

SPHOTA THEORY: A PHILOSOPHICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
ANALYSIS

A PHILOSOPHICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
OF
THE SPHOTA THEORY OF LANGUAGE AS REVELATION

By

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS:

The aim of this study was to clearly describe the Sphota theory of language showing both its logical consistency and its psychological basis in experience. In Part One the philosophical task of describing the Sphota theory in a reasonable and logically consistent manner was undertaken. Chapter Two established the ground for this philosophical analysis by presenting a conceptual survey of Indian thought regarding language and revelation, so as to make clear the metaphysical background against and out of which the Sphota theory of language as revelation developed. The Third Chapter carried out the actual philosophical task, namely, a description of the logical consistency of the Sphota theory itself. In Part Two of the study a psychological interpretation was offered showing how, according to traditional Indian Yoga, the Sphota view of language (as logically conceived) is practically possible. The psychological interpretation was developed in two steps. In Chapter

Four, attention was focused on the psychological processes that take place within the mind of the speaker showing how the Sphota can cognize itself into the two aspects of uttered sounds and inner meaning. Following through the practical experience of language communication, Chapter Five analyzed the psychological processes that occur within the mind of the hearer in his cognition of the uttered sounds and their correlate revelation of the same meaning-whole or sphota from which the speaker originally began.

The major conclusion reached was that the Sphota theory of language as revelation is both logically consistent and (when interpreted by Yoga) psychologically realizable in practical experience. It was also found that Patañjali's Yoga when taken up to the nirvicāra stage of samprajñāta samādhi (but not beyond since Bhartrhari's sphota, by definition, does not admit of an asamprajñāta samādhi) provides a psychological discipline which seems to fit well with Bhartrhari's unexplained assumption of śabdāpūrvayoga as a means for purifying vāk and achieving mokṣa. Śabdāpūrvayoga effects this purification by the removal of obstructing vāsanās, through the practice of the yogāṅgas, so as to allow the teleology of citta (given by the grace of Īśvara) to pass naturally into the noumenal state of the attainment of true knowledge. The implications of these findings for the ongoing language debate within Indian philosophy and for future comparative studies, especially in relation to contemporary Western psychology, were discussed.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Indian speculations on language or speech (vāk) began with the Veda and have continued to the present day. Several of the Rg Veda hymns are devoted to vāk and the same line of thought can be found continuing in the Brāhmanas and the Upaniṣads. Patañjali, in his Mahābhāṣya, comments on these earlier ideas establishing the basic formulations for a philosophy of language. These 'seed' formulations are given further development by both the Mīmāṃsā and the Grammar schools, with the latter producing the Sphota theory. Although these schools differ with regard to the exact way in which words reveal meaning, they both hold that the capacity of words to denote objects is inherent and given (with the exception of technical words and proper names). In the case of objects such as table or chair, experience is necessary to enable one to use the denotative word correctly, but the capacity of a word to signify a particular referent is intrinsic in it. In the case of words symbolizing supersensuous reality, such as "Brahman", we need not have seen the object or heard the word before to be able to understand its significance. While perception (pratyakṣa), inference (anumāna), comparison (upamāna) and, in the case of the Bhatta-mīmāṃsā and Vedānta postulation (arthāpatti) and negation (anupalabdhi), may give valid

indications as to the nature of reality, it is only through the revelatory power of words (śabda) that ultimate knowledge of reality can be realized.

The Sphoṭa theorists, along with the Mīmāṃsakas, hold that śabda is both divine in origin and is the means by which the divine may be known. The Cārvākas, Buddhists and Vaiśeṣikas, however, do not recognize śabda as a valid source of knowledge (pramāṇa). The Cārvākas, taking their stand on perception as the only pramāṇa, maintain that words or śabda may give knowledge only so long as they are cases of perception, but insofar as words are said to signify supersensuous objects they are not free from error or doubt. In such cases of śabda, e.g., the Vedas, authority is invoked by the process of inference, and inference, when analyzed, shows itself to be an uncertain leap from the known to the unknown. The Buddhists also challenge the orthodox view by maintaining, like the Cārvākas, that śabda is not an independent source of knowledge but a case of perception or inference. The Vaiśeṣikas, too, include śabda within inference since the ground of knowledge is the same in both.

In Jaina thought śabda is recognized as a separate pramāṇa which comes, at its highest or scriptural level, from a perfected and omniscient finite self. Both Sāṅkhya and Yoga accept śabda as pramāṇa but, as will be shown in Chapter Two, with the latter school giving it more weight than the former. For both, however, śabda is impersonal and therefore possesses self-evident validity. The Nyāya, on the other hand, hold that the Vedas have been created by God and, as much as any other form of knowledge, must be proven by reason.

Mīmāṃsā thought, although containing differences of opinion on the nature of personal (pauruseya) śabda, agrees that impersonal (apauruseya) or scriptural śabda provides valid knowledge of super-sensuous realities. Like the Mīmāṃsā, the Vedāntists view Vedic śabda as impersonal -- revealed but not created by God -- and pramāṇa.¹

In addition to being challenged by the Cārvākas and Buddhists for their ontological view of the nature of śabda, the Sphota theorists were also attacked from within their own Brāhmanical camp because of their view that meaning is conveyed by virtue of śabda's primary existence as a meaning-whole or sphota. The Mīmāṃsās² and Vedāntists³ rejected this Sphota theory and argued that meaning is conveyed as a result of the summation of the primary śabda phonemes or letters. It seems worthy of note that in spite of receiving so little support within the overall context of Indian thought, the Sphota theory has continued to be hotly contested right up to the present time. Today, in addition to the continuing challenges from

¹The above summary statements introducing the different stands taken on śabda by the various Indian schools of thought is mainly based upon Satischandra Chatterjee, The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge, Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1965, pp. 319-321; and S. C. Catterjee and D. M. Datta, An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1939.

²See, for example, sūtra V, section 12 "On Sphota" of Slokavārtika by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, trans. by Ganganatha Jha. Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1909.

³See, for example, Śaṅkara's bhāṣya on the Vedānta Sūtras, trans. by G. Thibaut, vol. XXXIV, "Sacred Books of the East", reprinted by Motilal Banarsidass, 1968, I.3.28, pp. 206-211.

within Eastern thought, the Sphota theory is confronted by contemporary Western conventional views of language in terms of empirical factuality and linguistic game theory.⁴ Yet, in spite of all this calling into question, for one empirically nourished Westerner, at least, the Sphota theory seems worthy of consideration because of its explication of the felt divine unity of language. In the face of such challenges, however, the Sphota view of language, if it is to be credible, must continue to support itself not only by logical argument but also by demonstrating psychological evidence for its position.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to clearly set forth the Sphota theory of language showing its logical consistency; and (2) to describe psychological evidence supporting the Sphota theory of language. While the psychological interpretation that is planned here will use both traditional Indian psychology (yoga) and modern Western psychology, more weight is given to traditional Indian psychology, with Western psychology being used to provide added evidence and elucidation.

Importance of the study. The question as to how language conveys knowledge, in ordinary inter-personal communication, or as to how language reveals knowledge, in intra-personal reflection, has

⁴See, for example, the view of L. Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963.

attracted the attention of philosophers in both the East and the West. Speculation as to the relation between thoughts, words or sentences, and the reality to which they refer, has been one of the oldest preoccupations of the human mind.⁵ Urban clearly expresses the relationship between language and knowledge: "...the problem of what we can know is so closely bound up with the question of what we can say, that all meditation on knowledge involves meditation on speech".⁶ Although no attempt is made here to review the vast Western discussion of the nature of language, it is perhaps apposite to note that a nineteenth and early twentieth century renewal of interest in language in the West was influenced by scholars such as von Humboldt,⁷ Max Müller,⁸ and Cassirer,⁹ all of whom gave considerable attention to Indian language and religion. The analytical psychology

⁵W. M. Urban, Language and Reality. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1939, p. 21.

⁶Ibid., p. 22.

⁷See, for example, Chapter 13, "The Word Unit: The Incorporative Capacity of Language" in Wilhelm von Humboldt's Linguistic Variability and Intellectual Development, trans. by G. C. Buck and F. A. Raven. Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971 (originally published in German in 1836).

⁸K. M. Max Müller, The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1899, and Lectures on the Science of Language. Delhi: Munshi Ram Manohar Lal (1861), reprint 1965.

⁹E. Cassirer, Language and Myth. New York: Dover Pub. Inc., English trans. by S. Langer published in 1946. This work, which evidences considerable influence from the Indian concept of speech (vāk), formed the basis for much of the thinking upon which his Philosophy of Symbolic Forms depends. (See "Translator's Preface", vii ff.)

of Carl Jung also acknowledges a considerable influence from Indian ideas as to the inherent power and meaning of various visual and linguistic symbols.¹⁰ However, as will be seen in Part Two of this thesis, Jung's concepts of "archetype" and "symbol formation" may well involve some distinctively Western differences from the traditional Indian analysis of the psychological nature of thought. Although Jung seems to be the only major figure in Western psychology who has been seriously influenced by Eastern thought, the theory and experimental evidence of a recent Western study by Werner and Kaplan on the psychological processes of language seems to have some common ground with the problems encountered in the classical Indian analysis of language.¹¹

In India, the evaluation of language as a means of valid knowledge (sabda pramāṇa) has from the earliest debates to recent discussion remained a key topic in traditional Indian philosophy and psychology. And within the Indian context, the Sphota theory, as first systematized by Bhartṛhari and as later defended by Mandana Miśra, has remained one of the pivotal points in the debates between

¹⁰ See, for example, C. G. Jung, Psyche and Symbol. New York: Anchor Books, 1958, and his Psychology and Religion. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938.

¹¹ See, for example, Werner and Kaplan's concepts of the inherent expressiveness of objects and uttered sounds (phonemes) as a necessary basis for the formation of words. Heinz Werner and Bernard Kaplan, Symbol Formation. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1963, pp. 19-22.

the various schools.¹² Recently there has been an increasing interest in this ancient debate regarding the nature of language and meaning. This may be due, on the one hand, to a renewal of interest in the metaphysics of the Grammarians, now that Bhartrhari's Vākyapadīya has been made available due to the diligent efforts of scholars such as K. A. Subramania Iyer¹³ and Gaurinath Sastri,¹⁴ and, on the other hand, to several recent Indian works suggesting the existence of some common parallels between the ancient debate pro and con the Sphota theory and current Western philosophical and psychological debate over the nature of language and meaning.¹⁵ Such parallels seem to be drawn on the basis of a psychological evaluation of Sphota theory which, although it appears to be implicitly present in Bhartrhari's Vākyapadīya, has apparently not (at least in recent discussion) received explicit explanation. It seems clear, therefore, that if such comparative comments are to have any value in

¹² This is clearly demonstrated in Jadunath Sinha's review of the debate between the schools over "Thought and Language", Chapter 21 in Indian Psychology I. Calcutta: Sinha Publishing House, 2nd ed., 1958.

¹³ As may be seen in earlier articles such as "The Doctrine of Sphota", Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute 5, 121-147, and continuing up to his definitive work, Bhartrhari, published by the Deccan College, Poona, 1969.

¹⁴ Gaurinath Sastri, The Philosophy of Word and Meaning. Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1959.

¹⁵ See, for example, The Philosophy of Sanskrit Grammar and The Linguistic Speculations of the Hindus by P. C. Chakravarti. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1930 and 1933. More recently, K. Kunjunni Raja has objectively reviewed Sphota theory in relation to

East-West dialogue on the nature of language, the implied psychological aspects of the Sphota theory need to be clearly set forth. This is one reason for feeling that the psychological task undertaken in Part Two of this thesis has value. But there is an even more important reason for this study. Within the context of Indian thought itself, the Sphota theory in its traditional formulations in Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya, Bhartrhari's Vākyapadīya, and Mandana's Sphoṭasiddhi had the two sides of: (1) the metaphysical inquiry into the nature of meaning in language; and (2) the psychological discipline for evidencing or verifying meaning (through Yoga techniques such as samādhi) and realizing that meaning both at the practical level of inter-personal communication and at the ultimate level of freedom, salvation or mokṣa.¹⁶ However, in the current revivals of Sphota theory, scholars such as Iyer and Sastri have concentrated on the first side, the metaphysics, and largely neglected the second, the psychological aspects. The aim of this study is to attempt a description of Sphota theory, from both its sides, so as to restore the psychological aspect to its rightful place within the traditional literature. Secondly, such a presentation of Sphota theory, with its inclusion of the psychological aspect, will provide a better basis for making any comparisons

modern linguists such as de Saussure and Ogden and Richards, and Western psychology of the Gestalt and Association Schools, Indian Theories of Meaning. The Theosophical Society, Adyar, 1963.

¹⁶ The Vākyapadīya of Bhartrhari, I:14, trans. by K. A. Subramania Iyer. Poona: Deccan College, 1965.

to contemporary psychological studies of language.

Apart from or in addition to all of the above, there is another way in which this study is viewed as having importance. Arapura has recently suggested that a dialogue between the spheres of the spirit (Western and Eastern), occurring within the consciousness of a scholar, is an essential pre-condition for really fruitful and truthful studies in comparative religion.¹⁷ Although it is impossible for a scholar of religion to be, for example, both Christian and Hindu at the same time, he can think the phenomenologically graspable aspects of Christianity and Hinduism together as an act of freedom.¹⁸ And the way in which language reveals knowledge is certainly a fundamental aspect of each sphere which, to a degree at least, is phenomenologically graspable. But Arapura has a warning for the scholar about to embark on such a study: "It is most difficult to differ significantly while it is easy to resemble non-significantly; there is much to learn from the former and very little from the latter".¹⁹ Before one is in a position to dialogue significantly within one's thinking between the Christian and Hindu spheres on the topic of language, one must have first thoroughly thought through the concept and function of language as it exists within each tradition. This study, with its

¹⁷ J. G. Arapura, Religion as Anxiety and Tranquillity.
The publisher: Mouton and Co., 1972, see pp. 115-126.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 117.

logical and psychological analysis of the Sphota theory of language (which, it is recognized, is only one viewpoint within Hinduism), is seen as a first or preparatory step within the sphere of Hinduism towards a future Christian-Hindu dialogue which will have the potential, at least, to differ significantly. For this purpose the philosophical analysis (Part One) has importance in achieving the understanding of a particular Hindu concept of language; and, the psychological analysis (Part Two) has importance in perceiving the way in which such a view of language could practically function in relation to both ordinary communication and moksa.

II. METHODOLOGY AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

The Sphota theory finds language to be the means by which knowledge of reality is revealed.²⁰ The term knowledge here is conceived not as specialized theoretical or practical understanding in a particular branch of scientific study (as the word is commonly used today), but as "wisdom" in the ancient sense -- the possession of or experiencing of general knowledge of the essence of all things, and the power of applying such knowledge and experience both critically and in practical life.²¹ It is on the basis of this definition of knowledge as wisdom that Indian thought has always assumed that knowledge is neither strictly philosophic nor

²⁰ Vakya-padiya, op. cit., I:1.

²¹ See definitions of "knowledge" and "wisdom" in The Concise Oxford Dictionary.

purely psychological but subsumes both these disciplines.²² For example, the question of how knowledge arises from language may take two complementary forms: (1) "How is knowledge from language logically²³ conceivable?", and (2) "How is knowledge from language, as logically conceived, psychologically evident in practical experience"? The logical analysis will produce limits which must be taken seriously when the psychological question is being studied, and vice versa. In addition, an answer to the logical question (for example) must also be shown to be psychologically possible in practical experience if it is to have serious contention in the larger arena of knowledge. In the first half of this thesis the logical question is examined and an attempt is made at describing the Sphota theory in a reasonable and consistent manner (i.e., as containing no internal contradictions). In the second half, an attempt will be made to describe how, according to traditional

²²For an example of this viewpoint, see N. K. Brahma, Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1932, pp. 5-7. It is interesting to note here that within the Western context the philosopher and psychologist Jean Piaget has recently argued both for a return of modern philosophy to "wisdom", and the necessity for philosophical speculation to demonstrate its practical possibility (in his thought, of course, this means scientific verifiability). Jean Piaget, Insights and Illusions of Philosophy. New York: The World Publishing Company, 1971, see especially Chapters 1 and 5.

²³"Logically" is used here, not in a specialized philosophic sense, but rather as defined by the Concise Oxford Dictionary as "defensible on the grounds of consistency" or "reasonably to be believed". It is in this sense that the idea of logical is generally used in Indian philosophy in a variety of general terms such as "yukti-vāda (reasonable argument), tarka (science of argumentation), pramāṇa (canons of argumentation), siddhānta (established doctrine), etc.; in noun form,

Indian psychology, the Sphota view of language (as logically conceived) is practically possible.²⁴

For the purposes of this thesis, the term psychology is taken not in its narrow specialized sense of modern empirical psychology, but in its more general sense defined as "Science of the nature, functions and phenomena of the human soul or mind".²⁵ This definition is sufficiently broad so as to include all in the West who have designated themselves as psychologists, and the traditional psychology of India (i.e., Yoga). Within Indian thought it seems clear that just as certain conceptions such as karma and saṃsāra are taken as basic to all Buddhist and Hindu schools, so also there are certain psychological conceptions such as cognitive traces (saṃskāras) which are seen to exist in and through the specific differences of the various schools as a kind of commonly understood psychology. Jadunath Sinha supports this contention in his finding that the Indian psychological conception of yogic intuition (pratibhā) is found in all schools with the exception of the Cārvāka and the Mīmāṃsā.²⁶ And the eminent scholar Stcherbatsky

yujyate (it fits), upapadyate (it obtains), etc.; in verb form, yuktam (that which fits), prāmānyam (that which is supported by prāmānas), and siddham, prasiddham (what is truly declared), etc. in verbal noun form.

²⁴ Throughout this thesis the phrase "psychologically possible" refers to "the evidencing of" or "the experienceability of the Sphota theory in the practical uttering and hearing of speech (with meaningful understanding).

²⁵ See The Concise Oxford Dictionary.

²⁶ J. Sinha, Indian Psychology: Cognition, Vol. I, Calcutta: Sinha Publishing House, 1958, Chapter 17.

observes that yogic trance (samādhi) and yogic courses for psychological training of the mind in the achievement of mokṣa (yoga-mārga) appear in virtually all Indian schools of thought -- be they Hindu, Buddhist, or Jaina.²⁷ Eliade, in his well known book Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, states that Yoga is one of the four basic motifs of all Indian religion.²⁸ Probably the most complete presentation of this very ancient and very generally accepted traditional Indian psychology is to be found in the Yoga-Sūtras of Patañjali. Although it is admitted that this presentation is made within the context of Sāṃkhya metaphysics, it is clearly the analysis of the commonly accepted psychological processes (such as are noted by Sinha, Stcherbatsky, and Eliade, above) which dominates throughout. Thus, there is no methodological difficulty in using Patañjali's yoga to test the psychological possibility of the Sphota theory of language.

Language is used in a rather special sense in Hindu thought. It is always conceived of in terms of speech. Inner thought is internal speaking, and written words are literal representations of spoken speech (witness the precise phonetic nature of Sanskrit). Vāk is the faculty of speech which functions both to reveal meaning to a person and to communicate, on the basis of the meaning revealed, between persons. As is shown in detail in Chapter Three,

²⁷ T. H. Stcherbatsky, The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa. London: Mouton & Co., 1965, pp. 16-19.

²⁸ Mircea Eliade, Yoga: Immortality and Freedom. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958, p. 3. The other three motifs named by Eliade are karma, māyā, and nirvāṇa.

vāk is conceived of not only in its external form as uttered words and sentences, but also as the internal thoughts which precede and follow from such sounds. In the Sphota view vāk is seen to have a hierarchy of levels, each of which is increasingly internalized.²⁹ However, perhaps the most important point to note here is that the chief characteristic of language or vāk for Sphota theory is its inherent meaningfulness.³⁰

Revelation here refers to the function of language in its "unveiling" of reality. The basic idea here is that language or vāk is pregnant with meaning which is at first hidden, but bursts forth (sphut) into manifestation with the help of the uttered sounds. Thus all language, when correctly spoken and understood, is taken as removing the veil of human ignorance (avidyā) and revealing knowledge of reality. In modern terminology, this would be described as "general revelation" in that the whole of language is seen as pregnant with divine meaning. It is distinct from, but establishes the basis for, the more theological conceptions of "special revelation".³¹ An example of the latter (in Hinduism) would be the mahāvākyas or great criterion sentences which are

²⁹ Vākyapadīya, op. cit., I:142.

³⁰ For evidence see K. Kunjunni Raja, Indian Theories of Meaning. Adyar: The Theosophical Society, 1963, p. 115.

³¹ See, for example, the distinction made between general and special revelation in A Handbook of Christian Theology, ed. by M. Halverson and A. Cohen. New York: World Publishing Co., 1958, "Revelation", pp. 327-328.

taken (by the Vedantists particularly) as bringing out the essential meaning which is hidden in all language.³² But to be understood, any special revelation of great sentences depends on the general capacity of language for conveying meaning, and it is precisely with this general revelation of language that Sphota theory is concerned.

III. SOURCES AND TREATMENT OF FINDINGS

For the Sphota theory itself, the primary source used was the Vākyapadīya of Bhartrhari. The editions referred to were as follows: the translation into English by K. A. Subramania Iyer of Chapter One with the Vṛtti and Chapter Three, Part One; and the translation of Chapter Two by K. Raghavan Pillai. Throughout the thesis, references to the Vākyapadīya follow the numbering used in these editions. For the debate between the Sphota theorists and their chief critics, the Mīmāṃsakas, the Sphoṭasiddhi of Maṇḍana Miśra was the basic source. The edition used here was the Sanskrit text edited with English translation by K. A. Subramania Iyer. For the criticism of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, the Ślokaṇvartika in the English translation by Gaṅgānātha Jha was referred to. Perhaps the best single secondary source found was K. A. S. Iyer's most recent work, Bhartrhari. A thorough search of the literature on the Sphota theory was conducted at the Central Library of the Banaras Hindu

³²K. S. Murty, Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedānta. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959, pp. 88-98.

University in 1972. In addition to the books listed in the Bibliography, the journals which were systematically searched for relevant articles included: The Vedānta Kesari (1934, 1937-1970), Aryan Path (1960-1972), Darshana International (1964-1972), Journal of the Ganganath Jha Research Institute (1948-1972), Brahmavidya: Adyar Library Bulletin (1950-1972), Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (1953-1972), Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute (1951-1972), Philosophical Quarterly (India) (1950-1972), Vāk (1951-1954), Prabuddha Bharata (1950-1972), Poona Orientalist (1938-1961), and Journal of Oriental Research, Madras (1932, 1945-1954). Individual numbers of other journals were also consulted as a result of following up cross references; reference to these journals appears in the Bibliography. As a result of this search, the following were some of the chief articles found to bear specifically on Sphota theory: "The Doctrine of Sphota", by K. A. Subramania Iyer, Journal of the Ganganath Jha Research Institute 5, 121-147; "Sphota", by A. L. Herman, Journal of the Ganganath Jha Research Institute 29, 1-21; "The Nature of Meaning", by P. S. Sastri, Journal of the Ganganath Jha Research Institute 26, 5-38; "The Doctrine of Śabdabrahman -- A Criticism by Jayantabhaṭṭa", by G. N. Sastri, Indian Historical Quarterly 15, 441-453; "The Doctrine of Pratibhā in Indian Philosophy", by Gopinath Kaviraj, Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (1924), 1-184, 113-132; "Vācaspati's Criticism of Sphotavāda", by S. S. S. Sastri, The Journal of Oriental Research 6, 311-321; and "Audumbarāyana's Theory of Language", by John Brough, Bulletin of the School of

Oriental and African Studies 14, 73-77.

For the psychological interpretation of the Sphota theory, the primary source used was the Yoga-Sūtras of Patañjali with the commentaries by Vyāsa and Vācaspati Miśra. The Sanskrit text Patañjala-Yogadarsanam (1963 edition) was studied along with the English translations of J. H. Woods and Rāma Prasāda. References made to Western psychology, for added evidence and elucidation, were based on a comprehensive review of the literature on "Intuiting" as listed in Psychological Abstracts between 1947 and 1969, and a survey of the treatment given "symbolizing" (as related to language) in textbooks and articles representative of different theoretical positions. The recent psycho-physiological research on bio-feedback and voluntary control of mental states (1966 to 1973) was also surveyed.

Treatment of findings. At the end of the logical analysis (end of Chapter Three) a summary of the major Sphota tenents, which are judged to have demonstrated their logical consistency, is offered. These tenents then require the demonstration of their psychological possibility, the task undertaken in Part Two. The results of this psychological interpretation are summarized at the end of Chapter Five. The possibility for a negative result (i.e., the failure of some or all of the Sphota tenents to have had either their logical or psychological possibility demonstrated) exists throughout the study, and forms part of the discussion in each concluding summary. Finally, in Chapter Six a general summary and conclusion is offered in terms of: (1) the logical and psychological possibility of the

Sphota view of how knowledge arises from language, (2) special implications of the psychological findings for logical aspects of Sphota theory, and vice versa, (3) implications of findings for ongoing discussion within the Indian philosophical context, and for the suggested parallels between Sphota theory and current Western psychology of language.

PART ONE:

A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE
SPHOTA THEORY OF LANGUAGE AS
REVELATION

CHAPTER II

METAPHYSICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SPHOTA

THEORY

In this chapter, a conceptual survey of Indian thought regarding language and revelation is undertaken. The purpose of this survey is to make clear the metaphysical background against and out of which the Sphota theory of language as revelation develops.

The Indian literature on the nature of language is vast. Each of the different philosophic systems has put forth its own view of language and its revelatory power, and criticized the views of others. Consequently, a comprehensive review of the whole debate cannot possibly be undertaken within a single chapter. Such a study would be a work of enormous compass.

Yet, for the Western reader especially, some background knowledge is a necessary prerequisite for an adequate understanding of the Sphota theory. To draw out such a brief conceptual survey from the voluminous Indian debate over language has necessitated the adoption of some method of selection. Here I have adopted the approach of Professor T. R. V. Murti.¹ He suggests that in the Indian debate regarding the nature of language two principal traditions may be identified: the Brāhmanical tradition stemming from the scriptures,

¹T. R. V. Murti, Some Thoughts on the Indian Philosophy of Language. Presidential Address to the 37th Indian Philosophical Congress, 1963.

which holds that language is divine in origin; and the Naturalistic tradition of the Cārvāka and earlier Buddhism, which holds that language is an arbitrary and conventional tool. This categorizing of the various schools of Indian thought into two traditions is not done without difficulty. For example, there are often strong and definite differences between two schools categorized within the same tradition, and sometimes even within a single school major quarrels erupt. Then again, certain schools such as the Jaina and Nyāya seem to occupy an intermediary position between the two traditions. Yet in spite of these difficulties, the purpose of achieving a brief but representative overview seems best pursued by examining selected schools from each of these two traditions.

The chapter begins with an outline of the Brāhmanical tradition as it is evidenced in the Hindu scriptures, as well as in the Mīmāṃsā, the Sāṅkhya-Yoga and the Vedānta schools of Indian philosophy. In section two, the Naturalistic tradition of the Cārvāka and early Buddhism is examined, along with the Jaina and Nyāya as occupying a somewhat intermediary position. The development of the Sphoṭa approach is traced against the "two traditions" background in section three.

1. THE BRĀHMANICAL TRADITION²

Indian speculations on the nature of language (its origin, the

²The term 'tradition' here is not used in the sense of doctrine

relation of a word with its meaning, whether speech is eternal or created, and the nature of speech in its original state) began very early.³ In the Rg Veda several hymns are devoted to Vāk (Speech) and the same trends are continued in the Brāhmanas and the Upanisads.⁴ Speech is described as the creation of the gods.⁵ It permeates all of creation.⁶ The Brāhmanical tradition goes further yet in identifying language with the divine. The Rg Veda states that there are as many words as there are manifestations of Brahman.⁷ The Aranyakas and early Upanisads continue to equate Speech and Brahman. "The whole of Speech is Brahman".⁸ In the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, Speech is seen as the support of all creation.⁹ Various symbols are used to indicate the divine nature of Speech and its evolution to form creation. Prajāpati and Speech are viewed as male and female copulating to create the world.¹⁰ Professor Murti puts it well when he says,

which is supposed to have divine authority, but to mean the source from which flows a continuous stream of thought and culture.

³ P. K. Chakravarti, The Linguistic Speculations of the Hindus. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1933, pp. 1-11.

⁴ Murti, op. cit., p. vi. See also R.V. 10.10.114.8 and Māṇḍūkya U., 7.

⁵ Rg Veda (R.V.) 10.10.125.3.

⁶ R.V. 10.10.114.8.

⁷ R.V. 5.10.2 and 10.114.8.

⁸ Sankhya Aranyaka, 3.3.

⁹ Taittirīya Br. 2.8.8.4-5.

¹⁰ Tandya Mbr. 20.14.2 and Kath. Br. 12.5.

The Brāhmanical tradition stemming from the Veda takes language as of Divine origin (Daivī Vak), as Spirit descending and embodying itself in phenomena, assuming various guises and disclosing its real nature to the sensitive soul. The well-known Rg Veda verse, 'Catvāri sṛṅgāḥ' expresses this truth in poetic form. It symbolizes speech as the Bellowing Bull of abundant fecundity, as the Great God descending into the sphere of the mortals (Mahādeva martyām āvivesa).¹¹

In the Upanisads speculations on language become more philosophical. Brahman is defined as the one reality, without a second, and is identified with Speech.¹² But the question then arises as to how this single absolute real can be expressed by the many words when the former is defined as 'one without a second'. As Arapura has observed, the Māṇḍukya Upanisad tries to link the unspeakable Absolute with the speakable through speech itself. "It creates the deeply meaningful symbol of AUM, which traversing the three phenomenal levels of consciousness, waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, reaches out beyond to the transcendent where the sound itself comes to an end".¹³ Brahman, which is said to be Speech is also said to be AUM.¹⁴ Just as leaves are held together by a stalk, so is all speech held together by AUM.¹⁵ In both the Upanisads and the Rg Veda, speech is seen to have various

¹¹ Murti, op. cit., p. viii.

¹² Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanisad 4.1.2.

¹³ J. G. Arapura, "Language and Phenomena", Canadian Journal of Theology, xvi, 1 and 2, 1970, p. 44.

¹⁴ Taittirīya Upanisad 1.8.1

¹⁵ Chāndogya Upanisad 2.23.3.

levels ranging from the manifoldness of the phenomenal words to the absolute oneness of Brahman as vāk.¹⁶ The implication is that only as we perceive speech at its higher levels do we get a clear revelation of its meaning. Thus it is said that the ignorant man seeing and hearing speech in its overt manifest forms does not know its real nature. "To the wise, Speech reveals her intrinsic nature, even as the loving wife does to her lord. Lost in appearances we fail to penetrate to the deeper reality".¹⁷ The Sāṅkhya-Yoga, Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta, the school of Grammar and Kashmir Saivism are not only loyal to this tradition but give further systematic development to these early 'seed' concepts. But before looking at some of these schools, let us briefly examine the approaches of the vedic and upaniṣadic seers (ṛsis) to the divine Vāk.

The Approaches of the Rsi to the Divine Vāk

The Vedic seers are called in Sanskrit, ṛsis, defined by Monier-Williams as, "a singer of sacred hymns, an inspired poet or sage, any person who alone or with others invokes the deities in rhythmical speech or song of a sacred character, e.g. Kutsa, Atri, Rebha, Agastya, etc".¹⁸ The root given is ṛs which, it is suggested, is perhaps from an obsolete root ṛs for root dra, "to see". Consequently, the Ṛsis are said to be the "seers" rather than the authors of the Vedic hymns. The approach of the Vedic Ṛsis to the

¹⁶ Rg Veda 2.3.22 and 10.2; Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad.

¹⁷ Murti, loc. cit.

¹⁸ M. Monier-Williams, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956, p. 226.

real was characterized not by logical reasoning but rather by intuitive inspiration or illumination. He was not the individual composer of the hymn, but rather the seer (drastā) of an eternal impersonal truth. As Aurobindo describes it,

The language of Veda itself is śruti, a rhythm not composed by the intellect but heard, a divine Word that came vibrating out of the Infinite to the inner audience of the man who had previously made himself fit for the impersonal knowledge. The words themselves, drsti and śruti, sight and hearing, are Vedic expressions; these and cognate words signify, in the esoteric terminology of the hymns, revelatory knowledge and the contents of inspiration.¹⁹

Aurobindo emphasizes that the approach of the Rsi is not aimed at speculation or aesthetic originality but rather the practical achievement of the spiritual goal -- the divine vision -- by himself and for others around him.

Another author has made a careful philological study of this vision of the Vedic Rsīs. Such a vision, says Gonda, comes to the mind in a spontaneous flash of intuition (dhi) which is beyond all purely sensuous perception.²⁰ In his approach to the real the Vedic Rsi is thought of as having been "emptied of himself" and "filled with the god". Therefore the words that he spoke were not his own words, but the words of the god. This suprahuman origin lent his words a healing, a salutary power, and made them even into a deed of salvation. It is this understanding of the true word as being at once inherently powerful and inherently teleological that is so difficult for modern Western

¹⁹ Sri Aurobindo, On the Veda. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1956, p. 6.

²⁰ J. Gonda, The Vision of the Vedic Poets. The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1963, p. 17.

minds to comprehend. Yet these are the very characteristics that underlie Indian cultic ritual and chant. From this viewpoint duly formulated and rhythmically pronounced words are bearers of power. This, as Gonda makes clear, has given rise to the traditional Indian belief that formulas are a decisive power, that whoever utters a mantra sets power in motion. "It has conditioned belief in the supra-human power of the verses and stanzas of the Veda, in the eternity and suprahuman nature of the Veda in its entirety".²¹ The texts come to be judged as formal expressions of ultimate reality, revealed by *dhī* or "vision" and recited as a rite to actualize their inherent power and affect both the worshipper and the gods involved -- to further the teleological process of the whole cosmos.²²

A point of agreement between Aurobindo and Gonda is that this "inner or central meaning", with all its potential power and teleology, is not simply given to the *Rsi* in its finished form. Aurobindo describes it as a living thing; a thing of power, creative, formative; a primitive root-word with an immense progeny; a general character or quality (*guna*) capable of many applications -- thus he accounts for "the enormous number of different meanings of which a single word was capable and also the enormous number of words which could be used to represent a single idea".²³ This also is the key distinction for Vedic

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 134.

²³ Aurobindo, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

interpretation or translation for Aurobindo -- to locate the root-word meaning, put it in place of the obscure word in the text, and then test for validity by checking the sense of the root-meaning in the overall context. Gonda makes a similar point by showing that an analysis of the Vedic term *Dhīh* makes clear that the mere revelation of a "vision" or "central meaning" was not enough. Having received such a supra-normal "vision", the *Rsi* still had the task of fostering and cultivating the *dhīh* which had come to him. "He had to translate it into audible and intelligible words...to develop the initial nucleus into a more or less coherent series of stanzas".²⁴ In this sense Gonda finds *dhīh* to be frequently identified by the vedic poets with a cow. Indra and Varuna are likened to two bulls of a cow, lovers of *dhīh*, fertilizing and generating divine *Vak*. Just as a milch-cow gives us refreshing food and drink, so also the hymn (cow) which originated in a vision, will swell with milk.²⁵ The symbolism here indicates that the gods also play a part in the realization of the religious vision. Agni's activity with regard to *dhiyah* is described as "help" or "good offices".²⁶ "Help" probably both in receiving the proper visionary *Vak*, and in making them into effective verses.

It seems clear from this discussion that the *Rsi* was not a speculative philosopher but rather an intuitive receiver of the divine

²⁴Gonda, op. cit., p. 106.

²⁵R.V. 2.2.9.

²⁶R.V. 1.79.7.

revelation of Vāk. This revelation was a solitary vision carrying its own intrinsic power, validity and objective reality. The poetic form of the expression of the vision left it open to various levels of interpretation and apprehension by those who heard it from the Rṣi. On a lower level, many of the hymns might be taken to represent a naturalistic and polytheistic approach to reality. But, on a higher level, it can also be held that the visions of the Vedic Rṣis evidence a monotheistic approach in which the various Vedic gods are simply descriptive names representing the various manifestations of the one Deity or Reality.²⁷ Aurobindo also finds that spiritual realization by identity, which is so central to the Upanisads, is present in the experience of the Vedic Rṣi:

[The hymn] rose out of his soul, it became a power of his mind, it was the vehicle of his self-expression....It helped him to express the god in him, to destroy the devourer, the expresser of evil.²⁸

The continuity from the Vedic hymns to the Brāhmanas and finally to the Upanisads is evident in many ways. The intuitive vision (dhi) of the Vedic Rṣi is still very much present in the Brāhmanas. For example, in a series of mantras Indra's dhiyah are said to be yoked (yuj-dhiyah) or made use of for self-realization.²⁹ On a lower level, the sacrificial ritual, which had been present to

²⁷ Aurobindo, op. cit., p. 9.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 13.

²⁹ Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa 2.5.3.2.

some degree in the Vedic hymns, was given greater development and importance in the Brāhmanas. This meant that the Rsi of the Vedic hymns, the inspired singer of truth, now tends to become the possessor of a revealed scripture and the repeater of a magical formula.³⁰ But while the majority of Brāhmins during the period of the Brāhmanas may have concentrated on establishing an authoritative systematization (Śabdapramāṇa) of the ritual sacrificial aspects of the Vedic hymns, there were always some inspired teachers who resisted rigid formalizing and focused on the subjective spirituality of the Vedic visions. Due to their efforts, evidence may be found in the Brāhmanas of early struggles towards the formulation of many of the philosophic statements of the Upanisadic Seers.³¹

In continuity with this spiritual group of Brāhmanical thinkers, the Rsi of the Upanisads sought to recover the ancient spirit and knowledge of the Vedic Seers by philosophic meditation and spiritual experience. As Aurobindo puts it:

...they [the Upanisadic Rsis] used the text of the ancient mantras as a prop or an authority for their own intuitions and perceptions; or else the Vedic Word was a seed of thought and vision by which they recovered old truths in new forms. What they found, they expressed in other terms more intelligible to the age in which they lived. In a certain sense their handling of the texts was not disinterested....They were seekers of a higher than verbal truth and used words merely as suggestions for the illumination towards which they were striving.³²

³⁰Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. I. New York: Macmillan Co., 1923, p. 125.

³¹Ibid., pp. 130-36.

³²Aurobindo, op. cit., p. 16.

This quotation from Aurobindo highlights several aspects of the approach of the Upanisadic Seers, which we will now examine.

First, they experienced and further clarified the vision of Vāk which had previously been seen by the Vedic Rsis. Conda gives evidence for this in his study which shows that the dhī or vision of the Vedic Seers is also central to the approach of the Upanisads.³³ In the Upanisads the adjective dhīra characterizes the one who clearly sees the true and fundamental nature of reality.³⁴ In keeping with their increasingly precise analysis, the Upanisadic Seers make clear that this supersensuous dhī is a function of the mind rather than the senses.³⁵ It is this psychic faculty (dhīh) which enables the Rsi to penetrate into the world of the unseen reality — even to the ultimate vision of his own true Self (Ātman).³⁶ The more exact expression of the nature of the real as seen via the dhī is the unique contribution of the Upanisadic Seers. Whereas the Samhitas of the Rg Veda give external, cosmic, poetic expression to this vision of the underlying unity of all reality;³⁷ the Upanisadic Seers adopt the

³³Conda, op. cit., see Chp. IX, pp. 245-258.

³⁴Ibid., p. 253.

³⁵B.U. 1.5.3.

³⁶Maitri Up. 6.25.

³⁷See, e.g., Rg Veda X.168, "The Ātman of the Gods, the germ of the world..."; III.54 "One All is lord of...this multiform creation"; X.121 "...the one life-spirit of the Gods...the one God above the Gods..." and references to Rta. Translations from A Source Book in Indian Philosophy, eds. S. Radhakrishnan and C. A. Moore.

approach of philosophic dialogue and "negative exclusion" to help the truth seeker attain inner vision of ultimate unity ($\bar{A}tman = Brahman$).

A second aspect of the Upanisadic approach is the characteristic focusing upon or reference to the Vedic word or mantra by the Rsi. For example, in discussing the nature of the creation of this world the Rsi of the Bṛihad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad refers back to envisioned words, "I was Manu and the sun"³⁸ by the Vedic Seer Vāmadeva as the basis and authority for his contention, "This is so now also. Whoever thus knows 'I am Brahma' becomes this All; even the gods have not power to prevent his becoming thus, for he becomes their self ($\bar{a}tman$)".³⁹ By focusing on the Vedic intuition of the underlying unity between the Rsi, the gods and the real, the Upanisadic Seer brings out clearly the philosophic and religious implications of the vision, i.e., creation consists of Brahman becoming the All (including gods, seers, men, etc.), and whenever one awakens to this truth he immediately realizes that his essence or Self is identical with Brahman -- therefore, to worship God as some divinity other than one's Self is ignorance.

A third aspect of the Upanisadic approach is also illustrated in the above example. Whereas in the Vedic hymns and the Bṛahmanas, the vision is usually verbalized in external mythical symbols (such as Manu and the sun), the Upanisadic seers adopt increasingly abstract ("this All") and internal ($\bar{A}tman$ or Self is Brahma) symbols in their

³⁸ R.V. 4.26.1.

³⁹ B.U. 1.4.10, Hume's translation.

verbalization of the real.⁴⁰ This process of increasing philosophic abstraction and internalization reaches its peak, in one sense, with the "negative exclusion" teaching of "not this, not that" (neti, neti). By this via negativa philosophic approach, the Upanisadic Rsis force their students beyond all possible conceptualizations to the realization of a higher than speakable truth which is symbolized by the turiya level of AUM in the Mandukya Upanisad. As one Rsi puts it, "neti, neti" leads us to the understanding that there is nothing higher than the realization that he is not this -- but the underlying Reality ("the Real of the real") upon which all particularization as "this" or "that" depends.⁴¹

A fourth aspect of the Upanisadic approach relates to the context naturally fostered by the philosophic method outlined above. Whereas the Vedic Seer spoke his vision in the form of a solitary hymn (evoking responses at the varying levels of ritual sacrifice, worshipful

⁴⁰ It should be noted here that this Upanisadic approach was not completely unknown to the Vedic Rsis. For example, a remarkable symbolization of the real in very abstract terms occurs in R.V. 10.129 where the underlying principle of all (including all the gods) is tad ekam sat, "that One Being". On the other hand, it is also true that the theistic approach to the real, which is dominant in the Vedic hymns, is also to be found in the Upanisads. As Dasgupta points out, a minor current of thought in the Upanisads is that of theism which looks upon Brahman as the Lord controlling the world. It is because of this unsystematized variety of approaches in the Upanisads that differing schools of philosophy (e.g., Saṅkara and Rāmanuja) can appeal to the Upanisads for support. However, the majority of the Upanisadic approaches give stronger support to Saṅkara. S. Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. I. Cambridge: University Press, 1963, p. 50.

⁴¹ B.U. 2.3.6 and Mandukya Up. 7.

devotion or, for some, self-realization), the Upanisadic Rsi spoke his vision within the context of the teacher-pupil relationship (the word "Upanisad" comes from upa-ni-sad, "sitting down near" the teacher to receive instruction).⁴² Consequently, the common form is one of philosophic probing towards the real by question and answer. A good example of this approach is the dialogue of the sage Yājñavalkya with his wife Maitreyī as he leads her towards the realization that "it is the Ātman that should be seen...and with the understanding of the Ātman, this world-all is known".⁴³ The goal of this teaching relationship is repeatedly described by the Upanisadic Rsis as the student's intuitive vision of the identity between himself and the real (between Ātman and Brahman). This is the essence of the Four Great Teachings or Mahāvākyas: *tat tvam asi*, "that thou art"; *aḥam Brahma asmi*, "I am Brahman"; *ayam atma Brahma*, "This Ātman is Brahman"; and *prajñānam Brahma*, "Consciousness is Brahman". The purpose of the philosophic dialogue preceding the statement of the Mahāvākya by the Rsi is to systematically remove the obstructions (*avidyā*) in the mind of the student, which are preventing him from directly perceiving the Real (Brahman). The systematic use of *anumāna* or reasoning in removing defects such as contrary notions so that the unshakable immediate experience of Brahman can arise is characteristic of the Upanisadic approach to the Real.⁴⁴ Various tactics are adopted by the Rsi in

⁴² Mundaka Up. (Mun. Up.), see, e.g., 1.2.12 and 13.

⁴³ B.U. 2.4.5., Hume's trans.

⁴⁴ T. M. P. Mahadevan, The Philosophy of Advaita. London: Luzac and Co., 1938, p. 57.

their use of reasoning. One tactic is to seek to identify the essence of the empirical world with its subjective underlying unity.⁴⁵ In such approaches the common method is to start with the gross and then reason towards the subtle.⁴⁶ Another tactic used by the Rsi is to approach the real by questions which seek to lay bare the reality underlying all change and suffering.⁴⁷ But perhaps the most difficult aspect of all these methods is the wisdom required for the admission that one's own intellectual prowess and system-building achievements do not attain for him the real.⁴⁸ The use of the intellect will help by removing the obstructions of wrong ideas. But in the end all pride, even in such a meritorious achievement as knowledge of the Veda itself, must be overcome by spiritual and mental discipline (Yoga) so that the intuition of the real can occur.⁴⁹ And in this direct vision, the Rsi finds the real to be the overflowing of peace and bliss or ānanda upon which all life depends.⁵⁰

This brief survey has shown that for the Rsis of the Saṃhitā, the Brāhmanas and the Upanisads alike, the supersensuous vision of vāk is the ultimate approach to or experience of the real. As indicated

⁴⁵ Mun. U. 1.1.3.

⁴⁶ B.U. 4.3.1-6.

⁴⁷ C.U. 6.2.1ff. and 6.13-6.15; Kātha U. 1.20ff.

⁴⁸ Kātha U. 2.23; B.U. 4.4.21 and 3.5.1.

⁴⁹ Kātha U. 6.10 ff.

⁵⁰ Taittiriya U. 2.8 and 9.

in passages like Māṇḍūkya 3.33, this vision is seen to be a function of the mind in its capacity for direct intuition. Also for the Upanisadic Ṛsis, the intuition of the real has an internal rather than external focus in its symbolic expression. This approach depends for its validity upon the presupposition that the real is a given truth which requires only to be discovered or revealed. Such a presupposition is held in common by Jainism, Buddhism and the Ṛsis of the Veda. It was also accepted by the Greek philosophers such as Plato. However, this presupposition is currently challenged by various evolutionary and eschatological viewpoints which envision reality to be either a future goal capable of achievement (Marxism, contemporary Christian "Theology of Hope", e.g., Moltmann, or possibly Aurobindo's "Integral Philosophy") or an infinite evolutionary progress or regress in which everything remains phenomenally relative (twentieth century physical and social science). These latter viewpoints would be regarded as merely wrong ideas constructed by the mind which are obstructing the thought and experience of their proponents, so that the true reality is not seen.

Having surveyed the Vedic word or mantra, we have seen how the Upanisadic Seers sought to unify, interiorize, and give clearer philosophic expression to the common vision of the real. This approach also depends upon the acceptance of certain presuppositions for validity. The unifying and abstracting tendency assumes an impersonal absolute (such as Divine Vāk) to be the highest formulation of the real. And, at the same time, the interiorizing approach to the real presupposes that the real is intrinsic in each individual. Consequently,

for the Rsis, the revealed word (śruti) is not the ultimate truth in itself, but serves the necessary function of enabling one to "see" ultimate reality through its penultimate verbalizations (e.g., the Mahāvākyas). Buddhism, as will be shown, objects to all of these approaches to the real: no scripture is necessary, only one's reason is required; unifying and interiorizing tendencies must be overcome by focusing on the discrete and momentary elements of reality. With regard to the question of a necessary revelation, the approach of the Upanisadic Seers seems superior for the reason that within Buddhism the words of the Buddha rapidly were taken to be a necessary vehicle by which the direct intuition of the real could be achieved -- filling the function of a necessary revelation. Of course, for both Buddhism and the Upanisads, the direct face to face vision or intuition of the real is ultimate -- although the two views are in complete opposition as to the nature of the reality that is seen.

In relation to the Brāhmanical tradition as a whole, the effects of the approaches⁵¹ adopted by the Upanisadic Rsis have been described as subordinating the material utility of the mantra and the ritual sacrifice to a more purely spiritual aim and intention. In practical terms, this resulted in an increased emphasis upon asceticism and renunciation.⁵² In addition to achieving the culmination of the Vedic approach to the divine Vāk, these Upanisadic Rsis also provided.

⁵¹The word "approaches" here has been interpreted in the sense of "methods of drawing near" from the definition given in The Concise Oxford Dictionary.

⁵²Aurobindo, op. cit., p. 17.

the foundations upon which the subsequent schools of the Brāhmanical tradition base themselves. Let us now examine how the schools of Sāṅkhya-Yoga, Mīmāṃsā (although it rejects the jñāna-kāṇḍa) and Vedānta give more systematic formulation to this Daivī Vāk view of language.

Language in the Brāhmanical Schools

Before discussing the various views of language as such, it is necessary that the scholastic Indian conceptions of knowledge (pramā) and the methods or ways of knowing (pramāṇa) be understood, since they underlie all language discussions issuing from the Vedic views of vāk. In Sanskrit the word jñāna stands for all kinds of cognition irrespective of the question of truth and falsehood, whereas the word pramā is used to designate only a true cognition (yathārtha-jñāna) as distinct from a false one (mithyā-jñāna). Datta cites the Vedānta-paribhāṣā definition of pramā or knowledge as "a cognition the object of which is neither contradicted nor already known as an object (anadhigatā-bādhitā-rtha-visayam jñānam)".⁵³ Pramāṇa, according to this same authority, is the special source of a particular pramā. "Special source" here is described in terms of active and unique causation. Datta describes exactly what is meant as follows:

In the case of perceptual knowledge or pratyakṣa pramā, for example, a sense-organ (in the case of an external perception) or the mind (in the case of an internal perception) is said to be the kāraṇa or instrumental cause. There are many causes, e.g. the mind, the sense organ, etc., the existence of which

⁵³ D. M. Datta, The Six Ways of Knowing. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1960, p. 27. On pp. 20-27 Datta examines the differences in interpretation given to pramā by the various Indian schools, but concludes that they all essentially agree with the definition quoted above.

is necessary for the production of perceptual knowledge of an external object. But of these, the mind is a cause the existence of which is common to all sorts of knowledge, perceptual and inferential; so it cannot be regarded as a special cause. The special cause here is the particular sense-organ involved in that perception, because it is not common to other kinds of knowledge; it is peculiar to external perception alone...

A pramāṇa is, then, such an active and unique cause (kāraṇa) of a pramā or knowledge.⁵⁴

Let us now briefly note the particular pramāṇas accepted by each of the philosophic schools within the Brāhmanical tradition. The Sāṅkhya and the Yoga Schools accept three pramāṇas; perception, inference and testimony (śabda pramāṇa).⁵⁵ The Mīmāṃsā defines six pramāṇas: pratyakṣa or perception, anumāna or inference, śabda, upamāna or analogy, arthāpatti or presumption, and abhāva or non-apprehension.⁵⁶ The same six pramāṇas are also stated by Vedānta.⁵⁷ Of course there are many differences of definition regarding a specific pramāṇa among the schools. Our purpose here is to focus only on the śabda pramāṇa and briefly examine the various interpretations offered by the above schools.

Sāṅkhya describes śabda as being constituted by authoritative statements (āptavacana), and resulting in a knowledge of objects which

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 27-8.

⁵⁵ Sāṅkhya Kārikā of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa, Kārikā IV: The Sāṅkhya Aphorisms, Bk. I, Aph. 88; Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali, I:7.

⁵⁶ Ganganatha Jha, Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā in Its Sources. Banaras: Banaras Hindu University, 1964, p. 80. Prabhākara accepts only five pramāṇas.

⁵⁷ Dharmarāja Adhvarin, Vedānta Paribhāṣā, Cps. 1-6.

cannot be known through perception or inference. Two kinds of śabda are distinguished -- vaidika and laukika. Śabda as vaidika is the revelation of the Vedas. Śabda as laukika is the testimony of ordinary trustworthy persons and, according to some authors, is not recognized in the Sāṅkhya as a separate pramāṇa, since it depends on perception and inference. It is vaidika śabda or the vedas which alone give us true knowledge of the supersensuous realities that are beyond perception and inference.⁵⁸ This firm division of śabda, however, is called into question by the statement of the Sāṅkhya Aphorisms that śabda as secular is not different from śabda as Veda.⁵⁹ Here śabda is defined as the testimony arising from a person worthy to be believed.⁶⁰ A recent writer suggests that vaidika śabda is used in Sāṅkhya primarily with respect not to the Vedas, but to the tradition of Sāṅkhyan teachers.⁶¹ Although Sāṅkhya formally admits śabda as Veda as an independent pramāṇa, it is inference which is really the chief Sāṅkhyan pramāṇa.⁶² The attitude of this school would seem to be to keep śabda as Veda handy to fall back on when inference and perception fail. In this sense Scripture may be said to be subordinate to reason for Sāṅkhya.

⁵⁸S. C. Chatterjee and D. M. Datta, An Introduction to Indian Philosophy. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1939, p. 312.

⁵⁹Sāṅkhya Aphorisms, Bk. V., Aph. 40.

⁶⁰Ibid., Bk. I., Aph. 101.

⁶¹G. J. Larson, Classical Sāṅkhya. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1969, p. 172.

⁶²Sāṅkhya Aphorisms, Bk. I:60.

The Vedas are described as not made by any person, therefore free from defects and possessing self-evident validity.⁶³ They are spontaneously conveyors of right knowledge as a result of their inherent natural power.⁶⁴ Although the Vedas are impersonal, they are not eternal for, as shown in the previous section, they arise out of the spiritual experiences of ṛsis and are conserved by a continuous line of instruction from generation to generation.⁶⁵ Vāk is not eternal in that it evolves from Ahaṅkāra according to its own teleology, and expresses itself as sound (this fact is shown to us by inference).⁶⁶ The Sāṅkhyan School does not delve into the question of just how śabda conveys meaning. It is simply affirmed that the intelligibility of the Veda is natural and undeniable.⁶⁷ The aim of all Sāṅkhyan thought is the achievement of discriminative knowledge so that the real separation of puruṣa from prakṛti can be realized and liberation from ignorance achieved. This truth, however, cannot be known from verbal authority or inference but must be directly discerned as an immediate intuition or perception.⁶⁸

⁶³S. Chatterjee, The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1965, p. 320.

⁶⁴Sāṅkhyan Aphorisms, Bk. V., Aph. 51.

⁶⁵Ibid., Bk. V., Aph. 45-50.

⁶⁶Ibid., Bk. I, Aph. 62 and Bk. V, Aph. 50.

⁶⁷Ibid., Bk. V, Aph. 43 and 44. ⁶⁸Ibid., Bk. I, Aph. 58, 59.

Yoga adopts the Sāṅkhyan metaphysics with its three pramāṇas of perception, inference and verbal testimony,⁶⁹ but in Yoga the primary concern is the achievement of a practical psychological technique by which the liberation of the puruṣa (as described by Sāṅkhya) can be achieved. Verbal testimony, here referred to as āgama, is defined as "a thing which has been seen or inferred by a trustworthy person is mentioned by word in order that his knowledge may pass over to some other person".⁷⁰ In Vācaspati's gloss the observation is made that according to this definition the teachings of Manu and other sages would not be judged as āgama since they speak of things neither seen nor inferred. But this objection is refuted by noting that as long as such a teaching has been disclosed in the Veda, it is āgama, for all of the Veda was perceived by its original speaker -- Īśvara. Truth (satya) is described as occurring when word and thought are in accord with the facts that have been seen, heard and inferred. Speech is uttered for the purpose of transferring one's knowledge to another. True speech can only be employed for the good of others and not for their injury.⁷¹

Perhaps the most noticeable difference between the Yoga and Sāṅkhya Schools is the high place accorded to Īśvara by the former. When the unique universal and eternal superiority, claimed for Īśvara, is challenged, it is interesting to note that the authority of the sacred teachings (śāstra) is invoked to prove the contention.

