

Each of these points will be elaborated in the lecture. PowerPoint has been avoided since our focus needs to be on the non-visual. This will not be read. These are helpful notes which an attendee is requested to go through.

- ✓ It is in Father de Nobili's honour that we are gathered here today, in a world which has not really changed much from de Nobili's times. He was a much-misunderstood man amongst his own as Pope Francis, another Jesuit today is amidst the attacks of Robert Cardinal Sarah and his huge followers who reject the syncretism of the current Pope. Father de Nobili's only fault was that he was a Jesuit as the present Pope is and during de Nobili's times it was the then Pope who was against him. It is as a tribute to Father de Nobili that we are here today to critique phenomenology as practised across religious traditions and within the works of Dr. Edith Stein. While much work has been done by both Hindu and Christian scholars in India and abroad on each Continental phenomenologist and their relationships to Hinduism and Buddhism, there exists no such cross-cultural work on Edith Stein's corpus by either Carmelites or Hindu philosophers and theologians. Further, Dr. Stein is a liminal figure who was a Jew who converted to Catholicism and was thus criticised by both her own Jewish community and by the community whom she embraced, that is, the cloistered Carmelites. It is a repeated truism that she was martyred by the Nazis and today the Roman Catholic world has found in her the patron Saint of Europe which has detracted from her reputation as a career philosopher. As will be discussed in a moment her philosophical genius lied in her revision of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology and unbeknownst to her, in providing very crucial answers to Hindu metaphysical problems. Stein's importance as a philosopher can be understood from the fact that Martin Heidegger realised her potential as a better philosopher than him and he indirectly helped to gas Stein. Academic jealousy led to Stein's murder by the

Nazis. On the other hand, we will interrogate how Adi Shankaracharya's version of Hinduism has come to be known as Advaita Vedanta at the cost of Sri Avinavagupta's erasure from learned discussions on the nature of non-qualified nondualism. Hindus are not Mayavadins but Brahmavadins. We will discuss Sri Avinavagupta's philosophy in relation to Dr. Stein's phenomenology and how Stein provides a theodicy to problems we encounter in Samkhya and Yoga whose best known extant primary text is the *Bhagavad Gita* and not the *Samkhyakarika* of Ishvarakrishna which is a secondary text. Sri Avinavagupta has a commentary on the Kashmiri recension of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

- ✓ Phenomenology has many definitions and yet it remains a discovery of Husserl where Husserl realised that what we think is what is actually there in the outside world. I am not original when I say that Husserl realised the semantic nature of phenomena. Another way of looking at what Husserl and his doctoral candidates including Edith Stein were trying to do was to find out the whatness of being itself as ontologically founded in God qua Ishvara qua Brahman. We should note here that Badarayana's *Brahmasutras* begin by questioning the foundational nature of the manifested world(s). So, both Hindus and Christians are agreed on the fact that we are essential beings whose teleologies (eschatologies) are corporeal. This is a position entirely different from both Buddhist understandings of what exists and also different from the worldview of Adi Shankaracharya. Sri Avinavagupta and Sri Utpaladeva reject the crypto-Buddhist position of both Sri Gaudapada and Adi Shankaracharya.
- ✓ Now how or on what basis do we connect Sri Avinavagupta's monism with Edith Stein's phenomenology? Husserl imbibed, as we find in his writings, much that the German Idealists and the German Romantics wrote. These German thinkers were well acquainted the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita as were the American

Transcendentalists. It is through their works that Stein, as an assistant of Husserl, her supervisor, could have come across this Hindu corpus. Though it has to be emphasised that in her translated extant works in English, Stein not once mentions Hinduism or Advaita Vedanta though Husserl does. Even if she was unacquainted with Hindu thought, which is impossible because she typed and proofread Husserl's works, yet her work on empathy and the problem of other minds has a direct bearing on what we are going to discuss in the last part of this brief lecture.

