

CHAPTER II

INTUITION AND SRUTI PRAMANA

In the previous chapter we have seen that Rāmānuja contends against Advaita and other schools who hold that experience is all and that it is proved by perception and that the that revealed in perception is quality less and without any differentiation or having any parts. In this chapter further consideration of the Aparokṣajñāna which is said to be super Perception involving no mediation of inference is made.

Rāmānuja holds that inference involves the discriminating activity of the knowing mind; and surely no one denies that inference involves subject-object relation, and plurality. All that is sought is somehow to get over the limitations imposed on us by the discriminating intellect. Nor does inference show anything more than the interrelationships subsisting between individuals belonging to varying times and places and types and causality. Indeed our ratiocinating mind functions according to the laws of thought seeking synthesis of diverse facts no less imperatively than it seeks to analyse the given in perception. Its content then is nothing more than what is perceived. Perception involves an elementary reciepience, whereas inference disposed towards synthesis of the given involves greater activity of the mind. In this greater activity is involved the whole group of activities which we designate the personality, its wants, desires, memories and affections; its total being carves out of the given only such parts as stimulate its needs. Danger indeed lies here; and all faults of reasoning have their source in this. Thus the given is likely to be vitiated by the mental conditions. A pure mind devoid of all these conditions might be expected to know the real all the same. Savikalpaka involving, as it does, the activity of mind however slight, is vitiated; so also is inference. The pure perception got through effort of the activity of the mind in yoga, leads to an immediate perception or more correctly, sense-organs are not the agents of this perception or experience.

Rāmānuja refuses to recognize any distinction between perception and uparokṣa in so far as they are experiences Perception does not grant illusion; nor is granting of reality the prerogative of immediacy or non sensory cognition, as such. Rāmānuja does not use the word aparokṣa, his word being divya-pratyakṣa. Sankara creates a dualism between the practical and pure phenomenal and the transcendental, *apara* and *para*, and it stands for a new distinction between reality of the external world of matter and the Reality of the self. In reality *aparokṣa* can only mean the perfect consciousness unlimited in range and intensity due to purification of the mind and prāna (vital consciousness). If we grant that pratyakṣa gives us only the knowledge of events which are transitory and changing, and thus gives us knowledge of the external world of constant impacts between elements and actions on a huge

mechanical scale. consciousness; which is pure, gives us not only the knowledge of the particular perishing existences but also the true and unique nature of their real relations with one another. Divine perception is an apprehension of the whole, of which these crashing atoms and movements are parts. Consciousness in its limited condition, gives us knowledge of discrete data of the external world without any significant connections or unifying formula of inter relationship. The self same consciousness in its fully expanded condition gives us a fully articulated definition of reality throbbing with significance, and all fall into a unified picture as it were. Thus, consciousness, however veiled is not a giver of illusion. This is the basis of the satkhyāti theory of Rāmānuja.

Thus facts of the objective world are given to an embodied soul through perception: relations, general and particular, between these facts, are inferred or seen by the activity of thought or intellection, *vikalpa* and with the help of *vyāpti*, invariable concomitance and memory. The highest knowledge is attained neither by perceptions through sense which are particulars nor by inferences which present generalities as such, but only by super sensory perception or intuition.

To achieve even this, the 'Words' of those who have already achieved and known have to be consulted and followed. Intuition even though natural to the individual, is feeble and has to be strengthened by practice of dis-interested devotion to knowledge and to the highest purposes of the divine. Such then is the difference between the perceptive knowledge and intuitive knowledge, which we designate as insight into reality for it is neither influenced by *vyāpti* nor *karma* nor *vāsana* nor by *vyavahāra* nor disease of the sense organs. If a more clear cut distinction has to be made, we may say that the external reality is perceived, whilst the internal or the spiritual is intuited, defining external and internal as the two aspects of a thing distinct indeed from the internal and external to the subject who perceives or intuits.

Rāmānuja refuses to recognize the three degrees of reality of *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna* and *śabda*, or in advaitic terminology, *pratyakṣa*, *parokṣa* and *aparokṣa* since that would mean that we are trying to impugn the reality of each in turn, especially the reality of the data given in perception. Further it is a distinction without a difference. An identical consciousness is operative in these three phases, and in each of these three phases some aspects of the real are exhibited.

It is true that perception is of a fragment of reality, a snatch and a patch, nothing more. It does not reveal the constitutive principles of knowledge or reality. It supplies, it is true only snapshots, but even then snapshots do exhibit certain elementary relations and configurations, and these induce so to speak other extensions of the relationships with the help of principles governing perceived invariable concomitances and similarities. But the limitations under which inference suffers are serious when we consider that it has to build a superstructure on the basis

of these snatches and patches of perceptive data. Relieved from the immediate, contemplating the wide range of similar phenomena mediately or in imagination, undoubtedly there is facilitated the understanding of the principles of truth. And predictability becomes more and more sure and exact. But there are limits to this. Rāmānuja points out that despite the amount of expansion in our knowledge that intellectualizing reason or understanding might make, it can never lead to the knowledge of the highest perfection which is the limit supreme of intelligence itself.

