

CHAPTER VI

BRAHMAN--THE HIGHEST UNITY

From a study of the problem of unity we find that if ever a real and concrete unity is to be realized, it must be a Person who integrally sustains and manifests multiplicity of things and natures a real unity of concrete character or of concrete possibility. That this unity is affirmed by the metaphysicians of the type of Śankars and Bhāskara in a being devoid of all character is what we have seen from the foregoing. The most abstract truth must find exemplification in the most concrete occasion of existence. The truth of the abstract lies in its infinite capacity to be concrete. That is why the Supreme and most transcendent Brahman, the Infinite, has complete powers of manifesting Himself in the present conditions. Śankara does not allow any concrete nature to the transcendent and noumenal Being which is real but too real to exist under the conditions of Māyā, though it has the supreme power of being the ālambana, ground of all the illusions. Bhāskara grants a Being which is concrete in so far as it is said to possess qualities, *saguṇa*, but not in the sense of Spinoza's model and attributive qualifications or possessing concrete nature of extension and thought, but purely in the sense, that it has the power to involve itself in differentiations through self-limitation. But no sooner than he grants this power to proliferate, he declares that this is a limitation which is temporary, and which in fact must be got rid of by the seeker. By his theory of identity and difference he frustrates the spiritual characteristic of significant infinity and makes it merely a generic infinity.¹ Though Bhāskara thinks that his Being has essential intrinsic, *svābhāvika*, characteristics of power and perfection, he makes it at the same time an idea "beating its ineffectual wings in the void or grand Samsāri.

The Highest Unity must be a substance or Person as such and not an ideal or merely formal unity. It must be conceived as an organic unity and not as a mere conglomeration or compound. The relations in the organic unity are an ordered unity of relations and whilst the relations are not all of the same kind nor the *relata* of the same kind, the unity realized as between all these diverse kinds is one of the most concrete manifestations of the ideal of Unity. Rāmānuja holds that the notion of unity can never belong to any thing except to the Spirit or Person who is not merely the material cause but also the operative cause of the continuing unity of organic existence. It is that alone which organizes unity in purpose, in works, in cognition, in enjoyment and in freedom. A material being like *prakṛti* can never organize, much

¹ cf. *Philosophy of Bhedābheda*: P.N. Srinivasachari

less sustain the unity of its vital life.²

The unity of subject and object is also expressed in terms of soul and body. The unity of subject or spirit in all activities is; a positive evidence of the continuity of the self, despite the fact that its several ideas and perceptions and cognitions have a fluxional nature. It is in mind or self that all experiences of objects and ideas and their solution or integration and solace. The subject absorbs the object in one sense and understands it, and the more the absorption of the one in the other happens there is realization of the depths of the subject and object which now present a unity in experience. But this possibility is available not in mere sensation nor yet in mere comparison or inference, but only in the intuitional experience of reception of one another. Mutual reception is possible only when there is utter sympathy not merger, *ṇa* not *nirvāṇa*.

But what this really means is, that the subject must not stand over against the objects as something to be subjugated and ordered but as something to be understood as it is in itself, and truly this is impossible if the object were to be treated as only a phenomenal existence. The subject himself in introspection fails to discover himself as he is in himself, thus all the troubles he takes turn out to be futile. But when we find that this definition of Self or subject really and absolutely applies to the Supreme Being alone and that that alone is the Subject and Unity as it is in Himself we will be enabled to affirm that in His case there does not happen the difficulty of conceiving this Unity of the Organism.

The self as subject holds the multiplicity of its experience in it, unity. The organism contains the multiplicity of its organs. The subject expands its activities as more and more objects are brought within its circle of experience; its organism as constituted grows and increases in its dimensions through its various activities of absorption of alien bodies suited indeed to the needs of its growth and survival. The self, as we find it, is a real agent of all activity. Consciousness is the function of this self, and in all attitudes it exists as its all-abiding function³. Empirical evidence points to the existence of a number of selves and their existence seems to be necessitated logically also as proved by the theories of Sāṃkhya and Nyāya, and Rāmānuja does not feel it necessary to refute the reality of these existences. On the contrary the individuality of each of these is guaranteed as unique and intrinsic, and impossible of identification with other units or individuals. They are distinguished by their bodies which are different, belonging as they do to any class, genus or species, caste or state.⁴ " There is no confusion or mixing up of the individual spheres of enjoyment and

² Śrī Bhāṣya. II.2.3.ff.

³ Śrī Bhāṣya II.iii.29,30,33-34

⁴ Śrī Bhāṣya II.iii.48. "Asantateścāvyatīkaraḥ."

experience.⁵"

Nor is this uniqueness capable of being dissolved into the Unity of the One Intelligence, since such reports thwart the existence of intelligence itself. Apparent or real, the doctrine of deluding limitation *upādhi*, is self-contradictory.⁶

The individual selves are not all-pervading but pervade only their bodies. It is true that their sizes are not variable according to the sizes of the bodies they occupy, as in the Jaina doctrine, but they pervade through power, even as the rays of light pervade the room which they occupy even though their source is limited to one place. In the case of the individual souls the place they are limited to and from which they exercise their powers is said to be the heart. Thus the individual selves are finite in their pervasive action, since they cannot extend beyond their bodies for direction or action: their finitude is still further affirmed by their characteristic locus in the life of the Divine⁷, or if we may use a modern word, the perspective. Since this perspective which is unique and impossible of destruction or alienation is only a point, the individual as spirit must be conceived as atomic, or rather, as a unit without parts, or a, unity without parts (*śiḥ*), not in the physical sense but purely in the sense of a spiritual significant unity of direction and action and locus of the Divine All-Spirit. The number of these points are many, even uncountable by the individuals, but finite. Thus the individual souls are finite in quantity or number, and in pervasive capacity, (though they may, through the grace of the All-Spirit, enlarge their knowledge-pervasion to the limits of Divine knowledge), and finite in their initial limitation of action due to the need for doing creational duty. Rāmānuja of course points out that this last limitation does not include the freed and the eternally free souls, who have no creational duties like the gods Brahmā. Rudra and others, whom he considers to be bound to do the duty of creation etc. *karma vaśyas*.

The second consideration to which the former leads is, if the individuals are such absolutely eternal entities and subjects of experience, being spiritual in nature possessing cognitive activity, what must be the nature of reality which they perceive from their own unique points of view? Should it not be identical for all? This means

⁵ Brahmāmśatvādinaikarūpatve satyapi jīvānām anyonyabhedād aṅtvena pṛtīśārīram bhinnatvā cca bhoga-vyatīkaropi na bhavati

⁶Śrī Bhāṣya (II.iii.49) Akhadaikarasa-prakāśamātra-svarūpasya-svarūpa-tirodhāna-pūrvakopādhibhedopapādāna-hetur-ābhāsa eva. Pragāśai-ka-svarūpasya prakāśa-tirodhānam prakāśa-nāśa eva

⁷ *Svadharmā*

that there must be one identical object for all individuals.

