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THE QUESTION OF TIME AND THE TIMELESS

Loka and Svarga: Spacial Conception of Time.

Dālabhya, Silaka and Pravāhana decide to discuss *Udgitha* in a place suitable for meditation.¹ With Dālabhya's permission, Silaka formulates a question: What is the ground of *Udgitha*? Dālabhya responds by saying that the ground of *Udgitha* is sound, which is grounded in breathing (*prāna*)—breathing in food (*anna*)—food in water which in turn has *svarga* (heaven) as its ground. *Svarga* is the nebulous world where gods, among other things, attain an object just by desiring it, that plane of existence where *wishing* is *having*. Honest to the Upanishadic manner of “seeing” through “talking”, the persistent Silaka reformulates the question this way: What is the ground of *svarga*? Dālabhya advises him to stop there, for *svarga* is a state higher than which there is nothing; it is the limit of the wishes of man insofar as he is a wishing being. Instead of raising questions as to its ground, one should worship *svarga*.

But Silaka feels uncomfortable with Dālabhya's confident confusion between mere assertion and a reasonably established position. Silaka compares Dālabhya with a discussant who, out of chagrin, says “The opponent's head will fall”, “and then claims that “The opponent's head has in fact fallen”.² Charged with mistaking emotion with a reasonable claim, Dālabhya, somewhat contrary to his taste, raises a philosophical question: What is the ground of *svarga*? Silaka responds by claiming that earth (*prthvi*-

1. Sharma, Shriram, *Chandogya Upanisad*, (Veda Nagar: Sanskriti Samsthana, 1972). p. 42. (all citations from Upanishads refer to this edition.)

2. *ibid.*, p. 43.

loka) is the ground of all that exists, that the world has nothing other than itself for its ground, that the being and meaning of *svarga* is maintained by sacrifices done on earth. In another place, *Chandogya* (5.17.1-2) is more expressive of this idea. Here Asvapati asks Uddālaka: Which Atman do you worship? Uddālaka says that he worships earth. Asvapati is pleased to hear this because such a worship brings power, fame and prosperity. But then he adds, "Earth is nothing but steps of Atman. Had you not come to me, you would have become lame".³ The word "*prthvi*" generally signifies earth as a planet. But Asvapati is making a shift from the natural to the historical, for he is saying that not to take earth as *steps* of Atman is to become lame. The world, therefore, is not a geographical place but a situation, not a surface one walks *on* but the *walking* itself of a conscious being. The world is a temporality of persons in relations, and the ground of this temporality, as we shall subsequently see, is the pleasure of being an I. It is this mode of man's being in the world (*loka*) that is the ground of gods and their *svarga*: Gods in heaven are the symbolic revelation of the face of "This I am". To ground the world in gods' *svarga*, Silaka implies, is to put the cart before the horse; it is the argument of those who desire freedom from death without willing to free themselves from life.

Pravāhana, who has been watching with amusement, thinks that Silaka's conclusion is incomplete by its own logic. He now joins the discussion this way: What is the ground of the Silaka's world? His rationale for raising the question is this: All that exists in the world involves the contingency of non-existence before and after its real existence. Existence in the world is "cooked by three times". Space, says Pravāhana, is the ground of existence subject to past, present and future; it is *that* from which things emerge, in which they endure and to which they return. What Pravāhana is suggesting is that the ground of being in time is Being that transcends time: *lokasya gātiratyakāsa iti-hovācha*.⁴ The word used for ground is "*gatih*" which, when taken literally, means "going is knowing" (*gati=gamana=jñāna*). Philosophically this signifies that the meaning (*Purusārtha*) of being in time is to remove our forgetfulness of the timeless Being.

3. *ibid.*, 5,17,1-2 p. 137.

4. *Chandogya*, p. 44.

5. *Akasa Sariram Brahma... santi samrdhamamrtam, Taittiriya*, p. 149.

Let us recall that our "seers" talk in metaphors. The symbol for the "timeless" is space which in turn is equated with Being: *Brahman Kham Brahmeti. Loka* symbolizes time, which furnishes the context of the talk about time and the timeless. The movement of their discourse is very interesting. It takes place in the world and goes to the gods and their heaven. Then the world of gods is sought to be rooted in the world of man which, in turn, culminates in space symbolizing Brahman. The problem of time and the timeless, we claim, is disclosed in the movement of this discourse. My being in the world involves the predicament of not being able to be after having been; it is a fundamental refusal of ceasing to be symbolized by *svarga*—without transcending that mode of existence which happens to be (birth) insofar as it ceases to be (death). The "timeless" signifies the deathless, not in the sense of personal immortality in *svarga*. It is deathless in the sense that the meaning of being in time is to cease to be in time, of conquering death which is to have lived in such a way that one need not be reborn to die again. The word of the timeless Being is: In knowledge I am the experience of self-in-itself; among reals I am space, in events I am the choice of dying.

Thinking on Time

That, however, is the language of Being about itself. It should not be taken literally; for, the timeless Being, as we shall see, cannot think; it has no mind and, honest to itself, it is silence: *Upasānto' yam ātmā*. The very formulation of the question of Being is an activity of the ego (*jiva*) who is faced not only with the crisis of ceasing to exist, but also because of his weariness of being an ego. Thinking about the timeless Being is the fundamental activity of the being in time; it is man alone whose predicament is to think: *nityānitya vastu viveka*.