That there is a Transcendent above the experienced has never been denied by Rāmānuja. The Transcendent can be known and experienced: this also Rāmānuja claims to be possible. But he does not admit any opposition between the consciousness that knows this and the consciousness that knows That. He avers that whilst reason or understanding infers correctly about other thing it can never infer correctly about the Whole and the Supreme Transcendent.

II

Parā vidyā or Parā jñāna

Rāmānuja accepts the idealistic view that the essence that substands or supports the whole of reality is spiritual and not material. It is the immanent principle of order, and must be considered to be the active pervasive principle of reality all over. It is the absolute permanent in the changing world. Thus the truth of all existence must be sought in this essence, supreme *rasa*. It can be said to be the cause of the entire universe or the primary base of the cosmological arguments of the theists. An inference from the nature of experience to the existence of God is said to be sufficient proof for the existence of God. Rāmānuja contends that all arguments based on cosmology and teleology are grounded on comparisons and analogies available in the fragmentary creative activities of finite beings and cannot lead to the proof of the omni-causal, omni pervasive omni-potent being at all. Further such arguments prove a substance not a personality and a spirit. The Spinozistic proof without teleology led him to substance. The cartesian proof, ontological though it was, was grounded on nothing more than belief. The teleological principle cannot prove an omniscient being. Kant's famous criticism is perfect; all these proofs at best may reveal the upper limit to the notion of cause nothing more, never a real existence.

The Nyāya argument is that God could be inferred from the conception of the most perfect intelligence required for the sake of explaining the order and design of the world and its motion and arrangement. Due to anthropomorphism inherent in common sense, the inference from the appearance of order in human creations leads

to the inference of a supreme creator other than the mechanical movements of the atoms. At the back of all creation there is intelligence. This in substance is the argument of Udayana. *Adr̥ṣṭa*, the unseen force, is a natural potency, not an intelligence like the *Nous* of *Anaxagoras*. Thus neither karma nor *adr̥ṣṭa* can explain the design, though they might explain the moving and acting. The world has a plan which no material entity, mechanical movement or inner necessity like *adr̥ṣṭa* can explain; therefore God must be postulated as an existent being, as the supreme cause of creation, whereas the atoms and *adr̥ṣṭa* are the material and instrumental causes.

Rāmānuja maintains that these proofs are not sufficient to prove the Divine. They may prove a very capable creator not the all-creator. Rāmānuja holds that God cannot be proved by perception nor by inference which depends on the former, though inference may gather in many more perceptions into its reckoning. It cannot go beyond the given in the experience. And God is not given in perception. Continuity and extensity might be inferred to a great extent but one cannot infer the existence of a supreme Intelligence. The cosmological argument cannot prove the existence of God: it may prove that it is necessary for the existence of the world that there should exist an intelligence, superior to any we know. It cannot affirm its existence though it may necessitate a presumption. And presumption is not proof. That is why it is said that the existence of God is proved by vision of Him, *sāṭṣatkāra*.

Inferential *idea* cannot involve *existence*. Existence depends on the conditions of space-time, *deśikāla-ākāra*: the existence of God transcends the conditions of space and time. God thus cannot be known through ordinary perception or by inference. Nor do all ideals or ideas involve existence. Existence is a predicate. The sky flower cannot have existence though it is an idea. It exists as an idea. Such ideas do not have a place or time. Others exist at some places and some times. Fictions such as horn of the hare and sky flower or son of a barren woman, involving intrinsic contradiction, are ideas outside space time and causal conditions.

The Divine being thus is outside the pale of the *pramāṇas* of perception and *anumāna* and *upamāna*. □ Whom he chooses by him He is perceived□.¹ □Not by austerities nor yet by mere *jñāna* nor yet by works, but by the grace of the Divine only can the Highest be known, understood and entered". Then alone does the Perfect Being become for the individual a real being: till then it should be content to believe in it as a regulative idea- a demand of practical reason or morality, and only possess a precarious existence as an idea constantly getting modifications as to its satisfying character as the most real and most perfect That there is a higher demand on us, the *parama-puruṣārtha*, which means the demand to conceive of and perceive and

¹ Katha Up. I.ii.23, Yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyaḥ

experience the actual existence of the Most Perfect, even here and now, apart from which we have no place and being, entails the faith that fulfils itself as vision, as intuitive realisation of His bring or Existence. The moral demand and the religious imperative compel our cognition to struggle forward beyond the immediate sensory and the mediate inferential towards the Vision that comes from Grace.