In the Philosophy Of Nature we usually see this objective identity to rest in matter. This is the sensuous realm of our experience which despite the differences registered in individual experiences, forms the one identity of universe in which we do our work and strive to realise ends and purposes. This indeed is eternal in the sense that it is something into which we came in the particular form we have and have to accept it as having been existent from primordial time. But we have also seen that this changing universe is altering every instant though constant in its continuous nature as the cause of our sensations and as the field of our activities. It is true also that our consciousness is not able to penetrate into its inner nature through the senses, and is tempted to deny its reality, because it finds that according to its own canons it is pointing to an ordering person and governing intelligence not perceivable in it as such. This sense objectivity or externality is common to all thinking minds. The denial or the external reality of sensuous objects has resulted in positing all the properties that have been found in the object in the inner reality of the self. The positing has been facilitated by the phenomena of memory and creative constructive ability belonging to conscious persons as such. Thus solipsism came into being as a reaction, intellectual at first undoubtedly, against the sensuous erraticism of Nature. But no sooner than this inner objectivity of self posited imagination constructions of objects is accepted, despite the fact that without any prior cognition through senses no imaginative constructions are possible, then the need for discovering the basis for the reality of the identical universe for all beings becomes imperative and urgent. This identity can then be established in two ways. Firstly, we can affirm that since the laws of thought are identical to all intelligences, the constructions made by individuals independently will *ipso facto* be identical. Thus there will be constructed through out only one universe of reason though the constructions may indeed be many. We will thus be presented with similar and almost identical schemes of universe constructed through the efforts of the most pure creative thought. The diversity of the universes then will only be numerical but not logical. The differences registered in these universes must then be referred to the practical purity of the constructing intelligences and not to the Intelligence itself. The second view is, that all these intelligences are One only and the real objectivity of the Universe lies in this Oneness of intelligence rather than in the supposed "anstossed" oneness of the material universes of sense. In either case the Oneness of Intelligence is the truth of the objectivity and not the multitudinous individual selves nor yet the sense-world of diverse objects. The second view achieves both the abolition of the sense-world and the manyness of the individuals at one stroke and thus in a more radical doctrine than the former. But looked at carefully the first view also is capable of being logically reduced to the

second by the application of the principle of indistinguishability⁸.

But this purely rationalised account of the objectivity cannot explain the dual objectivity experienced by the individual in regard to the life he leads. The objectivity of the sense-world, in general nature, is the externality, or otherwise, restrictive of the individual's movement and life, conditioning him to time, space, life and death perils.

The objectivity that the solipsist seeks to install is the inner creative constructive logical universal spirit which is transcendent to his own finite limited logical, private, reiterative, reproductive activity. This Objectivity is the principle of Spirit which we have to discover in our inner Being as the Lord and self of our own selves, the Infinite which sustains the finite natures, the Ruler Immortal ruling and leading the feeble and dependent existences to His own Mansions of Light and Life and Glory imperishable. This too is the truth of existence, this too the goal to which all creation moves. But the objectivity of this Spirit is indeed different in kind from the objectivity of the Nature that we apprehend through our senses. Both are true. Whilst the material world which is objective is a principle of externality, the inner transcendent Spirit is objective but is a principle which includes the souls in itself and thus is not an other in the sense of the former.

The real objectivity which every individual grants to sense-perception is to be taken as fundamental to the question of existence of objects without our minds or individual beings, and in that sense common to all minds. The characteristics of colour and sound, touch; and taste, and smell are refunded to Matter (the primordial principle) by Sāṃkhya, though in a real sense they are responses made by the sensible (sātvic) cognitive quality of the sense organs to the vital or motional and gross and obstructive qualities of the elements of light, air, ether, water and earth. The conscious embodied being perceives everything through his consciousness in five ways and his experience is characterised by the objectivity revealed by the sensations. Even in the highest Yogic consciousness which is held to be due to overwrought imagination the object appears in one of these five ways and cannot altogether annihilate the object. To say that these colours and other sensations are impediments to complete knowing or pure knowing is to declare firstly, that matter as such is unknowable, and secondly that matter is an obstruction to knowing in its capacity as the body of the psychological subject. To bring in the representationalist theory of knowledge is to drift into the view that knowledge is knowledge of mental states, that is of our responses alone, and therefore it is an affirmation of the impossibility of knowledge of any outer thing, and that finally leads to the denial of all existence. To claim that intelligence is capable of manifesting creative-activity which has got sensorial character as in hallucinations and the rest, is to give the case away,

⁸ Leibniz's principle of *Identity of Indiscernables*

because nothing is created by the individual except what he has once observed or experienced. Surrealism is not idealism. The individual gives unity to these impressions in so far as his own reactions are concerned for it is the business of an efficient consciousness to apprehend the real in its own uniqueness and unity, which is diversified and received in a five fold manner by the senses. As such the function of the mind in perception apparently is to integrate the disintegrated sensations. This is helpful in one sense to the activity of the individual as he can contemplate the difference in the object by individuated reception, but the whole object cannot but be apprehended as the unity that is essentially is. This perception of its unity through the integration of its own sensations in the order of existence is the activity which leaves abundant scope for illusory superimpositions. Thus whilst the senses might not be normally wrong, and the perception thus essentially true, the *kalpana*, the interpretation of the individual features received through senses makes error. All creativity of the individual is only a recreation of the object in new symbolic forms. Thus also is made possible the infinite capacity for the forms of nature to stand in symbolic relations with profoundest psychological truths or truths of spirit.

Matter or the matrix of objective sense data is to be admitted. This matter is not identical with the scientist's matter which is said to be the substrate of all things but which can never enter into experience. Of course modern theories of matter which consider that the ultimate Material substance is not the atom, are nebulous. But the conversion of tile impenetrable substance into mere waves of radiant character by modern Physics is not a success for the idealist with his hopes hitched on the materiality of Spirit or immateriality of matter. Sāmkhyān Prakṛti is the principle of objective experience of matter and it is the completest account of the psychophysics of objectivity. The self is that which perceives it directly without the help of senses. Organs which indeed come into existence only after it has been known. In some sense the direct perception of the object is fundamental to the process of evolution of matter itself. It appears correctly as the basis of activity, for *Prakṛti* means the beginning of activity. The *Mahat* or objective intellect is itself the first fruit of the practical tendency. The egoistic self affirmation of independent existence (as distinct from its status as dependent on the Supreme Spirit which is its *svarūpa*, intrinsic nature or quality), is also the second fruit. The cognition of object for the purpose of instinctive grasping and possession, implicit in the egoistic self-assertion, *ahamkāra*, which seeks to sway and rule and grow mighty-God Almighty one might even say⁹ - and the *chitta* or *manas* memory functions as the nucleus of this

⁹ According to the Viśiṣṭādvaita it is not ignorance that is our difficulty but the ignorance that we are independent that is the source of all our miseries. Svatantrātma-bhrama is the foundation of all other kinds of illusion. Once this is reversed, the instruments of action and even pseudoaction and cognition undergo a transformation and become implements of knowledge and not of selfish action. It is this reversal of the first causal ignorance that is absolutely necessary and is the greatest sacrifice.

integration of knowledge in the interest of practical grasping, *kāmyakarma*, are the third stage of evolution. The senses also diversify themselves in the interests of selection of objects in the same manner. The functions of knowledge or cognition are secondary in this evolution and growth and manifestation. That is why it is affirmed that it is impossible to utilize these instruments of action, though at least some of these euphemistically are called *jñānendriyas* organs of cognition.