- ✓ In the *Bhagavad Gita*, in its various versions including the Kashmiri version that only a child or a fool, sees any differences between Samkhya and Yoga. We have mentioned earlier that Sri Avinavagupta and his school of monism, that is the philosophy of recognition, which is not in vogue due to historical contingencies, focuses on the phenomenological nature of existence, which he too found as a semantic expression of thought, he insists on the essentiality or whatness of being. Here we have to understand about the nature of a Yogi within Samkhya, Yoga and Kashmiri Shaivism. A yogi is that Being who is YET to attain release from the cycle of births and rebirths or samsara. It is important to understand that the sixth Chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* is the entire *Yoga Sutras*. This is as yet not documented anywhere. Be that as it may, a Yogi is an imperfect death oriented Heideggerian Dasein. This is where the *Yoga Sutras* become important. The *Yoga Sutras* say that the Yogi, not someone getting ready for the practise of Yoga, rather a Yogi someone who is just at the point of experiencing the mysterium tremendum et fascinans, or freedom from the cycle of births and rebirths, and who has to yet cease the modifications of the individual mind. According to both Samkhya and Yoga, not to speak of Kashmiri Shaivism, and that school's (Advaita) Vedanta ratified by these schools' interpretation of *Yoga Vashishta*, the various monistic *Agamas* and *Tantras*,

this manifested universe in which we are gathered together in the here and the now, are the citta-vrittis, or, the modifications of the mind of the nearly perfect Purusha who to all practical purposes, is like unto God to us in whose image both that Purusha and we are made, but we are Heideggerian qualia, after all. There may be countless Purushas. When each Purusha realises that It is That, an Upanishadic Mahavakya, this universe will cease to exist. The *Yoga Sutr*s clearly states that the Samkhya Yogi is not Ishvara or God or Brahman. In other words, the semantic structure of the external world as discovered by Husserl had been much earlier mapped by Samkhya, Yoga, Kashmiri Shaivite monism or Advaita Vedanta. The problem here is that each Purusha is independent of the other Purusha since they are but individuals. We digress to point out that Jesus as a Yogi perhaps needs rethinking in the light of the Hindu canonical texts. But that is beyond the scope of this lecture. Returning to this phenomenological entrapment of the individual who is not yet a being in time who is Omega Point or God or Brahman oriented, we have the solution given by Dr. Stein. I repeatedly stress on her titles as a Ph.D. since it is now the need of the hour to study her works as a that of a serious Ph.D. scholar. And on a lighter note, we often do Ph.D.s as not original contributions to our domains but just another examination to be cleared and later rehashed as a book. Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross needs immediate saving from well-meaning but non-academic piety. Dr. Stein while working under Husserl and later collaborating with Heidegger found out a way to pressurize the solipsism of each Dasein, a nearly perfected, God-oriented Dasein being the mystical Dasein of Karl Rahner, through what Stein calls empathy to start what today is the need of the hour. Not dialogue. Not tolerance. But a genuine heteroglossia where each Purusha is aware of its separation from the One Purusha who matters and who cannot be reached unless we realise that Shiva=Jiva.

- ✓ In her neglected work on empathy, Stein's cultural contribution has been to solve the problem of solipsism found throughout Advaita Vedanta and even within Husserl and Heidegger's phenomenology. What is missing in all three is the element of praxis. Only when we deeply listen to the other, not merely by our ears, only when we live for the other to the point of death, then alone does either Advaita Vedanta or Husserl's phenomenology has meaning.
- ✓ If only we are to listen to what Stein has to teach us and what she taught by repeatedly writing to the Pope then about the persecution of the Jews and with her life, we will understand the meaning of phenomenology in both our religions. We will reject the appropriation of both our religions by aggressive minorities howsoever learned and, philosophy then, will be truly a therapy of desire. Desire for name, fame and whatever it is that keeps us from experiencing that God is Love.
- ✓ Adi Shankaracharya had to experience the life of the senses to realise that Mystery called God. It is a misunderstanding to think that Advaita Vedanta admits of no God since a visit to any monastery established by Adi Shankaracharya has one of the Manifestations of the Motherhood of God as its Guardian. Adi Shankaracharya had to build monasteries to counter the Buddhist Sangha, but Hinduism is essentially, a religion which is not based on monasticism. Our *Upanishads* are people with seers and sages who are married and whose neolithic introspection led them to conclude that a husband love his wife for the sake of the Self within. This is phenomenology. But how does these hundreds of nearly perfected Yogis (the Buddha was a Samkhya Yogi according to Kapila); realise this Atman? Through following the philosophy of Edith Stein. Hers is not the only way to come out of our solipsism, but it is definitely a valid hermeneutic. This speaker is a great admirer of Karl Rahner and in his spirit, I invite you turn to the Omega Point but how did Rahner find out the techne to do so?

Certainly, from Stein. We will discuss this revision of Hindu phenomenology as well as Dr. Stein's phenomenology in some detail for about ten minutes.

