

EXPLORATION

CONTEMPORARY VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY,

CONTINUED

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5. G. R. Malkani.¹

IMPORTANT as the original developments of Vedanta philosophy are, the heart of its teaching is still the transmission of the orthodox tradition of Advaita Vedanta, the perennial philosophy of India. G. R. Malkani is a contemporary champion of the ancient wisdom. He does more, however, than merely repeat the teachings of the classical Vedantists. In the first place, Malkani, by restating Vedanta in English, has freed it from dependence on the Sanskrit language with which it has always been associated. This means not merely translating Sanskrit terms into English equivalents but rethinking the whole doctrine in the concepts of Western philosophy. "The method of exposition which I have adopted is that of European philosophy, but the ideas are essentially Indian,"² he says; "the substance is oriental but the form is very much occidental."³ In the second place, he carries out the implications of Advaita with a ruthless rationality which surpasses in rigor not only the doctrines of other contemporary Vedantists but even, so far as I know, those of any former ones. His relentless logic makes no compromise with common sense, current opinions, or even tradition, but pushes its arguments to their ultimate conclusions. Because of this his less rigorous colleagues sometimes protest that these extreme conclusions are not orthodox Vedanta at all but a unique philosophy of his own. In the third place, he presents the doctrine systematically, instead of in the

¹ This article concludes my study on contemporary Vedanta philosophy, the first two parts of which were published in this *Review*, IX (March, June 1956), 485-504, 662-80.

² *Philosophy of the Self*, p. v.

³ *Vedantic Epistemology*, p. v.

traditional Vedanta form of commentary on previous works. He claims, for example, that his *Vedantic Epistemology* is the first book in which Advaita epistemology is set forth directly, explicitly, exclusively, and systematically. His works consequently form an independent body of Advaita philosophy intelligible to those who have no acquaintance with the classical literature.

Ghanshamdas Rattanmal Malkani, a Sindhi Kshatriya, was born in 1892 at Hyderabad Sind, and educated at Karachi, where his principal philosophy teacher was T. L. Vaswami. When the Indian Institute of Philosophy was founded in 1916, he was one of the six original fellows chosen to attend it. He soon became its permanent director and, except for two years at Cambridge University, has been there ever since. Since 1926 he has also been editor of the *Philosophical Quarterly*, which under him has become India's leading philosophical journal.

The Indian Institute of Philosophy, located in the little mill town of Amalner, East Khandesh, is a unique institution. It was founded and endowed by Srimant Pratap Seth,⁴ proprietor of the Pratap cotton mills, who, converted to Advaita Vedanta by his guru Savalaram, established an institute to develop and propagate this philosophy in a way which neither the Westernized universities nor the tradition-bound schools of the pandits could do. It is a small institution, with a faculty of three and a few resident fellows, but it has had a great cumulative influence on contemporary Indian philosophy. Many of the leading philosophers of India have been associated with it for longer or shorter

⁴ Srimant Pratap Seth, whose foundations at Amalner also include a liberal arts college, a modern hospital, and a temple, while best known as an industrialist and philanthropist, is also himself a philosopher. He holds the most radical form of Advaita. Realization of the Advaita truth which we know intellectually, he says, is attained only by thinking about it. Neither good deeds nor love, consequently, can be of the slightest value for spiritual progress, which is accomplished only by knowledge. The problem of death, in which philosophy has its origin, is solved by realizing that only existence is real. There is no you; there is no God; and the traditional Vedanta definition of Brahman as "being-consciousness-bliss" is only confusion. There is only one truth, namely, that *I exist*. It is interesting to note, in view of the frequently heard claim that Vedanta is incompatible with altruism, that in this case, at least, the most extreme form of Vedanta is accompanied by the most lavish philanthropy.

periods, and have profited from the opportunity to speculate on philosophical problems in this secluded intellectual oasis.

The soul of the institute is Malkani, who has informed it with his forceful personality. His erect bearing reveals an inner integrity of character, but his brusque manner conceals an inner warmth of devotion. His habits are of Kantian regularity, he never leaves Amalner except for the annual Indian Philosophical Congress, he does the same things at the same times every day, and the people of Amalner could no doubt set their clocks by his evening walks. His mind is pure intellect. He is not interested in anything except philosophy, in any philosophy except Vedanta, or in the theories of any Vedantists except himself. He makes no pretension to scholarship, is not a Sanskritist, and reads relatively little. He says it is his practice to read an author, then forget what he has written, and then re-think the same problem for himself. Every day he thinks and writes about philosophical problems. He makes no attempt to advance himself, feels no mission to convert others, and never argues. He has a low estimate of his personal merits, but is absolutely certain of the absolute truth of his philosophy.

Professor Malkani has written several books⁵ (all published by the Indian Institute of Philosophy, and all in print) and many articles (mostly published in the *Philosophical Quarterly*, almost every number of which has an article by him). The most important books for understanding his philosophy are *Philosophy of the Self* and *Vedantic Epistemology*. All are short, and written with a primer-like directness and simplicity which make the author's meaning crystal clear. The succession of writings does not, he says, indicate any change or development in his philosophical thought, but only a persistent resolution to formulate it with greater precision and clarity. He claims certainty and truth for all his works, though he pretends to have forgotten them once

⁵ *Problem of Nothing* (1918), *Metaphysics of Energy* (1920), *Study of Reality* (1927), *Ajnana* (with Das and Murti, 1933), *Reality and Value* (1934), *Philosophy of the Self* (1934, his longest book, 218 pages, the most complete systematic account of his metaphysics, but superseded by a work now being written), *Life-Sketch of Srimant Pratapseth* (1952), *Vedantic Epistemology* (1953), besides several pamphlets.

they are published, his endeavor not being to seek the truth, which he has already found, but to express it.

Malkani's certainty is justified, he maintains, by his absolute rationalism. Free, so far as that is humanly possible, from prejudice, superstition, or tendencies toward mysticism, he endeavors to follow reason wherever it may lead. He has a Cartesian confidence in his own rationality. He does not acknowledge the influence of other philosophers on his conclusions, and in his teachings it is hard to find direct influence of any sources, Indian or Western, with two conspicuous exceptions. First is the obvious influence of the whole classical tradition of Advaita Vedanta, of which Malkani's philosophy is merely a new formulation.⁶ Second is the influence of K. C. Bhattacharya,⁷ whose ideas are very prominent in his later writings, although he utterly repudiates Bhattacharya's conclusions and theory of alternation. Malkani's rationalism is pure in that it attempts to avoid perversion by non-rational elements, but it is not abstract in the sense of being separated from life. For him a significant rationalism must have a *motive*, a *content*, and an *application*. (1) The motive for philosophy is found in our doubts and questions about the world. To the person who is satisfied with the reality of the world, Malkani has nothing to say. If there are doubts, however, they can be resolved by logical analysis. For this reason he prefers questions to systematic exposition. He has no message to expound, but he is prepared to answer any question and refute any objection. (2) Mere rationalism as analysis of ideas he considers barren, since perception of truth, not rational explanation, is the important thing. His rationalism is concerned with our actual experience, and his philosophy is essentially a rational analysis of experience. Philosophy begins with phenomena, but it goes beyond phenomena. Metaphysics is the study of the ultimate ground of the reality of all things, and metaphysical truth is attain-

⁶ He states in a 1927 preface that the only debt he has to acknowledge is to Srimant Pratap Seth, who initiated him to this way of thinking.

⁷ He has a great respect for K. C. Bhattacharya, whose oral teaching he found very clear, with a logical subtlety against which neither he nor any others could stand up. I do not believe Malkani would say this of any other person.

able. (3) A purely theoretical philosophy, however true, is of little value. Rational thought should be expressed in rational living, and Vedanta as philosophy should also be Vedanta as religion. The only value of knowledge is as a means to bliss.

