

CONCLUSION

I

In the first chapter can be distinguished two broad views of causal relation which can never be identified with each other, though that chapter has left it without drawing out clearly the manifest differences between those two. Śrī Rāmānuja himself does not set forth clearly his two views as distinct from each other, and perhaps, identifies one view with the other, as will be showed, in order to yield a unitary conception of Brāhmaṇ as the sole cause.

The first view maintain that there is an identity between the causal totality and effect-totality, the only difference being the difference of condition (avastha), the former unseminal condition of reality (avykta) becoming the manifest actual condition; the undistinguished into names and forms, passing into the distinguished by names and forms. This reality considered as the totality is not Brāhmaṇ merely, but Brāhmaṇ as with his modes (cid-acid-viśista -Brāhmaṇ). In which case, the assertion of the total cause as being equal and identical with and having in potentiality all the physical manifestation of the effect within its own bosom, is expressed by the statement “there is non-difference between cause and effect. *Kāraṇadanyātkaryam*. The upādana, material cause thus would be the Brāhmaṇ with Prakṛti, its absolute dependent.

With the help of this view, Rāmānuja is enabled to accept Satkāryavāda, as also the synthetic relation implied by such an acceptance, that causes as well as effects are as real or as unreal as their effects or causes, for the effectual state is merely the manifestation of the causal or a distinguishing of the cause into names and forms (nāma-rūpa vibhājana).

The second view, however, is not the same as the former, because the causal condition of the totality of existence is distinguished as within itself as constituted by three entities, viz. Brāhmaṇ, the intelligent finites (jivas) and Matter, the latter two being regarded as the effects of the former. This means that the causal relation is again introduced in the relations subsisting between the entities which compose the whole of reality. But such an application of the causal law is manifestly different from the causal view propounded in the former. The former view, as already pointed out, takes the whole of reality as passing into another condition, the latter view, on the other hand, holds the causal view to mean that conditionedness means effectedness. The former view leads to the conception of the upādāna karana of the universe or the material cause; the latter view leads to the conception of the transcendental conditioner or effector of changes seen in the primal elements or constituents of the whole, viz. the changes of contraction and expansion of the range of consciousness in the individual selves a seen in the evolution of different grades of existence, such as the lowest forms of life in the unicellular organisms upto the highest forms of life as typified in the conscious beings, men and gods, if any; and the drastic changes of the

raw matter or prakrti as seen in its infinite splitting or cleavage into infinite forms of physical and physiological organs which form the bodies of the selves. According to the latter view, the cause is not the totality that passes into another condition, but merely the external destiner of changes, the transcendental enjoyer, and the immanent sustainer of them both, being their conditioner. He is the condition of their being what they are.

In this sense, and in this sense only and with the help of this second view alone, is Rāmānuja enabled to equate the causal relation to the soul-body relation and not otherwise. The definition which he gives what a body is, extended to every one of the other important relations viz. while-part, substance-mode or attribute, and in every case, pointed to obtain and satisfy the definition of the body. Thus Rāmānuja manages to reduce all relations to one typical and unitary relation or conception of soul-body. (*śarīri śarīra bhāva*)

This second view also helps him to postulate reasonably the unchanging nature and incorruptible perfection of the Brāhmaṇ, who is their Cause in the second sense. He is unchanging, because he is the external destiner as also the internal moral governor and the immanent sustainer of the process and also because, Spirit is incorruptible and cannot undergo such drastic changes of complexion as matter does, it being merely the purposive volitive ideal of the process of matter's changers, and perhaps, throughout its play or (strivings) it always maintains the character of the demiurge in nature. And in so remaining unchanging, He persists as the incorruptible overlord of the process, destining with His character of Spirit He is, the unfolding of nature.

By combining both these views, Rāmānuja seeks to make Brāhmaṇ both the immanent cause, according to the first view of the totality passing into another condition, as also the transcendent cause as illustrated by the second view, of the whole creation. He finds sufficient reason for maintaining that at the beginning ‘He alone was’, because no one can distinguish, not only historically in the beginning or cause the distinguishing of names and forms, but even logically, no one ought to disjunct the inseparable relations (aprathaksiddha) from one another, and treat them as two separate entities, that can be described to exist apart from one another. For wherever there is a body, there is present its soul, and we do not make any definite judgment, such as ‘there is a body’, ‘here is the soul or mind’, as if they are wandering terms; on the other hand, we only judge ‘so and so is there’, a judgment that gives the higher among them a specific name and means by it the related both.

Brāhmaṇ according to the first view, then, is Brāhmaṇ as integrally related to the jivas and the Prakṛti which form its modes, and for the reason aforesaid can be called He, though correctly speaking, we must speak of it as “He as qualified by his modes” alone was. In the second view, Brāhmaṇ is distinguished as the superior to every

other term, as such the most perfect, the omniscient and omnipotent, full of perfections and auspicious qualities, standing as the intimate self, antaryāmin, of all. Also the final end of all is he, he being the most perfect being. The second position does not leave Brāhmaṇ as merely a copy of the God of Deism or Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, who is the mere maker of the world. But God is regarded to mean the religious ideal, near and dear to all selves because of the relation which subsists between God and the modes which constitute the Jagat which relation is not such a slender one nor even a dispensable one. When this fact is once realised and valued, we are at once shunted up to the first position that at no stage of evolution, in its causal or effectual condition, was there any separate existence for either, nor was the relation wanting at any time, since they (God and the universe) were bound to each other in an eternal organic bond forming a unity existence. Atasasyavādā cid-acid-sthutaya tatprakāram brahma.