But thinking is a very vague category. It is determined by that which is thought, the subject who thinks, and the situations which force one to think. Philosophical thinking in India involves, to a large extent, the predicament of not being able to speak of

6. *Vidyānamatma vidyā . . . bhūtanam . . . vyoma tattvanam mṛtyureva ca*, Shri Ram Sharma (ed.), *Kurma Purana*, Vol. II, (Vedanagar, Sanskriti Samsthana), p. 84.

7. *...yatsukhannāparam sukham*, Sankara, *Atmatattva Viveka*, (Varanasi: Chowkhamba, 1973), verse 53, p. 67.

Being because the thinking philosopher is in time and Being is timeless. Hence the manifest confession that Being cannot be described except that it is.

The Upanisadic seers are confident that logic and language start bleeding when they bump against Being: *yato vaco nivarttante aprapya manasa saba*. This accident has something to do with the nature of Being as timeless. For Being is "greater than" what one can think as "greater"; by becoming Being one transcends existence in terms of "more than". Being transcends those conditions given which one can say "better than"; it devalues not only the notions of good and evil but the very world in which one needs to be ethical (*dharmā*). Being as timeless is deathless; it is freedom from the temporal circularity (*samsāra*) whose structure is such that one is born to be reborn.⁸ Being is the overcoming of man's will to be; it involves freedom of dying from a point of no return. This point of no return is made possible by realizing through *purusārtha* that to exist infinitely as an ego is the greatest disease. Being is that by "seeing" which there is nothing else to be "seen".⁹ Being is *akhanda*; it is neither a class nor a proper name. It is not like the being of "X" (cow) which is what it is said to be insofar as it belongs to its class "Y" (cowness). Nor is Being like the being of "X" (individual cow) which excludes all other Xs by virtue of its being and "X" and in spite of the fact that its "Y" (cowness) inheres in it.¹⁰ Being, again, does not signify the epistemological mode of being. It is not an object "X" to be determined as "X" by a cognitive subject in terms of some conditions which make possible the validity of its being cognitively claimed. Being cannot cognize (not a *pramata*); it is not an object of cognition (*prameya*) and it, of course, is not a cognitive experience. Being is All. To add something to it involves self-contradiction; to subtract something from it, is impossible. It knows nothing, does nothing, loves nothing.¹¹ Being is ontological stillness. Philosophy is an argument to return to this stillness, a return made possible by doing a reflective anatomy of man's appreciation of and consequent disillusionment from being in time.

8. *yad... bhutva na punarbhavah*, *ibid.*, verse 54, p. 67.

9. *Tiryaguedhvarmadhah purnam...* *ibid.*, verse 55, p. 67.

10. *Atadvyarttirupena... akhandananda mekam yad tad*, *ibid.*, verse 56, p. 68.

11. *Niskryatve ca sarvatra karirtvabhvah*, Vascaspati Misra *Tattvakau-mudi*, (Varanasi: Chowkhamba, 1971), p. 295.

For this reflective thinking, the reality of Being is relatively less important; what is more important is the *question* of Being, that is to say, what is philosophically interesting is the authentic ego (*jijnāsu*) to whom the question of Being has become as much of an emergency as "putting out fire in his beard". This authentic ego has realized that man is older than the world, that man is more than what the "three worlds" have to offer. Arjuna raises the question of Being not because he cannot have the world; he asks this question insofar as his problem is that he *can have* the world. The Buddha's problem is not just seeing—as we all do—an old man; it is his perception that the man has will to walk in spite of his physical inability to do so. Nachiketa, symbol of the most authentic ego, goes to the God of death (*Yama*) not to live infinitely; his being in time has been precisely that. He does so because of his weariness with existence in recurrence, his hermeneutical immanence. This hermeneutical immanence is *samsara*, the modality man's being in time which seeks fulfilment but ends with emptiness.

Yama asks Nachiketa to "wake up and to see Being that is concealed in and through his own embodied-being. Not to do so is to go from death to death."¹² Yama is requesting Nachiketa to see that the timeless Being is concealed in his own existence "cooked by three times;" that the deathless is nowhere else than the being that dies. Being, adds Yama, is not in another world; the other world, including that of the gods, is not better than this world. One who seeks Being need not go to another world; *na lokottara gamanam*. Instead of hearing a transcendental word, the proposal is to look into one's own "going" in the world: *na tasya pranah utkramanti*.¹³

This discourse between Yama and Nachiketa is significant for two reasons. One, it formulates the most fundamental problem of Indian philosophy, and that is the problem of the timeless Being and the being in time (*jiva*). Secondly, it provides the technique of reflective meditation as a methodological paradigm to deal with this problem. The claim of Yama is that the question of Being is the question of one's own being; that the question of the timeless is really the question of what it means to