Metaphysical truth is attainable but it is ineffable. No theory is adequate to the truth. Philosophy, therefore, is not a theory.⁸ Philosophy consists of answers to questions. This point of view leads to an intellectual relativity. The same question may be answered differently for different inquirers. For example, the question whether God creates the world is answered affirmatively to a person in doubt between theism and materialism, but negatively to a person in doubt between theism and Advaita. A question need not be answered at all unless it is a real question, and it is not a real question unless it is a question for somebody.⁹ For example, the question, very prominent in Indian religious thought, whether the individual who has attained freedom has an obligation to assist those who are still in bondage, is not a valid problem. Those of us still in bondage do not yet have this problem. The person who has attained freedom, since the freedom he has attained is freedom from individuality, does not recognize the separate existence of discrete individuals, and so does not raise this problem. The problem, consequently, is never a problem for anybody, and does not need to be answered. Problems are always relative, not absolute or abstract. They arise only in experience, and must be solved in terms of experience. But every real problem, theoretical or practical, has a solution for the person who has the problem and in the circumstances under which he has it. No genuine metaphysical problem is insoluble. The most common technique of solution is by demonstrating that the pre-suppositions of the problem are false, so that the problem vanishes without needing an explicit answer.

⁸ This statement itself is not a theory but a point of view. Malkani objected, for obvious reasons, when I proposed to give it a name (*avadavada*, "non-ism-ism").

⁹ In our conferences Malkani invariably refused to speak until I asked a question, thereby indicating that I personally had a problem. He was willing to answer any question, at great length if necessary, but he had no theory which he wanted to teach on his own initiative.

Vedanta philosophy thus understood is part of the larger whole of Vedanta religion. This involves five steps. (1) The psychological prerequisites are the traditional "four qualifications" for spiritual progress. These are: first, self-control—including control of the mind, control of the senses and the body, ability to endure suffering, and contentment with little;¹⁰ second, discrimination between reality and appearance; third, renunciation of the fruits of action in this life and the future life (but not renunciation of true bliss, which is release from life); fourth (the most important, from which the others will follow), desire for release. These qualifications are necessary even before faith. All men, however, have them at least to some extent. (2) Listen-

¹⁰ This moral prerequisite of self-control constitutes the whole of Malkani's ethics. He rejects the obligation of duty (*dharma*), taught by orthodox Advaita as the first prerequisite to philosophy, as unnecessary; duty is derived, through education, only from scripture, and is valid only insofar as its performance leads to my own welfare here or hereafter—scriptural injunctions, perhaps valid as rules for attaining heaven, being fallaciously interpreted (as by the Mimamsa school) as pure obligations. He rejects non-injury (*ahimsa*) as a non-Vedic and non-Hindu doctrine unhappily introduced into Indian thought by Buddhism. He rejects pacifism (as taught by Buddhists, Jains, Quakers, and Gandhi) as non-Hindu, maintaining that only ascetics have a right to be pacifist, others not only betraying their country but retarding their own spiritual progress by it. He rejects altruism, interest in another's this-worldly or other-worldly welfare or spiritual progress, as having no basis in human nature (though altruistic acts may advance my own spiritual progress by helping me to free myself from self-consciousness). He rejects knowledge of truth as not being an end in itself, since knowledge has value only as a means to bliss (to which, however, it is indeed the only means). He rejects love as having no metaphysical value (except the self-love of bliss), since love, requiring an object to be loved, is significant only in the world of illusion (though in helping us get rid of illusory selfishness it has instrumental value as a means to knowledge). He rejects moral goodness (considered as an absolute value), since we have no knowledge, either rational or intuitive, of goodness, good acts being good only because they produce happiness, and being known to be good only by revelation or by social tradition originally derived from revelation. He rejects all non-hedonistic value, since value is created by desire, and only my own welfare, which means ultimately my own joy, is desired and so valuable. He maintains, however, that this ruthless criticism of conventional ethics does not imply selfishness, since we attain release only by getting rid of our attachment to ourself. (Malkani's aesthetic doctrine is equally ruthless: beauty exists only insofar as, and only because, it is appreciated by somebody.)

ing (*sravana*) to revealed truth and believing it by faith. This involves uncritical submission to a guru¹¹ (for he is not your guru if you doubt or criticize him). In the absence of a guru, the scripture, other books, or ordinary teachers may, as quasi-gurus, provide the material for faith—but eventually a real guru is necessary (even if only for a moment at the end of the discipline) if release is to be attained. (3) Thinking the truth out intellectually (*manana*), resolving all doubts, and demonstrating the revealed truth by rational understanding. This is philosophy. (4) Meditation (*nitidhyasana*), the persistent effort to see Brahman in everything, so confirming in experience the truth already heard and thought out.¹² (5) Release (*moksha*) from illusion by direct vision of Brahman—first *jivanmukti*, release while still appearing in the body, but behaving with the spontaneous altruism of the self freed from selfishness; finally *videhamukti*, no longer even appearing. Absolute truth is first desired, then learned, then proved, then experienced, finally enjoyed.

Philosophy is the third of these steps, the rational one. The Vedanta philosopher as a Vedantist accepts the revelation of the Veda and as a philosopher follows reason. Vedanta philosophy consequently has a problem of the relation between reason and revelation similar to that in Christian philosophy. Malkani's solution of the problem is Augustinian: to know the truth, faith is necessary psychologically but not logically. We cannot discover the truth without revelation, but having discovered it we can

¹¹ The guru (who must be more advanced than the disciple, although the disciple may eventually surpass him) need not be sought systematically, but will appear when the disciple is ready, the guru seeking, rather than being sought by, the disciple, and being recognized by the power of his influence.

¹² "Truth has not only to be found in experience, but it has also to be fully realized and lived. This is only possible by persistently checking the long-standing habits of wrong thinking, and keeping the mind fixed on the truth. It requires one-pointedness and devotion to a truth which we have begun to see intellectually. It removes the last impediment to a vision that will dispel ignorance for good. This is the only legitimate mysticism. Our rational faculties do not go to sleep. They are quite awake and alert. A mysticism based upon religious enthusiasm and the exercise of imagination or will is possible. But it has no theoretical value and is bound to be declaimed by reason." ("Rational Intuition," *Philosophical Quarterly* (July 1955), p. 118.)

understand and demonstrate it rationally without any premise derived from revelation. Without revelation we would never know the existence of a super-empirical reality because we would never think of it. Unaided experience and reason give objective knowledge only, never metaphysical knowledge. Revelation is necessary prior to metaphysical thought in order to provide the material for that thought and propose its problems.¹³ Revelation does not necessarily mean the Veda or a guru.¹⁴ Revelation is simply that metaphysical truth, inaccessible to the natural faculties of the child or the savage, which is known to any civilized adult through ordinary education in the tradition of any culture. It is handed down from teacher to pupil, and is always revealed (*sruti*, literally "heard"), having no human origin either in an intellectual genius (who could not transcend reason) or an inspired prophet (a concept unknown to Vedanta).¹⁵ Once acquired, however, the metaphysical truth *can* be understood rationally without any premise to be accepted on faith alone—although only by clear thinking and rigid dialectic. It can, consequently, be demonstrated cogently to any person willing to follow the requirements of pure reason. Pure reason does not mean abstract reason in the manner of Parmenides, Anselm, or Spinoza; it means reason apart from authority but not apart from experience. The business of philosophy is not to analyze concepts but to analyze our experience. Thinking (*manana*), as understood in Vedanta, is the rational analysis of experience.

A deductive system requires a premise not itself demonstrated. If the conclusion is to be proven true, the premise must be self-evidently true. If the conclusion is to be a metaphysical fact,

¹³ Not (as some authorities, notably Sankara's disciple Suresvara, have maintained) necessary *after* metaphysical thought in order to make us *see*, by a violent shift of attention, the truth we have already fully understood.