The second section describes the process of differentiation according to the Rāmānuja theory, the monism of the theory being shown by the unity of control and direction of substance or spirit. And the modes of such a spirit can never be deduced from such a spirit or even conceived to be so derived from a unitary source as do the modern zoologist viz. Haeckel, etc. Even the biologist philosopher, Bergson, does not find it difficult to postulate a unitary principle such as Spirit to be the ultimate from which matter and the rest take their source, even though their cleavage takes place according to the three major currents or phases of reflex, instinct and intelligence. But Rāmānuja finds it difficult to accept such a single-source derivation of the triune entities of matter, finite intelligences and Brāhmaṇ from any other source¹ or from Brāhmaṇ itself. He rather sees that instead of taking such risks of deduction, he could as well make the two others as not derived but as dependent and completely subject to the Highest among them, namely, Brāhmaṇ. And with the help of the definition he had given of what a body is, he could make all the triune entities assume a unitary appearance or unity. The deep concrete of his theory made it an impossible assumption that he could ever dissolve or attempt to so dissolve, or surrender to the siren-song of metaphysical abstractionism of Buddhistic metaphysics or to the intellectual mores of Pure intellectual Monism.

The real evolution or change consists in the attitudes that primal matter assumes and the forms it takes when in contact with the individual selves, which in turn are willed to assume contraction of consciousness for the purpose of action in the world. Such actions are destined by God at the beginning of creation, so that there may be a real evolution in the bodies of the finite individuals and a corresponding enlargement

¹. Cf. Yādava Prākāśa's Philosophy which resembles Bergson's just as Bhāskhara's resembles Fichte's.

of consciousness in them and a beautiful manifestation of perfection in Nature. The knowledge, namely, that they have a superior to whom they have to be loyal, who is also at the very moment the imponent of moral law and the intimate self of ours, is requisite to the individuals to be more able to control nature and thus be more perfect.

This obligation to fulfil God's will is (when understood) the transcendent moral law and spiritual word, and when not understood, is the fate or Karma. It is out of the scope of the present thesis to attempt to sketch anything like a definition of what karma means, as it is allied to the ethical problem rather than to the metaphysical. However, it is well to suggest here that there are two meanings for that word, one which means action, and another which means the result of actions and the perpetuation of cosmic justice due to such actions or action. Fate means the latter view, which signifies the perpetuation of such divine justice resulting from our actions, good or evil. As to the bondage resulting from such actions good and bad, it is, as already pointed out, the stamp of material environmental adjustments, when considered in the material sense; and considered in the moral sense, the bondage is the infliction of greater suffering on the individual who has acted irrespective of the cosmic law, which cosmic order causes such cosmic repercussions and reactions to effect the individual. Thus these organs of ours are not our own make or creation, but only the make of our actions or karma, our environment, however, is due to the cosmic reaction and make-up accordingly. These organs are not self-determined, but they are rather determined by the actions that have issued from us in this or prior life or lives, which have been motived towards selfish ends and by desires equally egoistic and selfish.

The differentiating take s place in the Sankhyan order till cosmic elements are formed in order, and in their combinations is paced the cosmic seed, which contains all the bound selves under the cosmic governance of Brahma or Hiranyagarbha (as he is the first to issue from the cosmic eff). Then the gradual unfoldment of animals, plants, men and gods etc take place as also the panchekarana-prakriya or intermixture of elements in specific proportions to form the various actual elements and things.

The third section defends the realistic thesis that substance is no bare being but is always substance as qualified by qualities and modes or relations. It is not mere consciousness, nor experience devoid of distinctions of subject and object. It defends the thesis that subject and object are coeval and one cannot be merged or derived or surrendered in reality, so as to lose self-identity of its own nature. They are a Unity in distinction.

Consciousness is the function of the ego and cannot be treated as the ultimate of which the ego is a centralisation or focalisation. The ego is the spirit or intelligence;

consciousness is the activity of the cognising subject and is found whenever the subject cognises. It is the sphere of consciousness that is limited, as has been more than once hinted at, and never the ego itself, if it be limited by the overlaying of Māya, in case it be mere consciousness. The range of consciousness is the experiential limit of the subject, and it has got potentiality of infinite extension or knowing capacity.