⁶⁹ Yoga Sūtras, I:7.

⁷⁰ Ibid., Bhāṣya, trans. by J. H. Wood.

⁷¹ Ibid., II:30.

And when the authority of the scriptures is questioned, a circular argument results:

The authority [of the śāstra] is the supremacy of His Universal Essence [Īśvara's sattva]. These two, the supremacy and the sacred teaching, exist in the Universal Essence of Īśvara eternally related to each other. For this reason does it become possible that He is ever free, and ever the Lord.⁷²

Vāchaspati's gloss attempts to overcome objections to the circularity of the argument by stating that what the sacred teachings reveal is not a cause and effect relationship but the true correspondence which has existed beginninglessly between the word expressing a meaning (vācaka) and the thing expressed (vācya). The self-evident validity of this perfect correspondence between vācaka and vācya constitutes āgama or true śabda pramāṇa, and is made possible because of the purity of Īśvara's sattva. The śāstra, which includes not only the revealed word (śruti) but also the remembered writings of the tradition (smṛti), is held to both give expression to Īśvara's sattva and to have its existence in it. It is in this way that the śāstra is taken to be the authoritative distinguishing characteristic of Īśvara.⁷³

Yoga elucidates this conception of Īśvara by emphasizing that in Īśvara the seed of omniscience is present in its utmost excellence. By inference it is shown that our process of knowing the supersensuous as it arises out of the past, future or present, either collectively or individually, is possible only through the āgama -- the verbalization of

⁷² Ibid., I:24; Bhāṣya, trans. by Rāma Prasāda.

⁷³ Ibid., Tīkā.

Īśvara's omniscience, which he has given to us only because of his compassion.⁷⁴ This same Īśvara, in his omniscience, is the teacher (guru) of the ancient rsis, with whom he differs in that they are limited by time while he is not.⁷⁵ There is one word which when spoken connotes Īśvara with all his power for omniscience. That is the pranava or the sacred syllable AUM.⁷⁶ In his commentary on this sūtra Vyāsa raises many thorny questions regarding the nature of language. In answer to the question as to whether the relationship between the word and the meaning signified is conventional or inherent, it is stated that the relationship is inherent and self-manifesting. The conventional activity of Īśvara is only for the purpose of manifesting this meaning which is already inherently existing. In other creations, too, this same inherent relation between the word and its meaning existed.⁷⁷ Vāchaspati's gloss explains the intended meaning as follows:

All words have the capability of meaning objects of all forms. Their relation with objects of all forms must, therefore, be inherent. And the convention of Īśvara is the determining factor and the shower thereof....⁷⁸

According to the Yoga School Īśvara or God repeatedly recreates this same convention in each new creation -- it is in this sense that the āgamic

⁷⁴ Ibid., I:25; Bhāṣya and Tīkā.

⁷⁵ Ibid., I:26.

⁷⁶ Yoga Sūtras I:27.

⁷⁷ Ibid., Bhāṣya.

⁷⁸ Ibid., Tīkā, trans. by Rāma Prasāda.

words are said to be eternal (but not independently eternal as is held by the Mīmāṃsā school). And all of the above, says Yoga, can only be known through the authority of śabda pramāṇa or the āgama itself.

Patañjali, having defined the word as possessing inherent power to express meaning, then describes how the yogin is to repeat the pranāva (AUM) with the result that the habitual consciousness of the yogin more and more comes to approximate the manifestation of the syllable — Īśvara's pure and omniscient sattva. The devotee who is diligent in this devotion not only achieves thereby complete clarity regarding the meaning of all words, but also receives grace from Īśvara, who aids the yogin in the attainment of his yogic trance (samādhi) and its end goal.⁷⁹ Yoga differentiates between the quality of knowledge resulting from śabda and that resulting from samādhi. Since words of scripture are based upon concepts which take note only of the general characteristics of things, they can never take one to the heart of reality. The same is true of inference and perception which can only know things in their gross forms. Only by intense practice of samādhi can the gross obstructions of ordinary consciousness be rooted out and the new consciousness, in which all things are known in their essences, become established.⁸⁰ Such yogic consciousness can tell by its superior perception the inherent meaning of any word and whether a particular usage of a word is in accord with its true meaning.⁸¹ By this kind of yogic perception of the inherent

⁷⁹ Ibid., I:28.

⁸⁰ S. N. Dasgupta, Yoga Philosophy. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1930, p. 344.

⁸¹ Yoga Sūtras I:42 and 43.

meaning of words there arises the intuitive knowledge of the cries of all living beings.⁸²

Mīmāṃsā maintains that śabda pramāṇa is a valid and independent means of knowledge of the supersensuous.⁸³ Śabda (which here stands for the Vedic word) is the chief pramāṇa for Mīmāṃsā, since it is the sole means for knowing injunctions and prohibitions (dharma).⁸⁴ The word, its meaning or denotation and the relationship between these two are all judged to be inborn, eternal, and therefore not subject to creation by any person (e.g., God).⁸⁵ When words come from human sources, there are many reasons why the validity or truth of the words may well be doubted (e.g., trustworthiness of the speaker, his source of information, etc.). But if a word does not come from a human source it is not open to such defects and there can be no doubt regarding its impersonal truth. Thus the Veda is held to be impersonal, eternal and infallible with regard to all that is supersensuous. However, an objection is raised against this natural view of language. If what has been said above holds true then each word, by virtue of its "inborn meaning", should be understood by everyone the very first time it is heard. Now clearly this is not what happens in experience. When a word is heard for the first time no such inborn relationship as the Mīmāṃsā proposes is cognized. It is only when we have heard a word several times that we come to know its meaning. Therefore,

⁸² Ibid., III:17.

⁸³ Shabara Bhāṣya as translated and quoted by Ganganatha Jha, "Purva-Mīmāṃsā in Its Sources". Varanasi: Banaras Hindu University, 1964, p. 97.

⁸⁴ Ibid., Sūtra 5.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 98.

the nature of the relationship between the word and its meaning must be conventional and not natural.

Śabara replies to this objection by a detailed examination of the nature of śabda. First the word is described by Śabara as a verbal unit composed of a number of letters. For example, the word gauh (which denotes cow) is the verbal unit made up of the letters g, au and h. In experience people understand "word" to mean the vocable whole which is apprehended by the ear -- in this case the verbal unit composed of the letters g, au and h. But, it may be asked, if the meaning of the word is said to come from the composite whole, how is it that these three letters which are individually uttered by the speaker and individually strike the ear of the hearer -- how can these individually spoken and perceived letters suddenly be cognized as a whole so that the meaning of the word (the composite letter-unit) is understood?⁸⁶ Śabara answers this objection, and states the Mīmāṃsā position as follows:

What happens is that each component letter, as it is uttered, leaves an impression behind, and what brings about the cognition of the denotation of the word is the last component letter along with the impressions of each of the preceding component letters. In actual experience, the composite word-unit is never found to be anything entirely different from the component letters; hence there can be no 'word' apart from the component letters.⁸⁷

Having defended his contention that śabda is a verbal unit

⁸⁶ Śabara-Bhāṣya, op. cit., p. 99. This objection cited by Śabara is put forward by the Grammarian School, whose Sphota Theory is examined in Section III of this Chapter.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 100.

composed of a number of letters, Śabara then asks exactly what it is that is denoted by the word -- the universal (e.g., the class of 'cow') or the individual (e.g., a particular cow possessing unique characteristics)? This question arises because in experience when the word 'cow' is spoken, it brings about the idea of the universal or class character which is common to all cows, and yet at the same time "in all actions resulting from the use of the word, it is the individual cow that comes in".⁸⁸ Following Jaimini, Śabara contends it is the class or universal, and not the individual, that is denoted by the word.⁸⁹ To sustain his position, Śabara has to answer the objections of the Individualist who maintains that if the word denoted the universal: no action would be possible (since all action requires some individual agent); there would be no words expressive of qualities as subsisting in substances (e.g., the 'six' in six cows); and there could be no injunction referring to "another" such as is given in the Vedic text, "another animal should be brought in".⁹⁰ In response to the first point Śabara says that as words denote universals and through these also individuals, therefore there is no dissociation from action.⁹¹ For example, in the injunction "Sprinkle water on the rice", since it is not possible to sprinkle water over the universal denoted by the

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Mīmāṃsā Sūtras of Jaimini and the Bhāṣya of Śabara, I.3.30-35, as translated by G. Jha.

⁹⁰ Ibid., Sūtra 32.

⁹¹ Ibid., Sūtra 35.

word 'rice', the universal is used here for the purpose of qualifying the object of the action of sprinkling water. Śābara argues in the same fashion regarding the second point. Words expressive of qualities (e.g., 'six' in six cows) are seen as primarily referring to the universal in that what is denoted is simply the amount of that universal (i.e., cowness) that is required. As for the injunction regarding "another" animal, what is indicated here, says Śābara is a substitute for the one which has become lost -- thus the primary reference is to the universal (i.e., the "cowness" which remains constant over both animals). So, maintains Śābara, it is clear that words such as "cow", etc., primarily denote classes or Universals, and yet at the same time secondarily refers by implication to the individual possessed of the generic attribute of cowness.⁹² As we shall soon see, the Vedāntists adopt this same viewpoint. The Nyāya School, however, effectively challenges this interpretation by holding that in the meaning of a word three aspects are always present: the universal, the individual, and the formal.

The Mīmāṃsā doctrine of the word as eternal, infallible, and impersonal has aroused much controversy. How, for example, can the word be held to be eternally unchanging when it is not always present in our consciousness; when it seems to cease or grow silent and to require human effort for its production again; and when we hear the same word uttered in varying forms of dialect, accent, or loudness? Śābara replies to such questions by saying that what is brought about

⁹² Ibid., p. 90.

by human effort is only the making present or manifestation of the already existing word.⁹³ When the sound of the spoken word is no longer heard, this is not due to any destruction of the word itself; rather, it is a case of non-perception of the word which remains eternally present. And when we think of the great variety of accents, dialects, etc., that exist, it is evident that only on the assumption of an eternally existing and unchanging word could communication between individuals take place. Śabara concludes that all this reasoning only supports the Vedic texts which speak of the word as eternal.⁹⁴

The Mīmāṃsā's over-riding concern is to safeguard the infallibility of the Vedic injunction as the sole means of knowing dharma. The argument this far has shown how words, their meanings and the relation between words and their meanings are all eternal. But a further objection could still be raised by saying that when sentences are considered (and the whole of the Veda is in sentence form), neither the sentence nor its meaning, nor the relationship between the two is eternal. This is the case in that since the word-meanings have been shown to be eternal, they must therefore also be mutually exclusive and unable to enter into relation with one another. And in the absence of any relation the words cannot be held to form a sentence. To make things more difficult, experience shows that sentences are man-made, imperfect and incapable of conveying their meaning to someone on first

⁹³ Ibid., Sūtra 12.

⁹⁴ Ibid., Sūtra 23.

hearing.⁹⁵ In opposing such a viewpoint Śabara argues that the sentence cannot have any separate meaning entirely apart from the meanings of the words composing it. The meaning of the sentence is comprehended only on the comprehension of the meanings of the component words, and does not result from a distinct unit in the shape of 'a group of words' (i.e., the sentence conceived as something over and above the words).⁹⁶ The sentence can have no independent meaning apart from the meanings of the words composing it. What happens in the sentence is that each of the component words ceases from activity after having expressed its own meaning, and "the meanings of the words thus comprehended bring about the comprehension of the meaning of the sentence as a whole. Consequently the nature of the sentence is no different from that already shown to be the case for words — it too is eternal. In answer to the charge that the sentence cannot be eternal because it is man-made, Śabara says that while this may be true in regard to sentences about ordinary things in this world, it cannot be true of sentences in the Veda which relate to supersensuous things and are authorless."⁹⁷

Having safeguarded the eternality of the sentence as being identical with the eternality of the word, Śabara offers an interesting thought as to how the unified meaning of the sentence results from the comprehension of the meanings of the component words. In sūtra 25 it is stated, "In the sentence there is only mention of words with definite

⁹⁵ G.V.Devasthali, Mīmāṃsā: The Vākya-Śāstra of Ancient India. Bombay: Booksellers Publishing Co., 1959, pp. 202-3; and Kumārila's presentation of the Pūrva-paksin position "On the Sentence", Śloka-vārtika, trans. by G. Jha, pp. 486-504.

⁹⁶ Sabara-Bhāṣya, op. cit., Sūtra 25.

⁹⁷ Ibid., Sūtra 26.

denotations along with a word denoting action, and the meaning of the sentence is based upon that".⁹⁸ The idea here is that the direct denotation of each word -- which consists of the universal -- is useless in itself, but becomes useful (as a Vedic injunction requiring action) only when it is qualified by the word in the sentence denoting action. This concept is given full formalization in the Prabhākara view which holds that only the injunction of an action is expressive of meaning and hence valid. Prabhākara holds that words with imperative terminations express the Vedic injunction directly, while other words (e.g., the name of the act enjoined, the person enjoined, etc.) denote things related to that injunction. Thus the true meaning of the Vedic sentences is always found in the injunction and prohibition of action. As to how knowledge of the meaning of such words and sentences originally comes about, Prabhākara maintains that people learn the meaning of words only by watching the usage and activity of older people. One person voices a set of words to another, having the result that the latter person acts in a certain manner. It is clear to the observer, claims Prabhākara, that the words spoken must have been in the form of an injunction to do what the other person has done. If, on the face of it, the words do not appear to lay down any action, then their meaning can be found to depend indirectly upon some injunction.⁹⁹ As we shall soon see, this systematic position regarding the meaning of sentences (technically called the Anvitābhidhāna Theory) results in two important conflicts. It goes directly against

⁹⁸Trans. by G. Jha.

⁹⁹Prabhākara's view on the meaning of the sentence as summarized by G. Jha, op. cit., p. 120.

the Vedānta view that the meaning of the most important Vedic sentences is found not in the laying down of something to be done, but in the pointing out of certain self-evident truths (e.g., the being of Brahman). Secondly, the emphases on the meaning of sentences being learned from the usage of older people opens the way for the objection "how can this be regarded as 'eternal' when it is based upon the usage of people?" This objection will be examined when we consider the Nyāya position.

Even within the Mīmāṃsā School itself there is no unanimity on the question of how the eternality of the sentence is to be defended. Kumārila, in his Śloka-vārtika, opposes the Anvitābhīdhāna theory of Prabhākara according to which the meanings of words can be known only when they occur in injunctive sentences -- the meaning of words and sentences can only be understood when seen as related to something which has to be done. In objecting to this view Kumārila points out that even though we only encounter words when they are functioning in a sentence, we are still able to understand the individual meanings of words when taken separately. If this were not so a word learned in one context could not be applied in another context. And the isolated understanding of words must be possible if the experience we have of recognizing the same word in a variety of sentences is to be explained. According to Kumārila, all of this is quite understandable when we view the meaning of the sentence as a linking together of the individual meanings expressed by its words. The sentence has no meaning of its own, independent of the words:

Inasmuch as the meaning of a sentence is always comprehended in accordance with the meaning of the words (composing the sentence), -- the fact of the sentence having a qualified (particular) signification cannot point to the fact of the sentence being inde-

pendent (of the words).

For us, even in the signification of the sentence, the words (composing it) do not lose their significance (potentiality); and it is only because the direct function of the words ends in the signification of their own individual denotations, that we hold the meaning of the sentence to be deduced from the meanings of the words (and not from the words directly).¹⁰⁰

In this view it is solely from the connection among the independently expressed word-meanings, that the meaning of the sentence arises. On hearing a sentence, we first have an understanding of the separate meanings of the words one after another, then these word-meanings are related on the basis of syntactic expectancy (ākāṅkṣā), fitness (yogyatā) and proximity (samīdhi) so that the meaning of the sentence as a whole is produced. The process is described as follows: "The individual word-meanings are remembered separately until all the words are heard; then there is a simultaneous cognition of the sentence-meaning in which all the word meanings are properly related to one another on the basis of ākāṅkṣā, yogyatā and samīdhi".¹⁰¹ The resulting sentence-meaning is something more than just the sum of the word-meanings. The individual word-meanings are verbal (śabda) since they are directly produced by the words. The sentence-meaning, however, is not produced directly by the words and therefore is not directly śabda. But neither is it non-verbal (aśabda). It is verbal in that the intention of the speaker (causally operating via ākāṅkṣā, yogyatā and samīdhi), which is conveyed by the words, has not yet

¹⁰⁰ Kumāṛila, Ślokaṁvārtikā, trans. by Ganganatha Jha. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1909, pp. 527-8.

¹⁰¹ K. Kunjunni Raja, Indian Theories of Meaning. Adyar: Adyar Library and Research Center, 1963, p. 208.

ceased to function. Thus the words are seen by Kumārila to be the indirect cause of the sentence-meaning.¹⁰² The unified sentence-meaning is referred to by different terms: sentence-meaning (vākyārtha), association (samsarga) of the word-meanings and the purport or intention of the speaker (tātparyārtha).¹⁰³ This view of Kumārila, called the Abhihitānvaya Theory, defends the eternality of the sentence by showing how its meaning arises from the juxtaposition of words, the eternality of which has been proved previously.

On one point the Mīmāṃsā School markedly differs from all others in the Brāhmanical tradition -- its complete rejection of yogic intuition. The Mīmāṃsakas deny the possibility of omniscience of any kind, either eternal as of God, or as a result of samādhi as described by Patañjali. After reviewing the Mīmāṃsā arguments in support of denial, Gopinath Kaviraj finds them "to be no more than the stale stock-in-trade arguments with which the common empirical sense of man seeks to overthrow the dictates of the higher mystic consciousness".¹⁰⁴ He suggests the real reason behind this denial is their conception of śabda as eternal, impersonal, self-revealed and the source of all knowledge.

¹⁰² Sloka-vārtika, op. cit., pp. 527-528. According to Prabhākara's theory, on the other hand, each word, as it is being uttered, contributes to the meaning of the sentence which is revealed step by step, becoming clearer and clearer with the utterance of the subsequent words.

¹⁰³ K. Kunjunni Raja, loc. cit.

¹⁰⁴ Gopinath Kaviraj, The Doctrine of Pratibhā in Indian Philosophy, op. cit., pp. 120-121.

With this high conception of śabda, not only would it be superfluous to posit a personal omniscient being, but such knowing via personality (rather than by śabda) would open the door to doubting śabda since personality is a limitation which inevitably results in the relativity of consciousness, and the impossibility of omniscience and eternality.¹⁰⁵

Vedānta also accepts śabda pramāṇa as a valid and independent means of knowledge of the supersensuous.¹⁰⁶ As in the Mīmāṃsā, the Vedānta school holds that the word, its meaning, and the relationship between the two is eternal and therefore not subject to creation by any person. Vedānta also agrees that śabda pramāṇa is vitally important in that it enables one to achieve mokṣa (freedom or release from suffering). The capacity of śabda to give such "saving knowledge" assumes both the immediate apprehension of the meanings of words in a sentence, and the ability to understand the purport of a sentence. The former requires the absence of ignorance or delusion which would obstruct the apprehension of the knowledge inherent in śabda. The understanding of the purport of a sentence requires both concentrated study and the application of inference as developed by the Mīmāṃsā school. The six characteristics of purport are: the harmony of the initial and concluding passages, repetition, novelty, fruitfulness, glorification by eulogistic passages or condemnation by deprecatory passages and intelligibility in the light of reasoning.¹⁰⁷ When the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Vedānta Paribhāṣā, trans. by S.S.S.Sastri. Adyar: Adyar Library and Research Center, 1942, Cp. 4, pp. 65-88.

¹⁰⁷ T.M.P.Mahadevan, The Philosophy of Advaita. Madras: Ganesh and Co., 1969, p. 57.

purport of a sentence is both uncontradicted by other pramāṇas and unknown through other pramāṇas, then that sentence is held to be śabda pramāṇa or a valid verbal revelation. From this viewpoint, a false statement results not because of any inadequacy in the words themselves, but because the delusions or ignorance of the person speaking act as an obstacle which prevents the intrinsic truth of the words from being cognized. In the case of a reliable person's statement, however, there are no such obstacles present, and the inherent meaning of the word is clearly cognized by the listener. On this theoretical basis, if it can be shown that there are certain sentences lacking authors, then the knowledge which they give will be free from error. Thus the thesis of all the Brāhmanical schools that the Veda is authorless and eternal. In cases where some mantra is said to have been composed by a particular ṛṣi, this does not mean that the ṛṣi in question created the mantra but rather that the ṛṣi himself has been generated from the words of the Veda. In his commentary on the Brahma Sūtra, Śaṅkara says that at the (relative) beginning of each creation (kalpa), God, who is self-illuminated, creates Brahmā and delivers the Vedas to him in the same form as they existed in previous creations. With this power Brahmā then gives to all the ṛṣis who had existed previously their same names and their same vision of the vedic mantras. Just as the various seasons of the year return in succession, so the same seers and Vedas appear again in each different creation cycle, so that the Vedas of the present are equal in name and form to those of the past.¹⁰⁸ It is in this way that Vedānta maintains the

¹⁰⁸ Śaṅkara, The Vedānta Sūtras, trans. by G. Thibaut. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1962, 5.B. I.3.30, pp. 211-216.

impersonality and eternality of the Veda, while at the same time suggesting that God is somehow the eternal omniscient author. The argument is similar to the one used by Yoga in explaining the eternal co-existence of Īśvara and the Veda. Various explanations are offered by Vedānta scholars.

Vācaspati argues that both Veda and God are beginningless, but that God is the ultimate source. Amalananda explains it as follows: a lamp may be lit by Devadatta, but its ability to give light is its own and not due to Devadatta. Similarly, although God is the cause of the Veda, its validity is intrinsic. Referring to the Chāndogya Upanisad (4.15.1) Śāṅkara argues that the Veda itself states that it is but breath of the great Being. As easily as a man exhales, so God produced the Veda, as if in play. Due to its self-evident omniscience and omnipotence, nothing but Brahman can be inferred as its cause. 109

Śāṅkara has dwelt upon this issue at some length. He carefully distinguishes between "evolution of the world from Brahman" and "evolution of the world from śabda". Brahman, he maintains, is the material cause of the world while śabda is only an efficient cause. Just as experience shows us that in doing something we first remember the significant words and then act according to those words, so it was that before creation the Vedic words became manifest in the mind of Prajāpati, the creator, and that he created things corresponding to those words. 110

109 These arguments and many others on this point are summarized by K. S. Murty, Reason and Revelation in Advaita Vedānta. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959, pp. 40-50.

110 Vedānta Sūtras, op. cit., I.3.28, p. 204.

But while śabda is seen as the efficient cause of creation, Śaṅkara takes us a step further to the material cause and originating will which lies behind śabda -- the mysterious desire of Brahman to get into diversity from unity was the direct cause of creation.¹¹¹ Or as a contemporary Vedāntist puts it, creation occurs due to a "free phenomenalization" of Brahman.¹¹²

In agreement with the Mīmāṃsā, Śaṅkara not only maintains that śabda is eternal, but that the connection between the word and what it denotes is also eternal: "...we observe the eternity of the connection between words such as cow, and so on, and the things denoted by them".¹¹³ In the same passage Śaṅkara also accepts the Mīmāṃsā argument that it is the universal, rather than the particular, with which the words are eternally connected. Like the Mīmāṃsā, Śaṅkara argues that meaning results from the comprehension of an aggregate of letters by the buddhi, and not from the manifestation of some mysterious sphota by the group of letters as is argued by the Grammarian school.¹¹⁴ As this debate will provide the focus for Chapter Three of this study, the issue will not be developed any further at this point.

While discussing the Mīmāṃsā school, two opposing theories regarding the nature of the meaning resulting from sentences were noted. The Prābhākaras argued, like many modern pragmatists or instrumentalists,

¹¹¹ Chāndogya Up. 4.2.3. and Vedānta Sūtras 1.1.5.

¹¹² T. R. V. Murti, "Unpublished Lectures on Vedānta", McMaster University, Winter, 1971/72.

¹¹³ Vedānta Sūtras, op. cit., 1.3.28, p. 202.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 1.3.30, p. 210.

that the words of a sentence necessarily take their meaning from the verb or the action required from the subject (the Anvitābhīdhāna Theory). Śaṅkara,¹¹⁵ and his notable disciple Prakāśātman,¹¹⁶ argue against this theory. They reject the claim that "doing" or the verb is the entire meaning of the sentence and that the performance of injunctions contains the entire meaning and purpose of the Veda. This view is antagonistic to the essence of the Advaita Vedānta, which champions the Vedic texts holding reality to be attainable through knowledge rather than action, and philosophically holding the absolute to be "being" rather than "becoming".¹¹⁷ Although there is no complete agreement among Vedāntists on this point, the majority seem to follow Śaṅkara and Prakāśātman and side with the other Mīmāṃsā view (Kumārila's interpretation) that the words of a sentence present only their primary isolated meanings. Those meanings then combine under the influence of factors such as expectancy, compatibility, proximity and purport, to produce the particular synthesized meaning of the sentence. According to this view (the Abhihitānvaya Theory) nouns as well as verbs have eternal denotations, and, therefore statements of fact, which offer no injunctions, are still significant in that they can indicate the state of reality and thus dispell illusions. Applying this approach the Vedāntists finds that all śabda and all Veda has the non-dual Brahman for its

¹¹⁵ Vedānta Sūtras, op. cit., 1.1.4, pp. 36-45.

¹¹⁶ Prakāśātman, Śābdanirnaya. Trivandrum: Trivandrum Sanskrit Series, No. 53, Govt. Press, 1917, pp. 50 ff.

¹¹⁷ D. M. Datta, The Six Ways of Knowing. Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1960, p. 302.

purport.¹¹⁸ Initially śabda and Veda are not known like this because of ignorance (avidyā). Avidyā, however, is not ultimately real and its obstructing or veiling effect may be removed by the achieving of knowledge through the great sentences of the Veda (the mahāvākyas). In opposition to the Mīmāṃsā school, which holds that such sentences regarding Brahman are secondary to injunctions, Śaṅkara maintains that the Vedānta sentences are ultimate since through them comes the realization of the identity of Brahman and one's true Self (Ātman). In this way these sentences are held to give knowledge which is unobtainable through any of the other pramānas such as perception and inference. Therefore, they are said to be independently authoritative.¹¹⁹ "That Thou art" is one such great text which teaches that the sense of "I" everyone possesses is, in its true nature, identical with Brahman. This mahāvākya is judged to be the purport of the Vedas and therefore the foundation for Advaita Vedānta.¹²⁰ Once this revelation of absolute oneness is achieved, maintains Śaṅkara, śabda and the Vedas will have been superseded since śabda pramāna is meaningful only when one is in the bondage of avidyā.¹²¹

All of the above assumes a concept which is repugnant to all of the Mīmāṃsā thinkers. In Sanskrit it is variously referred to as "pratibhā", "prajñā", "anubhava" and "śabda-aparokṣya".¹²² In the

¹¹⁸ Śabdanirnaya, op. cit., p. 69.

¹¹⁹ Vedānta Sūtras, op. cit., 1.1.4.

¹²⁰ K. S. Murty, op. cit., pp. 88-98.

¹²¹ Vedānta Sūtras, op. cit., 4.1.3.

¹²² Śabdanirnaya, op. cit., defines śabda-aparokṣya as "the immediacy of śabda knowledge", pp. 71-72.

Vedānta view of śabda all these terms refer to the experience of an immediate conscious communion with the Supreme Being or Brahman which coincides with the removal of the veil of ignorance by the mahāvākyas.¹²³ "That Thou art", for example, teaches one to recognize the truth which is inherently given. Just as a prince kidnapped by robbers in his childhood does not know that he is a prince, but realizes himself to be a prince as soon as he is told, so also an individual ego (jīva) realizes himself to be Brahman as soon as he hears the mahāvākya. It is via this kind of immediate intuition that Vedānta believes supersensuous knowledge to be given by śabda pramāṇa. Technical words and proper names are exceptions, however, since their referents are neither eternal nor universally known.

Within the Vedānta school itself there is some difference of interpretation in regard to just how this intuition of word meaning occurs. For example, Prakāśtman says that the word meanings are immediate from the start. Thinking or enquiry into the purport of the sentence (adhyāsa) is only required to remove the obstacles of avidyā, and does not result in any qualitative change in the meaning which is inherently present from the beginning. On the other hand Vācaspati Miśra regards śabda pramāṇa as capable of generating only mediate knowledge. The mahāvākyas are first perceived as mediate knowledge and only through continued adhyāsa does the sentence meaning become immediate. In his view there is a qualitative change in the meaning achieved. This interpretation is supported by appeal to scriptures such as the Chāndogya Upaniṣad where Indra, after knowing mediately

¹²³ Gopinath Kaviraj, op. cit., pp. 116-120; and K. S. Murty, op. cit., p. 103.

the nature of the self as indicated in the text, "That self which is devoid of defect, rid of ravaging effect of age",¹²⁴ etc., approached his teacher four times with the intention of acquiring the intuitive experience of the self.¹²⁵ Such differences of opinion regarding the way in which śabda achieves immediacy do not detract from the main thrust of the Vedānta contention -- that the pluralistic world of everyday experience cannot be consistently explained without admitting one underlying unity which transcends all diversities, and that this unity can only be known through the intuition of the meaning of the mahāvākyas (reports of the direct realization of that fundamental unity by the *ṛsis*). These authoritative sentences will first be perceived as conveying only mediate knowledge, but as one undergoes the fourfold mental and moral discipline (i.e., discrimination between the eternal and non-eternal, giving up desires for the enjoyment of the fruits of actions either here or hereafter, acquisition of powers of concentration and endurance, and ardent desire for liberation), these truths known from śabda pramāṇa attain immediacy (*aparokṣatva*). This process is illustrated by the story of the ten persons who, having crossed a river, count themselves. Every time the counter forgets to count himself and finds only nine. They mourn the loss of their tenth comrade. The error is corrected by a passerby who counts all, and tells the counter, "You are the tenth". This mediate knowledge from śabda afterwards becomes immediate knowledge when, counting again and including himself, the counter comes to realize

¹²⁴ - Chāndogya Up. 8.7.1.

¹²⁵ - Vacaspati's view as presented by T. M. P. Mahadevan, op. cit., pp. 58-59. This is the difference between the Vivarana and Bhamati schools.

"I am the tenth".¹²⁶ In a similar way the earnest seeker perceives from the mahāvākyas that Brahman is the one reality in all outer things and in the inner self, and achieves an immediate consciousness of "I am Brahman". Once this revelation is achieved, maintains Śāṅkara, then śabda and the Veda will have been superseded, since śabda is meaningful only when one is in the bondage of avidyā.¹²⁷ Although it is the only pramāṇa by which the liberation of absolute truth may be achieved, śabda, even as the mahāvākyas, is ultimately seen to be a part of worldly phenomenal diversity (māyā) which must be negated if the ultimate absolute unity of Brahman is to be realized.¹²⁸ The Mīmāṃsā refusal to accept any kind of pratibhā or immediate intuition was to guard against just such an outcome in which the Vedas could be considered transcendable.

¹²⁶ Vidyāranya, Pañcadaśī, trans. by Swāmī Swāhānanda. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1967, 7:22-27, pp. 239-41.

¹²⁷ Vedānta Sūtras, op. cit., 4.1.3.

¹²⁸ The Advaita Vedānta central-tenet of the non-duality of Brahman raises many thorny issues when considered in relation to śabda. For example, śabda is held by Śāṅkara to be eternal. Thus it would seem that there are two eternal entities co-existing, Brahman and śabda, but this is unacceptable when Brahman is defined as "absolute non-duality". Then again it is held that Brahman alone is real and that truth is made known by śabda. Now, is śabda which is evidence for Brahman real or unreal? If it is real, then there is a reality other than Brahman. If it is unreal, then Brahman which is its content cannot be real. For the Advaitin such dilemmas are resolved by holding that, on the phenomenal side, there are various levels in our perception of truth. Ultimately, however, non-dual Brahman is the only absolute, and the unreality of śabda is accepted. For further discussion of these scholastic arguments, see D. M. Datta, K. S. Murty, and T. M. P. Mahadevan.

II. THE NATURALISTIC TRADITION

In opposition to the high evaluation given language in the Brāhmanical tradition, the Naturalistic tradition tends to view language as an arbitrary and conventional tool. The validity of śabda and Veda is denied as a source of knowledge. Professor T. R. V. Murti finds the Cārvāka and earlier Buddhism to be representatives of this traditions, while the empiricistic Jaina and Nyāya schools occupy a somewhat intermediary position.¹²⁹

Like the Brāhmanical viewpoint, the Naturalistic tradition may be traced back to the Upaniṣads and early hymns of the Vedas. In his review of the Naturalistic tradition in Indian thought, Riepe finds in the Rg Veda "some important assertion of a naturalistic approach to life".¹³⁰ He admits, however, that there is no strong case to be made for the presence of a presystematic naturalism in the Vedas. But he does find evidence that attitudes of skepticism, hedonism and materialism were present in hymns such as the "Hymn of Creation" (Rg Veda X.129), and maintained in the Upaniṣads by sages such as Uddālaka, the great opponent of the ṛṣi Yājñavalkya. Riepe feels that Uddālaka may be dated at 640-610 B.C. and is likely earlier than the Cārvāka or any of the first systematizations of a naturalistic school in India. He describes Uddālaka's position as follows:

The point of view represented by Uddālaka appears to have been that of the Breath-Wind Magicians

¹²⁹ T. R. V. Murti, Some Thoughts on the Indian Philosophy of Language, op. cit., p. 8.

¹³⁰ Dale Riepe, The Naturalistic Tradition in Indian Thought. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1961, p. 26.

who held, as opposed to their idealistic opponents, that the breath rather than thought or words was the most important element of the human being: briefly, a distinction between holding stuff rather than thought to be primary. Of such Breath-Wind Magicians who foreshadow the later clear-cut naturalistic outlook, there are at least eighteen among the one hundred thinkers mentioned in the oldest Upanisads.¹³¹

The step from the early naturalism represented by Uddālaka to the Cārvāka school is of considerable importance since "in the Cārvāka we have the first and possibly only unquestionable materialistic system in early India".¹³²

Cārvāka

The Cārvāka school rejects śabda pramāṇa as completely false and accepts only the pramāṇa of perception as producing true knowledge. Sacred scriptures, religious injunctions, etc., are all considered useless. Everything is held to be derived from material elements (mahābhūta) which are judged to possess their own immanent life force (svabhāva). Intelligence, thought and words are all seen as derived from these elements. There is no God, no supernatural, no immortal soul, and the only aim of life is to get the maximum of pleasure.¹³³

Śabda pramāṇa is rejected by the Cārvāka on the grounds that it must first be established by other verbal testimony resulting in an infinite regress unless at some point there is an appeal to direct sensory experience. In addition to this logical reason for rejection,

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 28.

¹³² Ibid., p. 32.

¹³³ Mādhava Āchārya, Sarva-Darśana-Saṅgraha, trans. by E. B. Cowell and A. E. Gough. Vanarasi: Chowkamba Sanskrit Series Office, 6th Ed., 1961, pp. 2-11.

Carvāka also holds that śabda is unacceptable on epistemological grounds -- that it is impossible for perceptual knowledge to be communicated.

The argument offered here is that a man knows only what he perceives, and not what someone else says he has perceived.¹³⁴ In this view the only referents are material, and direct sensory perception of such material referents is the only valid knowledge of reality.

Early Buddhism

Whereas for the Cārvākas sense perception was the only valid knowledge and pleasure produced by sensation the only goal, Buddha taught that "sense knowledge is considered to be inextricably bound up with feeling and desire, and hence is to be eliminated as far as possible because by its nature it is a stumbling block to the ultimate aim of the Buddha, the elimination of craving through understanding or illumination".¹³⁵ For the early Buddhists (e.g., the Theravādins) intuition is the highest source of knowledge. This intuition (prajñā) is defined as "knowledge of things as they are in themselves as distinguished from what they appear to us".¹³⁶ Such knowledge is considered to be the only means to freedom or salvation. This Buddhist concept seems virtually parallel to the Yoga concept of intuition which was discussed earlier. Prajñā is frequently conceived as an omniscient eye. Buddha, for example, was said to have gained such a divine eye on the memorable night of his overthrow of the demon Māra. Through it he saw the entire knowable

¹³⁴Riepe, op. cit., p. 66.

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 127.

¹³⁶The Doctrine of Pratibhā in Indian Philosophy, op. cit., p. 122.

reality as if it were reflected in a clear mirror.¹³⁷ Only such knowledge gained through one's own experience of intuition is considered to be valid. Sense experiences, words, inferences, etc., are worthwhile only as they help one to overcome the obstacles of ordinary experience, and achieve *prajñā* for oneself. But, in themselves, *śabda*, sense perception, inference, etc., cannot be considered to give knowledge.

It is for this reason that Buddha rejected the Brāhmanical claims as to the authority of the Veda and its status as *pramāṇa*. The vedic *ṛsis*, he claimed, had no direct personal knowledge of the truth of the Veda.¹³⁸ But, as was pointed out in the previous section of this chapter, such personal knowledge is precisely what was claimed by the *ṛsis*. This contention of Buddha, therefore, was virtually a denial that the *ṛsis* were competent persons whose testimony could be trusted. Aside from this, it seems clear that Buddha's intention was not to discredit all *śabda* as incapable of conveying truth, but to show that the truth or falsity of any statement is to be judged by factors other than its claim to be reliable report, self-evident, or authoritative revelation. As Jayatilleke puts it, Buddha's criticism "seems to presuppose that it is possible to determine the veracity of all the assertions by other means than that of revelation, etc., in so far as it is stated that what is accepted as reliable may prove in fact to be true or false".¹³⁹ In spite of the fact that his followers tended to make

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹³⁸ K. N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1963, p. 183.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

Buddha's words into the very kind of absolute authority he was rejecting, it seems clear that Buddha's view was that his own teachings and the path to freedom contained therein were only to be accepted provisionally by the disciple until found to be truth in his own direct experience (prajñā). Jayatilleke points out that this approach bears some similarity to the attitude of those sceptics who likewise suspend judgment when confronted with statements which may be true or false, but radically differs from it, "in view of the possibility, positively entertained, of knowing whether these propositions were in fact true or false in this life itself".¹⁴⁰

In general, the thrust of the Buddhist criticism of the Brāhmanical viewpoint seems aimed more towards discrediting the unquestioning acceptance of a handed down tradition, rather than towards the rejection of śabda as having any possibility for truth bearing. Buddha is said to have compared the generations of vedic teachers to a string of blind men clinging one behind the other in succession. Just because a succession of teachers or teaching is unbroken is no guarantee of its truth.¹⁴¹ It is perhaps partly in response to this criticism of the early Buddhists that the Mīmāṃsā school developed the apauruṣeya theory, which makes śabda impersonal, eternal, and therefore free from the corrupting influences of personality and ill-remembered transmission as alleged by the Buddhists. In addition to this there is the Vedānta claim that not only is śabda apauruṣeya but its truth is necessarily realizable by experience (anubhava) in this life if one is to achieve salvation. This

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 194.

further interpretation by Vedānta would seem to satisfy the requirements of Buddha for confirmation in intuition and at the same time safeguard the Brāhmanical claim that śabda (and Veda) is pramāṇa. Buddha's reply to this would likely be that while the study of the Vedas may lead to the intuition of truth, this is not necessarily so. One who does not hear the Veda but follows the path of moral living and inner concentration, as pioneered by Buddha, can have the intuition of truth in the absence of śabda.

It has frequently been suggested that the early Buddhist attitude towards śabda pramāṇa is two-faced: rejecting it in regard to other schools but accepting it in regard to the teachings and omniscience attributed to Buddha. However, after critically reviewing such claims¹⁴² Jayatilleke persuasively concludes:

...The attitude to authority recommended by the Buddha is not contradictory to and is in fact compatible with the attitude recommended by the Buddha towards his own statements...

The sermons to Kalama and Bhaddali...do state that no statements should be accepted on authority because it is possible that such statements may turn out to be either true or false... Where 'a fellow-monk claims the highest knowledge, one should neither accept what he says nor reject it but without acceptance or rejection should question him' in order to test the veracity of his statement...

This is just what Buddha seems to demand from his own hearers regarding his own statements. He does not want his own statements accepted or rejected but seems to demand that they be tested and accepted if found to be true and presumably rejected if they are found to be false.¹⁴³

As suggested earlier, the teachings and path of Buddha are to be

¹⁴² Ibid., pp. 376-401.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 390.

provisionally accepted on faith by the devotee until his own experience leads him to confirm or reject it.

It appears that sometime after the death of Buddha there was an authoritative collection of Buddha's teachings. But "authoritative" here refers to the fact that these are the authentic teachings (against which all other texts claiming to be Buddha's words must be compared), and not to any truth claim of the teachings themselves.¹⁴⁴ The criterion for truth, as it was for the Cārvākas, is direct empirical perception. But where the Buddhists (and, as we shall see, the Jainas) differ from the Cārvākas is that the range of empirical perception is extended into what is usually referred to as the extrasensory realm. And just as the Cārvāka will allow for knowledge to result from inductive inferences on the data of sensory perception, so the Buddhists claim knowledge on the basis of inductive inferences on the data of extrasensory perception.¹⁴⁵ Such extrasensory perceptions are not considered to be miraculous but simply the normal result of the natural development of the mind until the state of pratibhā is achieved.

Jaina

Whereas the Cārvākas and the early Buddhists both deny śabda as an authoritative source of knowledge and therefore may be clearly taken to represent the Naturalistic tradition, Murti points out that in the cases of the Jainas and the Nyāya the same clear-cut distinction cannot be maintained. Within Murti's categorization, the Jaina and Nyāya are placed in intermediary positions between the two traditions.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 401.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 459.

However, because of their more dominant empiricism, they are included under "the Naturalistic tradition" classification for purposes of discussion.¹⁴⁶

According to Jaina epistemology consciousness is the inherent essence of every self. This consciousness is not, as the Cārvākas hold, a mere accidental property arising only under certain conditions. Nor is it a centerless stream of flux, as advocated by the Buddhists, for it is the essence of a continuing individual self or jīva. Consciousness is characterized as being like the sun's light, self-evident, and capable of manifesting all objects unless some obstruction (the physical presence of karmic impurity) prevents it from reaching its object.¹⁴⁷ Once all obstacles are removed the self is omniscient, an achievement which is potential in every self. Body, senses and mind are all constituted by karmas or physical impurities and the self's omniscience is limited by them. On the basis of these assumptions, the Jainas suggest a twofold classification of knowledge into immediate and mediate (aparokṣa and parokṣa).¹⁴⁸ What is ordinarily taken as immediate (e.g., sensuous perception) is held to be merely relatively immediate. Only when the medium of the sense organs is removed does the fully immediate knowledge of the self's inherent knowledge manifest itself. Such a state is one of absolute knowledge or omniscience and

¹⁴⁶T. R. V. Murti, Some Thoughts on the Indian Philosophy of Language, op. cit., p. 8.

¹⁴⁷Chatterjee and Datta, An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, op. cit., p. 86.

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

is called kevala-jñāna. We have seen that this kind of absolute omniscience, while acceptable to the Sāṅkhya, Yoga and Vedānta, is rejected by the Mīmāṃsā on the basis that it exceeds the limits of personal perception and cognition (through the senses and mind as ordinarily known). This Mīmāṃsā objection is bypassed by the Jainas who agree that ordinary knowledge resulting from sense organs and the mind is incapable of omniscience, but that once these physical karmic obstacles are removed the self is capable of knowing all sensory and supra-sensory objects simultaneously so that even the limitations of time and place are superceded.¹⁴⁹

With this background we are now in a position to understand the Jain view of śabda. Śabda is considered pramāṇa but is classed, along with inference, as only mediate or non-perceptual knowledge.¹⁵⁰ The knowledge produced by the word of a reliable person and which is not inconsistent with the evidence of perception is called authority, verbal testimony or śabda. A reliable person is defined as one "who knows the object as it is and describes it as he knows it. He who possesses right knowledge and makes a right judgement is said to be reliable or āpta".¹⁵¹ For these reasons he is taken as "authority" and his word is known as testimony. The testimony of śabda is held

¹⁴⁹ M. L. Mehta, Outlines of Jain Philosophy. Bangalore: Jain Mission Society, 1954, p. 101.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 105.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 113.

by the Jainas to be of two kinds. It is called secular testimony (laukika) when the words come from an ordinary reliable person of the world (e.g., one's father). It is called scriptural testimony (śruta-jñāna) when it proceeds from a self liberated from the bondage of the karmic senses and mind and who is therefore omniscient (e.g., Mahāvīra).¹⁵²

The Jaina Prabhācandra defines a word as an independent aggregate of letters which are dependent on one another.¹⁵³ The way in which a word gives meaning is held to be a result of both its natural capacity for signifying, on the one hand, and the practice of convention, on the other. Regarding the debate as to whether the word denotes the universal or the particular, the Jaina view is that words denote both at the same time. Since objects as they exist are neither universal only nor particular only, so also words denoting objects are not one side only but invoke both aspects together. If, says the Jaina, a word denoted its object in its universal character and lacking any of its particular characteristics, then its object would be unreal since there is no universality without distinctive particular characteristics. Śabda, therefore, denotes both the universal and the particular characteristics of an object. In addition to this, Jainas view the positive word as having a negative or excluding function. The word "jar", for example, denotes the object jar but at the same time negates or excludes other objects, such as "cloth". For the Jaina, therefore, śabda denotes a many-sided object with its universal and particular characteristics,

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ As quoted by J. Sinha, Indian Psychology: Cognition, Vol. I. Calcutta: Sinha Pub. House, 1958, p. 444.

and its positive and negative characteristics.¹⁵⁴

Nyāya

Like the Jaina, the Nyāya school holds that śabda is the teaching of a reliable person, and that it is a pramāṇa. (As the only means of expressing knowledge is through a sentence, śabda as testimony occurs in the form of a group of words syntactically and significantly connected. As long as the meanings of the words composing the sentence are known, then the meaning of the sentence will be known as it is heard. Thus the cause of understanding relating to śabda is the knowledge of the meanings of words and not the referent object and its qualities.¹⁵⁵

The Nyāya opposes the Prabhākara Mīmāṃsā contention that śabda must take the form of an injunction, and agrees with both Kumārila and Śaṅkara in maintaining that sentences conveying informative knowledge are also śabda.

Just as the Jaina is a realist; so also is the Nyāya in his theorizing that the objects of reality exist independent of any knowing mind. Knowledge, therefore, is simply the discovery by a conscious mind of the objects already existing. "Just as the light of a lamp reveals or shows physical things, so knowledge manifests all objects that come before it".¹⁵⁶ Śabda is one of the four sources of true

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 445. As noted by Sinha, this interpretation of śabda is consistent with the syādvāda (sevenfold disjunction) which is the necessary logical complement of the Jaina anekanta-vāda (not one-pointed) doctrine that no one view of reality can be absolute.

¹⁵⁵ K. S. Murty, Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedānta, op. cit., p. 223..

¹⁵⁶ S. C. Chatterjee and D. M. Datta, An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, op. cit., p. 191.

knowledge. The others are perception, inference and comparison (upamāna). The adjective "true" in regard to knowledge is used advisedly, since, according to the Nyāya, there can be false knowledge. Knowledge is said to be false when it does not correspond to the nature of its given object; and, true when it does correspond to the nature of its object. In answer to the question as to how correspondence to the true nature of the object is to be judged, Nyāya replies that the test of the truth or falsity of knowledge is the success or failure of our practical activities in relation to the object. The following example¹⁵⁷ is offered. Wanting to add more sugar to your tea, you take some from the cup before you and stir it into your tea. The tea now tastes sweeter than before and you know that your previous perception of sugar was true. It may happen, however, that you come upon a cup filled with a white powdered substance and, taking it to be sugar, place a pinch of it into your mouth only to discover to your dismay that it is not sugar but salt. In this way it is shown that true knowledge leads to successful practical activities while false knowledge ends in failure and disappointment. The Nyāya school concludes therefore, "that the truth of knowledge is not self-evident in it, but is evidenced or known by inference from successful activity".¹⁵⁷ By successful activity they mean that the expected result, arising from the knowledge claimed, is empirically experienced. This approach is common to the Jainas, Buddhists, and Vaiśeṣikas.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ S. Chatterjee, The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1965, p. 80.

¹⁵⁸ In this representative survey of the various views of śabda, the Vaiśeṣika school is not included since its focus is on cosmology

Following the above epistemology, the Nyāya takes śabda as neither impersonal nor self-evidently valid. It maintains that the Vedas are created by God, and that, notwithstanding such divine authorship, their validity ultimately must be proven by perception or inference.¹⁵⁹

Nyāya classifies all knowledge from śabda under two headings: dr̥stārtha or that relating to sensuous objects, and adr̥stārtha or that relating to supersensuous objects. Chatterjee differentiates the two terms as follows:

Under the first head we are to include the trustworthy assertions of ordinary persons, the saints, and the scriptures in so far as they bear on the perceptible objects of the world. Thus the evidence given by witnesses in law courts, the knowledge about plants that we get from a reliable farmer, the scriptural injunctions about certain rites...are illustrations of dr̥stārtha śabda. The second will include all the trustworthy assertions of ordinary persons, saints, prophets and the scriptures in so far as they bear on supersensible realities. Thus the scientist's assertions about atoms...the prophet's instruction about virtue and vice, the scriptural texts on God, heaven, future life and the like are all illustrations of adr̥stārtha śabda.¹⁶⁰

Although Chatterjee admits that there is not complete agreement among the later Naiyāyikas to the above classification by Vātsyāyana, he maintains that in respect of truth all agree there is no difference between the trustworthy assertions of an ordinary person, a saint, a prophet and the scriptures as revealed by God.

rather than epistemology. While certain Vaiśeṣika scholars seem to treat śabda as pramāṇa (e.g., Kanāda), others reduce it to a form of inference (e.g., Prāsaśtapāda). See summary by K. S. Murty, Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedānta, op. cit., pp. 222-23.

¹⁵⁹ S. Chatterjee, The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge, op. cit., p. 380.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 318-319.

The Nyāyas define śabda as word as a particular group of sounds or letters arranged in a fixed order which stands for some thing or idea. The meaning of a word is seen to consist in its relation to the object which it signifies. Consequently, a word may have different meanings according to the different ways in which it may be related to an object. The Nyāyas find three different kinds of relation: abhidhā, paribhāṣā, and lakṣanā.¹⁶¹ Abhidhā refers to the primary meaning of a word. The relation between the primary meaning and the word may be either direct or indirect. If direct it leads immediately from the word to the knowledge of its meaning. Such a direct relation may be either eternal or non-eternal. When eternal it is called śakti or the inherent potency of the word (e.g., relation between the word "jar" and the object called jar is a direct and eternal relation called śakti). The Nyāyas maintain that this eternal śakti is due to God's volition which ordained that the particular fixed order of letter sounds "jar" should mean the object now called jar. Thus, for the Nyāyas, the meaning of a word even at its most primary level is judged to be conventional (i.e., established by the will of God), and not natural as was maintained by the schools of the Brahmanical tradition, especially the Mīmāṃsā.

Paribhāṣā refers to the non-eternal or changeable relation between a word and its meaning when that convention is established by man rather than God. Proper names and technical terms are examples of this type.

¹⁶¹ This discussion of the Nyāya view of the nature of "word" and its three relations is based on Chatterjee's discussion, ibid., Chp. 18.

The third kind of relation, lakṣaṇa, refers to the secondary meaning of a word. It is the indirect or implied meaning which must be assumed (when the abhidhā or primary meaning does not make sense) in order that the word will fit into the context in which it is found. For example, in the sentence "the house is not on the Ganges", the word "Ganges" is taken in its secondary meaning of "the bank of the Ganges" rather than its primary meaning of "the stream of water".

After reviewing the many ways in which we come to learn the meanings of words (e.g., from grammar and dictionaries, from perception and comparison, and from the usage of elders), the Nyāyas conclude that the very profusion of different ways of coming to know the meanings of words proves that the relation between words and their meanings is not natural (as the Brāhmanical tradition declares) but conventional. If there were a natural relation fixed between a word and its meaning, as exists for example between fire and burning, then the word should have always co-existed with its referent and that given relation should be known simply by perception. But the word "fire" does not coexist with the object "fire" and produce any burning sensation in us when we speak the word. Further evidence for the conventional nature of the word is the fact that the same word is used by different people with different meanings.

In answer to the question as to whether the word primarily refers to the particular or the universal in its meaning, the Nyāyas reject three other views: the Sāṅkhyan contention that a word denotes a particular object; the Jaina view that a word includes both the universal and the particular as a particular form or configuration

of component parts; and the argument of the Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta schools which maintain that the word really refers to the universal or class character of the individuals. According to the Nyāyas the correct answer is that a word means all three of these, i.e., the particular, the configuration and the universal. As Chatterjee puts it,

...words do not mean universals only, since these cannot be understood apart from the individuals and their particular forms. A genus can be recognized only through the individuals that constitute it and their peculiar configurations.¹⁶²

All three factors are held to be present in the meaning of a word, although not always occupying the same degree of prominence. Whichever one we are interested in for the moment receives emphasis. For example, when we are searching for difference between things then the individuality aspect in the meaning of the word will be emphasized. The same thing applies to the other two aspects. This may be put more concisely by saying that there are three aspects in the meaning of a word, namely, a pictorial, a denotative, and a connotative. A word calls up the form, denotes the individual and connotes the universal.^{163, 164} Chatterjee

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 331.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 332.

¹⁶⁴ It is relevant at this point to make brief reference to the long and famous debate between the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and the Buddhist Dignaga schools regarding the universal aspect. The Buddhists reject the idea that there can be some universal characteristic which resides in common in a number of unique particulars. Nor do they accept the possibility of any common entity residing in them. But then, it might be asked, how do we have this notion of commonness with reference to the many particulars of a class? The Buddhist maintains that this notion is caused not by a positive commonness residing in all the individual objects of a class, but by the negative commonness which belongs to all the individual objects of a particular class. In the case of cows, for example, the negative commonness is evidenced, says the Buddhist, in that they are all different from the non-cows, viz. horses, etc. Thus the universal aspect of "cowness", according to the Buddhist, is not an

observes that Indian logic leaves no room for the so-called non-connotative terms of Formal Logic as claimed by the West.

Dealing with the question as to how the unity of a word is cognized from the perception of its individual letters, the Nyāya answers as follows. Since we perceive only one thing at one instant, the individual letters cannot be perceived simultaneously and must therefore be perceived successively. But how can there be a synthesis of these successive perceptions into one word? According to the Nyāyas it is by memory. As we perceive the successive letters c-o, traces of each letter are left in our mind. On the perception of the w, aided by the memory of the two preceding letters, the word cow as a whole is cognized and its meaning understood according to convention. Aside from the last clause (meaning being understood according to convention), this Nyāya view is in accord with the Vedānta and Mīmāṃsā theories. However, it contains certain inherent difficulties (i.e., since the Nyāyas agree that there can never be more than one cognition, perception

external reality, but only a negation in the form of the exclusion of non-cows. The technical term used for this "negative commonness" is apoha, which is the Buddhist counterpart of the universal aspect of the realist Nyaya school. D. N. Shastri compares the two views as follows. "Whether the universal is considered to be positive and real according to the realist, or negative and unreal according to the Buddhist, its function is admitted to be two-fold by both of them, viz., (i) inclusion of the common objects of a class, and (ii) exclusion of the objects belonging to all other classes". The realist lays more emphasis on the positive aspect declaring the universal to be an objectively real entity. The Buddhist, however, insists on the negative aspect and describes the universal as a mere mental construction which is objectively unreal." D. N. Shastri, Critique of Indian Realism. Agra: Agra University, 1964, see cp. 9 and p. 368 for above quotation.

or image to be in the mind at one time, how can individual letters be synthesized into a unity even if they are remembered -- the memory is still individual). To answer this difficulty the Grammarian school proposes the sphota theory which we study in detail in the next chapter.