III

Why should śabda be accepted as absolute authority

The Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā is a variety of *tarka*, reasoning. It assists the śabda pramāṇa. Its main topic is the discovery of the correct apparatus by which we could arrive at Vedic truth. It is more interested in the truth that we have known through communication through sound or rather hearing (śruti), than through the other ways of knowing, like pratyakṣa, anumāna and upamāna. The pramāṇas pertaining to the latter three are discussed at length by the Nyāya schools of thought. The schools of Nyāya and their metaphysical and practical allies the Vaiśeṣika, Yoga and Buddhistic schools, did not seriously consider the nature of the śabdapramāṇa, the authoritative utterances received by seers from a transcendent source. In most cases they were content to define *śabda-pramāṇa* as *āpta-vacana*, meaning by *āpta* one who is interested in the ultimate welfare of the individual. It bears a very wide connotation since any one could be classed as an *āpta*, and it may not refer to the Vedas, upaniṣads and the other works which were deemed by the Vedantins to be specially of the wise, seers. All the other systems were more rationalistic in the sense that their reasoning was not based on the scriptural texts of the Vedas, though some unorthodox schools do hold allegiance to other texts of their human teachers such as Gotama Buddha and Mahavira jaina. At the best, words such as theirs represented such general tendencies of speculation as did not find adequate representation in the Vedas not to speak of their being merely snatches without coherence from the body of the Doctrine propounded by the Vedas and upanisads. It was the intention of the Vedānta Sūtras to undertake a comprehensive synthetic unification of the entire body of the Scriptural Teaching so as to enable us to know the Divine²: To the rationalists however the Vedas and the upanisads meant nothing more than one of the many interpretations of life's problems.

Almost the first question that faces us here is, why should we consider that the faults inherent in the other pramāṇas do not inhere in this śruti or śabda-pramāṇa? There is needed an analysis of the conditions of error which vitiate others and not this Traditional knowledge may be considered to yield a coherent picture of reality in so far as it has been on the anvil of criticism for a pretty long period in the history of

² V.S.I.i.4 Tattu samanvayāt

experience. But there are differences in the traditions, for empirical traditions are different indeed from the ritualistic which has formed part and parcel of all religious practices everywhere. The question is which tradition has the authentic signature of truth. Antiquity by itself does not sanction truthness of a thing. The mīmāṃsakas being rationalists - of course within the ambit of investigation into authority without denying the efficacy of the rituals at all- were at pains to discover the principles of analysis and synthesis, and in so doing to discover the sources of error. There are therefore, theories of error formulated by the mīmāṃsakas in addition to the absolute claim they make for the śabda-pramāṇa. We shall consider at another place in extenso the theories of perceptual and other types of error. Here the point to note is that the śabda is claimed to avoid the triple sources of error.(kāraṇa- doṣāḥ).

Nyāya Vaiśeṣika has given us the clues to the determination of what is wrong with perceptual knowledge. It has found the causes that lend to misapprehension due to the non-correspondence with reality. The defects are due to factors of senses or the mind itself, but these defects can never be known or perceived except by a reference to reality directly through action, a reference that is incapable of being made via representation or comparison. This practical test is indeed extraneous to thought but it is not by any means extraneous to reality which is amenable to both thought and action in a synthesis of conduct.

Thus everything is known not only as to what it looks to the eye, but also as to what purpose or use it can be put to, and for which it is adequate. Thus the causal principle and teleological nature of every object get proved, for they are implicit in each and every object of reality. To separate this twofold nature the thought from the practical use or content or nature of each thing, is to divorce reality of its worth and value. Illusions are resolved by the dual test rather than by any one. Indeed the cognition enforces the conduct in relation to it, is a preparation for action or use.

With regard to the theory of Prabhākara which upholds that non-discrimination, *akhyāti* is the source of error, we have to say that it does not prove or explain all error. The *anyathākhyāti* - theory of Kumārila does not either. Whether there is any one theory which exhaustively explains all error on the perceptual level of experience without taking in, in some form, both the theories of error afore-said, is a matter of grave doubt. Error in perception in the first place is due to non-discrimination and in the second place is due to the mistaking of one thing for another. In the first case, more and more discrimination will get rid of the error, but in the second case, nothing less than the practical test will avail to dissolve the error in perception. Verification of the perception is necessary to avoid error. That is to say, to act in an erroneous manner leads not to the predicted consequences or known results but to some other results and consequences. Action becomes a failure and that decides the truth about a thing's existence or rather nature, *svarūpa*. It is true that the best cure for non-observation is more observation and careful observation.

Such a thing is fruitful when there is nothing wrong about the sense organs themselves as well as with our mind which is liable to fluctuations of attention and interest, grasping greeds and potencies. When however, the sense organs are not in good condition, the test of *svataḥ pramāṇya*, self-evidence, will be found to be indeed inadequate. But metaphysically speaking almost all the theories of Indian Philosophy hold that the sense organs are products of *karma*, action, and are imperfect veiling agents, making things appear otherwise than what they are.³ Coherence of facts continuously derived from faulty conditions might get a coherence of a sort, but that does not vouchsafe that that is the only test of reality. Reality is finally to be lived and experienced. As Rāmānuja said, for the universal vision of double moon (*timiradoṣa*) on a particular island, there is no cure, even as the irremovable categorical blue spectacles of Kant can never make us perceive reality as it is in itself. As Bertrand Russell argued we can create any number of self-consistent systems of philosophy none of which bear any semblance to reality at all. The criterion of self-evidence or: self-consistency cannot avail us in these cases. Nor would it be possible to arrive at truth if every one spent a fevered existence.

