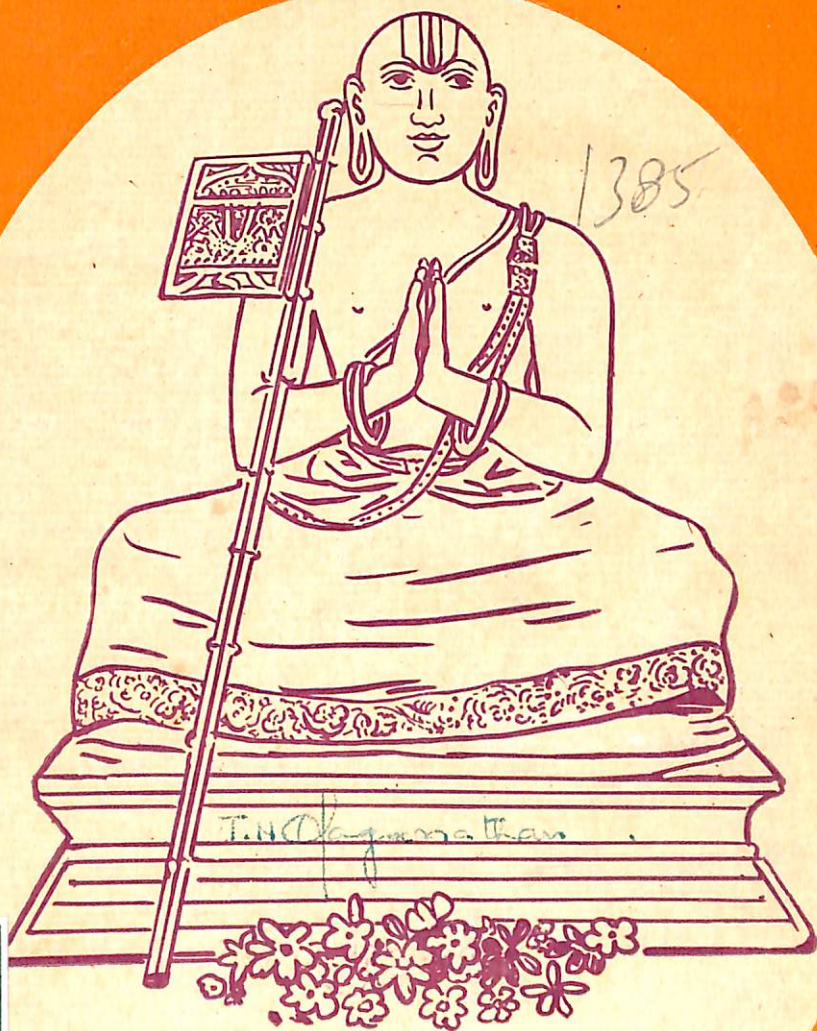


# VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA



S. S. RAGHAVACHAR

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GENERAL EDITOR :

Dr V. A. DEVA SENAPATHI

த.வ.ப.லகநாதன், ம.அ.ப.த.

VISIṢṬĀDVAITA

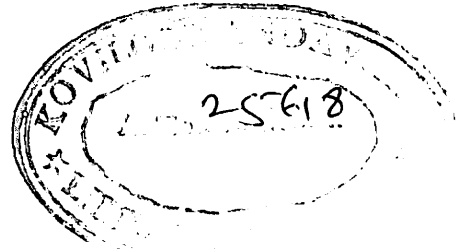
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தஞ்சாவூர்  
நடராஜ பிள்ளை உரைநாடுகள் M.A.B.T

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உலகநாதன்  
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## FOREWORD

The Department of Philosophy was started in the University of Madras in September 1927. In August 1964 it was raised to the status of a Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy by the University Grants Commission. From 1976 it has come to be known as the Dr S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy.

Since its inception in 1927, this Department has kept in view two major objectives: (1) the study of Indian systems of thought and (2) the study of other systems of thought. Last year the Department arranged for a course of special lectures in furtherance of these objectives.

Professor S. S. Raghavachar accepted the invitation of the Institute to deliver two courses of lectures, one on Dvaita Vedānta and the other on Viśiṣṭādvaita. He has very kindly given his consent to the publication of these lectures in the Golden Jubilee Series. His lectures on Viśiṣṭādvaita appear in the present volume. The Institute is grateful to Professor Raghavachar not only for these Lectures but also for his kind co-operation with the Institute in its various activities.

The Institute wishes to thank the Government of Tamil Nadu, Dr Malcolm S. Adiseshiah, the Vice-Chancellor and the other authorities of the University of Madras for the financial aid given for these publications. The Institute is appreciative of the interest evinced by the University Grants Commission in upgrading the parent Department into a Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, financing it for ten years and for its subsequent and sustained interest in the progress of the Institute.

The Institute is grateful to the late Professor S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri for laying the foundations of the Department on sound lines

and to Dr T.M.P. Mahadevan, former Director of the Institute for building up the Department over a period of three and a half decades by his devoted services.

The General Editor wishes to thank his colleagues, Professor R. Balasubramanian and Dr T.S. Devadoss for going through the proofs, and the Avvai Achukkoodam for the prompt and neat execution of the work.

Madras  
September 3, 1977

V. A. DEVAZENAPATHI  
*Director*

## PREFACE

I am grateful to the University of Madras and the esteemed Director of the Dr S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, Dr V.A. Devasenapathi, for the honour of this assignment to me for delivering the Special Lectures on *Viśiṣṭādvaita*. I had some personal difficulties in fulfilling the responsibility. As I had already published four extensive studies on Rāmānuja, the problem of compression and the adoption of a different mode of organizing the material to suit the assignment called for special efforts. I had to strive not to copy the existing expositions of Rāmānuja in English. There is always a need to look at a great system of philosophy in a fresh and independent way so as to capture at first-hand the methods and insights of the original masters themselves unconditioned by secondary sources. How far I have succeeded is for others to adjudge. As for myself, the labour of preparing these lectures was itself an amply rewarding experience. I have gathered my data from Rāmānuja, Sudarsanasūri and Vedānta Deśika, using here and there their illustrious successors sparingly. I am left at the end with a longing to do fuller justice to the great classics. Such a mood of wistful prayer is no small gain.

The plan of the lectures is simple. In the first lecture I have indicated the epistemological and metaphysical direction of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* thinking and have attempted a rapid survey of the greater personalities and works of this school. In the second lecture I have endeavoured to present briefly Rāmānuja's criticism of other schools. I regret for the enforced brevity of the section on Advaita. The third lecture condenses the metaphysical fundamentals, not excluding the manifestly theological elements. Almost everything of significance in this account calls for elaboration and more weighty exposition. I think I have succeeded in hinting throughout that there are depths awaiting leisurely and spacious disclosure. In the fourth lecture

there is a statement of the ideal of *Mokṣa* as formulated by Rāmānuja. The last lecture works out the plan of discipline laid down in the tradition for the attainment of the ideal. I am glad that it dawned on me to conclude with the grand passage of *Śrī Vaiṣṇava gadya*.

I wish to add that I owe a deep debt of gratitude to my learned friend, Śrī K. Seshacharya, who gave to my provisional writing the benefit of his close scrutiny and offered valuable criticism and suggestions for improvement. The final form stands enriched by his constructive comments.

Once again I place on record my warm sentiments of gratitude to the University of Madras and to Dr V. A. Devasenapathi for offering me this precious and covetable opportunity.

S. S. RAGHAVACHAR



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சிவசுந்தரம்  
திருச்சிற்றம்பலம்  
புலகந்தாசாமி

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## ORIENTATION

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I am thankful to the University of Madras and the Director of the Dr S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy for conferring on me the privilege and honour of delivering this course of Special Lectures on the Viśiṣṭādvaita system of philosophy, as a part of its new and significant scheme of Special Lectures. I am aware of my limitations and the difficulties of doing adequate justice to my great theme within the limits set for my exposition. But still hoping for inspiration from my subject-matter and encouraged by the generous confidence reposed in me, I propose to address myself to my task in all humility and devotion, and face the responsibilities with the competence that, I hope, may be vouchsafed to me in this worthy endeavour. A broad enunciation of the spirit and orientation of a school of philosophy invariably aids the comprehension of the doctrinal details and may even exonerate the insufficiency of their presentation. With that hypothesis in mind, I proceed to indicate the major directions of thought characteristic of Viśiṣṭādvaita.

(1) As is well known, the back-bone of a system of philosophical thought is its epistemological frame-work. Viśiṣṭādvaita formulates some basic epistemological principles. The first of its principles, which has almost supplied its historical designation, is its concept of knowledge. Knowledge for this school consists fundamentally in characterising reality with predicates or qualitative determinations. There is no knowing of reality without knowing it as characterised by some feature or determinate adjective. It is neither a mute and indeterminate awareness of the real nor a manipulation of ideal

predicates without referring them to the real as its determinate identification. The subject-predicate situation is fundamental. Whether the real in its ultimate nature can fall outside this scheme will engage us in the sequel. It is enough to note this initial insistence at this stage.

A second equally fundamental proposition of the system concerns its understanding of the relation between knowledge and its object or between thought and reality. This school advances the thesis that thought, in its natural and unimpeded exercise, is in fundamental harmony or attunement with reality. Unless this principle is conceded, the consequence of nihilism cannot be, it is maintained, averted. Rapport with Being is the intrinsic nature of knowing. May be there are external hindrances to the maintenance of this fidelity, but after the elimination of the hindrances, thought by itself, by a natural law of its being, without any alien pressure or labour, achieves its natural state of being truthful. It goes without saying that this is the principle of *svataḥ-pramāṇya* advanced by all schools of Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta.

The consequences deduced from this principle are manifold in Viśiṣṭādvaita. In the first place, Viśiṣṭādvaita discountenances the possibility of sheer error, a total cognitive mistake, for such a contingency would signify the annihilation of cognition as such. There must be a substratum of truth in all error. What of the erroneous superstructure built on this substratum, the so-called error of commission? This school does not admit the existence of this superstructure. It contends that all error is of the nature of omission, of inadequate apprehension. Only the fragmentariness of the truth apprehended is the sting in error. If the element of omission is precisely and fully discerned, there is no need to postulate an additional element of commission in error. The factors causing cognitive failures are obstructive in nature and not generative. There can be no manufacturing of mis-apprehension. There is only an illegitimate restriction of apprehension. This is an innovation in Indian epistemology, but is explained as following legitimately from the ascription of the *nisus* or elan towards truth in knowing its own intrinsic nature. Further, if a generative power is conceded to an alien factor over and above the obstructive power, the principle that what generates knowledge generates its truth also gets abandoned. There can be no knowing

divorced from the knowing of truth, and this whole power of knowing truth belongs inherently to the mind or thought in its purity.

The consequence of this innovation leads to the conception of truth and error in Viśiṣṭādvaita and the whole edifice of knowledge as conceived on this basis.

As we have noted, there is no such thing as a sheer error. Whatever error there is, is just a partial truth only, and its character of being only a fragment of truth is not recognised. It is maintained, therefore, that there is nothing in error other than truth and the truth that goes to make error is just a fraction of truth in the context not discerned to be only a fraction. This fragmentary truth is made known by the contradictions it engenders and the truth gets completed in the process of overcoming contradictions.

The entire edifice of knowledge is conceived as a process of comprehension, ascending stage by stage into widening ranges of apprehension. From the so-called error we ascend to perception of an authentic kind. There is no prejudice against sense-perception in this school, and even the highest metaphysical revelation cannot cancel or abolish sense-knowledge. There is no *avidyā* or *adhyāsa* vitiating the realm of sense-experience at the very root. In perception there is indeterminate perception, when we sense a datum afresh and the scope or generality of its characters is not yet grasped. But when the pervasive features linking several particulars into a genus or class are grasped as such and the particular datum is noted as characterized by them, we have determinate perception. Error is superseded in range in indeterminate perception, which in its turn is taken up and duly supplemented and enlarged by determinate perception. From perception the ascent is to inference. Inference is no doubt rooted in perception, but it goes beyond the sensed-particulars and gives rise to understanding extending beyond them from the point of space, time and generalities. There is no anti-intellectualism in Rāmāṇuja's philosophy. In its sphere of operation, *anumāna* or *tarka* is perfectly valid. It consists in grasping the consequents on the basis of assured grounds. The schools like the Cārvāka which endeavour to refute the validity of reasoning as such

adopt it most inconsistently in their very refutations and admit it in their prescriptions for life. There is no going against reasoning altogether. But there are truths beyond both perception and inference, and they have to be ascended to through revelation. Revelation is of value in so far as it does not run into contradiction with perception and reasoning, and is also not just a reiteration of what is cognized well enough in them. There is no dogmatism or superstition involved herein. This is a genuine source of knowledge, as it fulfils the criteria of novelty and non-contradiction, and all other sources of knowledge are also admitted precisely on those grounds. The principle of *svataḥ-prāmānya* is of universal application. Within the body of revelation answers should be sought for questions which perception and inference are incompetent to answer conclusively. It is a sound logical progress to increase our data when the data at hand leave fundamental and inescapable questions unanswered. Problems that pertain to creation as a whole, the nature of the soul and the conception of an absolute reality are such that they should be illumined, if at all, by revelation. Revelation itself should be construed through a strict logic of interpretation, standardized by the great tradition of Vedic exegesis. Within the body of propositions advanced by revelation, a strict principle of comprehension must be followed. No major direction of thought such as that of Divine transcendence, or that of Divine immanence, should be sacrificed. A total view of the import must be acquired through the procedure of seeing in every special proclamation a supplementation and amplification of other such special teachings. Such a unified insight into revelation is the culmination of the knowing process. It should not be ignored that this insight is itself a completion and fulfilment of the pre-revelation phase of knowledge and not its sublation in any sense. This comprehension of revelation, high as it is, is not the final stage of knowledge. This is intellectual understanding and no immediate vision. It is the latter that is named *para-vidyā*. This carries the scriptural wisdom to a greater height and amplifies it immeasurably by richness of experience not accessible to mere intellection. At the climax of this vision the seeker of knowledge realizes that there are further ranges and heights of truth not yet encompassed by his vision, and it is this discovery that is enshrined in the dictum '*neti, nēti*'. It is this that makes the spiritual venture an everlasting process holding forth prospects of wonders beyond wonders.

Thus the concept of knowledge is that of an ascending process of perpetual enlargement and amplification, which cancels no lower rung and terminates in no summit however exalted.

(2) While the foregoing account of the orientation of the system pertains to its theory of knowledge, it has an equally distinctive and outstanding standpoint in metaphysics. Viewing the history of metaphysics as a whole, one is struck by the significant alternative conceptions that have sprung up again and again. There is the metaphysics of materialism or naturalism for which the world open to sense-knowledge and the rational systematisation of it by way of science, is the only reality. This tendency of thought eliminates the transcendent. There is an antagonistic temper and formulation for which the empirical reality is a set of spurious appearances and behind and beyond which lies the only reality at once transcendent and beyond the categories of experience and related ratiocination. It may be posited as accessible to mystical intuition or dialectical demonstration or both. The identification of this wholly transcendent self in man or pure being as such as the basis of the beings of empirical experience does not reduce the transcendence of the reality in question. The beings of the empirical order and the empirical ego are parts of the nullified realm of appearance, and what lies beyond in sheer metaphysical transcendence is the real reality. This is the antithesis of the first standpoint. It is not difficult to find numerous illustrations of the two metaphysical trends in philosophy both Eastern and Western. A third view has also actualized itself in the course of human speculation which does not drastically annul either the transcendent or the empirical but synthesizes the two by affirming the substantiative reality of the transcendent and assimilating to it by way of ontological subordination the empirical order of existence. This is what has been named 'the Idealism of comprehension', and it has been exemplified by all the higher forms of philosophical theism. It is neither wholly cosmic nor wholly acosmic, but combines in an integrated perspective the concept of a transcendent Reality containing within its infinite expanse all that constitutes our cosmos of experience, in the status of an adjectival part. It is this direction of metaphysical thinking that is embodied in a full-fledged form in the philosophy of Rāmānuja. An adequate articulation of this system

will bring out this philosophical identity clearly. Brahman is the one central transcendent reality and the world of *cit* and *acit* belongs to it in an adjectival capacity. Hence this school has acquired the name, of 'Viśiṣṭādvaita'.

