

CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

I

Unity between Primary and Secondary Qualities

We have seen that Rāmānuja consistently holds that what the individuals experience is a real experience and that this experience involves the cognition or recognition of both the subject and the object whose conjunction or compresence alone is the real factor constitutive of all experience. Consciousness is the function of an embodied being in knowing, and is not a function of a subject or mind as such (a fact which is rendered absolute even in the case of the Absolute intelligence or God as we shall show). It is only a self-conscious subject that is capable of apprehending its own objects. The subject whether in the case of subjective mental states (inclusive of emotional states which invade the mental) as in dreams or in the case of objective things and states as in prophetic dreams, apprehends reality as such with or without the help of the exteriorly-turned sensory organs. The subject is capable of apprehending the sense-organs since sense-organs are products of sensing rather than original organs which determine all sensing. They do not limit the perception, since all perception inclusive of the Divine is composed of sense-characters as sound, form, colour, touch and taste. The colours are seen, sounds are heard, touches are felt, and all these are present unambiguously in mystic *dhyāna*, and are also presented without the mediation of sense organs. Thus Rāmānuja distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge, *indriya pratyakṣa* and the divine *divya* or *mānāsa pratyakṣa*. The former is conditioned-consciousness in the sense that all experiences filter through the sense-organs, whereas the latter is free-consciousness in the sense that its knowledge is direct and without (or with ?) the mediation of or obstruction from sense-organs. The sense-organs are no bar to full apprehension. They serve the mind in an absolute degree by being more and more adapted to suit the demands of a wide and full and integral apprehension. In any case the reception of knowledge proceeds from and is sustained by the entire spiritual being.

Rāmānuja accepts the view that sense-organs do not create the sensory experiences nor modify the external world. The sense-characters are in the objects themselves and what our sense organs do is to grasp them. The sweetness of sugar is in the sugar and not in the mouth, since there are other tastes such as alkaline and saline and bitter etc. Nor are colours to be referred to the eye. The modern doctrine of primary and secondary qualities is undoubtedly a consequence of the representationalist view coupled with the theory of atoms of the homogeneous variety. The chemical theory is against the view that the qualities are in the things. But the fact that the mouth cannot but respond to a particular grouping of atoms in one

definite way as sweet, in whomsoever's mouth it might be reveals despite differences that are not to be exaggerated that there is this particular quality in the objective groupings themselves. The electronic or chemical theory cannot annul the findings of the objective nature of the particular sensation. Invariable concomitance itself justifies the subject object unity of the primary and secondary sensations. There is a distinction undoubtedly but it is not a disjunction between the several kinds of sense-data. They form a unity. Their locus (*ālambana*) is in the object outside the individual's organism. The doctrine of exteriorization or projection of sense-impulses is made possible only on the basis of the object being 'covered' by the sensorium or light in the eye. This reading of the physiological situation in cognition is accepted also by the Advaitic view. Thus the cognition of the external object is made possible on either of the accounts. The objects have qualities that are perceptible and there is nothing to show that what they possess is other than what we see, in the form of structure or colour or taste or touch, though there may be individual differences and peculiarities that make doubtful judgments possible.

Some thinkers make *karma* the all-solvent, and try to make it the principle which helps the exteriorization of internal images. This theory is on a par with the hallucinatory theory of all perception. Creationism is not to be equated with such a theory since creationism involves real creation not delusive projection. *Karma* as a power or agency can do nothing more than expand or contract the ambit of perception of consciousness according as it is good or bad. It cannot create anything. Knowledge alone can create reality, neither ignorance nor unconsciousness. This is a central conception which cannot be given up under any conditions. Imperfection in creation means imperfection in knowledge.

If the virus of unreality is posited in consciousness itself, then in Absolute Consciousness also, as in individual finite consciousness, we shall have to face pure skepticism and illusionism. The consciousness that we know or have is that of individual subjects, though it must be conceded that there are degrees of expansion and enlightened-ness that are far above the average. Such a consciousness we have always seen in embodied beings. It does not of course preclude the existence of disembodied selves. But even then Rāmānuja holds that they have bodies of another kind more amenable or suited to the higher functions of the consciousness, relieved from the strain and limitation due to a refractory and contracting body. In freed state, souls are said to possess an *aprākṛita* or non-material body of pure light. And unfreed souls on the other hand have *liṅga śarīras*, which are always related to them and which determine their future life-series. These are essentially modifiable by knowledge on the one hand, and on the other hand, also modifiable by actions of either kind, good or bad. It is this *kārmic* body that gets touched or infected. It is this that limits the *dharmabhūta jñāna*.

Nor can we ever conceive of a pure consciousness or mind divorced from any

kind of body as Socrates and Aristotle conceived or even as some thinkers of modern times bold, and as Advaita Vedānta conceives In Advaita, it is an imperative of its thought itself, but then such an acceptance imperils the nature of reality itself. Absolute consciousness is yet a consciousness which cannot happen elsewhere than in matter or a body however tenuous or purified or perfect for consciousness is a function of a subject and is not 'perceived apart from an embodied being. The fact is that in the case of the Absolute Consciousness, it is a consciousness which is a function of the Most Perfect Being, and in whose case the instrumentality of our five-fold sense-organs or even the *manas* or *citta* or any other organ of mind in its imperfect career are nowhere needed. There is direct vision. His perception is vision. It is perfect vision since it enfolds all infinity in its ken. In Him the senses are not the means of knowing or enjoying.

We find that the supremely intelligent mind's consciousness is capable of creative action and possesses more completely the body which it governs. The limitation of consciousness is due to spiritual defect, or rather moral defect, which makes it impassible for it to function efficiently in a body which it holds. A higher morality or purity of living points to a greater and more facile control of the functions of the body. Thus reality does not change, the body does not become a barrier that has to be got rid of, but spiritual life gets deepened and intensified, or in other words, perfected. Consciousness as we know in the manner we know may enlarge itself and even get transformed into a super mind or *Divya cakṣus* but in its essential nature as a function (*dharma*) of a spirit it does not forsake its nature.

