

Introduction

TO THE

VEDĀRTHASANGRAHA

OF

ŚRĪ RĀMĀNUJĀCHARYA

S. S. RAGHAVACHAR, M.A.

INTRODUCTION
TO THE
VEDĀRTHASANGRAHA
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ŚRĪ RĀMĀNUJĀCHARYA

With best Compliments
S S Raghavachar
26-7-84



By
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P R E F A C E

It is a matter for pious satisfaction that this volume is being published on the sacred birthday of Sree Ramanuja. The *Introduction* took the shape of an exposition in the course of execution and the expansion seems justified in view of the fact that the *Vedarthasangraha* is so packed with thought that a freer re-statement of the argument might render it more intelligible to the modern student of the classic. It was felt that the text and translation along with this *Introduction* would make the book bulky. Hence the text along with the translation with the learned introduction of Swami Adidevananda was brought out independently. The present volume is a supplement and a companion to the other volume published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore. The *Introduction* aims at an exposition in addition to the elucidation of some historical questions. While the sequence of discussion follows the original in general, there is some minor re-arrangement. Considerable supplementary material from the other works of Sree Ramanuja and those of Sree Sudarsanasuri and Sree Vedanta-desika, is utilized herein for purposes of amplification. It is hoped that the *Introduction* serves the purpose of a running commentary helpful through inadequate.

I am indebted to Swami Adidevananda for his unfailing encouragement. Swami Sundananda willingly and patiently saw the book through the press. I thank him deeply for this labour of kindness. I gratefully acknowledge my obligations to the Sharada Press of Mangalore for the fine execution. Sri Achyuta Kamath took a friendly interest in the publication throughout and my sincere thanks are due to him.

MAY 4, 1957

S. S. Raghavachar

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

I am happy that a second edition of my expository Introduction to Ramanuja's Vedarthasangraha is being brought out. That there should be need for this re-issue is a cheering circumstance. As it has always happened in my publications, Sri A. S. Kamath of the Sharada Press, Mangalore has planned the whole production and given it a very much improved shape. We together have corrected almost all the misprints of the first edition. The text, as such, has not been altered. I have added an analytical table of contents. I am glad to record that the first edition inspite of its formal deficiencies received the approbation of reputed scholars. Personally it initiated me into the mood of writing and I have subsequently produced studies of the Naishkarmya-siddhi of Sureswara, the Vishnu-Tattwa-Vinirnaya of Madhva, the Gita Bhashya of Ramanuja and a book on 'Ramanuja on the Upanishads'. The Vedarthasangraha is a grand treatise and to repeat one's homage to it is a gratifying act of devotion.

Date 8—8—1973

S. S. Raghavachar

INTRODUCTION TO THE VEDARTHASANGRAHA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Preface to the first edition
2. Preface to the second edition

PRELIMINARY

	Page
<i>a.</i> The works of Ramanuja	1—3
<i>b.</i> The order of Ramanuja's originality	3
<i>c.</i> Ramanuja and mere Theology	4—7
<i>d.</i> The Vedas as authority	7—11
<i>e.</i> The secondary scriptures	11—12
<i>f.</i> Ramanuja's Theory of Error	12—15
<i>g.</i> Ramanuja and the Upanishads	16—20

II — Expository

PHILOSOPHY OF REALITY

<i>a.</i> The physical world	21—24
<i>b.</i> The Individual self	24—31
<i>c.</i> Brahman	31—33
<i>d.</i> Types of Srutis	34
<i>e.</i> Critical review of the Advaitic interpretation 'Tattwamasi'	34—47
<i>f.</i> Re-interpretation of Advaitic Texts in general	47—51
<i>g.</i> Metaphysical examination of the Advaitic position	51—61
<i>h.</i> Examination of the positions of Bhaskara and Yadava-prakasha	61—69
<i>i.</i> Constructive statement of the Philosophy of the upanishads	69—82
<i>j.</i> Human freedom and God	82—88
<i>k.</i> Brahman = Narayana	88—91

III

PHILOSOPHY OF THE END

<i>a.</i>	Materialistic values	91—94
<i>b.</i>	The conception of Moksha as self-recovery or Kaivalya			94—97
<i>c.</i>	The Theo-centric conception of perfection	..		97—106
<i>d.</i>	The nature of evil	106—109

IV

PHILOSOPHY OF THE WAY

<i>a.</i>	Bhakti as the supreme sadhana	109—115
<i>b.</i>	The aesthetic characterization of Brahman	..		115—124