(3) The orientation is not complete without a brief account of the literary history of the philosophical movement.

As could be fairly expected, the writers in Viśiṣṭādvaita confidently claim that the ancient Vedic literature itself lays the foundation for this school. The celebrated *Puruṣa-sūkta* pictures the supreme reality as an infinite personality permeating and transcending the cosmos and as such, contemplation on it is said to be the road to immortality. The most sacred prayer in *Vedas* glorifies the creator, as adorably resplendent, and that He is to be contemplated upon and prayed to, for saving illumination. Neither a poly-theistic Nature-worship nor an acosmic monism is the creed of the *Vedas*. The Nature-gods are just manifestations of a single divine principle, and the world is named *māyā* on account of its wondrous panorama. Rituals are not the last word of the Vedic religion, but the spiritual realization of the ultimate. It is also significant that Viṣṇu is duly recognized as the infinite, all-pervading and all-subsuming God-head whom all else, including the multiplicity of deities are just limited manifestations.' Thus the Vedic wisdom projects in considerable clarity the philosophy under consideration. All that is required is to see through the veiled and indirect presentation in Vedic hymns. Hence the justification for Vedānta.

We pass from the early Vedic mysticism to open philosophical proclamations in the *Upaniṣads*. All the *Upaniṣads* announce the unity of the transcendent Brahman and predicate of it the infinite variety of the cosmos. The smaller *Upaniṣads* such as *Īśa*, *Praśna*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Kena* and *Kaṭha* are comparatively easy of comprehension and speak of an absolute sustaining and shining through the universe. The major and philosophically weighty ones, such as the *Taittirīya*, *Chāndogya* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, consolidate the philosophic position in their elaborate dialogues. The 'blissful embodied spirit' (*śarīra*..... *ānanda-maya-ātman*) of the *Taittirīya* is a clear statement of what

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1. *Rg-veda*, 7-40-5.



Rāmānuja elaborated in his Vedānta. The *Dahara-vidyā* of the *Chāndogya* is really central to the *Upaniṣad* assimilating into itself the *Sadvidyā* and *Bhūma-vidyā*, and that section, on all accounts, propounds a Brahman in Viśiṣṭādvaitic terms. That the conception of Brahman as the soul of which the world of finite selves and material nature constitutes the body is not something that Rāmānuja superimposes on the Vedānta, but something that he derives from it through textual compulsiveness is demonstrated in the focal *Antar-yāmi-brāhmaṇa* of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, out of which no Upaniṣadic commentator can disengage himself by cogent exegesis.

The early Vedic and Upaniṣadic thought is emphatic that man's ultimate good lies in the apprehension of God, but it leaves much to be clarified about the nature of this apprehension. The *Gītā* adds the grand elucidation that this approach to the ultimate Deity must be construed as *bhakti*, adoring contemplation or meditation of the character of love. This is in consonance with the conception of the Supreme in the *Gītā* as *Puruṣottama*, the supreme Spirit, transcending and also sustaining the realm of finite reality. The entire message of the *Gītā* consists of these twin concepts of *Puruṣottama* and *bhakti*, and the magnificent structure of spiritual wisdom it builds up works out the dimensions of these two. The teaching of the *Gītā* is fully incorporated in Rāmānuja's philosophy, and that philosophy is, in reality, developed in the course of the interpretation of the text. Almost every other significant principle of the *Gītā* gets subsumed organically under this leading philosophy of the *Gītā* furnishing the inspiration and authority for Viśiṣṭādvaita.

The third textual basis for Viśiṣṭādvaita is the *Brahma-sūtra* and it offers very little resistance to a Viśiṣṭādvaitic commentator and Rāmānuja appropriates it masterfully in building up his philosophical standpoint. Well may Madhusūdana Sarasvatī deplore the recalcitrant character of the work in relation to Advaita and equally intelligible is Vedānta Deśika's declaration that all the four chapters of the work expound Viśiṣṭādvaita and the alien interpreter must seek support from the fifth chapter. It may also be recalled that Śrīdharasvāmi and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī gently deviate from Saṅkara's interpretation of the final teaching of the *Gītā* (as contained in the 66th verse of the 18th chapter).

The epic *Mahābhārata* contains in its vast canvas plenty of philosophical material scattered throughout, and Rāmānuja finds in it substantial basis for his philosophical position. He uses particularly its *Nārāyaṇīya* section in his defence of *Pāñcarātra*. Its Vaiṣṇavism and the gospel of surrender enter vitally into Viśiṣṭādvaita.

The other *itihāsa*, Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa* is a favourite classic. An ardent Viśiṣṭādvaitin lives habitually in the world of *Rāmāyaṇa*. Though it is epic poetry, as Sudarśana Sūri says, it is looked upon as the highest philosophy attired in the mode of poetry, *kāvyaṭva kañchukita-paramārtha*.<sup>1</sup> The particular conception of *prapatti* dominating the Viśiṣṭādvaitic theory of *sādhana* is disclosed in all its fullness in the episode of Vibhīṣaṇa resorting for refuge to Śrī Rāma. The poetic style of the epic has entered into the writings of the masters of the tradition and contributes a unique charm of style.

Among the *Purāṇas*, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* hailed as *purāṇa-ratna* by Yāmuna-cārya, receives from Rāmānuja considerable elucidation and some of the characteristic doctrines and technical terms are drawn from this source. This is a brief *purāṇa*, has suffered least interpolation, concerns itself more with philosophical ideas than stories, and has been used as an authority by a wide range of philosophical writers including Śaṅkara and Vyāsa, the commentator on the *Yoga-sūtra*, not to mention Vācaspati Miśra and Prakāśātman.

The principal *Smṛtis* such as that of Manu, Āpastamba, Yājñavalkya and others command the respect of the tradition, and Rāmānuja argues in favour of their value in the field of metaphysics and theology also, in addition to their special province of *dharma*. In fact in some crucial contexts they are used effectively.

Now we have to consider the role of the *Pāñcarātra-āgama* in the shaping of Viśiṣṭādvaita. There is some debate concerning this class of Sanskrit scripture. Śaṅkara and Bhāskara regard it as only partially in conformity with the Vedas and impute to it non-Vedic doctrines also. Yāmuna-cārya, and following him Rāmānuja, refute this allegation wholly and consider the *Pāñcarātra* as a divine condensation of the Vedic philosophy. The practical and religious part

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1. Commentary on *Vedārthasaṅgraha*.

of Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy is greatly influenced by the Pāñcarātra. Its doctrine of God as manifesting Himself in five forms, and the five-fold prescription of devotion are adopted in entirety.

So much for a rough sketch of the Sanskrit literary inheritance of Viśiṣṭādvaita.

Viśiṣṭādvaita as systematized by Rāmānuja has another source of inspiration. The hymns of the Tamil saints, named Ālvārs, collectively named *Divya-prabandha*, constitute the other literary foundation of the system. All these saints preceded Rāmānuja and were highly venerated by him. Their fervent compositions breathe an exalted spirit of devotion and are also marked by a strong current of philosophical consciousness. The term 'Ālvār' means one who has merged himself in God-experience, and their lyrical outpourings portray the varied spiritual moods such as yearning, aspiration, attainment and the propagation of the inexhaustible sweetness of devotion. Their stirring power is truly profound. The Ālvārs come from all castes not excluding the lowest in the conventional hierarchy and there is Appāl, a saintly poetess, of the highest excellence. These devotees draw their themes from the *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Epics* and *Purāṇas* and re-fill them with the depth of authentic personal mysticism. Of these Nammālvār is esteemed the loftiest. He is regarded as having transferred to the great Tamil medium the divine wisdom of the *Vedas*. Tiruvāymoli is his most celebrated composition which has evoked voluminous appreciative exposition. In such works, it is claimed, the Ālvārs have solved many a problem not solved even by the Sanskrit Vedāntic literature. Tradition holds that Nammālvār's great work enshrines the sublime pathway of surrender to God, a characteristic promulgation of this school. The conjoined devotion to the Sanskrit Vedānta and the Vedānta distilled in this Tamil devotional literature, has earned for the tradition the title of *Ubhaya Vedānta*.

Utilizing this rich inheritance, the system-builders of Viśiṣṭādvaita, consistently described as Ācāryas, proceeded to work out the philosophy in all its completeness and detail. From their hands Viśiṣṭādvaita which was till then a spiritual tradition, emerged as a

fully formed *darśana*, the distinctive feature of which is the intellectual treatment of the inherited revelation and devotional inspiration. The logical ordering of ideas, their intellectual defence and advocacy in the manner of philosophical argument were the tasks to which the Ācāryas devoted themselves. The first of these Ācāryas was Nāthamuni. He fulfilled two missions in his great life. He collected the Tamil *prabandhām* with great effort and zeal. He consolidated it and made its perpetuation a possibility. He laid the foundations for the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita in his two Sanskrit treatises, *Nyāya-tattva* and *Yoga-rahasya*. Unfortunately both these works are lost and only some significant fragments from them are preserved as quoted in the works of the subsequent Ācāryas. But his influence on the system is profound and pervasive. The homage that Yāmunācārya pays him is something phenomenal.

The next great Ācārya is Yāmuna. Luckily some of his works are available wholly, while some are incompletely available and one is wholly lost. He is a vigorous dialectician and commands a synoptic vision of the system in the setting of the entire philosophical heritage of India upto his time. His devotional composition is of the highest order, setting the model for subsequent poets. The remarkable thing about his writings is that though their state of preservation is unsatisfactory, they seem to be wholly incorporated in substance and sometimes in the very terminology in the writings of Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja's veneration for his personality and works is profound.

The next great Ācārya is Rāmānuja traditionally regarded as born in the year 1017 A. D. and as living a long and rich life of dedication and philosophical creativity. Whatever be his reverence to the previous Ācāryas, he is the greatest Ācārya in Viśiṣṭādvaita. It is in the fitness of things that one of his great preceptors desired that the system itself be named 'Rāmānuja-darśana' hence-forward. His early career is marked by unceasing study and mastery of the ancient heritage and current systems of philosophy. He did gather with zeal the teachings of the earlier teachers of the tradition. His spirit was marked by an independence of judgment, and an uncritical submission to authority was not possible for

him. He not merely departed from the prevalent philosophical opinions but deviated from some of the elder preceptors of the tradition also. The sense of personal responsibility for truth burnt brightly in him. His vast scholarship and critical originality were harnessed to a deep spirit of *bhakti*. That was the very core of his personality. It was but natural for him to pray for *bhakti* in the great invocatory verse of his greatest work. *Bhakti* was the standard and criterion of all his philosophical valuations and the motivation of his entire life and thought. Parāśara Bhaṭṭa<sup>1</sup> says that the master annihilated the dark powers of *Kali* with the single talisman of *bhakti*. Vedānta Deśika describes the illumination radiating from him as fed by the inexhaustible oil of *bhakti*.<sup>2</sup> Dāśarathi, a great disciple, says of him that he was a lion of *bhakti*, and that those who live under his shelter could thereby encompass all in spiritual life, even as the insects sticking to a lion are carried from peak to peak as the lion leaps across the mountains.<sup>3</sup> There is certainly an occult link between *bhakti* and compassion.<sup>4</sup> It is in profound conformity with this that the great Nanjeer makes the oft-repeated pronouncement that the test of a true man of God is that at the sight of suffering he does not see the justice of it in terms of *karma* but gets moved into intense sympathy and rushes to works of immediate relief. This is exemplified in the historic acts of compassion on the part of Rāmānuja fondly narrated in the biographies. Piḷḷai Lokācārya<sup>4</sup> records that the age of large-heartedness in Viśiṣṭādvaita was inaugurated by Rāmānuja. Kureṣa than whom there was no greater disciple of Rāmānuja says of his master that he had three points of greatness. He was intoxicated with love for his *Acyuta*. In consequence, he took all other values as utter trivialities. He was an ocean of compassion.

The writings of Rāmānuja comprise only nine works. Of these four are short devotional compositions. But the devotion in them is such that they contain the quintessence of his philosophical position. The *Gītā* has elicited from him a balanced, perceptive and adequate commentary in a style befitting the original. That it moves

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1. Vedānta Deśika, *Yatirājaśaptati*, v. 56.

2. Vedānta Deśika, *Rahasyatraya sūtra*, Chap. 8.

3. *Bhagavad-viṣayam*, 1-2-1.

4. *Paranda padī: carama-śloka-prakaraṇa*.

profoundly the devotees of the Gita is but natural. The *Upaniṣads* are elucidated in the manner of survey and synopsis in the *Vedānta-sāra*, which was his first presentation of his standpoint by way of an exposition of *Upaniṣadic* philosophy. There is already the stamp of finality and completeness in the statement. The *Vedānta-sāra* is a brief elucidation of the *Brahma-sūtra*, while the *Vedānta-dīpa* also a commentary on the *Sūtra* covers a bigger scope making clear the dialectical frame-work in relation to the *pūrva-pakṣa* and *siddhānta* of each section. The *Sri-bhāṣya* is the fullest commentary on the all-important *Brahma-sūtra*. This is the greatest work of the Ācārya. In it is articulated the entire system of philosophy, combining in itself an interpretation of all the relevant passages of the *Upaniṣads* and a complete elucidation of the aphorisms of the text. Rival philosophical views are examined in thoroughness and the positive doctrines are decisively formulated and presented in organic unity of perspective. There is nothing provisional and piecemeal in argument. The work imparts completeness and finality to the entire Vedāntic outlook of Viśiṣṭādvaita. Even this philosophising contains outbursts of the rapturous *bhakti* of the author. There is no bifurcation of *bhakti* and *jñāna* in the writings of Rāmānuja, and the fusion of the two seems to elevate both.

The style of Rāmānuja's writing shows no improvisation. In his work and his remarkable for manly behaviour characteristic self-possession and a heroic glow of measured abundance. Successive units of discourse developing into coherent dynamic patterns converging to the climax of a grand conclusion is the order of his exposition. He is the greatest writer in the tradition of Vedānta. Deśika, himself a favourite of the Deity of learning, says that his style acquired grace through a devout application to the writings of Rāmānuja. Conceptual clarity, grandeur of construction and a deep spiritual fervour characterize the style of Rāmānuja. No wonder there is so much of *bhāṣya*-mysticism in the tradition. Sudarśana Śaṣṭī says that he is possessed by *bhakti* to the *Sri-bhāṣya* and that that work is revelatory of the supreme Divinity even as the *parvata* and the sanctum sanctorum at Śrīrangam are. <sup>a</sup> Rāmānuja's inspiration led to a phenom-

1. *Yatirājasaptati*, 18.

2. *Śrutiprakāśikā*, invocatory verses.

hal growth of literature. Kureśa, who was almost a collaborator with his Ācārya, has left five felicitous devotional compositions, which give an insightful summary of the system and illustrate the path of personal devotion and surrender through the poet's own overt practice of the same. His illustrious son, Parāsara-Bhaṭṭa, has followed him in his great *Raṅga-rāja-stava* and *Śrī-guṇa-ratna-kośa*. He has also left a masterly commentary on *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma*. Many other works, of his are lost. The *stotra*-tradition reached its consummation in Vedānta Deśika who has left hundreds of compositions in this genus, at once movingly poetical and profoundly philosophical. The *stotra*-literature rebaptures successfully the substance of the *Prabandham*-literature in fusion with the spiritual literature in Sanskrit. The *Prabandham* literature itself was taken upon for interpretation by a series of distinguished writers and the bulk of it is immense. Its outstanding writers are Piḷḷan, Nanjiyār, Periya Vācāṇi Piḷḷai and Vaḍakku, Tiruvīdhi Piḷḷai. It is of absorbing interest and has almost equalled the Vedāntic literature in Sanskrit. Sudarśana Sūri, a great grandson of Kureśa, has produced a brilliant commentary on the *Śrī-bhāṣya* which has eclipsed all others. This is the celebrated *Śruta-prakāśikā*. This is an unsurpassed masterpiece in the literature of interpretation. He has written an equally weighty commentary on the *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*. Vedānta Deśika has commented on the *Gītā bhāṣya* of Rāmānuja in a similar fashion and with the same qualitative excellence. On the esoteric teaching of Viśiṣṭādvaita centering round what are called the 'three secrets' (*rahasya-traya*) defining and elaborating *prapatti*, a similar growth of first-rate literature has taken place, the greatest names in the field being Piḷḷai Lokācārya and Vedānta Deśika. Varavaramuni is a splendid interpreter of Piḷḷai Lokācārya.