Further elaboration of what has been discussed above:

“Ignorance is regarding the impermanent as permanent, the impure as pure, the painful as pleasant, and the non-Self as the Self” (Yoga Sutras 2.5) for as Sage Patanjali goes on to say later, “the reason for [this delusion] is Ignorance or, avidya” (तस्य हेतुर्विद्या ॥ tasya heturavidyā ॥ 2.24 ॥). Phenomenology is an attempt at theodicy within the various branches of Advaita Vedanta and within the Continental tradition which has engaged with Avidya or what St. Augustine of Hippo calls the privation of the good. While Samkhya which leads to Yoga sees innumerable monads technically called ‘purushas’ all having attained kaivalya manifesting this present and other universes, yet neither does Samkhya or Yoga tell us how these monads are connected to each other since they do not need to know other Purushas within their state of kaivalya which is not mukti. It is only with mukti do we know that mysterium tremendum et fascinans. Thus, as we will argue later, it is well-intentioned but incorrect to portray Christ as a Yogi, because even the best of Yogis is not aware of the unity of all beings howsoever great. A Yogi is still an imperfect phenomenological quale; a time-bound Heideggerian death-oriented dasein who has not yet experienced what is known as achintya-bheda-abheda (अचिन्त्यभेदाभेद) within the qualified non-dualism of Vaishnavism. So, while a Yogi has brought into being this Universe with particular chitta-vrittis or modifications of Her or His or better still, It's mind, yet this Purusha whose mental vibrations, or spandas we are; yet this Purusha is trapped within Itself and yet not ready to be subsumed by the light of Ishwara or God. This is the archetype of the Problem of Other Minds within Hinduism and this is essentially but not entirely the Problem of Other Minds in Continental and Analytical Philosophy. So how do we overcome this problem? Edith Stein

solves this Problem for us through her work on empathy. The empathetic mode or turn within German philosophy as will be seen later is a solution wherein the dasein becomes Omega-point oriented and experiences the Mahavakyas of Advaita Vedanta, which is to say, that these Purushas are able to leave their solipsism and experience the truths of Acharyas Gaudapada, Shankaracharya and other Advaita Vedantins. It is through the works of Stein that later Karl Rahner will be able to posit his life-oriented dasein who experiences this tremendous Mystery otherwise known as God. The Problem of Empathy as resolved by Stein is a fitting critique of certain aspects of Samkhya and is a logical extrapolation of the project begun by the German Idealists leading on to Husserl and later to Heidegger and finally to Stein. Lectures of this sort begin with definitions of phenomenology, but we will avoid that here because phenomenology as a technical term has nearly lost its meaning through overuse and we here it as a theodicy since all self-examination is theodicy as all theologies are theodicies to the Problem of Other Minds which now seems eerily similar to the Samkhya position of innumerable Purushas and leads directly to the Problem of Empathy. And the German idealists certainly did not miss the point that the Brihadaranyak Upanishad or the Great Forest Upanishad speaks of a certain density of being in the here and the now, and it is well known that in that Upanishad, the Seer Yajnavalkya says to his wife Maitreyee that all beings and even emotions like love for family and children and money are all ontologically founded on the Atman. It is important to note that this Upanishad hints that love for family and love for wealth while being very real yet both lead to death. Yet if one can realise this Atman as being the only Truth then Yajnavalkya points out, it does not matter whether one is amongst grandchildren or to use a contemporary phrase, is a hedge-fund manager. So, the phenomenon of being as envisioned by Husserl as Husserl learnt it from his predecessors is becoming aware of the ontology of our esse rather than being outward. This is a misinterpretation of that part of the Bhagavad Gita which says that only when like a tortoise