¹⁴ Although acquaintance with a person whose freedom from ignorance has progressed beyond our own, and by whose power we feel ourselves being progressively freed from ignorance, offers a very effective suggestion of the possibility of complete freedom.

¹⁵ Revelation must not be confused with religion; theistic religion, which is based on illusion, not knowledge, is not a step toward enlightenment but rather an impediment to it.

not merely a logical relation of ideas, the premise must be given in experience. This first premise of philosophy, according to Malkani, is the clear and self-evident distinction between the self and the not-self. This intuition, he says, is "the beginning and end of my dogmatism": to deny it is absurd, and to anyone who denies it he has nothing to say, but for anyone who accepts it he is prepared to deduce the rest of his system logically. Our experience, in which alone we can seek reality, is twofold, that of the subjective self and that of the objective not-self, which are radically unlike. In practice we confound them, but on reflection we discriminate them, and can never be uncertain as to what is I and what is not-I, except by inertia of thought which prevents reflecting. The object is known and contemplated. The subject is never an object, is not contemplated but enjoyed, and is not known except enjoyingly, that is, as knowing.

Malkani's dialectic proceeds from the self-evident distinction between self and not-self to the conclusion that Brahman is non-dual (*advaita*). This does not mean that we go *from* empirical things to their transcendental ground, for there is no way of doing this.¹⁶ We can seek reality only in experience. But experience already includes the super-sensible reality of the self. Everyone is aware of his own self, and is never in doubt that he himself exists as a functioning self which knows and feels. All that needs to be proved is that this is the *only* reality. The dialectic proceeds by a threefold argument—an ontological argument, an epistemological argument, and a cosmological argument.

The ontological argument, based only on the distinction of subjective self and objective not-self in experience, asks where reality is to be found. Reality cannot be found nowhere at all—for that would be absurd, implying that nothing exists. Reality cannot be found in some third field beside self and not-self—for that would be outside experience. Reality cannot be found in both self and not-self equally—for then the self would be limited

¹⁶ "We know the given or the immediate. We do not know what underlies it or what lies behind it. We might speculate. But how are we to verify the truth of our speculation? We simply do not know any kind of transcendental reality or a thing-in-itself." (*Philosophy of the Self*, p. 19.)

by the not-self and so become an object. Reality cannot be found in a unity of self and not-self (such as knowledge or will)—for the unity would be apprehended and consequently objective and consequently not-self, since the subject which includes all objects cannot itself be included in any possible whole. Reality cannot be found in the not-self alone—for this as objective must always be object for a subject, the object being constituted an object by the subject which knows it and so being necessarily related to the subject, apart from which it is nothing. Ergo, reality can be found in the self alone. There is no similar necessity for the subject to be subject for an object, for the subject, which is not known, has being in itself, not through knowledge, and so is free, not necessarily related. The self, consequently, is the only reality—"one without a second" (*advaita*), tolerating only an illusory, not a real, other.

The epistemological argument is based on the usual arguments for subjective idealism derived from the conditions of experience. Whether we approach the problem through the physiological conditions of sensation, the form of the conscious field, or the categories of thought, we conclude that the objects of knowledge are at least partly determined by the knowing self and so are a priori or subjective. Some objects are conceded by all to be completely illusory—including both percepts (objective illusion, especially dreams) and mental events (subjective illusion, especially false memory). But there is no ground for distinguishing true from illusory perception, either in the object, which in the case of illusory perception does not exist, or in the structure of the perception, else we would be able to distinguish them and so never suffer illusion.¹⁷ But even supposedly real objects are determined at least partly by the subject's contribution to their knowledge. Knowledge of objects is thus an internal relation, but this is opposed to the very concept of knowledge, which is awareness of something really existing prior to and independent of the knowl-

¹⁷ Both dreaming and dreamless sleep have metaphysical significance. The former proves that appearance of the object does not signify its reality; the latter, that non-appearance of the object does not signify non-being of the subject.

edge.¹⁸ Neither can ideas exist objectively, for ideas must be ideated, and ideating is not knowing, so the theory of objective idealism is false.¹⁹ The objects of perception, of introspection, and of thought are equally subjective and consequently illusory. The illusory must not be thought of as an appearance of the real. Reality does not appear, and appearances do not reveal reality. There is no real relation between appearance and reality. Reality is the ground of appearances, but this is not a relation between them. Appearances may be related to appearances, and reality to reality, but the only relation of appearance to reality is that of false identity (to be taken for reality when it is not). We cannot, therefore, argue from our false, subjective, illusory knowledge of appearances to any true, objective, certain knowledge of reality. Our actual experience, however, is not completely false, subjective, and illusory. Experience, however false, contains a true element, and when we eliminate the false part (everything which can be doubted), the indubitable residue is true. This residue, the ground of appearance, is never the object, which is always dubitable, but the subject, which is indubitable.²⁰ When we dissociate from our intuition of the self all those elements which belong to the not-self, nothing remains to be intuited, and the self will be seen as pure intuition, with no distinction between being and knowledge. It is nowise determined by our knowledge of it and so nowise subjective but purely objective. The object is always subjective, but the subject is always objective.

The cosmological argument, based on an analysis of the phenomenal world itself, infers its unreality from its transiency

¹⁸ "We therefore rule out a rational intuition in the sense that thought can think something and the same can become fact, quite as objective as anything real could be. Such a possibility, if it could be realized, would result in a dream-like world of mere appearances, not in a reality which could be said to be intuited in our sense of the term. Reality must pre-exist the intuition of it and not be a product of the same." ("Rational Intuition," *Philosophical Quarterly* (July 1955), p. 111.)

¹⁹ "An idea is, *as* and *when* we think it. It is only in thinking the idea that we give a body or substance to it. It is otherwise with reality." (*Ibid.*, p. 116.)

²⁰ The subject is the knower, not to be confused with the content of consciousness, which is an empirical object.

and its finitude.²¹ That which ceases to exist cannot be said to *be*. That which is finite cannot be ultimate, since it is intelligible only in reference to the infinite of which it is a limitation and which alone truly exists. Illusory being arises out of reality, as a clay vessel arises out of the clay, stays in it, and disappears into it. The vessel, except for its name and form, is nothing but clay. Ontologically the world is nothing but Brahman. But the self, which is never known to cease to exist, and which is the infinite knower of all objects, is Brahman itself. It has no name or form: all we can say about its nature is that it is *not this, not this*. It is pure Being.²²

These arguments concur in the conclusion that the world is illusory and the self alone is real. When we negate all objectivity of the Being underlying all things, that Being is indistinguishable from the self which is never an object. The object represents a failure in knowledge. *Knowledge* must reveal the *real*, but any dualistic theory of knowledge based on the supposed reality of the object breaks down, because our supposed knowledge of objects is subjective, lacks self-evidence, and is subject to correction. Only the non-dualistic knowledge of the self, not mediated by sense or thought, and incapable of being reflected on or criticized, is certain. This conclusion can be elaborated by psychological studies which distinguish and describe the aspects of the soul (the witness, the individual, the ego, the intellect, the mind, the inner sense, the outer senses), the states of the soul (waking, dreaming, deep sleep, ecstasy), and the functions of the soul (knowing, feeling, willing). But such studies have no metaphysical significance, for the aspects

²¹ Reversing the argument to infer transiency from unreality, Malkani says that *time* is a necessary a priori form of the illusory world, else it could not come to an end and consequently would be as real as anything. So is *space*, else it could not be given and consequently would not be an object; and so is *causality*, else it could not be orderly and so taken to be real and consequently would not deceive us. All other properties of the world are contingent and so known only empirically, due to error and so inexplicable.