12. *Uttistha jagrat prapya varannibodhata, Katha, 1, 13, 14, p. 78.*

13. *Tamatmastham y'nupasyanti dhirah. Katha, 2, 12, p. 86.*

be in time. The condition of being in time is to be embodied, and it is this embodied being (*jiva*) that is the "house of Being": *asminbrahmapure daharam pundarikam*.¹⁴ It should be noted that in Indian philosophy a frequently used methodology of doing ontology is etymology. The etymological meaning of the word *Purusa* (Being), is that which 'sleeps'. Where it sleeps is the embodied being, the human person.¹⁵ Being, since it transcends the consciousness of now and then, is timeless; the embodied being is a recurring back in search of its fulfilment. This quest of one's own being through temporal recurrence is compared with someone looking for a missing necklace, although it is lying on one's neck all the while.¹⁶ Man's being in time is forgetfulness of Being. Since the solution of a problem is in a place where the problem is, philosophy (Indian) as a reflective thinking has been and it can only be, of the embodied being and his body. Pure consciousness can have no problem: a disembodied being is not known to think. Reflective thinking begins with body (*sarira*), grows with body; it, of course, stops with body. Body is the modality of being in terms of "I" and "mine": *aham-mameti*. It is mediated existence as well as the principle of meditation; it is the situation of being problematic as well as the possibility of thinking. Body, therefore, is *linga*, that which conceals Being and lets Being revealed through its "going" in time: *Lingayati jñāpyati iti lingam*.¹⁷ Body is the hermeneutical heritage of the transcendental ego (*jiva*) which is a meta-psychological will to be; body is the situation of pleasure and pain, of good and evil in terms of this will in action.¹⁸ (In the etymology of body is involved an ontology) "Deha" is that whose structure is temporal (*samsarana*); it is the medium of non-Being. It is that which is dissolved with the realization that "I am the Being who sleeps in the body."¹⁹

14. *Asmin Brahmapure daharam pundarikam, Chandogya*, 8, 1, 1, p. 186.

15. *Puram sariram tasmin sete iti purusah, Kaumudi*, p. 163; also *tadapi puri sthulasarire sete iti, ibid.*, p. 229.

16. *Griyasthagraiveyaka, Vedanta Sara*, p. 34.

17. *Lingyate jñāpyate pratyatmasadbhava ebhiriti ceti lingani, lingani ca tani sarirani ceti lingasarirani, Vedanta Sara* p. 69; also *Linganat jñapanat... lingam, Kaumudi*, p. 228.

18. *...Sambhavam karmasanchitam. Sariram sukha-dukhanam bhogayatnamucyate, Atma Tattva Viveka*, verse 23, p. 26.

19. *Aham Brahmasmi iti brahmatmaikatvajanena siryate, ibid.*, p. 35.

Reclaiming Being as One's own being is a task better than which there is nothing: *atmalābhāt paro nā'nyo*. The embodied consciousness (*jiva*), through whose being in time the timeless Being is reclaimed, is a pilgrimage more sacred than which there is nothing. Man's being in time is the pilgrimage of Being; it is an invitation to be timeless and therefore, deathless: *atma-tirtha bhajate... amrto bhavet*.²⁰ Philosophy, the reflective act of disclosing Being in the embodied ego, is a task more difficult than which there is nothing. Since the reflective thinking is the act of the ego, the question of Being as one's own being is as delicate as walking on the edge of a knife: This brings in another etymological meaning of "body" which sheds light on the methodological difficulties in raising the question of the timeless Being and the being in time. Body as *linga* is *Lina*. It means that the embodied ego, whose being is cooked by time, is closed to certain kinds of thinking, and is open only to "listening, meditation and reflection."²¹

Metaphysics and the Content of Time

The thinking to which the problem of being embodied is closed, is metaphysics. The question that immediately arises is this: What is metaphysics, and how precisely does it fail to disclose the timeless Being and the being in time? To this we say that metaphysics is a methodology of making ontological claims: *pramānaib, arthapariksanam*. It establishes the existence on non-existence of X insofar as it could be methodologically claimed.²² The phrase "methodologically claimed" signifies cognitively claimed; limit of being is the limit of cognitively claimed being.²³ Metaphysics reduces thinking to a methodology of intelligible assertions, of seeing and showing that those assertions are valid. It claims that sick forms of life are caused by sick forms of understanding.

Let us see what this metaphysical thinking has to say about the embodied being (*jiva*) "cooked" by three times. It is interesting that it raises the question of ego and time *after* establishing the methodology of making cognitive claims and the conditions

20. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

21. *Linamartham gamayati vyupateya lingam sariramityucyate. sravanamananadina gamayati jnapayati, Atmatattva Viveka*, p. 35.

22. *Satsca sadbhavosatasca sadbhavah, Nyayadarsanam*, p. 3.