II

Brahman, the Śarirī

We do not find consciousness anywhere else than in a body, though this consciousness be the most limited as in the case of the human or fully expanded as in the *avatāras*, the descents of the Lord as witnessed to in all religious literature, be it Hindu or Buddhist or the Christian. It is in a body, at least as the locus or occasion, that the consciousness ever manifests or is active either in reception or creation. The self is aware of his own body directly, introspectively, as dependent on him for its existence, action, enjoyment as a body amongst other objects. Thus an objective and a subjective relationship are available in respect of one's own body. The individual is capable of creating certain things or having certain transactions with the physical world according to the body. But, find that it is very little and so trifling, that it can never explain how we can ever consider the entire reality or physical world which is space-time configuration (continuum) to have a subject who can hold it as its object. Nothing in this world has value apart from being an object of some kind (subject). In fact, we are considering a question of metaphysical value when we put the question in the same manner as Berkeley did, that it is inconceivable how anything could exist unperceived? But with a difference that anything that can be known must be capable of being an object to a mind, subjectively or objectively or subjectively-objectively, as *śarīra-śarīrī*. Since the total world of physical reality can never be apprehended fully but only partially by the several selves which are finite, it raises the question of a Mind or Self which can be the Absolute Subject of the totality of the objects. We have already said that to the real Infinite. The manifold universe or multiplicity is a finite number capable of being apprehended by Him. The antinomy between finite and infinite is possible only as between the terms conceived as quantitative, and not when the Infinite bears other qualities which are definitely distinguishing it from the finite.

Further the necessity for the existence of the infinite Spirit is necessitated by the fact of the independence of ideas and objects cannot be created by the individual souls at all. It is one of the convictions of Sri Rāmānuja that consciousness of the finites in their stage of ignorant beings or bound souls, cannot create anything, as their power of true creation is almost nil. Thus dreams too are not the creations of the individual souls. They are the fruits of the karma of the individuals dispensed by the Lord, who is the Lord of all karma, *karmādhyākṣa*. Thus the subjectivity of the ideas

even cannot be claimed by them, whilst they themselves will be capable of asserting that all ideas and things are objective but only in relative degrees. Thus whilst the subjective idealist, conscious of his or oblivious of his limitations asserts that all things are relatively subjective, the realist will assert that in view of the independence of the objects and the consciousness of the limitation on the part of the souls, there is only objectivity. Mental states are as much objective as the objects of the outer universe are, since they appear to be independent of the individual's wishes. This is a truth which Sāmkhya philosophy and Yoga have most clearly shown. To seek the aid of the Supreme Spirit to resolve the pathetic dilemma of the solipsist is not a new one. It has been always the refuge of great epistemologists. Berkeley affirmed the existence of the Supreme Mind or Spirit or God as the necessary being who alone can vouch safe the objective independence of objects which he with ruthless analysis had deprived them of. The consolation was that they existed in the Mind, and that did keep up the pretence of logicity even when logic was overthrown. Creativity of all things is possible only to the Divine. But does creativity entail the existence of these creations in and through the Mind, or can it also mean the dependent existence of all things, apparently held to be independent, on the Supreme Self?

Rāmānuja at first view, like every theist, may be said to hold views somewhat like Berkeley, without his solipsism, but on closer inspection we find that he is not prepared to make Prakṛti, the matrix of the physical world, a creation of God, though he is anxious to make it not independent of God but absolutely dependent on God. It is that which he has established as real and remains real from years sempiternal. The creationistic view is many times an interesting view in so far as it seems to assure us with a monistic view. Then everything becomes the stuff of God's will, perhaps an emanation of the self-same Being, but it can never explain how Matter, the substance of Nature, the inert substance can ever come into existence out of Spirit. It is one thing to say that unintelligence comes out of intelligence, quite another to say that Intelligence controls and sustains and enjoys the unintelligent, If this later relationship is realized in a permanent manner, than the chances in Matter can occur easily under the central of the intelligent Self. Then creation will mean nothing more than bringing about willed changes, forms of beauty and delight, in the material foundation of Prakṛti which is utterly dependent on the Supreme Brahman. Thus creation cannot mean the creation out of nothing or creation from His own Being, but the purposive bringing about of changes in Matter which is His body. The purpose is not something like the desire to gain or achieve anything that He lacks, but to enjoy delight of manifestation of Grace towards the souls which too are His body. It is for the pure enjoyment of self-delight that the Supreme Lord wills the changes and manifestations. Thus

Matter is not created nor are the souls created¹⁰ but the processes of creation as well its destruction¹¹ are willed by the Divine Lord. The Lord then is the indwelling Self of all phenomena in so far as He it is who wills all the changes of creation or birth and death as also persistence without dependence on Him nothing can exist, can ever be.

Thus Sri Rāmānuja perceives that the true interrelation between uncreated things, namely the finites which are distinct in kind from the Divine, though they possess some likenesses like intelligence etc., and the uncreated Matter which is distinct and capable of changes in form as well as in nature, the unmanifest *avyakta*, is fundamentally one of *functional* dependence on the Supreme Spirit.

What is this dependence? It is not primarily a causal dependence but one of organic type. It is not like the ground and consequent relationship nor is it capable of being likened to the substance and quality even in the sense of rose colour bearing an inseparable relation to the flower rose. It is not a *samavāya* relationship. This is of the organic type. The terms are apparently of the most distinctive kinds. Yet they are united, in some peculiar relation of dependence on the Supreme Mind or Personality. It is a personality because it not only supports, it controls and enjoys them for its own supreme purposes. This is what we know to be the characteristic relation of a body to the soul. But the relationship between the souls and their bodies is not so simple as all that, since our souls are not absolutely masters of their own bodies, and secondly, the death of the body should mean the death of the soul also if inseparability be affirmed between the body and the soul. This difficulty is serious. But as can be seen it is not necessary and it is not conceded by Rāmānuja that the body we have are ours absolutely. It is yet on the analogy of the body to the soul that the organic relationship of dependence is being sought to be affirmed. God alone is the absolute self of all, who supports all forms of Matter, its unmanifest nature and its mutable existences, for He it is who destines their changes and transformations and as such is their master. The individual souls tenant bodies and are limited by them and on these bodies ceasing, the souls have to wander in search of others determined by their previous karmas. Dependant, existence cannot determine their own future or their existence. The finite souls though possessed of knowledge activity are not capable of fullest power so long as they are bound to their own karma and ignorance. The purest body that one can get will be that -which comes after strenuous askesis of *jñāna*, karma and bhakti. That even is given up for the super-material, *śuddha-sattva* body which results on liberation and physical death (*videha-mukti*)¹². It is just possible then

¹⁰ Śrī Bhāṣya; II.ii.39 *Utpattayasambhavāt*

¹¹ Śrī Bhāṣya: I.i.2. *Janmādyasya yataṭaḥ*

¹² The evolution of the soul to its fullest *sāmya* with the Brahman can be likened to the progress of the caterpillar through its chrysalis(pupa) state to its Butterfly career. The *jīva* is bound in the first state for it is a unidimensional material creature, and in the second stage it arrives at the state of yoga or *Samādhi*. After bursting out of this self-constructed self denying shell, the *jīva* arrives at the

for the individual souls to be lords of their bodies, but then they themselves would have realised that they are bodies of the Lord, in the significant sense of dependence, entire and complete, that there is no occasion to claim their super material body even as theirs.