²² "All finitude, which is the very nature of appearance, has to be negated. What is left is reality as such or reality in itself, and that has no limitation of any sort. It is properly described as *pure being*." ("Rational Intuition," *Philosophical Quarterly* (July 1955), p. 118).

of the soul are illusory objects (except the "witness," which is the knowing self), the states of the soul are states of illusion, and the functions of the soul do not lead to "alternative absolutes" but knowing leads to the one absolute of blissful freedom through knowledge. The conclusion can also be elaborated by epistemological studies, as in *Philosophy of the Self* and *Vedantic Epistemology*. But such studies are posterior to metaphysics, for Vedantic epistemology, like any epistemology, is essentially a rational support for metaphysical conclusions already accepted on other grounds, and, while useful in offering easy steps to a difficult goal, it distinguishes grades of knowledge rather than grades of reality, which does not have grades. The conclusion does, however, present two important metaphysical problems, one concerning the illusory object, the other concerning the real subject.

If the world is illusory, the problem arises of distinguishing between the phenomenal world of ordinary experience which we all share and the world of dreams or hallucinations peculiar to each individual. Historically this problem has divided Advaita Vedantists into two schools. All agree that the self is real and that objects seen in dreams are unreal, but how about the objects seen in waking experience? According to realism (*srishti-drishti-vada*, literally "being-seeing-ism," to be perceived follows as a consequence from being), we see the illusion because it exists. According to subjectivism (*drishti-srishti-vada*, "seeing-being-ism," to be follows as a consequence from being perceived), the illusion exists because we see it. Realists distinguish two kinds of illusion. A mirage is produced by external causes, is seen by all observers in the same position, and although non-existent somehow is still there even if nobody sees it. A hallucination, on the contrary, is produced by internal causes, is seen by only one individual, and has no sort of existence apart from him. According to the realists the world is an illusion created by God (or rather, as Hindus put it, created, sustained, and destroyed by God under his three aspects Brahmā, Vishnu, Siva). God creates the world as a magician creates an illusion on the stage, and we individuals (likewise created by God) then see this illusory world as the spectators see the magician's illusion, realistically—although by clear thinking we may avoid being deceived by it. The world is

not real, but neither is it unreal. It has an intermediate status—phenomenal reality or cosmic illusion. Both schools claim Sankara himself, but realism is the common doctrine of post-Sankarite orthodox Advaita. Malkani scorns this realism as “Advaita for the dull.” While it may be true that God creates the world, this is true only cosmologically, not metaphysically, since God also is part of the illusion. The world as illusion is created, sustained, and destroyed by the self which has this illusion—created by illusion, sustained by ignorance, destroyed by knowledge. The illusory being of things depends on their being perceived, not on their being created by God. There is no real difference between dream objects and waking objects, since neither exist. There is no ontological hierarchy among nonentities. The only significant distinction between dreaming and waking, states metaphysically indistinguishable, is *pragmatic*. My this-worldly goals are successfully attained by ignoring dream objects and acting as if waking objects were real. So far as the problem of reality in the phenomenal world is concerned, Malkani is a pragmatist.

If the self is real, the problem arises whether it is one or many. This problem divides subjectivist Advaitins into two sub-schools. All agree that the real self is one and that the illusory individuals (including bodies and minds) are many, but how about the self as subject of ignorance, the self which produces the illusory objects by perceiving them? According to monopsychism (*ekajivavada*, “one-individual-ism”) there is only one subject, plurality being characteristic of objects. According to polypsychism (*anekajivavada*, “non-one-individual-ism”), while there is only one real self (*Atman*, which is Brahman), the self as subject of ignorance (*jiva*) is manifold, the plurality of individual persons. The problem whether one individual can become free while others are still in bondage, together with the moral problem of the freed individual’s obligation to those still in bondage, arises only in the context of *anekajivavada*. Malkani, however, insists that the two theories differ only theoretically, not practically, since the problem of the freed individual’s relation to those still in bondage is never a practical problem for anybody. The theoretical difference depends on the question of the *ground of ignorance*. For *anekajivavada* this is the individual selves; but for *ekajivavada*, as

held by Malkani, it is *Atman*. Individuality is a product of ignorance, and consequently the individual selves cannot be the ground of ignorance. There is therefore only one *jiva*.²³ This theory is not quite like any Western monism. It is not like Eleaticism, for that is based on an analysis of being, while *ekajivavada* is based on an analysis of experience. It is not like neo-Platonism, for that recognizes degrees of reality subordinate to and emanating from the one absolute reality, while *ekajivavada* has no degrees and no emanation. It is not like solipsism, for that accepts the reality of one individual, while *ekajivavada* rejects all individuals, including myself, as equally unreal. When I wake from a dream I realize that the persons I met in the dream no longer exist, in fact never did exist, but I also realize that the person I remember myself to have been in the dream, with the body and behavior it had there, never did exist, but was just as illusory as the others. Likewise, when I attain freedom from ignorance (*moksha*) I shall realize, and even now I can understand intellectually, that the individual I called myself, with its body, mind, and ego, is just as unreal as other individuals. I can identify the *true* self with *my* self no more than with any other self. The only real individual, like that which finds itself awake after the dream, is that which finds itself really existing after the end of ignorance. It is this individual (*jiva*) which, by its ignorance, produces the illusion of many individuals, including itself as one among them. Malkani recognizes that this theory is paradoxical. In reply to my question, "If the *jiva* is one, what is many?" he stated that the very nature of *jiva* as *Atman* under the condition of ignorance requires it to be finite and so many, but that on the other hand *jiva*, being *Atman*, is essentially one. *Jiva* partakes both of self and of not-self: as self it is really one, but as not-self it appears to be many. The *self* (*Atman* or Brahman), limited by illusion, becomes, through false identification with the illusory body, the

²³ Some contemporary Vedantists ridicule *ekajivavada* as a fantastic perversion of Advaita taught historically only by the obscure writer Prakashananda and currently only by Malkani. Several of the philosophers whom I met, however, upheld *ekajivavada*, some of them accepting the formula that there are many *jivas* empirically, one philosophically, none really.

individual *jīva*, which then, by perception through the body, produces the illusory things of the world, including other bodies interpreted as other individuals supposed to perceive things realistically. Thus the world, including the plurality of illusory individuals, is an illusion produced subjectively by the one *jīva* (*Atman* limited by the body) and destroyed, together with all individuals, by knowledge. The true subject is the transcendental subject; this is the meaning of the Vedic formula *Thou art That*. *Ekajīvavada*, Malkani maintains, is "the most satisfactory philosophical theory." Because of its paradoxes, however, it cannot be expressed systematically, but only as a series of solutions of problems taken in the context in which they arise.

The heart of a philosophy which takes the world seriously is its theory of knowledge, but the heart of Advaita is its theory of ignorance. An error itself has no explanation. It exists in its unreal way only because somebody thinks it. To recognize it as error, to say, "I was mistaken," is an explanation which leaves nothing more to be said about *it*. There is no logical reason for error. If it could be defended logically, it would not be error. But there is a psychological reason for error. Error occurs in thought, not in immediate awareness. Error is due to our attributing an epithet to *this* which *this* does not sustain. When seeing a rope I say, "This is a snake," there is no error about the *this*, which is real, but I erroneously judge *is a snake*. Error has no *cause*, but it has a twofold *ground*—the objective ground, the real *this* on which the illusion is superimposed by false identification, and the subjective ground, the psychological process which performs the superimposition. The objective ground, according to Advaita, is Brahman, the only reality. The subjective ground which superimposes illusion on reality, according to subjectivism, is the self, and this, according to *ekajīvavada*, is not the individual (a product of ignorance and so not its ground) but also Brahman. Brahman, however, is not itself ignorant, for in that case it would be grounded in ignorance instead of ignorance being grounded in it. Brahman is not the ignorant subject (*jīva*), for absolute Brahman can only be thought of as omniscient, but it is the subjective ground of ignorance in the sense of being the intelligent principle without which there could be no ignorance.