However much then this might satisfy us in so far as we seek to arrive the theoretical consistency without going forward towards objects themselves in order to testify to their truth or otherwise, truth would remain an idle dream. To contend that knowledge must be full and complete before action can take place is as sane a possibility as that a man should know swimming before he learns to swim. Action and knowledge mutually correct themselves in order to facilitate greater and greater knowledge. A healthy interaction between conduct, experience and experiment, is a necessity forced upon any theory of truth.

So far then as our affirmations go, knowledge is its own testimony, provided the instruments of our cognition are all in a healthy condition, undiseased, sane and unemotional, Mīmāṃsā accepts the theory of self-evidence with the conditions we have enumerated, namely, that there should be no error or mistake in the nature of the several instruments of cognition in perception.

The senses and the must be freed from all defects. Is this condition fulfilled by any other person? Such knowledge is true only of the Veda according to Mīmāṃsā. If the source, that is the object itself, is vitiated by ambiguity, that is, if it has a

³ In Buddhism the sense organs delude by making things which are momentary, appear permanent, the atoms as having form which they do not possess, in hypostatizing objects which are inside as outside, in shewing the non-existent as existent. In Jainism we have the karma matter distorting perception. In Advaita – Vedānta there is again the action of karma and Māyā which distort the one consciousness into the appearance of many. In Rāmānuja's doctrine too this karma is an effective contracting agency which limits the ambit of perception, though it does not distort it. In Sāṃkhya and in Nyāya also Karma plays an important role as an illuding or distorting device.

plausible or possible similarity with other things as in the case of snake or rope or mirage, then the knowledge that follows upon that perception is uncertain, indefinite, frustrating and invalid. We would be forced to settle this ambiguity only by a recourse to fact, a reference which could only be by way of conduct. Thus if in the case of *akhyāti*, non-discrimination, more observation, carried out fully and scientifically cannot lead us to definite truth though it may lead us to some ways of knowing other than the purely cognitive, in the case of *anyathakhyāti*, we have to find out more and more fully the defects of sense-organs and the mind, and the ambiguity in the objects nature itself in order to get over the illusion. By doing so we arrive at the causes of error. Again it is a fact that error is a fruitful source of correct knowledge with regard to the objects other than those that we contemplate or seek to know about. Thus error leads to discovery of the properties of objects, that is to say, to knowledge as in the case of the illusion of a bent oar in water.

Thus we find that one valuable principle emerges even out of the consideration of the incidence of error, that is, it could occur only at three points, the subject, the object, and the organs: in the subject, so far as emotional samskāric or karmic or vāsana-propensities lead to non discrimination or partial observation of the given (object): in the object, in so far as it might possess ambiguity, that is to say, superficial similarity that could at first look lead to identification with another object(the fallacy of upamāna): and in the means, in so far as they have defects, natural or due to conditions of perception in the sense-organs.

In a similar manner we are enabled to discuss pramāṇas such as inference, and show that *vyāpti*, invariable concomitance, might be either superficial or intrinsic. Error would have to be detected in the *pakṣa* or in the *hetu* or *vyāpti*, or the example. The *pakṣa* is the subject, the example *udāharaṇa* is the means, the *hetu* is the objective reason *vyāpti*. Unless all these three are free from defects any true conclusion is impossible. Fallacies of *pakṣa* (*asiddhā*), of *Hetu* (*vyabhicāra*), or *virodha*, of *ādbita* and *satpratipakṣa*, could all be seen to refer to defects in the three elements of cognition.

Thus we find that in regard to the Sabda-pramāna we have to reject or rather select our well wishers on the basis of certain conditions we have laid down. All verbal testimony cannot be considered to be intuitive śabda, just as all friends and well-wishers cannot be considered to be wise; the testimony that we get must be free from the initial errors of means and source. The source must be pure and perfect: so also the means must be pure and perfect. Such śabda is true and perfect. Such is the Veda. By the grace of the Divine granted to the Rsis their visions are super sensory, untainted by the sense-organs and karma. The objects of the śabda, are untainted and true- and pure. Further to know them it is necessary to be in that receptive mood of mind wherein there is no confusion, no obsession, no inattention and no defect. Rsi-minds were in a high stage of yoga due to tapas. The truths themselves and the

rituals taught were all not creations by an intensified Consciousness, but were seen to be the: truths of eternal existence, and not man-made śabda which is the Veda, is uncreated even by God, therefore the causality of an imperfect Being for their existence is ruled out. Therefore they form a perfect document.

Such, in brief is the view entertained by the Mīmāṃsakas regarding the validity of the which is pure in regard to the three possible sources of infection; the subject, the object, and the means. Other śāstras owe their origins to human beings, temporary historical figures of humanity or even master minds. But they are vitiated by lack of perfect truth.

Śankara accepts śabda as valid testimony. But he pleads that it leads to the knowledge of the absolute pure being which is the undifferentiated consciousness⁴. Śabda is ; most close to intuitive cognition, and as such is superior to perception. "The śruti depends on direct perception (in the sphere of transcendent knowledge) for in order to be an authority, it is necessarily independent of all other authority; and smṛti plays a part analogous to that of; induction since it also derives its authority from an authority other than itself."⁵ This śabda consists of two types of texts it is said, and Śankara dichotomously divides these into the transcendental texts and the phenomenal texts. This is in the realm of knowledge texts; for there is a division into knowledge texts and ritual texts.