There are no degrees of reality according to Rāmānuja but only degrees of perfection¹. And perfection is measured by the completeness of control a soul has over its body and in the true creative feature of its functional consciousness. And creation in this sense means nothing more than making real the possible, thus effectuating its causal truth or will of God.

II

Śarīra- Śarīri Bhāva as the Typical Unity

Rāmānuja stands for the complete vindication of the holy soul relation even with regard to the Highest Spirit. A question may be asked whether God has a body in the very same sense that you and I have bodies? The point is not that God has a

¹ Cf. basis of Realism: Alexander. "The prejudice against Realism lies in the confusion between the different ideals of Reality and perfection Physical things are as real as the mind but not as perfect. When we speak of degrees of Reality we must be careful to ask whether we do not mean degrees of perfection.

human body,--since, such a limitation of God's nature to a body like ours will entail a crude anthropomorphism and a limitation on evolution which make does not man the peak of creation. Surely He has a body which makes it possible for the Seers to see Him as having a body of light, auspicious and awe-inspiring, gracious and beneficent even as the *Īśāvāsyopanīśad* seer says, *Yat te rūpam kālyāṇatamam* (verse 16). A body cannot be defined in terms of the appearance of the several types of bodies. A protoplasm has no sense-organs but it has a body; it has a nucleus which does animate the movements of its amorphous tissue. Thus a body cannot be defined in terms of the number of sense-organs or limbs or formations, special or general. What is the body then except that which functions or acts as an instrument purely and absolutely for the service of its owner which is said to fight out its life course in an environment ? This serviceability to the animating life within or rather more precisely the soul within might he or any kind of enjoyability. Thus does Sri Rāmānuja define the body: 'A body is any substance which a sentient soul is capable of completely controlling and supporting for its own purposes and which stands in an entirely subordinate relation to it.'²

Rāmānuja finds essential unity to lie in this soul-body relation. Metaphysical reality is of the nature of soul body. This is fundamental and from this we have to extract the view about the knowledge-relation. That the fundamental relation between subject and the object is a relation that is not organic in the sense that they are always and eternally inseparably tied to one another, need not be said. But it is also a fact that to speak about a subject is also speak about it as having an object. The objects change and vary and may be any number. The relation named cognition by the subject always remains except during deep sleep. Thus we find that we cannot affirm the subject-object relation to be anything more than what exists when the subject is awake or cognizing. A pure cognition without any object is a myth. though this also is granted by certain schools of thought, especially by Yoga which claims a state of cognition which is objectless. But even this is found to imply only that there are no objects of the outer world then but not objects of the transcendental kind, objects which are of divine origin. That is to say, to be conscious means to have some object, natural or divine, and the higher states of consciousness are those which have as their content the divine objects or objects which have God as their cause.

In one sense, however, we can yet speak of the cognitive relation as a soul-body relation. The object is enjoyed and utilized and controlled by the subject who cognizes it. That is to say cognition leads on to the two further ways of dealing with the object, namely, that the subject enjoys and utilizes it or determines it. If the

² Śrī Bhāṣya II.9: Yasya centanāsyā yaddravayam sarvātmanā svārtha niyantam dhārayitum a śakyam yaccheṣṭaika svarūpam ca tat tasey śārīram

definition we have given of a body of the subject is accepted, then, there is every reason to treat the object as a body of the subject at that moment. The subject as such becomes the soul or self of the object. The subject-object relation thus reveals more than this relation in that it is possible to conceive all subjects as capable of holding the objects in an absolutely dependent relation. This however is not true as objects do not exist for the subjects as such, and many subjects are capable of beholding the same object. This may be a serious flaw in the Rāmānuja's theory of relation of subject and object if we treat them as having śarīra-śarīrī relation. It would involve that the individual finite subjects must either be subjects or, souls or else fragments of as self or Mind, because they have no relation of this kind with the objects except their own bodies, and even then only in a limited manner. If the subjects are absolute subjects, the illusion of the many has to be accepted, in which case we shall have to argue for one Self alone, or else we must argue that souls are real partial aspects of one Subject which is the real, but who are capable of enjoying and appreciating and controlling their objects in a limited manner. But then this involves the breaking up of the one self if it does not involve the view that the aspects have each an individuality, real and inalienable. Either there are many partial subjects or finite subjects which somehow have come into being from one supreme Subject or Self or else the supreme Transcendent Self itself has somehow illusorily presented itself in various ways which are phenomenally real but not transcendentally so³. Thus our problem of subject-object relation leads to the question of Unity or Oneness.

Before we take into consideration the problem itself, we shall discuss firstly as to what we do mean by a Perfect Subject and its infinity: and secondly as to what we do mean by the term infinity of subjects and things?

III

Infinity and what it means

A perfect subject according to Rāmānuja is exactly that person whose consciousness or *dharma-bhūta-jñāna* is full and complete in its range, without taint or fault or contraction. who wills the real, perceives the real and enjoys the real. The cognitive and affective and conative perfections are reached by such a consciousness.