Vedānta Deśika requires special appreciation. He was specially favoured by providence with stupendous powers, philosophical, poetical and devotional, and fired with his spiritual passion, he has produced a vast body of literature, interpretative and original, in Sanskrit, Prākṛt and Tamil. He has commented on all the principal writings of Rāmānuja. He has written works elucidating the mysticism of the Ālvars. His *Rahasya-traya-sāra* is a majestic explanation of the three secrets of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. Almost every species of literature has a towering work of his, propagating the message of Rāmānuja. His

contribution to *stotra*-literature is huge and astonishing in depth and beauty. On the model of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika writers, he has three outstanding treatises, *Nyāyapariśuddhi*, *Nyāya-siddhāṅjana* and *Tattva-mukta-kalāpa*, with his own commentary on it, expounding the principles of Viśiṣṭādvaita in a rigorous technical style. He was a master of dialectics and has *Śatadūṣanī*, in refutation of Advaita and a Tamil work critically reviewing other schools of thought, *Paramata-bhaṅga*. His manysidedness and height of achievement are staggering. There is a host of secondary writers too numerous to mention. Perhaps, we must mention, in this connection Raṅga Rāmānuja, who commented on the works of Sudarśana Sūri and Vedānta Deśika and also produced commentaries on the principal *Upaniṣads* in regular order and also a Sanskrit elucidation of *Tiruvāymoḷi*. Mahācār-ya was a dialectician of high order who continued the tradition of Vedānta Deśika. Govinda Rāja wrote a famous commentary on the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Virarāghava on the *Bhāgavatam* and Viṣṇu Citta on *Viṣṇupurāṇa*. The series is continuing to our own times, and we have a number of recent important works.

Such is the map of the literary material constituting the basis, exposition, and development of the rich tradition of the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja. Its intellectual substance and gospel of human liberation are our chief concern in what follows.



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## CRITICAL REVIEW OF OTHER SCHOOLS BY RAMANUJA

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Rāmānuja's philosophical thought takes shape through a critical review of the current philosophical systems. The *Śrī-bhāṣya* in its second chapter subjects these systems to a considerable examination and some additional points of criticism come up elsewhere also in the works of Rāmānuja. Though a complete statement of this critical part is out of the question, the basic arguments may be noticed for purposes of a due recognition of the distinctive tenets of Rāmānuja.

(1) It is curious that Rāmānuja does not state the refutation of the Cārvāka system anywhere in his writings, though Yāmunācārya and Vedānta Deśika perform that critical work. One explanation is that Rāmānuja takes the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā of Jaimini as forming an integral preparation to Vedānta and in the treatise of Jaimini, the criticism of Cārvāka is implied in the very beginning. That criticism along with the allied Nyāya criticism, which, in this part is in fundamental kinship with Mīmāṃsā, is presupposed and fully admitted in Viśiṣṭādvaita with characteristic minor variations. The Cārvāka epistemology extolling perception as the sole *pramāṇa* condemns itself at its very root by employing inferential polemics for demolishing inference as a valid source of knowledge. Testimony, sacred or otherwise, cannot be expunged. *Pratyakṣa* has to support itself on the principle of *svataḥ-prāmāṇya* and it is that principle that validates testimony. A world-view, not acknowledging any source of knowledge other than sense-perception of particulars,

indulges in spurious ratiocination in legislating for the totality of the cosmos.

2 In metaphysics the assertion of matter, however conceived, as the sole reality does run counter to self-consciousness, which is the primary revelation of the self, not amenable to perception but the indispensable foundation of all perception. That the self, so self-revealing, should be looked upon as an effect or product of matter is itself the cardinal prescription of the Gārvāka. But this line of thought is ruled out by the impossibility, as Vedānta Deśika points out,<sup>1</sup> of proving and explaining the principle of causation within the strict limits of empiricism. Rāmānuja, in the course of his interpretation of the second and thirteenth chapters of the *Gītā* advances all the basic arguments for the super-physical reality of the Ātman.

(2) Early Buddhism advocates a high system of non-hedonistic ethics, but founds the ethics on a sophisticated system of naturalistic metaphysics. That there is no transcendent reality and no abiding self in man is sought to be established on a special concept of reality as causal power and the consequent doctrine of extreme temporalism, insisting on the literal 'momentariness' of all existence. The ethics of liberation is founded on a theory of causation which is supposed to bring into being aggregates of the momentary units of existence. Such aggregation is the source of suffering and the wheel of *dharma* is promulgated for bringing about the disintegration of the wretched aggregates. Rāmānuja, like all other Vedāntins, attacks the central doctrine of 'momentariness' in terms metaphysical and epistemological and exhibits in detail the impossibility of the valued causal process out of 'momentary' elements. Causation without continuity is a creature of wishful fancy. Nor is the process of cognition intelligible unless the object retains self-identity running through its pre-cognitive and cognitive phases of actuality. To save the situation, the Sautrāntika Buddhists postulated the inferential reconstruction of the object even in perception. The expedient does not work, because, like causation and perception, perhaps much more so, inference implies the continuity of at least the inferring consciousness for its leap from the ground to the consequent. A perishing particular can have no causal efficacy, can be no datum of perception and can

<sup>1</sup> *Paramatambhūga*, Chap. 6.

sustain no inferential process. By a strange but predictable nemesis Buddhism which started by denying the *Ātman* concluded in Yogācāra or Vijñānavāda with the denial of the entire world of external objects and asserted the sole reality of the flux of consciousness making up the self in Buddhism. Such a cosmic dream-consciousness has to be proved in the face of the realistic deliverance of cognitive consciousness, and the Yogācāra proofs are vitiated by its own basic thesis of the non-objectivity of all thought. Pure subjectivism cannot be proved by any *pramāṇa*, for the *pramāṇa* is also infected with the all-embracing subjectivity. Further, the momentariness of the units of the stream of consciousness involves all the difficulties of momentariness in general raised in criticism of the earlier stand of Buddhism.

The logical, if not the chronological, culmination of Buddhist metaphysics is *śūnya-vāda*, the doctrine of the 'void'. The meaning of the concept of *śūnya* is much debated, whether it signifies the ineffable and transcendent absolute or literal and total non-being. Rāmānuja frames an objection that applies to both interpretations. He advances his thesis that it must ultimately stand for being, for even negation is a special form of affirmation. There is no non-being as such. Distinctions and variations are spoken of negatively in ordinary discourse and they too are determinate characterizations of existence. The *śūnya-vādin* has the difficulty of proving his *śūnya* and only what exists by way of knowledge can constitute a proof. The 'void' stands in curtailed absoluteness if the *pramāṇas* enjoy the required status of being. If they do not, the *śūnya* becomes an empty postulate and all else reclaims reality inexorably. If *śūnya* is to be known in mystic intuition, it will be on a par with the Vedāntic Brahman, and the explanation of the negative characterizations of Brahman in the *Upaniṣads* bears an altogether different significance, as we shall see later on.

(3) On the Jaina system of philosophy, Rāmānuja's reactions are simpler. The crude statement of *syād-vāda* involves a violation of the law of contradiction. A logical refinement would rob it of all speciality. Reality is, no doubt, complex and admits of a plurality of predications but care must be taken to confine each predication to its own sphere of application, in which case, there is nothing startling or revolutionary in the logical theory of Jainism. In the

final philosophical position of Jainism, there is no recognition of a central and unifying principle and to that extent the integrative purpose of *syād-vāda* stands defeated. Jainism does well to recognize the eternal reality of spirits or *jīvas* and also that of nature, the *ajiva*. But a dualism, such as that, cannot give a satisfactory view of the cosmic order. An integrating ontological kernel is surely a metaphysical necessity. There is a considerably materialistic element in the Jaina account of the soul's transmigration and embodiment. For these reasons, the view stands in need of correction and revision. It errs in rejecting the teachings of Vedāntic revelation affirming a transcendent and infinite divine reality, which error lies at the root of all other shortcomings. Rāmānuja habitually extends the scope of the criticism of Jaina logic to the *bhedābheda* version of Vedānta, just as he sees many basic affinities between later Buddhistic schools and Advaita Vedānta.

(4) The Sāṅkhya is a hoary tradition in Indian philosophy. According to Rāmānuja, it has some good points such as the acceptance of Vedic authority to some extent, the doctrine of *satkārya-vāda*, the interpretation of cosmic evolution as proceeding from a single material principle, *prakṛti*, the doctrine of the irreducibly non-physical character of the *puruṣa*, the individual self. But its cardinal blunders are three. (1) It attempts to explain the cosmic process as self-contained and as needing no transcendent ground. Matter, if it were sheer matter, can exercise no activity involving self-transmutation from the status of a cause to that of an effect, as posited in this school. (2) The selves are conceived as inactive and uninvolved and as immutable to a fault. Such an entity can hardly be a spiritual principle amenable to philosophical proof. (3) The Sāṅkhya disables itself in rejecting the basic principle of Brahman or Īśvara.

(5) The next major system that Rāmānuja reviews is the Vaiśeṣika. Its atomism is the first target of attack. That a unit of physical existence, material enough to build up the world, could be indivisible and be an ultimate unit is objectionable. Having all other properties of matter in its gross form, how could the unit escape being spacial and divisible needing a further group of components to build it up? If it is regarded distinctive enough and is conceived as devoid of the

properties of gross matter, it could not be the material cause of the latter on account of discontinuity in nature. The theory of causation propounded in Vaiṣeṣika called *asat-kārya-vāda* has its own problems. The cause must continue to function in the effect, if the theory abandons Buddhism, as it does. In that case the continuity means merely that the effect is an actualization of what was merely potential and implicit in the cause. A totally novel effect would rule out necessary and universal connection between cause and effect. Causal necessity implies that the effect is an unfoldment of the properties of the cause itself under new and appropriate conditions. Causation is not a miracle, but a working out of the nature of things. The so-called emergence of the new is a revelation or liberation of a hitherto hidden or suppressed aspect of the causal material. The Vaiṣeṣika sets up a plurality of substances (*dravya*) and enumerates features that belong to them such as *guṇa*, *karma*, *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa* and posits a special category called *samavāya* to explain the relation of the features to the substances. This category for its connection with substances on the one hand and with the features on the other would need another supporting *samavāya*. There would be no end to *samavāyas*. It would be better to hold that the features are intrinsically embedded in the substances and no connecting principle need be postulated. On the whole, Vaiṣeṣika posits categories beyond strict logical necessity. The category of Ātman is admitted in the system but its nature is poorly conceived as lacking consciousness as its essential nature. The position is hardly an improvement on materialism. There is a theistic element in the school and it attempts to prove the existence of God on rationalistic grounds. But the attempt is inconclusive, not because God does not exist, but because reason confined to the reading of relations between finite entities cannot establish a transcendent and infinite principle. The infinite is accessible only to a special mode of proof not having the limitations of reason. The God that the Vaiṣeṣika argument could establish does not rise to the requirements of sound theism, and hence the greatest writers in the tradition, like Udayana, make a liberal import of Vedānta.

(6) This brings us to a consideration of speculative theism, such as that of Yoga and some forms of Śaivism which seem to have been current in Rāmānuja's time. The theistic argument of Nyāya-

Vaiṣeṣika also may be added to these. The position of theism, as such, propounded on grounds of reason is what is to be considered as examined by Rāmānuja.<sup>1</sup> Rāmānuja's criticism of the causal argument seeking to infer God's existence is two-fold.

(i) The argument is inconclusive. Though it may be admitted that causal intelligence determines the origin and evolution of the cosmos, it is not certain that there should be only one such intelligence. A plurality of co-operative powers is also a possibility.

(ii) Even if such a single intelligence were to be admitted as operative in the process, it cannot be proved to be infinite and all-inclusive as the complete theistic case requires. A finite God is all that can be so established, even if that much can be established.

The situation requires a little more explanation. In his criticism of the atheistic schools of thought such as Sāṅkhya, Rāmānuja opposes them on the ground that they cannot explain the cosmic process without admitting a divine intelligence as its ground. Here, in his attack on the rationalistic schools of theism, he holds that their case for God is weak and does not meet the full requirements of theism. He seems to be fighting both the thesis and anti-thesis.

The clarification, in principle, is this. Reason when it attempts to explain the world without positing God breaks down. It breaks down equally when it attempts to prove His reality on the resources of pure reason. Revelation is the only way for a sound theism. Its indispensability is established by the fact that reason can neither prove nor disprove God's existence. The meaning of the term '*aprāpte*' in the Mīmāṃsaka dictum, '*Aprāptehi, śāstram arthavat,*' is that what is neither proved nor disproved by other *pramāṇas* is the sphere for the illumination from revelation. The incompetence of reason on the question is demonstrated by the antinomy it cannot overcome.<sup>2</sup>

(7) Something needs to be said on Rāmānuja's reaction to Pūrva-mīmāṃsā. He holds it as a necessary preparation to Vedānta.

1. *Sri-bhāṣya*, I, i, 3 and II, ii, 35.

2. *Tattvamuktākalāpa*, Chap. III, v. 24.

He refers to Kumārila respectfully.<sup>1</sup> He adopts the Prābhākara views on several issues. He fully incorporates the doctrine of *svataḥ-prāmāṇya-vāda*. He adopts the thesis that the Vedas are impersonal and eternal documents. On some points he differs from the prevalent Mīmāṃsā conceptions.

(i) The Mīmāṃsā school does not seem to concede the pre-eminence of the *Upaniṣads* in the body of Vedic revelation.

(ii) It seems to attach primary efficacy to *karma* in the matter of effecting man's spiritual liberation.

(iii) In the conception of the *Ātman* and self-luminosity of knowledge the two wings of the school do not seem to come up to the Viśiṣṭādvaita point of view.

(iv) In the enunciation of the metaphysical categories, the concept of causation and the enumeration and explanation of *pramāṇas*, the school shows considerable uncertainty and borrows freely from other schools, particularly Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.

(v) The one point of the Mīmāṃsā theory that Rāmānuja discusses fairly fully<sup>1</sup> concerns the import of the Vedic revelation. In spite of the fact that he subscribes to a large number of the canons of Vedic exegesis set forth by the school, he chooses to differ radically on this point. The Mīmāṃsā theorists seem to have held that the primary import of revelation was the presentation of practical imperatives for man to act upon and not the affirmation of the nature of reality. Rāmānuja,<sup>2</sup> following all the other schools of Vedānta, puts up a strong defence in favour of the metaphysical import of the Vedic testimony. A great deal of the psychology of language and the nature of motivation get discussed incidentally. The main concern is to rescue the Ūpaniṣadic teaching about ultimate reality from the insignificant role assigned to it in the prevalent Mīmāṃsā conception. Rāmānuja uses Mīmāṃsā, but does not submit to it. His principal guide is Bādarāyaṇa, the final authority in Vedānta.

(8) Before attempting an account of Rāmānuja's critical review of Advaita, it is desirable to have a clear idea of the encounter itself.

1. *Vedārthasaṅgraha*.

2. *Srī-bhāṣya*, I, i, 1 and *Vedārthasaṅgraha*.

Advaita Vedānta is perhaps the greatest formulation of idealistic monism in the history of human thought. The Western parallels are just approximations to its standard of philosophical quality and do not reach its height of clarity, intellectual completeness and philosophical vision. Philosophers such as Parmenides, Plotinus, Spinoza, Hegel, Schopenhauer and Bradley are all valuable by the measure of approximation they achieve. Rāmānuja is by far the first philosopher of eminence and by all standards, one of the towering and far-reaching Vedāntic theists, to engage himself in the dialectics against Advaita. The Western theists and personal idealists ranged against absolutism or idealistic monism hardly possess a comparable stature. Hence a study of Rāmānuja's dialectics against Advaita has the value and excitement of a first rate philosophical enlightenment.