From these it follows that since the relationship between the body and the self is not of the samavāya-type of the Naiyāyikas, but is a unique relationship of dependence that does not annul the dependent but sustains it, Rāmānuja's aprathaksiddha śarīra-śarīrī relation of great importance as at once retaining the Unity of the three as well as affirming the distinctive features of each one of them. It is in the human organism that we for the first time come across the consciousness of the ownership of the body, and the enjoyability of the universe and also the independence-notion of the individual. It is in this same manner that we are forced to realize that this body is not ours, that we are not our own, that both the body as well as ourselves are dependent on the Supreme Lord, who enjoys and supports and orders it and us. That this interpretation of the relationship between the individuals and matter and God is of greatest importance to philosophic understanding need not be gainsaid. The unity herein brought into existence between the Divine and the human is of the essence of religious consciousness, and the mastery over Nature by God shows that this unity is also of the same order of dependence.

III

Brahman, a Person

The subject of knowledge is a personality. More so when the subject is the Supreme Infinite Being, and not less so as some contend. Further as we have shown this Supreme Infinite Being has the world and the souls as His bodies or rather body, and thus in one sense contains them within Himself and in another sense is their support indwelling them through His pervasive power and lordship¹³. They cannot support the Lord, on the contrary they are supported by the Lord. The individuals selves are in one sense objects of the Supreme Subject, who is the perceiver of all things in the world through His supreme sustaining vision. We have no reason to think that these selves (which are objects dependent on the Supreme Lord) would become unconscious entities like the physical objects, an objection that the *māyā vādā* brings forward by its proposition that to be an object is to be a material unconscious entity. But Rāmānuja says 'We do not apprehend other selves as unconscious " nor is " the proposition that consciousness does not admit of being an

state of freedom. Thus videhamukti has an analogy in biology. This, it may be remarked, is more true biologically than the *Bhramara-Kiṭa-Nyāya*

¹³ Īśa.Up.I. Edited by the author and Dr.T.Tatacharya S.V.O.I. No 5

object tenable□¹⁴. Na cānyaviṣayatvenanubhūtitvam. Further, according to Common Sense, when we are speaking to one another, we have what is called inter-subjective intercourse, we do not treat others as mere objects subserving certain ends which do not belong to them or lie within them. All intercourse is possible only on one consideration, that the person to whom we are speaking is one who is as much an intelligent subject apprehending the meaning of what we are speaking. We do not start with animism and later relinquish it, as some thinkers seek to do. On the contrary, there is undoubtedly an effort and a natural one at that, to distinguish between the sensible and conscient and the non-conscient and to deal with them in two different ways, errors notwithstanding. We cannot allow the contention that consciousness by itself becomes unintelligent like the physical objects by becoming an object of another mind or when ensnared by another mind. What is possible is that in knowing, the other individual appears to be more a body, a thing in the physical order, just like any other physical object, but then, we also apprehend him as a self who has a body of his own on account, of the perception of movements and other activities which places us in the presence of an embodied being. The perception or knowledge of other minds proceeds on a two-fold basis, firstly because of the objective resemblances to our activities and appearances, and secondly due to the subjective direct apprehension of the souls or selves or minds other than our own.

It leads to a certain kind of absurdity when we claim that Brahman or the Highest Being can be the goal or object of our knowledge, for such an object would by the very fact of its being an object turn out to be an unconscious entity. This absurdity the subjectivist cannot overcome by suggesting that the object is in fact the Subject and that there can only be subjective subjects rather than objects in regard to the spirit. For it is not the Self of all, of me and am I not of It, accordint the famous formula of *Soham asm?* The doctrine which seeks to transfer the object to the subjective status through the principle of experience of Identity is not altogether as wrong if it did not tag on to this theory of conversion into subjectivity, the faulty doctrine of objective consciousness. No doubt in a cognitive situation on relation, the intelligent subject is the principal Being (relatively speaking) having functional importance as against the subject he cognizes. The subject can view it in all ways and thus his independence is not lost¹⁵,but the object appears to have almost fallen into the hands of the mind for it to be turned round in any way he likes, provided ofcourse the object does not hit back nastily, teaching the subject that he is a limited consciousness and a powerless finite existence. But admitting even that the other self or embodied being is being perceived, it cannot be affirmed without being gravely challenged that the other self which is the object is not also functioning or that is

¹⁴ Srī Bhāṣya I.i.1. anubhāvyatve ananubhūtitvam ityupahāsyam

¹⁵ Even this statement has to be modified for the subject almost loses itself in this Object for He is attractive, as in the case of Māyā

functionally not cognizing the subject or some other object. In ordinary behaviour this is so real that the animated conversations and discussions and movements we make are not to be treated as mere unconscious movements, movements lacking coherence and intelligence and consciousness. It is a complete travesty of facts to say that to be an object is to be (or become!) unintelligent. That there may be some objects which are unintelligent, does not prove that all objects are such. The major fault of Māyāvāda and Advaita has been due to such facile universal propositions derived from a few fragmentary experiences. To build on such frail foundations a grand superstructure needs a profound optimism in oneself, and that optimism manifests itself in the great but misunderstood doctrine of *So'hamasmi*. What is not possible to the soul when it is indeed God? Everything is possible and this creative fancy which converts the object of consciousness into an unconsciousness is one such. It would have been more right to claim that all objects become conscious by falling into the mouth of the omnivorous consciousness as indeed Berkeley and Bosanquet and others have sought to do. Indeed finally it is into this theory that Advaita lands itself by its omniscient universal declaration that All is Spirit, is Consciousness and nothing else, but this is in the transcendental sense. This is something that we may not admit at the peril of unintelligibility, Even the illusion cannot save itself, and thus we are left alone when all intelligibility, the one criterion of logical and philosophical thought, is thwarted and denied its rightful place in the scheme of metaphysics, not to speak of epistemology. Epistemology cannot have a place in that kind of idealistic thought that finally culminates in the affirmation of the mere subject, albeit a universal self. A dualistic epistemology can perhaps go with monistic metaphysics but there cannot be a monistic epistemology.

IV

Brahman, the Supreme Freedom

We thus find that our analysis of the nature of the supreme subject yields us an intelligent Personality, and Infinite Being, who is capable of sustaining and controlling and enjoying all things which are in one sense objects of His eternal vision, inseparably belonging to Him, and who in another sense is also their One Supreme Object, whom they, because of their finiteness, cannot perceive through their senses and their mind even, but who can be seen only by the special divine vision that is the gift of the Divine Lord Himself alone.