The Nyāya understanding of how śabda gives meaning in sentences seems to differ very little from the Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta view discussed above. Chatterjee states, "The theory of abhīhitānvaya is advocated in the Nyāya, the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā and the Vedānta system".¹⁶⁵ Perhaps the main notable addition is that the meaning conveyed by a sentence must be determinative knowledge. Determinative knowledge is here defined as the knowledge of a thing as qualified by an attribute. Thus for the Nyāya the presence of a verb is not necessary for a sentence, rather it is the presence of "something to be related to something else as substantive to adjective".¹⁶⁶ The meaning of a sentence therefore is the relation it expresses between a substantive and an adjective.

III. THE SPHOTA APPROACH

Against the above background of the Brāhmanical and the Naturalistic traditions, let us now outline the Sphota theory of the Grammarians and the particular merits claimed for it.

We have seen that for the Brāhmanical thinkers śabda is both a valid source of knowledge and the means by which such knowledge may be communicated to others as verbal testimony. Emphasizing this latter

¹⁶⁵ S. Chatterjee, The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge, op. cit., p. 341.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 345, example of a sentence of this type: A fiery hill" or "A red colour".

function the early Grammarians Pāṇini and Patañjali describe śabda primarily in terms of the spoken word or speaking itself (Vāk). In the first verse of his Mahābhāṣya, Patañjali defines the word as "That on the utterance of which there is common understanding regarding objects (sampratyaya)".¹⁶⁷ This definition of śabda does not intend the identification of the word with the physiological production of speech. As Murti has pointed out the distinction between word (śabda) and sound (dhvani) is basic to the understanding of language in all schools of Indian Philosophy. To take the physical sound as the word is to confuse entities of two different orders, like the confusion of the soul with the body. "The word, like the soul, has a physical embodiment in the sound and is made manifest through the latter, but the conveyance of meaning is the function of the word; the sound only invokes the word".¹⁶⁸ Now if the word or śabda is only manifested and not constituted by the vocal sounds or dhvani, the question then arises as to the exact nature of this śabda which is manifested. We have seen according to the Naturalistic schools, that just as we create names for our children and scientific discoveries and so initiate new conventions, the origination of all words should be understood in a similar way. In this way of thinking all words are the result of convention. Where human convention^s is not allowable, the divine convention of God may be invoked — as is done by the Nyāya, for example. Against this view, the Grammarians support the Brāhmanical schools, especially the

¹⁶⁷ Trans. by T. R. V. Murti, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

Mīmāṃsā, in their contention that words and their relation with meaning are eternal, underived and impersonal. The relation between śabda and its meaning is not an arbitrary convention established by either man or God or both. Not only is there no record of any such convention, but the very idea of "convention" itself presupposes language -- the very thing claimed to be derived from convention. Murti makes the point quite clear:

To make conventions, words have to be used and understood by persons participating in the convention. This is clearly circular. Invoking God does not help either. How could God make known his intentions, his conventions between words and their respective meanings to persons who did not use language already?¹⁶⁹

It would seem, therefore, that language must be taken as having existed beginninglessly; or, as somehow being co-eternal with God (as suggested by the Yoga school and in the Christian tradition by Chapter One of the Gospel of John). As Murti suggests, the attempt to discover a temporal beginning of language may arise from a confusion of the śabda with dhvani. While speaking sounds and learning how to group sounds into syllables, etc., may well be conventional, the fact of verbal communication necessitates the acceptance of śabda as a given which the learned spoken sounds manifest, but do not constitute. Here the viewpoint of the Grammarians and the Brāhmanical tradition seems very similar to the Platonic concept of the universality and eternity of the idea. Whereas in Platonic doctrine the relation of the idea to the "copies" is described as the relation of the immutable to its several manifestations,

¹⁶⁹ T. P. V. Murti, Some Thoughts on the Indian Philosophy of Language, op. cit., p. 12.

here the word is the immutable which is first perceived through its several physical manifestations.¹⁷⁰ The word "cow", for example, is a word-form which is identical and immutable although its physical manifestations may differ markedly with regard to accent, speed of speaking, place and time of utterance, etc. But the Grammarians go further than just establishing the eternality of śabda. They identify śabda with the Brahman -- all words ultimately mean the Supreme Brahman. The meaning intended by this absolutistic claim is described as follows:

...Brahman is the one object denoted by all words; and this one object has various differences imposed upon it according to each particular form; but the conventional variety of the differences produced by these illusory conditions is only the result of ignorance. Non-duality is the true state; but through the power of "concealment" [exercised by illusion] at the time of the conventional use of words a manifold expansion takes place...¹⁷¹

On this basis knowledge of the meaning of words not only abolishes ignorance but also leads to the final bliss of identity with Brahman.

In our discussion of the two traditions above, we have seen various positions taken on the issue of whether śabda signifies its meaning through the universal or through the particular. Indian language speculation appears to contain a vast variety of views ranging from the extreme nominalism of the Buddhist to the realism of the Mīmāṃsā and the Nyāya. On this question the school of Grammar offers two views. In the Vākyapadīya, Bhartrhari first makes clear

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁷¹ Sarva-Darśana-Saṅgraha, op. cit., "The Pāṇini Darśana", p. 219.

that the real unit of language is the sentence, and that for pedagogical purposes words are abstracted from the sentence and ascribed a meaning. Thus the idea that words are divided into syllables and sentences into words is "a convenient fiction".¹⁷² According to the one view suggested by the school of Grammar, the word meaning is connoted by the universal. As Murti puts it, "The universal is primarily a Word-Form and by way of transference this is applied to the Idea-Universal".¹⁷³ The particulars are merely the appearances of the universal. For practical purposes we may speak of several universals such as man, cow, horse, etc., but in the final analysis there is only one ultimate universal-being, and it is this that all words mean. This view is by its logic identical to the Advaita Vedānta position which, as was shown, holds in all things for the non-duality of the real and the appearance and defines the relationship as a one-sided dependence upon the real. The other view suggested by the school of Grammar is that the meaning is to be found in the individual object the word denotes. Here substance or the substantive being of the particular is taken as the thing which remains permanent throughout the changes. Meaning on this view, says Murti, is denotation -- the that of things.¹⁷⁴ Ultimately, of course, there is still one indivisible being which is the meaning of all individual words. In this case the individuals are seen as appearances which exist through limitation (upādhi) of the one universal being.

But the most important issue for the school of Grammar comes

¹⁷² T. R. V. Murti, Some Thoughts on the Indian Philosophy of Language, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

in answer to the question, "What constitutes the meaning-unit of language"? It is here that the Sphota theory is presented in direct challenge to all of the other positions reviewed above. In criticizing the Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta and Nyāya view that the individual letters or words of a sentence generate the meaning, the Grammarian points out that the letters of a word or the words in a sentence die away as soon as they are pronounced so that when we arrive at the last letter of a word or the last word of a sentence, the previous elements have all vanished. How then can the meaning of the whole word or sentence be cognized? If it is replied that memory holds the traces of the letters and words, this still does not help since, as only one thing can be cognized at a time in our mind, the memory traces will only replay the serial presentation of the original parts and no whole meaning will be generated. Therefore, says the Grammarian, since meaning is a single or unitary whole so also its generating condition must likewise be a whole. On this assumption, the Sphota theory is advanced -- the idea that the word or sentence is an indivisible unity which is inherently given and engenders all meaning. The separate letters of a word or words of the sentence merely manifest the Sphota or meaning-whole. In Mādhava's Sarva-Darśana-Saṃgraha the argument is put this way:

...as the letters cannot cause the cognition of the meaning, there must be a sphota by means of which arises the knowledge of the meaning; and this sphota is an eternal sound distinct from the letters and revealed by them, which causes the cognition of the meaning.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ Sarva-Darśana-Saṃgraha, op. cit., p. 211. Kunjunni Raja notes that śabda should be translated by "speech-unit" rather than "sound" (as Cowell does above) to avoid confusion between śabda and dhvani. Op. cit., p. 143.

In addition to such deductive argument, the Grammarians also appeal to common experience. The sphota or unitary word meaning, they argue, may be proved to exist in that it is an object of each person's own cognitive perception. When the word "cow" is pronounced there is the unitary perception or simultaneous cognition of dewlap, tail, hump, hoofs, horns, etc. in the hearer's mind. This perceivable sphota, says the Grammarian, is exactly how Ratanjali in his Mahābhāṣya defined "word" (taking "cow" as his example) as that word by which when pronounced results in the simultaneous cognition of dewlap, tail, hump, hoofs, horns, etc. Verbal communication between people is only possible because of the existence of this sphota or word-meaning which is potentially perceivable by all, and revealed to each individual by speech sounds.¹⁷⁶

Although the conception of sphota, and the arguments of this theory need to be examined in greater detail (see Chapter III), the above brief discussion suggests both a logical consistency in the Grammarian arguments and a persuasive appeal to our cognitive experience of whole meanings as grounds for selecting the Sphota theory for serious study. Using Kantian thought as a model, Murti further describes the significance of the Sphota conception as follows:

In linguistic apprehension, as in other cognitions, there is the interplay of two factors of different levels -- the empirical manifold of sense-data (the separate letters or words in this case) and the transcendental or a priori synthesis of the manifold which alone imparts a unity to those elements which would otherwise have remained a mere manifold.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ T. R. V. Murti, op. cit., p. 17.

In this way of thinking the sphota functions exactly like a transcendental category of the whole. It is through the sphota, which is activated by the pronunciation or hearing of the separate letters or words, that the meaning of the sentence is manifested as a whole.

CHAPTER III

THE SPHOTA THEORY OF LANGUAGE AS REVELATION

Now that its metaphysical background has been surveyed, let us proceed to analyze the logical possibility¹ of the Sphota theory of language as revelation. The chapter begins with a definition of the concept of sphota itself. In section two the way in which the sphota reveals meaning is examined in detail with regard to both word meaning and sentence meaning. Section three studies Sphota theory in relation to the various levels of language and meaning which are seen to result. The chapter concludes with a summary of the major sphota tenets, the logical¹ possibility of which has been demonstrated, and which then require their psychological possibility to be set forth (the task of Part Two of the thesis).

I. DEFINITION OF SPHOTA

For the Grammarian, the word or sentence when taken as an indivisible meaning-unit is the sphota. The technical term sphota is difficult to translate into English. Sometimes the word "symbol" is used for sphota in the sense of its function as a linguistic sign. One authority on the subject finds that the original Greek conception

¹The reader is reminded that throughout this thesis the term "logical" is used not in a specialized philosophic sense, but as meaning "defensible on the grounds of consistency" or "reasonably to be believed". See Chapter One, p. 11.

of logos best conveys the meaning of sphota. G. Sastrī argues, "The fact that logos stands for an idea as well as a word wonderfully approximates to the concept of sphota".² The spoken sounds or printed letters of ordinary language are distinguished from the sphota in that the former are merely the means by which the latter is revealed. The term sphota is derived from the Sanskrit root sphut, which means to burst forth. In his Sanskrit-English dictionary, V. S. Apte defines sphota as: (1) breaking forth, bursting or disclosure; and (2) the idea which bursts out or flashes on the mind when a sound is uttered.³ In his Sphotavāda, Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa describes sphota in two ways: as that from which the meaning bursts or shines forth; and as an entity which is manifested by the spoken letters or sounds.⁴ The sphota may thus be thought of as a kind of two-sided coin. On the one side it is manifested by the word-sound, and on the other side it simultaneously reveals the word-meaning. In a more philosophic sense, sphota may be described as the transcendent ground in which the spoken syllables and conveyed meaning find themselves united as word or śabda. Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa identifies this theory with the teaching of the ṛṣi Sphotāyana, who the Grammarians claim to be the traditional formulator of their viewpoint. The original conception

²Gaurinath Sastri, The Philosophy of Word and Meaning. Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1959, pp. 102-103.

³V. S. Apte, The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 3rd ed., 1965, p. 1013.

⁴Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa, Sphotavāda. Madras: The Adyar Library, 1946, p. 5.

of sphota seems to go far back into the Vedic period of Indian thought when, as was shown in the previous chapter, vāk or speech was considered to be a manifestation of the all-pervading Brahman, and the pranava (AUM) regarded as the primordial speech-sound from which all forms of vāk are supposed to have evolved. This sacred syllable is said to have flashed forth into the heart of Brahman, while he was absorbed in deep meditation, and to have given birth to the three Vedas containing all knowledge. AUM is still chanted today by devout Hindus who find the repetition of it to be at once a means of worship, knowledge, and a way of union with God (moksa). Our interest in the Vedic conception of the pranava is that it seems to have provided the model upon which the later Grammarian philosophers based their conception of sphota. In fact, sphota is often identified with the pranava. Chakravarti points out that the analogy between the two is so striking that Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa does not hesitate to compare sphota with the internal phase of pranava.⁵

Although the Grammarians may have modeled their concept of sphota on the Vedic pranava, their method of approach was strikingly different. Rather than immersing themselves in mystical meditation, they set out to analyze the meanings of words and the means by which such word knowledge is manifested and communicated in ordinary experience. The Grammarian Patañjali provides the point of departure for such a study when he opens his Mahābhāṣya with the question,

⁵ P. C. Chakravarti, The Philosophy of Sanskrit Grammar.
Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1930, p. 89.

"What, then is this word, 'cow'?", and answers "That -- which when uttered, brings us knowledge of the object possessing dewlap, tail, hump, hooves and horns" is a word. He goes on to make clear that it is words spoken for communication purposes in popular language upon which he is focusing.⁶ According to Chakravarti, Patañjali recognized three prominent characteristics of sphota, namely, unity, indivisibility, and eternality. And with regard to the time required for the speaking of a word, Patañjali "observes that it is sound that seems to be either long or short, but what is manifested by sound, i.e. sphota, is not at all affected by the variations of sound".⁷ Thus, for Patañjali, śabda or word is seen as having the two aspects of sphota and dhvani (sound), which are related as follows: sphota represents what is śabda proper, whereas sound is only a quality serving to manifest the sphota. When a word is spoken, variations such as speed of speaking, accent, etc., all occur at the level of the sound while the sphota is held by Patañjali to remain unchanged.⁸

⁶S. D. Joshi in a recent article argues that Patañjali is here really offering two different definitions of śabda. The second of these defines śabda as dhvani, thus allowing for the possibility of śabda as being a mere sound or noise which conveys no meaning. Since the sphota is defined in terms of a meaning-unit-whole, says Joshi, this would only subsume the first alternative of Patañjali's definition. According to Joshi, the fact that the second alternative defines word in terms of sound only means that Patañjali remains open to the Mīmāṃsaka view that śabda is the sound (i.e., the aggregate of letters) even if it does not convey meaning. S. D. Joshi, "Patañjali's Definition of Word", Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute 25, 1966, pp. 65-70.

⁷Chakravarti, op. cit., p. 99.

⁸Ibid.

Chakravarti notes that on the basis of Patañjali's thought, sphota, though strictly one and indivisible, is also capable of being classified as internal and external. The internal form of sphota is its innate expressiveness of the word meaning. The external aspect of sphota is the uttered sound (or written word) which is perceived by our sense organs but serves only to manifest or reveal the inner sphota with its inherent word meaning.⁹ It is with Bhartrhari, however, that these two aspects of śabda or sphota are given systematic philosophical analysis. In his Vākyapadīya, Bhartrhari states "In the words which are expressive the learned discern two aspects: the one [the sphota] is the cause of the real word [while] the other [dhvani] is used to convey the meaning".¹⁰ These two aspects, although they may appear to be essentially different, are really identical. The apparent difference is seen to result from the various external manifestations of the single internal sphota. The process is explained as follows: At first the word exists in the mind of the speaker as a unity or sphota. When he utters it, he produces a sequence of different sounds so that it appears to have differentiation. The listener, although first hearing a series of sounds, ultimately perceives the utterance as a unity -- the same sphota with which the speaker began -- and it is then that the meaning is conveyed.¹¹

⁹ Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁰ The Vākyapadīya of Bhartrhari with the Vṛtti, English trans. by K. A. Subramania Iyer. Poona: Deccan Collège, 1965, I:44.

¹¹ Ibid., I:45-46.

In his discussion, Bhartrhari employs several technical terms: śabda/sphota, dhvani, and nāda. By śabda and/or sphota, he refers to that inner unity which conveys the meaning. The dhvanis are described as all-pervasive and imperceptible particles which, when amassed by the movement of the articulatory organs, become gross and perceptible sounds and are then called nāda. These nādas function to suggest the word, sphota or śabda. And since these nādas, which are gross and audible, have division and sequence, it is naturally assumed that the suggested word also has parts when in reality it is changeless and sequenceless.¹² Bhartrhari offers the illustrative example of reflection in water. Just as an object reflected in water may seem to have movement because of the movement of the water, similarly the word or sphota takes on the properties of uttered speech (e.g., sequence, loudness or softness, accent, etc.) in which it is manifested.¹³

Perhaps the reader can best understand Bhartrhari's theory when it is illustrated with reference to our common experience of poetry. Let us take, for example, the word "love", which Bhartrhari would call a śabda or sphota. Although the meaning of the word love ultimately may be experienced as unitary, the communication of that insightful knowledge may well require the employment of a variety of suggestive poetic expressions:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love

¹² Ibid., I:47.

¹³ Ibid., I:49.

Which alters when it alteration finds,
 Or bends with the remover to remove:
 O, No! it is an ever-fixed mark,
 That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
 It is the star to every wandering bark,
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come;
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
 If this be error and upon me prov'd,¹⁴
 I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

In this sonnet, Shakespeare, through the use of his poetic imagination, composes a variety of expressions which when uttered manifest in the listener's mind an intuitive perception of the word-symbol "love" and its meaning. Different people may experience the manifestation of unitary word meaning differently. For some, it may come as a sudden flash of intuition, full-blown in its development. Others, however, may experience a gradual and progressive revelation through repeated exposures to the suggestive poetic phrases. In Bhartrhari's theory, the word-sphota "love" is a given, unitary and eternal in nature, but, as the history of literature, religion and marital relations evidences, a given requiring many gross nādas or imperfect empirical expressions before its meaning is fully grasped or intuitively realized in one's mind.

In Indian aesthetics, the philosophical analysis of language in terms of the sphota theory seems to have been assumed as a basic premise.¹⁵ The term dhavani, used in the sphota theory,

¹⁴ William Shakespeare, The Works of William Shakespeare.
 London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1893, Sonnet # 116, p. 1110.

¹⁵ For a convincing demonstration of this contention, see

comes to occupy a central place in Indian aesthetics and receives further development in the hands of the literary critics. Whereas for the Grammarian dhvani referred to the imperceptible yet physical constituents of the gross utterances or nādas, the literary critics give the term dhvani a more specialized meaning. The utterance, "Love is unalterable, eternal, and matchless and ageless" would likely qualify, according to the Grammarians, as a dhvani/nāda sequence serving to manifest the word-sphota "love". For Indian Aesthetics, however, something more is needed before such an external expression could be considered as a full revelation of the inner word meaning, and therefore worthy of being called dhvani. That "something more" would be the kind of poetic expression encountered in Shakespeare's sonnet. The hallmark of such dhvani or greatness of poetic expression is that in it "the symbolic surpasses all the poetic elements in point of strikingness and shines in its full splendour as the cynosure of all minds".¹⁶ Rather than just a dry philosophic making present of the word meaning, the champion of Indian Aesthetics claims for dhvani a particular excellence in revelatory experience. According to Abhinavagupta, in the poetic experience of dhvani the transcendental function of suggestion removes the primordial veil of ignorance from our minds and thereby allows the bliss associated with the

the recent study by Tarapada Chakrabarti, Indian Aesthetics and Science of Language. Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1971.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 146.

discovery of true meaning to be experienced. Such bliss is technically termed rasa and is held to be fully experienced when the poetic expression or dhvani removes the veil of ignorance so completely that the self of the experiencer stands clearly revealed. Abhinavagupta terms such an ultimate experience of rasa as "the delectable savouring of the self by the self".¹⁷ The poet Hrsīkeśa defines rasa as "a fusion of both word and meaning [which] bathes the minds of sensitive readers with oozeings of bliss. It is the truth of poetry, shining without cessation. Clear to the heart, it is yet beyond words".^{18 19} Of course, it is probably true that

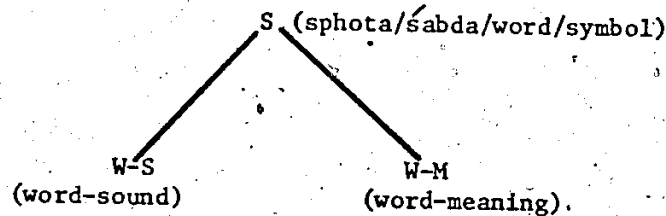
¹⁷ Ibid., p. 143.

¹⁸ As quoted in Aesthetic Rapture: The Rasādhyāya of the Nāṭyaśāstra, by J. L. Mason and M. V. Palwardhan. Poona: Deccan College, 1970, p. 26.

¹⁹ In his critical analysis of the rasa concept, V. K. Chari defends it from the Western criticism of subjectivism or mysticism as follows: "This objection may be answered by saying that if the Rasa theorists emphasize the essential privacy of the aesthetic experience -- and it must be admitted that they do so rightly enough for Rasa, being but a datum of our consciousness, cannot be verified by empirical means -- they also assume that it has its foundation in universal human nature. And in this sense, it is not so much subjective as inter-subjective. Without assuming such an affinity of nature between the poet and the reader on the one hand, and between a community of readers on the other, no aesthetic communication would be conceivable". 'Rasa' As An Aesthetic Concept: Some Comments from the Point of View of Western Criticism. Unpublished paper presented by V. K. Chari at the "International Sanskrit Conference", New Delhi, March 31st, 1972, p. 7. This seems similar to Kant's understanding of the universal but subjective nature of aesthetic judgment as outlined in his Critique of Judgment.

the philosopher who painstakingly mines a particular concept so that its essential meaning stands clearly revealed also experiences a state of elation similar to that which the poet calls *rasa*. Although the Indian poet and the Grammarian philosopher might traverse somewhat different paths from the diversity of empirical expression to the realization of a unitary meaning, both seem to agree that in the end a common goal is achieved -- the joyful revelation of the word-sphota as envisaged by Bhartrhari.²⁰

Having illustrated the sphota concept, let us now briefly restate its definition in a simple diagram:



It must be emphasized that, according to Bhartrhari, the sphota is an indivisible and changeless unity. But in terms of its communication or revelation function, it may be heuristically represented (in the above diagram) as having two aspects. It is like a two-sided coin. Its external aspect is the uttered sound or written word which is perceived by our sense organs but serves only to manifest the sphota's inner aspect. The inner aspect is the expressive word meaning which inherently resides in all beings. When

²⁰ Indian Aesthetics and Science of Language, op. cit.,
pp. 146-149.

a person wants to communicate an idea or word-meaning, he begins with the sphota which has been inherently existing in his mind as a unity. When he utters it and produces different sounds in sequence by the movements of his articulatory organs, it appears to have differentiation. But the listener, as he hears the sound sequence, ultimately perceives it as a unity (sphota), and only then is the word-meaning, which is also inherently present in the listener's mind, identified or revealed.²¹ The question as to just how such a communication of word-sphotas can occur will be examined in the next section of this chapter. The point of focus in this definition is simply the Grammarians' contention that the basic unit of language is the given whole (the sphota subsuming both the word-sound and the word-meaning) and the summed sequence of spoken sounds or written letters.

Reason for the Phenomenalization of the Sphota

If it is assumed with the Grammarians that the whole or sphota is the basic unit of language, the question may then arise as to why this unity should ever come to be expressed in the phenomenal diversity which is commonly called speech. In Bhartrhari's view, such phenomenalization occurs because the sphota itself contains an inner energy (kratu) which seeks to burst forth (sphut) into expression. This inner latency Bhartrhari calls śakti (power); when it emerges and becomes manifest, it is termed vyakti. What appears to be unitary is thus seen to contain all the potentialities of

²¹The above diagram is a modified version of the one presented by D. M. Datta, The Six Ways of Knowing, op. cit., p. 257.

multiplicity and complexity like the seed and the sprout or the egg and the chicken.

The external (audible) word, employed in verbal usage is merged in the mind after suppressing all assumption of differentiation, without, however, abandoning the residual force of the differentiation, as in the case of the yolk in the egg of the pea-hen. Just as one single word can merge, so can passages consisting of as many as ten parts. The word, thus merged, with all differentiation suppressed, again assumes differentiation and sequence, when, through the speaker's desire to say something, the inner word is awakened and it becomes the sentence or the word, each with its divisions.²²

Here Bhāṭṛhari seems to be suggesting two ways in which the energy of speech (kratu) causes the phenomenalization of the sphota. On the one hand, there is the pent-up potentiality for bursting forth residing in the sphota itself, while on the other hand there is the desire of the speaker to communicate. This desire for communication, however, is described as existing solely for the purpose of revealing the sphota that is within.²³ Unlike thinkers who conceive of language in conventional or utilitarian terms,²⁴ Bhāṭṛhari finds language to contain and reveal its own telos. In his metaphysical speculations, with which we are not primarily concerned, Bhāṭṛhari identifies this telos with Brahman who is beginningless and endless

²² Vakyapadiya, op. cit., vṛtti on I:51, p. 58.

²³ Ibid., I:1 vṛtti, p. 1.

²⁴ For example, the early Buddhists, the Cārvākas, or in modern thought the Positivists.

and whose essence is the word (śabdatattva). Bhartṛhari, in fact, takes his position to the logical extreme and concludes, in line with the Vedic Seers, that from speech (vāk) the creation of the whole world proceeds.

At this point the question might well be raised as to how the Grammarian view of the phenomenalization of the absolute compares with the Advaita Vedānta theory. On the surface there are apparent parallels. For both the Vedāntin and the Grammarian the world of phenomenal differentiation appears as a free act of the absolute, yet the absolute is judged to be in no way diminished by the phenomenalization. But, from Bhartṛhari's viewpoint, is this phenomenalization a case of vivarta (an unreal appearance) in the Vedāntin sense, or is it a parināma (a real transformation) in the Sāṅkhyan sense, or is it something else? As yet, there seems no definitive answer to this question. In recent years, two scholars²⁵ have given this issue serious study, each coming to different conclusions. Their findings are briefly summarized as follows.

G. Sastri points out that at the time of Bhartṛhari terms such as parināma and vivarta did not likely possess the fine philosophical distinctions which they later were given -- especially in the hands of Śaṅkara and his followers. In the hands of Bhartṛhari, says Sastri, the status of the phenomenal words in relation to Śabda-

²⁵ They are Gaurinath Sastri and K. A. S. Iyer. The following summary is based on Gaurinath Sastri, The Philosophy of Word and Meaning, op. cit., pp. 45-65, and K. A. Subramania Iyer, Bhartṛhari. Poona: Deccan College, 1969, pp. 128-135. See also, Some Thoughts on the Indian Philosophy of Language, op. cit., p. 15.

brahman cannot be adequately characterized by either parināma or vivarta in their respective doctrinal formulations. Bhartrhari does not believe in any real change of Śabdabrahman; therefore, the Sāṅkya conception of parināma is ruled out. Nor does the Vākyapadīya seem to contain exactly the same kind of logical antinomy between the ground (as an indivisible unity) and its appearances that led Śaṅkara to invoke the vivarta concept. According to Sastri's reading, Bhartrhari does not conceive of any difference between Śabdabrahman and its śaktis (powers or appearances) -- the being (Śabdabrahman) and its powers (śaktis) are identical. Thus, since Bhartrhari sees no difference to be accounted for, the concept of vivarta (with its intent of accounting for the difference between the diversity of phenomena in relation to the unitary absolute) does not really apply. Instead of either the parināma or the vivarta doctrinal viewpoints, Sastri suggests that Bhārtrhari's position is much closer to the notion of "reflection" (ābhāsa) formulated by the Trika writers of Kashmir. In this view the śaktis and their phenomenal manifestation as words are identical with the Absolute. The relationship between the two described on the analogy of the mirror (the absolute) and its reflections (the ābhāsas); the latter can have no independent existence without the former -- yet, the latter also have a reality which is somehow identical with the former. Sastri maintains that the many of Bhartrhari's commentators have failed to realize the above distinctions because they have read the Vākyapadīya under the influence of later Vedāntic vivarta formulations.

Iyer, however, claims strong evidence for interpreting

Bhartrhari's thought in line with traditional Vedānta doctrine. Iyer bases his interpretation on the assumption that Bhartrhari is the author of the Vṛtti (as tradition maintains), although he admits that this question is not yet finally settled. Iyer documents how, according to Bhartrhari, in ordinary life we can neither cognize nor express the absolute directly in words. There is, however, something which runs through these unreal word forms (asatyopadhi) and which persists when such forms disappear. That is, Brahman, the ultimate reality, and the expressed meaning of all words. Bhartrhari seems to offer two different ways of interpreting this situation. One viewpoint, associated with Vājapyāyana, holds that the persisting aspect of the word is the universal (jāti) which it connotes. Although in ordinary language we may validly speak of several universals such as man, cow, horse, etc., there is only one ultimate universal being, and all phenomenal word-forms mean this. The other interpretation, attributed to Vyādi, suggests that being or substance is that which persists and is perceived as the individual (dravya) through a limitation (upadhi) of that universal being. Word meaning in this view is the denotation or the "that" of things. Ultimately there is only the one indivisible Brahman, which is the meaning of all limiting individual word forms -- men, cows, horses, etc. are merely appearances through the limitation of that Being. Such limitations are described by Bhartrhari as asatya (false or unreal). It is these unreal limiting factors which words first denote before pointing beyond themselves to the ultimate reality. The real is thus cognized

only through unreal word forms. Both of these viewpoints would be consistent with a vivarta interpretation.

Bhartrhari himself, claims Iyer, seems to admit the parallelism between his position and that of Vedānta for he openly refers to the followers of Trayyanta (i.e., Vedānta), and seems to consider himself to be one of them. His repeated description of the cognized phenomenal world as "asatya" and his declaration that "satya" is that which, although free from all differentiation, assumes differentiation, is cited by Iyer as strong evidence for attributing to Bhartrhari a vivarta theory very close to that of Advaita Vedānta. This is further supported by Bhartrhari's repeated reference to avidyā as the cosmic power by which the one changeless reality is presented as having many word forms arranged in a spatial and temporal sequence. Helārāja, commenting on the Vṛtti, maintains that the undifferentiated ultimate reality becomes differentiated and assumes an infinite number of forms due to the beginningless influence of avidyā. Although he notes that the two words parināma and vyavarta appear more or less as synonyms in Vākyapadiya I:112 in the description of the emergence of the phenomenal world from the Śabdabrahman, Iyer concludes that all the available ancient commentaries, beginning with the Vṛtti, interpret Bhartrhari's thought as vivartavāda.

In concluding this observation on the apparent parallel between Bhartrhari and Advaita Vedānta, it is again noted that as yet there seems to be no definite answer to this question. That further research is required becomes even more evident when (as is

observed later in this Chapter) Bhartrhari's treatment of error as a case of progressive perceptual approximation to the real is compared with the Advaita view in which there can be only "true" or "false" cognitions with no gradations in between.

Returning to Bhartrhari's assumption that from Śabdabrahman the creation of the whole world proceeds, the following logical deduction is seen to result. "There is no cognition without the operation of the word/sphota".²⁶ This seems to agree with the contention of at least one modern linguist that there is no thought without language.²⁷ As Professor T. R. V. Murti puts it, it is not that we have a thought and then look for a word with which to express it; or that we have a lonely word which we seek to connect with a thought. "Word and thought develop together, or rather they are the expressions of one deep spiritual impulse to know and to communicate".²⁸ This identification between consciousness (*caitanya*) and speech (*vāk*) will be analyzed psychologically in Part Two of this thesis.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, I:123. Related to this point is the Grammarian's rejection of gestures as vehicles for communicating meaning. As Pūnyarāja puts it, the shaking of the head indicating negation does not communicate independent of words. The gesture serves to make one think of the word "no" before it can communicate the meaning of negation or refusal. P. K. Chakravarti, The Linguistic Speculations of the Hindus. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1933, p. 72.

²⁷ Edward Sapir, Language. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1949, p. 15.

²⁸ T. R. V. Murti, op. cit., p. iii.

Sphota Defined as Sentence (Vākya-Sphota)

In the above it has been made clear that Bhartrhari conceives of all beings as born with śabda or speech already present within. Metaphysically he identifies it with the self (ātman). Already at birth the newborn child has it, although as yet he knows no language in the ordinary sense of the word. As the child grows this inner śabda, which potentially can be developed into any language, is transformed into the language of the particular speech-community into which the child was born. Although little is known about how such transformation takes place, Bhartrhari makes certain basic assumptions in regard to the process. The first is that śabda or the word as it exists in the consciousness of even the new-born baby has the dual aspects of the word-meaning or the expressive aspect (vācaka) and the word-sound or the expressed element (vācya). This was illustrated in the above diagram. This differentiation of the ultimately unitary śabda (śabdatattva) into its two aspects is said to take place as soon as the metaphysical word-principle takes the form of mind (manas) or intellect (buddhi), and is technically referred to as "the buddhi stage".²⁹ The concern of this thesis is not directed to the metaphysical speculations regarding the ultimate nature of śabda, but rather focuses upon the question as to how śabda in the buddhi stage (and below)

²⁹ K. A. Subramania Iyer, Bhartrhari. Poona: Deccan College, 1969, p. 151.

both conveys and reveals meaning. Therefore, it is the second major assumption for Bhartrhari which is perhaps of greater interest for our present purpose. That is, the assumption that the whole is primary and its differentiated parts are secondary. For Bhartrhari, it is the whole idea or complete thought which is the *vācaka* -- the word-meaning or expressive aspect of *śabda* as *spṛṣṭa*. When the young child utters his first single word ejaculations, "mama", "dog", "cookie", etc., it is clear that whole ideas (as yet incompletely expressed) are being verbalized: e.g., "I want mamma!", "See the dog", "Give me a cookie!", etc. Even when a word is used merely in the form of a substantive noun (e.g., "tree"), the verb "to be" is always understood so that what is indicated is really a complete thought (e.g., "It is tree").³⁰

Bhartrhari opposes the views of other schools such as the *Mīmāṃsakas* and *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas*, who claim that the young child learns language by observing the use of words by grown-ups until the meaning of each individual word is understood. These philosophers conceive of sentence meaning or the complete thought as resulting from the summation of the individual word meanings. Bhartrhari observes, however, that man does not speak in individual words. For him the chief reality in linguistic communication is the idea or meaning-whole of the indivisible sentence. Although he sometimes speaks about letters (*varṇa*) or individual words (*pada*) as meaning-

³⁰ *Vākyapadīya*, op. cit., vṛtti on I:24-26, p. 31.

bearing units (sphota), it is clear that for Bhartrhari the true form of the sphota is the sentence.³¹ K. A. Subramania Iyer clearly summarizes Bhartrhari's position:

What Bhartrhari tries to establish is that the sentence and the sentence-meaning are indivisible units and that they alone are real (satya). Individual words and their meanings have neither definiteness nor reality. Communication is done with sentences and not with individual words. Communication means the transference of what the speaker has in mind to his hearer. What he has in mind may be a fact or a fantasy, but it exists as a unity and the word through which he communicates it also exists as a unity. This unity is the sentence. When the hearer also grasps this unity, both of the word and of the meaning, communication has taken place.³²

The listener grasps the unity of meaning conveyed by the words of the sentence in a flash of insight or intuition which Bhartrhari technically terms pratibhā.³³ Pratibhā, in Indian thought, is described as a super-normal perception which transcends the ordinary categories of time, space and causality, and has the capacity to directly "grasp" the real nature of things. Such super-normal perceptions are held to perceive the object in its noumenal wholeness, and to have totally transcended phenomenal characteristics such as name and form. Consequently, pratibhā

³¹ Ibid., see especially the Second Kāṇḍa in which he establishes the vākya-sphota over against the view of the Mīmāṃsakas.

³² K. A. Subramania Iyer, op. cit., p. 182..

³³ The Vākyaopadīya, ed. and trans. by K. R. Pillai. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971, II:153 ff., pp. 72-73.

cannot be understood by appealing to the phenomenal facts of ordinary perceptions. Aside from one's personal experience of such super-normal perception, there can only be speculative attempts at description which, because they are on the phenomenal level of name and form, will always fall short. The pratibhā experience is that of a unified psychic entity. It is in this sense that Bhartṛhari connects pratibhā with the vākya-sphota. The sentence is really a psychic entity, a mental symbol which in itself is the meaning. The mental perception of this vākya-sphota is a case of pratibhā. Although it is quite different from the meanings of the individual words, it is through the meanings of the individual words that the pratibhā of the vākya-sphota occurs. Because the whole sentence meaning is inherently present in the mind of each person, it is quite possible for the pratibhā of the sphota to be grasped by the listener even before the whole sentence has been uttered. More often, however, inference and reasoning may have to be applied to the words of the sentence so that the individual's cognition is brought to the level where the intuitive grasping (pratibhā) of the meaning whole (vākya-sphota) becomes possible. It is in this sense that reason is taken as the precursor of the revelatory experience.

Bhartṛhari also uses the term pratibhā as a broad general concept which is realizable in six different ways ranging all the way from the instinctive knowledge of animals to the perfect perception or special intuition of the īśis (visstōpahita). A more detailed discussion of pratibhā is undertaken later in this Chapter.

Variations in the Definitions of Sphota

Although Bhartṛhari's conception of sphota, as outlined above, is undoubtedly the dominant view for the Grammarian school,³⁴ there was evidently some difference of opinion among the ancient Indian grammarians as to the real nature of the sphota. Bhartṛhari mentions some of these definitions of sphota which differ from his own.

According to one of these variant views, the initial sounds produced by the contacts and separations of the vocal organs are themselves the sphotas, and not the mere manifestors of the sphotas as Bhartṛhari maintains.³⁵ As these initial sounds are momentary, the sphotas are also held to be momentary. The sound waves resulting from the initial sound produced by the vocal organs, and which spread in all directions decreasing in strength until reaching the ears of the hearers, are called the dhvanis. These dhvanis are said to have the nature of reverberation. This reverberation is thought of as a chain of repetitions of the initial sound or sphota. Each link in this chain of reverberations is weaker than the preceding one, but is still a reflection of the initial sphota. Just as the reverberation of a drum lasts longer

³⁴ Evidence for this is that it is Bhartṛhari's conception of sphota that the opposing schools of philosophy cite as the Sphota Theory or the Grammarian viewpoint: e.g., Kumārila's Śloka-vārtika, sūtra V, section 12; and Śaṅkara's commentary on the Brahma Sūtra I:3:28.

³⁵ Vākyapadīya, op. cit., I:102, p. 97.

and reaches further than the noise of a piece of metal, so it is the nature of the initial sound or sphota which is instrumental in producing a reverberation chain of shorter or longer duration. But in this view both the dhvani reverberations and the initial sphota sounds are held to be momentary.³⁶

Another theory differing only slightly from the previous one holds that the sphota and the dhvanis are produced simultaneously.³⁷ Whereas in the above view the sphota is produced prior to the dhvanis, here there is no interval between the production of the sphota and the dhvanis. The sphota is described as the material cause of the sound and is compared to a flame; the dhvanis are like the light spreading in all directions.³⁸ Iyer observes that here also the sphota is held to be transitory, and that this view is put forward to answer a possible objection that the sound, apart from the sphota does not exist at all. It is argued that both dhvanis and sphota exist separately even though they may not always be perceived as such. Sometimes, for example, we may hear the dhvanis (e.g., crowd noises) without recognizing or distinguishing the actual sphotas (e.g., the words being spoken). Yet

³⁶Ibid., vṛtti on I:102.

³⁷Ibid., I:104, p. 99.

³⁸K. Kunjunni Raja, op. cit., p. 114.

both co-exist and are being produced simultaneously.³⁹

In contrast to the two above variant views which define sphota as ephemeral and produced by human effort, Bhartrhari reports yet another theory. This theory is closer to Bhartrhari's own position in that it views the sphota as the changeless word which is caused by the different sounds or dhvanis.⁴⁰ Iyer states, "The main idea here is that the sounds, which differ from one another because of difference in articulatory movements, cause the cognition of the one changeless word without effecting any change in it, just as the light from a lamp reveals the object without effecting any change in it".⁴¹ The vrtti makes clear that the sphota here is being viewed as the universal and the dhvanis as the class members. Kunjunni Raja makes a helpful observation in this regard.

Many scholars have taken this theory as that of Bhartrhari himself....Here it is important to note that for Bhartrhari the sphota is the word or the sentence taken as a single meaningful unit; if he accepts the concept of a class, it will be a class whose members are themselves sphotas. The identification of sphota with the class of dhvanis, without any reference to the meaning-bearing aspect, is entirely against Bhartrhari's conception of sphota.⁴²

³⁹ Vākyapadiya, op. cit., translator's note on I:104, p. 100.

⁴⁰ Ibid., I:94, p. 92.

⁴¹ Ibid., note 1 to I:94, p. 92.

⁴² K. Kunjunni Raja, op. cit., p. 115.

Having taken note of these variant views mentioned by Bhartrhari, let us clearly restate his own definition of sphota. For Bhartrhari, the two aspects of word-sound (dhvani) and word-meaning (artha), differentiated in the mind and yet integrated like two sides of the same coin, constitute the sphota.⁴³ He emphasizes the meaning-bearing or revelatory function of this two-sided unity, the sphota, which he maintains is eternal and given in nature. He generally describes one's cognition of the sphota from the hearer's perspective. As a child learning a word, or as an adult on first hearing a word, the sphota is usually at first cognized erroneously. Having failed to grasp the whole sphota the listener asks, "What did you say?" Through a series of erroneous cognitions, in response to the repeated vocalizations of the word-sounds, there arises a progressively clearer cognition of the sphota. Finally there is a completely clear cognition of the whole sphota and its two-sided aspects which Bhartrhari describes as a case of special perception, intuition or pratibha. The initial error has given place to truth in which the two aspects of word-sound and word-meaning have become completely identical in the unity of the sphota. Since the cognition of this final and a priori sphota unity is held to be a case of perception (pratibha), various perceptual analogies are offered as examples. When from a distance a tree is vaguely

⁴³ This and the following statements are based upon Iyer's excellent summary of Bhartrhari's definition of sphota. Bhartrhari, op. cit., pp. 177-180.

cognized, the cognition may take the form of an elephant. When finally, through repeated effort, it is recognized as a tree, the cognition is clearly a case of perception. Or when the expert jeweller finally sees the genuineness of a precious stone after a continuous gaze at it consisting of a series of comparatively vague cognitions of it, it is a case of perception. Bhartrhari claims that means of knowledge other than perception (e.g., inference) either reveal the object or do not reveal it at all. It is only perception where the object (in this case the word-meaning) is at first seen vaguely and then more and more clearly. While all of this is the process experienced by ordinary men, Bhartrhari, along with most other Indian philosophers, allows that the great *rsis* are able to cognize the complete unitary *sphota* directly, without having to go through the process of repeated perception and error correction. In the previous Chapter, this *visistopahita pratibha* exhibited by the *rsi* was referred to as his *dhi* or clear vision of reality, which he verbalized in the poetic form of the Vedas.⁴⁴

In concluding this discussion, let us make one observation regarding Bhartrhari's definition of *sphota*, which plays an important delimiting function as far as this thesis is concerned. Such direct perception of reality, described above as characteristic of the *rsi*, does not properly fall within the scope of Bhartrhari's

⁴⁴It should perhaps be noted here that just as *pratibha* (realizable through six ways) is inherent in all beings, so too Veda or Agama, the real counterpart of *pratibha*, exists within everyone. See Bhartrhari, op. cit., pp. 90-91.

definition of sphota. Describing the process of the sphota's manifestation in ordinary communication, Bhartrhari emphasizes that when manifested by the sounds it is grasped by the mind -- making clear it is only in the buddhi stage where the two aspects appear differentiated that the term sphota can be applied. In the pre-buddhi stage (the level at which the rsi functions), there is no separation into the two aspects of word-sound and word-meaning, and the technical term used here is śabdatattva rather than sphota.⁴⁵

The scope of this study is therefore clearly delimited by Bhartrhari's definition of sphota. The task undertaken is the demonstration of the philosophical and psychological possibility of Bhartrhari's sphota conception. Although some reference is made (for contextual purposes) to Bhartrhari's metaphysical speculations regarding what happens at the pre-buddhi stages of language, no attempt will be made to show the psychological possibility of such pre-buddhi level speculations in Part Two of this study.

II. HOW THE SPHOTA REVEALS MEANING

The Grammarian Sphota Theory as officially expounded by Bhartrhari attracted both opponents and supporters. The chief opposition came, at a later time, from the Mīmāṃsaka Kumārila Bhaṭṭa. Kumārila's attack focused on the way in which the Sphota theory conceived of word-sounds as revealing their meanings. The side of

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 180.

Bhartrhari in this debate against Kumārila was taken by the skillful philosopher Mandana-Misra. Mandana's work entitled Sphotasiddhi, which is based on the Vākyapadīya, records the confrontation that takes place on this issue of how the word conveys meaning, and it will be the main source for the section on sphota and word-meaning. But for Bhartrhari, with his assumption of the whole as being prior to the parts, it is not the individual words but the complete thought of the sentence that ultimately matters. This will be examined under the heading sphota and sentence-meaning.

Sphota and Word-Meaning (pada-sphota)

In the above definition of sphota we have seen how Bhartrhari maintains that the external word-sound should not be taken as the objective reality since it serves only to reveal the inner word-meaning which is both a unified whole and the true object. Illustrations, such as the poetic experience, have been offered to support Bhartrhari's view that it is the whole word or idea which occasions sound and not vice versa. While such illustrations from ordinary experience can indicate that the Sphota theory is not implausible, they can hardly be taken as proof of the theory's logical possibility. The latter requires that the existence of the inner word, as distinct from its sounds, be demonstrated in terms of logical necessity and consistency. This is precisely the task undertaken by Mandana Misra in his Sphotasiddhi.⁴⁶ Mandana applies his logical

⁴⁶ Sphotasiddhi of Mandana Misra, English trans. by K. A. Subramania Iyer. Poona: Deccan College, 1966.

analysis not only to the Sphota theory but also to the alternative hypothesis put forth by Kumārila.⁴⁷ As Gaurinath Sastri observes, Kumārila was the most formidable critic of the Sphota theory -- later writers have offered no new criticisms but only repeat Kumārila's arguments.⁴⁸ Kumārila, arguing against Bhartrhari, maintains that the word or śabda, whether it be the sentence or the individual word, is nothing more than a collection of word-sounds or spoken letters, and it is with this collection alone that the word-meaning is associated. When such a collection is brought to the mind of the hearer by the sounds uttered by the speaker, the hearer understands the meaning from the sounds alone. No mystical entity, such as sphota, need be postulated at all.⁴⁹ According to Bhartrhari, however, "the essence of the Sphota doctrine is the idea that the word, mainly in the form of the sentence and secondarily in the form of the individual word and the phoneme [the articulated letter sound], is an entity over and above the sounds and not a mere collection of them and that it is this entity which is the bearer of the meaning".⁵⁰ This is the argument in its most general form. Let us now analyze it in detail.

⁴⁷The context and basis of Kumārila's argument was noted in Chapter Two in the summary of the Mīmāṃsaka viewpoint.

⁴⁸The Philosophy of Word and Meaning, op. cit., p. 103.

⁴⁹Ślokavartika, op. cit., Sūtra V, Section 12, pp. 261-268.

⁵⁰K. A. Subramania Iyer, "Introduction" to Sphotasiddhi, op. cit., p. 3.

The discussion begins with a statement of Patañjali's famous question, "What is meant by 'word'?" and his answer, "Speech or śabda".⁵¹ Here Patañjali is defining śabda as that which has a meaning. But Kumārila objects by noting that in the first place a definition in terms of meaning alone is too wide. Smoke, for example, signifies the meaning fire, but is not commonly regarded as a word. In the second place, says Kumārila, the definition is too narrow in that it holds śabda to be that which is heard. Now, that which is perceived by the ear is only a group of phonemes or letter-sounds, each one of which (according to Patañjali's definition) should be regarded as a word even though they do not signify any external fact. This results in the difficulty that in the word "cow", for example, the individual phonemes "c", "o", and "w" may be heard by the ear of the young child, and therefore qualify as śabda even though the word "cow" as yet carries no meaning for him. This clearly conflicts with Patañjali's contention that śabda is that significant word-whole which conveys meaning. Consequently, the spoken word "cow" would at the same time be śabda and not-śabda. It would be śabda in the sense that it consists in a commonly understood spoken word, but it would not be śabda before its meaning was known -- although it would become śabda after its meaning is known. For these three reasons: (1) that smoke should not be called śabda even though it causes the cognition of fire, (2) that phonemes, even though they are audible, should not be called śabda, and (3) that the same thing

⁵¹ Sphoṭasiddhi, op. cit., Sūtra 3, p. 2.

should at one moment be called *śabda* and the next moment *śabda*, Kumārila says that Patañjali's definition of *śabda* as interpreted by the Grammarians is not correct.⁵² In Kumārila's view, it is the fact of being audible which should be taken as the criterion for *śabda*, and it is the phonemes alone (even though they may not convey meaning) which conform to this standard.⁵³ It is the phonemes which are commonly accepted as *śabda*. Anything which is different from the phonemes, or over and above them (e.g., *sphota* -- even though it may have existence and expressive power), does not deserve to be called *śabda* since there is no such common usage in the world.

Mandana rejects Kumārila's criticism as frivolous misinterpretation. Saying that the signifying power is the criterion condition for *śabda* does not mean that a word ceases to be a word when it fails to communicate a meaning to an unlearned child or a dunce. According to the Grammarian, the key point is that the word is capable of conveying meaning -- regardless of its being understood or not understood in specific instances. And since the phonemes or letters which constitute a word do not have this capacity individually, they cannot be called *śabda*. Having refuted Kumārila in this summary fashion, Mandana goes on to elucidate the Grammarian interpretation of "*śabda*" in answer to Patañjali's question: "In that complex cognition expressed by the word 'cow' and which consists

⁵²Ibid., p. 3.

⁵³This statement is made at this point only for the sake of argument, since Kumārila actually believes that it is the phonemes which convey the meaning. Ibid., note 3.

of many aspects such as the universal, the particular, quality, action, phonemes, sphota, etc., which aspect is it to which the name śabda refers?"⁵⁴ Śabda, maintains Mandana, cannot refer to the individual phonemes because in themselves they convey no meaning. In common experience the whole word is the unit of language which is taken to be meaning-bearing. The common man takes a noun or verb to be a unity signifying meaning -- without reference to the plurality of letters and syllables which are the products of speculative thought. Mandana further criticizes Kumārila's objections and establishes the basis for the Sphota position as follows:

As for the definition that a word is what is cognized by the auditory sense-organ, it is vitiated by serious defects. The auditory organ also apprehends qualitative differences of pitch and modulation and such universals as wordhood and the like. These attributes though known through the organ of hearing are not words. Moreover, word is not known only by the auditory organ but also by the mind. So the definition proposed by Kumārila is misleading and apt to create confusion. The verdict of unsophisticated commonsense that 'cow' is a whole word which yields meaning, ought not to be brushed aside as an uncritical appraisal. The unity of the significant word is a felt fact and no amount of quibbling can conjure it away.⁵⁵

Of the various aspects of the complex cognition "cow", Mandana makes clear that it is the sphota or felt word-unity which is capable of conveying meaning and therefore is the essential characteristic --

⁵⁴ K. A. Subramania Iyer, "The Doctrine of Sphota", in Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute, vol. 5, p. 124.

⁵⁵ A summary of part of Mandana's answer to Kumārila, Sphotasiddhi, sutra 3 (cd), as presented by G. Sastri, Philosophy of Word and Meaning, op. cit., p. 105.

without which it would cease to be what it is (lakṣaṇa). Other aspects of the complex cognition such as the particular, the quality, the phonemes, etc., are merely occasional aspects (as in the usual example of a crow sitting on a house) and therefore are called upalaksana.

The next step in the argument occurs when Kumārila extends his definition of the phonemes as śabda to rest not only on their uttered quality but also now on the contention that it is they (and not a so-called sphota) that cause the understanding of meaning.

"Why not say that the phonemes themselves are the cause of the understanding of meaning and that, when grouped according to units of meaning which are understood, they are called words (pada)?"⁵⁶

In rebutting this new contention that it is the phonemes which convey meaning, Maṇḍana reasons as follows. Phonemes cannot singly convey the meaning since, as Kumārila admits, a collection of them in the form of a word or pada is needed. Nor can the phonemes co-exist as a pada since they are uttered singly and perceived in a certain order. When they are spoken by different speakers or in a different order or at the same time they do not convey a meaning. At no time can all the phonemes or letters of a word exist together and work together; their individual natures, being eternal and unchanging, are such that no joint simultaneity is possible. Phonemes are necessarily successive and therefore cannot work together to produce a pada which conveys a meaning. Therefore,

⁵⁶Sphoṭasiddhi, op. cit., sūtra 4, p. 10.

the understanding of meaning which cannot be due to the phonemes points to a cause which is something different from the phonemes (varnas).⁵⁷

Kumārila counters this rebuttal by giving further development to the Mīmāṃsaka view as stated in the Śābara Bhāṣya on Mīmāṃsaka Sūtra 1.1.5. Let it be admitted that the understanding of meaning does not take place from the phonemes in their individual condition, but if when grouped as pada they are seen to acquire some special efficacy which provides for the conveying of meaning, what then remains to block the acceptance of the collection of phonemes alone as pada. Nothing is required but the phonemes. Without them, however, there is no possibility of conveying meaning. In this regard, the case of the phoneme is very much like that of the common seed. The seed will not produce a new effect (a sprout) as long as it is isolated, but when it is helped by a group of other factors such as soil, moisture, etc., the sprout appears. Now the sprout is commonly judged as being the effect of the seed when combined with a group of helping factors. Similarly, these phonemes when combined with a group of helping factors (such as being uttered by the same person in a particular sequence) are commonly held to become the cause of the understanding of meaning. And as a parting shot, Kumārila invokes a principle of "economy": "As long as there is a visible cause and a visible mode of its being, there is no occasion for

⁵⁷ Ibid.

thinking of an invisible cause".⁵⁸

In reply to this, Maṇḍana admits that a special efficacy may be shown to be the property of an otherwise ordinary cause, but maintains that it is just that special efficacy which has not been demonstrated in the case of phonemes as potential conveyers of meaning. Maṇḍana asks, what is the difference between a "w" in the words "cow" and "bow" or an isolated "w"? The obvious difference is that in one instance the "w" is isolated while in each of the words it is accompanied by other phonemes. But can this really be called accompaniment when, by the time of the speaking or hearing of the "w", the other phonemes are no longer being perceived at all. A previously uttered phoneme, which has ceased to exist leaving no trace, and an unborn phoneme (or one which is as yet unspoken) are on the same footing. If previously spoken phonemes can be said to give help to a successor, then it should also be admitted that unspoken phonemes could also be of help -- clearly discrediting the argument. Thus, the previously uttered phonemes "c" and "o" cannot in any way help the "w" to produce a special functional effect since they are dead and gone.⁵⁹

Kumārila responds by putting forth yet another explanation. He offers the example of how the New and Full Moon sacrifices, along

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

⁵⁹ Unlike the subsequent discussion, the above debate assumes no invisible trace or samskara. The last phoneme, helped by the mere visible going before of the other phonemes in the word, is held by Kumārila to cause the understanding of meaning.

with other rites, have sequence and yet produce their effect together -- as do the repeated saying of the Veda for its memorization. In such examples different acts occurring at different times are still found to produce qualitatively and numerically different effects. This same kind of process, he argues, should be accepted in the case of phonemes.⁶⁰ Mandana is quick to note, however, that though these examples may seem plausible they are not parallel to the case of the phonemes. In sequences such as the examples offered, where the resultant is unitary, thinkers agree that the new effect is due to a trace or lasting impression which each of the parts in the series leaves behind and which helps towards the one result. As Mandana puts it, "In New and Full Moon sacrifices and the like, which have sequence, certain new elements (apūrva) which are produced by the acts and which last and are looked upon as powers or functions actually help (in producing the single effect)".⁶¹ In the case of Vedic recitation, the final learning is achieved with the aid of the memory traces left by the preceding repetitions. In the case of both the sacrificial apūrvās and the memory traces, there is a kind of continuing existence or simultaneity which allows for cooperation among the serial instances towards a unitary result. However, Mandana points out, this is clearly not possible in the case of the phonemes which were described above as leaving no trace.