From the considerations such as the above, it follows that the substance is characterised by two properties, ie., modes and qualities. Modes are the related terms of a substance, dependent on the substance for very being. These predicates or ‘modes’ are distinguished from the qualities by their having in turn qualities or guṇas, which might be the same in kind as that of the substance, or of quite a different kind. These modes, prakara as Rāmānuja calls them, are mode because they are dependent on another and are not independent in behaviour though they are independent in existence. Or more correctly, a mode has a specific individuality in existence, a certain distinguishable character, it is an entity (dravya) making it an other though inseparable existence. The definition of mode is its lesser perfection as a thing and dependence which follow such a lesser perfection, making it the mode of such an entity as can control, and direct, and guide, because of its inherent superiority of character over its “others” or modes. Quality is this inherent determiner of character of superiority or inferiority of the terms. It is that which is the measure of perfection, or grade of attainment. The qualities of Br̥hatva, omnipotence, and omniscience determine the superiority of Brāhmaṇ over the modes viz., finite selves and matter (Prakṛti), the former, because it cannot compete with Brāhmaṇ, so far as the cosmic controlling power is concerned, which power is the special prerogative of the Highest or Brāhmaṇ, a fact that determines Brāhmaṇ’s greatness; the latter, as it is by essential nature unintelligent, as such exists to be utilised by God, or Spirit or Intelligence, the Supreme Person.

This same fact also determines its wholeness and indivisibility, akhandatva, because a part, considered spiritually, is merely the extension of the spirit and not cut-out portion of the spirit. It is merely a specific function or focus of activity of the spirit in its self-manifestation. The part is thus an absolute dependent of the whole, and not necessarily a piece of the whole, as in the case of material portions of material whole. This explanation gets the advantage of not being culpable of the injustice against matter by dematerialising it or against spirit by materialising it. It secures the general principle, that matter can be at once a part, amsa, of spirit and yet can exist as itself i.e, as matter.

Thus the identity expressed by such clauses as ‘The world I He are founded on the principle that Brāhmaṇ or Vishnu pervades the world as its self, in the character of its inward ruler; and is not founded on unity of substance (vastu or dravya) of the

pervading principle and the world pervaded². For one substance (dravya) cannot pass over into the nature of another substance³.

II

In concluding and evaluating the philosophy of Śrī Rāmānuja, we have to analyse the method and the positions which Rāmānuja holds.

The method of Rāmānuja is ontological and not epistemological. It does not start from the question of a theory of knowledge, but only from the character of the Existent. Neither does it hold that what is perceived only exists, but what exists is perceivable, and the character of the existent is not something added, conditioned, or manufactured by the knowing subject. Nor is it a method that thinks that subject-object relation is the starting point in any ontological enquiry. The epistemological conclusion is only a portion of the ontological and supports the ontological.

Rāmānuja is an idealist in the sense of accepting Spirit to be the ultimate substance, and not in the sense that Idea is the ultimate. The “Absolute Idea” theory suits the Neo-Hegelian writers, and the Transcendental Idealism suits the epistemological mind of Kant and Sankara perhaps.

Rāmānuja accepts no triadic synthesis of the Hegelian system. And one can confidently assert that no system of Indian Thought accepts such a thesis, antithesis, and synthesis movements. But he independently accepts the theory of distincts of Signor Croce, though it is also quite apparent that there is no such circular ideal progression of the distincts. There is implication without transition and ascent maintained, though one must not I think in an epistemological or logical enquiry as that of Croce, refuse such an ascent or transition in thought as well as life.

The substance Rāmānuja accepts, is the substance of ordinary conception, a “thing” different though never apart from its qualities, even the aggregate of qualities, which form its “nature”, since qualities as qualifying in turn qualities would lead to infinite regress, which is the case, even in the case of relations where the terms of the relation are reduced to relations. The qualities in the aggregate define the “nature of the thing” (Svarūpa) though we must definitely hold that the “thing” is the substance which is related in quite a different, perhaps, more definitely immanent way

² Jagaccas idam ca tādātmyamantayaumirūpēṇa matyāmyār̥thi kṛtam na tu vyayāpyayapkāryeva kṛtam

³ Paramātmātmānyogah paramār̥th itisylate | Mityet dhanya hamya hi naiti tadhanya tayat ||

than the relations. There is no substance which has not qualities and relations. And as relations are “between” things, atleast between two things, there follows that there are bound to be many substances. But the Monism which Rāmānuja achieves is peculiar to his system alone as it reduces all the many substances to the level of a unitary existence called the Brāhmaṇ in which they move, and live and have their Being. The relations which characterise Brāhmaṇ is “with” his modes, which form with him the unitary reality or Existental. And for the reasons adduced already, with the help of implication of distincts under the superior, the Higher among them is called the Truth, which means also the reality and truth of the lower as existing with the Higher as its mode, amsa or Prakara, or Viseshana or Sarīra.

Unlike Berkeley, Leibniz, and McTaggart, Rāmānuja holds to the reality of Nature or Matter more definitely though he is cautious enough to assert, and herein is his best known and cardinal point of his system—that the relation between the Absolute Spirit and Matter is one of soul and body; the Pervading and the Pervaded stand in the relation of “Sariri-Sarīra bhava” or Soul-body relation, which relation is never absent at any time. It is this relation and the qualities of pervading, sustaining and enjoying and other infinite derivative characteristics of omniscience, omnipotence issuing from the characteristic of spirit, which is Truth, Intelligence and Eternity, Satyam, Jnanam, Anantham, that make Brāhmaṇ really Existental as substance. Therefore is Brāhmaṇ Saguna and Savisesha, where characteristics of relation and qualities are in force.