³ Bhāskara's is the first view and Śankara's the second. In the Bhāskara doctrine the aspects even when mutually contradictory co-exist in space and time or without reference to space and time. This involves a view similar to the Jaina *sapta-bhangi*. If the views are related to space and time are not self-contradictory in that regard, since it is time and space that always cause this self-contradiction, there will be no difficulty about the acceptance of the Bheda-abheda view. Unfortunately this point of reference is lacking in their formula as such hence the futility of the identity and difference view taken unconditionally

In actual experience we find however several degrees of perfection of this consciousness in different individuals. We may even think that there are different perspectives or grades which cover the entire range of perfection even as Leibniz conceived existence to be. There are infinite number of points of view possible and actual from which the universe might be telescoped or perceived by each one of them. There are no vacant spaces; or rather we should say there are infinite directions, *diśah*, and whilst it is conceivable that all the points of the circumference are occupied by some monad or other, it need not necessarily be so. Leibniz held that indeed they are occupied and then in order to explain change in this dynamic universe he proceeded to convert the straight line of progress to perfection into a circular movement, so much so every monad has to repeat its history of contraction and expansion of consciousness as it passes from the most luminous insight into the darkest contraction of unconsciousness. This according to him was necessitated by the fact of infinite perspectives occupied and innervated by the actual presence of monads at each one of them in the best possible of all worlds. Thus every monad seeks its fulfillment, as a *monadas, monadum*, but no sooner than it reaches it, it must make way for its successor who awaits anxiously its, enthronement. This eternal recurrence theory is utter nonsense from the standpoint of true religion which seeks a perfection that is beyond the constant threat of fall. The *Vedānta Śūtra*, which echoes the words of the Upaniṣadic seer, says *anāvṛttiśabdāt*. It is because of the phrase that there is no return, no return to this cyclical existence, there is needed this effort at Realization.

Every pluralistic system has contended for the view that the things and selves in the universe are infinite in number. Vaiśeṣikas as well as Sāṃkhya, argue for infinite soul; or puruṣas. What exactly does infinity mean? Is there any difference between numerical infinity and qualitative infinity? If so, what type of infinity applies to the souls? Do both avail? What type of infinity does the Supreme Brahman possess? These are important questions undoubtedly and interesting so.

Infinity means absence of finiteness or limitation. Limitation is of three kinds, limitations of space and of time and of distinctness or difference. All things occupy some space and all things occupy some part of time. They are thus limited by time and place. Similarly in so far as they are discrete and separate (*bhinna*) they are distinct from one another and therefore are capable of being counted or enumerated. These three limitations are thus available in regard to all created things.

Numerical infinity means that there are infinite number of discrete things. Infinite number means that they are countless or difficult to count. Thus the negative means only impossibility in so far as it applies to a finite self, not at all in the case of a self which could, and this Being is undoubtedly the Supreme Self of all. Though this

assumption has its basis in the scriptural texts it is yet valid. An all knowing mind can comprehend all, and numerical infinity turns out to be a finity in regard to such a self⁴. □ The proof of infinity rests altogether on the absence of limitation of space and time, not on account of the absence of substantial limitation; absence of such limitation is something very much akin to the 'horn of a hare?' and is perceived nowhere. On the view of difference, on the other hand the whole world as constituting Brahman□s body is its mode, and Brahman is thus limited neither through itself nor through other things.⁵

But this position is not what Rāmānuja is prepared to admit in regard to the limitation between the Infinite and the finite. Brahman surely is at once beyond spatial and temporal limitations and is transcendent to all limitations in so far as He is a unique Being capable of pervading all. Things of nature are limited by space-time and distinctions, and as such they cannot occupy the same space at the same time. They are non-intelligent and finiteness is their essential nature. Mustard seeds, beans, earthen pots and pieces of cloth are dependent upon their distinctions and are separate. Infinity is impossible where they are concerned. If numerical infinity is posited in the case of souls then the matter takes on an entirely new aspect. Undoubtedly occupying space they are numerically many but not infinite. *Nānātva*, manyness, is not *anantatva*, infinity. The numerical manyness is thus in fact in regard to the individual souls. But this is not all about the individual souls. Whilst having distinctions in their very nature, there is a particular feature of the souls which makes it possible for each of them to be reckoned as an infinite or participating in the infinite. Infinity has to be conceived in a different manner. It must be conceived as absence of all limitation. Substantial limitation is inescapable in regard to the souls. Is it the case with Brahman? The pluralists consider that this is involved, since the Brahman could be conceived to have these finites as its modes and yet be different from them. If He is different then there is limitation. It is impossible to think of Him as a numerical finite, just one of the many. Thus we find that Rāmānuja is not prepared to accept the position developed by the dualist thinkers who speak about the substantial limitation of Brahman whilst yet granting Him a freedom from limitations of space and time. Transcendental in one sense, they find Him to be bound by this particular limitation. This obviously entails that Brahman exists as limited by the existence of other individuals and things. Taken along with the theory of plurality of separate existence, substantial limitation would lead to temporal and spatial limitations. All the selves and Brahman along with them would be limited by space and time, which would argue against all qualitative infiniteness. *vibhūtvā*.

⁴ Śrī Bhāṣya: II,1.15

Anāntatvād ātmanāmamūktāśca santīcēt-kimidam anantatvam? Asaṅkhyeyatvam-itīcebba, bhūyastvād alpajñair asaṅkhyeyatve pīśvarasya sarvajñasya saṅkhyeyā eva .. Anāntatvam-nāma-paricchedarahitvatvam.

⁵ Ibid. p.39. Ānantyaprasiddhīśca deśakālaparccheerahitva-mātreṇa.

Whilst therefore we find that the individual selves are really independent existence if we hold them to be numerically many, we would be faced with the problem that there are not really infinite in number, and further that they are non-intelligent, since uniformity or number belongs to material differentiations. If on the other hand we define infinity to consist in the absence of all limitation it is found that bound selves are really bound by the limitation of space and time and, therefore are not infinite in that state.

We find that the objects this world must be really many and finite. We also find that the selves or souls which are embodied are many and finite in number. Infinity for the selves can only mean the highest attainment of qualitative perfection. But does this qualitative perfection involve absence of all limitation? If it does, it impugns the very occupation of a body, No embodied being can ever be at once substantially limited and yet be perfect qualitatively. The absence of all limitations leads to absurdities. It may be absence of limitations due to space and time and material refractoriness that pertains to having a body, but could it also mean absence of all relations, since relations connect things and individuals and argues for dependence of one on the rest? But " absence of such (substantial) limitation is something akin to the 'horn of a hare,' as the Brahmajñavādin says, and is perceived nowhere. Limitation is absolute and nothing is capable of existing without any limitations whatsoever. The individual selves are not infinite in the sense that they are numerically infinite but that they are substantially limited by their relation to the highest Brahman. But this substantial limitation is not of the same kind as limitation that occurs through space and time and nature.

