

“I”

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‘I’ knows itself as a finite single unit. There is scattered before it a plurality of countless objects, a panorama of infinite space and an endless flow of time. Having first recognised itself as one endowed with certain form, it later experiences itself as an extremely small unit. How trivial it feels among a multitude of persons and objects as if it is a particle of the flying dust, a tiny droplet of splashing water, a dying spark of fire, an insignificant corner of space or a shining instant in time ! At the same time, this ‘I’ knows all. It tries to adjoin to itself all such other objects as come within the periphery of its myopic vision. It tries to stretch out in space and wishes to preserve itself in the unruly flow of time. This unit of ‘I’ looks in all directions and loves all. It pines for what it cannot possess and feels small and deficient by their nonpossession. It is perturbed if it is pushed into a corner and fears its own extinction in future. It won’t give up what it possesses and even hate those who are instrumental in this act. It puffs up with lasting relationship and gets suffocated in isolation. Thus has this ‘I’ become a helpless captive of its own narrow egoism.

Is this ‘I’ knowledge or an illusion ? It is both, in as much as its nature is knowledge and its finite unity an illusion. By unity we mean that it is one among the many. What is this ‘many’ ? It is an extension of the consciousness of I ( i. e. Drishti ). How ? An impression of form as refle-



cted in consciousness (*drishti*<sup>1</sup>) becomes the object, its expansion and contraction space and its variation time ! But consciousness in itself is knowledge-monotone. To superimpose attributes of non-self (Time, Space and objects) on self ( I ) or of self on non-self is an illusion. For example, poverty and richness, smallness and greatness, birth and death, sorrow, delusion, fear, disease and death—all these are illusions and not of our nature; these are merely superimpositions on us. It is this illusion which generates desires—the desire to attract or repel, the desire to come and go, the desire to live and die. What is the root of these desires ? it is the circumscribed 'I'. If this 'I' were not to suppose itself a body occupying space and composed of several biological parts, how could it aspire to go after death to heaven or hell or to some divine or undivine abodes ? If this 'I' were not to suppose itself a body taking birth or dying at a specific juncture of time, how could it desire transmigration or fear death ? If this 'I' were not to accept itself as particular body, how could it desire to gain or lose or attract or repel anything ? The root of desires is not 'I' but the finiteness of 'I'. In such a situation, the question is whether in reality this 'I' is finite ( limited ) or not !

'I' cherishes a desire to extend beyond its rays of knowledge into time and distance and onto extraneous objects. It tries to fathom the unknown frontiers of time and space and know the hitherto unknown good or bad properties of matter with the help of natural sense-organs and human brain on one hand and other scientific accessories on the other. But the

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1 *Drishti* here means a modification of mind endowed with the impressions of and capable of visualising Time-Space-matter continuum as in dream and waking states.



fact is that the sum-total of the quantity of knowledge collected through these instruments only burdens the centre of knowledge i. e. 'I', but it hardly solves the problem ( of quenching the thirst of knowledge ). The forceps can hold other objects but not the fingers that hold them. The rays of sun illumine all object but not the sun from which they emanate. Similarly, the desires to know, in their state of unfulfilment, only add to affliction rather than alleviate it, and in the event of their fulfilment superimpose an ego which sits heavily upon I, covering the very source of knowledge. It is only in the renunciation of these desires of knowledge that the true nature of I, the pure knowledge, gets revealed ( and the thirst of knowledge is finally quenched ).

The desires to enjoy bliss need also be probed. If bliss is other than you, is not already possessed by you, is somewhere else and is to be achieved through an agency other than you, can it be one with your innate self? 'I' will continue to desire such an extraneous bliss and it will continue to slip away. Holding it fast will increase the tension, and if it be afar or delayed anxiety would prevail; and then 'I' shall not rest in peace. Bliss without peace is merely turbulence. What is then the bliss that 'I' should hanker after. If 'I' is not itself the bliss then for how long can it hold on to superimposed bliss? The fact is that the desire to enjoy or be prosperous arises out of the false concept of one's innate miserableness and poverty just as the desire to know is rooted in the misconception that one is ignorant and the desire to live long or forever springs up from the acceptance of one's destructibility. Fundamentally speaking, this whole process i. e. first assuming oneself miserable, poor, ignorant and perishable and then desiring to remove them or



acquire their counterparts, namely happiness, prosperity, knowledge and immortality thinking that these are extraneous to and unpossessed by oneself, in unscientific. This however happens because of projection of one's own nature into others and superimposing the nature of others on one's own. Hence all these desires, to live, to know and to enjoy, are born of ignorance.