⁶⁰ śāstraśiddhi, op. cit., p. 14.

⁶¹ Ibid., sūtra 5, p. 15.

Kumārila counters by allowing that phonemes may indeed leave lasting traces or impressions (saṃskāras), and through the traces left by the perceptions of the earlier phonemes and the last phoneme, the unity meaning of the word may be conveyed.⁶² The last phoneme, when helped out by the saṃskāras of the previous phonemes, conveys the meaning.

But Maṇḍana finds a fallacy in Kumārila's reasoning. Maṇḍana points out that saṃskāras which are generated by individual phonemes can only reinstate those same individual phonemes. The memory trace or saṃskāra for each phoneme will be present, but, just as in the case of the original utterance or hearing, only individually -- when the "w" is uttered, or remembered, the saṃskāras for the "c" and "o" will have ceased to exist. There can only be the cognition of one phoneme at a time, and this principle applies equally to the saṃskāra and the original utterance or hearing of the phoneme. Thus, the possibility of phonemes producing saṃskāras gets one no closer to accounting for the generation of a meaning-whole.⁶³

Kumārila defends his position by once again introducing an argument from "economy" (i.e., the position having to resort to the least numbers of postulated special powers or entities is best). Now it is agreed that each phoneme in both its original utterance or hearing or in its saṃskāra cannot co-exist with other phonemes so as to give the meaning of the word. Therefore, some cause for the occurrence of meaning must be postulated. The weakness of the Sphota

⁶² Ibid., p. 16.

⁶³ Ibid., sūtra 6, p. 16.

theory is that it has to make too many postulations: (1) it must postulate the existence of the sphota as some kind of unseen entity, and (2) it must then impose upon this postulated sphota the capacity to convey meaning. For the Sphota theorist two things have to be postulated. The upholder of the phoneme, on the other hand, has to make only one additional postulation. As has already been made clear, the existence of the saṃskāra is accepted by both the disputants. The only point at issue is whether or not it can be the cause of the understanding of meaning. All that is needed, claims Kumārila, is that a new function be postulated for the saṃskāra, which everyone agrees exists. It is the cognition of the final phoneme, accompanied by the special function of the saṃskāras of the previous phonemes, that conveys the meaning. Thus only one additional postulation is required, the postulation of a new function for the saṃskāras. The Sphota theorist is in an inferior position because he has to postulate both a new substance (i.e., the sphota) and a new function (i.e., its ability to convey meaning).⁶⁴

To Mandana, Kumārila's explanation seems to be an oversimplification. The memory impression or saṃskāra is not seen but is a capacity or function which is inferred from the existence of the original phoneme. The difficulty comes when Kumārila postulates yet another function as resulting from the saṃskāra which is itself already an inferred function. Mandana maintains that the postulation of functions of functions, etc., is unacceptable because it results

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 17-18.

in an infinite regress (anavasthā). In addition to this problem of infinite regress, Mandana finds logical weaknesses in Kumārila's view that it is the cognition of the final phoneme, accompanied by the cognitions of the previous phonemes that conveys the meaning. This cannot hold, says Mandana, since the saṃskāras left by the letters are the same even when their order is reversed. How is it then that the meanings of the words "now" and "won" are not identical? Since the letters and saṃskāras involved in the two words are identical, their meanings should also be identical and this is clearly not the case.^{65 66}

Letting go of this argument, Kumārila takes up his final and seemingly most potent line of attack. He returns to the proposition that the last phoneme, accompanied by the saṃskāras of the previous phonemes, expresses the meaning. But to avoid the difficulties encountered above, he now defines saṃskāra not as a memory

⁶⁵ Ibid., sūtra 7, p. 19.

⁶⁶ For our present purposes, sūtras 8 and 9 are omitted as obscure variations on the same argument stated in sūtra 7. Whereas in sūtra 7 Kumārila's position is that it is the cognition of the final phoneme accompanied by the saṃskāras of the previous phonemes that conveys the meaning, in sūtras 8 and 9 a variant and rather obscure interpretation is given suggesting that all the phonemes together convey the meaning. Although this seems to allow for a kind of felt unity, it is open to the same objections regarding order of phonemes in relation to meaning that Mandana marshalled against Kumārila's position in sūtra 7. See, G. Saatri, Philosophy of Word and Meaning, op. cit., pp. 109-111.

trace, but rather as "something else which is brought about by the cognition of the phonemes uttered separately in a fixed order by a particular speaker and leading to the understanding of meaning and it is similar to the effect called apurva (residual force) brought about by the performance of the different rites like a sacrifice and leading to heaven".⁶⁷ The distinguishing feature of the saṃskāra which causes remembrance is that it causes something similar to that which produced it. This, however, is not the case of apurva in a sacrifice. In a sacrifice, the individual acts performed perish immediately, but the apurva or after-effect of the whole sacrifice inheres in the self of the sacrificer as a special kind of potency until it brings the reward of heaven. Its result is thus very different from its cause, and this unusual kind of causal relationship is necessitated by scripture's declaration that the performance of a sacrifice produces such a result. In Kumārila's view, the apurva or after-effect kind of saṃskāra which is left by the different letters upon the subject is analogous to such religious leaven. Just as in a sacrifice it is the determinate order of performance by a single agent that is responsible for the spiritual leaven, here also the determinate order of the phonemes uttered by a single person is responsible for the unusual result. So it is when the last phoneme being spoken or heard in the midst of the "leavening" effect of the saṃskāras of the previous phonemes that the

⁶⁷ Sphotasiddhi, op. cit., sūtra 10, p. 30.

meaning is conveyed.⁶⁸ For Kumārila, śabda is the last phoneme being heard or spoken and conveying the meaning (when helped by the saṃskāras of the previous phonemes). The exact nature of this help is that the saṃskāras of the previous phonemes become a kind of intermediate cause (vyāpāra).⁶⁹ They help the last phoneme in its task of conveying meaning. This does not depreciate the causal value of the previous phonemes in any way since it is in harmony with their purpose -- the phonemes are not uttered just for the sake of pronouncing letters or leaving impressions, but also for the purpose of conveying a meaning.⁷⁰ This importance of and necessity for the phonemes as causing the conveyance of meaning must also be admitted by the proponent of the sphota or indivisible word, Kumārila claims. The proponent of the sphota or undivided word-entity has to admit that it is manifested by the phonemes uttered or heard in a definite order. As no single letter can be said to reveal the sphota, it must then be revealed by all the phonemes combined with one another. Nor can it be that each phoneme in succession reveals only a part of the sphota because the sphota, by definition, is held to be a simple indivisible whole. And, for the very reasons given by the Sphota theorist himself, the phonemes of a word existing in a

⁶⁸ The Philosophy of Word and Meaning, op. cit., p. 112.

⁶⁹ K. A. Subramania Iyer, The Doctrine of Sphota, op. cit., p. 130.

⁷⁰ Sphotasiddhi, op. cit., sūtra 10, p. 31.

fixed sequence have no way of pooling themselves or their saṃskāras so as to result in a unitary whole. Just as the Mīmāṃsaka has been forced to do, so also the Sphoṭa theorist is forced to have recourse to postulating some special kind of leaven of saṃskāra by means of which the phonemes reveal the whole meaning. Why then, asks Kumārila (recalling his "economy" principle once more), does he not attribute the conveying of meaning to a special saṃskāra function itself and leave out the extra step of postulating a sphoṭa? In postulating the sphoṭa there is both the postulation of a special kind of saṃskāra and the postulation of the sphoṭa. For these reasons, concludes Kumārila, "it is better to assume that the special saṃskāra which has to be postulated conveys the meaning (rather than that it reveals the word)".⁷¹

Mandana answers the above criticism by making clear that the Sphoṭa theory does not postulate a new kind of apūrva for the conveyance of meaning. Sphoṭa theory needs nothing more than the postulation of the ordinary saṃskāra or memory trace. It is just the commonly accepted saṃskāras (or vāsanās — dispositions) that result in the revelation of the sphoṭa. The only new thing postulated by Sphoṭa theory is the sphoṭa itself, and in fact even that need not be postulated because it is directly perceptible.⁷² Now, maintains Mandana, this is far superior to the position of Kumārila where the one new thing (i.e., the apūrva type saṃskāra)

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., sūtra 11, p. 34.

cannot be perceived and has to be postulated on the authority of scripture and on analogy to religious merit. Even this analogy is very weak since although the postulation of apūrva or religious merit is necessary to validate the moral law and religious rites, there is no such necessity in the apprehension of the word and its meaning. The cases are not parallel. Also ignored is the common man's intuition, "I understand the meaning from the word", and teaching of tradition that "the word, the meaning and their relation is eternal".⁷³ There is a natural connection between word and meaning which is inalienable. The conventions that we learn as children serve only to bring that relation out and to make the meaning present to us. Mandana summarizes his rejection of Kumārila's position as follows: "Because it has been said that the impressions, after all, do not constitute the word, the final phoneme is not expressive, [therefore] a collection of phonemes does not constitute the word and it does not convey any meaning".⁷⁴

Perhaps it would be helpful to pause here and outline the chief points made by each side in the argument.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Outline of Chief Points in the Argument

Kumarila (Mīmāṃsā)

1. Śabda refers to phoneme as uttered.
2. Phonemes cause the understanding of meaning when grouped together in the form of words (pada).
3. Various suggestions as to how the phonemes could be grouped together so as to convey meaning:
 - (a) e.g., seed. Just as a seed will produce a new effect (sprout) when helped by other factors, so also the phonemes when combined with a group of helping factors (such as being uttered by the same person in a particular sequence) will result in the conveying of meaning.
 - (b) via. saṃskāras. Phonemes leave memory traces so that the traces of the earlier phonemes together with the utterance of the last phoneme conveys the meaning.
 - (c) via apūrva. Phonemes leave impressions different from the ones which cause remembrance, and are like apūrva in a sacrifice, where the unified result is different in nature from the individual causes (parts of the sacrifice). When spoken by a single person in a determinate order, the apūrva of the phonemes inhere in the self so

Mandana (Sphota)

1. Śabda refers to sphota or indivisible word-whole which is a felt-fact in common experience.
2. Because of their ubiquitous and eternal nature, phonemes (as defined by Mīmāṃsakas) can only exist singly and cannot possibly co-exist as pada so as to convey meaning. This inability of the phonemes to convey meanings points to the sphota as the revealer of meaning.
3. Difficulties vitiating each suggestion:
 - (a) How can being uttered by the same person in a particular sequence make the discrete phonemes c-o-w into a word when each letter vanishes completely before the subsequent one is uttered?
 - (b) Saṃskāras, like their original individual phonemes, have only discrete existences vanishing completely before subsequent ones come into existence -- therefore no possibility for grouping into a word or conveying meaning exists.
 - (c) Analogy from the apūrva of religious merit (which is based on an inference from scripture so as to validate the moral law) to the saṃskāras of phonemes rendering them capable of conveying meaning is unjustifiable. Rather it is the case that the ordinary memory traces of the phonemes reveal the already existing inherent

that when the last phoneme is uttered the śabda is understood and its meaning conveyed.

4. In the above view 3(c) only one new thing (i.e., the special apūrva-like power) need be postulated, whereas Maṇḍana postulates two or three new things -- a special saṃskāra and a sphoṭa (and a special power of that sphoṭa -- conveying of meaning).

sphoṭa which provides awareness of the whole and determines the order of the phonemes.

4. Only new thing postulated is sphoṭa itself and even that need not be postulated since it is directly perceptible. Saṃskāra referred to is the common memory trace which has the same object as that of the uttered phoneme (i.e., the sphoṭa). The unified sphoṭa was the original cause of the phoneme and is the end-object of both it and its saṃskāra. Thus no special or illogical power, such as apūrva is postulated.

In this logical argument, it seems clear that Kumārila's attempt to identify śabda with the uttered phoneme is effectively discredited by the reasoning of Maṇḍana, who at the same time has vindicated the identification of śabda with sphoṭa. Although the logical groundwork has largely been completed, Maṇḍana still has to describe in detail exactly how śabda as sphoṭa may be comprehended using only ordinary memory traces of the phonemes to reveal the sphoṭa. He must also show the sphoṭa to be not a mere postulation but a perceivable reality, otherwise much of his logical argument simply collapses. These tasks he undertakes in sūtras 18 and 19 of the Sphotasiddhi.

In his explanation Maṇḍana depends upon the basic concepts put forward by Bhartṛhari in Chapter I of his Vākyapadīya.⁷⁵ The

⁷⁵ As Iyer notes, the thoughts put forward by Maṇḍana are not original but essentially a restatement of the ideas and analogies offered by Bhartṛhari in his Vākyapadīya, Chapter I, with the Vrtti. "Introduction" to Sphotasiddhi, op. cit., p. 10.

sphota is something over and above the phonemes. The phonemes are changeable (capable of variations such as accent, speed, etc.), and when uttered serve only to manifest the changeless sphota which exists within the speaker and is potentially present within every hearer. The phonemes do not convey the meaning, but the sphota, once manifested, conveys the meaning. Between the sphota and its word-meaning aspect the relation is that of expression and thing or meaning expressed. This is a natural relationship which is indestructable and beginningless. Convention only serves to bring it out. Bhartrhari emphasizes that the sphota is an entity which is within each person. All of us have the capacity to instinctively feel its existence within, and ultimately to directly perceive it with the mind. The contention that the sphota may be directly perceived, and is not merely a thing which is inferred, is one of the key points of Sphota theory.⁷⁶ Keeping these basic concepts in mind, let us now examine Mandana's detailed description of just how the sphota is both cognized and perceived without recourse to any new apurva-type postulations.

The process by which the sphota is cognized is stated by Mandana in his commentary on sūtra 18 of the Sphotasiddhi as follows:

Each sound individually reveals the whole sphota. Nor do the other sounds thus become useless because there is a difference in the revelation. It is like this: All the previous sounds bring about in the listener whose mind is free from any

⁷⁶ Sphotasiddhi, op. cit., "Introduction", p. 10.

particular residual impression [saṃskāra], cognitions in which the word figures vaguely and which sow seeds in the form of residual impressions capable of producing a later clear cognition of the word. The last sound produces a clear cognition in which figures, as it were, clearly the image of the sphota caused by all the seeds in the form of residual impressions left by the vague cognitions of the previous sounds.⁷⁷

Mandana offers the analogy of a jeweller who examines the genuineness of a precious stone. His continuous gaze is really a series of cognitions, each of which perceives the genuineness of the stone but with increasing clarity. Each cognition leaves its saṃskāra or common memory trace. The last cognition, helped by the saṃskāra of the previous ones, fully perceives the genuineness of the stone. But for the saṃskāras of the intervening cognitions, there would be no difference between the last one and the first one. An important point is that the jeweller is described as "expert", meaning that before beginning the examination he already had the image of a precious stone ingrained in his subconscious, and it was this image (like the inhering sphota) which was revealed to the jeweller's mind by his series of partial perceptions.

The sphota is a unity which already exists in the mind of the speaker. He utters sounds in order to manifest it and once manifested the sphota conveys the meaning. A reasonable explanation of this process by which the sphota and its meaning are held to be

⁷⁷ Ibid., sūtra 18, p. 44.

revealed is offered by Śeṣakṛṣṇa in his Sphotatattvanirūpana. As the phoneme "c" is spoken by someone intending to say "cow", the hearer grasps not only the phoneme "c" but also the whole word rather vaguely, since it is now known that the speaker is pronouncing a word beginning with "c" and not with any other sound. But there are a multitude of words beginning with "c" and we do not know which one is going to be uttered, thus the vagueness of our knowledge. However, when the speaker utters the next phoneme, "o", the field of possible words is further narrowed. All words not having "co" at the beginning are now excluded, and the hearer's knowledge of the whole is less vague. When the final phoneme, "w", is uttered, all doubt disappears as the "w" unites with the memory traces "co" to manifest the whole sphoṭa "cow", which immediately conveys its meaning.⁷⁸

The above explanation makes clear the reason behind Mandana's insistence that a speaker's efforts to utter the phonemes will differ according to the sphoṭa which he wants to manifest. Even though the phoneme may be the same (e.g., the "w" in "won" and "now"), the physical effort involved in vocalizing it will vary according to the position it occupies in the word. Thus the overall physical effort in saying "won" will be markedly different from that involved in saying "now", even though the same three phonemes are involved in each case. Consequently, the Sphoṭa theorist has a

⁷⁸As quoted by K. A. S. Iyer, The Doctrine of Sphoṭa, op. cit., p. 136.

basis for claiming that the sphotas manifested by the two vocalizations would be different, as would the meanings revealed.⁷⁹

This last point is important in relation to the Mīmāṃsaka contention that since the phonemes are changeless no mere difference in order or effort of vocalization can be important factors in the production of different meanings. Therefore, according to the Mīmāṃsaka, were it not for the postulation of the special "apūrva-like effect", the same meaning should result from "now" and "won". From the Sphota viewpoint, however, it is the sphota which is changeless and not the phoneme. And the evident variations in the pronunciation and ordering of phonemes in speaking different words is seen to be consistent with both Sphota theory and the evidence of experience. "Now" and "won" are composed of the same three phonemes but do require that the vocalization of those phonemes be given different orders and intentions or efforts for the appropriate sphota to be manifested and its meaning revealed.

The strength of this Sphota explanation as to how the word-meaning is revealed rests not only on its concurrence with experience but also on the fact that no new kind of saṃskāra is postulated. The saṃskāra employed is the usual trace providing for the remembrance of the phoneme which originally caused it.

"The weak point of the Mīmāṃsaka explanation", as Iyer puts it, "was that it either postulated a new power for the ordinary kind

⁷⁹ Sphotasiddhi, op. cit., p. 12.

of residual trace, or postulated a new kind of residual trace in order to explain the fact that, though caused by the cognition of the sound, it does not stop at causing a remembrance of it but causes the understanding of the meaning also".⁸⁰ In other words, the *saṃskāra* is supposed to have an object different from that of the cognition which deposited it in the first place. And this, says the Sphota theorist, is a logical impossibility. In his case, the original sphota (which lay behind the vocalization of the phonemes by the speaker) and the end sphota (which is the object of both the uttered phonemes and their *saṃskāras*) are one and the same. Consequently, the object (i.e., the sphota) of the phonemes and the *saṃskāras* is identical, and there is no logical difficulty of the kind which besets the Mīmāṃsaka.

Another aspect of the Sphota explanation, which is emphasized both in the *Vṛtti* on *Vākyapadiya* I:89 and by Mandana in his comment on sūtra 19 of the *Sphotasiddhi*, is that the final clear perception of the sphota is achieved through a series of errors. The analogy is offered of how from a distance one (if one is in India) may mistake a tree for an elephant. But if one keeps on looking at it, the tree is ultimately recognized in its true form. In this situation the truth has been arrived at through a series of errors. The sense organ (in this case the eye) has been in contact with the tree throughout. The errors of perception have

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, "Introduction", p. 13.

had the tree as their object, but the cognitions produced by the eye have had an elephant as their form. When, however, the final or true cognition takes place, it has the form of the tree itself and is one with its object. But this true cognition has been arrived at by going through the series of erroneous perceptions that preceded it. Now this change from error to true perception cannot be explained by factors such as change in distance, since simply standing in the same spot and gazing with intense concentration often produces the described result. According to Mandana, "it is the previous cognitions (having tree as the object and the form of the elephant) leaving progressively clearer residual impressions, which become the cause of the clear perception of the tree".⁸¹ There could have been no erroneous cognition of elephant had the tree not been there as an object for the sense organ to come into contact with in the first place. The error, therefore, may be described as misapprehension or vague perception. In the context of our discussion about words, the sphota is similarly said to be the object of the cognitions of each of the phonemes and yet it at first appears in the form of the phoneme. But through the additional cognitions of the subsequent phonemes, the sphota is seen with increasing clarity until with the uttering of the final phoneme the form of the phonemes has become identical with that of the sphota. Here the phonemes are seen in a position which at first glance seems parallel to the snake in the

⁸¹ Ibid., sūtra 19. Similar arguments are offered to show how the progressively clearer perception cannot be attributed to defects of the senses or memory through resemblance, p. 49.

famous rope-snake illusion of the Advaita Vedāntins. The perception of the rope as snake is error, but it is through the negating of the erroneous snake-perception that the true rope-perception is finally realized. And were it not for the prior existence of the rope, the erroneous perception would have lacked the necessary ground for its phenomenal existence. Similarly, in this case, the phonemes are seen as dependent upon the sphota for their phenomenal existence, but in that phenomenal existence as being the means by which the noumenal sphota may be perceived. This apparent parallelism, however, does not hold up under closer analysis. As noted previously, Advaita theory provides for only true or false cognitions and allows no progressive approximation to the real, as is the case in a series of erroneous sphota perceptions. Whereas the Advaitin describes his error as being transcended via a single negation (e.g., as when it is realized "this is not snake"), the Grammarian holds that his error (e.g., the vagueness of the perception of the whole in the first phoneme) is positively overcome by the increasingly clear perception of the sphota which the succeeding phonemes reveal. This analysis of how error is overcome would seem to give further weight to Sastri's suggestion, noted above, that in some ways the doctrine of reflection (ābhāsa) of the Kashmir Trika writers may provide the closest parallel to Sphota theory. In the Kashmir Trika view consciousness (caitanya) is the only reality, and all external manifestation is held to be a reflection on consciousness as on a mirror. Error, in this view, occurs not because the initial perception has no existence, but because its reflection of the object

captures or includes only a part of its totality and adds in other material (saṃskāras) taken from the old stock of memory. This error is positively transcended as the form of the reflection is progressively purified of memory material until it perfectly reflects the object. This perfect reflection, which is true knowledge, is further described as a union of the subjective and objective aspects of consciousness -- a return to the oneness which is its essential nature.⁸² From this brief glance at the Kashmir ābhāsa theory, it would seem to provide a helpful parallel supporting the Sphota view of the way in which the manifest phonemes erroneously but positively approximate their true object, the sphota itself.

Returning to Mandana, his explanation of the paradox as to how the indivisible sphota appears as the phonemes, and the phonemes as the parts of the partless sphota is as follows. He says it is the sounds that resemble one another which are the cause of both the error and the final correct cognition of the sphota. If, for the manifestation of two different word-sphotas, one has to make similar movements of the vocal organs, the phonemes produced by these movements appear to be parts of both of the indivisible words.⁸³ This is an error which is fostered by the construction of such artificial devices as alphabet letters or word syllables, usually for teaching purposes. It is precisely because of this kind of confusion, says

⁸² K. C. Pandey, Abhinavagupta. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 2nd ed., 1963, the ābhāsa theory is summarized on pp. 400-427.

⁸³ Sphotasiddhi, op. cit., sūtra 20, pp. 51-52; and Vākyapadīya, I:88, "Vṛtti".

Mandana, that sentences, words, and phonemes appear to have parts whereas in reality they have none.⁸⁴ The obverse of this applies to the sphota. From the phenomenal viewpoint the sphota "cow", for example, may appear to possess qualities such as accent, speed, loudness, time, place, and person in its utterance. That these are qualities of the phenomenal sounds and not the noumenal sphota is what makes possible the common recognition of the word "cow" in spite of its diversity of utterance. From the Sphota viewpoint, it is this noumenal grounding or basis that makes possible such things as the translation of thought from one phenomenal language to another.

A subsequent scholar of considerable note, Vācaspati Miśra, attempts to reject Mandana's conception of the relation between the phonemes and the sphota.⁸⁵ This criticism occurs in its fullest form in Vācaspati's Tattvabindu. The argument is stated as follows: "The particular sounds which manifest sphota, are they different from sphota or non-different therefrom?"⁸⁶ If non-different, says Vācaspati, then each phoneme should manifest the sphota and the remaining phonemes would be futile. If different, then there is no

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ It should perhaps be noted here that no less a person than Śaṅkara argued against the Sphota theory (Vedānta-Sūtra-Bhāṣya I.3.28). See also the recent analysis of Śaṅkara's objection to Sphota by A. L. Herman, "Sphota", Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute 19, 1963, pp. 1-21. Śaṅkara and Kumārila both base their criticism on acārya Upavaśa, and their objections are somewhat different than the debate between Vācaspati and Mandana.

⁸⁶ This and the following sentences are taken from the translation by S.S.S. Sastri in his article "Vācaspati's Criticism of Sphota-Vāda", in Collected Papers of S.S. Suryanarayana Sastri. Madras: University of Madras, 1961, p. 296.

ground for the relating of the phonemes to the manifestation of the sphota. And if the phonemes are treated as illusory, then their reality is discredited -- yet in experience we undoubtedly cognize individual letters. What is the justification for treating such cognitions as illusory?

In supporting the Sphota argument of Mandana, S. S. S. Sastri effectively answers these criticisms of Vacaspati as follows. To the criticisms regarding difference and non-difference Sastri replies,

Such a question has little application to Mandana's doctrine. To him indeed sphota is non-different from the sounds, as a whole is from its parts; and yet it is different too, since the whole is neither each part nor a mere aggregate of parts. The existence and functioning of such wholes can only be denied by defective psychology.⁸⁷

And as regards the justification for treating cognitions of the phonemes as illusory, Sastri answers,

The obvious reply is that not the existence of these cognitions but their significance is in question, just as in the case of the reflection. The reflection exists without doubt, but it is not real. And sublation in this case consists not in that presentation ceasing to be or giving place to another presentation, but in that presentation as such failing to fulfil what is expected of it. If each cognition as an independent part could by combination with other such parts explain the whole, then it would be unsublated; since, however, it fails of its purpose, since it seems to fit in more naturally with a theory which treats it not as producer but as manifest, it is in so far forth sublated. The

⁸⁷ Ibid.

reflection is sublated not as a reflection, but as the face; the letter-cognition is sublated not as letter-cognition but as an independent productive constituent of meaning.⁸⁸

Sastri observes that Vācaspati adopts and attempts to further develop Kumārila's viewpoint by trying to show that meaning somehow results from the phonemes entering into a single memory. But, as Sastri points out, such an explanation is untenable in the light of experience. If "cowness" is associated with the remembered letters "c", "o", "w", that meaning should not be recalled except when all three letters are present. How is it then that when there is a misprint such as "coe" or a mispronunciation such as "coo" we still correctly apprehend the meaning to be "cow"? The same sort of thing is evident when a letter or sound is omitted in the course of writing or speaking. The explanation in all of these situations would seem to be that we do not pass from part to part but rather apprehend the whole filling up gaps or correcting errors when they occur.⁸⁹

With regard to memory and sequence, Vācaspati, following Kumārila, maintains that in the memory itself the phonemes have no sequence being presented together, but memory follows experience, conforms to it, and the sequence in which the letters are experienced are repeated in memory. This contention, however, does not square with the view that letters, being eternal and pervasive, can have no sequence belonging to themselves. This difficulty is overcome

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 300.

in the Sphota view which holds that the sequence is determined by something other than the letters -- the sphota intended. It is not the case that the letters in sequence constitute the word, rather, it is the word or sphota that determines the sequence. The question may then be asked, is the word existent or non-existent prior to the phonemes being apprehended in sequence? In purely empirical terms, the question may be shelved by saying that though not present in my mind before I learn the sequence, it is present in the mind of another who instructs me; and in this fashion the process may be pushed further and further back, there being no authority for postulating the origin of language at any particular time. But such empirical indefiniteness does not seem adequate in the face of the common ground which necessarily appears to underlie all empirical languages -- requiring the sphota interpretation that the word both is and is not prior to the apprehension of sequence. This paradox is ridiculed by Vācaspati who describes it as the Sphota claim that the unreal helps the real. Sastri, in answer, states the Sphota argument, "It is real, otherwise it could not be manifested in sequence; it is not existent, otherwise there would be no need for manifestation".⁹⁰ This solution, Sastri observes, is in line with the solution of the problems of human knowledge and activity in general. "Knowledge is of the novel and yet not of the non-existent. Activity realizes a purpose which is real yet not actual".⁹¹ As

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 301.

⁹¹ Ibid.

both the Advaita Vedāntists and the Sphota theorists point out, the only solution to this paradox, which seems to be universally present in human experience, would seem to be the taking of the phenomenal as partial and therefore defective and illusory appearances of the unitary real. It is from this viewpoint that Sphota theory claims there is a given whole (i.e., sphota) which is increasingly revealed by particular phonemes uttered in sequence. As Sastri concisely puts it, "The succeeding sounds make more clear what was less clearly expressed by the preceding sounds; the latter provides the substructure, the former the superstructure, while all of them together reveal the one design, which while prompting their utterance is certainly not produced by them".⁹²

This same paradox is described by Mandana in his analysis of the relation between the universal and the particular. When one perceives the universal of an object, we perceive the particular and its qualities also, yet the essential cognition is that of the universal. To put it another way, when the cognition of the whole takes place we are also aware of the parts which make up the whole, but it is the cognition of the whole which is dominant.⁹³ Mandana offers the example of a picture. He points out that in our cognition of a picture, although we may be aware of the different parts and colours, the picture is perceived as a whole which is over and above

⁹² Ibid., p. 293.

⁹³ Sphotasiddhi, op. cit., "Introduction", p. 17.

its parts.⁹⁴ Similarly, when we perceive a piece of cloth our cognition is of the cloth as a whole and is quite distinct from the particular threads and colours involved.⁹⁵

In both of these examples there is a necessary perception of the parts prior to the perception of the whole. This aspect is brought out clearly by Bhartrhari who describes the painter as going through three stages when he paints a picture: "When a painter wishes to paint a figure having parts like that of a man,

⁹⁴ Ibid., sūtra 24, p. 64. See also K.A.S. Iyer's article, "The Conception of Guna Among the Vaiyyakaraṇas", in which he makes clear that from the Sphoṭa viewpoint whatever distinction of degree or part is made in an object must be done through a guṇa (quality or particular). For the Grammarians it is the guṇa and never the universal which serves to express degrees in objects. New Indian Antiquary V(6), pp. 121-130.

It should also be noted that of the many possible ways of interpreting the universal, Bhartrhari prefers the following. A movement like lifting the hand consists of a series of movements. As these movements are transitory they cannot co-exist and form a whole of which they would be the parts and in which the universal of the movement of lifting the hand would inhere. Now such a universal is more specific than the wider universal of movement in general. Although it inheres in each moment of movement, it is not capable of being cognized in them alone due to too much similarity between moments of lifting and those of the moments of other movements such as turning the hand. The moments of each movement are the result of a special effort to make that movement and they are the substrata of the universal of that movement. But that universal cannot be cognized until a series of moments has been cognized. One or two moments of movement are not enough, but after a series of moments is cognized the cognition of the universal inherent in each moment becomes clear. Lifting, for example, may be identified and other movements such as turning excluded. The process is similar in the manifestation of sphoṭas. Each is manifested by a series of special efforts to utter phonemes. One or two utterances of the series are not enough to eliminate other words with similar sounds. But as the complete series of phonemes is cognized, the cognition of the sphoṭa or universal of the particular word is clearly perceived and meaningful usage of it in speech becomes possible. Vakyapadiya II:20-21 as interpreted by K.A.S. Iyer in Bhartrhari, op. cit., pp. 168-169.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

he first sees it gradually in a sequence, then as the object of a single cognition and then paints it on cloth or on a wall in sequence".⁹⁶ So also the hearer of a word perceives the word in a sequence of phonemes which manifest in him the whole word as the object of a single cognition. As a speaker, however, he utters the whole word in its differentiated appearance as a sequence of phonemes. It is in this context that the perception of the many phonemes, before the final perception of the unitary sphota, is described as error, illusion or appearance. But it is a unique kind of error in that it has a fixed sequence and form, ultimately leads to the perception of the truth, and is thus regarded as a universal error.⁹⁷ The chief cause of this universal error is described as avidyā or the limitation which is individual self-consciousness. A characteristic of this avidyā is that it provides no other means for cognizing the sphota, except the phonemes. That is why all individual selves universally experience the same error with regard to speech; but, it is an error which ultimately leads to cognition of truth. It is only through this error or appearance of differentiation that the individual sphota comes within the

⁹⁶ Vākyapadiya, op. cit., I:52, p. 59.

⁹⁷ If one moves beyond Sanskrit itself and into the world of languages, I would take the universal error as referring to the necessity of going from the-differentiated phonemes (the error) to the whole sphota (meaning or ultimate reality). The fixed sequence and form of differentiation for a particular word-sphota would only be a constant error within each language (such as Sanskrit).

range of worldly usage so that we ordinary mortals have a way of comprehending it.⁹⁸ To illustrate this point, both Bhartrhari and Mandana make reference to the Vaiśeṣika conception that when two things are brought before us we first perceive each one separately and only on the basis of these separate perceptions does the notion of two arise. This is true for all higher numbers -- their cognition and production is possible only by way of previously cognized lower numbers. So also it is by way of the lower differentiated forms of speech that the higher unities, the word-sphoṭas, may be understood.⁹⁹

Reference has been made to the apparent parallel between the Sphoṭa and Advaita Vedānta views of error; however, a significant difference in interpretation was seen to exist. Whereas the Advaitin usually describes the error as being transcended via negation (e.g., as when it is said "this is not snake"), the Grammarian holds that the error (e.g., the vagueness of the perception of the whole in the first phoneme) is positively overcome by the increasingly clear cognition of the sphoṭa which the succeeding phonemes reveal.¹⁰⁰ And the final clear cognition is a case of perfect perception or pratibhā which, as will be shown in section three of this Chapter, is seen by the Grammarian as synonymous with Veda and the third or

⁹⁸ Vākyapadīya, op. cit., I:85, p. 86.

⁹⁹ Ibid., I:87, p. 87, and Sphoṭasiddhi, op. cit., sūtra 21, p. 53.

¹⁰⁰ Sphoṭasiddhi, op. cit., sūtra 22, pp. 58-59.

paśyanti stage of speech.¹⁰¹ At the more mundane level of psychological functioning, however, the positive process of perfecting the perception is described by Iyer as follows:

[The final] clear cognition is a case of perception. The previous cognitions also had the sphoṭa as their object, but the cognition of it was vague and that is why they had the form of the sounds....But when the final cognition reveals the sphoṭa in all its clarity and distinctness, it no longer has the form of sounds. The error has given place to truth. Such a cognition can only be perception. The object and forms of the cognition are now identical.¹⁰²

This conformity between the object and the form of the cognition is referred to by Bhartṛhari as a certain fitness (yogatā) between the sounds and the sphoṭa which results in the clear manifestation of the word.¹⁰³ The perfect perception in which there is identity between the object (i.e., the sphoṭa) and the form of its cognition (i.e., the phonemes or sounds) is a special kind of perception which -- the modern reader must realize -- is held to be a function of the mind¹⁰⁴ rather than the external sense

¹⁰¹ The Doctrine of Pratibhā in Indian Philosophy, op. cit., p. 14.

¹⁰² Sphoṭasiddhi, op. cit., "Introduction", p. 26.

¹⁰³ Vākyapadīya, op. cit., I:78-I:84, pp. 81-85. Among the analogies offered to explain the process, Bhartṛhari's favourite seems to be that the sounds leave impression-seeds (samskāra-bīja) which, as they mature in the mind, are conducive to an increasingly clear perception of the sphoṭa -- to which they finally offer a perfect "fitness" or identity. A literal rendering of yogatā could be "to fit in a frame" -- the "fit" of the "matured" series of phonemes into the "frame" of the sphoṭa. See also Vṛtti on Vākyapadīya, III:1:8, p. 12.

¹⁰⁴ The phrase "function of the mind" here is intended to indicate that pratibhā is not a function of the ordinary senses (of the Buddhist stage of consciousness), but is characteristic of the pre-buddhi or śabdatattva stage. This distinction will be developed in detail in Part Two.

organs. While the psychological nature of such a special or perfect perception will be discussed in Part Two of this study, it is pertinent to note in the context of the philosophical analysis of Part One that the designation of the final cognition of the sphota as a case of perception rather than inference has important logical implications.¹⁰⁵ Mandana puts the point clearly:

The revelation (of an object) clearly or vaguely is confined to direct perception. In the case of the other means of knowledge there is either apprehension (of the object) or not at all.¹⁰⁶

According to almost all schools of Indian Philosophy, the valid means of knowledge (pramāṇas), other than perception, either reveal the object completely or do not reveal it at all. There can be increasing degrees of knowledge only in the case of perception. This is most important for Sphota theory in its contention that the error due to the vagueness of perception of the initial phonemes may be gradually and positively overcome, as described above. It is also crucial for the Sphota theory in its contention that the existence of the sphota is not a postulation, as the Mīmāṃsakas maintain, but is proven by direct perception.

Relation between sphota and word-meaning

The above debate between Kumārila and Mandana has concentrated

¹⁰⁵ It should be clearly understood here that perfect perception or pratibhā, however valid in itself, remains outside the realm of pramāṇa (which is characterized by sensory perception and discursive cognition). With regard to language, therefore, it is sphota when manifested as speech that is pramāṇa (and not sphota at the unified level of pratibhā). The point made above, however, still stands. The cognition of sphota at the level of either śabda pramāṇa or pratibhā is via direct perception rather than inference.

¹⁰⁶ Sphotasiddhi, op. cit., sūtra 23, p. 60.

primarily on the nature of the relationship between the parts or phonemes and the word as an uttered whole. In Mandana's Sphotasiddhi, the way in which the external word-sounds manifest the unitary sphota has been the point of focus. Throughout it has been assumed that once the sphota is revealed the word-meaning is also known, due to a natural and indestructible relationship between the two. Mandana seems to do little more than affirm that this is indeed the case, and that it is self-evident in our experience.¹⁰⁷ Here Mandana seems to be depending on Bhartrhari's argument in the Vākyapadīya. Indeed, this aspect of the Sphota theory, the relation between the sphota and the word-meaning, receives major attention in Chapter Three, Part One of the Vākyapadīya. Bhartrhari begins by pointing out that unless there is a relation between the word and its meaning, any word would convey any meaning — but that does not happen in experience. He maintains that when words are uttered three things are understood: (1) their own form (the uttered series of phonemes), (2) their meaning, and (3) the intention of the speaker. The relationship between these three he holds to be fixed and not created by man.¹⁰⁸ Of these three, the first can sometimes be cognized without the other two (e.g., as in the case of the child who can hear and correctly repeat or imitate the form of the word

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, Sphotasiddhi, op. cit., sūtras 11, 18 and 19.

¹⁰⁸ Vākyapadīya, op. cit., III.3.1, p. 76 (Iyer's English translation).

even though he has no notion of its meaning or of the meaning intended by the speaker). This own-form is said to be closest to the sphota (antarāṅga); it is never apart from the sphota and is distinct for each sphota. The relation between the first and second aspects, the own-form and the meaning, is characterized "natural fitness" or yogyatā (referred to previously as the "fitting" of the sounds into the "frame" of the sphota), and is described by Bhartrhari as the relation of the expression and the meaning or thing expressed (vācya-vācakabhāva).¹⁰⁹ Iyer has drawn attention to the fact that the relations between the own-form and the sphota, and the own-form and the meaning, are both described as yogyatā or natural fitness. Thus, the own-form is also looked upon as a vācya (that which is expressed). Of course as soon as it is understood, it becomes vācaka or expressive of the meaning, but in the first instance it is vācya -- the own-form which conveys the meaning, yet which is also illuminated by the meaning.¹¹⁰ Between the third aspect, the speaker's intention, and the sphota there is a relation of cause and effect (kāryakāranabhāva).¹¹¹ This relation accounts for the fact that the uttered word brings to the listener's mind the idea which the speaker intended to communicate. The speaker's initial idea, therefore, is said to be the cause of the phonemes uttered which are in turn heard by the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 204.

¹¹¹ Vakyapadīya, loc. cit.

listener and result in the arising of a similar idea in his mind.

In this sense of causal relation, the word and the meaning can be alternately viewed as cause or effect.¹¹²

Bhartrhari attempts to further clarify the above relations, which he finds to exist intertwined within the sphota, by offering helpful illustrations.¹¹³ Iyer paraphrases Bhartrhari as follows:

It is not merely words which, because of a natural fitness, bring things to the mind, that is, cause knowledge. The senses also do it. Mention must be made of the signs also which cause inferential knowledge. But there is a difference between these three things. The senses are only a means in the production of knowledge. They do not form part of the knowledge itself. They are themselves not cognized while they produce cognition. They resemble words in one important aspect, namely, that they cause cognition through a natural fitness. As for signs, they do, like smoke in the inference of fire, enter into the cognition which they cause but stand apart from the thing cognized. The word, on the other hand, is not a mere cause of the cognition which it produces. The thing cognized appears to be one with the word itself.^{114 115}

¹¹² Bhartrhari, loc. cit.

¹¹³ Vākyapadīya, III.3.2, p. 77.

¹¹⁴ Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 205.

¹¹⁵ It is of interest to note here that the distinction between "sign" and "symbol" or "sphota" has relevance to much current debate. Cassirer, for example, also distinguishes between the two in terms of relations: a sign is related to the thing to which it refers in a fixed and unique way; a symbol, on the other hand, is extremely variable allowing, for example, the expression of the same meaning in various languages. E. Cassirer, An Essay on Man. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1970, p. 40. Blanshard, however, opposes Cassirer by finding no basic difference between sign and symbol, both of which he finds to be related to their object in a purely utilitarian fashion. The only distinction between the two is a purely psychological difference in

The concept of the natural fitness of a sphota is further defined, this time in relation to learning and convention. Bhartṛhari holds that this natural fitness or ability to convey a meaning is inherent in the word and made known to us through convention (saṅketa).¹¹⁶ Convention here is understood as learning through observation of the use of words by others, particularly one's elders. The usage of words by the elders, and one's learning of that usage, is not a human creation but only a making present to ourselves of the existing natural capacity of words to convey meaning. This is what is meant by the "natural fitness" in the relation between sphota and meaning. It implies (as does the relation of causality) that ultimately the meaning and the sphota are seen as being identical. As Iyer puts it, "Both the word and the object meant are designated by the same word. If the word which brings the object to mind is ghata, the object is also ghata. One can go further and say that

the greater volume of associations amassed by the one so that it comes to be called "symbol". B. Blanshard, "Symbolism", in Religious Experience and Truth, ed. by S. Hook. New York: New York University Press, 1961, p. 50. Yet another recent thinker, Tillich, disagrees with both Cassirer and Blanshard. For Tillich, the sign is interchangeable at will and is impotent in itself. The symbol, however, has a necessary character and has power and meaning inherent within it. P. Tillich, "The Religious Symbol", in Religious Experience and Truth, ibid., p. 302. While Tillich's view of symbol may have apparent similarity with Bhartṛhari's conception of sphota, it is evident that their conceptions of sign are quite different. Indeed, the Grammarian viewpoint on this problem seems to have a logic and appeal to experience which is absent from many of the modern views, and therefore should perhaps be seriously examined for contributions to the current debate.

¹¹⁶ Vākyapadīya, loc. cit.

the cognition which the word produces is also ghata".¹¹⁷ The word and the meaning are identified, and the nature of such a paradoxical unity in diversity is termed adhyāsa -- a superimposition of the various aspects or relations within the sphota upon one another and upon the sphota itself.^{118 119}

Yet another characteristic which Bhartrhari uses to describe the relation between sphota and word-meaning is that it is eternal. The nature of this eternality is something similar to that of the universal concept "jar-ness" which remains regardless of how many individual jars are destroyed. An individual jar may be destroyed, but the "jar-ness" which existed in it is eternal and continues to exist in other jars. The unchanging stream of continuity is its eternality. So also a sphota may be manifest in a vast variety of utterances, yet the meaning-universal of that sphota does not change or perish and in that sense is eternal. Nor is it necessary, for this view of eternality, that there should always exist an object corresponding to the meaning in the external world. Take, for example, the word alātacakra or "fire wheel" (the illusion created by quickly rotating a torch in a circle). Although

¹¹⁷ Bhartrhari, loc. cit.

¹¹⁸ Vākyapadīya, op. cit., III.3.1, p. 76.

¹¹⁹ At this point it should be noted that the meaning relation always exists with the correct form of the word, and never with its corrupt forms. Corrupt forms of words are described as not expressive of meaning. They only enable one to infer meaning from the correct form. This is also held to be the case with gestures -- they are not themselves expressive but serve to invoke in the mind of the observer the correct word form which directly conveys the meaning. Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 207.

there is no corresponding object in the external world, the fact that the word "fire-wheel" invariably brings its meaning to mind constitutes its eternality. "The very fact that a meaning invariably comes to the mind whether an object corresponding to it is present or not is taken as a proof that the relation between the word and the meaning is eternal".¹²⁰

Now if the meaning is something which invariably comes to one's mind when the sphota is spoken — even though a corresponding object may not exist in the external world — then the meaning must be primarily mental in its ontological status. Indeed, Bhartrhari makes a distinction between the existence of an object in the external world (primary being), and the mental existence of a meaning in relation to a sphota (secondary being). Words move in the realm of "secondary being", and within this realm may convey meaning whether they have anything corresponding to them in the outside world or not. The basic point here is that as soon as a word-meaning is cognized it has a kind of cognitive being, which must differ from primary being if a sentence such as "The tree exists" is to be intelligible. Such a sentence would mean that the tree which has cognitive being in our mind or thought also exists or has primary being in the external world as well. So also, "The tree does not exist" would mean that the tree which is cognized in thought has no primary being in the external world. This distinction between primary and secondary

¹²⁰ Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 208.

being, Bhartṛhari takes from Patañjali's statement in the Mahābhāṣya on Pāṇini Sūtra 5.2.94, "no meaning of a word is without this (Secondary) Being".¹²¹

The Vṛtti on Vākyapadiya III.3.1 makes clear that throughout the above discussion on the relation between sphota and meaning, it is really sphota as sentence rather than word that the Grammarian intends. Indeed, as Iyer suggests, all this effort -- especially on the part of Maṇḍana -- to prove the existence of the word-sphota as the entity over and above the phonemes might lead one to think that he believes in the ultimate reality of it. However, he probably did it only for the benefit of the Mīmāṃsaka, especially Kumārila, who had identified the word with the smallest element of speech, the phoneme. But throughout, "He was aware that all the arguments by which he sought to prove that the phonemes by themselves cannot convey the meaning...could be used to show that the words also cannot convey the meaning and that another entity, higher than words, namely, the sentence must be postulated to explain how we understand the meaning when we hear somebody speak".¹²² Let us therefore now examine the sphota as sentence.

Sphota and Sentence-Meaning (Vākya-Sphota)

The above analysis of the argument regarding sphota and word-

¹²¹ As quoted by Iyer in Bhartṛhari, ibid., p. 211.

¹²² The Doctrine of Sphota, op. cit., p. 146.

meaning has laid bare the logical basis of the sphota position -- meaning is conveyed by the whole and not by the summation of the parts. And for Sphota theory it is the sentence which is taken to be the primary whole in language. Bhartrhari bases his viewpoint not just on logical argument,¹²³ but on the observation that in common everyday language people speak in sentence units rather than individual words. He is convinced that the chief reality in linguistic communication is the indivisible sentence and sentence-meaning (vākya-sphota). Although within his hierarchial theory he can speak of the phoneme (varṇa) and the individual word (pada) as meaning bearing units (sphota), the main form of the latter is the sentence.¹²⁴ In kāṇḍa two of the Vākyapadiya, Bhartrhari establishes this position

¹²³ If one develops the Sphota position purely in terms of logical consistency, a monistic hierarchy such as the following necessarily results. Just as the phonemes are only unreal abstractions of the word, so also words are unreal abstractions of the sentence and sentences unreal abstractions of the paragraph. Even the paragraph is not the ultimate unity, since it is only an unreal division of the chapter of the book. At the top of this language hierarchy perhaps there is only one indivisible reality within our literary self which, due to our human ignorance, limitation or avidyā, can only manifest itself in such unreal forms as the book, the chapter, the paragraph, the sentence and the word. The underlying principle, maintains Bhartrhari, is that all difference presupposes a unity. Where there is difference or parts there must be an underlying identity, otherwise the one could not be related to the other and each would constitute a world by itself. This is the grounding for Bhartrhari's metaphysical speculation. Our literary life is only a part of our total life, which all may simply be the manifestation of one central, eternal and indivisible principle -- Śabda Brahman or Para Vak, having the Pranava as its mystic unitary utterance. Vākyapadiya, op. cit., I:1 and I:9. See also The Doctrine of Sphota, op. cit., p. 147, and Some Thoughts on the Indian Philosophy of Language, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

¹²⁴ Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 182.

reference to two ancient scholars, Vārttakṣa and Audumbarāyana, whose rejection of the fourfold classification of words as parts of speech he adduces in support of the unitary reality of the sentence.¹²⁶

Bhartrhari also refers to Yāska's Nirukta and, according to one scholar, shows him to be in agreement with Audumbarāyana's view that it is the sentence-meaning as a whole which exists in the mind of the hearer, and therefore the existence of four parts of speech is denied.¹²⁷

Everyday communication is achieved through sentences which the speaker has in his mind and which he evokes in the mind of the hearer. Regardless of whether such sentences are fact or fiction, they exist as unities. In the mind of the speaker as he begins to speak the sentence-sphota assumes two aspects: the sentence-sounds or component words, and the expressed sentence-meaning. Only as the hearer hears all of the words of the sentences in conjunction with their vague meanings does the realization of the sentence-meaning (vākya-sphota) burst forth as a flash of intuition (pratibhā).¹²⁸ This sentence-meaning is quite different from the meanings of the individual words which in the end are seen to have no ultimate reality in themselves. As the words of a sentence are heard one understands their meanings in a particular manner, but when the whole sentence

¹²⁷ J. Brough, "Audumbarāyana's Theory of Language", Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies XIV, 1952, pp. 73-77.

¹²⁸ Vākyapadiya, op. cit., II:143, pp. 70-71.

is grasped by the mind the meaning appears to be quite different. This occurs, for example, in the case of a sentence in which the meanings of many words seem to be understood only to be completely changed by a negation at the end. Thus one cannot take the meanings of the individual words seriously until the whole sentence is heard, and then it is the sentence-meaning which is always determinative.¹²⁹ This is further evidenced when it is realized that each subsequent word in the sentence conveys its partial meaning as influenced by the partial meanings of the preceding words. In each case the meaning offered by the individual word occupies only a temporary and ultimately unreal existence. As Iyer puts it, "The fact is that the understanding of these partial meanings in the middle is only a means to an end and once the end, namely, the understanding of the sentence-meaning, is achieved, the intermediary meanings are abandoned".¹³⁰ As was the case between the phoneme and word-sphota, the relation here is the same vivarta type of paradox. The individual words of the sentence have apparent existence only because of the prior reality of the sentence-sphota. The latter assumes phenomenal differentiation as uttered words, because (due to avidyā) that is the only way we can communicate and think at the level of ordinary consciousness. For us as listeners, these phenomenal words become the means by which the noumenal sphota, intended by the speaker, bursts forth upon our cognition. And once the sentence-meaning is

¹²⁹ Bhartṛhari, op. cit., p. 195. ¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 194.

perceived, the partial meanings of the individual words are seen to be incomplete, erroneous, and therefore totally transcended. The vākya-sphoṭa is the true sentence or speech-unit, which exists behind the unreal but necessary facade of sensuous phonemes and words.¹³¹⁻¹³² The relationship between these two levels of speech is, as was shown previously, one of superimposition or one-sided identification, with the sentence-meaning as the ultimate real.

According to Bhartrhari, the chief characteristic of the sentence is that there is a certain completeness about its meaning. This completeness is said to occur when the purpose or intention of the speaker is conveyed to the listener. In the situation where a word may have several meanings or several different words may convey the same meaning, orderly communication is brought about by the controlling influence of the speaker's intention.¹³³ In effecting completeness, the intention of the speaker must operate

¹³¹ Vākyapadīya, op. cit., II:437-438.

¹³² In this connection it is interesting to note Allen's observation that for phonetic purposes the basic linguistic unit is sometimes described as the "breath-group" (eka-prāṇa-bhava), corresponding in the Vedic hymns to one line of verse. The denial of independence to the word is further stressed by the Sanskrit system of writing which takes no particular account of word division. The "pada" or "word texts", having the word-isolate as the basic unit are generally recognized as products of an artificial analysis devised by grammarians and others for the purposes of instruction. W. S. Allen, Phonetics in Ancient India. London: Oxford University Press, 1953, pp. 9-10.

¹³³ Vākyapadīya, op. cit., II:399-402.

on the level of the sentence-meaning and not on the level of the word-meanings. This essential characteristic of completeness is also described by Bhartrhari in relation to the so-called one word sentence (see, e.g., of "Lion!" above), which is common in experience. In such situations it is clear that completeness does not depend on any particular number of words which the sentence must have, nor on any particular kind of word, such as a verb, which it must contain.¹³⁴ Whatever partial meaning or grammatical status may be attributed to the phenomenal utterance of the single word sentence, the sentence-meaning is only conveyed when, through the causality supplied by the speaker's intention, added word-meanings are mentally understood so that completeness results. In the situation where the single word utterance is a noun, which alone can express only an incomplete meaning, its utterance may be pregnant with some verbal action which is added mentally so that a complete meaning is communicated.¹³⁵ If the single word utterance is a verb then the intention of the speaker results in the mental understanding of a noun and possibly other accessory word-meanings, so that completeness of meaning is perceived.¹³⁶ Regarding the psychological process required in such

¹³⁴ Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 196.

¹³⁵ Vakyapadiya, op. cit., II:325a. In such nominal one-word-sentence situations, it seems as though Bhartrhari would accept asti as well as kriya-type verbs as meeting the requirements for completeness. See, for example, Pillai's note 82 to this sūtra offering "Here is a tree" as an example, p. 172.

¹³⁶ Ibid., II:325b-326a.

situations, the fundamental difference of opinion between the Kumārila and the Sphota theorists is again clearly evidenced. Kumārila requires that the unheard words be understood by inference and be individually cognized before the complete sentence-meaning can be understood.¹³⁷ Bhartṛhari, however, holds that when a single word (be it noun or verb) is uttered, it brings, without the inference of any other word or words, but with the help of the context or the speaker's intention, any other meaning which is required to complete it.¹³⁸ For Bhartṛhari, this completeness of the sentence-meaning is experienced, not through inference, but in the special kind of perception called pratibhā.