The controversy in later ages of Indian thought degenerates into a wilderness of minor subtleties and is apt to lose width of perspective and the fundamentals at issue. But Rāmānuja meets Advaita at its source, as it were, and deals with only the creative and pioneering masters of the tradition, such as Gauḍapāda, Maṇḍana Miśra, Śaṅkara, Sureśvara, Padmapāda, Vācaspati Miśra, Prakāśātman and Vimuktātman. Sudarśana Sūri and Vedānta Deśika know of some later Advaitins of eminence also. So the altitude of controversy is as high as could be wished for. As remarked by more than one non-partisan scholar in the field, Rāmānuja excels in the presentation of the Advaitic case, from the point of view of accuracy, logical substantiation, and completeness of the condensation of essentials. One of them observes: "A test of the degree of fairness with which he (Rāmānuja) accomplishes this task may be found in the fact that one may easily find this presentation of the Advaita more persuasive than Śaṅkara's own un-systematic exposition."<sup>1</sup>

A review of Rāmānuja's full discussion of Advaita is surely out of the question. All that can be compressed is just a rapid notice of the leading lines of thought so as to facilitate the emergence of Rāmānuja's own specific philosophic position into full view.

The first and ultimate assertion of Advaita is the reality of Brahman. Brahman is the fundamental and infinite ontological

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1. Max Hunter Harrison, *Hindu Monism and Pluralism*, p. 291.



verity. The concept, it should be realized, revolutionizes the entire philosophic scene. It is true that the *Upaniṣads* provisionally clothe Brahman with theistic attributes, making it the creator, preserver and refuge of the universe and as something that differs from individual souls and the physical world. But this is a preamble to be set aside eventually. The physical world is phenomenal and does not have any substantial ontological status. The jīva or individual self is a hybrid entity, being one with Brahman in its essential nature but appearing different from it owing to phenomenal encrustations derived from the phenomenal world. So there are no three metaphysical entities ultimately. It is so much of a unity that it should not be invested with the differentiating character of personality or individuality, and the distinction between substance and attribute in its nature is also untenable. Hence it is described as '*nirguṇa*', attributeless, separating it sharply from the God of theism. The reality of Brahman needs no proof, for it is one in substance with our consciousness which is the substratum of all; proving, and for that matter negating it, is also an exercise of consciousness. This infinite consciousness is describable as joy or bliss, for non-duality is the essence of bliss.

Accounting for the appearance of the phenomenal world and the individuality of the so-called individual self is certainly a problem. Dismissal calls for the explanation of the presentation of what is thus dismissed. The principle called *māyā* or *avidyā* or both is posited as responsible for the concealment of the real and presentation of the unreal.

The final goal of life, the *summum bonum*, lies in the experiential realization on the part of the individual of his non-difference from Brahman. That is the termination of the illusion of human bondage.

This unjustifiably brief summary of Advaita is, perhaps, enough for purposes of following Rāmānuja's criticism. The criticism can be conveniently focused on the cardinal concepts, Brahman and *māyā*.

Before taking up a brief statement of Rāmānuja's criticism, it seems necessary to eliminate a prevalent misconception. It is often said that Śaṅkara's Absolute may satisfy reason, but does not meet

the requirements of the yearning of the human heart. Hence Rāmānuja propounded a philosophy suited to the sentiments of the lowlands of humanity and gave a God that could feed and nourish the soul of the emotional aspirant. It may be that Śaṅkara's Absolute does not meet the demands of the yearning devotee. Even that concession is of doubtful validity. It may also be that Rāmānuja's God brings emotional fulfilment. But to say that Rāmānuja's critical reaction to Advaita was just inspired by this non-logical or non-intellectual motivation is a piece of historical non-sense. His primary opposition was on the plane of reason, and if the religiously and emotionally satisfying character of his thought was pointed out, he would have, perhaps, argued, as he does in the *samanvayādhikaraṇa* of *Śrī-bhāṣya* that it is the highest truth that could meet the demands of the human heart. The soul of man filled with truth is truly filled. This misreading of Rāmānuja's polemics should be set aside once for all. There is the other equally fallacious characterization of Śaṅkara's Absolute as the intuitional highest and Rāmānuja's God as the logical highest. Both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja are protagonists of both intellect and intuition, and cheap categorizations of the two philosophers and mystics in terms carrying an unspoken comparative estimate should be avoided.

Now to turn to Rāmānuja's examination of Śaṅkara's position.

Brahman is no doubt the ultimate metaphysical principle. To regard it as attributeless or without adjectival determination is to banish it from the realm of reality. No mode of knowing, perception, reason or scripture can establish the reality of such an entity. Intuitional experience, if there be such a thing, should make it known as something transcending the other ways of knowing. Such transcendence itself is a differentiating feature. While all experience is apparently of objects distinguished by respective characters, proving that an object is not such requires the discernment of some authentic features in it as the ground of the proof. Further, what is misconstrued in mundane experience, can be the object of the correcting apprehension, only if it discloses features cancelling the misconstruction. The core of perceptual experience, be it determinate or indeterminate, must be a judgment about a point of reality in terms of some characterization. The implication of reasoning is doubly so. It is

the attribution of a consequent character to an existent on the antecedent basis of a character apprehended in it. The Advaitin's view that Brahman is beyond verbal expression tacitly admits the scope of verbal testimony as constituted of the object as characterized. Whether the *Upaniṣads* posit an attributeless Brahman will engage us in the sequel.

Therefore the concept of a '*nirviśeṣa*' or '*nirguṇa*' Brahman is that of a non-entity. Even the identification of Brahman with consciousness cannot save the situation. Consciousness itself is a highly determinate factor. In the first place, it is revelatory of an object or objects, and it is by virtue of this potency that it is claimed to be self-revelatory. What is revelatory of all else, it is argued, must be self-revelatory. The objective factor renders the revelatory consciousness conditioned thereby. It is self-revelatory in the sense that it immediately manifests itself to the self in the act of manifesting the object to it, not needing another revelatory process and is thus conditioned by the self. The self to which both the object and the revelatory consciousness present themselves is itself a self-affirming reality, not needing any other mediation or consciousness to be aware of itself. The self is a personality aware of itself, and aware of the objective realm, through an awareness that is self-manifesting to it. Thus identity with consciousness, if it is a fact, would render Brahman richly determinate and rule out, at the very root, the supposition of its indeterminate and attributeless being. The merely material object is poor in quality, lacking as it does awareness; cognitive consciousness is richer, for it renders its object and itself cognizable to the self and the self is qualitatively richest in the context as it knows itself, knows the cognitive consciousness directly and knows also the object of the latter through its mediation.

The postulate of *māyā* involves two points. In the first place, the world of physical reality, change and multiplicity of objects and also the observed plurality of individual selves are held unreal. Secondly, the factor of *māyā* or *avidyā* is held accountable for the pressing presentation of this whole realm of the unreal. Rāmānuja counters both these propositions. Observability is not a mark of the unreal, for even the objects of dream-observation constitute

fragments of reality. More so is the object of unvitiated observation. Its being unvitiated is made known through non-contradiction. The principle of *svataḥ-prāmāṇya* stands rejected by such an unmitigated subjectivism. As noted against *Vijñāna-vāda*, such a subjectivism annihilates its own claim to truth. Change by itself is no mark of the unreal. Variation is not self-stultification. Early Buddhism blundered in defining the real as the changeable, and this theory is trapped in the other extreme of confounding dynamism with contradictoriness. It is possible to have a judgment with the maximum measure of non-contradiction and still the judgment might be about a datum obtaining at a passing point of time. The denial of multiplicity through a critique of the very concept of 'difference' is disproved by Rāmānuja by a refutation of that critique.<sup>1</sup> We need not go into details but only note the drift of the polemics.

The hypothesis of cosmic nescience receives elaborate consideration from Rāmānuja. In the *Śrī-bhāṣya* in the *mahāsiddhānta* devoted to the criticism of Advaita, he develops seven objections against it. This is a justly famous discussion. We can only enunciate the crucial points of the seven-fold argument.

(i) Nescience needs an intelligent seat or victim for it to happen. The victim in the case cannot be the absolute spirit for the very nature of the latter is self-luminosity and antagonism to misconstruction. It cannot be the finite individual, for the latter emerges as a consequence of the operation of nescience.

(ii) Nescience is supposed to cover up the real for misrepresentation to arise as a consequence. But concealing or covering up is to obstruct or prevent revelation. As the spirit is of the essence of self-revelation, concealing it must mean its annihilation. As it is indivisible, this must be total.

(iii) The effect of nescience is held to be the presentation of what is neither real nor unreal. This is an impossible middle position between contradictory alternatives.

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1. *Śrī-bhāṣya*, I, i, 1 and *Vedārthasaṅgraha*.

(iv) The ontological status of nescience requires specific enunciation. It cannot be phenomenal, for all phenomenal presentation is built on its basis. It cannot be noumenal, for, in that case, it must either be identical with the only noumenal entity posited or there should be duality of ultimates. Either Brahman is nescience or it is not one without a second.

(v) There is no ground for positing it. The author of the *Vivaraṇa* has framed several proofs for it. Rāmānuja quotes the entire argument and finds every proof fallacious.

(vi) The termination of nescience is inconceivable on the postulates of Advaita. The termination of it is itself a phenomenal event set up by another nescience. There can be no perishing of the nescience series.

(vii) What destroys nescience must either fall outside Brahman, in which case it is part of what nescience itself projects, or be one with Brahman, in which case as Brahman is an eternal actuality, nescience and its effects must have stood eternally destroyed.

Rāmānuja further develops his criticism bringing to focus the metaphysical pronouncements of the *Upaniṣads*, for, they constitute the fundamental authority for Vedānta. In this connection some important corrective clarifications are to be made.

(a) Rāmānuja keeps apart his criticism of Advaita in terms of reason from the exegetical criticism. He attaches primary significance to the first. He says in one important discussion<sup>1</sup> that even conformity to the sacred scripture cannot validate an intrinsically irrational doctrine. If the hard choice was forced upon him to accept the doctrine or reject the scripture, he makes clear that he would embrace the second alternative.

(b) In the choice of texts for discussion in this connection, he attends primarily to the apparently Advaitic texts. Though in the formulation of his final philosophical standpoint, he seeks to do full justice to all texts, including those that are specially favourable to that standpoint, in his polemical confrontation with Advaita he pays

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1. *Srī-bhāṣya*, *ānandamayādhikaraṇa*, I, i, 13.

exclusive and elaborate attention to the Upaniṣadic declarations that are held highest in Advaita and seem to accord sanction to that school to the utmost.

(c) He discovers and it is a happy discovery for him that all the principal Upaniṣadic passages relied upon in Advaita refuse to yield the philosophy sought to be derived from them.

We can only indicate in a very summary fashion his treatment of the passages. The passages that speak of Brahman as *nirguṇa* just mean, if we examine the contexts, that it is free from material properties and those that are of the nature of imperfection. The very passages have affirmative glorifications and also specify precisely the attributes negated of the Supreme. Definitions of Brahman such as the *Tattirīya* text, 'the real, knowledge and infinite', the *Aitareya* description of it as 'supreme consciousness', and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* calling it 'distinctive knowledge and bliss' only signify the defining attributes and do deny neither the substantive being of Brahman nor its other attributes. It is also untenable to take them in a negative sense, denying the very attributes ascribed to it. In Upaniṣadic parlance essential attributes are often mentioned in the place of the substantives.

The passages such as '*neti, neti*' and those that refer to the ineffability and inconceivability of Brahman do not assert its absolute inaccessibility to thought and speech, but the inadequacy of our characterization of it. This is a very effective way of conveying the infinite. Incidentally, infinitude does not mean the absence of other entities altogether, but the absence of other entities, not included and not sustained by it. All-inclusiveness is the primary significance of infinitude. This direction of interpretation is justified on the ground that the reality or unreality of other entities is to be described by the evidence presenting them (*dharmi-grāhaka-māna*) and not by a definition of Brahman as 'infinite'<sup>1</sup>. The positive interpretation in the sense of inclusiveness secures its veracity by itself, by just completing what the evidence in favour of the other entities convey about them. The Infinite is a completing and not a cancelling concept. There

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1. *Sṛi-bhāṣya*, I, i, 2, and II, i, 15 and *Srūtaprakāśikā* thereon.

are, of course, many pronouncements scattered through almost all the *Upaniṣads* denying plurality. If the related contexts are scrutinized, it becomes clear that in them Brahman is said to assimilate all diversity of existences as a part or effect of itself and therefore the negation of plurality should be legitimately construed as negating a plurality of entities as not subsumed under that scheme of integration. Plurality as such is not negated, but only plurality as not included in the all-embracing totality of divine existence is rightly negated. The most important passages in the *Upaniṣads* declaring that Brahman is the same as the individual self, as the famous '*Tattvamasi*' does, are decisive in the context. Rāmānuja devotes extensive exegetical attention to this particular passage. By a thorough examination of the whole chapter in the concerned *Upaniṣad*, Rāmānuja advances the interpretation that the passage just signifies that Brahman is the ground and sustaining principle of the whole cosmos and also the inner soul of the individual soul itself. The world-soul has graciously lodged itself within the soul of man. '*Tattvam asi*' is the declaration of this supreme truth. The passage implies no attributeless absolute, no unreality of the world and no fictitious character of the individual finite personality. It is no case of a world-sublating immanence, but a world-upholding immanence. All similar passages like '*Aham brahmāsmi*' call for a similar elucidation.

No interpretative ingenuity can squeeze out of the *Upaniṣads* the required doctrine of *māyā*. There are only one or two uses of the word *māyā*, and in them it signifies wondrous power. The passage in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* is itself a quotation from the *Ṛgveda*,<sup>1</sup> and in that ancient text the Deity is said to be resplendent through *māyā*. Illusion is a calamity or a distortion. It cannot constitute an instrument of splendour. The absolute Spirit cannot be associated with 'delusions of grandeur' as either the subject or the object. The standard Advaitic sense of *māyā* as a power that conceals, as unspiritual, as something to be overcome and as subject to elimination does not suit this early usage adopted in the *Upaniṣad*.<sup>2</sup> It is true that the *Upaniṣads* speak a great deal about *avidyā*. But this *avidyā* is the cause of man's bondage and not the source of the cosmos. Bondage itself,

1. *Ṛgveda*, 4th Aṣṭaka, 6th maṇḍala, 7th Adhyāya, Sūktas 18 and 19.

2. *Vivaraṇa*, p. 211 (Banaras edition).

the sum total of evil, is no unreality. *Avidyā* in the sense of ignorance of Brahman involves the individual in a real chain of real evils, unworthy of his potentialities and high destiny. The curative process is no less an ontological verity.

Liberation, therefore, cannot lie merely in a correction of perspective but high, sustained and integrated endeavour of the whole soul of man, which the *Gītā* calls *bhakti*. More of this later.

Such, in brief, is Rāmānuja's elucidation of the *Upaniṣadic* evidence supposed to present the doctrine of Advaita.



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## THE METAPHYSICS OF VISISTADVAITA

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The orientation of Rāmānuja's philosophy and his critical reaction to other currents of philosophy which we have noted somewhat releases us into a direct consideration of the fundamentals of his philosophy. The last discussion of the import of the monistic proclamations of the *Upaniṣads* furnishes a natural point of transition to his constructive thesis. He is a Vedāntin, and the philosophy he propounds is claimed to be built up on the teachings of the *Upaniṣads*.

