

PRAJNA – A WORK

Indian thought has its deep foundations in psychological truth. The very concept of an or knowing is very ancient. It represents the starting point of knowing and knowledge. A theory of knowledge stems out of a theory of knowing. Later thought has undoubtedly mixed up these two and indeed so inextricably that it is well -- nigh impossible to disentangle the mesh.

The highest Reality has been designated as Sat- Cit-Ananda. It has also been designated as jnana. The method of knowing being jna, it follows that the ultimate Being is an object of knowledge (jnana). However since all is a continuing activity it follows that the knowing process and knowledge are co-existent. The Ultimate Being or Reality however can never be grasped by means of the mind, or sense as the Upanisads say. They may grant knowledge that is but a tithe of the whole, and that too cannot be verbalized or put into words of communication. In other words it is beyond all knowledge in a sense. The Ultimate is said indeed to be that in which thought expires and the knowing agent also. What is that condition? Thus it is the source of all being (*satya*) or all *caitanya (citta)* and of all *ananda*. It cannot be said to be the potential condition of the all actuality but beyond even the potential condition that might actually be considered to be the antecedent of the consequent such as knowledge and knowing.

Thus the ancient psychologists knew of the depths of being correlated with knowing and also as transcending knowing. That the two poles of knowing and known of that which is ultimate to them are derived from that Ultimate is the truth that they have labored to communicate to the seeker after the ultimate being or God or the absolute. The triadic synthesis results from the whole or the one within which they are held in unique transcendence.

The jna concept leads to derivatives such as Prajna, ajna, vinna, samjna, and so on. Each one of these knowing represents a kind of knowing different from the rest. That they may represent several limbs of one integral moving has not to be ruled out. It is not certainly a fanciful undertaking to seek to know what each one of these represent. A

clear study of these several derivative terms or concepts may help to fill in the grasp in our knowledge of the ancient psychology.

In this paper I shall only take the first and I hope to deal with the others in due course. *Prajna* in a common non-technical sense means one who is intelligent or knowing. *Prajnavadamsca bhasase* : thou spikiest as if thou art wise, or as those who hold to the doctrine of *prajna*. The second meaning refers to the technical sense of *prajna* as that which is a high spiritual attainment. Indeed in Buddhist thought we come across the *prajna* as a high state (*Prajna paramita*). In Upanisadic thought we come across this word significantly in the *Mandukya* Upanishad. *Prajna* refers to the nature of the third state represented by and the senses both motor and sensory are withdrawn from all activity it is a state of perfect non-objectivity, and obviously it is the state of self-wraptness. It is not a state of non-being. But of pure being. It is of *su-supti*. Knowledge or *jna* here seems to have become *pratyak* (self directed) not *parancikhani* (moving outward to objects of senses). the *pra* of *pratyak* is tagged on the *jna* and thus it becomes *prajna*, by assimilation. It is stated to be the state of Tam or that-ness. later on writers have almost equated it with *layaavasta* or *tama*, beyond which there is the fourth or *turiya*.

In Yoga sutras we have significantly the states of *Samadhi* being described as *Sam-prajnata* and *asamprajnata*. The word *prajna* here occurring also seems to refer to the third stage of being without any interference of the *citta-vitti* which operates through the mind and the senses. the *nirodha* or the *citta* (otherwise identified with the operations of the *manas*) is achieved in the *sam-prajnata-samadhi*, thanks to the attainment of the inward poise of the *prajna*—which is identical with the *suspti* (deep, sleeo). It is the deep sleep of the senses and not of the self (*atma*). Whereas sleep of the in the one who has attained *samadhi* of the *Prajna*-state the *citta vrtti* donot begin to operate when one comes out of it, for the ordinary man who certainly enjoys this repose in his sleep everyday this *citta-vrtti* begins to returns no sooner than He awakes. The *asamprajnata-samadhi* is the state of transcendence equivalent to the *turya* or the fourth. The description of these as having an object and as having no object misses this

point of prajna which is of the quality of absorption of all in the one inward condition of self.

The concept of the Gita in the Second *adhyaya* of the *Sthita-prajna* can throw some important light on this concept. The description of the *sthita-prajna* or one established in Prajna gives the idea that such a one is beyond the sensory dualities of heat and cold, beyond that duality that arises out of gain or loss, honour or shame, victory or defeat. These are all referable to the mind which is said to be the organ of pleasure and pain or *cetanata* in respect of objects that are brought to knowledge by it. The transcendence of manas (which is verily described as the cause of bondage) is achieved when we enter into the *prajna* (the self-state). This state of prajna looks as if it is night to the others, even as the waking and svapna states look as night to one who has entered the prajna or got established there. It is a state that refutes the *ajna* (non-knowing or activity state). It is beyond the threefold knowledges that accrue to one who pursues the *trivarga* (dharmarthakama) which seem to be confined to the two states of *visva* and *taijasa* or *jagrat* and *svapna* and extolled in the *karmakanda* of the Vedas.

Thus the *sthita-prajna* is verily one who has achieved the state of *prajnata-samadhi* of the *Rajayoga* who has reached state of transcendence over the waking and dream –constructive consciousness. It is a self-aware consciousness beyond the object activity consciousness. It is so very different from the other two that it is qualitatively different from their consciousness. Obviously thus the state of the self or *jiva* in its disjunction from manas and the organs of sense and activity is arrived at in this state. That this state should look as *sunya* or nothingness of Night or *pasana –tulya* is what had led to many theories of it (prajna-veda).

The Upanishad seers went beyond this prajna state and announced that, that is the Real Self or the Universal Self or Brahman. It however could be strived at only through the prajna state. The clear and decisive abandonment of the knowing through the senses and through mind is counseled. The inward knowledge is not a communicable knowledge but it is experienced and informs all activities even of the

sense and the mind. Though at first the two kinds of existence are apparently so contracting that one might well appear as the delusive or shady counter – aspect of the other, it becomes clear that both of them derive their very existence from a third higher state. This higher however cannot be arrived at by any logical synthesis of the lower dualities. That is the reason why it is expressed as the source or cause in a sense that would make clear the fact that all arises from it though not contained in it in the same manner in which they appear to us. Thus the concept of *vivarta* arises. A reversal of the whole manner of existence and a reversal of the whole method of knowing are necessary. Knowledge by itself cannot do it constituted as it is : its logic is of the finite and of the activity of thought that is projecting outward away from the self. Thus the reversal of knowledge is not had through activity but by inward concentration or devotion to the inmost being beyond knowledge and word (beautifully represented by the words *manas* and *vac.*)

The gita use of *prajna* thus fully corresponds to the Upanisadic concept of *prajna*. The interpretation of the *sthita-prajna* as one who is almost a *jivanmukta* or one who has achieved liberation from *samsaric* cycles or has terminated his future births and as one who is only awaiting to be released from the karma that gets the perishable body going will also fall in line with the view taken. It is however clear that this condition of *sthitaprajna* is almost the very first that has to be attained on the path of divine life, for in putting up this ideal for man, even the ordinary man of duty and knowledge, at the first opportunity Śrī Krishna has shown that it is the peace or *santi* that this gives that becomes the abode of higher evolution or attainment of the *Brahmanirvana*.

Individual realization precedes God realization for some, for some others the God-realization includes the individual realization. The God-peace or *Ananda* is a matter for grace, individual peace or *santhi* is matter for individual effort. But we who establishes himself in God even at the cost of abandoning all claims to his own consciousness arrives at that awareness that is doubly –sanctified by God united soul-ness.

This short analysis of the concept of Prajna is made only for the purpose of shewing the deep psychological analysis of self-consciousness implicit in the Upanishadic literature.