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

VEDĀRTHASANGRAHA

PRELIMINARY

It is a fortunate circumstance that there is no uncertainty with regard to the authorship of the *Vedārthasangraha*. Authoritative followers of Śrī Rāmānuja are unanimous on the point and he himself explicitly refers to it several times in his *Śrībhāṣya*. That its composition preceded that of *Śrībhāṣya* is also incidentally established by these references. The chronological position of the other works of the āchārya is not so clear. The *Vedāntadīpa* refers to *Śrībhāṣya*. Thus its position is also settled definitely. The *Vedāntasāra* cannot be assigned any such definite chronological position on internal evidence of a positive character. It cannot be his first work as claimed by the editors of *Vedārthasangraha* in Śrī Vaiṣṇava Sāmpṛadāya Granthamālā Series, Tirupathī. On the contrary it is a condensation that presupposes the *Śrībhāṣya* and the *Vedāntadīpa*. The *bhāṣya* on the *Gītā* also raises difficulties on this question of its chronological position among the works of the āchārya. On the strength of the references in the *Tātparyachandrika* of Śrī Vedāntadeśika, it is construed that it was written subsequent to the *Śrībhāṣya*. Among the definitely devotional compositions of Rāmānuja *Śaraṇagatigadya* presupposes the *Gītābhāṣya*; and the *Nityagrantha* contains reference to *Śaraṇagatigadya*. Vedāntadeśika while introducing *Śrīrangagadya* indicates that it was composed later than *Śaraṇagatigadya*. It is also possible that the *Vaikuntagadya* was written later than the other two *Gadyas* as it compresses the description of the process of śaraṇāgati and elaborates the theme for meditation on the part of the devout *prapanna*. Thus provisionally the chronological order of the works of the āchārya is as follows: (1) *Vedārthasangraha*, (2) *Śrībhāṣya*, (3) *Vedāntadīpa*, (4) *Vedāntasāra*, (5) *Gītābhāṣya*, (6) *Śaraṇagatigadya*, (7) *Śrīrangagadya*, (8) *Vaikuntagadya*, (9) *Nityagrantha*.

श्रीभाष्यकृदुपन्यस्तो यः श्रीशैलपतेः पुरः ।

वेदार्थसङ्ग्रहस्यास्य कुर्मः तात्पर्यदीपिकाम् ॥

Fortunately there is another piece of information authoritatively preserved in the commentary of Sudarśaṇasūri. He says: 'We are setting forth this *Tātparyadīpikā* in elucidation of the *Vedārthasangraha* which the author of *Śrībhāṣya* expounded before the Lord of *Śrīśaila*'.

The whole of *Vedārthasangraha* was expounded and brought to light before the Deity, Śrīnivāsa of Tirumalai. It was Rāmānuja's devotional offering at the feet of his God. Thus from the standpoint of pious tradition, it embodies both philosophical knowledge and an act of worship. This twofold significance of the production is a fine illustration of the central affirmation of the work, an affirmation with which it starts and also concludes, that knowledge developing into *bhakti* is the ultimate value, the consummation of all spiritual endeavour and philosophical exploration. Thus the central teaching of the work was acted upon in its very production.

The plan and style of the treatise may be characterised briefly. It is an independent exposition of the philosophy of the *Upaniṣads*. It is not a commentary. In a commentary the author is constrained to follow the plan of the original and is called upon to justify that plan. He is obliged to introduce whatever creative contribution he has to make in the form of elucidation. In a work of this type the plan is the author's own and he can unfold his thought in the order dictated by the intrinsic logical necessities of that thought. Hence the work under consideration has commanding architectonics of its own. In this respect it bears comparison with such great classics of other schools of *Vedānta* like the *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* of Śrī Śuresvara and the *Viṣṇutattvanirṇaya* of Śrī Madhva. It is not divided into chapters but falls naturally into chapters and embodies a structure of argument at once synthetical and analytical. For the detailed appreciation of that structure the profound commentary of Sudarśaṇa offers acute directions. As is well-known Rāmānuja's manner of exposition is free from the elaboration of the non-essential¹ and the condensation of the essential². Two pervading attributes of his style may be mentioned. There is clarity of statement and grandeur of expression, the latter rising to heights of ecstasy in those stages of exposition which arouse the author's overmastering fervour of

¹ अनपेक्षितविस्तर

² अपेक्षितसङ्कोच

devotion. 'Intellectual love of God' is the animating principle of his style.