Although Malkani maintains that his theory of the self (*ekajivavada*) is orthodox Advaita, he concedes that his theory of ignorance is different from that of orthodox Advaita. This, therefore, is the most original part of Malkani's philosophy, and should be distinguished from the corresponding doctrine of traditional Advaita. According to orthodox Advaita, ignorance (*ajnana*) has two aspects, mere ignorance, the negative power of concealing truth, and illusion, the positive power of creating error. Error occurs, and so has a cause, but ignorance has no beginning (though it may, indeed must, have an end), and so has no cause. Ignorance has no explanation, but exists beside Brahman, not as a second reality, but somehow as a second principle. Brahman conditioned by ignorance (which is God according to realism, *jiva* according to subjectivism) creates the world (including all individuals) by illusion. Ignorance therefore is prior to error, a necessary though not sufficient condition of error, the material cause, as it were, of error. According to Malkani, on the contrary, error is prior to ignorance. Ignorance, which merely conceals truth without offering any alternative, cannot produce any positive error. Error or illusion, however, being false, necessarily produces ignorance of truth. Ignorance, therefore, can be explained. But error or illusion cannot be explained logically. We arrive at illusory experience by superimposing, on the real ground, errors derived from previous errors. Psychologically errors are caused by desires, but desires in turn are caused by errors, in infinite regress. Error has no beginning and so no first cause. Error (*maya*), not ignorance (*ajnana*), is the inexplicable first cause of all illusion.²⁴

²⁴ In *Philosophy of the Self* (1939, p. 12), Malkani says: "If there is any ultimate cause for the illusory appearances, it can be no other than our ignorance of reality. . . . The illusory is essentially irrational. It should not be. The fact that we do take note of it, cannot be traced to reality, which should be the case with all legitimate explanation; it can only be traced to our ignorance of reality, which is the ultimate principle of irrationality." Malkani's present position seems to involve a repudiation of this statement. Cf. a recent statement (*Philosophical Quarterly* [January 1956], p. 246): "What is natural to us is error, and error is never pure,—it is always mixed with truth. To get at the truth, all we have to do is to negate the error."

Freedom (*moksha*) from the bondage of illusion and ignorance is attained by knowledge of truth. It is not attained by any action, for whatever we do with desire is bondage leading to further illusion. It is not attained by negating the will, for the will is always free.²⁵ It is not attained by love, for love involves distinction and so is just as illusory as hatred. It is not attained by mystical ecstasy (*samadhi*), which is a fruit of spiritual discipline and the goal of Yoga, for this is transient and has an objective content. It is not attained by a change of state (like awakening, which serves only as an imperfect analogy), for the self does not pass from one state to another; only the states (waking, dreaming, sleep, ecstasy) pass. It is attained only after meditation (*dhyana*) on the truth already contemplated intellectually, when a shift of attention, evoked by the Guru within us, makes us attend to what we always know directly. Just as the highest good is never really lost, so it is never really attained; it is lost only through ignorance and regained only through knowledge. Freedom is simply realization, through knowledge, of the non-dual character of the self.²⁶

The absolute reality (Brahman), knowledge of which is freedom, can be described in terms of its extrinsic properties, its intrinsic properties, and its essential nature. The extrinsic properties of Brahman are the creation, preservation, and destruction of the world. These are properties of the self—not of God, as the realists maintain. The intelligent self is the cause of all things which appear—a *free* cause, the existence of which does not necessitate the existence of its effects. The effects are differentiated from it and from each other not in substance or in real being but

²⁵ Moral freedom, however, is attained by counteracting desire by moral law (known from revelation, directly or indirectly through tradition, never by intuition or reason).

²⁶ The individual who has attained freedom (the *jivanmukta*), to speak from the point of view of illusion, cannot be infallibly recognized by any behavioristic criterion, so we can never be sure that any given individual has attained freedom, but we can be sure that most individuals have not, since their behavior is incompatible with freedom, and in the case of certain personages, both historical and contemporary (not necessarily well known), there may be a strong presumption of freedom. Professor Malkani has not attained freedom; he says that his incorrigible devotion to *thinking* is the principal obstacle to his own spiritual progress.

only in name and form. But it causes them only as illusions. Brahman is "one without a second" (*advaita*), and neither becomes nor really creates the world. These properties, therefore, only express Brahman's relation to the world, and have no metaphysical significance. The intrinsic properties of Brahman, which do have metaphysical significance, are either negative or positive. Negative properties are lack of qualities and lack of relations. Positive properties are being, consciousness, bliss, purity, intellect, freedom, reality, contemplation, infinity, perfection, and so forth. These properties, especially being-consciousness-bliss, are positive contents which distinguish the Vedanta ideal of freedom from the indefinite nirvana of Buddhism. The properties are distinguished, however, only in relation to our doubts. Really, in Brahman, they are all the same, for Brahman is without internal differences (*ekarasa*, "of one flavor"). The properties serve to refute false theories, but do not adequately describe Brahman. The essential nature of Brahman is ineffable. It cannot be conceived as being anything (negation of everything that can be known or thought) or as not being anything (negation of negation). It cannot be conceived at all, or known as an object, and has no character in itself. But it nowise follows that Brahman is remote, mysterious, or unknown—much less that it is non-existent. Brahman is directly intuited, for it is the self—not the felt body or introspected conscious content—but the self—which knows. The secondary statements of the Upanishads connote the intrinsic properties of Brahman, but the four principal statements ("Thou art That"; "I am Brahman"; "Brahman is intelligence"; "I am *Atman* and this *Atman* is the stuff of intelligence") denote the essential nature of Brahman. Brahman is truly known not through its description as being-consciousness-bliss but through its identity with the self. Reality is all that I know myself to be when I dissociate myself from illusory objects, with their characteristic transiency, materiality, and suffering. Brahman has the nature of the self because it is the self—the transcendental consciousness beyond all states.²⁷

²⁷ "It is the ultimate ground of changelessness. It has no history and no temporal dimension. It eats up time itself [which in Hindu thought 'eats up' all things]. It alone is truly eternal and immortal." (*Philosophy of the Self*, p. 190.)

When it is intuited, it offers no further problems. The non-duality of the self, formerly understood but now intuited, implies the truths that Brahman is the only reality, the self is Brahman, and the world is illusory. What we really know is that we really are.

The distinction between reality and illusion, the basic principle of Advaita Vedanta, is valid only from the point of view of ignorance. The higher truth, from the point of view of knowledge, asserts the reality of Brahman but denies the illusoriness of the world, maintaining that there is no world at all, and even the illusion is illusory. The world, the empirical consciousness which perceives it, and the individual which has this consciousness are equally unreal. *Really* there is no creation and so no world even illusory, no bondage by illusion and so no release from illusion. Since there is no world to explain, there is no theoretical problem to solve, and since there is no freedom to attain, there is no practical problem to solve. There is only the self (*Atman* or Brahman). This higher view, called *ajativada* (no-creationism), is not a theory. According to Professor Malkani, *ekajivavada* is "the most satisfactory philosophical theory"; *ajativada* is "the last kick of philosophy" before it lapses into the silence which alone can express the truth.

6. R. Das.

The certitude of Professor Malkani's speculative rationalism has its extreme opposite in the agnosticism of Professor R. Das's critical rationalism. Professor Das has complete confidence in reason, both in its speculative and in its critical functions, as the only way of knowledge. He rejects all religion as mere superstition, and considers philosophy, which is knowledge of truth and guidance of life by reason, as the highest human activity. But he is sceptical about the success of this activity.