This naturally requires some recapitulation of his epistemological position. We must be clear with regard to what he takes as the sources of his philosophical insight. We have already seen that he is adverse on strongly expressed grounds to the denunciation of empirical knowledge gathered through perception. He is equally emphatic that empirical knowledge is a part, only a part, of the edifice of knowledge. Reason, signified by terms such as *anumāna* or *tarka* is also a veritcal pathway to truth. There is no anti-intellectualism in Viśiṣṭādvaita. The familiar attacks on reasoning framed by the Cārvāka, later Buddhism and Śrī Harṣa are all decisively answerable. The Nyāya account of reason can stand with further refinements and in the definitive form in which it is restated in Viśiṣṭādvaita. But rationalism is not the last rung in the ladder of knowledge. There are super-sensuous and therefore super-rational realities access to which has to be gained by another way of knowing. That way of knowing is through *śabda* or testimony. Following the Mīmāṃsakas

and other Vedāntins, there is an affirmation of the truth of the impersonal revelation embodied in the *Vedas*. This is the all-transcending and all-completing source of knowledge. Its validity is testified to by the application of the principle of *svataḥ-prāmāṇya*, and that in so far as it goes beyond the deliverances of the two other *pramāṇas* and is also free from contradiction from them. It answers the basic questions of philosophy unanswered by them and unanswerable in their plane, and imparts to knowledge integration and comprehensiveness. There is compulsiveness in this *pramāṇa* by virtue of the criteria of self-evidence, non-contradiction, positive coherence and the ideal of completeness. In the *Vedas* themselves the earlier section apparently concerns itself with ultimate issues only indirectly whatever be its undoubted metaphysical and mystical background and intimations. The *Upaniṣads*, on the other hand, directly and by explicit intention devote themselves to the articulation of ultimate philosophical truth. Sudarśana Sūri sees this fact in the very etymological derivation of the term '*upaniṣad*' and Rāmānuja holds that Brahman, the supreme reality, is distinctly and effulgently revealed in them. '*Vidiṣṭa*' is his expression. Hence the word *Vedānta* is applied to them and sometimes by the *Upaniṣads* themselves. In the interpretation of the *Upaniṣads* Rāmānuja claims that he is following two canons.<sup>9</sup> They must be taken in their totality as expounding a single integrated doctrine and as divesting no part or aspect of their teaching of primacy of signification. This is in contradistinction to some other interpretations, which not merely negate the truth of other *pramāṇas* but also negate the truth-value of certain texts of the *Upaniṣads* themselves or assign to them lower truth-value. Sometimes the same text is stratified into the teachings of lower and higher wisdom. There are interpreters who glorify certain types of texts and struggle to read a secondary or figurative import into other types. This, according to Rāmānuja, is not being fair to the accepted revelation. He also points out that there is a substantial degree of mutual implication and any one type of teaching stressed exclusively discloses gaps and want of intelligibility. Pursuing this

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1. *Srutaprakāśikā* on the second invocatory verse of *Śrī-bhāṣya*

2. *Śrī-Śaṣṭya* invocation.

3. *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*.

logic Rāmānuja takes up all types of *Upaniṣadic* teaching, be they affirmations of Brahman's transcendence or immanence, of the unity of reality or plurality, of the unity between the individual self and God or their distinction, of the glory of Divine attributes or the denial of attributes, and discovers in each type an equally significant aspect of ultimate truth and sees in the aggregate of texts the presentation of an organically unified conception of ultimate reality. With this interpretative perspective he formulates his version of *Vedānta*.

The single theme of *Vedānta* is Brahman. Brahman, according to Rāmānuja, is the reality which is infinite, all-perfect in itself<sup>1</sup> and is such that imparts perfection to finite individuals. Infinitude means eternal being, all-pervasiveness and all-inclusiveness in the sense that every other entity—we shall presently see that there are other entities—is sustained in its being through the permeating presence of Brahman in it.<sup>2</sup> The *Upaniṣads* speak of it as *sat*, *satya*, *satyasya satyam*, as its existence is unconditioned and absolute. It is also infinite consciousness, in the sense of being a knower who eternally and immediately apprehends all. It is no mere awareness but a self-affirming and all-cognizing Spirit. It is the supreme self or personality. Hereafter we may speak of Brahman in terms suitable to personality. Brahman is free from all imperfection, for the very devotion to Brahman brings about perfection. It does not have the mutability of mere matter and the infirmities of finite self-hood. These features imply a further fact. Brahman must be of the nature of joy, delight or bliss. Bliss comes of a full exercise of the self's nature by way of comprehension; and the contemplation of the infinite by itself or by another, is the essence of bliss. These five characterizations of Brahman, as *satya*, *jñāna*, *ānanda*, *nirmala* and *ananta*, define the basic being or substantial essence of Brahman. This is *svarūpa-nirūpaṇa*.<sup>3</sup>

Now this *svarūpa* carries an infinitude of attributes of the nature perfection. Many attributes of Brahman are spoken of in the *Upaniṣads* with ardour, *ādara*, according to Rāmānuja.<sup>4</sup> The attri-

1. *Śrī-bhāṣya*, I, i, 1.

2. *Śrī-bhāṣya*, I, i, 2.

3. *Śrī-bhāṣya*, III, iii, 13.

4. *Śrī-bhāṣya*, III, iii, 39.

butes are given a six-fold classification by *Pāncarātra*. Vedānta Deśika opines that they are reducible, in the final analysis, to *jñāna* and *śakti*.<sup>1</sup> A problem in connection with attributes must be faced at this stage. Why posit attributes? How are the attributes related to the substantive being, *svarūpa*?

What exists is to be learnt through our means of knowing. "*Mānādhīnā meyasiddhiḥ*." All our means of knowing point to reality as determined by attributes or characteristics. When some attributes are denied of the concerned object, the clearly discerned attributes of it should supply the basis for the denial. When we correct our misconceptions about anything, we do so compelled by our cognition of its character which is incompatible with the misconception of being true. Thus in both affirmative and negative judgments a 'that' is always characterized by a 'what'. So if reality is to be construed by the deliverance of our modes of knowledge, the concept of reality as characterized by attributes is inescapable. To be real is to be determined by qualitative features. Even self-consciousness is awareness of the self as exercising awareness.<sup>2</sup> When the *Upaniṣads* speak of Brahman as 'attributeless,' they deny of it qualities constitutive of imperfections. The three *guṇas* of Sāṅkhya do not belong to Brahman. This interpretation is governed by the two-fold consideration<sup>3</sup> that there are explicit denials of imperfections particularizing the general characterization as 'attributeless,' and they abound in positive attribution of excellences. That is why the *Brahma-sūtra* freely speaks of the *guṇa* and *dharma* of the ultimate reality.<sup>4</sup>

A wholly unnecessary confusion prevails over the relation of *guṇa* to *guṇi*, or *dharma* to *darmi*. The attribute must be other than the substance in order to make a difference to it. It is the '*ittham*' of the '*idam*'. But it cannot be different in the sense of being ontologically or epistemically separate from it, calling for a linking category

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1. *Nyāyapariśuddhi*, 6th chapt.

2. *Śri-bhāṣya*, I, i, 1.

3. *Sāmānya-viśeṣa-nyāya* and *utsargāpavāda-nyāya*.

4. For instance : II, i, 36; I, i, 12; I, ii, 2; I, ii, 15; I, ii, 79.

such as *samavāya*. In its very nature it subsists in the substance being inseparable from it in reality and thought. This is the situation to which the concept of '*aprithaksiddhi*' is applied. Inseparability and distinction are the differentia of the attribute, without which no substance can be a reality.

Śaṅkara seems to concede the case for the qualitative determinateness of Brahman in his justification of Vedāntic inquiry. The Brahman being one with Ātman is self-established in our primordial self-awareness, and still there is considerable disagreement among thinkers with regard to the specific characterization of Brahman. Hence for purposes of resolving the dispute and determining the right characterization of Brahman, '*viśeṣa*,' the inquiry is held to be necessary. The argument does not discountenance the '*viśeṣa*' altogether.<sup>1</sup>

The qualities of the Supreme principle are literally infinite, and when thought and speech fail, it is this abundance of qualitative perfection that baffles them. The qualities lend themselves to some kind of classification.

There are, in the first place, qualities that go to constitute Brahman's majesty and unimaginable height of greatness. Such are omniscience and omnipotence and infinitude itself. They are together described as *paratva*. There are again qualities that signify the love, compassion and grace of the Supreme. These are called collectively the *saṃlābhya* of Brahman; On the pattern of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, it is also common to classify the attributes into four types. There are those that are expressed in the sovereignty, the ultimate and undivided causality of the cosmos, on the part of Brahman. He is the sole power and substance from the metaphysical point of view. He or it also transcends every type of limitation, deficiency and evil, characteristic of matter and the finite spirits. Brahman has every perfection implied in its being, the final power sublimating the finite self to perfection. Lastly, Brahman is such that experiential attainment of it constitutes that perfection. Vedānta Deśika names these four sets *kāraṇatvam*, *abādhyatvam*, *upāyatvam* and *upeyatā*, corresponding to the four chapters of the *Brahma-sūtra*.<sup>2</sup> These varied classifications of divine attributes do not introduce a tension or

1. *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, I, i, 1.

2. *Rahasya-traya-sāra*, *Mūla-mantra* chapter.

discord into the Divine, for they supplement each other. *Paratva*, as Vedānta Deśika points out, becomes a defect,<sup>1</sup> if it does not issue in love and compassion; and mere compassion not backed by *paratva* is an affliction to both the subject and object.<sup>2</sup> Both divine might and divine mercy are necessary for the purpose of 'soul-making'; only their fusion can actualize the conservation of values.

In addition to these majesty-attributes and grace-attributes, if we may simplify their designations, Rāmānuja posits aesthetic attributes.<sup>3</sup> This is a striking novelty and he asserts that the Vedāntic scriptures are unambiguous and emphatic on the point. He finds no difficulty in putting together the aesthetic descriptions of Brahman in the *Upaniṣads* themselves and does not rely merely on the semi-mythological and semi-anthropomorphic accounts of God's beauty in the later *Purāṇas* and *Āgamas*. After all, the beauty of nature and the sublimity of the human soul, the aesthetic aspects of finite existences, are meagre intimations of the Divine shining through them. This is a well-expressed doctrine of the *Gītā* itself.<sup>4</sup> Matter in its true metaphysical character is not undivine, and beauty itself is not a physical property. There is surely a 'natural - supernaturalism' even in earthly beauty. Nothing but the semitic prejudice could treat this extension of the aesthetic category to Divinity as strange or objectionable. Tirumangai Ālvār, says Vedānta Deśika, was a *dehātma-vādin* about God.<sup>5</sup>

Thus far, we have attempted to gather the doctrine about the central and undivided metaphysical ultimate, Brahman. We have seen that it abounds in an infinity of glorious attributes.

Now we have to descend to a consideration of the lower field of reality consisting of material existence and finite souls. It is Rāmānuja's characteristic doctrine that they also form a realm of attributes qualifying Brahman. In fact, there is only one substantive reality, with the normal attributes like knowledge and love, and the

1. *Dayāśataka*, 15.

2. *Rahasya-traya-sāra*, Chapt. 23.

3. *Śrī-bhāṣya*, I, i, 12, and *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*.

4. Chapter 10.

5. *Rahasyatraya-sāra*, Chapt. 28.

realm of finite realities also constituting its attributes. The whole expanse of reality consists of one divine substance with all else inclusive of the finites forming its adjectival circumference. Hence this school is legitimately named *Viśiṣṭa-advaita*, a theory that holds reality to consist of a single subject with all else as its predicates. We will go into this idea of the finite reality as adjectival to the infinite in some detail later on. Now, we shall consider broadly the finite reals.

One part of finite reality consists of the physical or insentient realm of being. For Rāmānuja, it is undeniably real and the arguments of later Buddhism and Advaita refuting its reality are fallacious. While it is not all that is real, it is an irreducible ontological principle. It consists of three constituents, *Suddha-sattva* (*Nitya-vibhūti*, celestial matter without the anti-spiritual potentialities of *rajas* and *tamas*); Time or *Kāla*—which is no illusion—exercising great power in the world we know, but wholly subdued in the eternal order of Divine manifestation; and mundane nature, characterized by *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The first division is posited on the ground of Scriptural testimony which cannot be explained away. The last is what constitutes our nature and all Nature-philosophy concerns that.

A number of categories listed in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika as qualifying the physical, such as *Karma*, *Sāmānya*, *Viśeṣa* and *Samavāya* are eliminated in this school, and only the Sāṅkhya category of three *guṇas* is admitted along with the well-known five sense-qualities. Two more are added, *Samyoga* and *Śakti*. The entire group of these subsidiary categories are named '*adravya*', non-substance. The physical substance is one as maintained by the Sāṅkhya school, and it is said to be subject to evolution more or less as pictured in Sāṅkhya. The senses fall into the realm of effects and they are eleven including those of action and mind. The elements which are five are products of the unitary source and have subtle and gross forms. They become objects of perception after being suitably mixed up by way of *pañcīkaraṇa*. By *prāṇa* is meant the principle of life and it is no separate principle but air itself in a special functional configuration sustaining the life-process. The evolution is primary in the sense of emergence of the elementals and secondary and gross in the sense of the origi-

nation of the worlds and the living creature in them. This cosmological account is nothing very special to the school. What is special is the specification of the ontological status of physical nature. It is a teleological order produced, sustained and periodically withdrawn, by God, forming his sportive splendour, *līlā-vibhūti*, and is designed for the perfection of the finite souls still struggling for the attainment of God. His aesthetic creativity and compassionate concern are the primary springs of the cosmic process. This physical order has Brahman as its central moving factor, its very soul, and exists, endures and varies as He operates it to that effect. This dependence makes it adjectival to Him, His *viśeṣaṇa*. It moves from causal states to those of effects. Causation is conceived on Sāṅkhya lines as a continuous process of self-transformation. In this connection there is a problem. Rāmānuja regards God as the all-sufficient cause of the world-order, its efficient and material cause. The material cause has to undergo modification in the process of causation. Does Brahman also change? The answer lies in our conception of the effect in question. The effect, considered in its fullness, is the manifest world, not in itself, but as embedded in and ensouled by Brahman. Brahman embodied in the gross universe is the full effect. Of that, Brahman containing within Himself the universe in its subtle state, is the cause. The totality of Brahman with the subtle universe transforms Himself into Brahman with the gross universe.<sup>1</sup> There is no materialization of Brahman and no mutation of a physical kind. Brahman indwelling the world in both states retains His fundamental nature and the only change attributable to Him is the change that He chooses to maintain it in mere potentiality in the causal state and to bring it into manifestation in the other. The direction of His cosmic control varies but there is no alteration of substance. The implicated variation is a form of divine perfection and adorable glory, *kalyāṇaguṇa*.

The other division of finite reality, named *parāprakṛti* in the *Gītā* consists of the finite selves. The finite self is a reality, not a function or product of matter and not also a distorted presentation or misconstruction of Brahman. It is a distinct and irreducible metaphysical principle. As in the case of nature, it should be added at once,

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1. *Śrī-bhāṣya*, I, iv, 23, till 28, particularly 27.



that it is a part of reality, sustained, and actuated by the infinite God-head and subserving the Divine in an adjectival capacity. It reveals itself to itself in ineradicable self-consciousness and thus constitutes the metaphysical ego, not to be confounded with the degenerate ego which identifies itself with the not-self. The metaphysical self is a personality and it is in this character that it admits of philosophical proof. What lacks personality belongs to the category of the unspiritual.<sup>1</sup> It is said to be atomic not in the sense that it is a material particle but in that it has no spatial dimension and is also finite. While it is self-affirming consciousness, it also exercises consciousness by way of knowing in relation to the rest of existence, the supreme Being, other finite selves and the material world. This outward aspect of consciousness is called *dharmabhūta-jñāna*, adjectival knowledge, the substantive knowledge being the consciousness of the self by itself. The latter is no self-contradiction in cognition, while such an identity of the object, may very well be self-contradictory in the realm of action. *Dharma-bhūta-jñāna* is an eternal attribute of the self admitting of decrease and increase in its range of operation in the case of the finite self. In the condition of *saṁsāra*, when the self is involved in evil and transmigration from life to life according to its *karma*, the knowledge in question is attenuated. In the blessedness of salvation it expands to infinity apprehending God and His glories. All modes of knowing investigated in epistemology are specific forms of *dharmabhūta-jñāna* itself. It is a substance in that it admits of such modifications, but is inalienably an attribute of the self.<sup>2</sup> A substance being an attribute is a recognized possibility in Viśiṣṭādvaita. This happens in all cases of inalienably dependent substances. In addition to cognition, *dharmabhūta-jñāna* expresses itself as volition and emotion. These three functions of consciousness are not separate faculties but organically continuous workings of the single power of consciousness.<sup>3</sup> In volition, the finite self enjoys autonomy and freedom of initiative, with which it is endowed by God for purposes of fulfilling itself through pursuits of self-chosen values. The freedom of the finite individual is not a limitation of divine sovereignty but a

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1. *Śrī-bhāṣya*, I, i, 1.