How far is Rāmānuja original in this work? This is a question that perhaps calls for consideration in view of the modern valuation of ancient Indian thinkers in terms of originality. Rāmānuja is not original in this work, because, in the first place, he undertakes to represent, elucidate, expound and defend, what he regards as the fundamental doctrine of the *Upaniṣads*. He is not original, in the second place, because he explicitly acknowledges ancient masters and their invaluable leadership in the interpretation of the *Upaniṣads*. He mentions Bōdhayana, Tanka, Dramida, Guhadēva, Kapardi, and Bharuchi. In crucial contexts he falls back upon and takes authoritative clues from Tanka and Dramida. In this list of other ancient forerunners, Guhadēva, Kapardi, and Bharuchi, are cited as authorities but no quotations from their works are found in the *Vedārthasangraha*, Bōdhayana is relied upon and profusely quoted, from in *Śribhāṣya*. In addition to these, *Vedārthasangraha*, takes abundant aid from the *Vedāntasūtras*, *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*, *Manu*, *Yajñavalkya*, *Apastamba* and some other *purāṇas* and *dharmaśāstra* texts. Coming nearer still, Rāmānuja offers his whole-hearted and profoundly humble tributes to his guru's guru, Śrī Yāmunāchārya. Thus neither the claim to nor the allegation of primary originality can be sustained. But it must also be noted that the critical assimilation of all these data needed, as the devout traditions about Rāmānuja record, a master-mind. It is also a fact that the range and volume of counter-doctrines were enormous at the time of Rāmānuja. A vigorous mind with a devout assimilation of the pure truth of the *Upaniṣads*, as treasured and elucidated by the ancients, was called upon to reaffirm, work out and amplify that truth in the new context of opposition and confusion. Implications had to be elaborated, partial visions had to be corrected and the battle had to be pursued to decisive triumph against misinterpretation. Thus there is a secondary order of originality in Rāmānuja which is all that can be claimed for or alleged against any *āchārya*. Thus perhaps we can satisfy the claim of the orthodox that Rāmānuja did not 'create' but merely 'fulfilled' and the demand of the modern seekers of originality. The truth is, as Vedāntadeśika happily puts it, the philosophical contribution of Rāmānuja is both old and new.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in his work, *An Idealist View of Life* alludes to Rāmānuja as 'the Hindu Theologian' in an important stage of his exposition. The description of Rāmānuja as a theologian by itself implies no great derision. In fact, the word 'theology' if it means a systematic inquiry into *God*, as it means etymologically, would be a very happy designation of the ideal he sets out to achieve in his works. But unfortunately the term 'theological' carries the associations of a dogmatic formulation of a system of thought on the authority of Scripture. It means a creed fashioned out of dogmas, not pursuing truth for its own sake and not employing methods of free, rational and philosophical investigation. It is reason fettered by faith. Now the question is whether Rāmānuja's philosophical system is theological in this undesirable sense. And the question with particular reference to *Vedārthasangraha* would be 'Is it not a treatise of dogmatic theology?'

The question is a fundamental one and calls for the analysis and clarification of many subordinate issues. Considerable discussion of the epistemological contributions of the school should be undertaken in order to formulate the answer to this question. Rāmānuja acknowledges perceptual knowledge as a valid mode of knowledge. This is a point of great significance. There are types of *Vedāntic* thought which discredit perception altogether as being phenomenal. Rāmānuja vigorously protests both in *Vedārthasangraha* and *Śrībhāṣya* against such undue depreciation of perceptual knowledge. He admits reason or inference as a legitimate mode of understanding. There are tendencies in certain ancient as well as modern varieties of *Advaita Vedānta*, to repudiate reason and intellect. Rāmānuja goes farther than the purely empirical and rationalistic schools of thought and in this he is ultimately one with all schools of *Vedānta*. He acknowledges and forcefully champions the truth of the scriptures, the Vedas inclusive of and culminating in the *Upaniṣads*. It may be noted with interest that Śrī Śāṅkara in his introduction to *Bṛihadāraṇyakabhāṣya* remarks that the *ātman* is unknowable through perception and inference and the schools of Indian thought that claim to prove the reality of *ātman* through perception and inference surreptitiously adopt the intuitions and reasonings of the scriptures. Mādhva is no less emphatic on this point as he says that the supreme Reality is, 'knowable only through

the right Scriptures'¹. In fact this adherence to the idea of the primacy of the scripture for the discovery of the ultimate truth is the permeating characteristic of the entire philosophical writing of Śankara and Mādhva. Thus if Rāmānuja is theological or dogmatic, he is not more so than any other school of *Vedānta*.