Rasvihary Das, a Bengali Hindu, was born in 1894, and educated at Calcutta, where he studied under B. N. Seal and K. C. Bhattacharya. After receiving the M.A. degree in 1920, he went to the Indian Institute of Philosophy at Amalner for 26 years. Since

1946 he has been Lecturer in Philosophy at Calcutta, except for two years at Saugor and one semester at Harvard.

Professor Das's secluded life has left him innocent in the world of affairs but wise in the world of books. An omnivorous reader in many languages, he is learned in the philosophical and other literature of India and the West. His familiarity with all sorts of ideas has bred a certain contempt for them, which prevents his embracing any philosophical system. He is never dogmatic, but always critical.

His English works, written in a fine literary style, include four books (all now out of print and scarce)—*Essentials of Advaitism*²⁸ (1933), *The Self and the Ideal* (1935), *The Philosophy of Whitehead* (1937), and *A Handbook to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (a condensed free translation for use as a textbook, 1949)—and many articles.²⁹

Professor Das's philosophy has passed through two stages, a youthful speculative stage and a mature critical stage. The youthful speculative stage has its fullest expression in the book *The Self and the Ideal*. This work, although developed in Western concepts, is clearly within the Vedanta tradition, but it is an original theory which eludes classification in any of the traditional Vedanta schools.³⁰

"Philosophy aims at the knowledge of reality that can be attained by rational thinking," this book begins, but "the data for such thinking are supplied by the facts of experience," which implies that "the reality which philosophy seeks to know must be intimately related with the facts of experience." Experience, however, includes not only physical but also moral experience, and a rational philosophy must include the facts of morality in its

²⁸ A free translation of the Vedanta classic *Naiskarmya-siddhi* by Sankara's disciple Suresvara. Authentic because by Suresvara and clear because by Das, this book is in my opinion the best introduction to Advaita Vedanta.

²⁹ He considers his most important contribution to Indian philosophy an article (*Modern Review*, April, 1934) which called attention to the previously little known K. C. Bhattacharya and led to his appointment as professor at Calcutta.

³⁰ He answered "Perhaps" to my suggestion that his theory could be called "qualified non-dualism" (*Visishtadvaita*).

scheme of reality. Metaphysics thus depends in part upon ethics for its data, but ethics depends upon metaphysics for the justification of its ultimate principles. The chief purpose of the book is to bring out the metaphysical implications of moral consciousness.

Moral judgments, like all judgments, are eternally true or false. The reality to which they refer is relative, since nothing is good except through its relation to other things, but not subjective. Judgments of value presuppose an objectively real standard of value, the *ideal*, in relation to which things can appear as good. Moral experience shows, however, that the ideal has yet to be realized. We are not what we ought to be. The ideal does not possess the sort of reality found in the natural world, nor could it be the ideal if it did. Attempts to define the ideal as the Good, as God, or as the Absolute are inadequate. The ideal is eternally existent, else moral judgments could not be true. It has absolute knowledge (inseparable from the being of things known), else it could not be infallible. It possesses ultimate satisfactoriness, bliss. It can be conceived, therefore, as absolute existence, knowledge, and bliss.

This definition of the ideal, however, does not explain why it is our duty to pursue it. To understand our duty we must inquire into our own nature. As pure subject of knowledge the *self* is identical with the ideal. But as active the self is a distinct individual related to others, an identity in difference requiring to be changed, the object of the moral judgment, "I ought to be good." The self as active is an appearance, that is, something which is real but lacks stability, and so part of the changing empirical world. The history of the world is a tendency toward the realization of the ideal. The tendency of the self as known in moral consciousness is also to realize the ideal. The attraction of the ideal is the root of both physical and moral law. But the self really is the ideal, so that moral compulsion is the compulsion of our own nature, that is, freedom. Our only duty is to be ourselves, and the expression of this self-realization is through love for our fellow beings, who are all appearances of the one self. Moral consciousness is the evidence for our unity with all mankind, and this unity is the justification of our moral obligation.

The mature critical stage of Professor Das's philosophy, as

found in his present teaching and in the article, "Pursuit of Truth through Doubt and Belief," in *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, is a critical realism. Reason is the only philosophical method. By reason we can know the physical world more or less clearly. But the deeper we penetrate into reality, the more obscure we find it. This is not because there is no deeper reality, as positivists assert. Metaphysical reality certainly exists; the study of this reality is the most important thing both for theoretical interest and practical guidance; metaphysical truth is attainable, and the world is making progress toward attaining it; but it has not yet been attained. Whatever philosophy we hold we should hold lightly, realizing our uncertainty about it. The great rationalist systems, both Indian and Western, are dubitable just because they cannot stand up against rational criticism. Advaita Vedanta is not rational: its Brahman is unintelligible; its method is not really dialectical; and its thesis that the world is illusory is at best shown to be possible, never shown to be true. The teaching of K. C. Bhattacharya is a resolute attempt to penetrate more deeply into reality, but it is difficult to follow. Das's own system of philosophy, described above, he does not repudiate, and still accepts as a working hypothesis for life, but he "holds it lightly." Not knowing the Absolute, we must be sceptics. Scepticism is candor, honesty, and humility. Philosophy is not a theory but the clarification of ideas.

The concept of *illusory*, so glibly used by Vedantists, is in Das's opinion particularly refractory to logical analysis. *Illusory* is a predicate which never has a subject. Nothing is illusory except when you are talking about something else. It is meaningless to call the world, or anything, illusory. Das accepts the world as given, refusing to discriminate between its simply perceived aspect as sense data and its understood aspect as object, as he finds no such distinction in his experience of things. Our problem is to understand the world, not to deny it. *Morally* the world can be denied or called illusory in the sense of having no value for us, but this is a moral, not a metaphysical, judgment. What the world lacks is not reality but value.

The concept most important to clarify is that of the *self*. Our concept of the self is based on the body, but it goes beyond

the body, and even penetrates the eternal as it develops. The self is not a beginningless or unchanging substance. It begins in this life, is constantly changing, and will end with this life. Das does not expect or desire immortality or rebirth; he finds this life happy and satisfactory. It is satisfactory just because the self can grow in it. Basically body, and never ceasing to be body, it yet grows to include incorporeal and even eternal aspects. The eternal ideal is not actual, but it is real in the sense that it acts on the self and determines its growth. We may not know the essence of the self, but we do know its existence, and we do know the ideal which directs it.

Since we do know the ideal, the scepticism which is prudent in metaphysics is out of place in ethics. Das's moral teaching, just because it is based on what we can know, tends to take the form of moral clichés: knowledge is an end, but not the only end; the most important thing is spirituality, involving withdrawal from the body and its demands; we should live simply, not trying to be great; inner peace is good, yet we must be concerned for those we love; we should lead a life of service, yet being finite can be concerned only for those near us; we enrich our sympathies by conversation with our friends. The problem of evil is not so clear, yet we can see—though with great hesitation, and not allowing this to dull our sympathies—that perhaps even suffering itself is good in turning us to the spiritual. In aesthetics also, Das is not sceptical: he is a realist, considering beauty objective and capable of being apprehended with certainty, although its metaphysical significance is uncertain. The moral concept of *charity*, including sympathy and service, and the aesthetic concept of *beauty*, including delight and harmony, combine to form the concept of *love*. Love is an ultimate ideal, coordinate with the ultimate ideals truth and freedom, these three corresponding with the rational functions of feeling, knowing, and willing respectively. In our concern for these ideals we rise above the mere consciousness which we share with animals to attain the spirituality which is the highest concern of the universe and which forms the only immortality of mortal man.