Rāmānuja accepts the supremacy of the Śabda even like Śankara: he does not however admit that it teaches an undifferentiated Consciousness; he does not accept the dichotomous and mutually exclusive division into transcendental (para) and phenomenal (apara,vyāvahara) texts, nor does he consider the two-fold division into knowledge-texts and ritual-texts to be mutually incompatible. They are all one

⁴ Māndukya Up.7 “ The wise think that the fourth (caturtha) which is cognizant neither of internal objects nor of external objects (in the distinctive and analytical way) nor at the same time of the one and the other (viewed synthetically and in principle) and which is not (even) a synthetic whole or integral knowledge being neither cognizant nor non-cognizant is invisible (*adṛṣṭa* and equally imperceptible by any faculty whatsoever), non active (*avyavahāra* in its immutable identity), incomprehensible (*agrāhya* since it comprises all), indefinable (alaksana since it is without any limit)-unthinkable (*acintya*, incapable of being invested with any form), indescribable (*avyapadeśya*, incapable of being qualified in any particular attribution of determination), the sole basic essence (*pratyaya-sāra*) of the self(*ātma*, present in all states), devoid of any trace of development or manifestation (prapañca upaśama, and therefore absolutely and totally liberated from the special conditions of any mode whatever of existence), fullness of peace and bliss, without duality; It is ātma(itself, beyond and independently of all conditions: (Thus) Must it be known”.

⁵ Śankara *Bhāṣya* quoted by Rene Gnonon; *Man and his becoming*

coherent structure, a single organic unity.⁶ To divide them in this manner can never lead to synthesis but to division which will constantly be at war with experience as we know it.

Śankara dichotomized the texts as pertaining to two different and even antagonistic teachings such as Karma and Brahma, saṅguṇa and nirguṇa, as phenomenally and transcendently real instructions. Śankara relegated karma and saṅguṇa to the phenomenal realm of Māyā or Avidyā which is contradictory to Jñāna and Nirguṇa. Rāmānuja holds that this dichotomy to be false and unwarranted, as it does not really show his allegiance to the unitary teaching of the Veda or its total worthiness. If it is conceded that Veda refers to two contradictory teachings we should seek a criterion that shall distinguish between them for our purposes. That would imply that a criterion other than self-evidence (*svataḥ-pranmāṇya*) would have to be framed. It means thus a refutation of self evidence, and is a subtle way of entering into scriptural thought through reasoning which is valid only within the limits of actual sensory experience (*pratyakṣa*).

It may be difficult to unify the divergent trends of the Vedic and upaniṣadic instructions. Classification into vidyās, ways of knowing: has always been welcome but dichotomous division is unfortunately not the path towards synthesis. *Samanvaya*. We have to discover a third principle from which or within which, these two phases might get a realized unity. But such a unity which holds within it two opposites is irrational and cannot be substantiated. Further if Hegel is appealed to help us in this predicament, we can remark that such an outlet is ruled out for Śankara, even if he had recourse to it, as some modern interpreters of Śankara are wont to, because the matter on which the discussion revolves does not belong to the perceptual or inferential order.

We have admitted that classification and definition are the means to understanding the several trends of thought in the Upaniṣads. But we have to note them not as contradictory to one another or annulling one another but as helping to make for an integral realization of the nature of Brahman, the ultimate reality.

Further, the doctrine of negation as affirmation is crucial to the understanding of the classification. Dichotomy believes, only in the opposition of its two terms or divisions and never admits distinctive synthesis. The use of the negative *an* or *a* or *na* only leads us to suppose that the qualification is to shew that the thing so qualified is other than and not the opposite of. This interpretation is valid in regard to the

⁶ Rāmānuja claims that Pūrvamīmāṃsā and Uttaramīmāṃsā are one śāstra. Śrī Bhāṣya, I.1.1 : Mīmāsāśāstram- “ Athāto Dharmajijñāsā ity ārabhya “ Anāvrttiśśabdādanāvrttiśśabdāt” ityevam antam sangativiśeṣeṇa viśiṣṭakramam

scriptural texts in general, because the insistence is that they form a synthetic or integral body of unitary instruction. Examples of this are furnished by the terms *A-Vidyā* which means karma. *Asambhūti* which means immortality, *A-karma* which means *Vidyā*, *A-sat* which means *Prakṛti* and *Na-iti* which means the Transcendent.

Again on the same count the karma and jñāna portions of the Vedic literature or Śabda are a synthetic body of doctrine. This is substantiated by the teaching of the Upaniṣads themselves as evidenced by the *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad* which teaches that by the one (karma) one crosses over death, and by the other (jñāna), one attains the Immortal; thus once and for all disposing of the argument for irreconcilable dichotomous divisions of the texts.