Therefore the whole trend of Rāmānuja’s enquiry is founded upon the character of the existent which is reality, and not a something called Reality, achieving or self-fulfilling or self-fulfilled at an end. The ultimate is spirit as controlling supporting and enjoying matter and individual selves, and as the existent is never anything without this relation, it stands to argue that spirit is the soul or substance whose predicates are the worlds and selves. The relation thus becomes an immanent relation not convertible into quality by any means but absolute all the same. The relations as between the different individual selves (which are substances also) and matter are external relations.

But the method is not inductive essentially as might be seen, it is a priori, meaning by such an assertion, that the initial belief starts from the Sabda or the Scriptures which include all the range of mythical and Philosophic lore and the Pāñcarātra agama, too. The meaning of the priori then is not western in any sense as before experience, though that too forms a portion of the way of inquiry. But the ontological method seeks help or refuge or verification from the “Character of the Existental”, and therefore Rāmānuja whenever he asserts the reality of experience, of relations and qualities, calls upon the enquirer to look to perception-date and sense-date and even goes far enough to assert that whenever there is a hopeless rift between our experience in its purity and that of the Scriptural statement, it is our experience that

ought to count. But all the same, he is content to affirm that the Scriptures are not contradictory to experience at all, if only one interprets them naturally.

III

In evaluating any philosophic system that claims truth, it is necessary that we should pay less heed to its special theological views, which may be true or false or merely fantastic and imaginary, whilst they may interest us by their novelty or freshness as such. Our aim consists in evaluating its logical satisfactoriness. But this initial statement is not meant to mean any thing against the religious and ethical ideals that, in fact, form the bed-rock of life, and without which there can be no endeavour towards logical reconstruction of experience at all. Far from such an obnoxious limitation of the sphere of philosophising to mere consistent intellectual formulation of partial phases of reality, as defined by the causal sequence, and evolution, and ontological status of Being, and whilst never forgetting to value a truth for its truth-claim, we should always correct our truth-valuation by its ethical and religious results and consequences, and seek to satisfy those demands of the soul, more demanding, indeed, than even truth. For as Lotze says, “the beginning of metaphysics is not in itself but in ethics”.⁴ Consistency every or any system may have, but consistency is not everything either in logic or in ethics: for whilst a theory may be a consistent formulation as far as it goes, it may not be true, though it is certainly true to assert that truth is and should be consistent. So also everything that is useful is not true though truth must need be useful. Truth must satisfy, and has an intrinsic character of satisfaction. Value is the corrective to Truth. In such relative degrees as any philosophical system achieves the world-view in all its diverse real phases, and formulates its theory consistent with such a world-view, it approximates to reality. And further, as Śrī Vedānta Desīka somewhere⁵ very finely puts it, no system can claim reality or truth because it a view or belief that has been prevailing from time immemorial, and deride another view because it is a thing of yesterday; the only test that can determine truth is when it has stood the test of experience, just as gold when rubbed against touchstone proves its purity from other alloys.

Reality in its manifestation revels its potential beauty and goodness and sustains itself by its truth-character. Reality manifests itself because, to be is to manifest. It manifests not on account of any want of perfection which it seeks to attain, nor in the way that evil and falsity make themselves commendable and appreciable. Evil and falsity have a borrowed and disguised character which by an ‘effort’ seek to attain a

⁴. “There is nothing more real than what comes in religionThe man who demands a reality more solid than that of religious consciousness knows not what he seeks”. Appearance and Reality. Bradley. P. 449.

⁵. Yatiraja Saptati 57 Sloka.

dignity they essentially have not. Reality, on the other hand, does not seek by an ‘effort’ to be; it self-realises itself, it appreciates itself in its own manifestations. Its existence cannot be challenged, nor can its self-appreciating process, which the universe of manifestation is. Its appreciableness and commendability, its truth, beauty, and goodness, is its very positive character; its value consists in itself. Reality thus having such character of intrinsic value, cannot be said to have no effective existence. But to have an effective existence is to be self-manifest. Evolution is this outward and extended character of reality in its self-manifestative activity. Its living is its evolution or manifestation of beauty and goodness. Thus value, or intrinsic value, is the fire-test that truth has to stand, before it can claim truth. Truth and value are intrinsically bound together. Virtue is knowledge, said Socrates, and Ramanuja agrees with him in holding that not only is knowledge virtue, but that knowledge is power. From being to expression, from truth to goodness, from knowing to activity, is the inevitable transition. To gain knowledge is to give to activity a divine positive intrinsicality of truth-character, namely, goodness. The practical expression of a theoretic truth may be defined to be goodness. The attempt at the knowledge of reality (Brahma-jijnasa) is made, not only because such an effort is intrinsically valuable as throwing open to us new vistas of experiences, but also because, it is the only way by which one is enabled to live a good life, a life in tune with the infinite reality, its purposes, and infinite ends. (I. i. 1.)

A denial of life and its values or value, involves a denial of reality and its life, and such a denial is not only a self-contradiction but a self-stultification. It is based on an increasing anxiety to get rid of life, a tendency towards morbid quietism. It is a moral revulsion which over-emphasized translates itself either into scepticism or nihilism or mysticism or all of them in quick succession, because thought cannot rest content in any or all of these. Such is the transition and evolution of Buddhistic thought which ran through all these above phases culminating in Advaita, its last phase and logical product. It is thus life that in its movement leads to such typhoons in the thought-sphere. It reveals how far the practical revulsions may determine the logical, and defeat its purposes, but that does not imply the non-utility of truth or the unreality of the practical.