It is only appropriate at this stage to glance at how this ignorance extends its scope. What are the requirements for this finite self to live on? In truth, the inventory of this demand-list is never complete. Wealth, mansions, garments, family, and status are all requisitions to the same end. Without education, without the power to dominate or rule, without eating and drinking and without being clothed, this 'I' begins to suffer from an inferiority complex. Nay, it gets agitated and irritated, calls bad names, laments and grieves over; and finally it is overcome with a real sense of lowness, poverty and enslavement. Truly, desire is the mother of enslavement. But whence came this desire? It is the result of false knowledge of the true nature of 'I' which in turn leads to identification with non-self. Therefore one must first cease to identify with non-self. Let it be said what is said. Let it happen what happens. Let it go what goes, and let it come what comes. Do not care for what is said, done or lost. The real grief is not the coming or going of something but the desire that something should come or go. Coming and going (acquisition and loss) are merely unreal interpretations (Vivarta) of existence (Sat), appearances of consciousness (Chit) and splashes of Bliss (Anand). However, desires ghoro this finite I, make it dance to their tune and finally sit heavily on it. Desires, nowith-



standing the spiritual robes that they may don and the noble aims they may profess, are characteristic of imperfection. Therefore for a seeker of Truth, renunciation of triple desires has been prescribed: (1) desires for concrete material things related to the body as means of subsistence of the body which is concretised existence (sadvivarta); (2) desires in the form of acquisition of status, fame, worship, scholarship, kingdom, etc. for oneself as means of self-propagation which is merely a reflection in consciousness (chidvivarta); (3) Desires for possession and long preservation of woman, children and other enjoyable objects as means of buoyancy of Bliss (Anand vivarta). The desire for son and the desire for woman are but one. In them, there is not only a temptation for immediate enjoyment but also a latent desire to propagate oneself to eternity through posterity.

We may also describe these desires as follows:—

(1) Desires pertaining to the body (Dehvasna):—A strong and stout body, fragrant body, beautiful body, soft body with sweet and soft voice, body with capacities for immense enjoyment etc. etc. These desires arise on account of ignorance of the Existence-nature of 'I'

(2) Desires pertaining to knowledge (shastra-vasana):—Enhancement of intelligence and book-knowledge and acquisition of knowledge of various subjects etc. etc. These desires arise on account of ignorance of knowledge-nature of 'I'.

(3) Desires pertaining to the world-opinion (Lok-vasana):—These are but one single desire to magnify artificially the illusory finiteness of 'I'. But if 'I' is intrinsically



small, how far can it be stretched without tear? The desires for self-worship, fame, status, appreciation, world-wide name and fame and lasting memorials are all various forms of Lokvasana. They arise on account of ignorance of Perfection-nature of 'I'.

The centre of these triple desires is the finite 'I' and the same is being afflicted with fear of death, bondage and grief.

We can analyse this situation in an alternative way. Classify your desires. You will get three broad categories : desire to live, desire to know and desire to enjoy. Ponder whether 'I' can fulfil them while remaining a limited entity ! This life is death-bound. The objects of knowledge are innumerable. The objects of enjoyment are mutable while the instruments of enjoyment have their own limitations; the sense-organs are incapacitated, the mind loses tastes and inclinations and the intelligence loses its sharpness. Then how can the desires be perfected? And if not, shall we always remain grief-stricken? Is it not trying to realise the impossible then? What is the basis of the source of these desires? The reality is that without understanding the true nature of 'I', desires of objects, appearing as non-self, are allowed to dwell in ourselves. They do not let 'I' rest in peace and compel it to wander about. There are countless places where this 'I' wanders and gets stayed temporarily, for example the body; the senses, the distant, the near, the inside, the outside, the past, the future, the own, the others and so on. The irony is that one's own comfort and happiness, knowledge and light and existence and stability are completely ignored while the whole life is ill-spent in tasting various dishes in different hotels against payment of bills of vitality. The nett gain is a fattering intelligence,



are restless mind and a completely tensed and fatigued out body. This illusion must be rooted out or we perish.