No thing or soul is thus free from all limitations. All things are limited by space and time and substantial limitation: souls are also limited by substantial limitation. Thus both fall under the category of finite beings.

IV

Brahman, the true Infinite

Brahman is the only substance, the supreme subject who is free from all limitations including the substantial, or at least who surpasses the limitations from the stand-point of the qualitative transcendence. Transcendence over limitations even of the substantial involves mastery over them, hence, not limitation at all. By this concept of transcendence enunciated very powerfully in the Upanisads Rāmānuja solves the difficulty that confronts the dualist, who though he found himself in a position not dissimilar to Rāmānuja was unable to solve the problem of substantial limitation, and accepted the position that Brahman too was subject to this substantial limitation. The relation that the things and souls bear to the Supreme Self is indeed a substantial relation of dependence, secondly they are objects occupied,

governed and noticed and witnessed by the Supreme and fall within the category of elements that constitute the subject object relation. But the subject-object relation is not all, though undoubtedly essential.

The only subject for whom all are objects at all times and therefore eternally in the Supreme Subject

The importance of the meaning of the term infinity in regard to the numerically many is found therefore to lie in a very novel explanation. Infinity consists in having all the many in one vision and beholding them eternally in one's vision. This is possible only to the Highest.

There is however another meaning which is warranted by the Scriptures by the passages which show that the supreme Brahman is unreachable by speech or mind: *yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha*. This indeed is the meaning of the word *Anantam*, infinity. His truth and being and nature and form and qualities are transcendent and immeasurable in excellence and superior. From that Being our mind returns baffled and falls into a consciousness of its own finiteness.

Thus transcendence is the real definition of infinity. But this does not abjure the initial recognition of its Superior nature. It is immeasurable and this is transcendence. The transcendent does not refute the finite nor the limited, it contains all the limits within it and yet is afar, It is here and afar, near and distant. As the *Īśāvāsyaopaniṣad* says: *tadejati tadu najati taddūre tadavantike! Tadanta rasya sarvasya tadu sarvaṣyāsyā bāhyataḥ*. The finite cannot contain the infinite fully when considered from the stand point of space and time and external relation, but when considered from the stand-point of spiritual pervasion it contains it. It is not a refutation of it, nor contradictory to it. It is within it as part and parcel of it. The element of transcendence it is that is all important, and it is this that makes the infinite the supreme subject of all experience. Reality is both subject and object and the infinite is composite of both. The doctrines that seek to reduce the subject to the level of the object or the object to the level of the subject are apparently doomed to failure. But this does not involve the giving up of the distinction in their status in regard to one another. The real is knowable; even the unknowable is merely the statement of transcendence and nothing more. This view is implicit in the doctrine of superiority of the subject when applied to the Supreme Being. The Supreme Lord possesses all Objects as in their eternal nature in His ever-present vision. It is also true that He establishes all these in their real nature through years sempiternal. This is an important conception in so far as it shows that there is a fundamental distinction between the knowing and being in regard to Brahman the true Infinite, the transcendent, and the finite and subordinate. The contradictions and antinomies

raised between the finite and the infinite, the infinite divisibility of the infinite or the composition of the infinite of the infinities are all numerical devices which do not imitate but in fact, impugn the integrity of the infinite. Brahman is the infinite, that is the transcendent, The transcendent is the subject, the supreme subject who establishes all things in their real nature from eternity,

V

Consciousness and its Ideal Nature

The ideal condition of consciousness is its unlimited nature. Consciousness itself is a function, which undergoes contraction and expansion. In plants there is a widening of the scope of living as compared with metals and stones in which it is dormant and inconscient. As evolution moves forward the individual body lets consciousness function more and more or rather the consciousness within breaks through the material confines and organizes its own ways and means of knowing. Freedom is thus assured and is dependent upon the greater and higher perfection of consciousness which is the function of the soul. Perfection means the highest freedom of consciousness or conscious functioning of the self. The real is consciousness in the sense that whatever it reveals fully and intrinsically or illumines or whatever it grasps is real *yathārtha* because it is the real function of a real subject.

□ All cognitions

whatsoever abide in real subjects or cognitions and are themselves real, consisting in mental certainty with regard to special objects. Reality is of the nature of any object which is cognized by consciousness and things that are false are sublated by proofs which consciousness itself provides and reveals, failing which 'how it works' in practical application or conduct proves the presence of effects. Some of these cognitions "may rest on defects which are themselves real: others spring from a combination of causes, real and free from all defects." The distinction between false and true is not a distinction that should be brought in between the non-existent Absolute which is the Highest category of intellect and the existent world of practical conduct, nor between the theoretical and the practical, between which there need be no opposition; but between features which thought itself in its variant phases and expressions reveals. If the real is to be judged from the point of view at pure thought which does not fulfil action, then there is no doubt that we shall have only a splendid fiction, unknowable and beyond thought. Thought is in its very nature capable of infinite discrimination, *samkhya*, so that it finally defines things. Things of the outer world are patently enumerable having number and are finite. Notwithstanding their multiplicity, in their inner nature is revealed a supreme transcendence which is of the Real and the Spiritual. It is this infinity that is within the finite of the numbers. But to convert the principles, verifiable and functionally absolute in the realm of the outer into principles of the inner and the unverifiable is to disrupt the integral diunity of the total.