Any theory that doubts the truth or reality of the life of spirit, or its worth, treating them to be either as unreal or phenomenal or subjective and imaginary, firstly, has involved itself in self-contradiction, because it is an affirmation of the impossibility of knowledge, which affirmation is itself an affirmation of the knowledge about it; secondly, has involved itself in self-stultification, because it is an affirmation of the unattainability of real goodness or worth, which evaluation is itself a valuation. Thus once we grant that thought (our thought) can know reality as it is in itself and does not make it or distort it, and that reality is expressive, because of its fullness, and for the self-same reason, exhibit or self-manifests itself to itself through selves or minds; and once we grant also that truth has got intrinsic value, which means a value not

dependent on any one mind, nor many minds, that I, neither individual-subjective nor social-subjective, but universal or general-subjective, as valuable in its own merit, and that the effectivity of truth is its capacity to aid a greater realisation of ourselves, and that Truth is not only achievable but worth achieving, since it gives a positivity to activity, and power to the act or volition, then we steer clear off the clogging channels of scepticism and self-contradiction.

Activity binds only when it is done through ignorance of the laws of the world, through ignorance of God and his will. As the famous Isha Upanishad verse runs ‘action cling not to man, *na karma lipyate nare* and one should seek to live a hundred years doing action. *Kuvarnvēha karmāṇ jījivisetu śatasamah* And later on, the same Upanishad goes on to say that through Avidya (meaning by that action) one crosses over death, through Vidya he gains immortality. There is nothing that should make us shirk from action. Action, not knowledge is the final effort. Knowledge leads to perfect action, and action directed towards knowledge gives perfect knowledge. They are mutual dependent, forming an ideal circular progression leading to the actual spiral ascent of individual life leading to perfect knowledge, and therefore, perfect action. *Yogah; Karmēsu Kauśalam*

Such considerations as the former, lead to the view that a pure monism such as the static Absolute of Advaita is unmeaning and contradictory of experience, since all process I rules out as unreal and fictitious, and all activity, even of manifestation of itself and its perfections, is declared to be an activity of egoism, as such upadaic and unreal, and cannot and ought not to be predicated of the Absolute. But wherein lies its worthiness or commanding character? It cannot commend itself to itself, since it cannot commend itself except by its ‘expressing’, the which it does not ; nor is such an Absolute commanding to me, because do not know it at all, because all attempts at knowing it are unavailing and distorting. Perhaps one can as well ask who is to see and who is to know? Advaita which denies life of the Absolute, or in other words, denies manifestation of the reality except under the condition of distortion and imperils very life, its value and the value of the moral striving and religious realising of the individuals. All true activity, as is the manifestation of perfection or potential capacity, as seen even in the case of an artist or sculptor or poet, is an activity of self-appreciation, or if we remove the sting behind the word, is an activity of self-love. The relation between Being and manifestation is further an organic one, and intrinsic. That being the case, to deny this organic bond between manifestation and manifestor, or the relation between the universe and God, in order to accentuate the contrast of the Brahman’s worthiness with that of the world or Jagat, and to deny the worthiness and reality of the universe whilst recommending the knowledge of God, is to ask us to appreciate that which has no intrinsic character of appreciableness or self-commendability. A monism achieved through such a simple method of denial of reality to the world, is certainly not a real monism but a mere

singularism. Such a singularism which the identity implies, is absolutely uncommending and untrue. Unity does not mean singularism or inertia.

Truth has got value, and value is the corrective to abstractionistic Absolutistic biases. That is on criterion of truth.

Thought can know reality and can represent reality in terms of thought. That is a position that all real idealism accepts and all realism ought to accept if it should escape the solipsistic and sceptical alternatives. Knowledge is not any thing unconnected with experience but is what which is true to experience व्यवहारणुगुण शानप्रम्. Ramaṇuja takes his stand firmly on experience as we know it and does not go beyond it, except when called for by the scriptures, which along with the orthodox schools he fully accepts. But whilst accepting them, he yet thinks that the texts must be interpreted in a way that is consonant with the experience that we aware of, and in the way which reason could accept. And if scriptures are trust worthy, they must, inspite of temporary ex-aggerations of unity and multiplicity, express a fundamental synthesis of both, and any interpretation worth its name should conduce to express the synthetic view which must be at once rational and real. Such a synthesis, Ramaṇuja achieves by his strict logical method.