This, of course, is a minor consideration as it simply puts him on a footing of equality with other *vedāntic āchāryas*. A more vital grasp of the authority of the sacred scripture for the school is necessary. Certain basic principles determine the attitude to the scriptures.

Rāmānuja adopts the theory established by the *Mīmāṃsakas* with great acumen that all knowledge is intrinsically valid. That is, it is natural and inherent to thought to be true. No adventitious support or evidence, no alien quality of excellence, is needed to invest knowledge with truth. Only falsity is brought about and cognized through such adventitious circumstances. Thought, when pure, is in rapport with reality. This is the basis of all knowing and all claim to the apprehension of reality. But when thought is sullied or distorted by falsifying adjuncts, it misses truth. Such falsification is made evident by contradiction by the rest of the body of knowledge. This principle implies in relation to scriptural knowledge that it necessarily carries validity unless it is subject to contradiction. This is a general epistemological principle defended and developed on a free and independent philosophical basis and rests on no dogmatic belief.

The deliverance of scripture on the foregoing principle possesses objectivity only on condition that it is free from contradiction. Now contradiction may be of two kinds. It may be internal or external. The deliverance may be self-contradictory or it may be in conflict with unimpeachable facts ascertained by observation and reasoning.

Now Rāmānuja following the grand scheme of the *Vedāntasūtras* devotes the whole of the first chapter of *Śrībhāṣya* to the removal of the apparent and alleged contradictions in the *Upaniṣads*. He points to the essentially coherent structure of the philosophy that is embodied in them. In the present work also there is a systematic analysis of the various types of *Upaniṣadic* intuition and their coherence and perfect inner harmony is exhibited.

¹ 'सदागमेकविशेष्यम्'

In the second chapter of *Śrībhāṣya* in the first *pāda*, and the third and fourth *pādas*, there is a resolute effort to answer all objection to the philosophy of *Vedānta* presented. The objection based on supposed or real facts of experience and considerations of logic are squarely faced and the principle of non-contradiction from the rest of knowledge is established.

Thus non-contradiction, both internal and external, is assured to the thought of the *Upaniṣads*. The doctrine of self-validity needs strictly speaking no further intellectual demonstration of the truth of the scriptures.

But the *Vedāntins* in general and Rāmānuja in particular go a step further and examine all the current doctrines that claim to work out a coherent philosophical system independent of the *Upaniṣads*.

In fact this extension is necessary. Non-contradiction is not merely freedom from contradiction but positive coherence. It is necessary to demonstrate that the rejection of the doctrine in question lands all thought and life in sheer self-contradiction. The self-contradictoriness of all anti-*Upaniṣadic* schools of thought, all schemes of philosophy, the *Sāṅkhya*, *Yoga*, *Vaiśeṣika*, Buddhism, Jainism, Pāsupata, as demonstrated by Rāmānuja in the II *pāda* of II *adhyāya* of *Śrībhāṣya* necessitates the adoption of the *Upaniṣadic* approach to reality. This method is worked out in detail in *Śrībhāṣya* and is implied and hinted in the *Vedārthasangraha*.

Rāmānuja and his commentators urge another foremost argument. There are certain ultimate metaphysical questions to which empirical thought can offer no decisive answer. The fundamental question of that kind is about the existence of God. Empirical intelligence can offer no conclusive proof for the existence of God. Rāmānuja has powerfully argued out this point in his interpretation of the third *Sūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa. Again, empirical intelligence can offer no conclusive refutation of theism. Rāmānuja has brought this out with equal power in his criticism of *Sāṅkhya* in the II *pāda* of II chapter of *Śrībhāṣya*. The significance of this impasse is that the idea of God is neither to be based on empirical reason nor to be discredited on that ground. Reason is powerless to prove and equally powerless to disprove. The philosophical position is almost analogous to the impression that Kant produced at the end of his *Critique of Pure Reason*. This is a decisive proof of the limitations of the empirical standpoint and the pure reason seeking to discover reality by their own light.

Thus while the scriptures are free from self-contradiction, and contradiction from the rest of assured knowledge, other pathways in philosophy are riddled with contradictions and the nature of observation and reason are such that they cannot furnish satisfactory and conclusive answers to certain fundamental and irrepressible questions. Hence the scriptures, or rather the Vedās inclusive of and culminating in the *Vedānta*, are to be acknowledged as valid.

The inadequacy of empirical thought and pure reason to meet certain legitimate and fundamental demands of the spirit of quest in man has been pointed out. The same argument contains another implication. If scripture merely reiterated other modes of thought, it would be superfluous. If it stood in conflict with the deliverances of perception and inference, when the latter are valid, it would be false. As it is neither reiterative of nor in opposition to them it has to be accorded acceptance as a valid mode of thought.