The criticism that thought is not practical, a meaning less, for it means to deny the expression or manifestation and power of intelligence as intelligence. Illuminating power does not only mean the dispelling of what is antagonistic to it but also of defining things, thus rendering them capable of being objects of empirical thought and speech. - *na hi virodha-nirasana-mātram prakāśatvam api tvārthaparacchedah.*

VI

Thing-in-itself

The criticism that thought is not practical is meaningless because it denies the expression of intelligence an intelligence it is. This primal or principal distinction which Kant recognized very clearly was by Śankara denied. That it did issue from knowledge he conceded, but that what it manifested, or resulted in was real was what he stoutly refuted. Such a radical theoreticism could only lead to mere phenomenalism and to solipsism. Even this is inadmissible because the Absolute is not a solipsist but an undifferentenced Consciousness which is neither subject nor object and not even a thing-in-itself. To such an absolutely undifferentenced Consciousness or intelligence not implying distinctions of subject or object, *syayamprakāśatā* (self illumining power) cannot possibly belong.

It may of course be argued that introspective vision will grant us the nature of the thing-in-itself whereas the exterior type of observation can only grant us an external view which despite its verifiability and objectivity can never give us the nature of a thing as it is established in itself. The importance of the concept of the *yathārtha*, the inner truth of existence of a thing as it is in itself and not to another consciousness is a very important fact that can be explained only on the basis of the inwardness of the thing.

This process of introspective intuition is facilitated by the method or yogic intuition, or *samādhi*, and in that intuitive perception there is inward revelation of the nature of a thing as it is in itself. This is its essence which is always the subjective view of the thing not the object-view of thing. Can anything be known in the sense in which we use the term know, as it is in itself as subject; and not object? Can this shift be achieved except by means of the abolition of the objective status of the object and by making it know itself through our subjectivity? If it could be so known as even M. Bergson affirmed we could, then we shall know, not in the sense of subject-object relation but by abolishing the object absolutely and by being in rapport with the subject as an articulate self existence as it is in itself; this would be a supreme achievement of the seer and not of the subject at all. Then we shall be able to say that knowledge does not require a subject object relation absolutely and under all

conditions. An external knowing demands this relation, not the internal seizing of the essence through making the object the subject itself. The Important question that arises at this point is whether in this subjectification, the object does in fact, participate in the life and movement of tile subject, or does the subject (namely, the person who subjectifies the object) lose himself in the objects subjectivity? Then, we are confronted with the problem of dual-subjectivity, between which it is difficult to find any identity. Thus the knowledge of a thing in itself is possible only to that thing itself and not to any other. Nor do we arrive at the knowledge of the thing as it is in itself when we reduce all objects to the nature of adjectives of the subject. But if we do reduce all the subjects (the so-reduced objects) to one single spirit, then the problem gets simplified and it is conceivable that we shall be in the presence of the One all-embracing Subject which shall know all as they are in themselves, because they are in it. At any rate, the above way of reasoning makes the concept of the Subject sans object, intelligible. It appears, then, that there is no other way except to accept the situation, as it is the only way by which we shall know things as in themselves, which is the intrinsic truth about them requiring no further confirmation. The object thus presents itself as having a subjective as well as an objective aspect. To deny either is to gain a fictitious truth. But as amongst the two, the more important is the thing in itself, which falls on the subject side and the knower has to identify himself with that part of the existence through intuition to gain access to it. The other aspect is freely gained through scientific

Observation, but it requires the pragmatic test also. This is the *parataḥ pramāṇa* necessary for gaining the truth of the external relationship of the object with other objects in a common universe. How these two have to get reconciled in the unity of knowledge is yet a deep and profound problem bringing in as it does, the problem of dual reality or appearance and reality.

There is only one way or escape, a way that was indeed pointed out by the theologically inclined Berkeley, by the logical Bosanquet and others, and that is to treat the Absolute as the solipsist. To take refuge in Him or It and to console ourselves in His ability to grant us sufficient objectivity, and feel that the truthful Being will not deceive us, is our only alternative. So far as the individuals are concerned their knowledge: as subjective experience is possible only through the Absolute, through which alone they could gain subjective thing-in-itselfness of the object. This is the seeing all things in the Supreme Divine, to see them ail as having their self in the Divine. This is the possibility of seeing intimated by the pregnant words of the Īśāvāsyaopanisad: *Yāthā tathyatorthān vyadadhāt śāśvatībhyaḥ samābhyaḥ*(8).

Direct intuition is impossible. Only intuition through the Supreme Being or Absolute is capable of granting us the inward reality of all things, their *svarūpa sthiti*

and *svasmai sthiti*.⁶ Equally it follows that our knowledge true and right, of others or their minds is possible only indirectly through the Absolute. This is obviously different from the perception of their bodies or their movements in space, growth etc., all of which yield only a pragmatic reality but not the thing in-itself of the objects. It must in this connection be remarked that Rāmānuja has not touched the problem in this manner⁷. It is however necessary to insist on this two fold manner of this cognition in order to shed the importance of the diunity stressed by him in his doctrine of śarīra-śarīrī - relation. The intrinsic thing in itself in Brahman is the essence, the externality is the outer form of manifestation of that essence to other modes or subjects. Both go together and both of them are real.

VII

Diunity of Reality and Apprehension

Thus we find that the essential principle of explanation that needs must be understood in the Philosophy of Rāmānuja is this constant insistence on the two-fold unity or diunity of the nature of the thing. It is usual to find in this type of explanation the doctrine of identity in difference or identity and difference. But the theories of Bheda-abheda are by no means capable of answering the problems we have presented so far in regard to the intrinsic and external or objective nature of the self-same object. Bhāskara starts with a view that perilously lands it in self-contradictions. He states that the One Pure Intelligence or Consciousness distinguishes itself into subjects and objects which are real. That is, souls on the one hand and not-souls on the other are fragmentations from the Consciousness. Thus multiplicity is derived from the unity, which is precarious once we consider the meaning or manner of differentiation. It is said that the universal undifferentiated consciousness is stigmatised or else like the Fichtean *Anstoss* posits its other, which acts as the limiting element (*upādhi*), giving rise to the appearance of several subjects and several objects, Bhāskara who holds this view is refuted by Rāmānuja on the score of arguing for a double aspect theory. There is no thing with two aspects Bhāskara

⁶ Prof Laird has raised a very important discussion in his masterly Gifford Lectures “Mind and Deity” as to whether God knows the knowledges of souls as they reflexively know it for themselves. The infinity or Omniscience of God either includes or excludes this reflexive (*svasmai*) knowledge of the souls. If it excludes, His omniscience is not omniscient, if he knew it, they would not be souls. Even if they be souls and God knew their knowledges, a further question arises whether God knows this knowledge reflexively or otherwise. These are difficult questions to which no answer can be given except to a very limited extent.