Ramaṇuja could not understand how knowledge could drive out activity, or even that activity is inferior to knowledge, for in the one case, it is precisely knowledge that gives power or worth to activity, and in the other case, knowledge is organically united to activity. The intellectual impotency to grasp the essential synthesis of knowledge and activity, of gnana and karma, leads to the Sankarite dualism or rather contrarism between them, which postulates that to ‘know’ truth (सद) were to sublate activity or to cease functioning. Experience reveals on (a priori) synthesis which is characterised by the dualisms of spirit and matter, minds (souls) and bodies, unity and multiplicity, etc., which when accentuated into clear-cut distinctions of disparate character, leads us to treat them because of their disparate character, as opposites rather than as distincts, yielding thus, as Hegel sketches, a triadic movement rather than a dyadic ideal transition. But Sankara and Kant do not ask us to abandon “our conceptions of the natural world, nor even, in our daily, life cease to believe in it; we are to be idealists only north-northwest or transcendentally; when the wind is southerly we are to remain realists.....” as Santayana remarks.

IV

The principle of Negation in Śrī Ramaṇuja’s Philosophy.

To Ramaṇuja more than to Sankara, one must believe from their works, the full meaning and implications of the Principle of Negation was very clear. In the consideration of the principle of negation, which is a very vital problem in knowledge

as Bradley and Bosanquet in recent times have shown, we have to take note of contradiction and contrariety. “All determination is negation,” and “all negation is determination”. The Spinozistic axiom as well as the Hegelian corrective dictum are true. To negate certain determinations is to assert or affirm their contraries. Bare negation is meaningless⁶. The defect of Spinoza as also of Sankara lies exactly in this, that by denying all determinations to Being, they intended to make Being all perfect. Unfortunately the Hegelian principle did not appeal to them. What Hegel was to Spinoza, Ramaṇuja was to Sankara. But this comparison between Hegel and Ramaṇuja holds only so far as this particular proposition holds, and I must think it breaks even a few steps later as we shall show, that whilst Hegel resembles Sankara in merging activity and though in a final synthesis by treating them as opposites, Ramaṇuja resembles Signor Croce by adopting them to be distincts and reals. But to proceed, Spinoza did not see that determination of character does not always mean to limit the perfection of the thing so determined. Instead, to define being is to establish its truth, is to make it be what it is, and that certainly is not to make it imperfect.

Our thought, says Croce,⁷ in investigating reality finds itself face to face not only with distinct but opposite concepts. The latter cannot be identified with the former. The logical category of distinctions is one thing, and the category of oppositions is another. Where one enters the other disappears. The opposite concept is slain by its opposite eg., fancy and intellect, true and false, activity and passivity, life and death, being and non-being etc. It is impossible to confuse the two series, so conspicuously do they differ.”..... “The opposites are abstractions, the distinct are real.” The unity of distinct is as much a reality as the unity of opposites. The distinct that in order supersedes that below it, is implied in the existence of that under which it is subsumed, indeed, the higher organically implicates the latter’s existence within its own being. The utterance of truth implicates the intuition which gave birth to it. Truth does not slay its existence or ballast it; it raises, lifts it to the logical status. Likewise when we speak of spirit we have inevitably implicated matter which is possessed by it./ Matter or presentation is passive, but surcharged with spirit, it is truth and activity at the same time.

If follows that in every negation, two ideas may be involved, (1) either the abstraction of the same, or (2) the affirmation of every thing except this or other than this. Thus when we speak of non-truth, it may mean, firstly, falsity (an abstraction), or secondly, practical activity, or even feeling or intuition. Thus we see that to deny truth

⁶Ifbeing of nature of opposite to non-intelligence and so on be not admitted as attributes of consciousness (anubhuti)—whether of a positive or negative kind—in addition to its essential nature it is altogether unmeaning proceeding to deny to it such qualities, as non-intelligence and the like, Śrī Bhāṣya I. i. pp. 55.

⁷ What is living and what is dead of the Philosophy of Hegel. (pp 8-32) and Logic Part-II.

essentially does not mean to affirm falsity alone. It may mean assertion of its being of quite a different order of existence, as beauty, or intuition, or goodness, or usefulness. Croce, in criticising Hegel for confusing the two un-confusable series, says that in all definition of truth, intuition or representation is organically implicated, and this implication is not of the kind of implication of an abstraction which is an ‘overcoming’ and slaying of falsity, but an implication of a real thing within itself. No knowledge can arise without an objective presentation or intuition. Only after such an experience had taken place, can its truth be as much as questioned, and the minute the truth-value of the same be questioned, the aesthetic intuition is lifted to the logical status of a truth. Here the intuition is a real existence as much as the truth which implicates it and organises it. And all activity of the practical, viz of utility and morality, is poised on this knowledge or truth, distorted in the former case, and true, in the latter case. It would follow that there is an ideal history of implicative process of real experiences and things under higher ones, a circular movement as it were from aesthetic intuition to logical truth, and from truth to activity, and back again to the aesthetic which is thus grasped and used.