Pratibhā. Pratibhā is described by Bhartṛhari as the perceiving of the meaning-whole of the sentence (vākya-sphota) in a flash of intuition.¹³⁹ It is not logical in nature, nor is it capable of being directly described to others. The words used in attempting to describe this pratibhā to someone else can do no more than evoke in the other the conditions which will allow that vākya-sphota (already present in his inmost self) to be revealed in the listener's own pratibhā experience. Pratibhā, therefore, is of the nature of one's inner self, but normally requires uttered word or

¹³⁷ Ibid., II:327a.

¹³⁸ Ibid., II:335-6. See also Iyer's summary of this argument in Bhartṛhari, op. cit., pp. 197-198.

¹³⁹ Vākyapadiya, op. cit., II:143-145.

words for its manifestation. The meaning it reveals is the complete and indivisible sentence-meaning. In the context of one word sentences pratibhā functions to complete the sentence-meaning by making present, in a unitary act of intuition, whatever other meaning or meanings may be required -- without mentally adding any word or words to the word actually uttered.

Sphota theory defines pratibhā as the indivisible meaning expressed by a sentence which is ingrained in each person.

Chakravarti attempts to make this unique aspect of Indian thought understandable to the modern reader by describing it as follows:

To the grammarian pratibhā is inborn intelligence; it is innate and not post-natal. Pratibhā is neither an acquisition that is sense-born nor does it result from common experience. It is called saṃskara or bhavana, firmly seated in our mind and linked together with the continuous currents of knowledge flowing from previous stages of existence. Here we find the justification why pratibhā is sometimes denominated as purva-vāsanā (knowledge drawn from prior births). The mind has, truly says Kalidāsa, the power of recalling the deep-rooted impressions of previous births.¹⁴⁰

In this explanation it is quite clear that in logically defending his conception of pratibhā and vākya-sphota, the grammarian depends upon the assumption of previous existence. Once this presupposition is accepted -- as it is by virtually all schools of Indian thought -- then the Sphota view of pratibhā (and vākya-sphota) seems to be both reasonable and logically consistent. Bhartṛhari's main point is that

¹⁴⁰ Linguistic Speculations of the Hindus, op. cit., pp. 113-114.

it is the use of words in sentence form that rouses this innate pratibhā or intelligence resulting in the revelation of knowledge.¹⁴¹ Without pratibhā and its innate connection with the vākya-sphota, the r̥si's dhī or direct vision of reality could not be communicated or put to ordinary use.¹⁴² Not only is it the source of all popular word usage, but, according to Kālidāsa, pratibhā is that function of the mind that provides the strong guiding principle when one finds oneself in the midst of doubts as to the right course of action to follow.¹⁴³ Thus both knowledge and ultimately mokṣa are said to flow from pratibhā -- the self-revelation of reality.¹⁴⁴ Gopinath Kaviraj suggests that the teleological aspect of the Sphota view of pratibhā may in some sense be comparable to the concept of instinct.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, Bhāṭṛhari illustrates and supports his view of pratibhā by claiming that it is naturally present in all beings, who take it as authority for their conduct.¹⁴⁶ Even the animals are seen to conduct themselves by it in their eating, moving, loving, nesting, vocalizing, etc.¹⁴⁷ For the animals, as for man, it is

¹⁴¹ Vākyapadiya, op. cit., II:143.

¹⁴² Ibid., II:139.

¹⁴³ Linguistic Speculations of the Hindus, op. cit., p. 115.

¹⁴⁴ The Doctrine of Pratibhā in Indian Philosophy, op. cit., p. 16.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Vākyapadiya, op. cit., II:147.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., II:148-150.

pratibhā which guides and controls practical life. Bhartrhari concludes his discussion by delineating six different kinds of pratibhā. There is pratibhā arising from: (1) nature (svabhāva), (2) action prescribed by a tradition (carana), (3) repeated practice (abhyāsa), (4) concentration of the mind (yoga), (5) actions done in prior lives (adrsta), and (6) intuition given one by the grace of a special person (viśtopahita).¹⁴⁸ As Kaviraj observes, when it comes to the psychological analysis of the manifestation of pratibhā, the Sphota theorists, through their reference to antenatal dispositions, seem to open the way for an explanation in terms of Yoga psychology.¹⁴⁹ This will be one of the major tasks undertaken in Part Two of this thesis.

III. SPHOTA IN RELATION TO THE LEVELS OF LANGUAGE

In the above discussion of the vākya-sphota, it is clear that, from the Sphota viewpoint, language may be seen to operate on at least two levels. On one level there is pratibhā or the intuitive flash-like understanding of the sentence-meaning as a whole. On the other level there are the uttered words of the sentence. Bhartrhari calls the latter vaikhari vāk (overt or elaborated speech), while the former is aptly designated as paśyanti vāk (speech which through

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., II:152. See also Bhartrhari, op. cit., pp. 88-90.

¹⁴⁹ The Doctrine of Pratibhā in Indian Philosophy, op. cit., p. 18.

pratibhā sees or perceives reality).¹⁵⁰ Between these two levels, says Bhartṛhari, there is a middle or madhyamā vāk corresponding to the vākya sphota in its mental separation into sentence-meaning and a sequence of manifesting word-sounds, none of which have yet been uttered. According to Bhartṛhari, these are the three levels of language through which śabda or vāk passes whenever one speaks. Śabda, which is at first quite internal, is gradually externalized for the purpose of communication.¹⁵¹ In this way Bhartṛhari accounts for all cognition as being necessarily identified with language, since these levels of language span the complete continuum of cognition. This is clearly expressed in one of Bhartṛhari's basic tenets: "There is no cognition in the world in which the word does not figure. All knowledge is, as it were, intertwined with the word".¹⁵² For Bhartṛhari there is no cognition possible without the operation of śabda.¹⁵³ His conception

¹⁵⁰ Vākyapadiya, op. cit., I:142. ¹⁵¹ Bhartṛhari, op. cit., p. 144.

¹⁵² Vākyapadiya, op. cit., I:123 (Iyer's trans.), p. 110.

¹⁵³ A thoughtful criticism of this position has been offered by Jayantabhaṭṭa in his Nyāyamañjarī. The main point of his criticism seems to be that Bhartṛhari is misled when he identifies word and consciousness and takes this so-called Śabdabrahman as both the efficient and the material cause of knowledge. Jayanta's argument is that words simply illuminate objects which already exist — the word is not at once the illuminator and the object, otherwise what is it that the word denotes? Then again, says Jayanta, all cognition is not necessarily determinative nor verbal in nature. In fact, in experience we first cognize the object and only then is a word roused up and used to signify it. See G. N. Shastri, "The Doctrine of Śabdabrahman — A Criticism by Jayantabhaṭṭa", Indian Historical Quarterly XV, pp. 441-453. Jayanta's position would seem to lead into an infinite regress, however, in attempting to explain why a particular word should be roused up in response to a particular object. To invoke memory only lands one in the same

of the levels of language seems quite logical once this presupposition is accepted. Thought at the buddhi or differentiated stage of word-sequences is perhaps best understood as internal speaking. And pratibhā or intuition may be seen as a kind of muted speaking. The point being emphasized is that for Bhartrhari speaking is the essence of consciousness, and the means to all knowledge. And it must also be clearly understood that by "speaking", "language", or "thought" what is meant is the conveyance of meaning -- "thinking" here does not primarily refer to concept formation, the drawing of inferences, etc., all of which would exist at the two lowest levels (vaikhari and madhyama) only. But when "meaning" is identified as intertwined with consciousness (as Bhartrhari identifies it), this satisfies instances of pratibhā as well as instances of more commonplace cognition, and therefore can be held to be logically possible at all levels of vāk, including even the very highest (i.e., the pranava).

Although the primary concern of this study is not with Bhartrhari's metaphysical speculations, it is perhaps worthwhile to briefly outline the way in which this doctrine, i.e., "no cognition without language", along with the assumption, "all difference presupposes identity", forms the groundwork for the Grammarians philosophy. The latter statement necessarily leads to an advaitism or monistic

dilemma one step further back. At some point, it would seem, some natural fitness, or self-revelation on the part of śabda, seems inevitable if communication is to be logically explained.

absolutism. The former statement indicates the nature the unitary absolute must possess -- śabda and caitanya (consciousness) inseparably mixed together, self-evident, and revealing of all knowledge. This is Śabdabrahman.¹⁵⁴ It is mainly due to the limiting function of time (kālasakti) that Śabdabrahman, without suffering any loss of transformation, assumes differentiation as the intuited sphota (pratibhā) with its uttered words and manifested meaning.¹⁵⁵ As in Advaita Vedānta, the metaphysical principle of beginningless ignorance or avidyā is held to be the initial cause of the One manifesting itself as many. Helārāja summarizes Bhartṛhari's position as follows:

...Within Nescience (avidyā) which is the cause of the phenomenal world, there emerges, first of all, the phenomenal world (samsāra), consisting in the appearance of differentiation. Differentiation is spatial and temporal. Of the two, temporal differentiation comes first in the creation of the world. Consciousness in the form of Pāsyantī is without any sequence, but when it is associated with the Prāna principle (activity) it shines as Time, as though it had sequence...¹⁵⁶

The importance of all of this metaphysics for our present consideration is that it is the power of time in producing sequence in our experience of the really unitary word-consciousness that results in the division of the sphota into word-sentences which make communication possible. It is under the power of time, therefore, that the pāsyantī level of

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., I:1.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., I:3.

¹⁵⁶ Bhartṛhari, op. cit., p. 123, Iyer quotes Helārāja.

word-consciousness assumes the lower and progressively more differentiated levels of madhyamā and vaikhari. From the hearer's point of view the process is reversed. The word-sounds (vaikhari) and the inner word-meanings (madhyamā) are both initially cognized under the sequence of time until, with the final perception of the vākya-sphota, the level of pasyanti is manifested. In this pratibhā state noumenal knowledge dawns, and all differentiation due to the sequence of time is transcended.

Having seen how the levels of language fit into and categorize Bhartrhari's overall metaphysics, let us now examine each level in somewhat more detail.¹⁵⁷ Vaikhari is the most external and differentiated level in which vāk is commonly uttered by the speaker and heard by the hearer. It is prāna or breath that enables the organs of articulation and hearing to produce and perceive sounds in a temporal sequence. Prāna may therefore be taken as the instrumental cause of vaikhari vāk. The chief characteristic of vaikhari vāk is that it has a fully developed temporal sequence. At this level individual peculiarities of the speaker (e.g., accent) are present along with the linguistically relevant parts of speech. Going further inwards, as it were, madhyamā vāk is the next level and its association is chiefly with the mind or intellect (buddhi). It is the idea or series of words as conceived by the mind after hearing or before speaking out. It may be thought of as inward

¹⁵⁷ The following summary depends mainly upon Iyer's presentation of Bhartrhari's position in Bhartrhari, ibid., pp. 144-146.

speech. All the parts of speech that are linguistically relevant to the sentence are present here in a latent form. At this level a variety of manifestation is possible. The same sphota or meaning is capable of being revealed by a variety of forms of madhyamā, depending on the language adopted. Although there is not full temporal sequence of the kind experienced in spoken words, word and meaning are still distinct and word order is present. Therefore, temporal sequence must also be present along with its instrumental cause prāna. As we shall see in Part Two, traditional Yoga is able to demonstrate a subtle but direct connection between breathing and cognition.¹⁵⁸

The next and innermost stage is paśyantī vak. Paśyantī is the direct experience of the vākya-sphota -- of meaning as a noumenal whole. At this level there is no distinction between the word and the meaning and there is no temporal sequence. All such phenomenal differentiations drop away with the intuition of the pure meaning in itself. Yet there is present at this level a kind of "going-out" or desire for expression. This is the pratibhā "instinct", referred to above, which in one sense may be said to motivate the phenomenalization into sentences and words of the paśyantī vision, so that communication may occur. Thus the Vedic vision or dhī of the ṛṣi, which in itself is paśyantī, becomes phenomenalized so that by its uttered word men might rise above their

¹⁵⁸ Cf. post, p. 271.

ignorance and be grasped in their cognition by the revelation of ultimate reality. Therefore, there is a sense in which Veda and pratibhā are identified as paśyantī vāk. Since paśyantī is, by definition, beyond the level of differentiated cognition, it is impossible to define it in word-sentences. It is at the level of direct intuition and therefore must finally be understood through experience. Nevertheless, there has been no dirth of speculation over the exact nature of paśyantī and the possibility of yet a higher level of language, i.e., parā vāk. Although such speculation is beyond the concern of this present study -- with its delimitation of buddhi stage, and below -- it should be noticed in passing that Bhartṛhari himself could quite possibly have conceived of a fourth or parā vāk level. The Vṛtti on I:142 does quote, among numerous other passages, Rg Veda I:164:45, which refers to four levels of vāk. Of these four three remain hidden in the cave or the inner self, only the fourth is spoken by man as his external language. In this regard, Iyer offers an interesting observation on the Vākyapadiya itself. He points out that a very obvious parallel seems to exist between its structure and contents, and the levels of vāk. The first kanda concentrates a great deal on Brahman, the undifferentiated ultimate reality, to which the paśyantī vāk is very near. In the second kanda the vākya-sphota is the subject with its paradox of containing both the differentiation of the sentence-words and the unitary meaning at the same time. And this parallels the madhyamā level of vāk. The third kanda concentrates almost totally on analysis of parts of speech and their

differentiation, which clearly seems identical with the realm of vaikhari vāk. Iyer finds support for such a parallelism from Helarāja. If this position can be taken, then the parallel to the level of parā vāk might well be taken as the whole of the Vākyapadiya. For in this work it is the indivisible whole of the speaking act, or better yet, "speech itself", which Bhartrhari is analyzing. As Iyer observes, it is remarkable how Bhartrhari, throughout the Vākyapadiya, is ever conscious of the highest word-principle, the Śabdātattva -- "Brahman out of which the whole cosmos and our experience of it consisting of an infinite variety of cognitions, objects and words expressive of them, are manifested".¹⁵⁹ Another scholar, Kunjunni Raja, suggests that although later Grammarians have been influenced by the Pratyabhijñā School, which interprets Śabdabrahman as having a fourth or parā vāk stage of manifestation, in Bhartrhari himself no stage higher than paśyanti vāk is found.¹⁶⁰ However, Gaurinath Sastri has made a detailed comparison between the classification of vāk as found in both Bhartrhari and Kashmir Trika writers and concludes that the two systems do not differ significantly. Sastri points out that for Bhartrhari the supreme reality is conceived of in terms of śabda or vāk in such a way that there is no real difference between Śabdabrahman and Parabrahman -- they merely represent two aspects of the same supreme Śabda. Consequently,

¹⁵⁹ Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 68; see also, pp. 66-67.

¹⁶⁰ Indian Theories of Meaning, op. cit., p. 147.

Sabda Brahman is synonymous with Paśyantī and Para Brahman with Parā Vāk. According to Trika thought, Parā Vāk is given a subtle logical distinction in that it is described as a power of the supreme reality Parama Siva -- yet both Parama Siva and his power Parā Vāk (or Vimarsa) are held to be identical in essence. Whereas for Bhartrhari and his followers Parā Vāk is taken to be independent and self-subsistent, the Trika writers place Parā Vāk in a dependent relationship with Parama Siva. Parama Siva is described as the substantive or the powerful, while Parā Vāk is the attribute or the power. G.N. Sastri concludes his comparison by suggesting that Bhartrhari's writing was earlier than that of the Trika writers, and that their subsequent speculations have led to a different conception of Parā Vāk -- but a difference which is more logical than real in its nature. However, it may also be that the distinction insisted on by the Trika philosophers is a direct result of Bhartrhari's equation of paśyantī (from the root drs -- to see in the present time) with the supreme reality. "Seeing" admits a multiplicity in that relation with an object is implied, and this is clearly unacceptable as a description of the ultimate necessitating a higher level of vāk.¹⁶¹

The question as to whether or not Bhartrhari intended a fourth or parā vāk level is a problem which at this time seems to remain unresolved. For our present purposes, however, it is not of crucial importance since we are not concerned with the more mystical metaphysical speculation. Our focus is primarily upon the more psychological aspects of the vaikhari and

¹⁶¹ The Philosophy of Word and Meaning, op. cit., Cp. 4, pp. 66-82. See also, Abhinavagupta, op. cit., p. 629.

the madhyamā levels and the nature of the paśyantī pratibhā which is involved therein. Before leaving this discussion of the various levels of vāk, it should perhaps be noted that some other traditions have made much of these same four levels. In both Tantrism and in Kashmir Śaivism, an advaita or non-dualism is adopted, and the parā vāk level is given great speculative elaboration. Yet there appears to be much in common with the main tenets of Bhartrhari's philosophy.¹⁶² From the viewpoint of Śaiva Siddhānta, however, the Grammarian's interpretation is criticized in a fashion similar to the previously mentioned objection of Jayantabhaṭṭa. In the Śaiva Siddhānta view śabda is not self-revealing, but serves only to illuminate the meaning which is located in the independently existing object (artha).¹⁶³ Because of this basic disagreement in presupposition, the interpretation given to the four levels of vāk, and especially to that of parā vāk, is quite different from that offered by Bhartrhari.¹⁶⁴ As Sivaraman notes, Śaiva Siddhānta rejects the Śabdabrahman position and looks on the parā level "not

¹⁶² See Chakravarti's interpretation of the levels of vāk, The Linguistic Speculations of the Hindus, op. cit., pp. 49-51, which he seems to base on the Tantric text "Mañjūsā". See also John Woodroffe's presentation on the levels of vāk in Tantric Mantra, The Garland of Letters. Madras: Ganesh & Co. Ltd., 1969, pp. 65-76; and in Śakti and Śākta. Madras: Ganesh & Co. Ltd., 1927, Cp. 24.

¹⁶³ K. Sivaraman, Śaivism in Philosophical Perspective. Varanasi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1972, p. 229.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 223-229.

as brahman but as śakti — parigraha-śakti of brahman and its unfoldment into concrete and overt speech forms as a case of real change of states, modal change (vṛtti) not unreal appearances".¹⁶⁵

Returning to Bhartrhari's own position, we see that the very ontological reality of vāk throughout its various levels also amounts to a description of the path by which mokṣa (ultimate freedom from ignorance) may be attained. In Vākyapadīya I:14 we read, "It (Grammar) is the door to salvation, the remedy for all the impurities of speech, the purifier of all the sciences and shines in every branch of knowledge".¹⁶⁶ The vṛtti following makes clear that use of corrupt forms of vāk is a cause of sin, and that the correct use of vāk not only reveals all knowledge but, at the same time, results in the acquiring of special merit through which one may become united with Śabdabrahman and eventually, by repeated repetition of this union, mokṣa is finally achieved. It is at the level of paśyantī vāk or pratibhā that such union, productive of mokṣa, is depicted. Iyer describes such a practice as śabdapūrvayoga or vāgyoga which he defines as a kind of meditation aimed at raising consciousness to the highest level of vāk.¹⁶⁷ Absence of differentiation or time sequence within the vākya-sphota is held to be characteristic of this meditation. Iyer finds the required discipline

¹⁶⁵ Loc. cit.

¹⁶⁶ Iyer's translation, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁶⁷ Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 145.

described in the vṛtti on Vākapadiya I:123 which he translates as follows:

Taking his stand on the essence of the Word lying beyond the activity of breath (prāṇa), resting in one's self with all sequence eliminated,

After having purified speech and after having rested it on the mind, after having broken its bonds and made it bond-free, After having reached the inner Light, he with his knots cut, becomes united with the Supreme Light.¹⁶⁸

Although Bhartrhari is emphatic that the study of the correct use and meaning of vāk is a means of attaining mokṣa, he does not describe the different stages of that spiritual ascent. As Iyer points out, Bhartrhari seems to do little more than to observe the levels of vāk, particularly the vaikharī, madhyamā and paśyantī, and indirectly suggest that they are somehow connected with the process of ascent to mokṣa.¹⁶⁹ An analysis showing how Sphota theory as a practical spiritual discipline could psychologically result in mokṣa will be attempted in Part Two of this thesis.

IV. CONCLUSION: SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR SPHOTA TENENTS

The above philosophical analysis has examined the Sphota theory of language as revelation for evidence of its logical possibility. This analysis has been carried out within the context of the critical dialogue between the Sphota theorists and their most

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 404.

thoroughgoing critic the Mīmāṃsaka Kumārila Bhaṭṭa. The criterion applied throughout has been "logical possibility" with "logical" defined as "reasonably to be believed, and defensible on the grounds of consistency". As a result of this analysis, the following summary is offered of the major Sphoṭa tenents which are judged to have satisfied the philosophical requirement of being logically possible.

- A. The primary unit of language is the sphoṭa or meaning-whole; its physical manifestation as a series of uttered words or phonemes is secondary.
 1. An uttered word or phoneme has no independent existence apart from the meaning-whole of which it is a part, i.e., the sentence (vākya-sphoṭa)
 2. The primary meaning-whole or sphoṭa phenomenalizes into parts (i.e., padas and phonemes), because there is a potentiality to burst forth into disclosure (sphuṭ) within the sphoṭa (self-revelation is the telos of language and consciousness). To put it another way, there is an inherent desire within the individual self to communicate -- speech has an instinctive basis.
 3. The two aspects of word-sound (dhvani) and word-meaning (artha), differentiated in the mind (buddhi) and yet integrated like two sides of the same coin, constitute the sphoṭa.
- B. Meaning is communicated, not by the summation of phonemes/padas or their special apūrva like powers, but by the progressive revelation of the inherent vākya-sphoṭa as the phonemes/padas are uttered.
 1. Sphoṭa is an a priori meaning whole, which is fully perceived in the mind of the speaker before he begins to speak, and is latent in the minds of all hearers. The uttered sounds serve only to manifest to the hearer the sphoṭa which is already latent in his consciousness, and which is identical with the speaker's initial sphoṭa.
 2. The manifesting of the sphoṭa in the cognition of the hearer is a process of perception,

rather than inference. This process is characterized as a series of progressively clearer perceptions, the first having the highest degree of error, the last having no error at all.

a. There are levels of language characterized by different degrees of phenomenalization of the sphoṭa.

(1) At the lower levels of vaikhari and madhyamā, the sphoṭa is limited by the function of time sequence which occurs in conjunction with prāṇa, and results in ordinary verbal cognition -- overt speech and mental thought.

(2) At the higher level of paśyantī, ordinary verbal cognition is transcended and the noumenal meaning of the vākya-sphoṭa bursts forth in a flash of intuition or pratibhā.

Since the above tenents include almost all of the major theoretical tenents proposed by Bhartṛhari, this analysis indicates that from the philosophic viewpoint at least, the Sphoṭa Theory of language as revelation is logically possible. However, there are two claims made by Bhartṛhari which, it is judged, have not as yet received philosophic elucidation so as to show forth their logical possibility. Consequently, they have not been included in the above summary.

They are (1) The claim that the Sphoṭa Theory (probably via the levels of language) is a means for attaining mokṣa, and (2) The claim that the śabdabhāvanā (ie. the residual trace of the use of words in previous lives), with which every child is born, is somehow transformed into knowledge of a particular language as the child grows up. As Iyer observes, since the vākya-sphoṭa are indivisible units

and are the only real elements in the Sphoṭa view, the process by which the child learns language must be much more than merely learning the meanings of individual words by watching the usage of elders and using the method of agreement, difference and elimination, such as the Mīmāṃsakas suggest.¹⁷⁰ But neither Bhartṛhari nor his commentators have as yet shown how a child achieves knowledge of the particular language community into which he is born. From the point of view of philosophical analysis both of these claims remain as problems for future examination and testing for evidence of their logical possibility. Some help in this direction may be forthcoming if one or both of these claims can be shown to have psychological possibility, and this will be attempted in Part Two. Part Two, the psychological analysis, must also demonstrate the psychological possibility of those tenents whose logical possibility has been established, if the Sphoṭa theory of language as revelation is to be taken seriously.

¹⁷⁰ Bhartṛhari, op. cit., p. 404.

PART TWO:

A PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE
SPHOTA THEORY OF LANGUAGE AS REVELATION

CHAPTER IV

CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE EXPRESSION OF SPHOTA

In attempting a demonstration of the psychological possibility of the major sphota tenents, as outlined above, the approach taken is as follows. This chapter, by focusing attention on the processes that take place within the mind of the speaker, will undertake a psychological interpretation of how the sphota (whose existence as an a priori meaning whole is assumed) can cognize itself into the two aspects of uttered sounds and inner meaning (see conclusion of Part One, tenents A.1.2.3). The next chapter, following through the practical experience of language communication, focuses its attention on the psychological processes that occur within the mind of the hearer -- in his cognition of the uttered sounds and their correlate revelation of same meaning-whole or sphota, from which the speaker originally began (see conclusion of Part One, tenents B.1.2).

This chapter, therefore, begins its psychological interpretation with an examination of the given nature of the speaker's consciousness as a basis for his expression of the meaning-whole or sphota. The possibility and form of such a state of consciousness is analyzed in section one. Then, in section two, the individuation of that consciousness into its external manifestation as uttered speech will be examined. As indicated in Chapter One, the main source

used in this psychological interpretation is the Yoga-Sūtras of Patañjali¹ with the commentaries by Vyāsa, Vācaspati Miśra, and Viññāna Bhikṣu. Passing comments are made to other schools of Indian thought and to modern Western psychology, for added evidence and elucidation.

I. THE NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Sphota theory describes all consciousness as an intertwined unity of cognition and word which constantly seeks to manifest itself in speech. In our experience we do not have a thought and then look for a word with which to express it, nor do we have a lonely word which needs to be connected with a thought. From the Sphota viewpoint, word and thought develop together as expressions.

¹Tradition identifies this Patañjali as the same Patañjali who authored the Mahābhāṣya -- the foundational work upon which Bhartrhari developed his Vākyapadiya. Although this tradition is being questioned, modern scholars such as Rāma Prasāda (see "Introduction" to his translation of Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras) and S. N. Dasgupta (see his Yoga Philosophy in Relation..., p. 271) offer solid arguments in its favour. But regardless of whether there was one Patañjali or two, it seems probable that both the Yoga Sūtras and the Vākyapadiya spring from a common tradition in which the psychological and philosophical aspects of language were given complementary explanation. Evidence for this contention appears frequently in the Yoga Sūtras (see, for example, the analysis of Sphota itself in Y.S. III:17; the description of savitarka samādhi in terms of an analysis of language which is virtually identical to Sphota theory, Y.S. I:42; and the treatment of the prāṇava in Y.S. I:27), and in the Grammarian's direct or implied usage of such Yoga conceptions as saṃskāra V.P. I:84, pratyāhāra and vairāgya V.P. I:5, and samādhi V.P. II:152). Recent discussion of Sphota theory, however, has dwelt almost exclusively on the philosophical analysis and ignored Yoga psychology which, in the early debates, was evidently assumed and valued for both theoretical and practical purposes.

of the same deep impulse towards communication. Having seen the logical possibility of this understanding of consciousness, let us now examine its psychological possibility.

A conception of consciousness, which seems parallel to the Sphota description, is found in Patañjali's analysis of Īśvara's omniscience.² Here, the inherence of word and meaning in consciousness is seen in its purest form. All words are described as eternal in their meaning relation in that they are one with consciousness in its most elemental state and remain constant throughout the various manifestations and dissolutions of each new cycle of creation. These cycles of creation arise out of the need of consciousness itself to find a means of self-manifestation in accordance with its inherent teleology. That the nature of that manifestation, and its telos, is intertwined with word, may be clearly seen in the case of Īśvara himself. Īśvara is described as possessing two characteristics, (1) a pure mental essence (sattva) of perfect quality³, and (2) the germ (bīja) of omniscience at its utmost excellence.⁴ Let us examine each of these characteristics in more detail so as to understand this view of Īśvara's consciousness as all-knowing and desirous of communication.

According to Yoga psychology, if we analyze our experience

²The Yoga Sūtras, I:24-29.

³Ibid., I:24.

⁴Ibid., I:25.

of consciousness, we will find that in all of its manifestations, it is composed of three aspects (gunas) or substantive qualities: sattva, which is brightness or intelligence; rajas, which is passion or energy; and tamas, which is dullness or inertia. Although each of these gunas keeps its own separate identity, no individual guna ever exists independently. Rather, the three gunas are always necessarily found together like three strands of a rope. However, the proportionate composition of consciousness assigned to each of the gunas is constantly changing.⁵ Only the predominant guna will be easily recognized in a particular thought. The other two gunas will be present but subordinate, and therefore their presence will have to be determined by inference. In the case of Īśvara, his consciousness is described as being completely dominated by pure sattva (although some rajas and tamas must also be present). Within this sattva there is a teleology which insures the reappearance of Īśvara in each new creation for the purpose of communicating to all beings his omniscient knowledge, so that they may, with the help of his grace, attain mokṣa. The psychological mechanism by which is reappearance in each new creation is ensured is as follows. At the end of each creation, Īśvara freely wishes that his sattva consciousness should appear again at the time of the next creation. This wish leaves behind a saṃskāra or mental potency which ensures Īśvara's

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Ibid., II:18, Bhasya.

reappearance at the start of every new creation.⁶

The matchless perfection of Īśvara's sattva consciousness is evident in, and attested to, by his omniscience, which he communicates to the ṛsis as āgama (including śruti, smṛti, the Epics and Purāṇas). The psychological means by which this communication takes place is technically referred to as visistopahita (intuition caused by the grace of a special person). The ṛsi supersensuously sees directly into the omniscience incarnated in Īśvara's sattva and reveals it to other men in the manifested form of uttered speech -- Veda, the authoritative vāk. Īśvara is thus named both the first knower and the first teacher, who, out of grace, gives to the great ṛsis a direct vision of that which is the essence of all language and all revelation -- namely, his own consciousness. Within each creation, at least, this unity of omniscience and consciousness, which is Īśvara's sattva, is timeless in that it continues on unchanging although the limitations necessary for human language are constantly being placed upon it.⁷ It is the dynamic ground upon which all language and knowledge rests, and from which all speech evolves. Īśvara's sattva with its perfect purity and permanence

⁶The underlying metaphysical assumption here is that Brahman freely phenomenalizes himself as Īśvara (as an act of grace) so as to provide the means (i.e., the revelation of the Veda) by which beings can attain mokṣa. On the psychological level, if this revelation is to be capable of human understanding, it must function through human cognition, thus there is a kind of continuum between Īśvara's sattva and that of the lowest jīva.

⁷Yoga Sūtras, I:26.

is what makes possible the true correspondence which has existed beginninglessly between the word expressing a meaning (vācaka) and the meaning expressed (vācya). It is the self-evident validity of this perfect correspondence between vācaka and vācya that constitutes the communicating and revealing power of Īśvara's sattva when manifested as speech. Such a correspondence also constitutes āgama or true śabda pramāṇa. Āgama, both as śruti (the revealed word) and smṛti (the remembered writings of tradition), is really the authoritative verbalization of Īśvara's sattva, and may therefore be taken as the expression of the true nature of consciousness.⁸ All this is expressed in the one mystic symbol, the pranava, which, when spoken, connotes Īśvara with all his power for omniscience.⁹

Īśvara, as described above, represents for Yoga psychology, the pure ideal upon which the yogin or devotee should focus in his daily practice.¹⁰ He is defined as a special kind of being who is free from or untouched by afflictive drives (kleśas), actions performed as a result of such drives (karma), and the fruition or maturation (vipāka) of the traces laid down by action or thought.¹¹ When all of these aspects of psychological functioning are deleted what is left is Īśvara's omniscient consciousness with its compassionate telos for communication. It is in this sense that Īśvara is a

⁸ Ibid., I:25.

⁹ Ibid., I:27.

¹⁰ Ibid., I:28.

¹¹ Ibid., I:24.

close parallel to the Sphota conception of consciousness as a given unity of thought and meaning. The Yoga conception of Īśvara provides, as required by Sphota theory, that consciousness contain within it the seed state of omniscience. And just as the Yoga Sūtras take this omniscient consciousness as the universal basis for the āgama of the rsis, so also Bhartrhari conceives of āgama as necessarily existing within all beings and providing the basis for their pratibhā experience.¹² Although there may be some differences in Bhartrhari's concept of āgama, the main outline of his conception is in agreement with that of Patañjali. As Iyer has observed, this parallel was noticed by Helārāja who quotes from Vyāsa's commentary on Yoga Sūtra I:25 in this context.¹³

For Bhartrhari, Brahman is conceived of as the omniscient word-principle -- the Śabdatattva. Bhartrhari holds that the Veda is not only the means of attaining mokṣa (unity with Brahman), but is also the image (anukāra) of Brahman. Similarly, Īśvara is described as the ever free lord whose universal superiority is seen in his sattva of perfect quality. The śāstra or sacred scriptures both reside in Īśvara's sattva and evidence its omniscience. The relation between Īśvara's sattva and the revealed śāstra, which resides therein, is referred to as eternal or never-beginning.¹⁴

¹² Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 90.

¹³ Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁴ Yoga Sūtras, Bhāṣya I:24.

While all of the above indicates good grounds for the use of Patañjali's psychological analysis of Īśvara as a parallel against which to interpret Bhartṛhari's conception of reality as word-consciousness or Śabdabrahman, one difference does exist at the level of the highest metaphysical speculation. The Yoga System is ultimately a duality between pure consciousness (puruṣa) and non-intelligent matter (prakṛti). Consequently, Vācaspati points out that Īśvara's sattva does not possess the power of consciousness since sattva is non-intelligent in its own nature.¹⁵ From the viewpoint of Sāṅkhya/Yoga metaphysics, sattva, as a manifestation of prakṛti, only appears to have intelligence due to avidyā or the beginningless wrong identification between puruṣa and prakṛti.¹⁶

The nature of prakṛti is also exemplified in terms of causation, namely, that the cause persists in all its effects and therefore the nature of the cause can be deduced by observing what persists in the effects. For example, gold may be seen to exist in all objects made from gold. By looking at them it can be inferred that gold is the original material out of which they were all made.

¹⁵ Ibid., Tīkā.

¹⁶ In all experience of self-consciousness or thinking, this metaphysical assumption of wrong identification between puruṣa and prakṛti is held to obtain. Since the present concern is with the psychology of thinking, and not the ultimate nature of the metaphysics involved, the discussion proceeds as if the sattva aspect of prakṛti were indeed real consciousness or illumination. This is in accord with the Yoga view of the nature of psychological processes at the thinking level. The sattva aspect of the thinking substance (citta), in so far as it is absolutely clear, takes on or reflects the intelligence (cāitanya) of puruṣa. For practical purposes, therefore,

Although Sphota theory is non-dualistic, there is evidence of a similar sort of causal argument. In the Vrtti on the Vākyapadiya, it is stated that our knowledge of everything in the world is interwoven with the word.¹⁷ Knowledge is by its nature in the form of words. In order to cognize any object, we must first cognize the word relating to it. Therefore, since all manifestations of Brahman are inter-twined with the word, so also the root cause of all such manifestations, Brahman, must be of the nature of the word (Śabdatattva).¹⁸ From the Sphota viewpoint, therefore, Īśvara's omniscient sattva as the root cause of all āgama needs no outside illumination (such as puruṣa), for as the ultimate Word-Principle (Śabdatattva) it is self-luminous. Now, from the Yoga standpoint, for the practical purpose of our psychological experience Īśvara's sattva also appears to us as self-illuminated in nature. It is only at the level of mokṣa or final discrimination, leading directly to Kaivalya (realization of the puruṣa's existence as independent and free from the fetters of prakṛti), that the Sāṃkhya/Yoga dualistic metaphysics result in a total break with the Sphota theory. At the empirical level of verbal communication between individuals, however, there is no difficulty since for psychological purposes both Yoga and Sphota treat consciousness as being self-

no duality appears, and prakṛti may be treated as self-illuminating (see Tika on Yoga Sutra I:17).

¹⁷ Vākyapadiya, op. cit., I:123.

¹⁸ Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 100.

manifesting.¹⁹ In order to understand how the Yoga analysis of consciousness could provide a possible psychological interpretation of Sphota theory, it is first necessary to have a general overview of the Yoga conception of consciousness as citta (mind or intellect).

The Yoga Conception of Consciousness as Citta

Citta is the Yoga term which designates prakṛti in its appearance as mind or intellect. Citta is the stuff of consciousness formed of the three guṇas sattva, rajas and tamas, with an absolute preponderance of sattva. In its dominant sattva aspect, citta is most fully conscious and illuminated with knowledge. In its rajas aspect citta is characterized by passion and energy. Tamas is the material aspect of citta that becomes infused with energy and at the same time conserves the energy, preventing its dissipation and providing for potentiality. Citta is always self-evolving by virtue of its rajas energy, this is the ever-present movement of thought.²⁰

¹⁹ S. N. Dasgupta finds that both the Yoga Sūtras and the Vakya-padiya adopt a kind of common sense identification or ontological unity between the whole (the universal) and the parts (the particular manifestations). The three guṇas are the one universal genus, and it is the guṇas in various collocations that show themselves as the particular manifestations. Thus Patañjali (in the Mahābhāṣya 5.1.129) identifies substance (dravya) with both the particular object (in all its qualities) and the substratum which remains constant amidst change. But the latter has more reality than the former in that the latter remains intact even if the former is destroyed. Yoga Philosophy, University of Calcutta, 1930, pp. 120-126.

²⁰

The Study of Patañjali, op. cit., pp. 202-203, and p.

Between creations citta is merged in unmanifested (avyakta) prakṛti, where the three guṇas continue in a state of dynamic equilibrium.²¹

According to Yoga cosmology the self-evolution of the unmanifested prakṛti into its manifested state occurs as follows: Prakṛti includes within itself both "mind" and "matter". This means that the guṇas must also possess two forms, i.e., the form of the perceiver (mind), and the form of the perceived (matter). In the form of the mind or perceiver, the guṇas evolve themselves into the ego, the manas (mind) and the sense organs. In the form of the perceived, the guṇas evolve themselves into the five subtle elements (tan-mātra), the five corresponding gross elements and their compounds. Thus the elements which compose the objects of perception are the same primal matter as those which constitute the mind of the perceiver, and there is no theoretical difficulty in observing interchange between the two. As for a more formal explanation of the evolution of such "matter" and "mind" forms from the elemental unmanifest prakṛti, the following is proposed. From the unmanifested prakṛti, mahat, buddhi or intellect is the first emanation. This buddhi or mahat primarily functions in the making of discriminative judgments (sattva aspect), and secondarily in willing (rajas aspect) and feeling (tamas aspect). From the buddhi proceeds the ahaṅkāra or sense of egoity which functions by receiving sense impressions from the manas or mind, giving them

²¹ Here Yoga psychology is based on Sāṅkhyan metaphysics. See The Sāṅkhyan Kārikā of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa, op. cit., sūtra 3.

personalistic form and passing them on to the buddhi. From the ahaṅkāra emanates the five karmendriya (faculties of action), the manas, the five jñānendriya (faculties of sense), and the five tanmātra with their corresponding gross elements and compounds. Therefore perception can take place as follows. Sense impressions are received by the sense organs, processed by the manas, given ego-identification by the ahaṅkāra and passed on to the buddhi, where cognitive awareness occurs.²²

Once prakṛti passes from the equilibrium state of pure potential into the buddhi or mahat, it takes the form of citta-vṛttis, or mental states. Such states include all the possible modifications of citta that may be experienced in one's phenomenal existence. Dasgupta points out that we cannot distinguish these states of consciousness from consciousness itself, for the consciousness is not something separate from its states; it exists in its states and passes away with their passing and submerges when they are submerged.²³ Citta differs from the senses in that they represent functions through which the citta may flow. The citta vṛttis are not functions but the actual mental states with which we are concerned.

The ancient Yoga scholars arrived at the above theory by

²² Ibid., sūtra 3; and Yoga Sūtras, II:18. The next section of this Chapter provides a detailed analysis of this evolution of prakṛti. The above brief outline is merely intended to give an overview for contextual purposes.

²³ The Study of Patañjali, op. cit., p. 94.

subjectively analyzing thought processes. In our experience of thought, a particular idea seems to arise, become illuminated and pass away. Movement (rajas) therefore was conceived as a principal element of thought. Apart from rajas, thought, when its sensuous contents are removed, seems to exhibit a sort of universal form or mould. This a priori form appears to assume the form of all contents presented to it. This is the universal knowing aspect (sattva) which provides the substratum upon which the idea particulars impose themselves for understanding. In the Yoga view the contents of thought are simply limitations of this universal aspect of sattva.²⁴

At this level, such limitations of sattva are said to be pure ideas or ideas shining forth in the light of pure intelligence, and would seem to be very close descriptions of the Grammarian's concept of vakya-sphotas in which there is no subject-object distinction. The limited sattva is a whole idea which, like the sphota, is held to remain ever pure and changeless.²⁵ At this abstract and immediate (buddhi) stage, sattva is predominant but has the potentiality of bursting forth into mediate thought processes via the suppressed rajas and tamas aspects of the sattva sphota. The way in which this sattva dominated idea or sphota becomes individuated through rajas and tamas into overt speech will be examined in the next section of this Chapter.

²⁴Ibid., p. 49.

²⁵Ibid., p. 50.

Citta as a Psychological Interpretation of Sphota Consciousness

In the Yoga conception of Īśvara's relation to citta,²⁶ there is a ready-made basis for a psychological interpretation of the Sphota view of consciousness. Īśvara removes obstacles or unlocks the potential energy of prakṛti so that it naturally evolves into its various citta states. With regard to language, Īśvara gives to prakṛti the eternal word of the Veda at the start of each new creation. As the Veda, in its noumenal state, resides in the buddhi or mahat, it provides the word form as pure meaning (artha) which makes possible both the direct vision of the r̥ṣi and the phenomenal usage of language as uttered speech. These noumenal word forms (sphotas), which Īśvara bestows upon the diffuse buddhi state, can be likened to channels through which the potentiality of citta may flow out and be manifested as phenomenal states.²⁷

The general mechanism by which these noumenal word forms exist within citta is that of saṃskāra. Saṃskāra is defined as follows. When a particular mental state (citta vṛtti) passes away into another, it does not totally disappear but is preserved within citta as a latent form or saṃskāra.²⁸ Such saṃskāras are always

²⁶ Dasgupta maintains that the Yoga school differs from the Sāṅkhya in holding Īśvara to be responsible for the particular knowledge content (Veda) and the compassionate line of evolution which prakṛti follows. The Study of Patañjali, op. cit., p. 203.

²⁷ This interpretation is based upon Yoga Sūtra I:25.

²⁸ Yoga Sūtras III:9.

tending to manifest themselves anew, and therefore are also referred to as *bīja* or seed states.²⁹ *Īśvara's* state of *sattvic* omniscience is described as *bīja* in that his matured omniscience lays down the seeds for its own eternal continuance (both within and between creations).³⁰ The "*bīja*" connotation emphasizes potency, which is the essential characteristic of *saṃskāra*. On the analogy of the seed and the sprout, *saṃskāras* are seen to be self-perpetuating in nature. A particular mental state or *citta vṛtti* results in a like *saṃskāra* which is always attempting to manifest itself in another *citta vṛtti* similar to the first. Thus, there is a self-generating cycle from *vṛttis* to *saṃskāras* to *vṛttis*, and so on.³¹ In *Yoga* thinking this cycle is beginningless (i.e., it has always been going on), but is not necessarily endless. Although the repetition of the same series of *vṛtti-saṃskāra-vṛtti* results in the establishing and strengthening of habit patterns (*vāsanās*), which are likened to "roots" that have grown deep within the "soil" of *citta*, the continual practicing of an opposing *saṃskāra* series will eventually weaken and render the "root" or *vāsanā* of the less reinforced series impotent.

In *Yoga* thought such *saṃskāra* series or *vāsanās* are categorized as either: (1) *klista* (afflicted by ignorance), obstructing and leading away from the revelation of knowledge or insight

²⁹ *Ibid.*, I:25 and III:50.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, I:25.

³¹ *The Study of Patañjali*, op. cit., p. 98.

(prajñā); or (2) akliṣṭa (unafflicted), leading towards prajñā.³²

Seen in this perspective, citta or consciousness is like a constantly moving river whose flow can go in either of two directions (or both ways at the same time).³³ Through the samskāra series resulting from Īśvara's beginningless bestowing of the Veda within buddhi, citta has an inherent tendency towards knowledge and the revelation of Brahman. But through the kliṣṭa samskāra series composed of beginningless ignorance (avidyā) and egoity (asmitā) (which characterize the endless round of birth-death-rebirth or samsāra) citta has an innate tendency towards ignorance.³⁴ The teleology of prakṛti (via the grace of Īśvara), however, ensures that the will to realize knowledge is never lost in man -- thus the innate overall tendency of citta is to flow in the direction of knowledge.³⁵ As will be outlined in the next Chapter, the practical psychology of Yoga is offered as a means by which the beginningless entrapment in ignorance may be finally overcome through the realization of knowledge.

Does the Yoga conception of citta, as outlined above, provide a theoretical demonstration of the psychological possibility of the Sphota view of the nature of consciousness? Let us examine

³² Yoga Sūtras, I:5.

³³ Ibid., I:12.

³⁴ Ibid., II:4-6.

³⁵ S. Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, vol. I. Cambridge: University Press, 1963, p. 269.

the evidence. Sphota theory defines consciousness as an intertwined unity of cognition and word, which constantly seeks to manifest itself in speech. In the Yoga analysis of consciousness we have seen how the sattva aspect of citta is beginninglessly bestowed with the word forms or meanings of the Veda due to the grace of Īśvara. These sattvic word forms are equivalent to Bhartṛhari's vākya-sphotas. Saṃskāra series provide the psychological process by which the sphotas become and continue as vṛttis or states within consciousness. Such a primordial noumenal sphota is psychologically analyzed as a concentrated insight (prajñā) which exists as an undisturbed succession of akliṣṭa saṃskāra. It does not fluctuate or change, nor does it require any supporting object (ālambana) since it is itself the substratum — the eternal universal essence upon which all phenomenal language manifestations of that word depend.³⁶ As prajñā or pure intuition it is unitary, partless and free from the predicate relations which characterize ordinary speech. Yet as citta, it contains, in addition to this pure sattvic intuition, elements of tamas and rajas (especially the latter) which provide the material and motive force for the phenomenalization of the sphota into thought and speech. Thus, the inherent telos of consciousness is towards self-revelation and communication of which Bhartṛhari speaks. The actual processes of phenomenalization have not as yet been analyzed. Up to this point, the focus has been on the analysis of consciousness at the noumenal level in order to demonstrate its nature as including

³⁶ Yoga Sūtras, I:18, Tīkā.

cognition, word-meaning and the desire for speech. The mention of phenomenalization here is simply to indicate that the rajas and tamas aspects of citta provide the potency to burst forth into disclosure, which Sphota theory requires.³⁷ Sphota theory maintains that although the sphota is, in its essence, a partless unity of consciousness, yet it contains within it in potential form all the variety of its particular manifestations. Within citta the essential oneness of the sphota is seen in its existence as an undisturbed succession of akliṣṭa saṃskāra which is primarily composed of sattva. Secondly, however, the rajas and tamas aspects of the sphota citta vṛtti provide the potential for its various particular manifestations.

In view of the above, it seems clear that the Yoga conception of consciousness as citta does provide a psychological explanation for the Sphota view of consciousness as a unity of word and cognition which seeks to manifest itself in speech. Before passing on to examine the process of phenomenalization or, as it is called here, the individuation of consciousness, some general comments are offered regarding the above interpretation of citta in relation to classical Indian thought and modern Western psychology.

General Comments on Consciousness as Citta

The term citta appears in a variety of usages in the

³⁷ The actual process of phenomenalization will be discussed later in this Chapter.

Upanisads. The Praśna Upanisad (4:8) places citta above the mind (manas) and intellect (buddhi) and egoity (ahaṁkāra). The Kauṣītaki Upanisad (3:3) notes that prajñā (which in this context seems to be equated with prāṇa or "life breath") constitutes the essence of citta. Here it would seem that prajñā, prāṇa and citta all refer to the same reality, possibly as seen from different aspects of manifestation. According to the Chāndogya Upanisad (5:1:15), the organ of speech, the eyes, the ears and the mind all emerge from prāṇa, which seems to be equated with citta. These few examples serve to show that the concept of citta as consciousness was present in general form in the Upanisads.

In classical Indian thought, citta occurs in Sāṅkhya, Yoga and Vedānta, but with different limitations. Although there is much in common between the Sāṅkhya and Yoga systems, the Yoga conception of citta does have distinct differences. For Sāṅkhya citta seems to be mere buddhi or intellect. In Yoga, citta is also described as buddhi, but buddhi as including all of the sub-conscious as well as the conscious. Unlike the buddhi of Sāṅkhya, which sometimes seems to be just a category, the Yoga citta is conceived of as an inner mechanism (antah-karana) consisting of four aspects of which buddhi is just one. Vācaspati Miśra describes Yoga citta as a unity of buddhi, ahaṁkāra and manas.³⁸ Yoga has also given extra emphasis to the truth-bearing nature of citta which,

³⁸ Yoga Sūtras, Tīkā on I:1, I:2, and IV:10.

as evidenced above, provides so well for a psychological interpretation of language.

In Vedānta, the Yoga psychology of personal consciousness as citta seems to be generally adhered to. The specific psychological terms, however, are used rather loosely. Pure transcendent consciousness (Brahman) is described as being in essence pure intelligence (caitanya).³⁹ The personal consciousness is a limitation (upādhi) of this omniscient and omnipotent caitanya. In its limited form as mind, various Yoga terms such as manas, buddhi, ahaṁkāra and citta are used; however, Śaṅkara seems to prefer manas as a general term for citta (as used in this thesis).⁴⁰ For Vedānta (at the ultimate and empirical levels) and Yoga (at the empirical but not the ultimate level) consciousness is seen as containing within itself both the illuminating power of cognition and the essential knowledge content (omniscience). With regard to language, there is, however, a difference in what each system perceives as the basic limiting structures of this knowledge. Śaṅkara gives support to the phoneme rather than the sphōṭa as the basic language limiting structure found within consciousness.⁴¹ In general, however, the Sāṅkhya/Yoga analysis of citta or consciousness in terms of the

³⁹P. Deussen, The System of the Vedānta. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1912, p. 324.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 330.

⁴¹The Vedānta-Sūtras, op. cit., I:3:28.

three gunas seems to be accepted by most Vedāntists,⁴² although with a different interpretation of the nature of the changes involved.

As with Yoga citta, the Jainā views consciousness (cetanā) as being, capable of manifesting itself as well as all knowledge. Jaina cetanā is described as consisting of both knowledge and intuition. While in citta the rajas and tamas gunas limit and obstruct the prajñā of sattva, in Jaina theory the illuminated knowledge of consciousness is blocked out by moral impurities (karmas). The body, the senses and the manas are all constituted by karmas and the omniscience of consciousness is limited by them.⁴³ Of the Buddhists, the Yogācāra theory is very sympathetic to the view of citta as the ground of all mental states. As Vasubandhu put it, a groundless appearance is unintelligible.⁴⁴ The Yogācāras also describe consciousness (viññāna) as a storehouse or granary where the seeds of all future ideas are stored. Like citta with its saṃskāra-series, the Yogācāra storehouse consciousness (ālaya viññāna) is described as having a two-fold function: it is the receptacle of the saṃskāras of past viññānas, and it gives rise to

⁴²As an example see Vidyāranya's Pañcadaśī, English trans. by Swāmī Swahananda. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1967.

⁴³An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, op. cit., p. 86. See also Outlines of Jaina Philosophy, by M. L. Mehta. Chickpet: Jaina Mission Society, 1954, p. 45.

⁴⁴A. K. Chatterjee, The Yogācāra Idealism. Varanasi: Banaras Hindu University, 1962, p. 16.

further vijñānas by the maturing of those saṃskāras.⁴⁵ Ālaya vijñāna, like citta, is not static but compared to a flowing stream in which our mental states are constantly being transformed from one moment to the next. Within this flow of consciousness, manas or intellect (mano-vijñāna) and the senses (pravṛtti vijñānas) appear as evolutes. But, underlying all of these similarities between citta and vijñāna are important differences which cannot be overlooked. Citta, for Sankhya/Yoga, is taken to be ontologically real; ālaya vijñāna (and its evolutes), however, has epistemic function but no ontological reality (and in this sense is similar to the Vedānta conception of manas). Citta, in the evolution of the guṇas, retains an underlying identity of substance with only the modes of surface manifestation changing. In contrast, the Yogācāra, as a true Buddhist, understands ālaya vijñāna and its evolutes as moments of consciousness that in causal succession emerge on the death of the preceding moment, exist for a moment, and become totally annihilated without any residue save the succeeding moments of the evolutionary series.⁴⁶ This interpretation was fully established in the early Buddhist writings where, as Rhys Davids points out, there is "an emphatic negation of any substantial unity in viññāna or chitta or mano".⁴⁷ From the Brāhmanical viewpoint the

⁴⁵ T. H. Stcherbatksy, The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāna. The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1965, p. 32.

⁴⁶ The Yogācāra Idealism, op. cit., p. 123.

⁴⁷ C. A. F. Rhys Davids, Buddhist Psychology. London: Luzac and Co., 1924, pp. 54-55.

change in consciousness is either unreal (Vedānta) or real transformation (Sāṅkhya/Yoga). For all Buddhists, however, change is real but not transformation. It is a series of completely new productions -- the previous mental state only providing the occasion for the production of the present one, which in turn will be completely used up in its own existence and provide only the occasion for the emergence of the next in the series.

The Yoga conception of citta may be further highlighted by briefly relating it to some theories encountered in Western psychology. William James proposes that consciousness be considered a stream of thought in which each moment is different from that of the last moment, but appropriative of the latter.⁴⁸ This is similar to the Yoga view of the evolving nature of citta which, through its saṃskāra-series, can appropriate its own knowledge contents. James, however, seems to incline more towards the Buddhist position when he maintains that, "the thoughts themselves are the thinkers".⁴⁹ Like the Sphota theorists, James feels that in thinking meaning arises basically from the whole idea or unified mental state and not from a summation of the parts or component sensations.⁵⁰ In support of this contention, James cites the experiments of Cattell which indicate that the reaction time for

⁴⁸ William James, Psychology. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1893, p. 215.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 216.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 151.

distinguishing a word is often but little more than that for distinguishing a letter. The conclusion drawn is that we do not distinguish separately the letters of which a word is composed, but the word as a whole.⁵¹ This work by Cattell, however, may now need to be critically evaluated in the light of subsequent work in the field of cognitive psychology.

Another researcher, K. H. Pribram, also has offered ideas which may support the primacy of the whole in knowing. Pribram conceives of knowledge as a process or plan that is enacted.⁵² While studying memory, Pribram found evidence which seemed to suggest that cognitive processes may take the form of diffraction patterns resembling lasser-produced holograms. The brain seems to store sensory data within individual cells in the form of complex diffraction patterns. When an appropriate input pattern is presented, it interacts with the neural cells throughout the cortex producing "wave fronts" in such a way that a new presentation of the original idea or image is reconstructed. Pribram also speculates that such "seed holograms" can provide the basis for a hierarchial coding system which results in the words and symbols that function as our means for knowing.⁵³ Pribram further suggests that holograms can be layered one on top

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 126.

⁵² K. H. Pribram, "The Neurophysiology of Remembering", Scientific American, January, 1969, pp. 73-86.

⁵³ K. H. Pribram, "Neurological Notes on Knowing". Unpublished address to Second Banff Conference on Theoretical Psychology, Banff, 1969.

of the other and yet be separately recreated. One attractive feature of this hypothesis is that the "seed information" is distributed throughout the stored hologram and is thus resistant to insult (e.g., in cases of the persistence of memory and function on a reconstructed basis after specific brain damage -- a phenomenon that has for years baffled Western cognitive psychologists such as K. S. Lashley⁵⁴). Even if a small portion of the hologram remains, the entire cognition can be recreated. In some ways this recent theorizing by Pribram bears formal similarity, at least, to the Yoga concept of a sattva saṃskara-series which can provide the basis for a sphota. The nature of the guṇas as pervasive throughout citta and as conveying knowledge through a limited manifestation of this pervasive sattva has interesting parallels with Pribram's model in which knowledge results from the manifestation of stored neural patterns or holograms that have a diffuse or pervasive existence in the cortex.