23. *Pariksitani pramanani premayadinam pariksyate, ibid.*, p. 293.

which justify the validity of such claims.²⁴ The rationale of this structural arrangement is to show that the embodied being and time are object of cognition (*prameya*)—to claim that their existence can be cognitively established and that such claims are valid. It finds phenomena such as “I know,” “I see,” “I do” philosophically interesting, and thinks that it is important to methodologically establish the existence of the substantive “I”. Not having extension, magnitude and colour, the substantive “I” does not satisfy the conditions of perceptibility. It, therefore, is not a perceptual object. Nevertheless, the “I” is inferred to exist because the conscious activity of knowing exists. The metaphysician finally succeeds in establishing the substantive “I” by equating the “I know” with “I know therefore I exist”. He is not interested in what it means for the “I” to exist; he is interested in how the “I” could methodologically be demonstrated to exist.²⁵

So is the case with time. The primary interest of the metaphysician is not what it means to be in time; he is interested in cognizability and therefore the methodological demonstrability of the existence of time. Not having extensions, taste or colour, time is not a perceptual object. The metaphysician is quick to add that we do not perceive time the way we perceive a cow. There is no experience of empty time; it is always perceived as qualifying an object, action or event.²⁶ Since there is no distinct perception of time apart from objects and events, can we say that there is no time apart from objects and events? No, says the metaphysician. His argument is that not being independently perceived does not amount to the denial of the substantive time. Time, indeed, is not distinctly perceived, but it is involved in the objects of perceptual experience. When I say “I am doing this,” what I mean is that “I am doing this now.” When I say “I did it” what is meant is “I did it in some time, day or night, yesterday or the day before yesterday.”²⁷ In so arguing, the metaphysician makes the following two claims. One, “there are no objects, or events that are not in time,” that time accounts for the “was,” “is” and

24. ...*taccatmadityatma vivicyate, ibid.*, p. 293.

25. *Darsanasparshanabhyamekartham grahanat, ibid.*, p. 295.

26. *Kalo na svatantryenendriyaiṅgrhyate. Athasca visayesu svesu grhyamanesu tadvisesanataya sarvairapindriyaiṅgrhyate tadvat, Parthasarathirisra, Sastradipika*, (Benares: Samvat, 1964), p. 554.

27. *Atitadi vyavahara hetu kalah—sa caiko vibhūnityasca*, Vagiswara Sukla, *Padartha Vijnanam* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba, 1965), p. 20.

“will be” in regard to actions, objects and events. Secondly, the distinction of past, present and future does not signify three times; they are parts of a whole which, although distinct from its parts, inheres in them. Just as space is posited as the inherent cause of sound to be inferred on the ground that there is sound, so also there is substantive time which is the inherent cause of events and change. To establish the existence of such a substantive time, phenomena such as “X was done late,” “X happened earlier,” “X and Y happened simultaneously,” etc. serve as *linga*.²⁸

Linga is the Sanskrit equivalent of the reasoning signified by the term “therefore”. Its standard concern is this: What conditions must be fulfilled in the light of which we can validly draw a conclusion. *Linga* is a cognitive category to validly arrive at the knowledge of X as possessing Y by virtue of Z in X so that Z is uniformly correlated with Y.²⁹ The metaphysician takes the ego as distinct from its body and time from what happens in it. Since both ego and time do not satisfy his criterion of perceptibility, he uses *linga* as an inferential category to make claims such as “I know therefore, I exist,” “events happen therefore time exists.”

We are not interested in the validity of such claims. What we are interested in is the fact that the metaphysician makes such claims. It is this epistemological use of the term *linga* that misses the ego whose mode of being in time is forgetfulness of Being, and Being which “sleeps” precisely in the mode of being an ego. Our claim is that *linga* is an ontological category. It signifies the situation of being embodied where Being lies underground and which, at the same time, is the *jiva's* horizontal history in search of Being: *ūparyupari san cranto...*³⁰ *Linga* is the man's being in the world, a tragedy of man's walking over what he is walking for: *nibita-maksetrajña*. Another word that helps to comprehend the ontology of the word *linga* is “satyam”. The letter *s* symbolizes the deathless, *t* stands for the being that dies, and *yam* signifies the meeting point of the two.³¹ Similarly, *linga* signifies the meeting of time and the timeless.

28. *Aparasaminnaparam yugapat ciram ksipramiti kalalingani*, Dhundhiraja Shastri (ed.), *Vaisesika-Sutropaskarah*, (Varanasi: Chowkhamba, 1969), p. 160.

29. *Nityatvam vyapaktvam sahacaryam nama samanadhikaranam, Parartha Vijñanam*, p. 56.

30. *Chandogya*, 8,3,2, p. 191.

31. *Trinyaksarani satiyamiti tadyatsattadamrtamatha yatti... ibid.*, p. 191.