Considered in this way, the true instruction contained in the Vedas and Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads is not at all about a non dual consciousness, but only about a true Being characterized by qualities of the highest perfection. In other words, the instruction contained in the Upaniṣads is regarding the Supreme Personality.

Intuition is a fundamental type of cognition capable of apprehending the true and true only, when an individual is freed from all ignorance and karma and when he is freed from his body(deha) that is a product of karma. And Vedas alone can and do speak the voice of intuition fully and adequately. If the acceptance of śruti is to be valid, it must be valid on the ground of its experiencability in some manner by the individual. Thus the validity of the Śruti finally depends for its sanction on the experience and Vision of the Divine by the individual.⁷

According to Rāmānuja, the śrutis are eternal.⁸ They are of non-human origin (*apauruṣeya*). "The superhuman origin and the eternity of the Veda really mean that intelligent agents having perceived in their minds an impression due to previous recitation of the Veda in a fixed order of words, chapters and so on, remember and again recite it in that very same order of succession. This holds good both in regard to men and the highest Lord of all: there however is that difference between the two cases that the representation- of the Veda which the supreme person forms in his

⁷ In śrī- Rangarājastava it is claimed that Divine experience is more truly a vision than perception is. The jaina concept of vision is more or less similar to the above position. Purification of the body by the fruits of karma leads to vision or perception, pratyakṣa. According to them however sensory vision is not perception.

⁸ S.B: I.iii.29: etadeva ca vedasyāpauruṣeyatvam nityatvam ca--- cf. Adhikaraṇa Sārāvali I.i.3 “ The veda not having been made and being therefore perfect, its testimony is implicitly accepted, like the statements of a friend returning from a distance. Where any of the statements conflict with what is known from other sources, they are rejected. Similarly if the Veda makes a statement conflicting with sense perception, it should be understood in a sense as mere praise”.

own mind are spontaneous, not dependent on any impression previously made.⁹ In other words, the Vedas are universal truths of intuition or fixed immutable principles by which the Lord manifests or creates and governs the moral and physical orders of the universe. The world of the Veda so to speak is the unchanging permanent. The Lord alone is capable of spontaneously generating it. Since Vedic principles form the body of truth, they express the fundamental nature of the Lord. Creation being the real activity of the Lord, the order manifested by Him and His creation is of a fundamentally identical nature, though not of an eternally recurrent nature in so far as any particular individuals and instruments are concerned. There is no eternal recurrence in the Nietzschean sense, though there is an eternal recurrence in the order of the unfoldment and enfoldment, creation; and dissolution. In fact " He chooses the makers of the mantras who see the hymns and transmit them loyally.

Thus valid insight is approached and realized through the practice of the ways of knowing prescribed in the scriptures such as madhu-vidyā or dahara-vidyā etc., which are meditations on the Supreme. No other way is possible. In every case inference fails to establish the real and the perfect creator of the Universe.

IV

Cosmological Argument and God

The Nyāyā cosmological argument for the existence of God is disproved by Rāmānuja on the ground that the world is not of the nature of an effect in the same sense as jars, pots and cloth made by intelligent beings. Nor is it an effect in the sense that it is made up of parts or displays the connection with or control by an intelligent being as is the case with a body controlled by a mind. Nor should it be said that there must be an intelligent being to fit the several parts in an order so as to be a working or living tissue of existence. All the arguments merely reveal that the world is a product of the individual soul or self and not of a universal or perfect being. We do observe that some persons of great yogic attainments or who are liberated are capable of creating some things and performing miracles too in many ways. From all this it follows that the individual souls only can be causal agents; no legitimate inference leads to the Lord different from them in nature. Tanubhuvanādi kṣetrajñakartṛkam, kāryatvāt ghaṭavat, īśvaraḥ kartā na bhavati, prayojanaśūnyatvāt, muktātmavat, īśvaraḥ kartā na bhavati, aśarīravāt na ca kṣetrajñanam svaśarīrādḥṣṭāne vyabhicāraḥ, tatrāpya-nādessūkṣmaśarīrasya sadbhāvāt, vimativiṣayah kālo na lokaṣunyaḥ, kālatvād vartmānakālavat-iti. The body,

⁹ Ibid. Yat pūrvapūrvocāraṅakrama-janita-samskāreṇa tameva krama viśeṣam smrtvā tenaiva kramenocāryatvam.