2. *Śrī-bhāṣya*, I, i, 1.

3. *Vedārthasaṅgraha*.

consequence of it.<sup>1</sup> God wills the emergence of willing individuals. This is a proof of the fullness of His creative prowess. He is a Creator of creators. There is no 'soul-making' without the self itself shaping its destiny, without the impediments of a compulsory bondage or even compulsory redemption. There is a plurality of finite selves. All the principles of individuation, such as the diversities of *dharma-bhūta-jñāna*, and the non-participation in one another's experience are inherent in the metaphysical self. Between the body and the soul, it is the soul that constitutes the principle of individuation. While the manyness of individual selves is a metaphysical and enduring fact, their inequalities are not so. They are adventitious being part of the vicissitudes of *saṁsāra*. The restrictions and gradation of *dharma-bhūta-jñāna* obtain only in the stage of bondage, and emancipation from it must bring about the state of complete and natural equality. In its inward metaphysical nature every *jīva* is equal to every other *jīva* in respect of fundamental constitution, powers and possibilities.<sup>2</sup>

There are three classes of souls in spite of this basic equality. There are souls that are eternally free, and they enjoy the rapturous union with God through all eternity. They are called *Nityas* or *Nityasūris*. The postulation of this category of souls is entirely owing to scriptural declarations to that effect. There are souls that have passed through the life in bondage and have attained liberation by the grace of God. They are called *Muktas*. There are souls still in bondage, *Baddhas*, and they have to work for emancipation. There are no souls predetermined for eternal, damnation 'condemned by an accursed nature'. Viśiṣṭādvaita takes up the conception of bondage as standardized by the *Upaniṣads* and the *Brahma-sūtra*. The doctrine of *karma* and rebirth is admitted, and the mechanics of rebirth as detailed in the major *Upaniṣads*, such as *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chāndogya* and *Kauṣītaki* receives necessary clarifications and co-ordination on the lines laid down by the *Sūtra*. While the essential principles are capable of philosophical formulation, the eschatological description is admitted simply on scriptural authority. The soul as such is unoriginated and eternal. But in its mundane and unregenerate career it passes through the cycles of births and deaths. While

1. *Śrutaprakāśikā*, II, iii, 41.

2. For instance, *Gītā-bhāṣya*, chapters V and VI.

the whole of bondage is a fictitious evil for Advaita, the Viśiṣṭādvaitin, holding as he does that bondage is real and requires methods of cure over and above simple enlightenment, attaches a more literal value to the scriptural accounts of transmigration. In his picture of salvation also, considerable eschatology pertaining to the liberation-bound soul's passage beyond embodiment till he attains the final state of blessedness, is accorded serious consideration and acceptance on the lines indicated in the relevant *Upaniṣadic* passages.

The final thought with which we can conclude this account of the finite individual according to Viśiṣṭādvaita is its insistence that *jīva*, along with nature, is an adjectival dimension of the supreme Ātman and is ensouled by him. Nature and the souls together constitute the body of God. Fuller treatment of this central thought must be attempted in the sequel.

Incidentally, this seems to be a proper place to put together all the ideas that Rāmānuja takes over exclusively from the scriptures and for which no contradiction or confirmation is possible from other *pramāṇas*. They are such that no indirect philosophical justification is available except that discarding a part of the scripture, while we rely on other parts, is illogical. The case is not only so much on some other doctrines such as Brahman being *saguṇa*, Brahman's causality of the world, the distinctness of the *jīva* from the body and so on. In those other cases, rejection of the scriptural affirmation leads to other contradictions, in addition to the untenability of admitting the *śruti* in parts. This, perhaps, is the purely theological part of Viśiṣṭādvaita. The doctrines concerned are the attribution of beauty of form to Brahman, the recognition of a realm of celestial matter, *Suddhasattva* or *Nitya-vibhūti*, a class of individual souls in beginningless freedom, *Nitya-sūris*, and the eschatology of transmigration and that of emancipation. May be, there is a profound symbolism in all this. The *Brahma-sūtra* sets aside the literal interpretation of some of the elements mentioned in connection with the process of the departure of the release-bound *jīva*. The principle through which the whole position can be defended is stated surprisingly by Śaṅkara himself, the least theological of the Vedāntic commentators. If a scriptural declaration agrees with

other *pramāṇas*, it is merely a reiteration and cannot be taken as the original teaching of it. If it conflicts with the other *pramāṇas*, it must be given a secondary or figurative interpretation. If it is such that it neither repeats nor conflicts with them, and if we have respect for the deliverance of the *pramāṇa*, we must take it as truth and not in any secondary signification. This, perhaps, gives the key to the right adjudgment of the matter.<sup>1</sup>

We must now attempt a satisfactory statement of the fundamental contribution of Rāmānuja to the understanding of the relation of the finite reals, (the individual selves and physical nature) to the supreme reality, Brahman. The problem presses for consideration for two reasons. The finite reals are not unreal or phenomenal. They are metaphysical verities. In the second place, they cannot be accorded reality as independent and self-sufficient entities. Such a position is contrary to the whole spirit and letter of the *Upaniṣads*, according to Rāmānuja.<sup>2</sup> Vedānta stands for a unitary conception of reality. There are not merely passages denouncing radical pluralism; there are affirmations to the effect that the knowing of Brahman includes a knowledge of all existence. There are also straight and explicit statements that 'Brahman is all this', 'Brahman ensouls all this', '*Puruṣa* is all this'. The only theistic thesis possible is that though there are three reals, one is self-dependent and on it all else depend. Brahman is the self-determining Supreme and it is also all-determining, and the rest of the reals is utterly subordinate to it, drawing substance and significance from it. Even this normal theistic solution leaves on our hand three factors, Brahman, the attributes of Brahman involved in the maintenance of the subordinate entities, and the essential substantive *svarūpa* of the entities in question. The subordination of the finite might strike as external domination, not sufficiently bringing out the unitary character of the situation. It is in this context that Rāmānuja propounds his unique doctrine. He holds that the subordinate reals themselves form an attributive dimension of Brahman. They fall into the expanse of his existence, as his other well-known attributes like knowledge and power do, in an adjectival status and capacity. It is not that

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1. *Brahma-sūtra*, I, iii, 33.

2. *Śrī-bhāṣya*, I, i, 1.

Brahman with His attributes *and* the finite reals exist. There is no 'and' in this case. Brahman alone exists with His attributes and the *jīva* and *jagat*, *cit* and *acit*, are also His attributes. Brahman resplendent with His attributes is the sole reality. The problem of the finite limiting the infinite does not arise, for the finite itself is a constitutive factor in the totality of the infinite in all its glory and dimensions.<sup>1</sup>

Rāmānuja adopts several modes of explaining this fact. He says, for instance, that the *cit* and *acit* are the *prakāra* or *viśeṣaṇa* of Brahman and that the latter is the *prakārin* or *viśeṣya*, the two together constituting a *viśiṣṭa*. This is employing the logical categories of subject and predicate. He says of the world that it is *dharmasthāniya*<sup>2</sup> in relation to God. This is using the categories of substance and attribute. Again, using dynamic categories, he says the world of finites is the *śakti* and Brahman, the subject wielding that power. He also says that the finites form a part or *aṁśa* and that the Supreme is the whole, *aṁśin*, because the totality of the divine reality contains its adjectival modes as its own constituents.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps, the most characteristic and inclusive manner of setting forth the metaphysical position is to regard the world of selves and matter as the body and God as the Soul embodied in it. By body, Rāmānuja understands what is supported, controlled and appropriated by a personal spirit and that spirit is the soul in the situation. The world is the *ādheya*, *niyāmya*, and *śeṣa* of God; and God is the *ādhāra*, *niyantā*, and *śeṣī*.<sup>4</sup> This relation is coterminous with the reality of the body. Apart from it, the body loses its being and intelligibility. This is the *aprthak-siddha* relation. It also implies the ideas of pervasion and inward control. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* speaks of Brahman as *antaryāmin*. This is commanding immanence. Another way of expressing the position is adopted in the *Gītā* in the conception of the world as the '*Vibhūti*' of God,<sup>5</sup> meaning glory or splendour.

1. *Śrī-bhāṣya*, II, i, 6 and I, i, 2.

2. "*Kalyāṇaguṇaikadeśa*". *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*.

3. *Śrī-bhāṣya*, II, iii, 42 and III, ii, 28.

4. *Vedārtha-saṅgraha* and *Śrī-bhāṣya*, II, i, 9.

5. Chapt. X.

This conception secures two points of capital philosophical importance. The soul, in its intrinsic nature, transcends the body and is untouched by the distinctive vicissitudes of the body like birth and death. Similarly, God is unaffected by the mutability of matter and the infirmities of the finite self. The body of creatures affects their souls also, not because of the relation but because the embodiment is brought about by the binding *karma* of the soul concerned. As for the supreme soul, as it is not embodied the corrupting force of *karma*, the freedom from the evil influences of the body<sup>1</sup> stands. Embodiment in this case is unmixed glory and not a retributive incarnation. So this transcendence is the one point of importance. The second point is that the monism of the philosophy is thoroughly maintained as the body is a part of the embodied soul, and the supreme reality understood in all its riches of attributes and glories, includes in itself its cosmic body. The popular conception that the soul is a part of the body must be corrected, as in reality the body is a part of the embodied soul. Vedānta Deśika puts the central thought in a memorable aphorism, "*aśeṣa-cidacit-prakāram brahmaikameva tattvam*".<sup>2</sup>

There is one problem that may arise in connection with the utter immanence of God in all creatures and also his omnipotence and goodness. That is the problem of evil. The problem must be properly localized or cornered to see the Viśiṣṭādvaitic manner or its solution. There is no evil, however understood, in God's intrinsic nature as such, as He is transcendent. There is no evil in matter as such, except to a soul that sees matter as uninhabited by the Divine. In the *jīvātman*, there is no evil in its intrinsic nature, which carries all the potency for perfection and whose full manifestation is what constitutes perfection or salvation. There is no evil for the finite self which is either a *Mukta* or *Nitya*. There is evil only in the experience of the *Baddha*-soul in its state of bondage. Evil is of two forms, suffering and sin, described normally as natural evil and moral evil. The evil of suffering is explained in Hindu thought in general as the consequence of moral evil. This is the import of the doctrine of *karma*. The essence of moral evil or sin lies in the pursuit of a Godless career, shutting out, as it were, the consciousness of God and

1. *Srī-bhāṣya*, II, i, 14.

2. First sentence in *Nyāya-siddhāntajana*. Contrast this with Madhva's aphorism, "*svatantram asvatantram dvividham tattvamucyate*."

seeking values other than God. That a life founded on God-negation should involve the soul in question in suffering is a negative demonstration of the fact that all peace and joy are to be found in God only. One cannot refuse God and have the blessedness and fulfilment that could flow only from communion with Him. This is determined by the very nature of things, the nature of the soul, the nature of God and the nature of ultimate value. One cannot have the infinite good through a negation of the infinite itself. Then the problem shifts to sin, or God-negation itself. How can an individual so intimately embedded in God and forming His inseparable embodiment or mode indulge in the defilement of denying Him or unawareness of Him? Does not the imperfection of attribute imply the imperfection of the substance, especially when there is eternal inseparability as posited? Now the *jīvātman* is a spirit and not a material tool of God; and to be a spirit is to be a free agent with moral freedom. This freedom also is an endowment from God but it is freedom in reality. This freedom is a necessary requirement for the soul to become all that it has to become and all that it has in it to become. Spiritual perfection is an attainment through creative effort. An imposed perfection is the perfection of matter and not that of a soul. A *puruṣārtha* is a goal to be sought freely by a *puruṣa*. Freedom implies the possibility of choosing other ends and seeing through their unworthiness through the hard but convincing way of experiment and the consequent wisdom of experience. Evil as sin is the exploitation of this possibility. It is not the final term in the process, for it invokes the corrective frustration through suffering. In this connection, suffering almost becomes a blessing, whatever be its immediate impact.<sup>1</sup> In the meanwhile, sin at the time of its perpetration must belong exclusively to the spiritual agent, for that is the precise significance of freedom, the sole accountability of the agent.<sup>2</sup> That the agent intimately belongs to God is not abrogated, but the fact of being the agent would be unreal if the choice of sin were to extend beyond the agent. God is no inactive background, as he sustains the individual in his creative initiative and envelops him with corrective pressures and persuasive inducements. *All this heavy preparation is for making him make the right choice by his own individual initiative and experimental*

1. Vedānta Deśika, *Nyāsa-tīlaka*, 14.

2. *Śrutaprakāśikā* on II, i, 3 and II, iii, 41.

*wisdom.* For a large and profound enough theism, evil presents no intractable problem.

With this necessarily slight indication of the way in which the problem of evil is sought to be met in Viśiṣṭādvaita, we may return to the topic of God's transcendence-immanence brought out in the characteristic doctrine that God is the infinite soul and the entire universe of finite reality consisting of the three kinds of *acit*, and the three classes of *cit*, constitutes the body of that soul. It is exhibited by Rāmānuja as hinted and assumed in the entire Vedic literature and that the *Upaniṣads* proclaim this central truth with all possible weight, throughout the great texts and particularly in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, in the peak-dialogue. The later religious literature such as the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyana*, *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*, *Āgamas*, and even the *Smṛtis* such as that of Manu and Āpastamba reiterate it as a deliberate summary of the *Upaniṣadic* philosophy.

With this, perhaps, we may conclude the metaphysics of Viśiṣṭādvaita. While doing so it is appropriate to mention that the esoteric tradition in Viśiṣṭādvaita maintains that the concept of Nārāyaṇa contains within itself the entire metaphysical philosophy of Brahman. Nārāyaṇa abides in all and envelops all. He is the spring and sustaining ground of all finite existence. He abounds in perfections beyond number and utterly beyond every trace of evil. He is such that the finite soul should realize its ultimate good through His paramount instrumentality. It is in the vision of Him, absolute and eternal, that its ultimate good really lies. There is no metaphysical truth not contained in the elucidation of this designation of Brahman. It is in the fitness of things that the *Upaniṣad* proclaims "*Nārāyaṇaṇaṁ brahma, tattvam nārāyaṇaḥ paraḥ*". The terms such as *Sat*, *Akṣara*, *Puruṣa*, *Brahman*, *Jyoti*, *Ātman*, merge in this, as it carries to completion their intended import. It is the supreme name of the supreme Reality.<sup>1</sup>

1. *Śrī-bhāṣya* on III, iii, 43 and *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*. *Rahasyatraya-sāra* on *Mūlamantra* and also *Mumukṣupada* of Pillai Lokācārya on *Mūlamantra* with Varavaramuni's commentary.



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## PURUSARTHA

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(1) That philosophy is no mere understanding of reality however well authenticated' is an established, conviction in Indian philosophy. It is not merely *pramāṇa-śāstra* and *tattv-śāstra*. It is also an inquiry into the goals of life, which too press for rational scrutiny and considered formulation in the light of all the means of knowing bearing on the issue. It is a *puruṣārtha-śāstra* also. It cannot stop even there. It is no mere discernment of the ends of life, however systematic and critical it may be, but a right and equally thorough adjudgement of the ways of achieving the philosophically framed ideals. Thus, it is also a *sādhana-śāstra*, the science of the pathways of realization, open to us, of the ends in question. It may turn out, in the final analysis, that the reality, goal and the means <sup>1</sup>, tend to fuse into a single principle, but in the preliminary inquiry, they are to be investigated into as three spheres of philosophical concern. Viśiṣṭādvaita, therefore, holds that the complete function of philosophy is the thorough determination of *tattva*, *hita* meanings *sādhana*, and *puruṣārtha*. In the order of actualisation the *sādhana* precedes *puruṣārtha*, but in that of conception, the *puru-ṣārtha* has priority.