⁷ What has been sketched above is a possible development of his thought. The whole concept of knowledge of a thing is dealt with from the relativistic position and not the subjectivist position. Śrī Rāmānuja takes up the subjectivist position only in so far as the liberation of the functional consciousness from its limitations due to karma is concerned.

"makes a distinction between the cause and genus as objects of the idea of discontinuance distinction", but as a matter of fact there is no perception of these two elements in separation. Therefore the principle of Bhāskara's theory is grounded in false abstractionism⁸.

Bhāskara contends that we are capable of distinguishing the difference and identity between dissimilar and similar characteristics in a thing when compared with another-thing, and therefore we can clearly posit that non-difference belongs to a thing viewed as cause and genus, and difference belongs to the same thing viewed as effect and particular. This means that the two characteristics of difference and non-difference can be reconciled in one and the same thing. We find that the individual self in so far as it has intelligence belongs to the genus, Brahman, and in so far as it is finite it is different from Brahman. As against this view Rāmānuja holds that "if difference belongs to the individual and non-difference to genus 'this implies' that there is no one thing with a double aspect". On the contrary it means that there are two things which are conjoined together. If you hold that the genus and the individual together constitute one thing, you abandon the view that it is difference of aspect which takes away the contradictoriness of difference and non-difference. Difference and non-difference thus cannot be predicated of genus and particular. The genus is merely a generic character which is not a real thing in the sense of an existent thing by itself apart from the particular, for it is arrived at by a process of abstraction. The individual is not a manifestation of the genus. For Bhāskara however to be a manifestation is to be identical with the genus. There is no difference except that the locus of its expression is difference.

But the individual is not a part of the genus since it has in itself its unique character of existence separately, which is exactly what the genus lacks in spite of its so called universality and eternity. The individual is the real thing from which alone the concept of the genus ever arises. The species is a form of the individual and does not manifest the individual. Bhāskara by making the genus the most important, and by taking genus to be a real existent apart from or over and above the particular through which alone it has any plausible existence, has made the logical genus real, and the individual, the real imperfect manifestations of the Highest Reality or the genus. The identity or the genus-character, is extensive and infinite (here consciousness is infinite), it is more than the difference which is the particular. The Particular existence are perishable and fleeting. Therefore eternity is of the genus, and the perishing character belongs to the particulars only. Since therefore the genus is the identity, it is eternal and may be said to be the *svābhāika* nature of a thing. The limited character is the perishable character, and as such is *aupādhika* or contingent character. This equally applies to the intelligence which is seen as differentiated in the

⁸ Śrī Bhāsyā. I.i.4

finite individuals having contracted intelligences. The intelligence is the eternal infinite, the finite is also intelligent but so made finite by limiting conditions of the bodies. The finites are as real as the Infinite but not as eternal according to Bhāskara.

In Śankara's doctrine these differences are unreal, caused indeed as they are by ignorance and because they are perishing existences, or because they could be sublated: in Bhāskara's on the other hand, these difference are real, but not permanent. Already we find the recognition of the defect in the equation of the idealistic view namely that permanence is reality. Whether permanence is to be considered in the logical manner of non-self contradiction or in the temporal sense of changelessness, it is clear the former is correct and acceptable to all whereas the latter is not. We may accept the former but not the latter criterion.

Regarding the multiplicity which is equivalent to differences, the unreality of the differences or *nānātva* is important in the doctrine of Śankara. Equally so is it in the doctrine of Bhāskara. The nature of the conditioning agent is all that matters. Śankara was more right in so far as he regarded the Consciousness or the Supreme as indivisible, and if we do indeed find differences it is due to the ignorance, the conditioning agency and it is not to the substance that we should look for the defect. For Bhāskara the absolute Identity has the capacity of becoming many in the presence of the conditions or limitations. Consciousness can become personal, characterised by power to become or create or produce or diversify itself as the many. There are two tendencies which cut at the root of this philosophy. The one original consciousness is firstly revealed as the Absolute Identity having the power to become many selves. The one self becomes many selves in manifesting itself, though it is absolutely unconditionally real because it is its own nature. The many are limited manifestations which would lose their identity on becoming free from limitations. It is necessary to consider these limitations, *upādhis*, as the power of self-determination or self-limitation for the sake of play or whatever purpose might be credited to that absolute consciousness. The crucial point in Bhāskara's theory consists however in his doctrine of Release. The formal character of Brahman becomes more and more pronounced and release seems to be the attainment of the full and complete formal perfection of the genus by the individual. The Platonic tendency thus is clearly traceable and becomes more and more patent when we emphasise the formal identity more than the difference which can never have permanent footing in the laps of identity. Once the permanent footing is found, release is impossible if indeed it is not necessary, since it is by the will of God, the Absolute, that this permanent footing is being found. Thus to manifest or not is not a matter for the striving of the individual at all. *Mokṣa* is not therefore explained. But what is really important in the analysis of the problem is his clear perception of the need to find a real relation of identity and difference between the many and the one. It is not release that should attract our attention in his philosophy because it is a hopelessly confused explanation that he gives, but only his rejection of the phenomenologists and Illusionists. The individual is