While neither James nor Pribram would accept the Sphota notion that citta inherently contains meaning essences within it, they, along with many other contemporary psychologists,⁵⁵ do support

⁵⁴For an excellent review of Western attempts to solve this problem, see the paper by V. Meyer, "Psychological Effects of Brain Damage", in the Handbook of Abnormal Psychology, ed. by J. J. Eysenck, New York: Basic Books, 1961.

⁵⁵See, for example, O. H. Mowrer's review discussion of "Representation and Consciousness" in Learning Theory and the Symbolic Processes. New York: J. Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1963, pp. 257 ff. See also the discussion by Wilder Penfield, a neurologist, of consciousness

the ancient Indian contention that the mind contains its own structuring mechanisms without which knowing would be impossible. For modern Western thinkers, however, such inner mechanisms of consciousness are usually taken as learned representations of the external world, and not a beginningless inner entity which is related to both the individual's previous lives and the universal or collective consciousness of all beings. Perhaps the only Western psychologist to maintain that consciousness is collective and contains within itself in seed form the knowledge of reality is Carl Jung. In this regard Jung provides the closest Western approximation to the citta conception of consciousness. The psyche is defined by Jung as the totality of all conscious as well as unconscious mental processes.⁵⁶

For Jung, as is the case for citta, the stuff of consciousness is no less real than the physical matter of the external world.⁵⁷

Again like citta, Jung's psychic matter is conceived of as possessing

as the integrative activity of the brain. Penfield, in a way reminiscent of the citta guṇa theory, likens the cerebral cortex to a carpet of nerve cells in which consciousness is recorded in a kind of permanent fashion. Such "permanent" recordings (of past experiences) provide a "sphoṭa like model" against which present experience is interpreted as meaningful. "The Recording of Consciousness and the Function of the Interpretive Cortex", in Speech and Brain-Mechanisms, by W. Penfield and L. Roberts. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959, pp. 38-55.

⁵⁶ Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C. G. Jung. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

an essential dynamism and an ongoing indestructibility.⁵⁸ However, Jung's theory of consciousness differs significantly from citta in the hierarchial order in which it is conceived. Rather than beginning with consciousness in its most general and most omniscient form (i.e., the Yoga conception of Īśvara's sattva), Jung begins with the ego as the dimension of consciousness which in turn is surrounded -- in ever expanding concentric circles -- by the personal unconscious (containing specific personal acquisitions and forgotten, repressed or subliminally perceived contents), and by the collective unconscious (which encloses within itself all of the previous dimensions and expands outward in every direction toward infinity). The collective unconscious is based upon the inherited potential for psychic functioning (i.e., neurophysiological structure), out of which contents arise which are common to all humans. It is the foundation for the "primal datum" out of which consciousness ever rises afresh. Consequently, the fundamental human psychic activity is activity of the unconscious. Within it, as within the pervasive gunas of citta, resides the potential dynamics which, when structured by individual growth, represent mankind's universal reactions to typical human situations (e.g., fear, hate, sex, love, birth, death, etc.). These are the archetypes.⁵⁹ The Jungian archetypes bear

⁵⁸ Ruth Monroe, Schools of Psychoanalytic Thought. New York: The Dryden Press, 1955, p. 541.

⁵⁹ The above summary of Jung's basic theoretical concepts regarding consciousness is based on The Psychology of C. G. Jung, op. cit., pp. 5-10.

some formal resemblance to the sphota (when conceived as an *aklista saiskara* series), in that it is described as a universal and eternal presence which represents the sum of the latent potentialities of the individual psyche.⁶⁰ But an idea entirely contrary to the Sphota conception of its knowledge as pure divine truth occurs when Jung describes the archetypal knowledge as the latent ancestral knowledge of the human race. Thus, for Jung, the knowledge content of consciousness is, at its core (or archetypal level) coloured by the darker hues of human passion and cultural history. As Jacobi puts it, "every collective, representing at the same time the sum of its single members, is stamped by the psychic constitution of those members".⁶¹ In the Yoga view of sphota within citta, however, the knowledge content of the *buddhi sattva* remains the pure knowledge essence, the eternal meaning constant (by *Īśvara's* grace), upon which all lesser levels of human knowledge and language depend. This difference would seem to be a direct outcome of Jung's modern Western, egocentric view of consciousness. For citta, and virtually all other Eastern approaches, the nature of consciousness is primarily identified with God or divine truth -- the personal ego being consigned to a relatively low location in the hierarchy of the evolution of consciousness. Perhaps this difference is most clearly seen in the respective ways in which the knowledge inherent in consciousness is said to be realized. Whereas Jung seeks to appropriate the

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-48.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

universal truth (archetypes) to the self-conscious ego, Yoga seeks to appropriate the self-conscious ego to the universal truth.

Since this difference focuses on the question of how consciousness individuates itself, and since this is precisely the topic next to be considered, let us withhold further comment until the Yoga view of the individuation of consciousness has been discussed.

II. THE INDIVIDUATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

IN THE EXPRESSION OF SPHOTA

Having shown that the Sphota view of consciousness (as an intertwining of cognition and word which constantly seeks to express itself in speech) is psychologically conceivable when interpreted according to the Yoga conception of citta, let us now proceed to the next step of describing how such a sphota consciousness can express itself as speech. Following the logical analysis of sphota, as summarized at the conclusion of Part One, the psychological description of the expression of sphota consciousness as speech will be approached on two complementary lines of analysis. To begin with, the psychological dynamic which enables the meaning-whole of consciousness, the vākya-sphota, to burst forth into disclosure (sphut) will be analyzed. This will show the psychological possibility of tenent A.2. of the logical analysis: the instinctive basis of speech in consciousness which causes the phenomenalization of the sphota. Secondly, the psychological processes required for the individuated expression of sphota as word meaning (artha) and word sound (dhvani) will be described. This will provide evidence for

tenent A.3.

Rajas Individuation of Citta as the Instinctive Basis of Speech

In the above examination of the nature of consciousness, a description has been offered of how, according to the Yoga conception of citta, consciousness could contain within itself (in a potential state) word, cognition and the desire for expression. This level of consciousness has been shown to be synonymous with paśyanti vāk or Śabdabrahman in Sphota theory. Here the sphota exists in an undifferentiated state. It is simply the vāk of Īśvara pervasively existing within undifferentiated citta as an eternally continuous pure sattva saṃskāra series. In it there is no distinction between word and meaning, but only the constant presence of meaning as a whole. There is present, however, "a going out", a desire for expression, which has previously been referred to as the instinctive basis of speech (see logical tenent A.2.). It is this characteristic of citta that will be focused on now.

To begin with, let us introspectively examine our initial experience in the act of speaking. At its earliest genesis the speaking act would seem to involve the following: some kind of mental effort to control or tune-out distracting sensations and thoughts, an inwardly focused concentration of the mind, and an effort of the mind to bring into self-awareness some idea (or glimpse of reality) that is only vaguely within our ken. Although we may feel very sure of its presence just beyond the fringes of our conscious awareness, and although we may find ourselves impelled

by a great desire to reveal that idea to ourselves in discursive thought, a great effort at concentrated thinking is often required before any clear conception of it is mentally achieved. Even then we may well feel dissatisfied in that the laboriously conceived conceptualization proves to be so inadequate and incomplete in comparison with our direct intuition of the noumenal "thing" which remains stubbornly transcendent in the face of all our attempts to capture it in discrete thought. Yet the more persistently and intensely we think, the clearer our corresponding intuition of the object often becomes. But thinking it is not enough. We are also conscious of a compulsion to manifest our inner thought in speech (or writing), for only then does the urge for the revelation of the hidden idea seem fully satisfied. According to Bhartrhari, it is this urge or inner energy (kratu) which is responsible for the whole process of the individuation of consciousness and the expression of sphota in both inner thought and outer speech.⁶²

Bhartrhari maintains that this kratu is a quality of the sphota itself. But the telos of kratu to burst forth (sphut) into disclosure is experienced within self-awareness in two forms. On the one hand, there is the pent-up energy for disclosure residing in the sphota, while on the other hand there is the epistemic impulsion of the subjective consciousness and its desire, as a speaker, to communicate.⁶³ Let us now see if Bhartrhari's analysis

⁶²vākyapadīya, op. cit., vṛtti on I:51.

⁶³Ibid., I:1 vṛtti.

of our "speaking event" can be interpreted in terms of Yoga psychology.

In Sāṅkhya/Yoga gunā theory, it is clear that the energy aspect of any manifestation of citta will be directly attributable to rajas. We have already described citta in its unmanifested state as buddhi (containing the omniscience bestowed by Īśvara's sattva). The characteristic of this buddhi state is that in it sattva predominates over rajas and tamas in a steady flow of Īśvara's omniscient ideas (Vedas). These ideas or unmanifested sphotas are but limitations within sattva of the pure universal knowledge of consciousness. At this level of collective consciousness (buddhitattva), there is no subject-object distinction, and, as Vyāsa puts it "all we can say is that it exists".⁶⁴ This buddhitattva is citta in its most universal individuation containing within it all the buddhis of individuals and potentially all the matter of which the gross world is formed. Thus it is also referred to as mahat or "the great one" in Yoga writings.⁶⁵

Now as a result of the teleology inherent in citta (the

⁶⁴Yoga Sūtras, II:19 bhāṣya. Although for our present purpose the inherent knowledge aspect of the buddhitattva is the point of focus, it should be realized that the buddhitattva, as the collective of all the individual minds (buddhi) with their beginningless saṃskāras of ignorance (avidyā) from previous births, also contains within it the inherent avidyā of the individual souls. And from the viewpoint of language, this avidyā would be composed of all the residual traces of the use of words in previous lives (śabdabhavana). See Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 91.

⁶⁵Ibid., II:19.

grace of Īśvara) the buddhitattva is affected by its own pent-up rajas activity which posits itself as ego (ahaṁkāra). This is the sense of "I-ness" as an active entity which takes experience as "mine".⁶⁶ Due to the increasing preponderance of rajas guna in the originally pure sattva of buddhi, the buddhi citta transforms itself into the ego, the subject or the knower. But at this first phase of ego manifestation the ego, although conscious of itself, has as yet no other content to know since the tamas guna is still under suppression. This bare "I-ness" is a preponderance of rajas as manifested by sattva which "knows itself to be active and holds itself as the permanent energising activity which connects with itself all the phenomena of our life".⁶⁷ Still, however, there is no subject-object distinction and therefore the sphoṭa inherent in citta can only be known as a general datum of consciousness but with the characteristic of I-ness or mine. Sphoṭa at this level is described as the subtle inner word (sūkṣmā vāk) that becomes the knower (jñātā), and then in order to reveal himself becomes the external word.⁶⁸ In the Yoga description the ahaṁkāra is equivalent to the sūkṣmā vāk, and rajas to the śakti or power of vāk for self-manifestation. The next level of manifestation occurs when the buddhi citta, through the ahaṁkāra, turns back upon

⁶⁶ Ibid., I:17, Tīkā.

⁶⁷ The Study of Patañjali, op. cit., p. 53.

⁶⁸ Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 149.

itself and divides into a part that sees and a part that is seen -- the subject-object distinction that characterizes thought. According to Yoga theory, citta accomplishes this involutinal bifurcation by virtue of the germs of subjectivity and objectivity that the gunas contain within themselves. At the initial ahaṁkāra level these two sides of subject and object exist, but only in an implicit way within the bare self-awareness.⁶⁹

This bifurcated individuation of the buddhi citta through the ahaṁkāra occurs by the instrumental activity of rajas in evolving, on the one hand a sattva preponderance, and on the other a tamas preponderance of citta.

Following first the rajas produced sattva preponderance, it is seen as a continuing individuation of the buddhitattva -- since the latter was already characterized as having a dominance of sattva. By the further activity of rajas, the sattva citta through the ahaṁkāra develops itself into: the five cognitive senses (jñānendriya) of vision, touch, smell, taste and hearing; the five faculties of action (karmendriya), speaking, handling, locomotion, evacuation and sexual generation; and the prāṇas or vāyus (psycho-motor activity which help both action and cognition and are the life force manifestations of rajas). Also formed by the rajas activity in the sattva preponderance is a further specialization of the ahaṁkāra as manas -- the instrument whereby

⁶⁹ The Study of Patañjali, op. cit., p. 54.

the ahaṁkāra directly connects itself with the cognitive and conative senses.⁷⁰ It is in this manner that Yoga theory envisages the collective consciousness of the buddhitattva being individuated into the intellects (individual buddhis) of finite persons. Dasgupta helpfully summarizes this rajas produced individuation of citta.

The individual ahaṁkāras and senses are related to the individual buddhis by the developing sattva determinations from which they had come into being. Each buddhi with its own group of ahaṁkāra (ego) and sense-evolutes thus forms a microcosm separate from similar other buddhis with their associated groups. So far therefore as knowledge is subject to sense-influence and the ego, it is different for each individual, but so far as a general mind (karana buddhi) apart from sense knowledge is concerned, there is a community of all buddhis in the buddhitattva. Even there, however, each buddhi is separated from other buddhis by its own peculiarly associated ignorance (avidyā).⁷¹

From the viewpoint of our special interest in language, the above situation is interpreted as follows. At the buddhitattva level each buddhi has incorporated in its particular avidyā vāsanās accumulated from word usage in previous lives. These are seed forms of the inherent śabda vocalization patterns which, as Bhartrhari points out, are seen to already exist in the new born baby who does not as yet know any language.⁷² This is the vācaka or expressive

⁷⁰Yoga Sūtras, II:19, Tīkā. The function of manas will be further described in the next section.

⁷¹S. N. Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy. Cambridge: University Press, 1932, vol. I, p. 250.

⁷²Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 151.

element of sphota in its potential state. But, insofar as the individual buddhi participates in the general mind (the buddhitattva), the sattva there encountered contains seed forms of the inherent meanings (described above as Vedic akliṣṭa saṃskāra series, bestowed by the grace of Īśvara). These seeds are the meaning elements (artha) in potential form, and are also referred to as the vācya or the expressed aspect of the sphota.

On the other side of the bifurcation, by the activity of rajas, the tamas guna of the buddhitattva citta individuates through the ahaṃkāra into the five tanmātras which, by a further evolution of themselves, produce the five gross elements of matter.⁷³ The tamas guna by itself is inert mass, but in combination with rajas becomes fully dynamic and vibrant -- in somewhat the same sense as matter is conceived as moving electrical energy charges in modern physics and chemistry. In its state as mere mass, tamas is referred to as bhūtādi. By its combination with differing amounts of energy or rajas, the bhūtādi is individuated into various tanmātras or aggregations of the original mass-units. Due to their particular collocations of mass and energy, the tanmātras possess the potential physical qualities of sound (śabda or ākāśa), touch (sparsa), colour or shape (rūpa), flavour or taste (rasa), and smell (gandha).⁷⁴ These tanmātras are the subtle material counterparts of the five cognitive senses which formed part of the rajas-sattva

⁷³ Yoga Sūtras, II:19.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

individuation described above. However, as tanmātras, they have only the potential for affecting our senses and therefore are described as infra-atomic (paramānu).⁷⁵ In order to be perceivable to ordinary or distracted (vikṣipta) consciousness, these potential states or tanmātras are said to combine together in varying proportions so as to produce the five gross elements (sthūla-bhūtāni) as follows. The sound tanmātra with the accretion of further tamas preponderance from the bhūtādi becomes the ākāśa or sound atom with its characteristic of penetrability. The first tanmātra combines with touch to produce the vāyu or gas atom with its characteristic of mechanical pressure. The first two tanmātras combine with colour to form the tejas or fire atom with its characteristic of light and radiant heat. The first three tanmātras combine with taste to generate āpas or liquid atom with its characteristic of viscosity. Finally smell, together with the previous four tanmātras, produces the pṛthvī or earth atom with its quality of cohesive attraction.⁷⁶

The ahaṁkāra and the five tanmātras are given the technical name of avīśeṣa (indeterminate) since through them further citta individuations occur. The five cognitive senses, the five faculties of action, the manas and the five gross atoms are all classified as vīśeṣa (determinate) since from them no further individuation of

⁷⁵ A History of Indian Philosophy, op. cit., p. 252.

⁷⁶ Yoga Sūtras, II:19 and I:45 Bhāṣya. See also The Study of Patañjali, op. cit., pp. 60-70 for a comprehensive review of the various differences in interpretation of the evolution of the tanmātras and gross elements.

citta can take place.⁷⁷ Citta, having reached the furthest limit of its rajas individuation by producing the senses and manas on the one side and the gross atoms on the other, should not be thought of as having reached the end of its process of change. The underlying principle of citta's transformation is concisely stated by Dasgupta:

The order of succession is not from whole to parts nor from parts to whole but ever from a relatively less differentiated, less determinate, less coherent whole to a relatively more determinate, more coherent whole....increasing differentiation proceeds pari passu with increasing integration within the evolving whole.⁷⁹

Seen in its cosmic perspective, the rajas energized transformation of sattva and tamas towards both individuation and integration results in a totality of mass, energy and illumination that remains constant throughout its diversity of collocations. Although manifestations of the gunas within individual buddhis may appear to be subject to growth and decay, the gunas taken in the totality of their manifested and unmanifested citta, are a cosmic constant (with no overall increase or decrease but having a continuous circular flow within the system as a whole).⁷⁹

This overview of the whole cosmic process of citta came about as a natural outcome of the analysis of rajas as providing,

⁷⁷ Yoga Sūtras, II:19 Bhāṣya.

⁷⁸ Yoga Philosophy in Relation..., op. cit., p. 208.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 209.

in its individuation of citta, the inner energy (kratu) or instinctive basis of speech. In Yoga theory as described above, it seems clear that rajas activity provides the psychological basis required for the "instinctive urge" to phenomenalize the sphota. Rajas in its pent-up state within the buddhitattva is a clear description of the energy for disclosure (sphut) that Bhartrhari conceives of as residing within the sphota. And in its individuation of the buddhitattva through the ahaṁkāra, rajas has demonstrated its power to produce the subject-object distinction that characterizes speech at its two lower levels. The formation of the ahaṁkāra, with its sense of egoity, provides for the overall sense of awareness which, in its more individuated forms as mind and senses, forms the basis for the experiencing of epistemic curiosity. This is especially so when the cosmic teleology, within which this rajas individuation takes place, is identified with the omniscience of Īśvara. At the finite level of ego, mind and senses, such an epistemic drive has been shown to provide both the desire to bring into self-awareness that hidden meaning (artha) of sphota and the subsequent urge to express that revelation in speech (śabda). Now that the instinctive or dynamic basis for expression of sphota has been described, let us proceed to the speaking act itself and its fully individuated manifestation of the sphota as word-meaning and word-sound.

The Individuated Expression of Sphota as Artha and Dhvani

Tenent A.3. of the logical analysis states that the two aspects of word-meaning (artha) and word-sound (dhvani) differentiated in the mind, and yet integrated like two sides of the same coin, constitute the expression of sphota in thought⁸⁰ and speech. So far in this Chapter we have seen how the unitary sphota consciousness, through the phenomenizing activity of rajas, forms from within itself the potentiality for its two-sided expression. It remains only to trace further the psychological manifestation of the individuated sphota to its expression as uttered speech.

The individuation of the ahaṁkāra, the manas and the sense organs from the buddhi citta has been described. But how do these organs function so as to result in the expression of sphota in speech? In Yoga psychology, perception may be thought of as being external or internal. External perception, of course, occurs through the sense organs. Internal perception is said to occur via the internal organ (antah-karana) which assumes the threefold character of buddhi, ahaṁkāra and manas accordingly as its functions differ. The buddhi functions as the discriminating, knowing intellect, the ahaṁkāra as providing perception with the ego sense of "mine", and the manas as the processing or liaison center between

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As was pointed out in Chapter One, "thought" is treated as a case of internal speaking in Sphota theory.

perceptive and motor activity.⁸¹ It should be noted here that in Yoga theory names such as buddhi, ahaṁkāra and manas are used not to refer to any kind of structural division within citta, but rather as an attempt to functionally describe the unified functioning of the whole antahkarana. In its buddhi function the antahkarana contains the saṁskāras of both the word-meanings (arthas) and the word-sounds (dhvanis -- vocalization patterns from previous lives). In its ahaṁkāra function the antahkarana has the first awareness of the universal artha or meaning as its own cognition, and the concomitant awareness of the forming of that artha into inner speech or dhvani. In the introspection of our speaking act, this represents the cognitive birth of the earliest formulations in our grasping of the vākya sphota. The initial distinctions between artha and dhvani are therefore manifesting themselves. At this stage the manas aspect of the antahkarana is coordinating the concomitant developing vocalization patterns into internal thoughts

⁸¹Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, op. cit., p. 20. Eliade further describes the function of manas as the coordination of all psychic and biological activities. For a review of the differing interpretations given to the manas (especially regarding internal perception) see Indian Psychology: Cognition, op. cit., pp. 11-22. As against schools such as the Nyāya and individuals such as Vacaspati Miśra who interpret manas as an internal indriya or sense organ, the Sāṅkhya/Yoga holds that internal perception does not take place through the instrumentality of the manas as an organ. In the case of an external object, perception occurs when the antahkarana goes out to the object and assumes its form. In instances of inner perception, however, the object being perceived is an a priori part of the antahkarana and therefore no going out -- nothing other than the antahkarana itself is required. With this view many Vedāntins agree. See The Six Ways of Knowing, op. cit., p. 132.

in which the order of words is present. The dhvani-thoughts concomitant to the artha (of the sphota in question) are psychologically composed by the inter-action of the vibrant and highly charged śabda tanmātra with the organ of speech. The individuation of the śabda tanmātra into a particular sphota dhvani manifestation occurs through the conjoint action of a variety of factors. The overall form of the dhvani is provided by the artha through its "magnet-like" attracting of the tanmātra into its (the artha's) collateral dhvani pattern. But in order for the śabda tanmātra to be so structured, the speech organ acts as a variable filter through which the tanmātra is limited.⁸² It is in this way that vāsanās of vocalization patterns from previous lives⁸³ instrumentally operate through the speech organ so that the speech organ and the electric-like vibrancy of the śabda tanmātra can together respond to the electromagnetic-like pattern of the artha to produce the dhvani. Throughout all of this the manas is providing the psychomotor coordination for the complex cognitive activity involved.

The above interpretation provides a practical psychological explanation, in terms of Yoga theory, of how the sphota inherently present within the buddhi can express itself as artha and dhvani within individuated citta. In our analysis this far, however, dhvani is still at the level of thought or inner speech — corres-

⁸²Yoga Sūtra, III:41.

⁸³Vakyapadiya, II:117-118 and I:122.

ponding to Bhartrhari's madhyamā vāk.⁸⁴ In addition to the organ of speech, the prānas or vayus will also be involved -- the psychomotor activities such as action of the muscles of the diaphragm in driving the śabda tanmātra, in its gross ākāśa form, through the speech organ. In Yoga theory the individuating process is a continuum so that even at the level of internal thought, the initial gross manifestations of dhvani will be present in a subtle fashion. Therefore to move to the final level of individuation requires only that the gross forms, already minutely present, receive further development. Speaking aloud requires only that the processes of our thought out sentences be given an increase of prāna until the gross or nāda articulation of the phonemes occurs.⁸⁵ In the case of written speech, a slightly different pattern of the prāna or psychomotor structuring (so as to include hand-eye coordination and a learned system of phonetic representation) is all that is required. This is Bhartrhari's vaikharī vāk⁸⁶ level of expression in which what is meant (artha) is produced as word-sound (dhvani) by the articulatory organs. Thus, interpreted according to Yoga psychology, the Sphota theory is seen to provide a logical and experientiable explanation of the speaking act.

But here a difficulty appears. Sphota as citta has been

⁸⁴ Ibid., I:142.

⁸⁵ Ibid., I:46-47.

⁸⁶ Loc. cit.

shown to be realizable, in our experience, and omniscient in its nature (see Part One of this Chapter). In addition, this inherent omniscience within citta was found to have a divine (Īśvara given) and psychologically possible (through the activity of rajas) telos towards self-manifestation. Consequently, omniscience should totally characterize our speaking (and thinking). Although this may well describe the experience of the *rsis*,⁸⁷ it is manifestly not so in our ordinary experience. How then is this apparent inconsistency to be explained? Bhartrhari held that our failure to experience the omniscience of *vāk* is due to the veiling action of the beginningless *avidyā*, which is present as impurity in our speech.⁸⁸ Let us see if this answer of Bhartrhari's is capable of inclusion in our Yoga interpretation.

The concept of *avidyā*, as the beginningless ignorance which obscures the inherent omniscience of consciousness, is indeed present in Yoga psychology. Patañjali describes *avidyā* as the root or chief affliction (*kleśa*) of citta.⁸⁹ *Avidyā* is defined as the taking of the non-eternal (*anitya*), the impure (*asuci*), the painful (*duḥkha*) and the not-self (*anātman*) to be the eternal, the pure, the pleasurable and the self.⁹⁰ In the speaking act *avidyā* would be the taking of the phonemes, and words produced by ego senses, *prāṇa*, etc., to be the real, rather than the *sphota*.⁹¹

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, I:5.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, I:1 & I:14.

⁸⁹ *Yoga Sūtras*, II:4.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, II:5.

⁹¹ *Bhartrhari*, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-24.

Avidyā is the root cause upon which the other four kleśas (asmitā or egoism, rāga or attachment, dveṣa or aversion, and abhiniveśa or clinging to life) depend.⁹² The psychological mechanism by which these kleśas operate is the same saṃskāra series of citta vṛtti which we have previously discussed. But whereas the saṃskāra series of the omniscient sphotas were seen as leading citta towards the revelation of knowledge (prajñā), saṃskāra series of the kleśas result in an increase in the tamas predominance and therefore a further darkening of the sattva omniscience within citta. By such theorizing the ancient Yoga psychologists simply and clearly describe those unhelpful thought patterns which were noted in our earlier introspection of the speaking act. The initial stages of any speaking act require an act of attention or concentration in which we control the distracting thoughts present in our ordinary cognition. And to achieve a clear perception of the sphota, which we are attempting to reveal, may well require a concentration effort of some duration. If the uncontrolled and distracted patterns of thinking have formed strong habits within us, then the attainment of any intensity of concentration may require great effort and be very difficult to maintain. According to the Yoga analysis of our ordinary states of consciousness, it is the persistent presence of such uncontrolled thought processes that obscures our realization of knowledge and accounts for the ignorance that characterizes so

⁹²Yoga Sūtras, II:3.

much of our human experience.

Vyāsa finds that a person's concentration may be categorized as follows:⁹³ (1) Kṣipta, the citta which is restless or wandering due to the rise of passion or rajas. A person with this type of citta lacks mastery over himself and is a slave to his own passions. (2) Mūḍha, the forgetful, infatuated or idiotic citta which is overpowered by tamas and so always chooses the wrong course. (3) Vikṣipta, the usual or ordinary state of citta in which distraction of thought is more dominant than attention. (4) Ekāgra, the focused citta capable of complete concentration upon a single sphota or thought object so that it is clearly seen in all its qualities. This concentration results in an experience of elation, which is accompanied by asmitā or a sense of ego awareness. In this type of concentrated citta rajas and tamas dominated vṛttis are overcome, but sattva dominated vṛttis remain and change as the ego probes and examines the object for all its predicable qualities. (5) Niruddha, ekāgra type concentration but with all changing of vṛttis controlled and a total attention to or identification with the object. There is no flow of thought or asmitā and the universal sphota is fully realized in a sattvic union — which, however, still contains the saṃskāras of previous citta vṛttis whose attempts at maturation are held back by the intensity of the concentration.

Throughout the above classification of citta concentration, the obscuring of the sphotas by the kleśas is most severe in kṣipta

⁹³ Ibid., I:1, Bhaṣya.

and, for all practical purposes, non-existent in niruddha. To appreciate the full depth of penetration of the Yoga analysis, one must realize that the clear revelation of the sphota is not just a simple question of the degree of concentration achieved. For within the state of concentration itself, the build up of kleśas in this and previous lives imparts a positive "colouring" which distorts one's perception (of the clear sphota) and its subsequent expression in speech. By concentrated mental effort in the correct perception and expression of sphotas, the obstructing of omniscience by avidyā can be gradually lessened.⁹⁴ But, even with controlled concentration and good word use vāsanās from previous lives, any expression of sphota will always carry some darkening avidyā due to the very nature of the individuation process itself. There is the asmitā element added by the ahaṁkāra, and there is the inevitable obscuration which comes with any attempt, no matter how skillful, to render a meaning-whole into a series of parts. Are the sentence and words used the best ones? Are the accent and feeling connotations conveyed by the spoken phonemes the ones intended? For all of these reasons, adduced by Bhartṛhari and given psychological analysis by Yoga, the bifurcated expression of sphota, useful and necessary though it is, must always remain tinged with avidyā and therefore be secondary to the direct perception or pratibhā of the sphota itself.

⁹⁴ In the next Chapter we will examine the Yoga technique for doing this.

Comments on the Individuated Expression of Sphota

In traditional Indian thought, a view which in many ways corresponds with the Yoga interpretation offered above is found in the Tantra conception of śabda -- as popularized by John Woodroffe.⁹⁵ Śabda, defined as sound, is psychologically described as vibration (spandana) which is similar in its motion to the flow of electrical stresses. This spandana seems to be a parallel way of conceiving of rajas in its citta individuations. According to Tantra, as a result of cidākāśa (Brahman in which stress of any kind manifests itself) the individuation of the whole of creation occurs. Woodroffe summarizes as follows:

This Cidākāśa is known as the Śabda-Brahman through its Māyā-śakti, which is the cause of all vibrations manifesting themselves as sound to the ear, as touch to the tactile sense, as color and form to the eye, as taste to the tongue and as odour to the nose. All mental functioning again is a form of vibration (Spandana). Thought is a vibration of mental substance just as the expression of thought in the form of the spoken word is a vibration affecting the ear.⁹⁶

As was the case in the Yoga conception of dhvani, this Tantra theorizing conceives of thought and external speech as a continuum of the same vibration or spandana. At the level of noumenal entities, this spandana is conceived of the essential movement of the subtle electron-

⁹⁵ John Woodroffe, Śakti and Śakta. Madras: Ganesh and Co., 1918, see especially Chapter 24 entitled "Śakti as Mantra", pp. 482-515.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 499.

like tanmātras so that to a super-sensitive or divine ear every object could be heard to express its own characteristic vibrations. A living tree, for example, would present itself in the form of a particular sound which is the natural word (śabda) for that tree. In modern thought such a "word", which is outside the hearing limits of an ordinary human ear, can perhaps be taken as the electrical cellular activity which the scientist through his various empirical methods studies ("hears"). Thus, says Woodroffe, the Tantra conception of śabda in terms of spandana provides that to a divine ear all electron movements (including both rotating or infra-atomic and shooting-off or radio-active) would constitute the "music of the spheres".⁹⁷ This seems at one with the Yoga interpretation of pratibhā as possessing the potential for intuitively knowing the cries of all living beings.⁹⁸ Before leaving this passing reference to the Tantra psychology of śabda, it is important to note that on the question of how the word-meaning is itself conveyed, Tantra follows the Mīmāṃsā theory of Kumārila — the phonemes or varṇas are the ultimate entities which through their summation into words and sentences convey meaning.⁹⁹ Since the psychological explanation of the Mīmāṃsā theory by the Tantra writers seems — on the basis of Woodroffe's brief summary — to evidence practical possibility, it would seem that the Sphota-Mīmāṃsā debate cannot be

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 498.

⁹⁸ Yoga Sūtras, III:17.

⁹⁹ Śakti and Śākta, op. cit., pp. 501-504.

settled on the basis that one is psychologically realizable while the other is not..

Turning to the Yoga interpretation of Bhartṛhari's conception of avidyā as being the beginningless obscuring factor that prevents the a priori omniscience of citta from revealing itself, we find agreement from most schools of Indian thought -- although the ultimate ontological status of avidyā is a question of considerable debate. As Murti has pointed out, if knowledge is conceived of as the discovery of a given reality, then the postulation of a "something" which covers the real or obstructs its discovery is a necessary corollary.¹⁰⁰ In the psychological analysis of experience a similar situation is encountered. Self-consciousness awareness points beyond itself to a deeper element of the psyche which is taken for granted in our common sense experience. On the one hand, there is the constant experience of a "self" or "I-ness" which gives characteristic continuity to all of one's existence. On the other hand, there are the disruptive forces of the instinctual drives (saṃskāras) that lead us to behave in ways which somehow seem to be inconsistent with our true nature. In Christian thought, Paul puts it, "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do".¹⁰¹ In commenting upon this observation, Paul notes that this evil is foreign to his true self which is identified with God. For

¹⁰⁰ T. R. V. Murti, "The Theory of Ignorance", in Ajñāna, by Malkani, Das and Murti. London: Luzac and Co., 1932, p. 118.

¹⁰¹ Romans 7:19, The Oxford Annotated Bible, R.S.V.

Paul the evil is overcome through the aid of a mystical participation in Christ.¹⁰² Freud also recognized two aspects of psychic experience, and attributes the disruptive aspects to the resultant pressures of the "Id" (unconscious instinctual drives) and the "Ego-Ideal/Superego" (ideals and traditions of the past) upon the "Ego". The integrative aspect of psychic experience is the controlling of disruptive elements by the rational scientific functioning of a mature ego. In Freud's view, however, the disruptive elements of the psyche are never totally overcome but simply controlled in line with the ideals of rational scientific humanism — and this, for Freud, would seem to be the best possible expression of the "true self".¹⁰³ In Vedānta, the ignorance veiling truth and the disruptive drives of the psyche are all identified with māyā as being ultimately unreal; God, truth and true self are all found to be expressions of the one ultimate reality. Śaṅkara describes the situation as follows:

This potential power of the seed is of the nature of avidyā, and it is indicated by the word 'undeveloped' (avyakta), and has the Highest Lord as its basis, and is of the nature of an illusion (māyā), and is the great sleep in which the transmigratory jīva-selves unaware of their own true nature (rūpa) continue to slumber on. This same 'undeveloped' (avyakta) is occasionally indicated by the word ākāśa (B.U. 3.8.11). Occasionally it is expressed by the word 'Akshara' as in "Higher than the high Imperishable" (Mund. U. 2.1.2), and occasionally it is suggested to be the illusory power

¹⁰² Ibid., 7:21-25.

¹⁰³ S. Freud, New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1965, pp. 178-182.

(māyā) thus -- "You should know the Prakṛti (the cause) to be but the illusory power -- māyā, and the Highest Lord as the master-illusionist". (Svet. U. 4:10).¹⁰⁴

In the following sentences, Śaṅkara further specifies that it is impossible to predicate about this māyā that it is either different or non-different from Brahman. Thus māyā can neither be said to be sat (real) or asat (unreal) and so is something inexplicable (anirvacanīyā). Śaṅkara also notes that because of the ayyakta's avidyā the jīva-self is infected with avidyā beginninglessly -- resulting in its constant activity.¹⁰⁵ Here, as was the case in both Sphota and Yoga theory, avidyā is linked with the activity or rajas aspect of the individuation of consciousness. And just as avidyā was shown above to be a necessary result of the dualistic cognizing of the omniscient whole through the finite organs of individuated citta, so too Śaṅkara conceives of māyā as a limiting condition (upādhi) of Brahman which makes possible the appearance of phenomenal forms.¹⁰⁶ But, in spite of these common points with the Yoga and Sphota interpretation of avidyā, Śaṅkara, like the Tantra thinkers, rejects the concept of a real sphota existing in citta and supports the position of Upavarsa¹⁰⁷ to which Kumārila also refers.

¹⁰⁴ Brahma-Sūtra-Shaṅkara-Bhāṣya, trans. by V. M. Apte. Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1960, p. xxx.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., I.iv.3, p. 228.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., II.1.14, pp. 303-304. ¹⁰⁷ Ibid., I.3.28.

Although Śaṅkara seems to have used the terms māyā and ajñāna synonymously with avidyā, more recent Vedāntins¹⁰⁸ have developed specialized usage of these three words with reference to Yoga psychology. In the Pañcadaśī of Vidyāranya, when the pure sattva element of prakṛti is unsullied by rajas and tamas, it is called māyā. When sattva is dulled by the presence of rajas and tamas, it is called avidyā. When Brahman is reflected in māyā, that is Īśvara's omniscience; when Brahman is reflected in avidyā, that is jīva.¹⁰⁹ Ajñāna is described by Vidyāranya as that undifferentiated state of ignorance which the jīva experiences in deep sleep — and which is so close to the bliss and omniscience of Brahman that the individual minds are drawn to it.¹¹⁰ The bliss of this deep sleep or ajñāna state is differentiated from the elation of prajñā in that in the former the mind is fully absorbed and the body falls to the ground unconscious, whereas in the latter by continued practice of devotion and meditation one's ego and body consciousness are suppressed and the mind becomes exceedingly sattva dominated.¹¹¹ This analysis of the gunas of citta in relation to avidyā, omniscience and pratibhā seems very close indeed to the Yoga interpretation offered above.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, The Pañcadaśī and the Vedānta Paribhāṣa.

¹⁰⁹ The Pañcadaśī of Vidyāranya, trans. by H. P. Shastri. London: Shanti Sadan, 1956, I:16-17.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., XI:48 ff.

¹¹¹ Ibid., XI:98-99.

The bifurcated individuation of citta into the antahkarana and senses on the sattva side, and into the tanmātras and gross elements on the tamas side shows many formal similarities to the Buddhist Yogācāra conception of the individuation of the ālaya-vijñāna or storehouse consciousness. The first stage of individuation, corresponding to the ahaṁkāra citta, is called mano-vijñāna or manas. On the objective side (the tamas side) manas individuates itself into the pravṛtti-vijñānas which are the "sprouts" of the dormant ālaya seeds. Manas is the ongoing germination process by which the indeterminate consciousness of the ālaya becomes the determinate consciousness of the pravṛtti vijñānas.¹¹² The latter provide us with our common sense awareness of objectivity — the five kinds of external sense-data and the datum of our introspection. All these external sense data are discrete (i.e., colour, and not the coloured object) and therefore must be categorized by the manas concepts of substance, unity, permanence, etc. until the illusion of a perceived object appears.¹¹³ Along with this projection of an illusory object comes the collateral experience of "otherness" which simultaneously, through manas, evokes the sense of "I-ness" by which that "other" may be known.¹¹⁴ This evocation of the ego sense parallels the Yoga conception of the individuation of the subjective or sattva side of citta by the ahaṁkāra's turning back upon itself.

¹¹² The Yogācāra Idealism, op. cit., p. 135.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 141.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 136-137.

But, as was the case in the previous theories compared, the idea of a sphota -- as a perceivable and given whole which provides the necessary form for the meaningful unification of the objective sense data -- has no counterpart in Yogācāra thought. By contrast, the Yogācāra theory, in true Buddhistic fashion, describes such felt experiences of given wholes as illusions which occur as follows. Vāsanās of ālaya can arise singly or simultaneously. For the manas to synthesize so as to create the illusion of a whole object (artha), consciousnesses of many sense data must arise simultaneously enabling their apparent unification.¹¹⁵

From the purely psychological point of view as to the cognitive processes involved in word formation, the Yogācāra explanation is similar to some of the notions of the Western psychologists Heintz Werner and Bernard Kaplan.¹¹⁶ They attempt to answer the question of how it is possible that a material sound pattern -- so technically different in substance and qualities from the object of perception or thought which it can come to symbolize -- can ever be exploited for the representation of such an object.¹¹⁷ In formulating the problem thus, Werner and Kaplan seem to converse in terms virtually identical to the Indian discussion of language: "material sound pattern" for dhvani, "object of perception or thought"

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 141.

¹¹⁶ H. Werner and B. Kaplan, Symbol Formation. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1963.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

for artha and -- to anticipate our findings -- "symbol" for sphota. In their theoretical and experimental studies Werner and Kaplan found that there is an expressiveness residing in objects and in vocalization patterns. It is this inner locus of expressive qualities that is the basis required for any symbol or word formation to take place. The point of apparent similarity with Yogācāra thinking is their finding that the formation of such a symbolic whole depends on the symmetrical appearance of similar dynamic expressive qualities in both the vocalization pattern and the material object at the same point in time¹¹⁸ -- just as the Yogācāra prāvṛtī vijñānas must arise simultaneously in order for them to be synthesized into an apparent whole by the manas. But here a definite difference in thinking occurs. Whereas the synthesized whole remains an illusion for the Yogācāra, Werner and Kaplan suggest that once a symmetrical manifestation takes place the resultant whole is infused with meaning to the point of being an indissoluble unity of form and content -- and this seems very close to being a definition of sphota. The psychological dynamics by which the symmetrical qualities of expressiveness manifest themselves are described by Werner and Kaplan as twin form-building processes, one directed towards the establishment of meaningful objects, and the other directed towards vocalizations expressive of meaning.¹¹⁹ For Werner and Kaplan, the the vocable "chair", in an English speaking person, is not just a static sonic configuration,

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 21

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

but a dynamically unique phonetic sequence, ch-ai-r, whose expressive features parallel those ingredients in the object "chair". As a mere sound configuration, the word "chair" functions only as a sign or label (as in the case of proper names, technical terms and the learning of a foreign language). Only when the vocable or dhvani has become embedded in its expressive wholistic matrix (artha) through the schematizing activity of cultural-linguistic experience does it become transformed from the status of a sign to that of an indissoluble symbol.¹²⁰

Because this thinking of Werner and Kaplan so closely follows the sphota theory — at the level of practical experience — let us pause briefly to look at a Western phenomenological report which they offer. To begin with, they examine the very objection that the Cārvākas and Buddhists raise against the Sphota (and Mīmāṃsā) theorists, — that language is arbitrary and words (dhvanis) manifest no inherent expressive similarity to the objects (artha) they signify. While this objection is judged to be a true description of the sign-word situation, Werner and Kaplan propose that in the symbol-word situation an inner similarity between the vocable and the object exists without being apparent to the ordinary observer

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 25. It should be noted here that the objects capable of symbolization are given a very limited definition by Werner and Kaplan in comparison with Sphota theory. In common with most modern Western empirically oriented thinking, Werner and Kaplan talk of "chair" or "table" and would not accept any metaphysical or transcendent object. For the sphota theorists it is precisely upon such transcendental objects (e.g., Vedas) that all word symbolization depends.

who sees only the external manifestations (in Bhartrhari's terms, the *vaikhari vāk*). A study designed to examine this proposal was conducted at Clark University by S. Kaden, *et al.*¹²¹ The assumption was made that the visual dynamics ingredient in both perceived objects and word-forms would determine the individual's location of such objects and word-forms in space. Therefore, it was proposed that both word-forms and objects with dynamically upward directed features would be seen as similarly elevated in space. An experimental test of this hypothesis was devised by first having adult subjects individually establish their own "neutral eye-level" by physically locating an illuminated horizontal rod in that position (on a translucent screen in a darkroom). Following that, objects (e.g., pointing hands), and then words (e.g., "climbing"), were illuminated and placed initially in a position corresponding to the physically measured ("objective") eye-level of the subjects, who were then instructed to adjust the pictured object or word to their own "neutral" eye-level. The results showed that both objects and words with upward dynamics (e.g., "hand pointing up", and the word "climbing") had to be placed at a spatial position below the subject's eye level under neutral conditions before they would be experienced by the subject to be at his own eye level. The opposite results were achieved for objects and words with downward dynamics.

Werner and Kaplan cite a similar phenomenological report by

¹²¹*Ibid.*, p. 26, as reported by Werner and Kaplan. It is important to note that this study is subject to other interpretations, such as those offered by C. Osgood.

Chandler, but this time using the two syllable "nonsense" forms, budraf and medref. The results showed that these two nonsense forms are located by subjects at different places, when each of them is presented to subjects at neutral eye level. Chandler accounts for these results in terms of the expressive properties of the sound patterns. He points out that, "people rate the two words as being different in 'weight' and 'ponderosity': budraf is apprehended as 'heavier' than medref".¹²²

Werner and Kaplan conclude that these experiments by Kaden and Chandler support the theoretical formulations: (1) that dynamic expressive features are present in both vocalization patterns and objects, and (2) that such a parallel presence of inherent expressive characteristics points to the possibility of a transcendent unity occurring in these otherwise dissimilar entities. This work of Werner and Kaplan has been commented on at length here because of its basic theoretical ideas which bear apparent similarity to the Sphota conception of the collateral meaning dynamic between dhvani and artha. Of course there are definite points of difference: the symbol is a human construction based on a phenomenal object for Werner and Kaplan, whereas sphota is a divinely established a priori for the Grammarians. But, further comparative study seems indicated between these two theories which, on the basis of this brief comparison, evidence so many complementary aspects (for example, both Werner and Kaplan and Sphota theory take linguistic phenomena as

¹²²Ibid., p. 29.

the basis for all human knowledge).

Before concluding this comment on the individuated expression of Sphota, reference must once again be made to the psychology of Carl Jung. In Jung's theory, as was noted in the previous comment, the archetype seems to bear some formal resemblance to the sphota. It is of interest, therefore, to see how Jung's conception of the expression of the archetype relates to the above interpretation of the expression of Sphota. In agreement with Sphota theory, Jung conceives of the archetype's external expression as occurring by a process of individuation. Jung calls the external expression a symbol which may take the form of a word, or more often, a pictorial image. Symbols are never devised consciously but are gradually clarified as the pictorial or word motif moves from the level of the personal consciousness to the deeper level of the collective unconscious. There, says Jung, "the symbol becomes increasingly dominant, for it encloses an archetype, a nucleus of meaning that is not representable in itself but is charged with energy".¹²³ Jung's conception of the archetype as a nucleus of meaning that is not representable in itself would seem to correspond with the artha of Sphota theory, and the pictorial or word form with the dhvani. In Jung's thinking these two aspects, far distant from one another in our psychic functioning, are brought together in the constructive activity of the symbol.¹²⁴ The external word form or image is taken

¹²³The Psychology of C. G. Jung, op. cit., p. 92.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 50.

deep within consciousness, unified with a universally valid meaning and power, resulting in a newly created living whole which rises to manifest itself in expression at the level of personal consciousness. This is a process of individuation in that through it the universally shared archetype or meaning nucleus of the collective unconscious becomes limited and expressed within the structures and forms of the individual psyche. But, as was the case in the Yoga interpretation of the Sphota, this process results in a two-sided psychological dynamic -- side by side with the increasing individuation of the collective unconscious into external expression, there is in the reverse direction an increasing integration of the external particulars with the internal universal archetypes. This process is illustrated by Jacobi as follows:

The first dream of a series, for example, gives a detailed image of the real mother in her limited diurnal role; but gradually the meaning becomes wider and deeper, until the image is transformed into a symbol of Woman in all her variations as the contrasexual partner; then, rising up from a still deeper stratum, the image discloses mythological features, becomes a fairy or a dragon; in the deepest stratum, the storehouse of collective, universally human experience, it takes the form of a dark cave, the underworld, the ocean, and finally it swells into the one half of creation, chaos, the darkness that receives and conceives.¹²⁵

The manifestation of an integrated symbol occurs, says Jung, as an intuition or revelation, and thus seems very near to the Sphota pratibha. Such symbols are described by Jung as growing up from

¹²⁵ Loc. cit. See also J. Jacobi, Complex/Archetype/Symbol. New York: Pantheon Books, 1959, for a discussion of archetypes in animals and infants, pp. 43-46.

the dark depths of the mind, and forming a most important part of the subliminal psyche. For evidence of this, Jung observes how, in everyday life, dilemmas are solved by surprising new propositions that appear suddenly from the unconscious. Artists, philosophers, and even scientists owe some of their best ideas to inspirations that appear suddenly from the unconscious. Jung cites the examples of Poincare, the mathematician, and Kekule, the chemist (structure of benzene molecule), who themselves describe their scientific discoveries in terms of sudden "revelations" from the unconscious. In the field of literature the experience of Robert Louis Stevenson is recounted. After spending several years looking for a story to fit his "strong sense of man's double being", the plot of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde was suddenly revealed to him in a dream. Such dream symbolism, notes Jung, is especially potent because new images are expressed which have not yet reached the level of consciousness.¹²⁶

Perhaps the point where Jung seems closer than other Westerners to Yoga psychology and Sphota theory is seen in his description of symbol formation as being more dependent on intuition than on discursive thinking or external sensing. Before meaningful external expression can take place (in the speaking act, for example) there must first be an inner intuition which reveals the meaning to be expressed. Both Yoga and Jung maintain that this is only achieved when the psyche in its cognizing activity gives priority to the

¹²⁶ C. G. Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious", in Man and His Symbols, ed. by C. G. Jung. London: Aldus Books, 1964, p. 38.

eternal meaning elements or archetypes which are universally present in consciousness. Herein, Jung notes, lies part of the difficulty for modern technological man. Because of the emphasis upon "surface discursive thinking" and "empiric sensing" that such technology requires, there is a limited possibility for intuitive symbolization of the deeper meanings within consciousness. Consequently, there is a lack of meaningful integrating symbols in the consciousness of either an individual or a culture in which technology is supreme.¹²⁷ Although Jung is helpful in his analysis of the relevance of Eastern concepts of intuition for modernity, his psychology remains rather vague in the precise details as to exactly how the archetype becomes individuated through the various levels of consciousness to its integrated expression in thought and speech. The Yoga analysis seems in many ways to be more detailed and thoroughgoing. Aside from this, there appears to be a definite difference of emphasis in Jung's approach when compared with the individuation of Yoga. For Jung the end goal seems to be conceived as the individually created integration of the universalized archetypal meaning at the ego-conscious level of thought and speech (*madhyamā* and *vaikhari vāk*). For Yoga and Sphota, however, the external dualistic expression of *vāk* is useful only as the means for achieving that *paśyantī* state in which there is no subject-object separation but only the direct experience of the sphota as the uncreated and divinely given meaning whole within consciousness. Whereas Jung's emphasis is on the

¹²⁷ Schools of Psychoanalytic Thought, op. cit., p. 550.

humanly created individuation, the Sphota/Yoga focus is on the reintegration of individuated expressions (citta vṛttis) until egoity vanishes and all that remains is the unitary universal consciousness which is Īśvara's divinely given omniscience. This reintegrative emphasis is perhaps best seen if we proceed to the next step in the linguistic communication process and psychologically interpret the Sphota theory of how the word, once manifested as a gross vocalization, is heard and its meaning understood.

CHAPTER V

THE EXPERIENCE OF SPHOTA AS PERCEPTION

Having examined the inherence of sphota in consciousness (citta) and traced its individuated expression in thought and speech, let us follow through the practical experience of language communication by focusing upon the psychological processes that occur within the mind of the hearer -- in his cognition of the uttered sounds and their correlate perceptual revelation of the same meaning-whole or sphota from which the speaker originally began (see conclusion of Part One, logical tenets B.1.2). No effort will be made here to demonstrate the universal a priori presence of sphota within consciousness since that aspect of sphota theory was dealt with in the first section of Chapter Four. The primary task undertaken in this Chapter is a psychological interpretation evidencing the cognition of the sphota in the mind of the hearer to be a process of perception -- a series of progressively clearer sphota perceptions in response to the heard phonemes and padas, the first having the highest error, the last having virtually no error at all. In section one of this Chapter the high error levels in the perception of sphota will be psychologically related to Bhartṛhari's conceptions of vaikhari and madhyamā vak. In section two the virtual absence of error in the hearer's final perception of sphota will be examined for psychological evidence of pratibhā or paśyantī vak. Such a psychological analysis

of the perception of sphoṭa in relation to the levels of vāk may provide evidence for Bhartṛhari's contention that Sphoṭa theory, via the levels of language, provides a practical means for attaining the two goals or fruits (phala) of: (1) acquiring merit (dharma) through the correct hearing and use of words in communication, and (2) by continued practice (abhyāsa) in the correct hearing and use of words there is a gradual attaining of mokṣa or of becoming one with Brahman. This whole process is technically called śabdapūrvayoga.¹

Iyer summarizes Bhartṛhari's thinking as follows:

In Vāk. I.20, we are told that words appear like reflections in Brahman in the case of those who practise Yoga of the Word (śabdapūrvayoga)In the four passages of the Vṛtti where the word śabdapūrvayoga occurs, there is not only a reference to the process of attaining union with the Word-Principle, but also an attempt to recognize stages in this process....From an examination of these passages and the quotations, it appears that vāgyoga as used in the Vṛtti on Vāk I.122[130] and śabdapūrvayoga as used in the other Vṛtti passages mean the same thing, namely, some kind of Yoga as a means of attaining Brahman, the Word-Principle. It is a pity, however, that the word is not explained anywhere in the Vṛtti but is taken for granted. It is significant that the word occurs both in the Kārikā and in the Vṛtti, because it shows that some kind of Yoga practice for the attainment of Brahman-Sabdatattva is an integral part of the philosophy of Bhartṛhari who thought of the process as a kind of ascent from the differentiated to the totally undifferentiated.²

Although śabdapūrvayoga is assumed by Bhartṛhari, it was found in Part

¹Bhartṛhari, op. cit., pp. 135-139.

²Ibid., pp. 141-142.

One of this thesis that the logical consistency of śabdapūrvayoga had not received explicit demonstration, but that some help in this direction might be provided by the psychological analysis. This will be the secondary task attempted in this Chapter. As was the case in the previous Chapter, the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali provide the main source for the psychological interpretation, and comments are made at the end of each section relating the psychological interpretation to other schools of Indian thought and to Western psychology, for added evidence and elucidation. At the end of the Chapter, as a conclusion to Part Two of the Thesis, a summary of the major Sphota tenets interpreted by Yoga psychology will be offered.

I. PERCEPTION OF SPHOTA AT THE LEVELS OF VAIKHARĪ AND MADHYAMĀ VĀK

In the previous Chapter the speaking act was described showing how, according to Yoga psychology, the magnet-like action of the artha structured (or limited) the pervasive śabda tanmātra by filtering it through the inherent vocalization patterns (from vāsanās of word use in previous lives) of the speech organ so as to produce a dhvani continuum ranging from the subtle speech of inner thought to the gross (nāda) articulation of the phonemes. Once articulated as gross configurations of ākāśa atoms patterned by the psychomotor activities of the prāṇa vāyu, the phonemes continue to vibrate outward in expanding concentric circles from the speaker. The hearing act is initiated when the uttered phonemes in their

concentric expansion as configurations of ākāśa atoms (like waves moving outward when a stone is dropped into the water) strike against the hearing organ of the listener. Communication occurs, according to Bhartrhari, when these sounds striking against the ear as uttered phonemes evoke in the mind of the listener a perception of the same sphota from which the speaker began his utterance. But exactly how do these discrete phoneme ākāśa patterns striking against the ear psychologically function so as to evoke the partless sphota inherently residing in each individual buddhi? On this question all Bhartrhari offers are a few suggestions with regard to the function of saṃskāras and the general idea that the heard phonemes cognize the sphota through a series of perceptions distorted by error -- the sphota perception following the hearing of the first phoneme having the highest error, and the sphota perception following the hearing of the last phoneme the lowest error. Perhaps the most detailed psychological description of the process occurs in the Vṛtti: "The sounds [phonemes], while they manifest the word [sphota], leave impression-seeds [saṃskāras] progressively clearer and conducive to the clear perception (of the word). Then, the final sound brings to the mind which has now attained maturity or a certain fitness by the awakening of the impressions of previous cognitions, the form of the word as coloured by itself".³ But this is still a rather general analysis. Let us see if a more systematic interpretation can be obtained from Yoga psychology.