(2) There is a conventional scheme of four values in the Indian tradition, *dharma artha* and *kāma* and *mokṣa*. The first three are called *trivarga* and the last is named *āpavarga*. There is also a traditional valuation of them. *Artha* and *kāma* are transitory goods and are partial, if not actually trivial, fulfilments of life. *Dharma*, conceived

1. As the import of 'Nārāyaṇa' is held to signify.

as a plan for procuring them, shares their limitations. If pursued as an end in itself, it is subsumed under *mokṣa* as a means therefor. It is, under that circumstance, not an external good to be procured but a development of life ; and the zenith of such development is *mokṣa* itself. So what remains is the supreme *puruṣārtha* and that is *mokṣa*, which can be indifferently translated as liberation, salvation or perfection depending on the metaphysical predilection of the exposition.

(3) In connection with *mokṣa*, there are about four conceptions. It may be looked upon as an extension of earthy life and maximization of hedonistic values unmixed with suffering and pain, such a mixture being the law in the life we know. The Indian tradition outgrew this conception and categorized it as *svarga*, a state lower than *mokṣa*. It too is transitory and trivial and consists in having external goods and not the making of the self into what it should be in itself. This critical attitude to the hedonistic version of *mokṣa* reminds us of the consistent and repeated rejection by Jesus of a coarse and earthly interpretation of the Kingdom of God. Popular religion finds it hard to transcend the conception. The second interpretation of the idea of *mokṣa* is what early Buddhism seems to have offered. Its concept of *nirvāṇa* easily lends itself to a nihilistic interpretation. According to Buddhism, the basic error of life leading inevitably to suffering is the belief in a hard and enduring ego and all the consequent clings to life. With the renunciation of this illusion one achieves the dissolution of the ego and the resulting peace that 'passeth understanding'. The view is a straight antithesis to the hedonistic concept of ideal life. The third interpretation of *mokṣa* favoured prominently by Jainism and Sāṅkhya-Yoga is that it consists in self-recovery. The self in man has entangled itself in matter and this captivity in matter, real or imaginary, has brought about the manifold ills of life. Escape or emancipation from the disabling association is salvation called appropriately *kaivalya*. The fourth conception of *mokṣa* is what we find in the *Upaniṣads*, the *Gītā*, the *Brahma-sūtra* and all the schools of Vedānta. It defines *mokṣa* as the attainment of Brahman, *Brahma-prāpti* or integration of the individual with the supreme Spirit. There are alternative ways of describing this goal. That will concern us later. The essential point to note at this stage is that while *kaivalya* is an ego-centric view of *mokṣa*, this is a theo-centric understanding of the ideal. All schools

of Vedānta regard this as life eternal and life abundant, in and through the realization of Brahman. Viśiṣṭādvaita subscribes to this fourth conception of *mokṣa*, with its own specific clarifications.

(4) Consistent with its metaphysical fundamentals, Viśiṣṭādvaita interprets God-attainment or integration with Brahman not as a dissolution of the individuality, or rather the illusion of individuality, in the integral totality that Brahman is, but as a contemplative experience or better still, a vision of Brahman. The essence of bondage is the unawareness of God and the ascent to that awareness by way of immediate apprehension is the supreme consummation of life. In this state, the individual as individual is not obliterated but recovers and fulfills his authentic individuality. The innate differentia of the soul is the power to know, and this excellence reaches its completion of exercise in the knowing of Brahman, the infinite real. The finite self comes to possess itself, as it were, when it experiences, in the fullest sense of experiencing, the all-commanding reality of realities. The apparent dualism of the situation, the *individual subject* experiencing the *absolute subject as an object* must be cleared. There are two circumstances that mitigate the dualism. The soul contemplating God achieves likeness to its object in respect of purity, knowledge and bliss. This is hinted in several scriptural texts, such as the *Muṇḍaka* and the *Gītā*. This likeness is not total, for the cosmic powers of God or His power of Grace to save souls are not attained by the individual even in the state of self-perfection.<sup>1</sup> There is kinship without total equation in perfection. Further, this likeness is itself a gift of God, and Rāmānuja says that the recognition of this state attained by the *jīva*, must make him adore God all the more for this incomprehensible bountifulness.<sup>2</sup> In other words, there is likeness, which does not take away the metaphysical eminence of the *Paramātman*. The addition of powers to the *jīva* is valued by him because they make him capable of a less inadequate appreciation of God. There is another fundamental fact about this experiential attainment of God. The individual has a vision of God resplendent in all His attributes and glories. It is an inclusive perceptual cognition. In that unified vision he sees himself also as

1. *Srī-bhāṣya*, IV, iv, 17.

2. *Srī-bhāṣya*, I, iii, 19.

an integral constituent in the glory of God.<sup>1</sup> In his awareness of himself he finds added the all-important dimension of his being an inseparable part or body of God. So the object includes the subject in the unitive experience, and the subject discovers itself as lodged in the totality of the life-imparting God-head. There is no bifurcation of subject and object, though the individuality of the percipient and the eminence of the perceived are fully maintained. This unique unification is achieved through the inclusion of the individual in the expanse of the being of God.

(5) A further characteristic of this experience must receive attention. In the *Chândogya*, we are told that there is no joy in the experience of the finite, and that only the experience of the infinite is joy. The *Taittiriya* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* are emphatic that Brahman is of the nature of joy, meaning that to contemplate on it is to attain bliss, *ānanda*. This is a cardinal doctrine of the *Upaniṣads*. The right word for an experience of an object from which joy springs up is '*prīti*' or love. Rāmānuja insists that the *anubhava* of Brahman inevitably emerges as *prīti*.

(6) The implication of this characterization of the unitive vision as *prīti* is to be seen. The state of love adds to the life of the percipient immeasurably. But he wants that his life must not be looked upon as an end in itself. It should serve the object of love and must enhance its glory. The reality of love is measured not by how much the subject appropriates the object, but by how much it seeks to be appropriated by the object. This self-submission for the appropriation by God is the essential nature of the experience of this love. It is not a passive state of satiation but a dynamic and restless eagerness to do the work of God, whatever may be the individual's worth and whatever may be the self-sufficiency of the Divine beloved. This active manifestation of love in service is what is called by Rāmānuja *kaiṅkarya*, *seva* or *śeṣa-bhāva*. This is a further dimension of the unitive experience. We have already seen that *śeṣatva* is an important connotation of *śarīra*. Rāmānuja defines this *śeṣatva* or subsidiary character as "being of value only by virtue of contribution to the principal entity."<sup>2</sup> In this ultimate experience

1. *Śrī-bhāṣya*, IV, iv, 4.

2. *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*.

that character comes to fruition, and the individual soul in question fulfils itself in joyful service or joyful eagerness for the service of its lord and master. It prays for competence to render worthy service, and God, in His infinite love, values, in spite of His metaphysical self-sufficiency, the love that issues in the service, whatever be its quantitative aspect.<sup>1</sup> God's valuation of the creatures' love towards Him is unspeakably great. Rāmānuja makes these observations about love, both that which is towards and that from God in his commentary on the *Gīta*.<sup>2</sup>

The entire nature of *mokṣa* is presented in the *Saranāgati-gadya* in a long compound word :

परिपूर्णनवरतनित्यविशदतमानन्यप्रयोजनानवधिकातिशयप्रियभगवदनुभवजनितान-  
वधिकातिशयप्रीतिकारिताशेषावस्थोचिताशेषशेषतैकरतिरूपनित्यकैक्य.....।

(7) Thus far we have concerned ourselves with the inner experiential content of *mokṣa*. There are two incidental questions. When does the state of *mokṣa* start to be? Does it have an end or termination? To the first question, Rāmānuja answers that *mokṣa* in its full reality arises when the soul passes beyond its present embodiment, brought about by its *karma*. But still an anticipatory foretaste of it is possible even before.<sup>3</sup> This conclusion is urged because bondage is a fact and its termination should be awaited for the initiation of the fuller life. If bondage were purely an illusion, the actual enlightenment about the truth of things must mark the beginning of the higher state.

In Advaita a complication is introduced in the concept of *jīvan-mukti*, regarded as liberation 'even when one is still embodied'. If bondage is an illusion, the liberation from it must be full liberation. Why add the prefix '*jīvat*', as if the bodily existence has to await an end other than the ending of the illusion? There are different interpretations of the *jīvan-mukti* concept in the varied schools of Advaita. Rāmānuja argues that the concept of *jīvan-mukti* is inconsistent with the theory of the falsity of the embodied condition.<sup>4</sup> In

1. Govinda Raja on *Rāmāyaṇa*, Kiṣkinda Kāṇḍa, Chap. IV, verse 11.
2. For instance, Chap. IX, verse 34.
3. '*Mukta-praya*'. Vedānta Deśika on *Saranāgati-gadya*.
4. *Sri-bhāṣya*, I, i, 4.

Viṣiṣṭādvāita, it is maintained that the earthly life of the embodied soul may contain seeds of *mokṣa*, in its spiritual experience, which almost amounts to *mokṣa*. For such an experience, Vedānta Deśika actually prays in his *Dayāśataka*.<sup>1</sup> A further idea is there in this school that the intensity of the longing for *mokṣa* in a *prapanna* determines the duration of its postponement. If it is of the utmost degree in a *prapanna*, immediate liberation takes place. Anyway, *mokṣa* arises as and when the impediments are annihilated. The impediments are *avidyā*, *karma*, *vāsanā*, *ruṁ* and *prakṛti-sambandha*.

(8) Now, we have seen that *mokṣa* is the ending of all ills, the release of the natural abundance of the individual soul and its rapturous union with the Supreme by way of apprehension, love and service. Its beginnings are there undoubtedly in mundane life and its full magnitude is attained after the complete cessation of impediments. Now the problem is: how can this state of perfect life *attained in time be eternal*? What happens in time must be subject to eventual termination. There are three points of answer to this question. Release consists of the removal of hindrances that keep in suppression the innate nature of the soul, that is pressing for manifestation. It is not an artificial product of circumstances, with whose disappearance it may terminate. Nature freed from obstructions can very well be perpetual and ever lasting, though its liberation into manifestation takes place in time. What is generated may be perishable, but what is freed from obscuration, even though existing allthrough, is not bound to pass out of existence for that reason. Secondly, what is attained may be lost, if the subject ceases to be interested in it, and moves out to another value. Such a contingency is impossible in the present situation, for, a soul awakened into the fullness of its understanding and freed from all binding factors, cannot but cling to *mokṣa*, such being the nature of that supremely blissful state. Ignoring and deviation from the highest good can take place only in a spiritually darkened soul. As for God, He, whose grace is the ultimate means of release, whose compassion and love are eternal

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1. *Dayāśataka*, 100.

to Him, whose love for devotees is beyond all measure and to whom the liberated soul is precious beyond words and of infinite value, cannot abandon him who has reached Him. Such a self-stultification is impossible for the Divinity. It is with this assertion of the eternity of *mokṣa* that the *Śrī-bhāṣya* concludes.

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## SADHANA

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(1) In this fifth and final section of our study of Viṣiṣṭādvaita, we are to sketch the theory of *hita* or *sādhana* propounded in the school. It is to be expected that it is determined greatly by the conception of reality, *tattva* and the ideal of life posited as the highest *puruṣārtha*. The system makes a distinction between two factors in *sādhana*. One is what is already existing, an accomplished fact, as the ontological resource to be operated in the process of achievement. This is rightly called *siddhōpāya*. The *siddhōpāya* in man's progress to perfection is God Himself, with His perfections such as infinite knowledge, infinite power and infinite compassion. No human effort could even start, and for that matter, no man or world could even be, without this foundational reality. That effort could effectuate fruition is also due to the divine maintenance of the law of causation. That in the moral sphere there is a reign of justice, so that deed determines destiny, is also an expression of the basic spiritual power making for conservation of values. Therefore this resource-reality, *siddhōpāya*, must be admitted of necessity, and that reality is God in His plenitude.

But this, though fundamental, operates through the co-operation of the moral agent by way of appropriate effort. If the *siddhōpāya* were not merely necessary and fundamental but also sufficient to actualize the *summum bonum*, in view of the eternal compassion of God and His omniscience and infinite potency, there would have been no bondage at all. Man's perfection would be an eternally realized fact. Further, a perfection that is established without the indivi-



dual's aspiration and endeavour for it would not be perfection of a living spirit, but that of a finished material tool, which just receives passively its perfection and does not build it up through its own initiative. Hence another factor in the body of the means or *upāya* must also be admitted, and that is human effort, called appropriately *sādhyaopāya*. It is true that *siddhopāya* makes *sādhyaopāya* possible, but without the latter's supplementation, there is no completeness of *sādhana*. When the *sādhyaopāya* is completed, it is also true that *siddhopāya* is drawn by it and fulfils the object of the *sādhana*. In other words, when human effort reaches its zenith of performance, it is the responsive and consequent grace or *prasāda* of God that crowns the aspirant's life with the perfection aspired after. So both at the beginning and the end, *siddhopāya* dominates and in the interval *sādhyaopāya* works. It is necessary absolutely, but definitely supplementary or accessory.

(2) The nature of the *sādhyaopāya*, human endeavour, must be clearly determined. As we have seen, bondage or *saṁsāra* is a fact, however contingent and liable to termination it may be. Its essence is the unawareness of God, *avidyā* with regard to the supreme reality and all the consequences of that failure. To eliminate this, what is required is the knowledge, rather the vision, of God. The *Upaniṣads* declare that God cannot be gained except by His own self-revelation. He has to choose to reveal Himself. He has to be invoked to that effect. That seems to be the ultimate point of human effort. The nature of the invocation is utmost love, love that spurns all other ends and hungers and thirsts for the experience of the Divine with the utmost intensity of longing that the human soul is capable of. God reveals Himself to those to whom He is the life of their lives, the soul of their souls, and who without union with Him pass, as it were, into nothingness. Infinite compassion there may be eternally in Him, but self-revelation to the love-less souls pursuing other ends, is no compassion and does not constitute a *puruṣārtha*. Hence the condition to be fulfilled on the part of man to gain the experiential presence of God is *bhakti*.

(3) By *bhakti* is meant a form of knowledge, for ultimately love is just knowledge of what is a source of joy to the knower. This is not the knowledge of the scriptures. That knowledge, however

necessary, is lower. It is not the knowledge gained through divine self-revelation. That would constitute the very end pursued, the *phala* itself. *Bhakti* must be an intermediate type, rising beyond and on the basis of scriptural revelation, but striving after the final perceptual experience. So it is properly called meditation. It is a conscious and willed practice of *upāsana* or *dhyāna*, intense concentration characterized by intense love. When the *Upaniṣads* say that only *jñāna* liberates, they signify this exercise of intelligence by way of perpetual, ever-growing and imaginatively vivid meditation on God with utmost love towards the object and therefore towards the meditation itself. So *bhakti*, in short, is living meditation on God. The maturation of it in point of magnitude and of depth brings about the saving illumination.

(4) This height or depth of *bhakti* presupposes another element of knowledge. This knowledge may be called self-knowledge. A self seeks values in accordance with what it understands itself to be. If it understands itself to be a physical organism, it seeks materialistic values. If it understands itself to be a self-subsistent entity, it seeks non-involvement with alien factors. If it understands itself to be a spirit and a spirit whose being is hitched to God and that in Him lies its final life consummation, it cannot but seek the ecstasy of union with Him. Hence as a pre-condition of seeking God by way of *bhakti*, there must be authentic self-intuition and utmost certainty with regard to what constitutes the self's perfection. This intuitive self-understanding is to be achieved thorough a contemplative process which the *Gītā* calls *jñāna-yoga*.