Come, let us now analyse this 'I.' It is nearest to us and so there is not a moment's delay in its perception. The only requirement is that one should not be indifferent to its observation. What is the locus of 'I'? Is it some insentient matter? It cannot be, for an insentient object is not self-luminous; it requires another self-conscious principle to illuminate it. If 'I' be not consciousness itself, then even this knowledge that 'the insentient exists' or 'I is insentient' will not accrue to it. If it be asked how this 'I' was created and if it be answered that 'I' was created from insentient matter or from void or from Ishwara (the supreme consciousness) or from chaos or from other conscious entity, then we say that all these speculative questions and answers rest on the single consciousness 'I' which is self-luminous. It is impossible for anyone to experience one's own creation! The implication is that in the field of knowledge the creation of 'I' is a fib and a baseless proposition without any proof whatsoever. Any form of 'I' which becomes an object of experience is not the true 'I', for a form is 'seen' whereas 'I' is the 'seer.' No object which is in the category of the seen, whether sentient or insentient, soul or God, void or mediate, can be the cause of 'I', the seer. To say that 'I' is the cause of 'I' is a meaningless statement. Thus 'I' has no cause. If it be insisted that 'I' has some cause, then know it for certain that that cause is piece of imagination and can never be experienced. Therefore renounce the thought of the creation and causality of 'I' and lo! the uncaused 'I', the uncreated 'I' and the self-luminous 'I' is revealed as your very self.



It may be argued that 'I' may not have a cause but it can have an effect. For example the insentency is the effect of the consciousness, 'I'. But this proposition is not tenable; for every cause which produces an effect must be mutable. Now everything can change but 'I' cannot change, for 'I' is the conscious witness. If 'I' were to change who would know this change? Who will witness and substantiate the change? Then again if 'I' were to create an 'other' where shall it be—outside or inside, far or near? What will be that space in which 'I' would create the 'other'? The concept of 'inside and outside' or 'far and near' is only imaginary. The entire length-breadth-height concept with its expansion and contraction is visualised in the imagination only. The boundaries of space are not attained, and therefore space devoid of a beginning and an end and devoid of all differentiations of East, West and middle portions is experienced in imagination only and nowhere else. All imaginations of space are permeated with ignorance. The boundaries of North and South are unknown and the dividing line between them does not exist. In such a situation can the concept of space be anything other than a figment of imagination? The locus of space in imagination is the same as the locus of imagination itself. The consciousness that is limited by imagination is the same as that limited by the imagined space. Therefore space cannot limit the consciousness, 'I.' I—consciousness is absolutely unlimited. Neither within nor without 'I' does there exist any space in any form whatsoever. How can then there exist matter or its creation in such an 'I'? The matter shines in the substratum of its non-existence, namely space which is illumined by 'I'—consciousness. Hence the matter shines in



'I where there is no space and so no matter, for where space is not matter cannot be ! This 'I' is therefore absolutely unlimited by space and matter and is infinite.

It may be contended that although space and matter may not exist in or limit the I-consciousness, yet Time may be there. What is the harm if Time exists in 'I' or every unit of consciousness (I) is independent or I-consciousness appears only for discrete intervals of time? These contentions are now refuted. If I-consciousness shines only for moments, we must then accept that 'I' is the witness of its own destruction which is absurd. Time too, like space, is permeated with ignorance. Both the beginning and the end of Time are unknown and unknowable, and the illuminator of Time is unrelated to the beginning or the end of Time, for it is the illuminator of both. Hence ignorance does not get attached to consciousness. Time is in a flux from ignorance to ignorance ignorance in the beginning and ignorance in the end. But consciousness does not flow ( for it is a witness of flow ) and so is devoid of any concept of beginning, end or middle. Consciousness illumines even the ignorance and so is related to ignorance. Truly speaking, Time-concept is rooted in the visualisation of matter. Time, space, matter are not independent entities; they form one continuum. That which witnesses the rise and fall of imagination also witnesses the imagined object. The consciousness limited by imagination is identical with that limited by the imagined object. Therefore Time is incapable of producing any limitation on its own self-luminous substratum. 'I' is imperishable and all perishable objects appear and disappear in the substratum of their non-existence, they don't have any ontological status of their own and



so they are unreal. This I which is everybody's own self and which is self-luminous is both the illuminator and the substratum of the unreal Time, Space and matter. It is beginningless, endless and without a middle. It is beyond any imagination of past and future, inside and outside, inner and outer. This 'I' is not self relative to other 'self's' (and therefore 'I' is not many). Such an 'I' is being burdened with desires, made captive of them and is becoming dreadful of their nonfulfilment. Only ignorance is the cause of all misery, narrowness and grief. It is therefore necessary that ignorance of the real nature of Truth is annihilated.