the essential part of the genus and is the condition *a priori* for the manifestation of the genus in actuality. In other words, the genus gets existence only under definite conditions of space and time and particularity apart from which it is only a conceptual abstraction, even then possessing a relation with a particular in the mind of the conceiver. The defect in his theory is that he could not but move towards the absolute, and this was facilitated by his stressing the identity and the genus more than the particular and the reality of difference. He did not see that the annihilation of plurality would annihilate the identity. The double aspect must be either a permanent feature of reality or else it cannot be a feature of reality at all. Multiplicity and unity or identity must be conceived either in an oppositional polarised manner or as integrally related to one another. To abolish them even as terms by declaring their illusory nature or unreality character. or to abolish one of them whilst maintaining the status of the other, is to land oneself in fruitless contradictions. Bhāskara no less than Śankara postponed the problem of unity and multiplicity. However it must be recognized that Bhāskara felt that there was a way of resolving the problem. But Rāmānuja it was who felt that an integral solution was possible, and that required the abandonment of the prejudice of opposition between the unity and multiplicity. The way to seek it is to take examples of such unities that enfold or contain or manifest or express the multiplicity whilst yet remaining unities that they veritably are and will be. The relation must not only be real, it has to be integral, incapable of dissection into terms, that is to say, the unity should exhibit the multiplicity and be itself the self and being of the multiplicity. In other words, it must be a unique or significant unity, the pattern of the unity that is exhibited on all prangs of reality. Then it would be the principle which will explain all relations that manifest unity or multiplicity. That all relations cannot be reduced to this one pattern must be accepted, but then there is no reason to think that this one should not be a special relation. This type of relation is universal in the sense of being available wherever there are permanent types of relations called specially *aprthaksiddha*, inseparable or organic. This is the type that is most manifest and useful in our conduct and existence. All other types of relation are distinct but subordinate to this type of relation.

The cognitive relation is not an interminable relation. Nonetheless it displays the specific quality of a dependent relation. The subject is superior to the object in one sense and in another sense it is the subject that is inferior to the object. This kind of dual position as clearly found in the experience of Beauty is such that it precludes the possibility of making the finite individual superior to the object at all times. Creative power of the subject might make the individual superior to his creations, the adaptive powers or man might make him the knower and adapter and inventor of new things but the apperception of Natural beauty enforces the attention and subordination and wonder and awe of tire individual in its presence⁹. Thus it follows

⁹ cf. *Collingwood's Theory of Beauty*, K.C.Varadachari, Indian Philosophical Quarterly Oct. 1940

that the secret of Unity is not to be conceived of in any other way except through the perception of the relationship of permanent organic co-existence.

IX

Organic Unity

Rāmānuja finds that the unity which can hold multiplicity within itself must be significant, enfolding the multiplicity in a unique manner. Further the problem is one of dynamic multiplicity, a multiplicity that is growing, and full of contingent relations, in one word is one of ever increasing and renewing activity. In order to find in this growth, development and change, process and progress, it is imperative to conceive this unity in a special way. It is impossible to conceive of it in a mechanical one or a material one. As progress and evolution cannot be registered in them, we have to find out whether this is possible in a spiritual unity of love that is most logically explainable as organic coexistence.

All unity is not material or external unity. Indeed it is found that the best unity that we have in external unity is the chemical compound within which the individual terms or substances undergo a thorough change and are unreasonable. Disintegration brings them out of their transformation and makes them unique entities. Further an arrangement between the terms is also important and this could not also be disturbed without sheltering their individual natures as such. Not so the unity of an organism. The disintegration of the organism leaves us undoubtedly in the same state as in the case of compounds but the fact of development and reaction to stimuli are not features of the compounds. They specifically belong to the organism, which is a growing unity, not a unity that comes into existence after and out of independent elements, but a unity that reveals at once a self-sustaining oneness through all the diversity of organisations.

The way our knowledge coheres with other items of cognition reveals a. unity, a mental one, between all experiences. The way our food and other objects inhere and sustain the unity of the organism reveals physiological equivalence to it. The way all the organs of the body maintain and sustain a dependence on the life-purpose whatever this may connote in terms of human interests, such as *artha*, wealth, *kama*, needs, and *mokṣa*, freedom from limitations of ignorance, reveals the unity of the multiplicity that can never be surrendered. At times the multiplicity might be more pronounced than the unity, and this tendency is the visible sign of change. A growing multiplicity or multiplicity that is constantly in movement is the World of Nature which contains both the souls and things. The souls or selves are also changing in the sense of undergoing changes in their consciousness-function though not in their substantial

nature as knowers. The fixing of the individual self to a significant connection or relation is never possible in the case of a growing individual who has to thrust forward and upward towards the highest aim. Not only is this possibility of connection between God and the individual one of constant alternation into several poses (and there are as many as there are fundamental human aspirations), but these several relations equally apply to every other relation between the several individuals themselves.

Absolute Unity must yet be a flexible unity that grants freedom or play to these fundamental human relations. And the most fundamental is that of love and sympathy or Grace. The Bhāgavata-mārga, which is that of Bhakti, is one of utter dependence on this one type of relationship that manifests itself as the typical centre of all other types of *rasas*. Change that is characteristic of the world of matter, partial change which is characteristic of souls (of one type at least such as the bond), and non change in either sense of the eternals and the Supreme Being who is the Lord of Change and Unchange, all these require a demonstrable unity which is at once integral and flexible. Rāmānuja approaches the conception of the Absolute through this triplicity of entities.

The unifying principle must be a concrete spiritual Being and not merely consciousness or a generic Universal or concept or idea. It must be a person who persists in subordinating all the multiplicity to his will and pleasure and ordains its conduct. Whilst himself being permanent he should pervade all through his will and omniscience. In other words, the multiplicity is in one sense, and that in the fundamental sense, servile to the Unity, through which alone it lives and moves and grows and gains perfection. To say that this is an eternal pervasion and indwellingness means that this relationship is absolute. The unity is signified by the absolute Lordship of the Supreme Being. The multiplicity of real existences which are the several selves and things must be embraced within this single substance or Being or Person, wherefore He is called *Puruṣottoma*.