To Sankara, the world is a hallucination, a world, it is unreal, (let us not make much of its ‘phenomenal reality’)⁸ and will be slain when truth is known and reached; indeed having no worthiness the world has nothing of value; and though it is sometimes held that the world without Brahman is alone treated to be unreal, yet the main stress is always about its unreal nature. There would be no quarrel if it were held and that consistently, that without Brahman the world cannot be, for that exactly is what Ramanuja seeks to make clear by his analysis of experience and by his peculiar conception of the relation and metaphysical unity of Brahman and the world as soul and body (*Sarīra-Sarīrabhava*). But Māya of Sankara is founded on ignorance, as such is overcome by true knowledge, in which case, the world of names and forms would pass away as some far-off dream, dreamt in moments of ignorance (*avidya*) and when under the influence of *avidya* (*prakriti*). Matter, Māya, *avidya*, which all signify the same thing, would all vanish at the rising of knowledge, and would be completely annihilated so far as that person is concerned who has achieved the highest knowledge or Unity leaving only pure consciousness which alone is real and eternal. The former are all eternal unrealities because, abstractions, though real phenomenal entities, functioning from eternity (मिस्याभूतं सनातनः) and slain by truth, yet persisting because mysteriously involved, and existing in the shadow of reality. They certainly are not related to truth in any way, not only because they cannot continue except as false impotent existences, but also because, for Sankara, relations can obtain only between real entities and there is only one such real entity; and

⁸ All mystics which sankara, Ramanuja and others are, are very much more concerned about the value of the world as against their idea of value. The world is to them of insignificant value. It is a question of value that makes the problem of Maya efficient but it also is not the question of reality.

further, relations themselves are inexplicable and lead to infinite regress, the other entities must therefore be unreal yet existing entities,

To Rāmānuja, however, the world is real, but its reality is subsumed and organically implicated in the existence of God or Absolute Spirit, just as the body is originally implicated in the existence of mind or spirit, and is dependent upon it, and without that dependence nothing could be. They are mutually dependent, but the higher distinct is truth and is one only and is Spirit, as such the dependence is of the lower on the higher. The relation being between real entities and a unitary conception being made possible, Rāmānuja sees no reason why any trouble should arise, and why reality should be denied to any real entity. ‘What is, is real, because it persists.’⁹ This mutually dependent relation between truth and intuition, spirit and matter, knowledge and activity, is fully stressed by Rāmānuja. To make it still more clear that Rāmānuja does not confuse the ‘two unconfusable series’ as Sankara seems to have done, and that the full implications of the principle of negation were completely appreciated by him, it is necessary to point to certain passages in the Śrī Bhāṣya

Avidya is interpreted to mean ignorance by Advaitins in the already quoted famous Isha text. But the text would be meaningless if t were interpreted in that wise. By ignorance one cannot cross over death. Rāmānuja on the other hand, claims that such a interpretation would be not only meaningless and absurd, it would contradict every other text. “Whether we view non-knowledge (avidya) as a positive entity, or as the antecedent non-knowledge (abhava) of knowledge, in either case, it comes out as wheat the word indicates, viz. non-knowledge (avidya). Non-knowledge means either absence of knowledge, or that which is other than knowledge, or that which is contradictory to knowledge; and in any of these cases, we have to admit that non-knowledge presupposes cognition of the nature of knowledge. Even though the cognition of the nature of darkness should not require the knowledge of the nature of light; yet when darkness is considered under the aspect of being contrary to light, this presupposes cognition of light.”¹⁰ Rāmānuja after sketching the above meanings and implications of the word Avidya, proceeds to explain that, that in the Isha text the word “avidya” means only works (niyamita karma). “The non-knowledge of which this passage speaks as being the means of overcoming death, can only mean that which is ‘other’ than knowledge, viz. prescribed works.¹¹ Thus Rāmānuja treats works as ‘other’ than knowledge. Further he goes on to say that “knowledge doe not destroy a real thing”,¹² because it is absence of knowledge or the wrong knowledge that is destroyed by knowledge. And criticising Advaita which holds that ajñāna is a positive

⁹. Śrī Bhāṣya. I. i. 1.

¹⁰. Śrī Bhāṣya I. i. 1. (pp 110. Trans.) cf (p. 71)

¹¹. Ibis (p. 18) cf. Vedrtha Samgraha of Śrī Rāmānuja.

¹². Ibid (116p)

entity, he adds that “*ajñna* which is a positive entity cannot be destroyed by knowledge; just because it is a positive entity like jars and similar things”.¹³ Further he does on to suggest, that knowledge is incapable of destroying the emotions and affections. “Fear and other affections are not destroyed by knowledge; they rather pass away by themselves being of a temporary nature only, and on the cessation of their cause they do not arise again.”¹⁴ Thus he holds that *ajñāna* as contradictory to knowledge cannot be a positive entity, and it is a positive entity only when interpreted to mean other than knowledge or works.

So far the direct references in the *Śrī Bhashya* itself. We can now safely refer to the other work of his, equally important as *Śrī Bhāṣya*, for further substantiation of the view we have expounded as being the real view of Ramaṇuja. In commenting on the 17th and 18th verses of the IVth chapter of the *Bhagvad Gita*, Ramaṇuja means by the three terms, Karma, Vikarma and Akarma, action, manifold duties of life (vividha karma) and Gnana. In the former instance of the *Isha* text avidya is interpreted to mean *vidyetarat*; now in the *Gīta* passage akarma is interpreted to mean *karmetarat* (other than karma). One should take that whenever the term is used as contradicting or negating a particular concept, it does not essentially follow that the negation means the opposite. In every case the immediate needs of the passage (*prastuta*) must be consulted. It is, however, the special way of interpretation which no other commentator,¹⁵ either ancient or modern has followed. Bal Gangadhar Tilak in his *Gīta Rahasya* means by akarma, *naishkama karma* or karma that has lost its egoistic craving force.¹⁶ *Śrī Arvinda Ghosh*¹⁷ translated in his *Isha Upanishad*, Avidya a Ignorance, which is a consciousness of multiplicity merely, without the consciousness of unity underlying the multiplicity. I personally think the interpretation of Ramaṇuja beings with vivid force the nature of negation, and also that wherever a negation is used between two real entities, there is no other way of interpreting a text except in the way of recognizing it to be a district. In which case, the principle of distincts would lead to a subsuming process by the higher of the lower yielding synthesis of distincts.