We have seen that to exalt the human consciousness or consciousness to the status of a substance or to make it a permanent function that cannot but be always active is to make the facts of cognitive relation absolute, as if other facts of the conative or the affective life are not available. If the Divine Lord can be presumed

to create or to withdraw from all creation, to enjoy or not to enjoy, if freedom indeed is the foundational fact about the Divine Existence or Being, then the power to know or not to know, to experience or not to experience are equally fundamental facts of this freedom. Thus; the theory that consciousness is the Lord Himself, that at no time it was not in function, goes against the fundamental principle of freedom, and one is reduced to the position that consciousness is a function, inseparable and inalienable indeed, of a person who can cognize or not do so. Thus the characteristic nature of the Divine Lord or subject is Will, the Supreme Will which is freedom, infinite in its power and range and kind, which nothing can lessen or shroud. Ignorance is itself non-existent in that nature, though this ignorance is capable of being engendered by the very infinity of the power of the Divine Infinite in an organic manner. Thus Māyā is the power of the Lord, wonderful, supreme, infinite, deluding those who do not find their dependence nature, but liberating those who do.

The nature of the selves as intelligent, but not always conscious, leads to certain significant affirmations. The individual selves always seek an universal content, even in the particular ambit of their being. But this universal knowledge is possible, according to Rāmānuja, only when the individuals become pure, which they do on attaining liberation from their karmic bodies. For it is their karma that limits, restricts, dwarfs, depraves, deludes and diminishes their knowledge. It is the root-cause of the ignorance. There is a finiteness in the souls, a fundamental finiteness, which is a truth of their being. Also there is a sense of finiteness, a sense of being bound which gnaws into the vitals of one's consciousness, making it imperative to struggle against it, a sense of imprisonment which contrasts itself; with- the-existence of liberated souls. Egoism is the result. And once this egoism is present, there is an easy transition to the feeling of infiniteness and independence, which are indeed far from the truth of the finite soul, much as certain types Of mysticism affirm the same- It is one thing then to be final and quite another to feel bound. That they may coexist and in fact do coexist, is not proof enough for their being identical or necessary to one another. Religious consciousness affirms the necessity for the feeling of dependence on the Supreme Lord and the recognition of the finiteness of the individual even whilst it affirms the need to liberate oneself through the knowledge of God, Thus it is one thing to be finite, quite different to be liberated. These two co-exist in the liberated souls. The souls may be even divinised by the conscious (or super-conscious?) grace of the Lord; they may assume the form and body of the supermaterial nature, but they can never be more liberated than they are, that is they are related in the dependent-relation of body to the Divine. Liberation means the sense of fulness that comes to the individual in his perfected state of being. He becomes conscious of the Infinite within him, around him, everywhere and for all time.

These liberated beings may have enjoyment in the fullest measure, an

enjoyment which is of the nature of truest nature and being of the Divine, the fountain and ocean of Delight, into whom they merge and engage in varied types of relationships of which the human is aware, and even change their very natures too, but of that power of controlling and husbanding the Universe they verily have none.¹⁶ That is the distinctive mark of the Lord and all the rest are dependent on, subordinate to, that Lord. If the power of entering into significant relation with even his own body is denied to the individual, how much more when the whole Nature is concerned and all other selves are concerned? Thus even from the stand point of epistemology the individual finite being can never realise the extension of its power to infinity. Rāmānuja however grants this infinity of knowledge to the individual souls; but certainly not the power of creation. The individual can enjoy without let or hindrance all the worlds of the Divine Manifestation as easily and fully as God Himself, both the unchanging and eternal *nitya-vibhūti* and the world of *līla*, (all worlds of the Divine *jagatyām jagat* of the *Īśāvāsyopanīṣad*, which the Lord manifests and controls and dwells in). The individual gains the fullest plenitude of auspicious existence. Freed from all karma he enjoys all the excellent characteristics of the Divine Lord Himself, except one, that is the power of creation of the worlds, of being the *sarvādhāra*, *sarva-nīyantr*, *sarveśa*, *sarvaśeṣin*,¹⁷

It is true that the height of Philosophy is fully and completely reached when the individual can have the fullest and completest vision of reality as his goal or ideal.

This ideal is granted to the individual from the philosophical standpoint of knowledge but not on the plane of action. It may well be contended whether one can stop with this, short of completest identity with God? But then this is something that unfortunately is incapable of being realized. Our inmost religious consciousness and the experiences of mystics have borne witness to this lack on the part of the individual. In all things he becomes equal to the Divine, except for the lordship over creation and other cosmic processes. Thus whilst the height of metaphysical knowledge may be attained by the individual soul, it does not follow that it can have also the fullest power of pervasion and governance and enjoyment of all things. The doctrine of identity may be achieved and substantiated in the realm of knowledge, because of the doctrine of identity of indiscernables, but this certainly does not grant that the individual can ever become the Infinite Subject. What happens is that according to Rāmānuja, the *dharmabhūta jñāna*, the functional consciousness, which

¹⁶ Srī Bhāṣya IV.iv.17 ff. Jagadvyāpāraṅgam prakaraṇād asannihitvācca.

¹⁷ Srī Bhāṣya IV.iv.20... apahatapāmatvādis satya-sankalpatva patyanto guṇagaṇaḥ pratyagātmanaḥ svābhāvika evāvīrbhūtaḥ: Tathāpi tasya tathā vidhatvameva paramapuruṣasyaitannityatāḥ nityeṣṭatvānnityatayā vartata iti na kaścid virodaḥ. Evameva paramapuruṣabhogopakaraṇasya līlopakaraṇasya ca nityatayā śāstrāvagatasya paramapuruṣasya nityeṣṭatvādeva tathā vasthānamastiti śāstrāda vagamyate. Ato muktasya satyasañkalpatvam paramapuruṣasāmyam ca jagadvyāpāraṅgam.

had been in a contracted state during the soul's bondage, on liberation expands to its fullest ideal condition of universal expansion. That this expansion of its size so to speak, which makes it also move in all the worlds of God's creation with equal wisdom and enjoyment, unfettered by any limitation whatsoever, is what is possible to the liberated soul, Nothing more. In which case there may accrue liberty without power of the infinite kind, and enjoyment of all without obstruction and attachment, for it is attachment, which is consequent on the fear of going without it, that is the seed of all ignorance and egoistic grasping. Into this sense of fear of losing enjoyment the individual never falls once he has attained that fullest consciousness. There is no danger of a fall into the bond condition once the soul is liberated. This is the promise of Upanisadic thought and the Gītā.

V

Brahman as Siddhopāya

We find that the totality of phenomena is capable of being the object of the Supreme Subject, but only partially of the individual selves which are in very limited degrees subjects. Though these individuals may achieve in their liberated condition, *muktāvastha*, a range of perception which includes the whole range of phenomena without exception yet they are incapable of being Supreme Subjects, because there is a difference in kind between that and this in other respects¹⁸.

The very nature of the world as an order, a rational and spatio-temporal and causal order, requires an explanation in terms of a Spirit or Self, and no cause except the Highest Intelligence can make the world truly objective to the individual souls. It is impossible to assert on the plane of pure reason whether or not the world is an effect. The cosmological, teleological and the ontological¹⁹ proofs given to substantiate the existence of God are all incapable of showing the creator to be like anything we conceive of. That is to say, these proofs prove nothing. The finite cannot create the infinite, nor can the infinite be known through the apparatus of our perceptions and inferences. Kant may be right in affirming that the casual law itself cannot be applied transcendently since it leads to antinomies. The moral law and the religious intuitions alone can grant sanction to this existence of this Ideal Subject of all Experience, the

¹⁸ This indeed is an important point, we may ask two questions (1) Is the infinity of the dharma - bhūta-jñāna of the freed soul of the same intensity and kind as the dharma bhūta jñāna of the Lord? For Rāmanuja there is no difference. We can legitimately say that there is *sāmya,sa cānantyāya kalpate*. (2) Is not the effort to tag on to the finite being an infinite range in consciousness one more attempt at reducing the difference between the Divine Lord and the finite soul? That is the meaning of parama sāmya.