Professor Das calls himself a realist in epistemology ("theoretical realist and practical idealist"), but he does not pro-

pose any realistic system of philosophy. To Vedanta he presents a challenge based not on any lack of sympathy with its ideals or any positivistic denial of metaphysical reality but simply on a demand that, if it wishes to justify itself, it must be actually what it always claims to be, rational.

7. *D. M. Datta.*

I will conclude by considering two philosophers, D. M. Datta and R. D. Ranade, who are outstanding for their contributions not only to the intellectual but also to the spiritual life of India. In India, which has no dominant religion or organized Church, a spiritual teacher teaches on his own authority, and he may also be a philosopher.

Dhirendra Mohan Datta, a Bengali Hindu, was born in 1898, and educated at Dacca and Calcutta. After graduating from college, he had a P. R. Scholarship, with a simultaneous teaching position, and continued his studies both with pandits and with professors, including K. C. Bhattacharya. In 1921 he abandoned his academic career to follow Gandhi, and after training at Gandhi's ashram devoted himself to social and educational work, teaching spinning, and establishing girls' schools. When poor health forced him to abandon this, he returned to academic life, and for 25 years was Professor of Philosophy at the University of Patna. He attended the East-West Philosophy Conference at Honolulu in 1949, and in 1951-1952 was visiting professor at Wisconsin and Minnesota. In 1953, having reached the retiring age of 55, he retired to Santiniketan.

Although Professor Datta's teachings and writings are substantial, and his scholarship and philosophical acumen are considerable, his greatest influence has been through his personality. Cautious and slow in thought, speech, and action, with self-conscious but genuine humility, he shows moral power rather than dialectical subtlety. His gentleness, enthusiasm, and Gandhi-like personality make him universally loved by those who know him, and his friends and colleagues profit both from his example and from his wise counsel.

His books represent a variety of interests. *The Six Ways of*

Knowing (P. R. Scholarship thesis enlarged for Ph. D. thesis, 1932) is a technical work on Vedanta epistemology. *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (in collaboration with S. C. Chatterjee, 1939) is the standard textbook used by Indian undergraduates. *Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy* (1950), while devoted mostly to Western philosophy, also included the first systematic account to be published of K. C. Bhattacharya's doctrine. *The Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* (American lectures, 1953) is, in the vast Gandhi literature, the only competent account of the Mahatma's philosophy as such. Of his many articles in various journals,³¹ the most important for his own philosophy is "Philosophy of the Body."³² He was also a principal editor of the cooperative *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western* (1952), the first attempt since Deussen's to produce a general history of philosophy.

Datta is particularly interested in semantics, considering semantic analysis a necessary prerequisite to philosophical agreement, and the discovery of categories the most important philosophical activity. He points out that Vinoba Bhave, for example, can appeal successfully to the Hindu people because he can take for granted certain categories inherent in Hindu culture. He compares the terms found in Vinoba's speeches (sacrifice, equality, love, charity, self-control) with those found in Eisenhower's (democracy, freedom, free enterprise, standard of living). He is making a special study of the meanings of *sat* (being), and suggests that Sankara's philosophy is simply deduced from his definition of *sat*.³³

Datta's own philosophy, a sort of panpsychism, he calls *dehatmavada* ("body-soul-ism"). This term, he points out, is used by materialists to mean that soul is only body, but by him to mean that body is only soul. We come in contact with the

³¹ Datta, like Das, also claims to have first made K. C. Bhattacharya well known, by his paper at the Indian Philosophical Congress in 1934.

³² Radhakrishnan: *Comparative Studies in Philosophy Presented in Honour of his Sixtieth Birthday*, 1953, pp. 315-31.

³³ When Gandhi said, "God is Truth, or rather Truth is God," he may have meant "reality," for *sat* (reality) and *satya* (truth) are pronounced the same in Gujarati.

universe through the body. Far from being its prison-house, the body is the liberator of the soul. He finds the historical prototype of his system in the *Satadvaita* (non-dualism of being) of Sankara's contemporary, Mandana Misra.³⁴

In ordinary life we are always revising our views. Philosophy seeks a point of view which cannot be falsified. By absolute reality we mean that which has no possibility of falsification. One attribute of such absolute reality is existence; we can hardly deny that being is. An equally obvious attribute is consciousness, for its denial is itself consciousness. Existence is essentially consciousness. All beings—not only animals but also plants³⁵ and inorganic things—are conscious, although the consciousness may be in a subtle form, not organized as in a mind. A third attribute of reality is harmony. Harmony is recognized by immediate intuition in our apprehension of beauty, goodness, and logical validity, although an understanding of its nature may require subsequent analysis. *Beauty*, especially as seen in art, which has greater freedom and less agreement than other forms of expression, is essentially harmony. But beauty, which is jointly subjective and objective, is not for its own sake but is associated with morality;³⁶ the entire personality works in the appreciation of beauty, and what harmonizes with the entire personality is a source of aesthetic joy. *Goodness* is harmony—those ways of living which stabilize thought in harmony with truth. *Truth* is harmony (non-contradiction) plus presentation. Existence, con-

³⁴ Datta accepts the following doctrines attributed to Mandana Misra: explanation of error as seeing something other than where it is; distinction of two kinds of ignorance—not perceiving, removed by hearing, and otherwise perceiving, removed by meditation; account of ignorance as having the individual soul for its seat and Brahman for its object; acceptance of revelation as generating only indirect knowledge of Brahman; acceptance of a combination of works and knowledge as means of progress; possibility and desirability of liberation by works and knowledge without renunciation. But he rejects the following: absolutism of the Word (*Sabdadvaita*); possibility of ultimate release while in this life (*jivanmukti*).

³⁵ Consciousness in plants is supposed to have been demonstrated experimentally by the Hindu botanist J. C. Bose.

³⁶ For example, the nude nymphs of the Ajanta frescoes, where the exaltation of the faces precludes any immoral suggestion and expresses the artist's spirituality.

consciousness, and harmony constitute reality as we know it; it may have other unknown attributes.³⁷ The material appearances of things (including our own bodies) are carved out of the infinite consciousness by negation, and are defined as not being other things. Material things, consequently, are not unreal, but are abstract essences less real than the consciousness from which they are abstracted, and so may be called illusory.

The path of spiritual progress, according to the usual Vedanta teaching, is the way of introversion: starting from the body we turn inward to identify ourselves progressively with consciousness, mind, ego, and ultimately that inmost reality which is the absolute Self. According to Professor Datta, it is just the opposite. The path of spiritual progress is the way of extraversion. Starting from the body we turn outward to expand our consciousness by a widening of interest as we identify ourselves with progressively greater spheres of our environment. There are four ways in which consciousness may expand. It may expand in extent, as in astronomy. It may expand in quality, seeing all things as existence, consciousness, and harmony. It may expand in power, and so in freedom, as the control we have directly over our own bodies is extended to other things. It may expand in feeling, by an enlargement of sympathy, leading to universal love. It is inadequate, in fact it is bad, to expand the consciousness in one way only. Those who expand their consciousness in extent only become mere scientists. Those who expand it in quality only become mere philosophers. Those who expand it in power only become tyrants, like modern dictators or the asuras of Hindu legend. Those who expand it in love only are the persons of good intentions whose fate is proverbial. True expansion of consciousness is that which combines all four modes—knowledge, insight, power, and love. Expansion is accomplished by seeing *all* things in their *real* aspect as existence, consciousness, and harmony, and consequently *loving* and *controlling* them as we identify ourselves with them. Such expansion involves no rejection of existence, but a rejection of the predicates formerly attributed to it, a

³⁷ Bliss, the traditional third attribute of Brahman in Vedanta philosophy, is not an obvious attribute of reality.

re-evaluation of things valued no longer in themselves but as God³⁸ (absolute reality, or being-consciousness-harmony). Expanding selves intersect and so merge with one another. The ultimate goal is infinite expansion to embrace the whole universe.