(5) Now the *Gītā* and the rest of spiritual literature maintain that contemplativeness is prevented, thwarted and suppressed by the psycho-physical conditions generated by *rajas* and *tamas*. Unless they are subdued and finally eliminated, the tranquil pursuit of steady-mindedness is out of the question. To put down these antagonistic tendencies, which are all too powerful for the normal man, the *Gītā* prescribes *karma-yoga*. *Karma*, as such, may itself be action engineered by these tendencies themselves. But *karma-yoga* as defined and developed in the *Gītā* works as an infallible remedy against the hindrances to contemplativeness. The essence of *karma-yoga* is to discard concern for the personal and ego-centric fruits to the agent

and to work devotedly with the sole interest in the action as such. With the ripening of *karma-yoga* there is a steady and progressive purification of the psychic system furnishing thus the right matrix for *jñāna-yoga*.

In the elucidation of *karma-yoga*, Rāmānuja following the *Gītā* insists on a three-fold renunciation and consecration of action, ritualistic, religious and secular in its totality. There must be the fixed ascription of all action to God as its real agent and no egoistic agency must be claimed. The action as such must be regarded as God's own and not something to the individual. The fruits of action, whatever they be, must be dedicated to God in their entirety. That He alone is the doer, and that of works which wholly are His, and for ends solely accruing to Him, must be the basic determination (*vyavasāya*) transmuting mere *karma* into a *yoga*. When this state of consecration is consummated, the individual is set free from all that inhibits spiritual contemplativeness. Rāmānuja takes care to add that the restraints prescribed in religious literature, *sama*, *dama*, *uparati*, *titikṣā* and *samādhāna*, not merely co-exist with *karma-yoga* but also enter into the dispositional substance of *karma-yoga*. There is no conflict between *karma-yoga* and the prescribed ethical restraints. They function in fusion. When *karma-yoga* reaches its fulness, the inner element of spiritual attitude in it predominates over its external manifestation in the form of exertion. So *karma-yoga* is dominated by the inner element of *jñāna* and fulfils itself in preparing the required ground for *jñāna-yoga*.

(6) The entire plan of *sādhana*, from *karma-yoga*, through *jñāna-yoga*, to *bhakti-yoga*, presupposes a solid comprehension of spiritual truth through a devoted study of sacred revelation and connected philosophical reflection. It goes without saying that this acquisition of knowledge needs its own ethics and the informing spirit of *bhakti*, for reaching the requisite level of excellence.

(7) It remains now for us to attempt understanding another factor in *sādhana*, which is held fundamental in Viśiṣṭādvaita. This is the element of *prapatti* or *saraṇāgati*, which may be translated as surrender or taking to God for refuge. We have seen that *bhakti* is the ultimate element, the final phase of human effort, *sādhya-pāya*, for

occasioning the descent of redemptive grace that is to crown the aspirant with the accomplishment of his purpose in *sādhana*. It may so happen that an individual examines himself and finds himself unable even to start the arduous journey of *sādhana*, owing to the impediments in his nature. This is all too well-known a predicament in which a *sādhaka* may find himself. In such a situation, *prapatti* is held out as a remedy and he is promised the removal of impediments and the required competence to start his pilgrimage.

*Prapatti* in this case originates *bhakti*. There is a second type of situation in the practice of *bhakti* which may also require the remedial complement of *prapatti*. A *sādhaka* may have advanced considerably in the pathway of *bhakti* and find that his *sādhana* is deficient and that the *bhakti* he has built up is definitely incomplete for the efficacious culmination of his *sādhana*. Then *prapatti* is prescribed as a completing compliment which sets aside the consequences of the deficiencies and renders the *bhakti* accepted as a full *sādhana* and brings about the fruition in all its completion. These two are cases which subsume *prapatti* under *bhakti* as an accessory to it, and this *prapatti* is rightly named *aṅgaprapatti*. It may be remarked that all traditions of *bhakti* do admit this element of *prapatti* in some way or other in their programme of *bhakti*.

(8) Rāmānuja propounds another type of *prapatti* in his devotional works, and the tradition elaborates it a great deal. This is called *svatantra-prapatti*. When the *sādhaka* is utterly incapable of launching himself on the pathway of *bhakti*, even with the supplementation of *prapatti*, he can resort to *prapatti*, itself wholly. He, by his surrender, appropriates the *siddhōpāya* itself in the place *bhakti*. What his uncertain capability by way of *bhakti* could not accomplish for him is sought to be gained through the resources abounding in God as His attributes. This is but right, for God, to whose care he consigns his spiritual destiny, is an all-sufficient and unfailing means, provided one does not restrict the divine operation by partial trust in it and by utilizing other means also side by side. When the surrender is absolute, God takes the situation wholly in His hands, as it were, and releases His redemptive grace in unimpeded abundance. This

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1. *Gītā*, Chapter xviii, verse 66.

doctrine of *prapatti* is special to the tradition. Vedānta Deśika compares it to 'simhi-stanya'.<sup>1</sup>

The qualifications for *prapatti* are stipulated. If one does not have the knowledge required for *bhakti*, or does not have the practical ability to engage in it, or if his yearning for the goal has reached the breaking point and he cannot wait for the progressive maturation of *bhakti* or if his equipment or station in life is such that he cannot fulfil the conditions of *bhakti* laid down in the *sāstras*, he can resort to this autonomous *prapatti*. It may be he comes under all or some or one of these categories of *sādhakas* and thus the very incompetence for *bhakti* seems to endow him, as it were, with competence for *prapatti*. What is a disability in relation to the other *sādhanas* is a strength for adoption of *prapatti*.

While this conversion of weakness into strength in the alchemy of *prapatti* is to be noted, it is not itself left vague and indefinite. The principal factor in it and accessory factors are specified clearly and the picture of *prapatti* receives definitiveness.

The accessory factors are five.

(a) *Anukūlyasya-saṅkalpa* : The person who resorts to God in this way must resolve to be in conformity to the divine will and strive to co-operate in all that God designs. This includes the entire kingdom of souls that are objects of God's compassion and the *prapanna* must make his love cover the entire universe.

(b) *Prātikūlyasya-varjana* : Rejection of everything contrary thereto.

(c) *Ākincanya* : The full awareness of utter helplessness and total poverty of means to achieve the goal.

(d) *Mahāviśvāsa* : Immense faith in the power and goodness of God to save.

(e) *Goptr̥tva-varaṇam* : Prayer to God that He may take up the role of the Saviour.

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1. *Rahasyatraya-sāra*, Chāpt. 30.

Aided by these accessory factors, the devotee must place his spiritual responsibility and burden in God's hands. This is transfer of responsibility, called *bhara-samarpaṇa* or *bhara-nyāsa* or *ātma-nikṣepa*. This factor is the core or the principal element in *prapatti*. A single act of total surrender in this fashion is enough for the purpose. The *jīva* has to will his will away at the feet of the Lord. It is a *giving up of responsibility* and *giving it up to God*. It is a negative-positive process. Individual effort is terminated so that divine effort may replace it. Trustful passivity succeeds surrender. The *sādhaka* becomes free from burden and anxiety, and passes into the exhilaration of triumph.

(9) Such is the outline of the plan of *sādhana* according to Viśiṣṭādvaita. It is worthwhile recognizing its pervading characteristic. At every stage and in the total scheme also the spirit and procedure consist of a synthesis of two elements, both of them held essential and in the unified arrangement one of them is subordinate and accessory to the other. The Principle of 'synthesis and subordination' seems to govern the conception of *tattva* and *puruṣārtha* also.

(i) The absolute Spirit is the fundamental reality and the cosmos of finite existence is inseparably united with it in an adjectival capacity.

(ii) In the knowledge-situation the subject and predicate are ultimate and the predicate is united with the subject as its characterization. There is a difference, unification and the subordination of the *viśeṣaṇa* or *prakāra* to the *viśeṣya* or *prakārin*.

(iii) In the state of *mokṣa*, which consists of the union of the individual self with the supreme Self, the finite self enjoys the ecstasy of subservience to its Lord by way of *kainkarya*.

(iv) The two ultimate factors in *sādhana* are the grace of God and human effort, and both of them are necessary and function in unison. Between them human effort is accessory to the operation of grace.

(v) In *karma-yoga*, there is the dedication of works to God, and in the process we have both the inner element of understanding, *jñāna*, and the outer expression in action. Between the two, action is the body and the *jñāna*-factor is the soul of the full *karma-yoga*.

(vi) In the *jñāna yoga*, there is self-knowledge and also the knowledge of the self as just the *śeṣa* or subsidiary to God. Between the two, self-knowledge and knowledge of God, the first is preparatory and contributory to the second. God-knowledge is the inclusive and principal concern.

(vii) There is no separation between *jñāna* and *upāsana*—as often supposed—and *jñāna* is a contributory factor to the mode of approach constitutive of *upāsana*. *Upāsana* is *jñāna* elevated to the level of the practice of meditation.

(viii) Between *upāsana* and *bhakti*, mere *upāsana* is no good, even if it were possible, and it reaches its culmination in the ceaseless and absorbing love of God.

(ix) In *bhakti* as such, love is the predominant factor and as supplementary to it the element of surrender or *prapatti* enters. There is unification without any confusion between the whole and its constituent.

(x) In *prapatti* there is cessation of human initiative, but as a preparation for passing on the initiative entirely to the divine. The negative factor is duly subordinate to the positive aspect of submission of initiative to God, for Him to take it up and expand with His abundance to the requisite efficacy.

(10) In regard to *prapatti*, we have already noted, weakness, such as want of knowledge, of power of action, of spiritual patience and of other qualifications specified in the *śāstra*, is held up as the exact fitness for adopting it as the saving technique. It seems to be a constructive utilization of disability itself. Hence it is open to universal adoption. It is a boon to the spiritual have-nots. But a remarkable consequence follows. Being a pathway for the lower aspirant, it may be presumed that it is itself lower. Such is not the valuation of *prapatti*. Since the management and mastery of the process of liberation belong wholly to the absolute and supreme power in the situation and its efficacy flows from the abundance of His nature, and not from the paltry resources of the finite recipient of grace, this is the greater and higher way.

What is executed by the superior agent, in the present case the supreme Agent, is bound to be better, surpassingly better executed.

The substitution of the initiative of God for that of man through the initiative of man himself to that effect, will render the work of redemption perfect, even as its Author is.

In the later ages of Śrīvaiṣṇavism it is remarkable how the relative roles of the divine initiative and the human invocation of grace get clarified. The *Tengalais* seize one fundamental truth that the compassion of God is a primordial reality, not arising out of any cause inclusive of *prapatti*. It is truly *nirhetuka*, and Yāmūnācārya had this in mind when he described God as *nisargasuhr̥t*. But this eternal compassion, *dayā*, has to transform itself into *prasāda* to effectuate man's emancipation. This Yāmūna called *āśritavātsalyatvam*. This we may describe as consequent grace. Rāmānuja appropriates both the terms "*dayā*" and "*prasāda*" with all their due implications in his *śaraṇāgati-gadya*. The consequent phase of divine initiative flows from the primordial *dayā* undoubtedly, but takes the specific direction of operation in response to the opening occasioned by man's *prapatti*. *Prapatti*, therefore, is the *vyāja* for *prasāda*. This aspect of the truth is brought out splendidly in the *Vaḍaṅḷai* explanation. Thus we have the primordial compassion and consequent grace, and the transformation of the first to the second is facilitated by the intervening, indispensable but accessory, circumstance of man's total and supreme surrender.

From the religious point of view, the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja is Vaiṣṇavism. Its traditional name is Śrī-vaiṣṇavism. There is a special significance in the prefix. *Śrī* or *Lakṣmī* is the Mother-goddess sharing the divinity of her Lord, *Nārāyaṇa*, and functions eternally and pervasively with Him. The functions of cosmic sovereignty, redemptive compassion and the acceptance of the *kaiṅkarya* of the released souls are common to both the Deities and in reality they constitute a single principle. *Śrī* has a distinctive role of Her own, in addition; and she pleads the cause of creatures before *Nārāyaṇa* and prevails upon Him to exercise *prasāda*. In Her case, the law of mercy wholly supersedes that of justice. The tradition names its inclusive God-head, *Śrīman-Nārāyaṇa*. Between them, *Nārāyaṇa* is the



substantive, and *Śrī* is adjectival, translating His compassion to actuality. This status of *Śrī* is supported on the authority of the authentic Vedic hymns, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*, the *Pāñcarātra-āgama* and the religious poetry of the Ālvārs. Yāmuna, Rāmānuja, Kureṣa, Parāśara Bhaṭṭa and Vedānta Deśika have sung of the glories of *Śrī* in their sublime hymns. Among the three sacred 'secrets', (*rahasya-traya*), the middle one, called *dvaya*, explicitly embodies the surrender to and adoration of *Śrī* as preparatory to and as also constituting a part of the devotion to *Śrīman-Nārāyaṇa*. Rāmānuja's rendering of the *mantra* is "*Śrīman-Nārāyaṇa, aśaraṇya-saraṇya, ananya-śaraṇaḥ, tvat-pādāravindayugalam śaraṇamaham prapadye*".

It is appropriate that we conclude with Rāmānuja's message of *prapatti* in his own words :

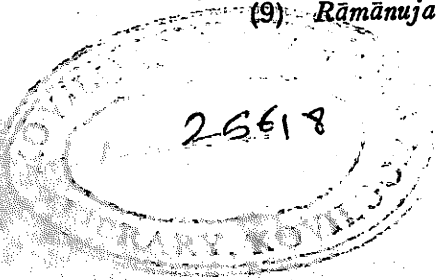
“खाद्यीन द्विविधचेतनाचेतनस्वरूपस्थितिप्रवृत्तिभेदम्, क्लेशकर्माद्यशेषदोषासंस्पृष्टम्, खाभाविकानवधिकातिशयज्ञानबलैश्वर्यवीर्यशक्तितेजःप्रभृत्यसंख्येयकल्याणगुणगणौघमहार्णवम् परमपुरुषं भगवन्तं नारायणं खामित्वेन सुहृत्त्वेन गुरुत्वेन च परिगृह्य, ऐकान्तिकात्यन्तिक तत्पादाम्बुजद्वय परिचर्यैकमनोरथः, तत्प्राप्तये च तत्पादाम्बुजद्वय प्रपत्तेरन्यत्नमे कल्पकोटि सहस्रेणापि साधनमस्तीति मन्वानः तस्यैव भगवतो नारायणस्य अखिलसत्त्वदयैकसागरस्य, अनालोचित गुणागुणाखण्डजनानुकूलामर्यादशीलवतः, खाभाविकानवधिकातिशयगुणवत्तया देवतिर्यङ्मनुष्याद्यखिलजनहृदयानन्दनस्य, आश्रितवात्सल्यैकजलधेः, भक्तजनसंश्लेषैकभोगस्य, नित्यज्ञानक्रियैश्वर्यादिभोगसामग्रीसमृद्धस्य महाविभूतेः, श्रीमतश्चरणारविन्दयुगलमनन्यात्मसंजीवनेन तद्गतसर्वभावेन शरणमनुव्रजेत् ।”

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Professor S. S. Raghavachar, born at Melkote in Karnataka, in the year, 1913, studied Philosophy at the University of Mysore under the inspiring guidance of Professor A. R. Wadia. After doing research from 1939 to 1941, he joined service in the same University in the year 1941. He retired as Senior Professor and Head of the Post-Graduate Department of Philosophy and Research in the year 1973. His principal publications comprise the following :

- (1) *The Unfolding Purpose*: Principal Miller Endowment Lectures, University of Madras.
- (2) *Durga-saptasati or Exposition of the Glory of the Divine Mother* : Indian Philosophy Congress Lectures delivered at the University of Madras.
- (3) *Paramārtha-sāra* of Abhinava Gupta. Kannada Translation and Notes
- (4) *Vedārtha Saṅgraha of Rāmānuja*: English Translation.
- (5) *Viṣṇu-tattva-nirṇaya of Madhva*: English Translation, notes and Introduction.
- (6) *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi of Sureśvara*: Introduction, English Translation and Notes.
- (7) *Introduction to Vedārtha Sangraha*.
- (8) *Rāmānuja on the Gītā*.
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