Time in Encounter with Death

Let us now recall Nachiketa's going to Yama, the God of Death. Whether or not such a god exists is an unimportant question. What is interesting for our purpose is that the story does not send Nachiketa to Brahma or Indra. Who can face death and how important this encounter with one's own non-being is to the question of one's own Being—is the rationale of the story. "Self-knowledge" says Yama, "is very difficult; most of the human beings, and Gods in particular, are simply not prepared for it...The knowledge of Being as one's own (*Atman*) transcends all inferential reasoning; and one cannot comprehend it by hearing about it from others."³² Let us not forget what Yama has to say about the ego whose mode of being is such that Being "sleeps" in it. "Consider the body to be a chariot, the ego as the rider, understanding as the driver, *manas* as the reins, sense organs as horses, and objects as the highways."³³ Yama is not talking a cognitive language. What he is talking about is the anatomy of being an ego. The manner of doing this anatomy is interesting. It does not start from things to consciousness from which the ego is to be inferred as a cognitive subject. That there is no passage from things to consciousness is true; what is no less true is that there is no passage from consciousness to a substantive self. Yama's anatomy of conscious experience avoids these difficulties so hotly debated in classical (Indian) epistemology. Yama's point of departure is the ego with body as the medium through which objects are encountered in due course. He does not take body as an impersonal nervous system; it is a house the 'I' dwells in; *nava dvāre pure dehi*. My body is not only what I just have, it is the means and therefore the limit of all that I can have.³⁴ The sense organs are not no man's horses, not impersonal and passive. They are ruled by understanding and step on objects with loaded intentionalities. Behind these intentionalities is the transcendental ego turning the not yet into no more, appropriating to itself what it is not and consequently its not being any more what it was.

In Yama's scheme, the ego is the existential *a priori* which is opposed to the epistemological *a priori*. To use the expression "a

32. *Sravanyapi bahurbhūyor na labhyah... ananya prokte gatiratra nasti*, *Katha Upanisad*, 1,2,7-8, p. 71.

33. *Atmanam rathinam viddhi...* *Katha*, 1, 3, 3, p. 76.

34. *Ahantam mamatam dehe gehadau ca karoti yah*, *Atama Tattva Viveka*, p. 39.

priori" in its epistemological sense is to ask: "What are the conditions that mind must fulfil in order to account for the fact we know the world and the laws of nature in the way we do."³⁵ Yama's thesis is not to deduce the "I am" from the "I know", nor is it to logically posit the "I" as a transcendental unity to account for cognitive experience. Yama's "I", as existential *a priori*, is *anādi*. That is to say, the ego's being as a subject is presupposed in all mediated experience, that it is the existential condition for the very possibility of mediated existence. The ego is *anādi* in the sense that in its very being it carries the possibility of a world, that the world of mediated experience has to have a representational character because of this I who is incarnate as a subject: *abamkārabhimānasca kartā mantā ca smṛtaḥ*.³⁶ The "I" is not a part of a given world; the world is the problematic of the "I am": *mameti badhyate jantub*.³⁷ Yama's request is not to methodologically deduce the ego from the world; that would be mistaking the symptom for the cause. The world, according to Yama, is a psycho-history of a "Who" whose basic structure is not of a *pramata*, not of the form "I know". Its structure is of a *bhokta*; it is of the form "I am". What Yama is saying is that the cogito is not only rooted in the ego; the cogito cannot establish the ego. Needless to say, Yama is raising a methodological issue with regard to the *question* of the ego as an embodied being and, for that reason, time. A question is not an innocent thing. Its formulation is such that it does not just expect, it is expressive of a claim implying the methodology to arrive at that claim. The metaphysician's concept of a question is to show that it is very important to ask whether there is an ego; his worry is to establish its (ego's) epistemological certitude. The concept of a question of content is inseparable from the question of methodology. The question about the ego is such that through it the ego refers to itself. It is so because "one who is investigated is also in this case the investigator". The question, therefore, does not possess the ego as an inquired object; it is the other way round. A question is inquiry (*jijnāsā*), a seeking possessed by the ego who seeks and whose

35. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith, (London, 1953), B 229.

36. *Atma ca māparō jivo yataḥ sarvaḥ pravṛttayah*, *Kurma Purana*, (Bombay: Shri Venkatesvara Press), 4. 19.

37. *Mameti badhyate jantuh nirmameti vimucyate*, *Paingala Upa*, 4, 26, p. 452; see also: *Ahamiti ankurotpanno mameti skandhavana mahan*, *Markandeya Purana*, (Poona: Ananda Ashram), 38, 6, 18.

being is sought. It is the situation of the rise of the ego as an inquirer (*jijnāsa*). The nature of the question is such that the ego and his life have come to utterance. The form of this life is signified by the phrase—"I am". This "I am" is older than the "I know".

Structure of Embodied Consciousness

So far we have argued two points. One, that the cogito is rooted in the ego, the *pramata* in the *bhokta*. Secondly, through the question about itself the ego encounters itself not as a demonstrable fact but as a presence; not as an epistemological object but as a subject. What is the structure of this ego-subject, and how to deal with it? To this we say that the structure of the ego is temporal, a structure which is revealed to phenomenological reflection on ego's everydayness (*lokavyavahāra*). Wise men distrust, and justifiably declare as madness, the language of the metaphysician who does not raise the unsettled issues of Being and non-being from everyday consciousness.³⁸ Needless to say, it is a proposal to use phenomenology as the methodology of doing ontology. By phenomenology we mean *aryamati*, which signifies the methodology of disclosing Being by looking closely into the structure of one's everyday Being.³⁹ The uniqueness of this phenomenology is that it recognizes the ontological priority of the timeless, but not the priority of the question of Being. It is so because Being is not a problem; it can't have a problem. It cannot be philosophised; it cannot philosophise. Being blissfully "sleeps": *sete is puruṣah*. A disembodied consciousness cannot think; a body without consciousness cannot think either. Phenomenology, therefore, recognizes the priority of the question of the embodied consciousness, and it discovers Being by reflecting on everyday consciousness: *vyakta jñānapūrvakam*.