Ramaṇuja is a anakarmasamuchayavadin, it may be claimed, and there is no reason for us to deny such a characterisation of his philosophy of life and conduct. But unlike Bhaskara, who is pre-eminently the anakarmasamu chayavadin, he holds to a personal theism, and as his commentary clearly shows, he holds that in the unity of these two, ana and Karma they somehow transform themselves into Bhakti or

¹³. Ibid (114p)

¹⁴. *Śrī Bhāṣya* I. i. 1. (116.)

¹⁵. It is true that *Śrī Sankra* means in the *Isha* passage by Avidhya. Karma, but he does not explain so clearly, and further his Karma is due to Ignorance.

¹⁶. *Git Rahasya* (telugu edition. Pp 929-930,)

¹⁷. *Isha upanihed* 1st edi. Pp. 33.

Love, and that is the highest achievement of Unity with the Brahman and is the Goal of the यज्ञः.

We have shown thus far that this system has almost analytically soled the problem of Philosophy by its clear and lucid explanations of the moot points in logic and epistemology, idealism and realism and the problem and meaning of negation, and perfection and reality and their infinite grades, and the inseparable synthesis of life and knowledge. In a word, the problem of the one and the many that masquerades in an immensity of colour and variety is solved by the acceptance of the synthesis in life of mind and body, matter and spirit, in the fusion of experience, not that experience is the ultimate thing or entity, but that these two, matter and spirit, mind and body, find in the activity of creation a fusion that is inseparable and at once involved in the higher fruition of experience and enjoyment for both the entities.¹⁸ The philosophy of Ramaṇuja is at once realistic, empericistic, idealistic, and pragmatistic. It is founded on the bed-rock of religious craving and logical knowing. Even if we remove the mass of scriptural evidence that Ramaṇuja marshals to prove the validity of he theory and the orthodox character of his system, yet there is substantial ground for recognising the truth-value of his system to be very high. This is an appreciation as much as one could grant. If one who is impatient of the views expressed of the future of the soul after death and release which the last adhyaya of the sutras and most of the Vedantic writers suggest, would but turn to the former chapters of that work and focus his attention on Ramaṇuja's criticism of the theory of consciousness, and his distinction between attributes and qualities, and his spiritual explanation of the relation between whole and part, as also the relation between matter and spirit as soul and body, and his appreciation of the Theory of Distincts, these facts are enough to grant to the author a very high place in philosophy for all time. The method of the author is very vigorous, synthetic, and finely alive to the wholistic view of reality. It ballasts not existence from life or "reality," countenances no quietistic life nor denies the manifold experiences of real life and its functions that need fulfilment, and that much is enough to grant it the palm in philosophy. The worship of the "God of religion" is the "intellectual love" of the Being that Spinoza so rapturously spoke about, and the "intellectual sympathy" with reality. It is this kinesis of feeling, religion, and thought, that all real existence demands. To understand in thought, to feel it in the soul, to act it in body in all their intimate triple unity is the action of the highest, and that is what the finite wants to grow into, and that is the goal and the ultimate destiny of the individual personality. After all, the goal of evolution is the realisation of the highest type in the lower, the ascent of the lowest to the highest, the descent of the highest in the lower, the release of the lower into the higher worlds of realisation (for God is the bridge, setu, as also the goal), he is the means as also the end of the evolution of the individual, as the Sutras suggest. The highest self may be viewed as

¹⁸ Rahasyatraya Sara of Śrī Vedāna Desīka

being itself a means towards itself being realised; “the self cannot be reached by the Veda, and so on; he whom the self chooses by him the self can be reached or gained” (II. ii. 34). The goal of knowledge, of all striving after truth is a realised Individuality, it is not a mere stereoscopic presentation of the totality of the universe or World’s, like the vision of Arjuna as in the eleventh chapter of Bhagavad Gīta, though that might be incidental (As it was incidental) in the experience of the conscious individuality of ourselves. It is the constant power to act like Gods, the fulfilled individuals, to remain the free expressions of the Highest truth or reality or Spirit, call it what you like, as possessors of a power of reflection and insight which would enable us to realise our place in relation to their beings, and to grasp their meaning by the free activity of thought. In a word, the aim is to be perfect conscious channels of force, and of the activity and will of God, the Highest Brahman. To know in that sense Brahman is to become Brahman, to become at one with him, at unity with his will. This is the destiny of knowledge, this is to know, and to become Brahman, where knowledge, and achievement are unified in a vital experience. This is truth and being, logic and metaphysics, finding solace in the bosom of reality recognised as a vital experience.