the world, have the individual souls for their (producing agents): because they possess the character of being produced effects (even) a pot does: (2) The Lord is no agent (in the act of creation) because he has no purpose (in creation) just as released souls (have not): (3) The Lord is no agent (in the act of creation) because he has no body (just as those same released souls have not). □ And this reasoning is not fallacious in being too widely applicable to the case of individual souls getting to preside over their own bodies, because, in such a case also, there is the (previous) existence of the beginningless subtle body (in association with those souls). (4) Time about which there is difference of opinion, can never have been devoid of (created) worlds because it possesses the character of being time, (even) like the present time. □ (S B I i.3) All these arguments and many more that pertain to the embodied nature, active nature, & etc., remind one of the paralogisms of pure reason that Kant utilized to show the inapplicability of causality beyond the realm of the phenomena. All transcendental applications involve inner contradiction. The appeal of Kant lay in the Practical Reason and more fully in the intuition of the Critique of Judgment. To Rāmānuja it lies in the Veda, the heard-word of the sages. The ultimate word of Rāmānuja is that Veda alone makes us know about the unity of the instrumental and material and the teleological causality of Brahman. For □ if we thought □ says Rāmānuja, □ that these texts do not mean to intimate the real existence of Brahman, the mere idea to which they give rise would not satisfy us in any way □. Aupaniṣadeṣvapivākyeṣu brahmāstutva-tātparyābhāvaniścaye brahmajñane satyapi puruṣāthta paryavasānam na syāt (S.B.li.4). Thus whatever the śabdapramaṇa, all its ideas are eternal existences. In the case of the divine intuition all the ideas or representations that are discovered by it are existent or rather possess existence as a predicate. The test of śruti does involve the practice of its methods (vidyās). Mere knowledge without practical test of the same will not make for insight and revelation (anubhava). We must perceive them even as God perceives them: that is the promise of the equality that we shall attain when liberated from karma and rebirth. This is the vindication of the ontological argument.

V

Seeing and Being

The 'seeing' of the scriptures by the Divine and the individual soul grants them an eternal value according to some thinkers. Does the highest Being see all things as eternally existent or as created by Himself?

Rāmānuja says that the power of seeing and so on that belong to the Highest self are not dependent on the sense organs: □ it rather results immediately from its essential nature since its omniscience and power to realize its purposes are due to its own being only □, It is because of this infinite capacity of His own nature, their beings

are included in His seeing, or rather His seeing and their beings and one and the same thing. As the infinite Being whose nature is eternal knowledge and knowledge of a different kind indeed from any of the individual souls, bond and freed or eternally free. He is the source of all their being. In his case alone could it be truly said that idea (essence) involves existence. In the case of the individual souls, existence is contingent. We might also in perfect truth argue that He alone can cause or bring out anything from out of nothing¹⁰, since in Him nothing is non-existent. It is true only of the individual finite soul to say that out of nothing nothing comes, *ex nihilo nihil fit, tuccād tuccameva abhavat*. Not so with the Divine Being- who could out of His own wish by a single act produce out of nothing even the material and the ultimate form. There is nothing repugnant in endowing all impossibilities of the finite being to the Infinite Being. But Rāmānuja holds that whilst there may be enough justification for such a procedure and even acceptance, it is necessary also to hold that from out His eternal Being, which indeed is illimitable, anything that comes into existence is in one sense eternally realized in His Being and therefore eternally existent. Knowledge of their eternal validity and existence is sanctioned by His nature itself and those who discover these hymns and truths find it impossible not to credit them with an eternal independent existence, independent of any human minds and independent of time and space.

To grant to the intuitive truths existence that is eternal, is to posit a real realm of essences adopting Santayana's phrase, different indeed from anything like the universals and floating ideas. But not all intuitive realizations can claim absolute existence and truthness since most of these are got at through efforts of imperfect individual souls. Those alone amongst the intuitive truths which have come out of the grace of the Divine can claim utter validity and peak of perfection. In the case of the Divine Lord Himself it is said that He sees them *spontaneously* without the mediation of sense-organs, and other prakrtic instruments.

VII

Divine Knowing

The knowledge of the Divine is creative unlike the individual's consciousness whose creative nature as consciousness is trifling, since God's knowledge becomes true or is true, whereas the individual's imagination and knowledge are not always capable of becoming true¹¹. Rāmānuja contends that the creative nature of the finite or bond consciousness is next to nothing, and its imagination is fraught with illusory character. But this view goes against all Creative art and inventive ability that we do

¹⁰ Meaning of Creation: Very Rev. Hugh Pope in Man: Summer school of Catholic Studies, Sheed & Ward pp.89ff.

¹¹ S.B.I.i.1 Na jīvasua sankalpa-mātreṇa srastrtvam upapadyate

observe. Most probably we shall be told that God is in that case acting through the agency of the individual. We find that the creative feature of knowledge most fully demonstrated in the inventions of man even in the most primitive contracted state his being. The urge towards greater expression and the manipulation of the environment, have been achieved by the creative or constructive instinct of living beings. But it is an instinctive and unconscious tendency. It is only a higher consciousness that can make art creations permanent. Else all creation of man is bound to be of a phenomenal and transitory nature. Here we find a cue. Creations of the Divine are permanent, *yathārthāḥ, śaśvatāḥ* as the Īsopaniṣad says, and those of the humans otherwise. Consciousness in its perfect actuality is creative in nature. The question then would arise whether creation is not progressively increasing in intensity and amplitude as the consciousness more and more becomes limitless. Undoubtedly this is possible as evidenced by the *siddhis*. This individual attains as shown in the Yoga śāstra as also in Buddhistic literature. But the absoluteness of creation is possible only to the completely liberated being. There is yet a difference between the Divine and that individual, in so far as the creation of reality is concerned. This is the prerogative nature of the Divine only and none else.¹² Otherwise the chaos of universes would result from the creative abilities of the individuals. Enjoyment and consciousness of ability may be had by the individuals, never indeed a creation of another universe or universes. A free consciousness thus becomes a contemplating and enjoying consciousness, participating no doubt in the work of the Divine, nothing more or may even become a perfect instrument of the Divine in the governance of the world. Thus true creativity turns out to be dependent on the Supreme Being alone, knowledge is real only in the Divine: outside Him, it is a figment of imagination, a fruitful source of illusion, hallucination, and delusion. Māyā is the power of knowledge of the Divine¹³, but it is also the power of delusion for the unfree individual souls. In other words, it is in the hands of the individuals a power of ignorance, not of creation but of illusion, a creative power of the transitory fruits not of permanent reals.