What is this embodied consciousness in its everydayness? To this our answer is that it is unhappy consciousness. Its structure is its ceasing to be young in order for it to become old; its having to die in order for it to be reborn.⁴⁰ It is a situation of encountering X as painful insofar as it is contrary to our expectations, of encountering Y as pleasant because of its being akin to

38. ...*Preksavadbhirunmattvadupakṣyet, Tattva Kaumudī*, p. 9.

39. ...*Aratyata tattvebhayah itiyarya, ibid.*, p. 309.

40. ...*Daha bhasmi karne iti vyutpattya ca deha bhasmi bhavam prapnoti, Atma Tattva Viveka*, p. 26.

what was expected.⁴¹ Pleasure and pain are not things, nor are they in things. They are experiences. Body is a field of right and wrong, good and evil, pleasant and painful actions; body is *karmaksetra*. Although karmas are manifold and diverse, their structural communality is this: there is no isolated, lonely act; it presupposes a habituated existence and seeks to perpetuate that existence through its occurrence. An action is incarnate disposition, so much so that birth itself is an act of embodiment: *karmabhogi sakāmasca*. Birth is not a biological fact but a will in action; it a dispositional passage inheriting all that has been and promising all that shall be. Birth is the act of having a body, an act of a beginningless will to be: *sarira parigrahana*.⁴² Involved in birth as the act of embodiment is a metaphysical principle called *rāga*. It signifies the thirst for the pleasure of being, it is immanent in the "unlearned" intentionality of consciousness flowing towards objects in order to assert its existence.⁴³ We call it "unlearned," for *rāga* is not something man has acquired after birth; it is in terms of *rāga* that man is born: *sukhatrsnadibhyah*. Birth is not a facticity, not an event without choice. My birth is not a right of my parents; they cannot choose to bring or not to bring me into the world.⁴⁴ Birth is an intentional act of embodiment. But birth and death, act and intentionality are not impersonal phenomena. There is no birth apart from somebody's birth; there is no death apart from somebody's dying. *Rāga* as pleasure of being presupposes the ego whose will it is to be reborn. Two factors constitute the ego's will-to-be. One, the ego is a transcendental ability to say "This is mine." Such an ego can proclaim good and evil, it can renounce the world and walk naked; but it cannot exist in the world without being a subject.⁴⁵ Its mode of being a subject is the condition of its being born and dying, and for its life over-reaching both birth and death: *abantām mamatām debe gebadau ca karoti yah*. The ego's being-in-the

41. ...*cetanasakteh pratikulaveda-niyataya'-bhisambandho'-bhigatatti. Padartha Vijñanam*, p. 114.

42. *Sarira parigrahana kena bhavati? Karmana, Atma Tattva Viveka*, p. 5; also: *Karmana phalam bhunkte jantuh janmani, janmani, Brahmavaivarta Purana*, (Poona: Ananda Ashrama) 1, 18, 32.

43. *Karma kena bhavati? Ragadibhyah, Atma Tattva Viveka*, p. 6.

44. *Ekaki bhavamayati yatyekaki punah punah. Karmana jayate jantuh ... Brahmavaivarta Purana*, 4, 99, 6.

45. *grhaksetrakalatradi... tyaktva'pi na tyatyesa garvaparatamadbhutam*, quoted in *Atma Tattva Viveka*, p. 9.

world is such that it contains with itself its archaeology and eschatology. Archaeology, in so far as it is a creative cycle of its own actions, it is a hermeneutical circle: *janmami janmami jivanam*.⁴⁶ Eschatology, in so far as the consummation of this circularity, symbolically expressed as *svarga* (heaven) involves the crisis of being in time. This crisis discloses the choice of ceasing to exist as an ego which, in effect, is the event of transcending the existential circularity itself: *janmadi rabito bhaved*.⁴⁷

Time and Timeless in Consciousness

Such then is the "I am" which reveals itself to phenomenological reflection. With the help of Samkhya Philosophy, we now propose to show that this "I am" has an ontological dimension, and that in its structure is involved the problem of time and the timeless. It is a proposal to show the rise of this "I am" in and through the passage of Being. Being-itself is *purusa*, a pure consciousness which is unconscious of anything and everything, and therefore not conscious of itself: *asang'o hi ayam purusab*. It is mindless, formless, speechless, relationless stillness; it is an ontological tautology and therefore the antivalue of all values (*purusartha*).⁴⁸ It merely is, a dreamless sleep where there is no night and day, no sense of the day giving way to the night. Then *Prakrti* entered into it and disturbed the *Purusa's* transcendental sleep. It should be noted that *Prakrti* is not nature, it is the principle of Understanding (*Buddhi*). Understanding is not a methodological concept but an ontological act: *mahana srsti vikurute*...⁴⁹ It is a situation of *Prakrti* letting itself be "seen" by Being which, in the act of "seeing" becomes self-conscious.⁵⁰ *Prakrti* in letting itself be "seen", lets Being become visible; its disrupting the plenitude of Being is a profound malady in that it accounts for the upsurge

46. *janmani janmani jivanam sancitanam ca karmanam*, *Devibhagavad*, (Varanasi: Pandit Prakasana), 6, 10, 10.