¹⁹ Cf. Udayana's arguments for the existence of God, are shown to be weak by Sri Rāmānuja and other under *Sāstrayonitvādhikaraṇa*.

creator, the true infinite.

We arrive at the conclusion that the relation between several selves may be regarded as eternal as well as external, because the subject object relation between them though not impossible is not fundamentally organic. Whereas the relation between the world and the Supreme Subject is an absolute relation of dependence of the former on the latter, the relation between the Supreme Subject and the finite selves is a relation of exquisite internality²⁰, which is also of the nature of dependence on the part of the latter, but made possible by the intrinsic nature of knowledge which is the quality common to both the Supreme Brahman and the individual souls.

The view that it is this inner presence of the Brahman within the individual that has made it possible for him to be even a subject. is admittedly a facile explanation²¹: but as already shown there can be no abandonment of the reality of the individual selves by this speculative assertion that the Infinite itself is the conscious principle in each body, and that the individual souls are false because mere partial predicates of it.

The Divine Lord therefore is a real unity, indeed the only Unity who holds within Himself all the multiplicity of the selves in an integral harmonious union making them more and more perfect in the light of wisdom, making them grow into the knowledge of the true and the real, making them realize their moral worth and religious status. He is not the substance in the sense of Spinoza. He is the unity because of His supreme power of control and power of enjoyment and power of knowledge. His Infinity-unity supports all and therefore substands all existence. The attributive theory of Spinoza also cannot avail here. The Supreme Brahman is not what appears to the individuals in or under the forms of the two attributes of thought and extension whose respective modes are ideas and things. On the contrary, the Infinite Being as Being is beyond the range of our normal perception, but He cannot be apprehended except through His Grace.

The highest unity is thus realized in the Supreme Person, or Individuality, through which everything lives and moves and grows. The finite existences have undoubtedly a reality of their own, not as pure parts, *amśas* in the materialistic and fragmentary sense, but in the sense of being related as bodies of the Supreme. This

²⁰ *antar-bahiśca tatsarvam vyāpya Nārāyaṇās stihitah.*

²¹ Cf. The idealistic view of Hegel and Bosanquet and others who hold that the reality of anything is in some senses accepted by Rāmānuja, because everything has its self in that Brahman, and when we speak of ultimate things, it is to this Self of all, which is the support of all, that we refer and not to the finite being. But Rāmānuja rejects their theories which reduce the real finites, soul and things to mere adjectives or a collection of adjectives, finding their ground in Reality. The souls are substances dependent, even as modes are, on the infinite Brahman.

conception entails the view of direct relationship with the supreme Person. It means that the world consists of souls which are individually bodies of the Supreme, in the sense that they are sustained, supported, governed and led to the fullest experience of Himself, through Himself. This view is not to be confused with the view of Hegel that "ultimate reality is not a mere system, made up of parts, but an all including individual, constituting its members', and in which "the Individual has an existence fundamental, logically prior, to that of the parts or of the members. It is not separate from them, but it is distinguishable from them. It is fundamental to the parts, though they are real, are not absolutely essential to it: it expresses itself in the parts instead of being made up of them.' There is so much in the system of Hegel when realistically and pluralistically viewed that makes his thought fall into line with the religio-mystical philosophy of Monotheism, but then there is not that galvanization of that System by Spirit which could make it real. The system of Rāmānuja because of its fundamental loyalty to the truth of religious and mystical consciousness affirms the Unique Personality of the Divine Lord, who is logically and metaphysically the true abode of all things, whilst He Himself is neither composed or made up of or constituted by the parts, or bodies or partial realities. The souls are not partial realities, they are wholly real. They are however not those which live independently. But if this be considered to be the mark of reality then we can say that the One Supreme existence of Brahman can safely be called the Real. But it is not so. The ordinary meaning that we grant to the word real cannot be denuded of its meaning. What can be done is that these reals can be shown to depend upon a higher real. Thus we are enabled to call the souls as *satya*, truth, and the Supreme Self as *satyasya satya*, truth of the true. Thus whilst dependence-relation may make a thing incomprehensible except through that on which it depends, and so on till we reach that; which is Truth that is independent of others, the reality or existentiality of these selves cannot be impugned. Nor could a contradiction be raised between existence as actual and reality as ideal Truth, the truth that is independent of every thing but on which all other truths depend. Rāmānuja's protest against idealism is not against the claim that all things are dependent on One Infinite Spirit, whatever be the material or spiritual character of these dependents, but only against the view that reality claims degrees. Once this claim is admitted, then it logically follows this Spirit is the only really Real, whereas the lowest term, namely, matter which is absolutely dependent on it, and the souls also, become absolutely false or illusory or appearances, and between these two extremes we shall have to admit that there are any number of degrees of reality.

Evolving from the crude unconscious life of the atoms, plants and the animals, the individual who has been embodied in matter (which acts as the body or structure into which the individual is placed according to his karma), grows into the human nature aware of his being the master to a certain extent of the body which is perceived by him to be his, in so far as it bears a peculiar personal interest to him, and aware of the environment which he comes across and modifies according to his needs and aspirations through volitions which are dependent on the needs of the

body and its continuance and perpetuation. From this level of conscious recognition of his own fundamental unity enriched by the complex structure of his experience, the individual looks far ahead to that grandest of all structures the final perfection which he recognizes to be only in the personality which is real, embracing all the lesser personalities, whilst granting them value and individuality. This is the promise of the Divine Birth in mystic consciousness, when the individual feels himself as one with the Divine or at one with the entire cosmos as in pantheistic mysticism. Mystico-religious man finding himself to be inseparable from the Divine Life and personality melts into it and losing himself in it, emerges from it transformed and sanctified and made holy, capable of viewing all things in supreme ecstasy of perception *sub specie eternitatis*, verily with divine eyes of immortal vision. Such is the transformation of the individual into true personality. We might even say that there is an *osmosis*²² in the contact of the Divine with the individuals, and the equality is established by the Divine. Such an *osmosis* does not exclude the reality of the individuals by themselves who compose the organic whole of reality. The individual forms an integral significant *amśa*, portion of the Divine, The truest definition of an *amśa* is the definition which keeps the soul neither aloof nor isolated but keeps it inseparably and inalienably integrated with the whole, without making it lose its individual character and emotion. The character of the part might undergo modification in so far as it becomes conscious of its dependence on the central self of its existence, and almost wear even a diaphanous coat or body which makes one see it as if it is indistinguishable from the whole. It may even perceive its own unity to be firm and thorough, so that it cannot see itself as existent apart from it. But the germs of its particularity and *amśatva* remain.