VII

Time

Time in one of the most important categories of experience. There has been not a little of talk about being beyond space and time. *kālātīta* being a term that denotes existence beyond time. But is it possible for any one to be beyond time and space? There is no possibility of even conceiving of a time or place beyond time and place, since all that is falls within the same. That being the case, the concept of

¹² Jagadvyāpāravarajam samāno jyotiṣā

¹³ Māyā vayanamjñanam “ it jñanaparyāyamapi māyāśabdān naigha-naṭukā adhiyate”
S.B.I.i.21. (Nirukta)

beyond space and time interpreted literally yields no sense. The view that God is beyond space and time means only that He never had been absent at any time or space like the human individuals. He is coeval with Time and co-existent with Space. But it yields sense to speak of *Kālātīta*, *triguṇātīta* etc., when we consider the alternative interpretation that He is *not limited* by space or time or the guṇas of matter. The non-limitation by these entities means that He is not dependent on them but is their master, and that He exists beyond space and time. It might be held that what it really means is that God is the Pure Concept or Essence which is outside existence. Even when we speak about concepts can we legitimately speak of their being outside or *a priori*? That they do not exist but yet are, is a very uncouth self-contradiction. Time is a series, beginning less and endless; all things occur at different stages of it. It is numerical infinity in so far as it is unlimited on either side; it is *vibhu*, it is never a pure finite though men divide it into dates and seconds and moments. So also space. It is also a *numerical vibhu* though it is never a pure finite despite the divisions that might be made in it. These two are infinities containing and subsisting or rather substanding the finites. They are infinite mainly and thus are identical with Brahman. But they are *finite* to the Divine mind in so far as His omniscience and omnipresence cover them. Thus when Brahma: is said to be Kāla Time, it means His coevalness at all times with time itself. He is beyond it in the sense that He is not itself that, rather He is the master of time, who brings into being creations, vast and multitudinous, within it. He is more than it. Nor is He Space. He is wherever it is and thus coexistent with it. But He is beyond it also, in the sense that He is aware of all that happens in it and in Time. So also He is beyond Matter which is also eternal, in the sense He controls it and sustains its changes etc., All that is meant by 'being Beyond Time' means that the individual is not affected by the divisions in it, which permit the judgments Now, Then, afterwards. etc... That means man becomes omniscient and eternal.

The nature of the concepts (i.e how they are and when they are known or when they are conceived merely) is rather an intricate matter, requiring an enquiry into the doctrine of their origins. Firstly, the view taken by the Viśiṣṭādvaitic thinkers is that these concepts or class-concepts (that is to say pseudo-concepts and concepts of Benedetto Croce) are the perceived forms of things; and the perceived behaviour of things and laws are merely the inferences of unities so perceived. That these, due to more cogitation and contemplation, lead to direct experience, is also granted by them. Sākṣātkāra then is the fulfillment of the sensory perception. These concepts then are forms, resident in things perceived, and do not exist apart from the objects, and therefore are conditioned by space and time and number. But they are also remembered in the mind and persist as memory and bhāvanā, which could be reproduced separately on paper or stone or wall in the form of pictures, or images. This sensory origin of the concept is never forgotten. They do not exist apart from space and time and cannot even be conceived as existing apart from space and time. The contention is that concepts as *ākāra* are retained in the memory of the perceiver

or knower which he utilizes for *anumāna* or *upamāna* the next time he comes across similar experience. The truth of the contention that images exist in this manner might more easily be admitted than in the case of these ideas or concepts. Since concepts are universals whereas images are particular, it may be said that Universals exist outside finite minds and outside space and thus are nowhere existent. This means that we cannot give a correct account of their being. This reduces itself to a futile explanation. On the other hand we can conceive of the Universals as the inherent laws of existence, that is, of all that are in time and space. That includes all minds, things, matter and categories. In other words, Kant's statement that all experience falls within these two intuitions of space and time and are categorized by categories, is valid and indisputably true. The only issue is whether we could legitimately speak of a Noumenon over and above the Phenomenon we know. Though Hegel himself rejected the Noumenon, his explanations of time and space are far from acceptable to the Realist mind. The concept of Reality beyond space and Time is verily a spiritual intuition of the nature of Freedom which is the one fundamental truth of Reality known as spiritual, which is expressed by phrases such as Liberation, Mukti, Sākṣātkāra, Nirvāṇa, Beatitude & etc.,