we withdraw our uncontrolled cognitive apparatus within ourselves, we can realize the Atman. While Husserl and the German Romantics got it wrong since the Bhagavad Gita was told in a hurry by the Supreme Godhead to a reluctant fighter amidst a war, perhaps because neither Husserl or, earlier the German Romantics and Idealists did not face a war, it took Edith Stein who was caught within the whirlwinds of unimaginable evil to understand the only way to break down the solipsism that we escape into when confronted by an indifferent but yet a very real world. No matter whether we are the vibrations of the Purusha of our Universe as the *Yoga Vashishtha* and the *Spanda Karika* both say. Reading theories of Advaita, one would think that Adi Shankaracharya was advocating mayavada; but reading both Shankara and Sri Abhinavagupta we understand that Advaita Vedanta is about Brahmavada. Through her emptying of herself, Edith Stein found a techne, or an upaya to reach the state of achintya-bheda-abheda without definitely not being aware of the Hindu corpus in any meaningful manner. Unlike Husserl and even Heidegger, Stein nowhere in her extant written works mentions Advaita Vedanta or even the *Bhagavad Gita*. Yet she is the only phenomenologist who could resolve the problems posed by Samkhya and Yoga and she remains the only phenomenologist who could experience the truths or the Mahavakyas of the Upanishads. This proves a particularly important point within Hinduism. We Hindus maintain that the Truth is One while the wise call It by many names. This essentialist philosopher who is mistaken as an existentialist and deserves to be better known than Heidegger and Martin Buber, experienced and understood the truths of three religions in her quest as a phenomenologist: that of Hinduism, of Judaism and of Roman Catholicism. It is a pity that while both Hindus and Christians have studied Husserl, Heidegger and even Martin Buber's relationship to almost all branches of Hinduism, Stein's relationship to Hinduism has not been studied either by Carmelite scholars, leave alone other Christian and Hindu thinkers. Yet all other Carmelite thinkers have been studied threadbare in relation to Hinduism by both

Christians and Hindus. This lecture tries to correct this ignorance or avidya regarding Dr. Stein's phenomenology and the problem of other minds within Yoga.

Working Notes. S Chattopadhyay Ph.D.

Helpful References

- From the *Bhagavad Gita*:

साङ्ख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः |
एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यगुभयोर्विन्दते फलम् || 4||

*sāṅkhya-yogau pṛithag bālāḥ pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ
ekamapyāsthitaḥ samyag ubhayor vindate phalam*

- For Karl Rahner:

Anton Losinger in his book *The Anthropological Turn: The Human Orientation of the Theology of Karl Rahner* writes about the “theological vocation of the human being as the point of departure for the divine revelation of salvation” (Losinger 4) and writes about the single most important Roman Catholic theologian in the last century, pointing out Karl Rahner’s rethinking of Martin Heidegger’s concept of the dasein. Losinger writes:

the formulation of this central concept [in]...Rahner’s theology suggests a contradiction, thereby giving expression to the relation, in itself ambivalent, of nature and grace to one another. In connection with the concept of the “existential” coined by Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time*, Rahner has recourse to the phenomenological constitutedness of Dasein as “being-in-the-world,” thus to a determination of its being which is “naturally” appropriate to this Dasein and characterizes its existence. (Losinger 36, emphasis original)

For Rahner, the being, or the dasein, due to no merits of its own is freely given the grace to choose “transcendence” (Losinger 29) by a fecund God bound to humanity by His covenant love. A vocation is to respond to the immediacy of God’s call (Losinger 37) and make a definite election between “between finitude and infinity” (Losinger 29). How the individual

dasein responds to this fecund love is shown by Stein. Without Stein this response could not have been mapped by Rahner. Rahner informed by Stein redirects Heidegger's death-oriented being towards a being which can existentially look forward to transcendence. Rahner's understanding of the Heideggerian dasein is an eschatological gesture towards the infinite.

(Losinger, Anton. "The Content of the Starting Point: Theology as Anthropology." *The Anthropological Turn: The Human Orientation of the Theology of Karl Rahner*, translated by Daniel O. Dahlstrom, Fordham University Press, 2000, pp. 23–53.)

Rahner did not think of Samkhya philosophy or Advaita Vedanta while he formulated his theory of Original Sin. Neither is he generally thought of as a phenomenologist. But when he speaks of the first man, from our standpoint as being a modification of the mind of the one Purusha we may want to look at his *Theological Reflexions on Monogenism*:

There is no doubt that in this definition there is contained a statement (mitgesagt) that a single individual stands at the beginning of human history... (244)

Rahner, Karl. "Theological Reflexions on Monogenism." *Theological Investigations: God, Christ, Mary and Grace*, translated by Cornelius Ernst, Second ed., vol. 1, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963, pp. 229–296. *Theological Investigations*.

➤ From the *Yoga Sutras*:

शौच संतोष तपः स्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि नियमाः ॥ 32॥

➤ Chapter IV of Stein's *On the Problem of Empathy* is necessary reading. Translated by Waltraut Stein and published in 1964. In this book's Preface by Waltraut Stein it is mentioned how Stein's phenomenology is different from the *Cartesian Meditations* of Husserl. Husserl's work was published after Stein's dissertation.