Professor Datta would never claim that his own consciousness has expanded very greatly. But passing over the question of the extent of such expansion, which is a matter of degree in any case, and considering its manner, we see in his own wide interests, philosophical insight, extensive sympathies, and considerable influence an example of the simultaneous expansion of personality in all four modes.

8. *R. D. Ranade.*

The guru is a basic institution of Hinduism. Whether thought of as a transmitter of revealed wisdom or as a Socratic midwife assisting the disciple to realize truth already possessed, the guru is considered the essential agent of spiritual progress. The disciple does not look beyond his guru, who as the agent of his salvation is for him the manifestation of God and object of devotion.³⁹ Historically gurus have varied from founders of world religions to those with a single disciple. At the present time R. D. Ranade is one of the great gurus, and perhaps the one with the greatest standing as a philosopher.

Ramchandra Dattatraya Ranade, a Marathi Brahmin, was born in 1886, and initiated into religion by guru Bahusahib in 1901.⁴⁰ He was educated at Poona, where he specialized in mathe-

³⁸ Like Chaitanya embracing a black tree because he recognized it as Krishna.

³⁹ A distinction is sometimes made, however, between the guru and the satguru (real guru). In this case the guru, a person of advanced but not necessarily exalted spiritual status, is the disciple's immediate teacher, while the satguru, a personage of exalted spiritual status, often the guru's guru, in whose name the guru acts, is the object of the disciple's veneration. One of Ranade's disciples told me that Ranade is a satguru, another told me that he is only a guru and not a satguru, while Ranade himself told me that there is no real difference between a guru and a satguru.

⁴⁰ Ranade is the only one of the philosophers discussed in these articles to have a guru.

matics, but where his most influential teacher was the novelist F. W. Bain. While fellow of Deccan College he began having spiritual experiences and also became interested in philosophy, especially Greek philosophy, and was professor of philosophy at Fergusson College in Poona from 1914 to 1924. Meanwhile his fellow disciple Amburao had succeeded guru Bahusahib and established an ashram in the jungle near Nimbai, a village north of Bijapur. When Amburao died, Ranade was persuaded to undertake the responsibilities of the guruship, and he then both assumed the spiritual guidance of his former fellow disciples and began initiating disciples himself. He gave up the academic life to live at the ashram, at the same time undertaking research in Vedanta philosophy, but three years later went to Allahabad to serve as professor of philosophy, and sometimes dean, from 1927 to 1946. Here he developed his interest in mysticism, especially mysticism in Indian vernacular literature, much of which he recovered from oral tradition and published. He retired from teaching at 60, served one year as vice-chancellor of the University of Allahabad, and since 1947 has lived at Nimbai, dividing his time between scholarly research, mystical contemplation, and the direction of the ashram.

Professor Ranade's personality is the opposite of what one expects to find in a venerable guru. Unlike some gurus, who tend to be pompous or unctuous, he is completely free from such traits. In a community of disciples for whom he is their divine teacher (*gurudeva*), he still keeps his humility and perspective. He does not seek to be conspicuous, but is frank and friendly with those who come to him, eager to discuss both his own intellectual interests and theirs. Physically very small, slight, and frail (perhaps because he eats little or nothing), he is nevertheless vigorous, sprightly, one might almost say bouncy. He is active as a scholar, a philosopher, a mystic, and a guru.

As a *scholar* Ranade has produced a variety of works. In the field of Western thought he has published a comparative study of Greek and Sanskrit, a series of papers on pre-Socratics, and an edition of Carlyle's essays. In Indian philosophy he has published several works, of which the most important is *A Constructive*

Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy. Material for his study of Marathi mysticism is gathered in the four-volume *Source Book of Maharashtra Saints*. His most important work is a series of books on the mystical literature of the three vernacular languages with which he is familiar: *Mysticism in Maharashtra*, dealing with Marathi mystics, appeared in 1933; *Pathway to God*, dealing with Hindi mystics, appeared in 1954; the third volume, dealing with Kanarese mystics, is still in progress.

As a *philosopher* Professor Ranade teaches a doctrine which he calls *beatificism*. Speculative philosophy, he says, is uncertain and of little value. All we know of metaphysics is that all things emanate from God and tend to, but do not always actually, return to God. The search for beatitude, which is "as far beyond Socrates's happiness as that is beyond the pig's pleasure," is self-realization—the unfolding and realization not of our faculties but of the *Atman* within us. We should not ask premature questions, such as whether the Self is one or many, but should try to know the Self. This is not accomplished by yoga exercises, or by the Advaita way of knowledge, which is opposed to true mysticism and dangerous.⁴¹ The world is not illusory, or even morally bad, since it may lead us to God. We are of the same *substance* as God, but finite, and nowise identical with God. The means to self-realization include morality, meditation, the company of good people, and a guru. Meditation is threefold—intellectual (on various concepts of God), moral (on the virtues), and "practical" (that is, mystical). The all-important thing is love of God. Love of neighbor is secondary, and sexual love is helpful (marriage being best for most people). Not action or knowledge but the love of God is what leads us to beatitude.

As a *mystic* Professor Ranade understands mysticism in a theistic and conservative way (like Evelyn Underhill, for example), and finds his models in the commonly recognized great mystics of India and the West. The faculty of mystical intuition, he says,

⁴¹ While I was at the ashram, one of the disciples recited a humorous poem he had just composed on *Ten Great Saints*, in which the praise of each saint was qualified by pointing out the flaw in his sanctity. In the case of one of these (Suka), the flaw was that he was an Advaitin in philosophy.

is not opposed to the ordinary faculties of intelligence, feeling, and will, but underlies them. The mystic path involves first morality based on our own efforts, secondly God's loving us by grace, but because we are good, finally our loving God. The principal criterion of the reality of mystical experience is the individual's increased moral and social sensitivity. Since retiring from teaching, Ranade has devoted himself primarily to meditation, several hours a day. Unlike many Hindu mystics, however, he makes no claims to advanced experiences; he told me that he had never yet enjoyed the "unitive experience" described by the great saints.

As a *guru*⁴² he maintains, in opposition to a view commonly held, that the disciple must seek and choose his guru, that the guru does not seek the disciple. He expects his disciples, following his own life-long practice, to spend three hours a day in meditation. Morning, noon and night the disciples in residence gather to chant hymns to the guru, and when Ranade has completed his own devotions a bell calls them to assemble for a reading, lecture, or discussion. The guru's principal work, however, is the individual instruction of each disciple according to his own ability, and whatever spiritual progress each one makes he attributes to the guru's grace. In a country where philosophy has always been associated with guruship, but where, as many persons told me, there are a hundred false gurus for every true one, Professor Ranade is carrying on the institution of the true guru in the grand tradition of India.

Conclusion.

Of the eight contemporary Vedanta philosophers discussed in these articles, K. C. Bhattacharya, K. Bhattacharya, Murti, Chaudhury, and Malkani represent the school of Advaita (monism), Ranade and Das (in his speculative stage) represent Visishtadvaita

⁴² I was told that he has about 2000 disciples in different parts of India, but have no idea how accurate this figure is. Disciples in residence at the ashram when I visited it varied in social status from a raja to an outcaste, and included professors, doctors, lawyers, government officials, and business men.

(pantheism), and Datta represents Satadvaita (panpsychism). All have developed the doctrines of these schools in original and significant ways. Vedanta is only one among many Indian philosophies, and within Vedanta the various schools have little in common except a firm belief in the ultimate reality of Brahman as revealed in the Veda. But its unwavering search for Brahman has made Vedanta the dominant philosophy of India, and its unlimited scope for new problems and new insights has kept it a living philosophy.

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