The argument for a single self alone is disposed of since multiplicity cannot but be. Such a theory could only dispose of all multiplicity. Nor can the conditioning theory through *avidyā* or *māyā* explain the multiplicity. The theory of degrees of reality abolishes all attempts at reconciling the reality of effort and attainment with the absolute identity or Oneness of Perfect Deity.

Rāmānuja affirms that the inequalities are inexplicable without real multiplicity, strongly recalling the views of Sāṃkhya. Release would be purposeless if it is merely a refunding into Brahman's homogeneous nature or into the causal substance. It is impossible to conceive of freedom as uniformity or homogeneity, since it is particularly the function of uniqueness and difference, and in the highest sense is the attainment of freedom from all limitations of this uniqueness of being. Multiplicity accordingly

requires for its fullest expression freedom, and true freedom is fully realized in the attainment of freedom from all limitations. So does *Kāśakṛtsna*¹⁰ hold that the individuals can only be Brahman's bodies since in spite of attaining equality Brahman abides in them. The immensity of Brahman and the immortal freedom of Brahman are essentially the *differentia* between it and the individual souls. Brahman is infinite, in nature as well as in consciousness-function; the individuals on the contrary are finite in their substantiality and limited in their consciousness-functions only during their evolutionary or bondage periods. The selves retain their distinctions even after abandoning their bodies, but they are all the same pervaded by Brahman. A merger cannot take place, since that involves the conclusion that limitation is unreal or transitory, which means that true multiplicity in unity cannot be sustained. Nor is it possible to hold that Pure intelligence such as that of the Perfect Being could in any sense be obscured or hidden by *Māyā*. Brahman abides in all souls; His identity in all is the soul of multiplicity and continues to be so for ever, in darkness as well as in light. All the difference is what is made in respect of the individual souls themselves, whether they know Him (or it) or not know. The Infinite resides in the finite and is their strength, but they do not compose it. The doctrine of *Bhedābheda* narrowly misses the conclusion of compositeness by its theory of contradictory aspects. The unity is non-disintegrative and non-disjunctive, is indivisible and its wholeness cannot bear even surrender to multiplicity of finites. The organic unity is made possible by the principle of controlling indwellingness or pervasive power of God involving a capacity to actually indwell each in certain ways such as have been asserted by the *Antaryāmi* theory of the *Vedānta* and *Pāñcarātra*,¹¹ Brahman thus is the indwelling person in the several individuals composing or constituting the multiplicity and forms with them an organic Unity, each of which apart from the Highest and the rest can only be an abstraction.

Rāmānuja points out that the principle on which we accept Identity is quite valid as it is true to say that the knowledge of the One leads to the knowledge of all, but the One here is not any piece of stone, or Tennyson's "flower on the crannied wall", or an individual soul, but the Divine Person, the Supreme Brahman who is the One who has no compeer, who is the source and spring and Life of all, who is the controller, destiner and goal of all things. When we refer to even a finite soul or thing, the reference is not to any one thing of the several things composing the multiplicity but to the One Person who is the significant self of all of them. The Tennysonian touch, in which *Bosanquet* revels, is available because it means that the Real is the whole and that the part only represents a unique permanent locus of the whole. The part reveals its own fragmentary character, that is to say, its dependence on the larger and vaster Intelligence is indicated to its consciousness all through.

¹⁰ Śrī Bhāṣya I.iv.22.

¹¹ Śrī Bhāṣya I.ii.11.19-21

The absolute Unity depends upon absolute knowledge of all, and is available to a mind which is in some measure capable of infinite apprehension or direct intuition. That is to say the singleness of Unity is perceived only when there is completest identification with its multiplicity, by a process of infinite condensation of perceived data. This is the unity that overflows and lives through the multiplicity. The two are different even in kind, and that is the reason why the multiplicity is incapable of abolishing the unity not to speak of its living in and through it, and why the unity is incapable of being true without a recognition of its inevitable association with the multiplicity. The individual souls or subjects which are substantial existences are also adjectivally related to the Supreme God, without their substantiality being impaired or reduced or sublated. *Love* or *sneha* is the principle expressed as the relation of this Unity (*viśiṣṭaikya*).

XI

Summary

Summarising we find that true unity cannot be a generic character or a pure being which is the highest essence or abstraction, though it is said to be consciousness or awareness or the subject-aspect of the cognitive relation. The subjective consciousness is said to be not an individual consciousness but a vastly enhanced and extensive universal consciousness which is the static basis of all activity, mutations and multiplicity. The concept of such a base is no better, if not considerably worse, than the matter of scientists, which is the matrix of all stimulations of senses but which could never be known at all through the senses.

The subject unifies his experiences, just as his sense-organs and the brain condense infinite number of small stimuli affecting the sense-organs into qualified objects. The subject is the synthesizer of all these sensations into the unity of the concept. This is also, if we may repeat the expression, condensation of sensations. He is also the performer of the actions stimulated by the sensations and concepts. The subject in cognition is alert and vigilant. All Philosophies which concede the epistemological situation as important and seek to affirm the view that knowledge it is that liberates an individual from his ignorance, can, despite all other theories of release and metaphysical statements of the relationships which manifest themselves as genus-particular, substance-attribute, cause-effect, infinite-finite, and unmanifest-manifest, affirm the uniqueness of the subject-object relation or the cognitive relation. It is this too that reveals itself as the psychological relationship of body and soul, as also as the relation of knowledge with other objects and minds and the Supreme Self also. Thus in this context of the cognitive relation should the problems of Substance and Attribute, Infinite and Finite, Unity and Multiplicity be considered. Though materialistic phraseology is not always wrong, psychological or spiritual phraseology is the more apt and capable of granting a better and fuller explanation.