47. *Purusasya vimokartham pravartate tadvadvyaktam*, *Sankhya Karika*, 58, in *Tattva Kaumudi*, p. 281.

48. ...*samopasita sarvada samastena*, *Chandogyia*, 2, 9, 1, p. 57; also: *Arupam asabdamasparsamarupamavyayam tathrasam nityamagandhavacca yat*, *Katha*, 1,3, 15, p. 78.

49. *Mahanatma to vijneyah sankalpo vyavasayakah*, *Brahmanda Purana*, 4, 3, 21-222, quoted in R.S. Pandya, *Mahabharata Aura Purana Men Samkhya Darsana*, (Delhi: National Publishing House), p. 177.

50. *Pradhanasya sarvakaranasya yaddarsanam Purusena tadartham*, *Tattva Kaumudi*, p. 173.

of "This I am" (*ahanta*),⁵¹ and with that the emergence of the world: *esa yoni sarvasya*.⁵² This malady is *gunaksobha* resulting in the negation by the off-the-guard Being of its timelessness. It is a situation of adumbrating a perspective by seizing a being for which alone objects can exist. This malady is called time: *kalo gunaksobhakah*.⁵³ In the *gunaksobha*, there is primacy of *rajas*, and *rajas* means that which lets something "on the go"; it means "going" for and of Being for the simple reason of its having become a subject: *rajastu kālātaya*.⁵⁴ Put simply, time is the situation of the loss by Being of its timelessness in order for it to be a subject.

This view about time is full of implications. *Kala* as *gunaksobha* signifies not only the loss by Being of its timelessness; it also stands for the disposition (*rāga*) in being to exist as a subject.⁵⁵ It means that time is a subject. Time, therefore, is not a thing, is not in things; things are not in time. In fact there are no things. The so-called things are pleasant and painful objectivities.⁵⁶ Such objectivities presuppose a conscious being, and they emerge to be *had* by the time-subject.

If time is not a thing, it is not a series of moments or events either. There are no events without a conscious being to whom they happen. Time, again, is not a substance in which past, present and future are contained, and with which they are related through the category of inherence (*samavāya*).⁵⁷ Not that something happens *in* the present; rather, the alleged present is the manner of becoming present to something. Present, therefore, is the event of sense-object contact: Behind these sensory-motor functions is the "I" (*ahanta*) whose acts these sensory events—therefore, the present time—are. The being of this "I" is such that everything other than itself is for itself (*bhogyā*); its manner

51. *Abhimano' hamkarah, tasmad... pravartate sargah, Samkhya Karika*, 24, in *Tattva Kaumudi*, p. 184.

52. *Vidyayete sa ca sarvasmin sarvam tasmin ca vidyate, Vayu Purana*, (Poona: Ananda Ashrama), 1, 4, 27-45.

53. *Vṛttanta Vyakhya*, 32, quoted in Shriharana Bhattacharya, *Kala Siddhanta Darsini*, (Calcutta, 1941), p. 7.

54. *Tattva Kaumudi*, p. 133.

55. *Ubhayo'pi samyogastatkrtah sargah, Tattva Kaumudi*, p. 172.

56. *ibid.*, p. 117.

57. *na kalo nama kvacit padartha'sti, kim tarhi kriyasu samjna, Kala Siddhanta Darsini*, p. 2.

of existing is its gathering everything to itself in order that it could become their basis.⁵⁸ This ego (*ahanta*) engages in sensory acts as a subject. The present, and for that reason time itself, is not given as a datum, not something the ego gazes at in terms of categories as a disembodied onlooker. The present (time) is *becoming* present of the human subject through seeing, hearing, touching, etc.

These sensory acts are not single and simple; they are structured experiences. The present, for that reason, is not the ultimate minimum of time, not an isolated moment preceding and succeeding which there is nothing. The sensory acts are presenting the present to a subject. In contacting objects the senses make the present emerge, for it (present) is nothing but the event of sense-object contact. These sensory acts are presented to the *antahkarana* whose structure is temporal and which, among other things, has as its constituents a transcendental intentionality (*manas*) belonging to the ego.⁵⁹ This ego impregnates sensibles with a meaning by situating them in a temporal context. My gazing at the flooded Ganges does not occur in the present; it is my gazing itself that is the present (time). My experience of the Ganges as flooded has a structure; it has in its background the experience of something that has already happened i.e., heavy rains on the hills.⁶⁰ That is to say, my sensory act of gazing at the Ganges is the present, but it becomes meaningful in the context of the *antahkarana*, which is temporal in that it carries within itself the experience of something which no longer is after having been. Sensory experience, therefore, the present time, always happens in the "face" of the past (*karma-klesa*). It is futural in that it always involves "for the sake of" (*pursartha*). Experiences can only belong to a temporal subject; it always involves pleasure or pain: *kalo...satatam sukha-dukhayoh*. That which is not temporal can have no experience; the timeless Being (*purusa*) is tasteless, touchless, pastless, futureless, partless, dreamless, pure Present: *asabdam, arupam, asparsam...* On the other hand, there is time for the ego because it is temporal. I am the consequence of what I have been; I am the promise of what I shall be. My present is a temporal wave whose circular structure involves pleasant union and unpleasant depar-

58. *Drstrdrstayo samyoga hetuh*, *Yoga Sutra*, 2, 17, quoted in *Tattva Kaumudi* p. 174.