To modify a relation or character is not the same thing as sublation of an unreality or as getting rid of its nature as individual. Individuality has been the locus of the constellation of relations and as such the faults of these are referred to it. Just as in the case of an organism, the mind does not sublimate the body, so also sensation is not sublated by thought. It is improved by it. Thought enters into things and makes them rich with concreteness in meaning, whereas abstract thought is made rich with images and thus made concrete by sensation. Thus the unity of the two is the fullest realization. The individual souls are permeated by the Divine Lord through His will and are transformed and not sublated by Him. They too live in the light of the personality integrally united in the Consciousness of the Divine devoted to Him. They are enriched by the perfect consciousness of the Highest, made now central in them through His

²² Osmosis The phenomenon whereby water passes through a semi permeable membrane with a push. The membrane is permeable to the solvent(water) but not permeable to the dissolved substance. The pressure with which this push is achieved by the solvent is called the osmotic pressure. “ The osmotic pressure is the excess of the pressure on the solution side of a semipermeable membrane over the pressure on the solvent side”. J.W.Mellor: Modern Inorganic Chemistry p.207. It is the principle at work in living tissues also. Cf. Loeb’s Mechanistic Conception of Life p.99

grace. Whilst all the imperfections are theirs all the richness is His. Thus we can almost affirm that the individual finity is so built in this manner that it acts as the semi-permeable membrane which permits the solvent, God's grace, freely to move into the individual consciousness, whilst the imperfections and other frailties are incapable of passing over into the broad expanse of delight of the Divine Personality. But when the conscious unity is established, we find that the pressure and infiltration of the supreme consciousness are indeed great, so that it profoundly alters the entire personality of the individual, so that even his body undergoes a transformation so to speak and becomes completely divinised and diaphanous. So much so, the Divine peers through the individual. The individual becomes the Bhāgavata, God-dwelt, God possessed, and utterly transformed being.

The Highest Unity is maintained and sustained and enforced by the Divine Consciousness of God alone, who is the Supreme Personality²³.

Rāmānuja finds in the Highest Personality, Puruṣottama not only the Ideal but the Actual. It is impossible to hold for a religious and mystical consciousness that the ideal that it has before it is something that is carved out by its own consciousness out of the stuff of its own reality, or by the askesis of the votary or tapas created out of the bosom of its reality. Such a view is entirely at variance with the profoundest beliefs and realizations of all seers. It is true that in some schools of thought the claim is made that the Ruler Immortal within can through *mantra* and *tantra* be projected outside into an image properly and correctly made so as to be the object of *savikalpaka dhyāna*, or *saguṇopāsana*.

Though Rāmānuja confesses that he cannot, and in fact no one could, prove the actual existence of the puruṣottama with proofs drawn from perceptual and analogical sources, yet it is to the common and un-contradicted conviction and belief and realization of the seers of all ages and times that in the last resort we have to owe our allegiance; Ālvārs and Ṛṣiṣ have with one voice affirmed the greatness of the Supreme Puruṣottama, His reality and His actual presence in each and in all. The voice of such, firmness and certitude cannot be dismissed lightly. The highest truth is the transcendent Personality of the Divine, not the impersonal which is transcendent to the senses; undoubtedly beyond our ken, He is yet the most gracious Lord who

²³ cf. Pluralist Philosophies : Jean Wahl p.45, “ The God of allows individual consciousness to live beneath him or by his side. The widest circle contains all the rest and yet each circle is as it were self contained. The finite mind remains immanent in God though still an individuality and even when it appears as though absorbed by the supreme individuality, it still retains its personality. Does a visual sensation cease to be itself because it enters at the same time as the other sensations into our greater consciousness?”

enters into relations with the humans who surrender themselves to His will and follow Him alone.

VI

Brahman the Puruṣottama

The conception of the Divine Puruṣottama we have arrived at shows that in Rāmānuja's conception the Personality of the Lord has a two-fold nature; one of which is manifested in a personal effulgent, auspicious and utterly transcendent body of light and truth and power immeasurable, qualified with the six transcendent qualities of *jñāna*, *aiśvarya*, *śakti*, *tejas*, *vīrya* and *bala*. " He possesses infinite measure of Knowledge (*jñāna*) and *ānanda*, and is bereft of all bad qualities: He is characterised by knowledge and power and unlimited auspicious qualities. He has a divine auspicious form and has as his bodies the eternal and play worlds.²⁴ The infinite Lord has infinite qualities but "amongst these the following six, knowledge, strength, lordship, courage, power and splendour (*tejas*) are apprehended by all as useful to meditation. Sauśīlya, Vātsalya, Saulabhya, these too are inherent in the nature of the Īśvara.

We find that the meaning of *śarīra* undergoes a wide amplification; the personal body of light and strength, blazing with effulgence, blinding and of terrific power all these indeed constitute His form. It is qualified all the same by the sweet presence which He has, easy of access, of love and beauty. The manifestations of his two-fold empires and the eternal world of freed, free and divine natures, and the world of the bond and struggling and the world of manifestation of His Grace, exist mainly for His delight, though the *līlā*-world is created for His pure play. This two-foldness is made possible because of the definition of body that he has given as the only perfect definition, namely that which a sentient soul is capable of supporting, controlling and enjoying for its own purposes absolutely is the body of that soul. Thus the unity of many bodies is possible only to a single Supreme Personality like the Puruṣottama.²⁵ The *aprākṛta* non-material, non-insentient, body is possessed by the Lord at the same time as He possesses the material, *prākṛtic* body.

Rāmānuja fuses the reality of the physical continuum with the spiritual reality which is capable of holding it always in its consciousness, and is capable of sustaining it. The embodied self is a unity of concrete character or Nature, and the unity of matter and mind if available in an embodied self. The moot-problem for Modern Psychology has been how the body and soul could exist together if they are

²⁴ Rahasya-traya-sāra: Śrī Vedānta Deśika ch.IV (Arthapañcakam)

²⁵ Examples of Saubhari and others are sometimes given as instances.

such different substances as idealistic metaphysics tries to make them. Either they are one and the same or owe their interaction to a common matrix, namely matter (as the behaviorists hold in the correct scientific manner) or *elan vital* (as vitalists like Bergson and his school hold), but none is prepared to accept the origination of these material things from one spirit. Idealism has to find a way out through the theory of *vivarta* or illusion to get at matter or apparent matter, the unconsciousness. Rāmānuja finds that the derivative relation is not capable of making for any clear explanation. Between the Syllogism of Māyāvāda and the Charybdis of Materialism, he undertook to solve it by the theory of psycho-physical organism. There is no physical event that has not been ordained by a spirit or controlled or enjoyed by one such, and thus there are corresponding causal situations in mental and spiritual consciousness. This dependent and yet non derivative relation is fundamental to reality from the highest to the lowest. Such is the manner by which the psycho-physical interaction is explained. The only proof for the assertion is its actual availability in experience. Mind controls matter, enjoys it: and even as the pregnant truth of Sāṃkhya lies in its affirmation that Prakṛti exists for the enjoyment of the Puruṣa, this is a metaphysical truth. Metaphysics does not sublate physics but makes physics possible.