³Vākyapadīya, op. cit., I:84, Vṛtti.

Fortunately, Yoga Sūtra III:17 deals with this exact question. The sūtra is stated in terms which seem to provide a very close parallel to those of the Sphota theory: "śabda" is used in the sense of the word-sound or dhvani, "artha" is interpreted -- as in Sphota theory -- to be the meaning or object, and "pratyaya" as the ālambana or support for the śabda and artha would seem to be very close to the sphota of Bhartrhari. In his bhāṣya, Vyāsa analyses the hearing problem in almost identical terms to those of Bhartrhari.

...voice has its function [in uttering] only the [sounds of] syllables. And the organ-of-hearing has as its object only that [emission of air] which has been mutated into a sound [by contact with the eight places of articulation belonging to the vocal organ]. But it is a mental-process (buddhi) that grasps the word [as significant sound] by seizing the letter-sounds each in turn and binding them together [into one word]. Sounds-of-syllables (varṇa) do not naturally aid each other, for they cannot coexist at the same time. Not having attained-to-the-unity-of a word and not having [conveyed a definite meaning], they become audible (āvis) and they become inaudible (tiras). Hence it is said that individually [letter-sounds] lack the nature of a word.⁴

Vyāsa thus ends up with the same problem as Bhartrhari, namely, by what psychological mechanism do the ephemeral phonemes heard by the ear become bound together by the buddhi into a unity (sphota) that manifests the meaning-whole?

Vyāsa begins the discussion of his solution to the problem

⁴Yoga Sūtras, bhāṣya on III:17, trans. by J. H. Woods.

by suggesting that each phoneme or varṇa taken by itself is capable of standing for any meaning, it has universal application. But when a varṇa appears in combination with other varṇas, the preceding and following varṇas have the function of restricting or limiting the application of each letter to a particular meaning. Thus there are many uttered sounds (varṇas or phonemes), which by being placed in particular orders result in slightly different overall sounds -- as determined by convention -- and therefore are able to denote a certain meaning (artha). For example, the literal sounds of g, au and h, possessed as they are of the potentiality of giving names to all objects (arthas), denote in this particular order (gauh) the object which is possessed of udder, dewlap, etc.⁵ Vācaspati adds the comment that a specific sonorous impression is thus established in the antah karṇa, as the hearing of the ordered utterance ceases. The specific sonorous impression that is evoked in the mind is the single image of the word gauh.⁶ This mental unity or sphoṭa, which is commonly called a word (pada), has no parts or sequence within itself and reveals a meaning-object which is also one (eka). The sequence of the uttered phonemes (as the last one is heard by the ear) reveals the one mental image of the sphoṭa. But what exactly is the psychological process by which this inner revelation of the one by the many heard phonemes takes place?

The solution offered by Vyāsa and Vācaspati is actually the logical counterpart of the process described in the last Chapter,

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., Tīkā.

by which the artha of a particular sphota resulted in the utterance of its particular vocalization of śabda tanmātra through the speech organ. The distinctive pattern of dhvani produced by the speech organ was described as being the resultant of the saṃskāras of speech patterns from previous lives and the "magnetic-like" attraction of the artha. In the case of hearing, the particular phoneme sequence of the utterance approaches the ear as air (ākāśa) wave modulations. The ear, because of its sattvic dominated composition, responds to the magnetic like sound wave pattern that was originally induced by the action of the artha on the śabda tanmātra. The sattvic aspect of the hearing organ thus begins with the hearing of the first phoneme, to approximate (vibrate in tune with) the total sound pattern sent out by the speaker. This sympathetic "vibration", which then travels throughout the citta of the hearer, induces maturation of the same sphota saṃskāra series in the buddhi of the listener.⁷ As the subsequent phonemes of the whole spoken pattern strike upon the ear, the sympathetic vibration induced within the hearer's buddhi citta more and more closely approximates the total sound pattern of the gross ākāśa. With the hearing of the last phoneme, its particular "vibration" taken together with the "vibrations" of the preceding phonemes (still active within the buddhi citta by virtue of their self-induced saṃskāras) triggers a recognition of the inherent sphota in the listener's buddhi.⁸ In

⁷ Ibid., III:41, Tīkā.

⁸ Ibid., III:17, Tīkā. See also Vākyapadīya, I:84.

this way a complete circle is established from speaker's sphota - uttered phonemes - heard phonemes - perception of same sphota within hearer. At the vaikharī level of the uttered and heard phonemes, this circle of sympathetic induction is described by Vācaspati as follows:

[Ākāśa is the physical basis] for sounds which are causes co-operating with the organ-of-hearing. When a sound is to be heard... the organ-of-hearing...presupposes that there is a special sound residing in the ākāśa which is its own [that is, the organ's substance]... This same organ-of-hearing, which is made of the ahaṁkāra, moreover resembles a piece of iron in that it is attracted by a magnet-like sound...produced by the mouth of the speaker, and, by a succession of its own functions (vṛtti), has the external sense of the word which has come to the mouth of the speaker. Hence there are sense-presentations of sounds functioning at different points of space.⁹

But if there is a completely closed circle from speaker's sphota to hearer's sphota, including both the sattva dominated levels of the buddhi and the grosser levels of the external organs, śabda tanmātra and ākāśa, and if citta has an inherent telos towards full revelation of the sphota (as Īśvara's omniscience), then why is it that in our speech experience meaning seems to be conveyed in a mediate and often unclear fashion by the series of heard phonemes, rather than in a perfectly clear, immediate fashion by the unitary sphota?

The reason for this obscuring of the circle of speech was previously seen, in the speaking act, to be due both to the finite nature of the individuated manas and speech organ (necessitating the

⁹ Loc. cit.

expression of the noumenal whole in phenomenal parts), and to the obscuring of the meaning by the beginningless kleśas. The chief or root kleśa was described as the avidyā of taking the unreal phonemes and padas produced by the organ of speech, manas, prāna, etc., to be the real.¹⁰ For these reasons the sphota when spoken as a series of phonemes or ākāśa vibrations is already considerably obscured and divided on its arrival at the hearer's ear. The hearer, through his own individuated citta, then has the task of trying to get back to the partless prajñā of the sphota from which the speaker began. The fact that the original sphota, due to its pervasive existence in the buddhitattva, is already potentially present throughout the hearer's buddhi sattva (and its individuations into ahaṁkāra, manas, and organ of hearing) paves the way for its recognition. And as was the case in the speaking act, saṁskāras from our language use in previous lives pervade the manas and the hearing organ so that the natural correlation between a sound pattern of uttered phonemes and its intended artha has become intensified. (through usage in accordance with the consensus of the elders or saṅketa).¹¹ Although this saṅketa intensification of the natural correlation has the positive function of helping the hearer to perceive the sphota intended by the speaker, it has at the same time an obscuring or avidyā effect described by both Bhartṛhari and Vyāsa

¹⁰ Bhartṛhari, op. cit., pp. 123-124.

¹¹ Yoga Sūtras, III:17, bhāṣya.

as adhyāsa or superimposition. Bhartrhari says that the conventional understanding of the uttered words as being one with the meaning is a case of adhyāsa.¹² The meaning whole is superimposed upon the parts¹³ but the obscuring avidyā of vaikhārī speech is that the true direction of the superimposition is not realized and the ālambana or ground of the hearing is taken to be the gross ākāśa phoneme pattern rather than the sphota. Vyāsa says that our taking of the uttered and heard phoneme word pattern to be something real in itself is a result of common understanding (sampratipatti).¹⁴ "It is owing to our knowing what this [word] means in accordance with conventional-usage that we attempt to divide it [into sounds of syllables]".¹⁵ Vācaspati shows that psychologically the expression of the word is really a single vṛtti or effort of articulation (as is evidenced by the particular order and unity that makes the utterance of r-a-s-a-completely distinct from the word s-a-r-a). The listener also distinguishes between these two words in that the hearing of each word-whole is also by a functional whole or single citta-vṛtti in spite of the fact that conventional usage and grammatical analysis seem to suggest a series of single vṛttis, one for each letter.¹⁶ Vyāsa

¹² Bhartrhari, op. cit., pp. 205-207.

¹³ Ibid., p. 372. Bhartrhari shows this superimposition to hold at all levels of linguistic complexity and offers the example of the appearance of the whole meaning in each part of the dvandva compound.

¹⁴ Yoga Sūtras, III:, Bhāṣya

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., Tīkā.

explains psychologically the conventional error as a result of the mutual superimposition or mixing up in the mind of the uttered sounds (śabda), the meaning (artha), and the ālambana pratyaya (sphota).¹⁷

Before describing the detailed analysis of this mixed-up state of vaikharī hearing, let us briefly note the way in which Yoga psychology, in agreement with Sphota theory, interprets the single effort or citta-vṛtti evoked in the hearing of the word as being ultimately vākya-sphota rather than pada-sphota. In all perceived words, says Vyāsa, there is the inherent hearing of the vākya-sphota or unitary sentence meaning. If the word "tree" is uttered the single hearing effort inherently includes within it the verb "is" (asti) since no intended meaning (artha) can lack existence. Thus the single citta vṛtti within the listener is the vākya sphota "It is a tree". Similarly in the case of the utterance of a single word which is a verb (e.g., "cooks"), the single hearing effort of the listener perceives the agent and any other expansions required as being present in vākya sphota correlated to the word (e.g., "Chaitra cooks rice in the vessel on the fire").¹⁸ In Yoga Sūtra III:17, with its commentaries, we have therefore found a faithful psychological interpretation of Bhartrhari's thesis that the sentence-meaning is the indivisible unit of speech (vākya-sphota),

¹⁷ Ibid., Bhāṣya.

¹⁸ Ibid.

and that ultimately it is the only real (satya).¹⁹ The above Yoga interpretation of the hearing event has also outlined the very mixing together of dhvani, artha and sphoṭa that Bhartṛhari has defined as vāk at the vaikhari or gross level.²⁰

In Yoga Sūtra I:42 we find an even more detailed psychological analysis of vaikhari vāk. Here the same technical terms "śabda" and "artha" are used (corresponding to the Sphoṭa "dhvani" and "artha"), but instead of "pratyaya" the word "jñāna" is employed to refer to the idea or "sphoṭa". These three are described by Patañjali as being mixed up (saṁkīrṇa) or superimposed on one another in various predicate-relations (vikalpas) so that the intended meaning of the word is not clearly seen.²¹ In line with Sphoṭa theory, Vācaspati notes that these predicate relations between śabda, artha and jñāna represent the diversity that there is in one thing, and the identity that there is in diverse things. For example, in vaikhari speech a hearer of the ākāśa meaning pattern "cow" finds, on yogic introspection, that three possibilities present themselves: (1) there is a predicate relation in which the śabda and jñāna are dominated and appropriated by the artha "cow"; (2) there is a predicate relation in which jñāna and artha are dominated and appropriated by the śabda "cow"; and (3) there is a predicate relation in which śabda

¹⁹ Vākyapadiya, op. cit., II:73. See also Bhartṛhari, op. cit., p. 182; and Audumbarāyana's Theory of Language, op. cit., pp. 73-77.

²⁰ Vākyapadiya, op. cit., I:142.

²¹ Yoga Sūtras, I:42.

and artha are dominated and appropriated by the jñāna "cow".²² Vyāsa finds that the psychological cause of this mixed up perception of the true meaning is twofold. On the one hand, there is the distortion caused by the saṃskāras of saṅketa (conventional word use in previous lives), discussed above, and resulting in the universally experienced error of type (2) vikalpa. On the other hand, there are the cognitive inferences (anumānas) based upon the artha -- made by one's own imaginative thinking or heard from the traditional schools of thought (darśanas). Such anumāna dominated hearing would seem to be an error of type (3) with the erroneous element being the "slanting" or "colouring" given the sphoṭa by the doctrinal presuppositions of the particular darśana heard.²³ Although not elucidated by either Vyāsa or Vācaspati, the type (1) situation, in which the artha predominates, would seem to be closest to prajñā yet still erroneous due to its predicate relations with the other two types. Such predicate relations would be experienced due to the finite structural individuations of citta through which the speech is necessarily heard (i.e., the organ of hearing, manas, prāṇa, ākāśa, śabda-tanmātra, etc.) in ordinary states of consciousness. These three types of vikalpa are therefore shown to be the psychological processes producing the high error perception which characterizes the verbal or vaikhari level of hearing. To such high error level perception Yoga applies the technical term of savitarkā which means indistinct concentration (samādhi) of the citta

²² Ibid., Tīkā.

²³ Ibid., Bhāṣya.

consciousness.²⁴

As the concentrated perception of the word is gradually purified or freed from memory, saṅketa and the predicate relations of anumāna, the citta approaches what Bhartrhari calls Madhyamā vāk. This is the inner hearing aspect of the complete communication circle which the sphota forms in its "vibratory movement" from the buddhi of the speaker to the buddhi of the hearer. In the Vākyapadiya commentaries it is described as having the ahaṁkāra as its only substratum and having sequence present but only in very subtle fashion. Dhvani and artha are still distinct and the order of words is present. Although sequence or predicate relations are suppressed, they are said to be accompanied by a distinct functioning of prāṇa.²⁵ Whereas in the speaking act the psychomotor prāṇa functions served to individuate the sphota pattern through the co-ordination of the śabda-tanmātra and vocal organ, the process is reversed in hearing with prāṇa and manas working to reintegrate the gross differentiations of the sphota pattern at the ear/ākāśa level into the less differentiated vibration patterns of the śabda tanmātra, organ of hearing, manas and ahaṁkāra. As the more integrated heights of madhyamā vāk are realized, the overall preponderance of sattva in the sphota vibration pattern correspondingly

²⁴ Ibid., sūtra.

²⁵ Vākyapadiya, op. cit., I:142, Vṛtti. Iyer notes that Viśvaśha gives as a proof of the presence of subtle prāṇa in the Madhyamā stage that sequence can be observed when one silently recites something heard to oneself (see note 2 on I:142, p. 128).

increases until a clearer perception of the unified sphota occurs.

A kind of idealized or criterion description of madhyamā in its purest form is offered by the Yoga analysis of savicāra or meditative samādhi.²⁶ In savicāra the intensity of concentration is such that the sattva is so transparent that the artha or true meaning of the given sphota stands revealed in the antah karana with little distortion or obscuration. On the subjective (sattva) side the distortion decreases as the integration of the heard sphota moves from the high rajas/low sattva ratio of the manas and senses to the low rajas/high sattva ratio of the ahaṁkāra. On the objective (tamas) side the overall obscuration of the sphota patterned citta decreases as the rajas activation of the śabda tanmātra becomes less and less²⁷ until the state of pure potential is approached. Vyāsa describes the savicāra state as being composed of the essences of all the gross particularizations of the sphota pattern. Vācaspati notes that just as the gross atoms (at the vaikharī level) are patterned by the manas and prāṇa into a whole by a single effort of consciousness, so also in the savicāra state, the subtle electron-like tanmātras are patterned by the prāṇa (although less prāṇa than at the vaikharī level) and the antah-karana into the same whole by a single effort of consciousness. The vikalpas still found at the savicāra level of inner hearing include notions of time, place and

²⁶ Yoga Sūtras, I:44.

²⁷ It may be helpful to think of this rajas lessening as a decrease of energy in the manifest electrical stress patterns of the śabda tanmātra.

causation.²⁸ But characteristics associated with the hearing of the ākāśa atoms (e.g., dialect, speed of speaking, gross emotional colorations by voice timbre, etc.) will have virtually all dropped away in the savicāra citta.²⁹ The influence of saṅketa saṁskāras, while not entirely absent, will be greatly reduced. Far more powerful will be the intensifying of the artha aspect of the sattva citta due to the magnet like attraction exerted by the pure saṁskāra series of the buddhitattva sphoṭa upon the "approaching" and integrating manifestation of the sphoṭa pattern within the listener's citta.

Now, although the above Yoga analysis provides a psychological description of the meditative or madhyamā vāk and satisfies the primary task of our psychological interpretation, the secondary question of how one's ordinary vaikhari perception of vāk, which is in the confused savitarkā state of consciousness, can be raised to a higher level has yet to be answered. This second answer is especially important if Bhartṛhari is correct in his observation that in many people, due to poor word usage in their previous lives, the divine vāk (in its pristine state as the pure saṁskāra series of Īśvara's sattva) has become badly mixed up with corrupt word forms.³⁰ And since both the divine and the corrupt forms are being

²⁸ Yoga Sūtras, I:44, Tīkā.

²⁹ The Study of Patañjali, op. cit., pp. 157-158.

³⁰ Vākyapadīya, op. cit., I:153-4.

handed down to us in our inherent *vāsanās*,³¹ some means of purifying one's *vāk* is required in order to avoid being trapped forever at the *vaikharī* level. Should this happen, not only would we be prevented from the earthly happiness and merit which results from the correct use of words, but we would also suffer the endless pain engendered by never being able to achieve the ultimate bliss of *mokṣa* which comes from the realization of oneness with *Śabdabrahman*.³² As was mentioned at the outset of this Chapter, *Bhartrhari* clearly assumes the practical possibility of such a purification of one's *vāk*. Although he does not describe the process required, he technically designates it as *śabdapūrvayoga*.³³ Let us see if the practical psychology of Yoga theory can provide an explanation for the *śabdapūrvayoga* assumed by *Sphota* theory.

Śabdapūrvayoga as Interpreted by Yogāṅgas

If one is fortunate enough to be born as a sage, due to the cumulative effect of good word use in previous lives, little more than continued practice of *vairāgya* (the turning away of the mind from all forms of worldly attachment) and *abhyāsa* (the habitual steadying of the mind in concentration upon the Vedic *sphota*) is required to ensure ascent to *Śabdabrahman*.³⁴ But before the

³¹Ibid., I:155.

³²Ibid., I:14, Vṛtti.

³³Bhartrhari, op. cit., pp. 135-142.

³⁴Vākyapadiya, op. cit., I:131, Vṛtti. It should be noted that while the above interpretation is based on Yoga Sūtras I:12-16,

ordinary person can attempt such advanced *vairāgya* and *abhyāsa*, his *vikṣipta* or habitual distraction due to lack of concentration and the obscuring *vāsanās* of bad word usage must be overcome. To this end the eightfold *yogānas* (aids to yoga) should be undertaken so as to allow the teleology of *citta* (given by the grace of *Īśvara*) to manifest itself as a flow in the direction of knowledge. *Vyāsa* maintains that the *yogāngas* effect this purification of *citta* by a separating off of the *kleśas*, like the action of an axe in causing the splitting of wood.³⁵ In this regard, Dasgupta points out that according to Yoga theory causation is viewed as the transformation of energy. The occasion for causation occurs when obstacles which were impeding transformations in a particular direction are removed. Then, by virtue of its own immanent teleology, the *citta* transforms itself in accordance with the principles of the conservation and transformation of energy.

..., the passage of *citta* into the state of the attainment of true knowledge is only helped by the removal of obstructions due to the performance of the *Yogāngas*; the necessary obstructions being removed *citta* passes naturally of itself into this infinite state of the attainment of

only one aspect of Yoga *vairāgya* is represented -- the turning away of the mind from all forms of worldly attachment. For Patañjali's Yoga at its ultimate level, *vairāgya* also involves turning away of the mind from all forms of *vāk* so that the "seeded" or *samprajñāta* *śamādhi* gives way to a "non-seeded" or "non-word" *asamprajñāta* state of *śamādhi*. (See *Yoga Sūtras* I:50-51 and II:15 ff.). For Bhartṛhari, since consciousness is shot through with *vāk*, *śamādhi* in its highest elevations will always be "seeded" with the Vedic word. (See *Vākyapadiya* I:123). With this in mind, therefore, the Yoga interpretation of Bhartṛhari being attempted goes no further than the *nirvicāra* stage of *samprajñāta* *śamādhi*.

³⁵ *Yoga Sūtras*, II:28, Bhāṣya.

...true knowledge in which all finitude is merged.³⁶

Let us now examine the eight Yogāṅgas in turn. They are listed by Patañjali as follows: yama or restraints, niyama or disciplines, āsanas or body postures, prāṇāyāma or regulation of respiration, pratyāhāra or freedom of the mind from sensory domination by external objects, dhāraṇā or concentration, dhyāna or yogic meditation, and samādhi or trance.³⁷ In his Tīkā, Vācaspati points out that abhyāsa and vairāgya, along with the accessory virtues listed in Yoga Sūtra I:20 (śraddhā or firm belief in the success of the yoga practice, virya or unflinching determination, satī or mindfulness, and samādhi or steady meditation from which comes prajñā or right knowledge), should be included with the yogāṅgas as aids to yoga.³⁸ Both the yogāṅgas and the accessory virtues are hierarchial in nature with the higher levels only arising out of the achievements of the lower levels. Of these eight yogāṅgas, the first five are designated by Patañjali as "indirect aids to yoga".³⁹ And in his explanation, Vācaspati shows how the last three (dhāraṇā, dhyāna, and samādhi) are the direct aids to Yoga. Let us first consider the ways in which the five indirect aids can establish the basis for śabdapūrvayoga.

Yamas. Patañjali lists five yamas or self-restraints which

³⁶ The Study of Patañjali, op. cit., p. 136.

³⁷ Yoga Sūtras, II:29.

³⁸ Ibid., Tīkā.

³⁹ Ibid., III:1.

when practiced will remove the gross impurities obstructing the perception of sphota in ordinary minds (the vaikhari level of vāk). These are: ahimsa (non-injury or absence of malice towards all living creatures),⁴⁰ satya (truthfulness), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacarya (celebacy),⁴¹ and aparigraha (absence of avarice up to the level of the spontaneous non-acceptance of "gifts" even in times of calamity).⁴² Although Vācaspati takes ahimsa to be the chief yama,⁴³ from the point of view of śabdapūrvayoga satya commands special attention. Satya or truthfulness is the conformity of one's speech and mind (citta vṛtti) with the thing itself. Word and thought must conform with the facts that have been seen, heard and inferred. Vyāsa points out that since the function of speech is to communicate one's own understanding to others, therefore it must contain no illusion nor should it create illusion in others if it is true speech (vāk). This vāk is for the benefit of all beings, but not for their injury. In this regard, Manu is quoted, "utter

⁴⁰ Ibid., II:30, Bhāṣya.

⁴¹ Brahmacarya is here taken to be abstinence from sexual intercourse, although originally the term would seem to have had the wider meaning of "the path leading to Brahma realization". Regarding its narrower usage here, Vācaspati points out that abstinence from lustful response to contact with a woman via sight, touch or hearing is also necessary for brahmacarya (Tīkā on Yoga Sūtra II:30). Viṇṇana Bhikṣu makes the restraint even more encompassing, "Continence is said to be the abstinence from sexual intercourse -- either by act, thought or speech -- with all living beings and at all times (Yoga-Sāra-Saṅgraha, trans. by G. Jha. (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1933, p. 75).

⁴² Yoga-Sāra-Saṅgraha, op. cit., p. 75.

⁴³ Yoga Sūtras, II:30, Tīkā.

what is beneficial to others; do not utter what is true but injurious to others....therefore, after careful enquiry one should speak the truth which will be beneficial to all beings".⁴⁴

Niyamas. Together with the above restraints, the yoga student must observe a series of five psychic and bodily disciplines (niyamas). They are: saucha (cleanliness), santosa (contentment), tapas (austerity), svādhyāya (study), and Īśvarapraṇidhāna (devotion to Īśvara).⁴⁵ Saucha is defined as including both the outer washing of the body with clay and water, and the inner purification of citta by the removal of impurities such as arrogance, pride and jealousy.⁴⁶ Santosa is described by Viññāna Bhikṣu as the absence of desire for more than the necessities of life or the sense of satisfaction with whatever comes to the yogin in the ordinary course of events (without any special effort on his own part).⁴⁷ Tapas or the practice of austerities consists in bearing with equanimity the "pairs of opposites" such as heat and cold, hunger and thirst, standing and sitting, with the absence of words, gestures and facial indications.⁴⁸ Svādhyāya, for Vyāsa, includes both the recital of texts which lead to release, and the repetition of the pranava or

⁴⁴ Ibid., Bhāṣya.

⁴⁵ Ibid., II:32.

⁴⁶ Ibid., Bhāṣya.

⁴⁷ Yoga-Sāra-Saṅgraha, op. cit., p. 77.

⁴⁸ Loc. cit.

mystical syllable Aum.⁴⁹ Īśvarapranidhāna is the offering up of all actions to the Great Teacher, God, so that all work is done for one's own self but for Him.⁵⁰ Both Vyāsa and Vācaspati conclude their discussions of the yamas and niyamas by noting that the pure, and consistent practice of these two yogāngas will result in the removal of all doubt, and error (including even the unmanifest vāsanās buried in the subconscious) until citta becomes virtually pure sattva. Such a purifying of citta would greatly aid in one's ascent from the high error and confused thinking of vaikhari vak.

In sūtras II:33 and 34, Patañjali states a most important psychological insight which seems also to have been assumed by Bhartrhari in his notion of śabdapūrvayoga. When a yogin, while performing his yogāngas, finds himself beset by thoughts occasioned by doubt, greed, untruthful use of vak, etc., he should counteract or inhibit such perverse thoughts (vitarkas) by the cultivation of their opposites (pratipaksa bhāvanā). Vyāsa provides the following illustration. Should a yogin find himself tempted by thoughts of vengeance, dishonesty, adultery and envy, let him meditate thus:

Baked upon the pitiless coals of the round-of-rebirths, I take refuge in the rules (dharma) for yoga by giving protection to every living creature. I myself after ridding myself of perverse-considerations [vitarkas] am betaking myself to them once more, like a dog. As a dog to his vomit, even so I betake myself to that of which I had rid myself.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Yoga Sūtras, II:32, Bhāṣya.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., II:33, Bhāṣya as trans. by J. H. Wood.

Contemplation of the logical consequence (following from the law of karma) and the infinite extent of the pain engendered as a result of such vitarkas, is thoroughly brought home to the yogin (by the laying bare of the various classifications of painful consequences, the permutations and combinations of which stretch on into infinity).⁵²

On a more theoretical level, Vācaspati notes that vitarka induced wrong living results in a preponderance of tamas in citta, and a consequent lack of right thinking. Such afflicted citta-vṛttis are of the nature of the four kinds of avidyā outlined in sūtra II:5. Patañjali's practical remedy for this common malady among yogins is the purposeful cultivation of opposite unafflicted citta-vṛttis -- in Sphota theory the cultivation of the right use of words according to the science of Grammar.⁵³ "As a result of the cultivation of opposites", says Vyāsa, "the perverse considerations [vitarkas] become things that may be escaped".⁵⁴ Underlying this statement is the psychological analysis of how actualized vṛttis create a potency or saṃskāra for the repetition of the same act or thought to be laid down in the subconscious citta where the appropriate moment for a new actualization of the vṛtti is awaited. Such habitual behaviour or thought patterns are self-reinforcing in nature and can only be broken by the self-conscious act of creating sufficient opposing vṛttis so that even the unactualized saṃskāras will be

⁵² Ibid., II:34, Bhāṣya.

⁵³ Vākyapadīya, op. cit., I:14.

⁵⁴ Loc. cit.

rendered impotent.

Certain practical signs are held to follow naturally upon the overcoming of vitarkas by the cultivation of their opposites. For example, the yogin who has successfully practiced the correct use of speech and cultivated sufficient pratipakṣa bhāvanās to overcome the vāsanās cumulated from his previous corrupt usage will find that what he says comes true because it is not blocked by any vitarka.⁵⁵ This produces the result of the first fruit claimed by Bhartrhari, namely, the accumulation of dharma or merit. The perfection of satya also aids in the attainment of Bhartrhari's second fruit, mokṣa, in that it removes the obstacles preventing the teleological "integration" of his vāk to its true end. The successful practice of the niyamas may also be "measured" by practical signs such as the following. By constant svādhyāya, the direct perception of the chosen deity is realized.⁵⁶ Regarding perfect Īśvarapranidhāna, Vyāsa maintains that total surrender would result in the yogin knowing all that he wants to know, just as it is in reality, whether in another place, another body or another time. By such spiritual or inner intuition, his citta knows (by becoming the thing itself) everything as it is.⁵⁷ However, warns Vācaspati, although this state achieved by devotion to Īśvara is at the level of samprajñāta samādhi, one should not assume that the other seven yogāṅgas are

⁵⁵ Yoga Sūtras, op. cit., Tīkā.

⁵⁶ Ibid., II:44.

⁵⁷ Ibid., II:45, Bhāṣya.

useless. In fact, it is the practice of these other yogāṅgas that makes the complete devotion to Īśvara possible.⁵⁸ Dealing with the same point, Vijñāna Bhikṣu goes further and points out that the meditation on Īśvara only removes ignorance, while samādhi is brought about by the operation of the other accessory aids.⁵⁹ Bhikṣu concludes his discussion by making the point that the yamas are negative in character (the desisting from certain acts), while the niyamas are positive in character (the disciplined performance of certain acts).⁶⁰

As vāk becomes more meditative, there is a reduction in all gross prāṇa or psychomotor activity. In Yoga this internalization of concentration is fostered by three aids of āsanās (body postures), prāṇāyāma (regulation of respiration) and pratyāhāra (withdrawal of the senses). Āsana, says Vācaspati is a word which refers to the posture in which one sits while meditating.⁶¹ The sūtra describes the kind of posture required as being stable, motionless and productive of ease. Vyāsa suggests the lotus posture, the hero posture, the decent posture, etc., and these are given detailed description in the Tīkā. However, as the next sūtra makes clear, the mere taking up of the prescribed physical

⁵⁸ Ibid., Tīkā.

⁵⁹ Vijñāna Bhikṣu, as quoted by S. N. Dasgupta, The Study of Patañjali, op. cit., p. 15.

⁶⁰ Yoga-Sāra-Saṅgraha, op. cit., p. 78.

⁶¹ Yoga Sūtras, II:46, Tīkā.

position is only part of the requirement. The āsana is not complete until it can be maintained without any mental effort -- so that all possible movements of the body are restrained, thus freeing the citta from the gross prāna activity and assisting in stabilizing the subtle prāna required for madhyamā vāk.⁶² As was the case for the yamas and niyamas, a practical criterion is given whereby the śabda yogin can test himself. Mastery of āsanās is indicated when the śabda yogin can remain unaffected by the pairs of opposites, such as heat and cold, while meditating upon vāk.⁶³

As another aid to śabdapūrvayoga, the devotee must further reduce the vaikharī expression of prāna by the practice of prāṇāyāma or controlled respiration. Prāṇāyāma is defined as the pause that comes after each deep inhalation and each deep exhalation.⁶⁴ When practiced in conjunction with āsana, a high degree of external stability and control is achieved over involvements of citta in the gross sequences which characterize the manifestation of vaikharī vāk. As Bhartṛhari observes, at the Madhyamā level the cognition of vāk is chiefly associated with the internal antah karana and not with the organs of gross articulation or hearing, therefore the kind of prāna required is very subtle and controlled.⁶⁵ By using various specified methods of

⁶² Ibid., II:47, Bhāṣya and 11:5.

⁶³ Ibid., II:48.

⁶⁴ Ibid., II:49.

⁶⁵ Bhartṛhari, op. cit., p. 144.

measurement, the śabda yogin can determine the length of pauses he is achieving and compare them against the established standards of: mātrā or instant (the time taken to snap the fingers after turning the hand over the knee three times), first or mild udghāta (thirty-six such mātrās), second or moderate udghāta (first udghāta doubled), and third or intense udghāta (first udghāta tripled).⁶⁶ A special fourth kind of prāṇāyāma is achieved by applying the yoga psychological principle of counteracting unwanted tendencies by the forceful practice of their opposites. In this case, the breath is drawn in forcibly when it has a tendency to go out, and thrown out forcibly when it has a tendency to go in. By such negative practice plus the three easier kinds of restraint, breathing becomes so inhibited that it may virtually cease for long periods.⁶⁷ The purpose of this practice is said to be the destruction of the impurities (such as delusions caused by vāsanās of corrupt word usage) from citta until it becomes so luminous or sattvic that clear perception of the sphoṭa becomes possible.⁶⁸ Only then is the mind judged to be truly fit for dhāraṇā or "fixed concentration".⁶⁹ As Eliade observes, a remark of Bhoja states clearly the underlying principle:

All the functions of the organs being preceded by that of respiration -- there being always a connection between respiration and

⁶⁶ Yoga Sūtras, II:50, Tīkā.

⁶⁷ Ibid., II:51.

⁶⁸ Ibid., II:52.

⁶⁹ Ibid., II:53.

consciousness in their respective functions -- respiration, when all the functions of the organs are suspended, realizes concentration of consciousness on a single object.⁷⁰

This principle, that there is a direct connection between respiration and mental states, is not only fundamental for Yoga, but also most important in the light of modern neuropsychological research. These implications will be discussed later in the "Comments" section.

A further aid to the turning of citta away from the gross or nāda manifestations of dhvani and towards the sphota's internal artha aspect is the yoga practice of pratyāhāra. Pratyāhāra is defined as the disciplined withdrawal of the senses from their preoccupation with external manifestations and instead identification of the senses with citta in single-pointed contemplation of the internal artha. Vyāsa offers the analogy that just as when the king-bee (queen bee in the West) settles down all the other bees follow, so, when citta is restricted and concentrated the sense organs are also withdrawn and concentrated.⁷¹ This is pratyāhāra which, along with the practice of āsanas and prāṇāyāma, results in control over the vakharī expression of vāk.

In the above discussion it has been shown how the practice of the five indirect prerequisites, the yamas, the niyamas, āsana, prāṇāyāma and pratyāhāra purifies citta to the level of single-pointedness (ekāgratā). This Yoga analysis would seem to correspond with Bhartrhari's basic requirements for śabdapūrvayoga --

⁷⁰As quoted in Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, op. cit., pp. 55-

⁷¹Yoga Sūtras, II:54.

the rising above the gross expression of prāṇa and the cutting of the knots which bring about the differentiation of vāk.⁷²

The last three yogāṅgas, described as the direct aids to yoga, are: dhāraṇā or fixed concentration, dhyāna or yogic meditation, and samādhi or trance contemplation. They represent three stages of the same process which is given the technical name of saṁyama (perfected contemplation).⁷³ For the practice of śabdapūrvayoga, dhāraṇā would be the fixed concentration of citta⁷⁴ upon the artha or meaning object of the sphoṭa. Dasgupta helpfully clarifies the necessary relationship between dhāraṇā and pratyāhāra. Dhāraṇā and pratyāhāra must be practiced together as conjoint means for achieving the same end. Dhāraṇā without pratyāhāra or pratyāhāra without dhāraṇā would both be fruitless endeavours.⁷⁵ Vijñāna Bhikṣu suggests that in terms of elapsed time, dhāraṇā must last as long as twelve prāṇāyāmas.⁷⁶

Dhyāna is the continuance or uninterrupted flow of fixed concentration upon artha in the stream of consciousness.⁷⁷ It is the continuation of the mental effort (pratyaya) to clearly perceive the sphoṭa. Vijñāna Bhikṣu indicates that in terms of elapsed

⁷² Vākyapadīya, op. cit., I:131, Vṛtti.

⁷³ Yoga Sūtras, III:4.

⁷⁴ Ibid., III:1.

⁷⁵ Yoga Philosophy in Relation..., op. cit., p. 335.

⁷⁶ Yoga-Sāra-Saṅgraha, op. cit., p. 88.

⁷⁷ Yoga Sūtras, II:2.

time, dhyāna may be thought of as lasting as long as twelve dharanās -- which would equal one hundred and forty-four prāṇāyāmas. Mastery at this madhyamā level of vāk is indicated by the lack of intrusion of any other citta-vṛtti during this period of meditation.

Samādhi or trance contemplation occurs when the dhyāna loses its subject-object distinction. As Vyāsa puts it, when fixed concentration shines forth only in the form of the object being contemplated and empty of all duality, that is samādhi.⁷⁸ Vācaspati further clarifies the point as follows. A kalpanā or two-termed-relation is a distinction between the concentration and the object upon which it is fixed. Dhāranā and dhyāna exhibit such subject-object distinction. However, all duality is absent in samādhi where the citta has fused itself with or become one with the object.⁷⁹ In this state there is no self-awareness but only a direct intuition -- knowing by becoming one with the object. For śabdapūrvavayoga this would mark the transition from the dualistic experience of sphoṭa as dhvani and artha -- grossly manifested at the vaikharī level, subtly manifested at the madhyamā level -- to the unitary perception of the sphoṭa which characterizes the pratibhā of the paśyantī level of vāk. It is this paśyantī state of sphoṭa samādhi that provides the psychological process by which the śabda-devotee may make his ascent towards mokṣa -- union with Śabdabrahman. At the lower levels of vaikharī and madhyamā,

⁷⁸ Ibid., III:3, Bhāṣya.

⁷⁹ Ibid., Tīkā.

however, the correct use of words through practices such as satya helps to produce spiritual merit (dharma) which makes the attainment of happiness here and beyond certain. But for the ultimate end, correct usage alone is not enough. When the lower yogāṅgas are combined with the higher samādhi forms, śābdapūrvayoga then opens the way to the ultimate end, and the realization of mokṣa.⁸⁰

Samādhi is the goal of the śābdapūrvayoga and all the yogāṅgas must work together for its achievement. It cannot be achieved unless, as the yogin tries to withdraw his senses and focus his citta, potential obstructions arising from the unsteadiness of the body and the mind are controlled by āsana and prāṇāyāma. And then only gradually, through the steadying of the mind on one sphota, does citta begin to flow evenly in that same state without any disruption. Finally, the mind even ceases to think that it is thinking the sphota and is steadily transformed into the form of the sphota itself.⁸¹ Although, theoretically, the last three stages are separated, Patañjali makes clear that in practice dhāraṇā, dhyāna and samādhi are all part of the same process of which the last one is perfection. Consequently, the technical term saṁyama is introduced as a short-hand designation for this process (in all three of its stages).⁸² Success in the practice of saṁyama is indicated by the shining forth of prajñā (insight or direct perception of

⁸⁰ Bhartrhari, op. cit., pp. 142-143.

⁸¹ Yoga Philosophy in Relation..., op. cit., p. 336.

⁸² Yoga Sūtras, III:4, Bhāṣya and Tīkā.

the sphota),⁸³ and is the paśyanti level of vāk. But before entering into a detailed psychological analysis of the pratibhā samādhi of paśyanti vāk, let us make a few passing comments on the above Yoga interpretation of vaikharī vāk, madhyamā vāk, and śabdapūrvayoga.

Comments on the Yoga Interpretation of Vaikharī, Madhyamā and Śabdapūrvayoga

In the above discussion of śabdapūrvayoga the theoretical descriptions, by their very nature, make the various aids to Yoga appear hierarchial in nature and serial in their order of achievement. However, in practice, this is not the case. The śabda yogin does not devote all his effort to āsana, for example, only moving on to prāṇāyāma after the perfection of āsana. Rather, the simultaneous practice of prāṇāyāma and āsana is required for either one of the two to reach steadiness. Likewise, prāṇāyāma requires the coordinate practice of dhāraṇā and pratyāhāra. And dhāraṇā cannot be accomplished if the purification of the body and mind is not being effected through the practice of the yamas and niyamas. Therefore, the various yogāṅgas should not be taken as unitary steps to be accomplished in serial order, but rather as theoretical descriptions of the various aspects of a unified practice aimed at the concentration and control of the citta. Because this yogic mastering of the mind and body is a complex achievement requiring the learning of all its member (yogāṅga) component skills,

⁸³ Ibid., III:5. *

the attainment of dhāraṇā, dhyāna and finally samādhi is not an overnight or suddenly complete accomplishment. As Dasgupta observes,

When the mind is on its way to pass into the samādhi state, it is in a state of oscillation as it were between its passage into ordinary consciousness and the samādhi consciousness, until the samādhi power is sufficiently strong to prevent the invasion of ordinary consciousness.⁸⁴

For this reason, both Eliade and Dasgupta would seem to be incorrect in maintaining that it is only with the third yogāṅga, āsana, that yogic technique begins.⁸⁵ As has been made clear above, all of the "members of Yoga" are inter-dependent and coordinate in function, therefore to judge that the yamas and niyamas are not Yoga proper is unacceptable. Indeed, both Vācaspati and Vyāsa see the perfection of these two yogāṅgas as necessary for the achievement of mokṣa. For example, the practice of satya is considered so essential for śabdapūrvayoga that without it all other yogāṅgas would prove fruitless.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Yoga Philosophy in Relation..., op. cit., p. 345.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 333, and Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, op. cit., p. 53.

⁸⁶ Although in the present Sphota theory context satya has been chosen over the other yamas for special emphasis, it is recognized that in the Yoga darśana itself ahimsa is the yama considered to be especially essential. Vyāsa goes so far as to claim that all the other yamas and niyamas are rooted in ahimsā (Yoga Sūtra, II:30, Bhāṣya). Although this principle seems conspicuously absent in most modern Western thought, it is widely accepted by all schools of Indian thought. For example, even though tradition holds that the Jaina

Turning to the conception of satya itself, two points of emphasis are observed which seem to bear a certain similarity to Plato's discussion of truthfulness in The Republic.⁸⁷ In regard to the first requirement of satya -- the conformity of one's speech and mind with the thing itself and thereby neither creating nor containing illusion -- Socrates also states that, "to lie and to have lied to the soul about the things that are...and to have and to hold a lie there is what everyone would least accept...and hates most of all".⁸⁸ Regarding the second requirement of satya -- that vak or true speech be used for the benefit of all beings and not their injury (in conformity with the Laws of Manu) -- Socrates also cautions that truthfulness must not injure people, especially the unlearned, and so he allows for the kind of lie which functions as a preventive to keep one's friends from madness, folly or doing something bad.⁸⁹ Thus in both Yoga and in Plato there is present, indirectly at least, a two-level conception of truth. Such a distinction was perhaps first clearly indicated in the teachings of

teachers (Tirthankaras) came from the warrior caste, yet their main teaching is ahimsa. As the Jaina Sūtra says, "With these three means of punishment -- thoughts, words, deeds -- you shall not injure living beings" (as quoted in Outlines of Jaina Philosophy, op. cit., p. viii). Within Christianity, insofar as the teachings of Jesus are taken authoritatively and followed in practice, ahimsa should also be given a high place (see "Sermon on the Mount", Matt. 5:21-22, 39-40, 43 and 48). But whereas Jesus seems to restrict his application to human relationships, Indian thought extends ahimsa to include all animal and insect life.

⁸⁷ The Republic of Plato, trans. by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968, Book II: 382 a-d.

⁸⁸ Ibid., II: 382 b.

⁸⁹ Ibid., II: 382 d.

Buddha and later given full formulation by Mādhyamika.⁹⁰ Once the Buddha has reached his enlightenment, in which he is at one with the ultimate or first level of truth, he may then, like a skilled physician prescribing a remedy, make use of the phenomenal or second level of truth to counter the illusion of a student by the use of an opposite illusion. Here again we note a certain similarity in Plato's conception of the "philosopher-king" who uses the "noble lie" for the good of the people. However, although this two level view of truth appears to have been present in the early roots of Western tradition, it seems quite lacking in modern thought. Now "truth" is taken to be "factual" or "empirical" -- which by definition excludes the metaphysical and the ultimate. Thus the modern Western anxiety when such catalogings of empirical facts seem bereft of any deeper unifying ground or absolute truth referent, and therefore seem to become totally relative and atomistic in themselves. The śabdapūrvayoga avoids this by perceiving vāk as the conformity of word and citta in or with the noumenal sphota itself.

In its analysis of asteya, we see how Yoga psychology understands that overt behaviour is not the thing of primary concern, rather it is the underlying motive that is the controlling factor. Thus the cure of man's acquisitive instinct, which leads him to steal, can only be accomplished by restraint of the inner thoughts

⁹⁰ The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, op. cit., pp. 50-54.

which precede and precipitate the outer acts. In this depth psychological analysis of human behaviour, Yoga is seen to prefigure by many centuries the psychoanalytic criticism of behaviouristic psychotherapy in contemporary Western thought. The truth of the Yoga and the more recent psychoanalytic position is evidenced by the fact that while the behaviouristic psychotherapist may succeed by de-conditioning in the removal of a particular symptom, his failure to deal with the deeper problem simply results in the appearance of yet another symptom. But while Yoga and psychoanalysis may both agree against Behaviourism as to the underlying nature of the problem, they diverge completely with regard to its solution. While psychoanalysis counsels awareness, acceptance and expression of the instinctual desires ("Id") in a socially acceptable fashion through the rationalizing and sublimating mechanisms of reason (ego),⁹¹ Yoga aims at the virtual destruction of the instinctual potencies or vāsanās by the disciplined establishment of goal directed (soteriological) physical and psychical habit patterns. The role played by reason in Yoga is completely the opposite of the function of reason in psychoanalysis. While reason functions in the service of the instincts (gaining socially acceptable means for their satisfaction) in psychoanalysis; in Yoga reason serves the achievement of the teleological ideal by elucidating the infinite suffering consequent upon the allowing of the instinctual potencies

⁹¹ New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, op. cit.,
pp. 79-80.

to achieve actualization.

At the vaikharī or gross behaviour level, there is a sense in which Yoga techniques bear apparent similarity to some of the approaches of contemporary Western Behaviour Therapy.⁹² Behaviour Therapy attacks unwanted or neurotic habit patterns by the establishment, through repeated conditioning, of opposing habit patterns. This approach is based upon evidence that neuro-physiological function occurs in terms of mutually exclusive opposites, i.e., hot and cold, pleasure and pain, etc., no two of which can be functionally operant at the same moment. Thus, to treat a phobia such as fear of venturing into crowded places, the behaviour therapist conditions his client to concentrate on non-fearful and pleasantly secure memories while in the crowded location. In a sense, Yoga psychology could be said to follow a similar procedure -- only with an internal (thoughts, desires) focus rather than the external behaviour focus of Behaviour Therapy. As we have seen above, Yoga seeks to destroy the perverse thoughts or vitarkas by the cultivation of their opposites or pratipakṣa bhāvanā.

In many ways, then, śabdapūrvayoga may be made partly understandable to the West through the use of contemporary Western psychological concepts as illustrated above. But only partly, for when the radical nature of both the practice and the goal are fully realized, it is clear that nothing in Western thought bears even a

⁹²See Joseph Wolpe, Psychotherapy for Reciprocal Inhibition. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958; and The Practice of Behavior Therapy. New York: Pergamon Press, 1969.

remote similarity. This is exemplified in the Yoga theory that basic instincts of man (e.g., his sexual urges) can be functionally destroyed so that no longer does he have to make conscious effort to control them. Or on a practical level Yoga does not rest with the mere control over feelings of avarice, but requires the more radical practice of the spontaneous non-acceptance of gifts or aparigraha even in times of calamity. This is based on the empirical observations that, on the one hand, the true nature of avarice is such that one will never be content with one's possessions but will always be driven by desire to obtain more and more, and on the other hand, that the possessing of things opens up an infinite path of painful consequences regarding their protection, preservation, etc., leading inevitably to the violation of ahimsa.⁹³

The practice of the niyamas poses much less difficulty for a Westerner of the Christian tradition. "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" has long been a slogan of Protestant Christianity. Peace of mind has always been taken as a characteristic of spirituality, and Jesus specifically directed his followers to be content with their lot: "Therefore I bid you put away anxious thoughts about food and drink to keep you alive, and clothes to cover your body. Surely life is more than food, the body more than clothes".⁹⁴ Study of scriptures and spiritual writings has also been accepted as a necessary practice by traditional Protestant Christianity, while

⁹³ Mahatma Gandhi has provided our modern world with a living example of this radical approach, and the spiritual power inherent in it.

⁹⁴ Matthew, Cp. 6:25.

Roman Catholicism has given more emphases to the repetition of mantras, e.g., the Rosary. Although austerities have not been common to the average Christian layman, they have been practised by many of the monastic orders -- although not to the extremes (such as sitting in the midst of four fires in the hot season) that are known in India. However, the practice of *Īśvarapranidhana* or the dedication and devotion of all thought, speech and action to God is well known and respected within Christianity. In Paul's letter to the Romans we read:

Therefore, my brothers, I implore you by God's mercy to offer your very selves to him: a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for his acceptance, the worship offered by mind and heart. Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed. Then you will be able to discern the will of God, and to know what is good, acceptable, and perfect.⁹⁵

Such a passage would, I think, be completely acceptable to *śabda-pūrvayoga* as a description of the nature and purpose of devotion to *Īśvara*. A virtually parallel presentation of the same sentiment is found in the *Gītā*:

He who lays works on Brahman, abandoning attachment, and so works is not smeared by sin, as a lotus-leaf is not smeared by water.

With body, mind and intellect, and sense alone, Ascetics do work, abandoning attachment, to purify their selves.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ *Romans*, Cp. 12:1-2.

⁹⁶ *The Bhagavadgītā*, trans. by W. D. P. Hill. Oxford: University Press, 1966, Chapter 5: 10-11.

Turning to the practice of āsanās, another basic insight of Yoga psychology is observed -- that the mind and body are a psychosomatic unity; that what happens in the one has a direct effect upon the other. Although this principle is now well accepted by Western medicine (e.g., in the etiology and treatment of ulcers) and to a lesser extent by Western psychology, Christianity has generally paid scant attention to body postures. Eliade correctly observes that on the plane of the body, āsana is an ekāgratā, a concentration on a single point; the body is "tensed" or concentrated in a single position. Just as ekāgratā puts an end to the fluctuation and dispersion of the states of consciousness, so āsana puts an end to the distracting mobility and disposability of the body.⁹⁷

While the benefits and necessity of āsana seem reasonably self-evident to most Westerners,⁹⁸ the practice of prāṇāyāma and its attendant claims of achieving voluntary control over the involuntary functions of the body (e.g., the rate of heartbeat) evokes considerable skepticism in the Western mind. Yet the deep connection between mental states and rates of respiration is easily observable by any layman. In states of emotional arousal respiration is uneven and fast, while in one who is concentrating it becomes rhythmical and automatically slows down. In deep sleep the respiration is slow, deep and regular. Observing this direct relationship

⁹⁷Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

⁹⁸As evidenced by the great popularity of āsana exercise programmes.

between respiration and the states of consciousness, Yoga developed prāṇāyāma as a means for controlling mental function. Since concentration is characterized by slow and rhythmical respiration, the yogin aims at increasing his level or intensity of concentration by gradually extending the length of the regular pauses he makes between inflows and outflows of air. By this means he claims to experience with perfect lucidity certain states of consciousness that are normally inaccessible in a waking condition -- especially the states of consciousness that are peculiar to sleep. In such states there is also pratyāhāra or withdrawal of the senses from attachment with external objects, and instead the identification of sense organs with citta in the single-pointed contemplation of the object.

Since the practice of prāṇāyāma and pratyāhāra claims the result of voluntary control over autonomically innervated functions, empirical studies should be capable of documenting such achievements. In their 1961 study, Wenger and Bagchi⁹⁹ used a portable Offner transistor electroencephalograph (with appropriate pickups for the recording of ANS functions) to obtain measurements of voluntary sweating and changes during āsana and prāṇāyāma. A problem with this study, however, is that the sample sizes were very small (e.g., N's of 1, 4 and 5), and that proper control groups were not always included. Consequently, the reliability and validity of

⁹⁹ M. A. Wenger and B. K. Bagchi, "Studies of Autonomic Functions in Practitioners of Yoga in India", Behavioral Science 6(4), 1961, pp. 312-322.

the results are questionable. Bearing these difficulties in mind, let us look at the findings. Only one subject was found who possessed direct voluntary control over any ANS function. He could prespire from the forehead on command within one and one-half to ten minutes. This yogin had spent two winters in caves in the Himalayas, unclad except for an animal skin. To counteract the cold, he learned to concentrate on warmth so as to effect an actual increase in body temperature. This he was able to achieve after six months of practice. In more moderate climates, the same practices also produced perspiration. The authors suggest that this result represents a conditioned ANS response pattern to visual imagery.

In experiments with four subjects who claimed control over heart and pulse, the authors found, that while for brief periods no heart sounds could be heard with a stethoscope and the palpable radial pulse disappeared, EKG records showed the heart to be in continuous action. In discussing this, the authors suggest that the above phenomenon was a result of strong abdominal contraction and breath arrest with closed glottis producing an increase in intrathoracic pressure to the point where venous return to the heart is markedly reduced. Consequently, although the heart continues to contract it pumps little blood and heart sounds and palpable pulse thus seem to disappear.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 315.

Regarding their study of prāṇāyāma, the authors found marked significant changes in respiration rates as a result of the practice. Commenting on this, they report that in the more experienced yogis, "altered breathing has produced bidirectional changes in every autonomic variable we measured".¹⁰¹ This result, although far from conclusive, is supportive of the basic Yoga principle that there is a direct relationship between rates of respiration and the states of consciousness.

The establishing of empirical correlates for the pratyāhāra aspect of samādhi was also attempted by Anand, Chhina and Singh.¹⁰² Four yogis who practised samādhi were investigated with the use of an electroencephalograph (EEG). They were repeatedly exposed to an external auditory stimuli (a loud banging gong) both during samādhi (marked on the EEG by persistent alpha activity with increased amplitude modulation) and during a control period of "ordinary" consciousness. This increased alpha activity could not be blocked by the auditory stimuli when the yogis were in samādhi, even though it was easily blocked (with no adaptation to repetition) when they were not meditating. The authors interpret these findings as supporting the Yoga claim of pratyāhāra, that while in the

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 318.

¹⁰² B. K. Anand, G. S. Chhina and Baldev Singh, "Some Aspects of Electroencephalographic Studies in Yogis", in Biofeedback and Self-Control, ed. by J. Kamiya. New York: Aldine Atherton, 1971, pp. 608-612.

state of samādhi the yogin's external senses are withdrawn, incoming external stimuli are blocked out, and the yogin is able to remain undistracted in his inner state of concentration.

Studies such as this are of interest, not from the point of view of any suggestion of the psychological mechanism involved, but only as an indication that there are Yoga states such as samādhi.

In a 1966 EEG study by Kasamatsu and Hirai, the trance meditation (Zazen) of Zen Buddhists was examined for alpha activity and alpha blocking in response to auditory click stimulation.¹⁰⁴ A group of four Zen masters evidenced high alpha activity with blocking for two to three seconds after each click. The clicks were presented with regular intervals of fifteen seconds. In a group of four control subjects (university students), no alpha increase was observed during meditation and the alpha blocking time to the clicks showed rapid reduction and adaption. In the Zen masters, however, the alpha blocking time remained constant indicating no adaptation of alpha blocking during Zen meditation. These results provide a striking contrast to the previously discussed study on the response of yogis to auditory stimulation while practising samādhi. The samādhi trance state, characterized by high alpha EEG, showed no

¹⁰⁴ Akira Kasamatsu and Tomio Hirai, "An Electroencephalographic Study of Zen Meditation (Zazen)", in Biofeedback and Self-Control, op. cit., pp. 613-625.

alpha blocking to auditory stimuli, supporting the Yoga claim of withdrawal of the senses. Zazen, on the other hand, also evidenced high alpha EEG, but with a constant alpha blocking to repeated auditory clicks and with no habituation of the blocking response. The latter findings would seem to support the Buddhist orientation to the real as being the discrete experience of momentary phenomena without the distortion of any central conceptualizing activity. It is the exact opposite of the Yogic pratyahāra, in that a heightening of sensitivity to sensory stimuli results. Each stimulus is accepted as a stimulus itself and is treated as such. The habituation to repeated auditory stimuli that characterizes normal consciousness is absent. One Zen master describes such a state of mind as "noticing every person one sees on the street but of not looking back with emotional curiosity".¹⁰⁵ Whereas yogic samādhi results in lack of response to external auditory stimuli, Zazen, represents optimal preparedness for incoming auditory stimuli. This difference would not seem attributable to a different kind of Yoga since the training procedures, etc., seem to bear much similarity, but rather to a philosophic difference in the point of

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 623. Support is given to this view of meditation by Deikman's empirical finding that in concentration upon a single visual object, subjects experience perceptual intensification. This, he suggests, is a kind of "fresh vision" resulting from the deautomatization of psychic structures and the reinvestment of percepts with attention. A. J. Deikman, "Experimental Meditation", a 1963 study reprinted in Altered States of Consciousness, ed. by C. T. Tart. New York: Anchor Books, 1972, pp. 201-223.

reference that is taken as ultimate -- for the brāhmanical yogi it is the inner unity of consciousness, for the Buddhist it is the discrete sensory experience. In both cases, however, the spiritual psychological discipline (sādhānā) seeks a common and typically Eastern goal, namely, the transcending of ego centered consciousness and its attendant evils by identification of one's self with universal reality.