59. *ibid.*, p. 206.

60. *...nadipurabhedadbhud vrstih*, *ibid.*, p. 207.

ture, fear and anxiety, birth, death and rebirth.⁶¹ Time is will-to-be as a subject, and I am the continuity of myself as a subject. I am my own circularity; I am time.⁶²

Passage from Time to Timeless

We have seen above the *gunaksobha* is posited to seize a being for which alone and with whose possibilities alone there can be a world of objects: Time as *gunaksobha* is burdening of Being by its becoming a subject in order to reclaim its Being. Time, therefore, is an ontological argument for man's being in the world, to live in it as an individual subject and then to forget it. Being can do no good to time; time does the greatest good to Being letting it (Being) lose its timelessness in order for it to become a subject: *parārtha mātram tu prayojakatvamiti*.⁶³ This passage from timelessness to time is a passage from the careless being to being as care: *icchā jñāna gunātmikā*. The world of pleasure and pain, anxiety and fear, is discovered at the heart of the subject. The subject as time, therefore, is the logos of the aesthetic world. Its manner of being is having; its world is all that could be *had*. It is, as it were, an ontologization of Freud who is reported to have said, "Man has always known he possessed spirit; I had to show that there is such a thing as instinct". In *Samkhya* the subject is a project to appropriate (*Pravrtti*) objects; its appropriating one object is an instance of its will to appropriate all objects; *madarthā evābhīh visayāh*. The consciousness of such a subject does not record objects, it invades them; it cannot tolerate *vastu*, it acknowledges *visaya* only: *āhāryam, dhāryam prakāsyam ca*.⁶⁴ Just as water from a tank, going out through the hole and entering fields through the channels, comes to have quadrangular or other shapes similarly the ego's consciousness goes out through the senses and assumes the form of all that it encounters: *tad-ākāra rūpatvād*. This illustration should not be taken as an epistemological blueprint. It is not a metaphysical stance of deriving consciousness from things, nor is it an attempt to reduce things to their consciousness. It is a mere description of the world the temporal subject lives in. Man's consciousness is such that it

61. *Sukham dukham... jaram mṛtyum... sarvam karmanusodheno kala eva, Brahma Vaivarta Purana*, 3, 24, 26.

62. *Bhokturbhogadhikaranatven...Kalah, Kala Siddhanta Darsini*, p. 2.

63. *Parathyomatranta prayojakamu padyate, ibid.*, p. 281.

64. *ibid.*, p. 204.

seeks objects; it gives meaning to objects in so far as it seeks them. In such a world there is no pure consciousness; there are no pure things either. The world is a situation of consciousness in relation to things. In this *point* of relation is arrested the whole world, its possibility, its presence and its limit. The world as the *point* of consciousness encountering things has some very important implications. The most important of these is that there is no world apart from lived-experience, and that the world as lived-experience is co-terminus with the means of experience, i.e., sensing, imagining, etc. The world, therefore, is not an autonomous "there"; it is a lived-through "there". In the sensory acts such as seeing, hearing, etc., the I gets incarnate.⁶⁵ Sensing is not a mechanical act; in it is involved the pleasure of being an ego. The ego assures its being *in having* the sensed: *mama sabda-sukham jāyatām, nama rūpa-sukham jāyatām*.⁶⁶ The lived experience reveals the ego's anxiety of its ceasing to be an 'I' with the loss of its 'mine'; the world is a situation of ego passionately in love with itself, its feverish repetition of itself and the body as the medium of its being: *samsarati iti upāttam upāttam*.⁶⁷ The world as lived-experience reveals that the ego has an inbuilt ability to deceive itself. This pleasure of self-deception is called *avidyā*; it is a convenient confusion of momentariness with permanence propelled by the wish that momentary be permanent.⁶⁸ This self-deception seeks its expression in the form of *svarga*. *Svarga* is the ego's project to become God without ceasing to exist as a subject;⁶⁹ of becoming timeless, therefore deathless, without ceasing to have temporal experience: *vayam amaranadharmakāh*.⁷⁰ *Svarga*, again is expression of the inbuilt will in man (*jīva*) to become a Being that *has* all (things) without acknowledging that Being is All insofar as it lacks nothing: *Atma prakṛtyabhinnah*. Time is the bliss of being a subject; it is the tragedy of not ceasing to be an ego. Time is the aesthetics of the "I am".

65. *dasa-visaya ranjaniya svarupatah, ibid., p. 249.*

66. *ibid., p. 246.*

67. *sariram jahati... ibid., p.225.*

68. *Anityasucidukhanatmasu nitya suchisukhatmakhayatirvidya, ibid., p. 244.*

69. *Ivaro hi yadevecchati tadeva kareti, ibid., p. 237.*

70. *Abhutasamplavam sthanammrtatvam, ibid., p. 29.*