Matter ranges from the most obstructive to the least obstructive.²⁶ The more gross matter is, the less likely is it for any intelligence to shine through it or to enjoy it. Or rather the more necessary is it for the intelligence to be perfect in order to enable it to utilise or control matter. Thus we find that whilst great minds are enabled to snatch the ideal truths of essences and meanings end all that there is not in them that same capacity for controlling and subordinating matter. In other words, till a particular stage in evolution, we find that matter and mind are in inverse ratio to one another. But when creative activity begins to manifest, as indeed it does, when the intelligence possessing the knowledge of laws of nature and of the mathematical and physical order is able to apply them to the conditions of life, then we find that it is possible, nay necessary, to speak of the realization of the ideal truths in existence. This supreme capacity for creative activity is of course something dependent on the perfection of consciousness or rather independence of consciousness from the trammels of ignorance. It is likely that we have gradual liberation, liberation in certain directions more swiftly than in others and hence there results the manifestation of creative activity in certain directions and not in all directions. The supreme capacity for creation of course in that of God, so much so perfect subordination of the most recalcitrant form of matter is available to Him, and not to any individual soul of whatever height or perfection. Two theories are possible in this context. Either the souls may be presumed to act creatively having been ordered or willed by God, the most Perfect Being, or else that God, the indwelling Lord in all beings, Himself creates through the individual. A third possibility may yet be envisaged. It may be said that

²⁶ Cf. Aristotle arranged all things between the two limits of pure Matter and pure Form.

greatest creative artists are possessors of bodies and souls which are receptive of the light and truth of God in the most perfect and purest way possible, Without a body of some kind there is possible no activity of any kind. Pure Intelligence is merely a ghost floating or beating ineffectually its wings in the void. Mere matter can never be anything apart from the soul or intelligence that enlivens it.

God is the supreme Being, the most perfect and infinite Intelligence, possessing infinite auspicious qualities,²⁷ whose nature is different in certain respects, though not in all respects, from the individual souls, but who whilst He may manifest Himself like the finite, yet never ceases to be the Infinite Being He ever is, auspicious, perfect and supreme His body or *śarīra* or divine form, *divya-mangala vigraha* is of light, supreme, transcendental, excellent and auspicious, in which the souls can seek and find refuge in meditation. This is His special form, His personal form of beneficent radiance and puissant effulgence, which seeing no one can ever seek to look at anything else. The other forms are of the cosmic and terrific kinds. The *virātsvarūpa* described in the great Puruṣa-sūkta and the Bhagavat Gītā and that which Hiraṇyakaśipu in the story of Prahlāda saw just before he was killed are instances of these kinds. To say that God has no form only means that He is not having a form that limits Him; He is transcendent to all material forms. To say that God does not have a body, *akāyam*, only means that He has no body which is a result of karma. He has a body which is assumed by Him out of His own free Will for the sake of His *līlā*.

Each individual soul wears a body which is useful to it for the service of the Divine Lord. Every²⁸ soul is embodied, whether it be a body of karma or of *śuddha sattva*, pure super-matter: in *praḷaya*, deluge, due to God's will, the bound souls, even like matter, lie strewn incapable of functioning because their consciousness-function is completely contracted and their karma-bodies are in a very subtle state.²⁹ This state undoubtedly is the most pitiable, but necessitated by the foolish prostitution of functions by the souls. The most important function of the individual is indeed the function of dependence on the Lord for knowledge, growth, action, and enjoyment. It is manifested through service, *kainkarya* to God. It is not merely the possession of consciousness-activity of cognition that is important but also *kainkarya*, service to the Divine who is all.

²⁷ Cf *Gadya-traya* of Rāmānuja

²⁸ See however Śrī Bhāṣya IV.iv.10-14 (*Abhāvādhikāraṇa*). In discussing the subject whether souls when freed have bodies or not. *Bādārāyaṇa* holds that the freed souls elect to have or not to have *śuddha sattva* bodies *Bādari*'s view is that the souls have no bodies, whereas *Jaimini* holds that they have bodies. *Sri Venkatanatha* in his *Virodhaparihāra* a *rahasya* work in para 78 discusses the point and says that their possession of even the *śuddha sattva* bodies depend on the will and pleasure of the lord.

²⁹ According to *Nyāya Vaiśeṣika* the souls during *praḷaya* being divorced from activity and matter, lie strewn like stones, *paṣānavāt*.

It is the realization of ecstatic dependence on the Supreme, a trustful surrender to God that makes the cognitive situation pass over into the affective situation. It is not ultimately the cognitive that is soothing to the human consciousness. It is the sense of Joy, of Delight of living under the sign and experience of the highest knowledge and God that matters. It is true to say that knowledge is very important, but what is this knowledge that is true and shall be true forever regarding the Highest Object of our knowledge, namely the Real, Absolute Being? The several individuals draw their life and light and being from its central relationship. The two-fold relation between these two can be expressed adequately only by saying that the Real is the Independent, which means that all are dependent on Him, and secondly, that all these dependents can realize or achieve that knowledge and enjoy their unity with Him. Thus the chief characteristic of the Absolute Personality or God is independence which sustains and improves the dependence of all souls on Him absolutely, whilst the chief characteristic of the individual souls lies in their utter and complete dependence on that One supreme Independent Personality alone. It is this mystic philosophy or more appropriately the religious philosophy, that makes it possible for the realization of knowledge in love, in that utter or complete consecrated love, whose concentrated movement is towards the central sun of its existence. The unity thus realized is *sneha-bhāva*; it is the central fact about the identity claimed and affirmed between the supreme and the individual. An identity which is not mere identity, since it reveals the relation of the conjointment between the Independent and dependent in the fullest embrace as *śarīra- śarīrī*, *dharma-dharmi*, *śeṣa- śeṣi*.

Thus we find that the supreme cognitive situation between subject and object finally lead not to the superiority of the subject over the Object when that object is something conscient and independent, as in the case of God or total Nature, but to the realization of the utter dependence of the individual on the Divine Object of his life, a realization that is not merely of his knowledge, but also of his love and being.

The Highest Unity is of the spirit which is Infinite, which is also the Infinite subject, which is embodied and not void of any body. With this difference, however, that whilst the continuum of the physical world is apprehended in fragments and as ragged edges showing reference to beyond themselves thus making for confusion of sense-data and physical objects by the individuals, in this case, there is no such conclusion or partial apprehension but only total and pure apprehension or knowledge. Thus His body is what He apprehends as His own in the same sense in which we view our bodies as ours as being connected in a unique manner with us, as dependent upon us more than upon others, as subservient to our wishes and desires and enjoyments than to others, as being a glory to our being as our expression and wealth. Our selves also bear the same relation to the Highest intelligence because we are equally dependent upon Him, subservient to Him and are guided by Him in our lives and actions. We are the bodies of the Lord. Every one of us is unique and yet

every one of us lives and moves and has his being in Him who pervades all and is the source and goal, *alpha* and *omega* of existence who is the Ideal Being immanent and real in each and in all beings at once and for all time, without whom we cannot even exist.

Just as the ocean is composed of small drops of water, wherein each drop is in itself and yet finds itself in the ocean enveloped all round so as to be indistinguishable in it, so also every individual finds his own fulfillment in this great envelopment of himself in the Divine, inside and outside his being. This is the supreme union and glory and freedom. The complete pervasion by Divine consciousness is the summit of our fullness.