The above EEG studies (and those to be discussed in the next section of this Chapter), while interesting and suggestive, may have little empirical validity as measureable correlates of trance states. In all studies the sample sizes are very small and the results are given as visual interpretations of the EEG recordings graphically presented. Such subjective visual interpretation is open to distortion by the philosophical presuppositions of the researchers. It would seem that until EEG measurements can be directly recorded as numerical quantifications subject to the standard statistical tests for significance that little use can be made of the EEG as an empirical research tool.¹⁰⁶

Turning from śabdapūrvayoga to the psychological interpretation of the hearing of sphota at the vaikharī and madhyamā levels, some comments may be offered from contemporary Western psychology.

¹⁰⁶ This observation is based on personal communications with Dr. A. R. Upton, EEG research specialist, McMaster University Health Sciences Center, May, 1973. Dr. Upton is now perfecting a computer technique which directly presents EEG measurements in numerical terms suitable for statistical analysis.

In a recent book, Jean Piaget examines the relations between organic body regulations and the cognitive processes of knowledge.¹⁰⁷

Piaget's analysis suggests that knowledge results from a process of assimilation of sensory stimuli from the lower specialized sensory organs to the higher functions of the nervous system in accordance with a known autoregulatory cognitive model.¹⁰⁸ This would seem to support the Sphota/Yoga interpretation of hearing as an integrative process in which the phonemes are perceived as meaningful due to the cognitive structuring they are given by the sphota. This parallel is further supported when Piaget notes that such an autoregulatory cognitive mechanism appears as a whole which is conserved throughout a series of transformations (in both the individuation and assimilation directions).¹⁰⁹ Piaget, of course rejects the Sphota claim that the knowledge model is innate, but admits the necessity for some kind of autoregulatory knowledge mechanism and recognizes the infinite regression which results when the a priori existence of such a mechanism (e.g., sphota) is not admitted.¹¹⁰ This assumption is also accepted by O. H. Mowrer when he suggests a human infant becomes able to say or hear a word by virtue of the fact that "he already 'knows' what it sounds like

¹⁰⁷ Jean Piaget, Biology and Knowledge. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 36-37.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 35.

¹¹⁰ Loc. cit.

and can practice the response against the model which already exists (in memory or 'imagination')." ¹¹¹

The neurophysiological analysis of speech and brain mechanisms by Wilder Penfield concludes with an integrative model very similar to the Sphota/Yoga interpretation. ¹¹² Basing his thinking on experimental electrical stimulation of the cerebral cortex during neurosurgery for the removal of lesions, Penfield suggests that the speech mechanism consists of two integrated halves. There is a "sound unit", a "conceptual unit", and an automatic integrative connection between the two. ¹¹³ As is the case with the Sphota analysis, Penfield finds that the conceptual unit seems to provide the neural integration for the speech unit. Penfield suggests that there is "conceptual storehouse" of such integrative speech mechanisms existing in the brain, but cautions that neither the place of storing nor the manner of their activation is understood. ¹¹⁴ Understanding of meaning occurs, he says, when the sound unit and the conceptual unit are established together with their interconnections. In Penfield's theorizing the "conceptual unit" alone would seem equivalent to Bhartrhari's artha, the "sound unit" to dhvani, and the "mental storehouse of automatically integrated

¹¹¹ Learning Theory and The Symbolic Processes, op. cit., p. 277.

¹¹² Speech and Brain Mechanisms, op. cit., pp. 233 ff.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 246.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 233.

conceptual units" to the sphotas. But Penfield, along with most other Western thinkers, does not seem to have any notion that such an integrated conceptual unit or sphota could be an object capable of inner perception or pratibhā. Let us therefore now examine the Yoga analysis of this apparently distinctive Eastern notion.

II. PERCEPTION OF SPHOTA AT THE LEVEL OF PASYANTĪ VĀK

In Section I above we have seen that at the gross or vaikhari level of vāk, perception of the heard sphota is severely obscured due to the three kinds of vikalpa or predicate relations which characterize savitarka samādhi. As the perception of the sphota becomes more concentrated, through practice of śabdapūrvayoga, the citta is gradually purified or freed from memory, saṅketa and the predicate relations of anumāna until the level of inner hearing or madhyamā vāk is reached. This is the savicāra or meditative samādhi in which subtle vikalpa notions of time, place and causation are still present, but which is characterized by the intensifying of the ārtha aspect of the sattva citta due to the magnet like attraction exerted by the pure saṃskāra series of the buddhitattva sphota upon the "approaching" and integrating manifestation of the sphota pattern within the hearer's citta. Finally through intense śabdapūrvayoga in the practice of samyama, the hearer's citta becomes so purified and sattva dominated that it is transparent like a crystal which can take on the colour of the object itself.¹¹⁵ In

¹¹⁵ Yoga Sūtras, I:41.

this transparent citta, the pure saṃskāra series of the buddhitattva sphota (in which the individual buddhis of both the speaker and the hearer are grounded) and the approaching and integrating pattern of the heard phonemes merge into a perfectly fitting (yogata) superimposition upon one another resulting in a shining forth of prajñā.¹¹⁶

The gross dualism of vaikhari cognition and the subtle dualism of madhyamā are transcended as the noumenal perception or pratibhā of the vākya sphota is realized. This is the paśyantī (the seeing one) into which all sequence is merged, and, though it is one, still has the power to produce sequence within it.¹¹⁷ Perhaps the closest thing to a Grammarian psychological analysis of paśyantī and its relation to śabdapūrvayoga is found in the Vṛtti on I:131 which

Iyer translates as follows:

Taking his stand on the essence of the Word
lying beyond the activity of breath (prāṇa),
resting in one's self with all sequence
eliminated,

After having purified speech and after having
rested it on the mind, after having broken
the bonds and made it bond-free, After having
reached the inner Light, he with his knots
cut, becomes united with the Supreme Light.¹¹⁸

Iyer adds that according to Vṛṣabha the bonds and knots which must be cut are the limiting factors avidyā and ahaṃkāra which bring about differentiation and multiplicity. "And the last stage is the attainment of the inner Light, that is, the One, indivisible Word which

¹¹⁶ Ibid., II:5.

¹¹⁷ Vākyapadīya, op. cit., I:142, Vṛtti.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., I:131, Vṛtti.

is identical with the inner Self".¹¹⁹

Throughout this analysis of the levels of vāk, it seems clear that Bhartrhari's concept is that these levels are heuristic levels on a continuum rather than discrete hierarchical stages. The same sort of heuristic continuum is also envisaged in the Yoga analysis of the various levels of samādhi. This means that within the paśyanti pratibhā there will be degrees of clearness in the unitary perception of sphota. It is fitting, therefore, that in the Yoga Sūtras, when samādhi is being analyzed in its non-dualistic or pratibhā state, two qualities of prajñā are described: nirvitarka or gross pratibhā of the sphota, and nirvicāra or subtle pratibhā of the sphota.¹²⁰ Let us examine each of these in turn.

¹¹⁹ Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 145.

¹²⁰ Various attempts have been made to reconcile the two seemingly different classifications of samprajñāta samādhi found in sūtra I:17 and sūtras I:42-44. My reading of the two passages suggests that:

- (1) vitarka includes both the savitarka and nirvitarka stages (the latter classification differentiating in terms of conceptual cognition; the former in terms of the perceptual quality of the intuition).
- (2) vicāra includes both the savicāra and the nivicāra stages -- for the same reasons as in (1).
- (3) ānanda is produced by citta's subtle (but dualistic in nature) intuition of sense organ's engagement with the object. Because the sense organs are sattvic in nature and because sattva gives pleasure, therefore Vācaspati says the intuition of the sense organs gives pleasure (see Tīkā on I:17). The dualistic nature of the subtle intuition of the sense organs is consistent with the savicāra stage, and is described as one of its parts along with the intuition of the tanmātras.
- (4) asmitā is the deeper intuition that the ahaṁkāra is the more subtle form (of prakṛti) out of which both the sense organs and the tanmātras arise. Consequently, quality is no longer part of the intuition (see Tīkā on I:17). This is also the exact description given for the nirvicāra stage.

Nirvitarka or gross perception of the sphota occurs when the samādhi is freed from memory, the conventional usage of śabda, and the predicate relations of jñāna by inference or association, allowing the thing-itself (svarūpa) to shine forth in itself alone.¹²¹ In this stage the svarūpa (sphota) is directly intuited as having just that form which it has in itself and nothing more. Citta has become one with the object so that the object no longer appears as an object of consciousness.¹²² The duality of subject and object is overcome leaving only the steady transformation of citta in the form of the object of its contemplation. Here the samādhi knowledge or prajñā is an outgrowth from the savitarka samādhi. It is of the grosser vaikharī manifestation of the sphota as perceived in its formal pattern or unity through the senses.

Nirvicāra samādhi develops naturally from the meditative concentration (savicāra) that was previously found to characterize madhyamā-vāk. When, by constant śabdapūrvayoga, the mind becomes so much identified with the subtle aspects of the savicāra samādhi that notions of time, place and causality disappear, and the antah karana becomes one with the sattvic sphota, that is nirvicāra.¹²³

Taken in this way, the two passages of the Yoga Sūtras are seen to be consistent with one another, and to be describing the same four stages of samprajñāta samādhi, and not six or eight kinds as Bhikṣu and Dasgupta suggest (see Yoga Philosophy, op. cit., p. 341).

¹²¹ Yoga Sūtras, I:43.

¹²² Ibid., Tīkā.

¹²³ Ibid., I:44, Bhāṣya.

In this samādhi-state the śabda yogin's citta becomes so purified that the prajñā obtained is perfectly pure and considered to be absolute knowledge of the sphota. It is the final clear no-error perception of the sphota and is at the opposite end of the hearer's continuum from the high error initial experiences of the phonemes at the vaikharī level. This nirvicāra samādhi which is Patañjali's highest samprajñāta stage seems equivalent to Bhartrhari's viśiṣṭophita or highest pratibhā.¹²⁴ It is the same process by which the rsis cognize the Vedas, but, unlike the more ordinary śabda yogin, the great sages are said to have been able to directly perceive the noumenal sphota without having to go through the process of errors.¹²⁵ The prajñā or knowledge revealed by the direct perception of the sphota is described as having a two-fold character: (1) it gives the special or true knowledge of the word, and (2) it gives the power to act in accordance with that knowledge.¹²⁶ It is through both of these capacities that the pratibhā perception of sphota provides the means for mokṣa realization. From the Yoga viewpoint, this situation is described in a more technical psychological fashion, as follows. When the śabda yogin remains in the concentrated insight of the nirvicāra state, the ongoing impact of this insight (prajñā) upon the citta effectively restricts the emergence of any remaining negative saṃskāras.¹²⁷ By such śabdapūrvayoga, any remaining ob-

¹²⁴ Vākyapadīya, op. cit., II:152.

¹²⁵ Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 167. ¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 90.

¹²⁷ Yoga Sūtras, I:50.

stacles are removed and the inherent telos within citta manifests itself in mokṣa -- oneness with Śabdabrahman.¹²⁸

With this Yoga interpretation of the direct perception of sphota at the paśyantī level of vāk, the psychological task of Part Two is completed. But before summarizing our findings, let us pause briefly for a general comment on the distinctive Yoga conception of nirvitarkā and nirvicāra samādhi.

Comments on Nirvitarka and Nirvicāra Samādhi

As the higher stages of samprajñāta samādhi are approached verbal symbolic descriptions become more and more inadequate to convey the fine distinctions which the yogin in his repeated practice of direct intuition is able to realize. As Dasgupta observes, in the higher stages it becomes a matter of the yogin's own experience -- Yoga itself becomes its own teacher.¹²⁹

In the introduction to this thesis, the suggestion was made that Yoga practice is common to most schools of Indian thought. Evidence for this contention is found in the observation that Buddhist psychology also defines four stages of samādhi: vitakka, vicāra, sukham and upekkhā. The close relationship of these Buddhist conceptions and their probable evolution from an early Yoga viewpoint, has been accepted and explicated by both Dasgupta¹³⁰ and

¹²⁸ Bhartrhari, op. cit., p. 127.

¹²⁹ The Study of Patañjali, op. cit., p. 160.

¹³⁰ Yoga Philosophy in Relation..., op. cit., p. 343.

Stcherbatsky.¹³¹ In his book on Jaina Psychology, Mehta helpfully summarizes the positions taken by the various Indian schools in regard to samprajñāta samādhi.¹³² In general, it is accepted by all except the Cārvāka and Mīmāṃsaka schools. The Cārvākas do not admit any other source of valid cognition than ordinary sensory perception. And the Mīmāṃsakas take the Vedas to be the only source for all knowledge and so reject such states as nirvitarka and nirvicāra in which predicate relations, by which the Veda is interpreted, do not exist. Sāṅkhya maintains that so-called future objects are present as latent or potential and so-called past objects are present as sub-latent. In a samādhi state a person is enabled to cognize the past and future objects which in the present exist only in sub-latent or latent form. For Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, ordinary knowledge or perception is defined as the direct comprehension of gross objects through the relation between the sense organs and their objects with the help of light, time, space, and the merit or demerit of the person. But prajñā is also accepted by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika as immediate cognition of distant, past, future, and subtle objects.¹³³ It is to be obtained, says Vātsyāyana, by following Yoga techniques.¹³⁴

¹³¹ The Central Conception of Buddhist Nirvana, op. cit., pp. 11 ff.

¹³² M. L. Mehta, Jaina Psychology. Amritsar: Shri Harjas Rai Jain, 1957, pp. 98 ff.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 99.

¹³⁴ As quoted in The Conception of Buddhist Nirvana, op. cit., p. 57.

Vedānta seems to accept Patañjali's viewpoint.

Perhaps a basic reason for this general acceptance of Yoga practice among schools which otherwise held such opposed doctrines as ātma and anātma is that they were all reactions to early Sāṃkhya.¹³⁵ Experimental Yoga developed samādhi and its stages as a means of getting from the phenomenal world of suffering (accepted by all in terms of karma and saṃsāra) to the noumenal goal of mokṣa, kaivalya, or freedom from bondage (accepted by all, but with different philosophic interpretations). According to Yoga this transition of realms occurs because the practice of samādhi produces prajñā or realization of the noumenal. As samādhi advances, there is a corresponding increase in knowledge. The fluctuations of citta are increasingly controlled and concentration deepened so that the essence of things can be entered into. In Dasgupta's words, "As the concentration becomes deeper and more steady the real and perfect knowledge of things begins to flash before the mind's eye".¹³⁶ As the plane of samādhi rises higher and higher, the citta becomes increasingly purified of rajas and tamas so that when the nirvicāra stage is reached the object of concentration is purely seen in its noumenal form. Then, says Vyāsa, from the heights of such a clear calm citta the yogin beholds all the creatures below in the midst of pain and suffering from which he himself has escaped.¹³⁷ This is

¹³⁵ As suggested by T. R. V. Murti, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, op. cit., Cp. 3.

¹³⁶ Yoga Philosophy, op. cit., p. 344.

¹³⁷ Yoga Sūtras, I:47, Bhāṣya.

prajñā. In its clear calm intuition, the yogin's concentrated citta is said to be identical with rta or cosmic truth.¹³⁸

In Western thought, the conceiving of intuition on such a high epistemological level has seldom been even suggested let alone practiced. Perhaps Plato came closest to it in his discussion of the illumination of truth in Book VI of The Republic.¹³⁹ In more recent times, both Bergson and Spinoza offered intuition as a method of knowing ultimate truth or beauty which is immediate, certain, convincing and can never be refuted or proven by intellect or reason.¹⁴⁰ Contemporary thinkers, such as Bunge, reduce intuition to nothing more than subconscious cases of rapid inference -- a view which seems generally accepted by many Western scientists and most psychologists.¹⁴¹ Among Western psychologists, Jung's concept of intuition seems to have something in common with Yogic intuition, but he does not accept it as a pure and absolute perception. As a psychological process, Jung finds intuiting to be necessarily subject to modification by thinking, feeling and sensation, and therefore to be subject to false distortion in its cognitive presen-

¹³⁸ Ibid., I:48.

¹³⁹ The Republic of Plato, op. cit., Book VI: 507 ff.

¹⁴⁰ See the review of some Western conceptions of intuition by Malcolm Westcott in his book Toward a Psychology of Intuition. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968, pp. 1-22.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. For recent experimental studies conducted assuming this definition of intuition as "unconscious inference" see "Man as an Intuitive Statistician" by C. R. Peterson and L. R. Beach, Psychological Bulletin 68 (1967), pp. 29-46.

tation.¹⁴² For Jung the intuition, at the deepest level of the unconscious, is in direct touch with the universal truths of mankind (archetypes); but, in its expression in symbolic form at the conscious level, this primitive purity of the intuition is lost. As a means of knowledge, intuition is characterized by Jung as being immediate but uncritical, and this is in complete contrast with the Sphota/Yoga analysis which finds prajñā intuition as being the essence of discriminative discernment. Another distinction is that in Jung's theory intuition can eventuate in either good or evil behaviour whereas in Sphota/Yoga theorizing pratibhā/prajñā clearly results in right behaviour. It is of interest to note that there is one contemporary psychologist, A. H. Maslow, who has theoretically and experimentally examined a state of consciousness which is in some ways similar to ekāgra or single-object super-reflective state of citta. Maslow calls his concept "the cognition of Being in peak-experiences".¹⁴³ In such "Being-cognition", says Maslow, the experience or the object tends to be seen as a whole, as a complete unit, detached from relations, from possible usefulness, from expediency, and from purpose. It is seen as if it were all there was in the universe, as if it were all of Being, synonymous with

¹⁴²See Jung's Psychological Types, op. cit.

¹⁴³A. H. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being. New York: Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1962, p. 67.

the universe.¹⁴⁴ Maslow finds that for people to have such an experience they must achieve a high level of maturation, health, and self-actualization. They must be able to become egoless to the extent that they can become so absorbed or "poured into" the object that the ego-self in a very real sense disappears. As examples, Maslow examines aesthetic, scientific discovery, and mystical experiences. Maslow also notes that the peak-experience, as he calls it, is self-validating, self-justifying, and carries its own intrinsic value with it.¹⁴⁵ In all of this, Maslow's thinking seems to parallel much of the śabdapūrvayoga description, and perhaps to come closer than any other Western psychologist to appreciating the transcending of ego required for nirvicāra samādhi. One contemporary Western philosopher, F. S. C. Northrop, has spoken strongly for the Yoga view of prajñā, and at the same time points out to Westerners that all conceptual approaches presuppose gross perceptual intuitions (nirvitarkas) as the basic constituents for either mental or material notions of substance.¹⁴⁶

Yet another reaction to samprajñāta samādhi by Westerners -- particularly psychologists -- is to attempt empirical validation via controlled measurement (as contrasted to "empirical validation" via personal practice and experience as taught by Yoga). The technological advent of instruments able to measure such variables

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 74.

¹⁴⁶ F. S. C. Northrop, The Logic of the Sciences and the Humanities. New York: Macmillan, 1947, p. 394.

as O_2 consumption, cardiac output, arterial blood pressure and blood gas analysis, heart rate, skin resistance, etc., all of which can be seen to be relevant to the claims of Yoga -- especially in regard to the lower levels of the Yogāngas -- have resulted in a large number of recent studies, some of which were referred to above. However, most of these have had little to say about samādhi as such. But the increasing sophistication in measurement of the electrical activity of the brain by the EEG has produced new attempts in establishing empirical correlates of samādhi. In a 1970 study, Wallace found that during transcendental meditation there is an increase and predominance of slow deep alpha waves in the central and frontal regions of the cortex. This EEG pattern was also found to be significantly different from sleep, dreaming or waking states, suggesting a super-normal level of consciousness.¹⁴⁷

In a perhaps more relevant EEG study, Lehmann, Beeler and Fender have attempted to investigate the brain state evoked by a stabilized image.¹⁴⁸ A contact lens embodying a small projector faces the eyeball in such a way that no matter how the eye is moved, the same image falls on the retina. At the same time EEG recordings

¹⁴⁷ R. K. Wallace, The Physiological Effects of Transcendental Meditation, Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1970. However, the technique of meditation used makes the results have questionable relevance to Yoga Samādhi.

¹⁴⁸ D. Lehmann, G. W. Beeler, and D. H. Fender, "EEG Responses during the Observation of Stabilized and Normal Retinal Images", Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology 22 (1967), 136-142.

were taken. Their findings indicate that when an image is fixed on the retina with extreme precision, the image disappears in a few seconds and never returns. At the moment of disappearance there was a correlate appearance of the alpha rhythm -- which is postulated as indicative of a decrease of awareness of the external world. The interpretation offered is that the CNS is so structured that if awareness is restricted to one unchanging source of stimulation, a "turning off" of consciousness of the external world follows -- as is common in Yoga meditation. In relation to the analysis of the samprajñāta samādhi, this piece of research seems fascinating, but of little relevance for the higher stages, especially with regard to prajñā itself. The findings described would support the Yoga conception of the withdrawal of the senses in ekāgra concentration -- but little beyond that. All the other internal variables such as memories, inferences, unconscious functioning of the vāsanās, etc. are all left uncontrolled. Thus all that can be said, it would seem, is that outwardly forced concentration upon a fixed object results in withdrawal of the senses and the appearance of EEG alpha waves. The fact that similar EEG waves are found in measurements of yogis in samādhi may only indicate a similar withdrawal of senses, but does not empirically evidence all the other inner variables which the yogi has under control. And even if all of these can eventually be brought under empirical control (as one day they might), we would still only be monitoring the negative side of samādhi -- the prajñā (the positive religious, epistemological, and psychological attainment) will, it seems to me, always remain out of

reach of empirical measurement. And since prajñā is the purpose of śabdapūrvayoga, especially at the nirvicāra or paśyantī level, this line of empirical research may prove to be of minimal value. This same opinion is expressed by B. K. Bagchi after his comprehensive review of the EEG research that has been conducted on samādhi states.¹⁴⁹ And the eminent yogi, Swami Rama, after his extensive experimental testing at the Menninger Foundation, stated that the EEG auditory and visual signals correlated to his various states of samādhi were of interest mainly for their potential use in training young yogis through the lower states. But at the higher levels, said Swami Rama, the machines can no longer follow.¹⁵⁰

Operating on another basis altogether, that of self-experience, Yoga has developed its own "experimental tests" indicative of the mastery of samprajñāta samādhi. These perfections or attainments convince the śabda yogin of his mastery over this level of samādhi and also strengthen his faith in śabdapūrvayoga as being a true path to mokṣa. To describe the many perfections (siddhis) included in the Yoga Sūtras is not possible in this context. Both Bhikṣu¹⁵¹ and Dasgupta¹⁵² helpfully summarize them. Let us simply

¹⁴⁹ Basu K. Bagchi, "Mysticism and Mist in India", in Biofeedback and Self-Control, op. cit., p. 566.

¹⁵⁰ An unpublished lecture given by E. E. Green, et al., entitled "Biofeedback for Mind-Body Self-Regulation" at De Anza College, Cupertino, California, p. 24.

¹⁵¹ Yoga-Sāra-Saṅgraha, op. cit., Section III.

¹⁵² The Study of Patañjali, op. cit., pp. 162-163.

note in passing that the temptation common to all disciplines of spiritual attainment -- of making it an "end" rather than a "means" -- is warned against. A yogin must constantly guard against feelings of attachment or pride arising due to the high nature of his attainments.¹⁵³

As a final comment, it is noted that Dagupta, in his study of Yoga itself, concludes that although in theory there was no limitation of the object of samādhi, in practice the path generally adopted by most yogins was meditation on Īśvara.¹⁵⁴ And, as has been shown above, this can be interpreted as being the very śabda-pūrvayoga counselled by Bhartrhari. When the śabda yogin meditated upon Īśvara through the vākya sphōta of the Veda (symbolized by the sacred pranava), Īśvara was pleased to make the advance of his trance realization easier for him by removing obstacles that could stand in the way, until at last to Brahman the devotee returned, like a drop of water to the ocean.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Yoga Sūtras, III:51.

¹⁵⁴ Yoga Philosophy in Relation..., op. cit., p. 357.

¹⁵⁵ Vakyapadiya, I:14 and 18-22; and Yoga Sūtras, I:25.

III. CONCLUSION:

SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR SPHOTA TENENTS AS INTERPRETED

BY YOGA PSYCHOLOGY

In Part Two of this thesis an attempt has been made to describe how, according to traditional Yoga psychology, the Sphota view of language (as logically conceived in Part One) is psychologically possible in practical experience. The criterion applied throughout Part Two has been "psychological possibility" and this has been taken as referring to the "evidencing of" or "the experiencability of" the Sphota theory in the practical uttering and hearing of speech (with meaningful understanding). The approach taken has been to systematically examine the psychological possibility of the major Sphota tenents (as summarized in the conclusion to Part One) by attempting a psychological interpretation of each tenent according to Patañjali's Yoga psychology. As a result of this analysis the following summary is offered of those Sphota tenents whose Yoga interpretation is judged to have demonstrated psychological possibility.

- A. Sphota theory defines the sphota, the primary meaning-whole of language, as consciousness characterized by an intertwined unity of cognition and word, which constantly seeks to manifest itself in speech.
 1. This Sphota view of consciousness is psychologically interpreted by Yoga theory as follows. Citta is beginninglessly bestowed with the word forms or meanings of the Veda due to the grace of Īśvara. These sattvic word forms are equivalent to Bhartṛhari's vakya-sphotas. Saṃskāra series provide the psychological process by which the sphotas become and continue as vṛttis or states within consciousness. Such a primordial noumenal sphota is psychologically analyzed as a concentrated insight (prajñā) which exists as an undisturbed succession of akliṣṭa saṃskāra.

It does not fluctuate, nor does it require any supporting object (*ālambana*) since it is itself the substratum -- the eternal universal essence upon which all phenomenal language manifestations depend. As *prajñā* or pure intuition it is unitary and free from the predicate relations which characterize ordinary speech. Yet as *citta*, it contains, in addition to the pure *sattvic* intuition, elements of *tamas* and *rajas* which provide the material and motive force for the phenomenalization of the *sphoṭa* into thought and speech.

2. The primary meaning-whole or *sphoṭa* phenomenalizes into parts (i.e., *padas* and phonemes) because there is a potentiality to burst forth into disclosure (*sphuṭ*) within the *sphoṭa* (self-revelation is the telos of language and consciousness). In the Yoga view of consciousness, it is the *rajas* aspect which provides, in its individuation of *citta*, the inner energy (*kratu*) or the instinctive basis of speech. *Rajas*, in its pent-up state within the *buddhitattva* is a clear description of the energy for disclosure (*sphuṭ*) that *Bhartṛhari* conceives of as residing within the *sphoṭa*. And in its individuation of the *buddhitattva* through the *ahamkāra*, *rajas* produces the subject-object distinction that characterizes thought and speech. The formation of the *ahamkāra*, with its sense of egoity, provides for the overall sense of awareness which, in its more individuated forms as mind and senses, forms the basis for the experiencing of the speaking act. At the finite level of ego, mind and senses, *rajas* activity (as the individuated expression of *Īśvara*'s graceful act of revelation) provides both the desire to bring into self-awareness that hidden meaning (*artha*) of the *sphoṭa* and the subsequent urge to express that revelation in speech (*dhvani*).
3. The two aspects of word-meaning (*artha*) and word-sound (*dhvani*) differentiated in the mind, and yet integrated like two sides of the same coin, constitute the individuated expression of *sphoṭa* in thought and speech. This is described in Yoga theory as follows. In its *buddhi* function the *antaḥ-karāṇa* contains the *samskaras* of both the *arthas* and the *dhvanis* -- vocalization patterns from previous lives. In its *ahamkāra* function the *antaḥ-karāṇa* has the first awareness of the universal *artha* or meaning as its own cognition, and the concomitant awareness of the forming of that *artha* into inner speech or *dhvani*. In the introspection of the speaking act this represents the cognitive birth of the earliest formulations in the grasping of the

vākya-sphoṭa. The initial distinctions between artha and dhvani are therefore manifesting themselves. At this stage the manas aspect of the antah-karana is co-ordinating the developing vocalization patterns into internal thoughts in which the order of words is present. The dhvani-thoughts concomitant to the artha (of the sphoṭa in question) are psychologically composed by the interaction of the vibrant śabda tanmātra with the organ of speech. The individuation of the śabda tanmātra into a particular sphoṭa dhvani manifestation occurs through the conjoint action of a variety of factors. The overall form of the dhvani is provided by the artha through its "magnet-like" attracting of the tanmātra into its (the artha's) collateral dhvani pattern. But in order for the śabda tanmātra to be so structured, the speech organ acts as a variable filter (in accordance with the vāsanās of vocalization patterns from previous lives) which, together with the magnetic like pattern of the artha, limits and shapes the electric-like vibrancy of the śabda tanmātra so as to produce the dhvani. The manas, in addition to the prāṇas, provides the psychomotor coordination for the complex cognitive activity involved. This results in thought or internal speech.

In Yoga theory the individuating process is a continuum so that even at the level of inner thought, the initial gross manifestations of dhvani will be present in a subtle fashion. The final level of individuation requires only that the gross forms, already minutely present, receive further development. Speaking aloud requires only that the processes of the thought-out sentence be given an increase of prāṇa (involving psychomotor activities such as the action of the diaphragm in driving the śabda tanmātra in its gross ākāśa form through the speech organ) until the gross or nāda articulation of the phonemes occurs. In the case of written speech, a slightly different pattern of the prāṇa or psychomotor structuring (so as to include hand-eye coordination and a learned system of phonetic representation) is all that is required. This is Bhartrihari's vaikhari vāk level of sphoṭa expression in which what is meant (artha) is manifested as word-sound (dhvani) by the articulatory organs. Thus, interpreted according to Yoga psychology, the Sphoṭa theory is seen to provide both a logical and an experientiable explanation of the speaking act.

- B. In the Sphoṭa theory of hearing, the cognition of the inherent sphoṭa is a process of perception — a series of progressively clearer sphoṭa perceptions in response to the heard phonemes and padas, the first having the highest error and the last

having virtually no error at all.

1. The distinctive pattern of dhvani produced by the speech organ is the resultant of the saṃskāras of speech patterns from previous lives and the "magnetic-like" attraction of the artha. In the case of hearing, the particular phoneme sequence of the utterance approaches the ear as air (ākāśa) wave modulations. The ear, because of its sattvic dominated composition, responds to the magnetic like sound wave pattern that was originally induced by the action of the artha on the śabda tanmātrā. The sattvic aspect of the hearing organ thus begins with the hearing of the first phoneme, to approximate (vibrate in tune with) the total sound pattern sent out by the speaker. This sympathetic "vibration", which then travels throughout the citta of the hearer, induces maturation of the same sphoṭa saṃskāra series in the buddhi of the listener. As the subsequent phonemes of the whole spoken pattern strike upon the ear, the sympathetic vibration induced within the hearer's buddhi citta more and more closely approximates the total sound pattern of the gross ākāśa. With the hearing of the last phoneme, its particular "vibration" taken together with the "vibrations" of the preceding phonemes (still active within the buddhi citta by virtue of their self-induced saṃskāras) triggers a recognition of the inherent sphoṭa in the listener's buddhi. In this way a complete circle is established from speaker's sphoṭa-uttered phonemes-heard phonemes-perception of the same sphoṭa within the hearer.
2. In the hearer's cognition, there are levels of increasing clearness of perception.
 - a. At the level of vaikharī vāk there is obscuration of the unitary sphoṭa of the buddhi by the predicate relations (vikalpas) of the three types described in the Yoga analysis of savitarka or indistinct samādhi. But as the concentrated perception of the sphoṭa is gradually freed from the errors of memory, saṅketa or vāsanās from conventional word usage, and anumana or inference, the citta approaches the inner hearing aspect of the complete communication circle which the sphoṭa forms in its "vibratory movement" from the buddhi of the speaker to the buddhi of the hearer. Whereas in the speaking act the psychomotor prāṇa functions served to individuate the sphoṭa pattern through the coordination of the śabda tanmātra and the vocal organ, the process is reversed in hearing with prāṇa and manas working to reintegrate the grossa differentiations of the sphoṭa pattern at

the ear/ākāśa level into the less differentiated vibration patterns of the śabda tanmātra, organ of hearing, manas and ahaṁkāra. As the more integrated heights of madhyamā vāk are realized, the overall preponderance of sattva in the sphoṭa vibration pattern correspondingly increases until a clearer perception of the unified sphoṭa occurs. A criterion description of madhyamā in its purest form is offered by the Yoga analysis of savicāra or meditative samādhi. Although the savicāra sattva is so transparent that the artha seems to stand clearly revealed, there is still the obscuring distortion of vikalpas of time, place and causation present. Characteristics associated with the hearing of the ākāśa atoms (e.g., dialect, speed of speaking, gross emotional colorations by voice timbre, etc.) will have virtually all dropped away in the savicāra citta. The influence of saṅketa saṁskāras, while not entirely absent, will be greatly reduced. Far more powerful will be the intensifying of the artha aspect of the sattva citta due to the magnet-like attraction exerted by the pure saṁskāra series of the buddhitattva sphoṭa upon the "approaching" and integrating manifestation of the sphoṭa pattern within the listener's citta.

- b. At the high level of paśyanti vāk, the hearer's citta becomes so purified and sattva dominated that it is transparent like a crystal which can take on the colour of the object itself. In this transparent citta the pure saṁskāra series of the buddhitattva sphoṭa (in which the individual buddhis of both the speaker and the hearer are grounded) and the approaching and integrating pattern of the heard phonemes merge into a perfectly fitting (yogatā) super-imposition upon one another resulting in a shining forth of prajñā. The gross dualism of vaikhari cognition and the subtle dualism of madhyamā are transcended as the noumenal perception or pratibhā of the vākya sphoṭa is realized. This is the paśyanti (the seeing one) into which all sequence is merged, and, though it is one, still has the power to produce sequence within it.

Since the above Yoga interpretation includes all of the tenets contained in the conclusion of Part One, it seems clear that the Sphoṭa theory of language as revelation is both logical and psychologically

possible.

Regarding the two claims made by Bhartrhari -- (1) that language is a means for mokṣa, and (2) that the śabdabhāvanā (i.e., the residual use of words in previous lives), with which every child is born, is somehow transformed into the knowledge of a particular language as the child grows up -- and which were found in the conclusion of Part One as not yet having received elucidation so as to show forth their logical consistency, the following comments can be offered. Concerning Bhartrhari's unexplained assumption that language via śabdapūrvayoga is a means for the realization of mokṣa, the Yoga interpretation of śabdapūrvayoga in terms of the yogāṅgas was found to provide a psychological description of how such a sphoṭa mokṣa realization is experiencable. Therefore, from the psychological analysis at least, Bhartrhari's assumption regarding śabdapūrvayoga has received support and detailed elucidation in the above Yoga interpretation. However, Bhartrhari's conception of śabdabhāvanā as somehow providing for the development of language in a child still remains somewhat of a mystery after the Yoga interpretation. Yoga psychology provides for vāsanās of saṅketa as being innate in the new born infant, but no real explanation seems to be offered as to how these potentialities for conventional word usage develop into the language of adults. Oblique reference is simply made to observation of usage of the elders. Consequently, this particular aspect of Sphoṭa theory (i.e., how a child achieves knowledge of the language community into which he is born) is judged to be lacking in the elucidation of both its logical consistency and its psychological possibility.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to clearly describe the Sphota theory of language showing both its logical consistency and its psychological basis in experience. In Part One the philosophical task of describing the Sphota theory in a reasonable and logically consistent manner was undertaken. Chapter Two established the ground for this philosophical analysis by presenting a conceptual survey of Indian thought regarding language and revelation, so as to make clear the metaphysical background against and out of which the Sphota theory of language as revelation developed. The Third Chapter carried out the actual philosophical task, namely, a description of the logical consistency of the Sphota theory itself. In Part Two of the study a psychological interpretation was offered showing how, according to traditional Indian Yoga, the Sphota view of language (as logically conceived) is practically possible. The psychological interpretation was developed in two steps. In Chapter Four, attention was focused on the psychological processes that take place within the mind of the speaker showing how the Sphota can cognize itself into the two aspects of uttered sounds and inner meaning. Following through the practical experience of language communications, Chapter Five analyzed the psychological processes that occur within the mind of the hearer in his cognition of the

uttered sounds and their correlate revelation of the same meaning-whole or sphota from which the speaker originally began. In this concluding Chapter, a brief summary of the major Sphota tenents found to be both logically consistent and psychologically experienceable is offered in section one; and in section two special implications of the psychological findings for the philosophical aspects of Sphota theory are discussed. Section three examines some general implications of these findings and indicates possibilities for further study.

I. SUMMARY OF MAJOR SPHOTA TENENTS FOUND TO BE BOTH LOGICALLY CONSISTENT AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY EXPERIENCEABLE

The following is a summary of those Sphota tenents that have been found to be both logically consistent (see the conclusion of Part One) and psychologically experienceable (see the conclusion of Part Two).

The primary unit of language is the sphota or meaning-whole which exists a priori within consciousness as an intertwined unity of cognition and word, and constantly seeks to manifest itself in speech. The a priori existence of the sphotas within consciousness or citta occurs via Īśvara's universal sattva which beginninglessly maintains the word-forms or meanings of the Veda as akliṣṭa saṃskāra series. These sattva saṃskāra series provide a psychological process by which the sphotas become and continue as vṛttis or states within

consciousness. Such a noumenal sphota is further described as a concentrated insight (prajñā) which does not fluctuate or require any other supporting object (ālambana) since it is itself the eternal universal essence upon which all language manifestations depend. This primary vākya-sphota phenomenalizes into padas and phonemes because there is a potentiality to burst forth into disclosure (sphuṭ) within the sphota. In the Yoga view it is the rajas guna which provides, in its individuation of citta, the inner energy (kratu) or instinctive basis of speech. In its individuation of the buddhitattva through the ahaṁkāra, rajas produces the subject-object distinction that characterizes the expression of the sphota in its two aspects of word-sound (dhvani) and word-meaning (artha). The mind or antah-karṇa, in its buddhi function, contains the saṁskāras of both the arthas and the dhvanis -- vocalization patterns from previous lives which, in the case of all except the great ṛsis, are tainted by habits of impure word use (avidyā). In its ahaṁkāra function the antah-karṇa has the first awareness of the universal artha or meaning as its own cognition, and the concomitant awareness of the forming of that artha into inner speech (madhyamā vāk) or dhvani. These dhvanis are psychologically composed by the interaction of the vibrant śabda tanmātra with the organ of speech according to the magnet-like pattern imposed by the collateral artha. In order for the śabda tanmātra to be so patterned, the speech organ acts as variable filter (in accordance with the vāsanās of vocalization patterns from previous lives) which, together with

the magnetic-like pattern of the artha, limits and shapes the vibrancy of the śabda tanmātra so as to produce the dhvani. The psychomotor coordination for this complex cognitive activity is provided by the manas and the prāṇas. In Yoga theory the individuating process is described as a continuum so that even at the level of madhyamā vāk the initial gross manifestations of dhvani will be minutely present. Speaking aloud or vaikharī vāk requires only that the processes of the thought-out sentence be given an increase of prāṇa (involving psychomotor activities such as the action of the diaphragm in driving the śabda tanmātra in its gross ākāśa form through the speech organ) until the gross (nāda) articulation of the phonemes occurs. Thus, as interpreted according to Yoga psychology, Sphoṭa theory is seen to provide both a logical and experienceable explanation of meaningful speaking. But can the hearing and understanding of this uttered meaning by another (a listener) also be explained?

In the case of hearing, the particular phoneme sequence of the whole utterance (sphoṭa) approaches the ear as air (ākāśa) modulations. The sattvic aspect of the hearing organ begins with the hearing of the first phoneme, to approximate (vibrate in tune with) the total sound pattern sent out by the speaker. This sympathetic vibration, which then travels throughout the citta of the hearer, induces maturation of the same sphoṭa saṃskāra in the buddhi of the hearer. As the subsequent phonemes of the whole spoken pattern strike upon the ear, the sympathetic vibration induced within the hearer's buddhi citta more and more closely approximates the total sound

pattern of the gross ākāśa. With the hearing of the last phoneme, its particular vibration taken together with the vibrations of the preceding phonemes (still active within the buddhi citta by virtue of their self-induced saṃskāras) triggers a recognition (pratibhā) of the inherent vākya-sphoṭa in the listener's buddhi. In this way a complete circle is established from speaker's sphoṭa — uttered phonemes — heard phonemes — perception of the same sphoṭa within the hearer, thereby making the conveyance of meaning via language possible. This Yoga interpretation supports the Sphoṭa contention that meaning is communicated, not by a summation of phonemes/padas or their special apūrva-like powers (as Kumārila argued), but by the progressive revelation of the inherent vākya-sphoṭa as the phonemes/padas are uttered. The manifesting of the sphoṭa in the cognition of the hearer is a process of perception rather than inference — a process of progressively clearer sphoṭa perceptions in response to the heard phonemes and padas, the first having the highest error and the last having virtually no error at all. Consequently, as Bhartṛhari suggested, in the hearer's cognition of the sphoṭa there are levels of increasing clearness of perception. At the level of vaikhari vāk there is obscuration of the unitary sphoṭa of the buddhi by the three types of predicate relations (vikalpas) detailed in the Yoga analysis of savitarka samādhi. As the concentrated perception of the sphoṭa is gradually freed from the error of memory, saṅketa and anumāna by the practice of

śabdapūrvayoga, there is a reintegration of the gross differentiations of the sphoṭa pattern at the ear/ākāśa level into the less differentiated vibration patterns of the śabda tanmātra, the organ of hearing, the manas and the ahankāra. As the more integrated heights of madhyamā vāk are realized, the overall preponderance of sattva in the sphoṭa vibration pattern correspondingly increases (with a correlate decrease in rajas and tamas) allowing for an increasingly clearer perception of the sphoṭa. A criterion description of madhyamā vāk in its purest form is offered by the Yoga analysis of savicāra samādhi in which the artha seems to stand clearly revealed yet there is still the obscuring distortion of vikalpas of time, place and causation present. At the high level of paśyantī vāk, the hearer's citta becomes so purified and sattva dominated that it is transparent like a crystal which can take on the color of the object itself. In this transparent citta the pure saṃskāra series of the buddhitattva sphoṭa (in which the individual buddhis of both the speaker and hearer are grounded) and the approaching and integrating pattern of the heard phonemes/padas merge into a perfectly fitting (yogatā) super-imposition upon one another resulting in a flash of intuition or prajñā. It is the nirvicāra samādhi in which all notions of time, place and causality disappear and the antah-karṇa becomes one with the sattvic sphoṭa. This is the noumenal perception or pratibhā of the vākya-sphoṭa. It is the paśyantī or "seeing one" into which all sequence is merged,

and, though it is one, still has the power (via the rajas guṇa) to again produce sequence from within itself.

Since the above description includes all of Bhartrhari's major tenets relating to the question of how language conveys meaning, it is the conclusion of this study that the Sphoṭa theory of language as revelation is both logically consistent and (when interpreted by Yoga) psychologically realizable in practical experience. Let us now examine the implications of this finding.

II. SPECIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION FOR THE PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF SPHOTA THEORY

Although Bhartrhari clearly assumes the practical possibility of, and necessity for, the purification of one's vāk,¹ he does not describe the process required but simply designates it as śabdapūrvayoga.² Consequently, the conclusion of the philosophical analysis (Part One) was that this aspect of Sphoṭa theory required further elucidation. A possible elucidation is found in the description of śabdapūrvayoga in terms of Patañjali's yogāṅgas, presented in the psychological interpretation of Sphoṭa theory (Part Two). Some clear understanding of śabdapūrvayoga is especially

¹ Bhartrhari, op. cit., pp. 135-142.

² Ibid., pp. 145-146.

important if BHārtrhari is correct in his observation that in many people, due to poor word usage in this and their previous lives, the divine, vāk (which exists in its pristine state as the pure saṁskāra series of Īśvara's sattva) has become badly mixed up with corrupt word forms.³ And since both the divine and the corrupt word-forms are being handed down in our vāsanās,⁴ some means of purifying one's vāk is required in order to avoid being trapped forever in the ignorance (avidyā) of the vaikharī level of speech. In the psychological interpretation, it was found that Patañjali's Yoga when taken up to the nirvicāra stage of samprajñāta samādhi (but not beyond since BHārtrhari's sphoṭa, by definition, does not admit of an unseeded or asamprajñāta samādhi) provides a psychological discipline which seems to fit well with BHārtrhari's assumption of śabdapūrvayoga as a means for purifying vāk. Śabdapūrvayoga effects this purification by the removal of obstructing vāsanās, through the practice of the yogāṅgas, so as to allow the teleology of citta (given by the grace of Īśvara) to pass naturally into the noumenal state of the attainment of true knowledge.

While all of the yamas were seen to have importance for śabdapūrvayoga, the practice of satya or truthfulness was found to command special attention. Since the function of speech is to communicate one's own understanding to others, it must contain no

³ Vākyapadīya, op. cit., I: 153-4.

⁴ Ibid., I: 155.

illusion nor should it create illusion in others if it is true speech. Of the niyamas, the practice of svādhyāya (the recital of texts which lead to release, and the repetition of the praṇava) and Īśvarapraṇidhana (devotion to Īśvara) were seen to have special importance for the śabda yogin. At its more meditative levels (i.e. madhyamā and paśyantī) the śabdapūrvayoga requirements for a reduction in gross prāṇa and an internalization of concentration were found to be fostered by the three coordinated practices of āsana (stable body posture), prāṇāyāma (regulation of respiration) and pratyāharā (withdrawal of senses). The final three yogāṅgas (the direct aids to samādhi) were interpreted in terms of śabdapūrvayoga as follows. Dhāraṇā was found to be the fixed concentration of citta upon the artha or word-meaning of the sphoṭa. Dhyāna was described as the mental effort (pratyaya) to clearly perceive the sphoṭa -- the continuation of the fixed concentration upon the artha with no intrusion of distracting citta-vṛttis during this period of meditation. Samādhi or trance concentration was found to occur when dhyāna transcends its dualistic experience of sphoṭa as dhvani and artha and attains the unitary perception of the sphoṭa which characterizes the pratibhā of the paśyantī level of vāk. This pratibhā level of śabdapūrvayoga was characterized as a direct intuition -- a knowing by becoming one with the object. In such a samādhi state, the śabda yogin's citta becomes so purified that the prajñā ultimately obtainable is pure knowledge of the sphoṭa. This

nirvicāra samādhi, which is Patañjali's highest samprajñāta stage, was described as equivalent to Bhartṛhari's viśiṣṭophita or highest pratibhā.⁵ It is the same process by which the ṛsis perceive the Vedas, but, unlike the more ordinary śabda yogin, the great sages are said to have been able to directly perceive the noumenal sphoṭa without having to go through the śabdapūrvayoga process of purifying errors. The prajñā or knowledge revealed by the direct perception of the sphoṭa was found to give both true knowledge of the word and power to act in accordance with that knowledge. Through both of these knowledge capacities, the pratibhā perception of sphoṭa was found to provide the means for mokṣa realization. In more technical psychological fashion this paśyantī purification was described as follows. When the śabda yogin remains in the concentrated insight of the nirvicāra state, the ongoing impact of this insight or prajñā upon citta effectively restricts the emergence of any negative saṃskāras. By such śabdapūrvayoga, any remaining obstacles are removed and the inherent telos within citta manifests itself in mokṣa — oneness with Śabdabrahman. At the lower levels of vaikharī and madhyamā, however, the correct use of words through practices such as satya and svādhyāya were described as making possible clear verbal communication, and helping to produce spiritual merit (dharma) which leads to the attainment of abhyudaya or happiness here and beyond.

⁵ Vākyapadīya, op. cit., II: 152.

As a result of the above findings, it is concluded that Bhartrhari's assumption of śabdapūrvayoga, as a practical means for purifying one's vāk, is both reasonable and psychologically experienceable (when interpreted by Yoga theory). This is an important finding since the Sphota theory, as conceived by Bhartrhari, indicates clearly that the purifying of vāk by śabdapūrvayoga is not only the shortest path to the realization of mokṣa,⁶ but aids all other branches of knowledge in their use of correct words which convey meaning.⁷ In Chapter One it was suggested that the importance of śabdapūrvayoga had not received due emphasis in recent discussions of the Sphota theory. The above findings indicate the necessity of giving śabdapūrvayoga its rightful and important place in future discussions of Sphota theory.

The other unexplained assumption which was made by Bhartrhari, namely, that the śabdabhāvanā with which every child is born is somehow transformed into the knowledge of a particular language as the child grows up, was found by both the philosophical and psychological analysis to be lacking elucidation. Further study on this problem by Sphota scholars is therefore indicated.

⁶Ibid., I:12 and 16.

⁷Ibid., I:14.

III. SOME GENERAL IMPLICATIONS INDICATING POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER STUDY

It was noted in Chapter One that recent studies by scholars such K. Kunjunni Raja⁸ have suggested some common parallels between the Sphoṭa theory and contemporary schools of Western psychology. These comparative comments were seen to have been based upon a psychological evaluation of Sphoṭa theory which, although assumed by Bhartṛhari, had not yet been made explicit. It was therefore suggested that for such comparative psychological comments to have any value in the East-West dialogue, the assumed psychological aspects of the Sphoṭa theory would have to be clearly set forth. As the present study has made an attempt to do this, it can perhaps be said that a better basis now exists for the making of such comparisons. Tentative steps were in fact taken in this direction in each of the "general comments sections" which were offered throughout the psychological analysis of Chapters Four and Five. But before proceeding boldly in this direction it is well to remember Professor Arapura's warning that in any dialogue between the Eastern and Western spheres of the spirit, "It is most difficult to differ significantly while it is easy to resemble non-significantly; there is much to learn from the former and very little from the latter."⁹

⁸ Indian Theories of Meaning, op. cit.

⁹ Religion as Anxiety and Tranquility, op. cit., p. 117.

The present author is in agreement with both this dictum and its necessary corollary that before one is in a position to differ significantly one must have first thoroughly thought through the phenomena under consideration, as it exists within each tradition.

As a first step in understanding the Indian view of language and revelation, this study of Sphoṭa theory in both its philosophical and psychological aspects has been undertaken. Since the conclusion of this study supports the Sphoṭa view as being both logically consistent and psychologically experienceable, one's attention is naturally drawn to the differing analysis (within the Indian tradition) of the way in which words convey meaning. In the Brāhmanical tradition itself, the more generally accepted theory was found to be that of the revered Upavarśa who held language to be eternal and inherently expressive of meaning, but differed with the Sphoṭa theory in maintaining that the meaning resulted from a "summation" of the phonemes and not from a pre-existing and unseen sphoṭa. The philosophic aspect of this viewpoint was well represented by Kumārila in his debate with Maṇḍana Miśra. Śaṅkara, and others were found to support Upavarśa's philosophical position, and, according to the brief indications given by John Woodroffe, Tantra thinkers have made some progress in making it psychologically explicable.¹⁰ Yet no comprehensive analysis of Upavarśa's position, including both

¹⁰ See for example, Śakti and Śākta, op. cit., pp. 501-504.

the philosophical and psychological aspects, seems to be available. Such an analysis, therefore, seems to be indicated as the next step for further study within the Brahmanical tradition of the Indian spiritual sphere.

Although several indications of both support and difference between Western psychology and Sphota theory have been commented upon in this study, the author is very much aware that a further thinking through of Western psychology of language is required before significant East-West dialogue can take place on this topic within his own thinking. A first step in this direction could well be a more detailed reading of those modern Western studies seeming to indicate support and/or difference. As was noted at several points in this thesis, the psychology of C. G. Jung not only attempts to relate itself to Eastern thought, but also seems to share the Sphota/Yoga view that consciousness may be characterized as matter, energy, personal, collective and possessing inherent knowledge potential within itself (archetypes). Yet in spite of these obvious similarities, Jung's thought seems to differ significantly from Eastern psychology in that whereas Jung (in typically modern fashion) seeks to realize the knowledge inherent in consciousness by individuating it or appropriating it to the self-conscious ego, Yoga (in typically Eastern fashion) seeks to realize the knowledge inherent in consciousness by appropriating the self-conscious ego to that knowledge (the universal truth). While Jung, and contemporary psychology in general, seeks to experience truth in an integrated

fashion within the context of the personal ego, Eastern Yoga aims at transcending the finite limitations of the personal ego so that union with the universal truth can be realized. In view of these apparent similarities and differences between Jung and Yoga, further study is indicated so that a more significant dialogue and comparison can be undertaken.

The observation was also made, at various points throughout the general comments of Part Two, that several Western empirical psychologists in their analysis of language are evidencing concepts close to some of those which characterize Sphota theory. The experimental finding of Werner and Kaplan that both phonemes and material objects seem to possess an inherent expressiveness, and that this expressiveness is somehow basic to word meaning -- this finding is suggestive of the Brāhmanical view that *vāk* is inherently expressive of meaning. Others such as James, Pribram and Piaget were seen to perhaps approach the idea of a *sphota* in their theorizing that consciousness must contain some kind of structuring mechanism which integrates incoming stimuli so that a whole meaning results. This idea of some kind of central mechanism within consciousness also appears to occupy some importance in the recent Western discussion centered on Chomsky's notion of universal grammatical structures as being innate within the mind.¹¹ However, all of these current Western approaches appear to be significantly different

¹¹ Noam Chomsky, Language and Mind. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968, p. 76.

from the Sphota view in that whereas their central mechanisms or structures seem to be neutral (in terms of meaning content), the sphota is conceived of as being the very essence of meaning. From Sphota theory the pertinent question for modern Western psychological theories would seem to be "How can you have a non-meaningful or neutral structure when the very function of structuring or programing incoming stimuli necessarily assumes the pre-existence of a meaning-whole -- otherwise the structuring would occur on a basis of pure chance?" As is the case with a computer programme, the organizing programme or structure must itself possess a meaning logic, which is the essential element enabling the incoming stimuli to be processed into a meaningful result. This dialogue promises to be exciting and to involve issues of real significance in relation to language and revelation.

Although further comparative study between Jung's psychology and Yoga would be of interest, it seems likely that the most important comparative study of language and revelation will come from a depth dialogue between the modern empirical psychologists (such as Piaget and American scientific psychology) and the Sphota theory on the specific question, "How do words convey meaning?" It is on this comparative study that the author intends to focus his attention next. A beginning point for such a dialogue is outlined in the preceding paragraph. But before continuing the comparative discussion, a detailed study of the debate on language currently going on within empirical psychology needs to be undertaken. Thus, there is much work to be done before the author is in a position to dialogue

significantly within his own thinking between the spheres of the spirit. From the author's point of view, however, the task seems eminently worth pursuing in the hope of achieving a better understanding of the felt divine unity of language and knowledge (so strongly championed by the Indian Sphota theorists) in the face of its serious modern challenges.

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