Observe also the rush and restlessness of 'I' for Bliss ! It? is here, it is there, it has gone, it is to come !! What all this Strange as it looks, nevertheless it is true, that non-existent objects i.e. Time, space and matter, are dear to you, are the objects of your love. But rest assured, never can a garland of ( non-existing ) sky-flowers adorn your neck ! If your beloved is the son of a barren woman, it is sheer stupidity to hope to meet him. Alas ! why after all do you want to love imaginary objects while ignoring your self-evident blissful nature ? Your absolutely lovable 'I' is immediate and directly perceptible !

Why does this 'I' want bliss ? It is because it does not know itself Bliss. Strange ! Bliss in its ignorance as Bliss desires Bliss !! It is worth observing that no bliss can ever be realised without being attached with 'I'. Being one with 'I' is Bliss. How foolish to think that one would get bliss when one faces the 'other' and backs the 'I' only by identification with which bliss becomes blissful ! It is futile to go out anywhere in search of Bliss, for I is Bliss. It is not nece-



ssary to acquire anything for Bliss, for I is Bliss. You need not wait for Bliss, for your 'I' is Bliss. Nor you need render this Bliss an object of knowledge, for I is self-knowledge, illuminator of all concepts of self and non-self and independent of other illuminating agents. True, 'I' is not knowable as an object of knowledge such as sound, touch, taste etc., nevertheless it is immediate and directly comprehended, because it is our own 'self'. Knowledge and Bliss are not two, but one. Who can witness the destruction of 'I'? It is impossible that 'I' should witness its own destruction, Neither any cause nor effect of 'I' can cause its destruction for it has no cause and no effect. Also, neither 'I' is the locus of anything nor anything has 'I' for its locus. Therefore 'I' cannot be destroyed by the destruction of its locus. Further, it is neither equal to nor superior to anything, it is neither the master nor the servant as it is neither a friend nor a foe of anybody. In such a state who will destroy it? This 'I' is a solid mass of Absolute Bliss, self-luminous consciousness and imperishable Truth, Duality cannot even touch it, It is therefore absolutely wrong to suppose one's 'I' as perishable, ignorant, unhappy and mutable. The dualities of come and going, birth and death, sin and virtue, pleasure and pain simply do not exist in 'I' where there is no limitation of any kind, how can there be any relation with these dualities. Leave alone relationship limitedness in the unlimited cannot acquire any status of its own. 'I' is not a finite (limited) single unit, it is Perfect Brahman. The desire to abdicate what is already possessed and the desire to achieve what is not already possessed, are both born of ignorance. And in knowledge even ignorance does not exist. What is achieved through knowledge is already



achieved, for knowledge does not bestow, it only illuminates. Similarly, What is lost by ignorance is not really lost; it remains in tact all through. Knowledge or ignorance of any object does not produce or destroy that object; they are simply the process of destruction of the veil of knowledge that is apparent in 'I'. Ignorance is free from the dualities of knowledge and ignorance and independent of self. To call it knowledge is merely a process of knowing it as undifferentiated consciousness.

Is this 'I' mine or yours, his or other's ? There is no occasion for such a question ! 'I', you, he and others are not separate units. All these small units, whether explicit or implicit, are purposeless in the immediate and directly perceived Truth that is identical with 'I.' The real 'I' is of the nature of Brahman. As soon as this knowledge dawns upon the aspirant, the imagined Nescience together with its family of misery, ignorance and fear is completely vanished. After this, even the Knowledge acquired is rendered purposeless. What is the need of further sublation when the superimposition has already been sublated ? There is a limit to sublation also, and this limit is reached in the self-luminous, non-dual, Brahma, 'I', which is the substratum of all.

( Translated by Shri V. K. Gangal )