In case of conflict between scripture and perception, and between scripture and reason, it is definitely contended by Rāmānuja that the Scripture is not always to be preferred. Such conflicts are not natural and are the results of some trespass either by the one *pramāṇa* or the other. That *pramāṇa* has to be set aside, whose trespass engenders the conflict.

He enunciates the fundamental principle on this question thus: 'even for supporting the *Śruti*, what is against reason and is contradictory of the evidences should not be postulated'¹.

Lastly, the supremacy of the scripture, its role as the revelation of the supreme, is itself based upon its satisfactory fulfilment of the criterion of truth and validity settled by empirical intelligence. It satisfies its claim to truth by conforming to a standard that is not set up by itself. In the light of these positive principles it is not perhaps possible to characterise *Vedārthasangraha* as a treatise of dogmatic theory.

III

Connected with the problem of the role of the scripture as a source of knowledge there is a long controversy arising from certain doctrines of the Prabhākara School of *Mīmāṃsā*. If the Vedas are taken as a source of positive knowledge about reality, conflict with similar sources of knowledge like perception and inference is possible.

¹ श्रुतोपपत्तयेऽपि अनुपपन्नं विरुद्धं च न कल्पनीयम्.

Hence this school of *Mīmāṃsa* seems to have thought of the Vedas as a source of knowledge about 'what ought to be done' and not about 'what is'. Vedic imperative inculcating what should be done is held fundamental and it is claimed that the rest of the Vedas in general and particularly the Upaniṣadic assertions about ultimate reality are not to be taken seriously. The significance of the controversy cannot be fully appreciated in the context of modern thought or life. But the chief issues involved can be discerned easily.

The Prabhākara School seems to have held among others the following views:

The psychology of language shows that linguistic testimony always embodies or promotes pragmatic or practical directions. Hence the Vedas teach what is '*kārya*' or something to be done or accomplished. This *kārya* is not action but duty or obligation commanding performance. Hence the *Upaniṣads* purporting to throw light on *Brahman*, the supreme Reality, are not of any significance.

Rāmānuja both in *Srībhāṣya* and this work argues against this position, which saves the Vedas and abandons *Brahman*, the supreme Principle. He discusses the view very thoroughly, takes into account the various alternative formulations of it and finds it wholly unsatisfactory.

The psychology of language is analysed and it is shown that language has an existential import. It can reveal or inform about reality. It is not necessary to uphold the practical import of language. Even if such be its import, as the meditation inculcated in the *Upaniṣads* requires a great deal of supplementary metaphysical knowledge, such knowledge must be taken as forming an essential part of their import.

The notion of *kārya* if analysed discloses two existential notions. A course of conduct leads to one's good and that course of conduct is a process capable of emerging solely from human effort or volition. Thus, 'the right' is instrumental to the 'good' and human action is productive of the realisation of the 'right'. The notion of moral obligation is integral to the notion of value. Value is rooted in reality and the highest good or value is God or *Brahman* and also the ultimate means for the attainment of the good is *Brahman* itself. Thus the very notion of *kārya* involves fundamentally positive metaphysical knowledge.

There is a large number of subordinate but interesting problems discussed with great subtlety. The chief conclusion is obvious that

the existential knowledge is capable of being conveyed by the Vedas and is in reality the principal burden of the *Upaniṣads*. This does not eliminate the autonomy of scripture, for it conveys knowledge transcending empirical knowledge and is free from inconsistencies of every kind. The earlier part of the Vedic scripture teaches modes of worship and the *Upaniṣads*, the later and the conclusive part of it, embody knowledge about the supreme Reality that is to be worshipped.

IV

While on the question of the import of the Vedas there is this divergence from the Prabhākaras, there is agreement between Rāmānuja and all schools of *Mīmāṃsa* and all schools of *Vedānta* on the question of the impersonality and eternity of the Vedas. The insistence on this principle is somewhat difficult to understand from the modern standpoint. The Vedas were no doubt intuited by the ancient seers. But these schools maintain that the seers intuited pre-existent truths, the knowledge that they thus acquired was there eternally and they only re-discovered the ancient treasure. This eternity is not attributed merely to the knowledge enshrined in the Vedas. It is extended to the actual words and the order of words constituting the vedic composition. It is possible to understand the eternity of knowledge about Reality in a scheme of philosophy in which the governing principle of the universe is held to be a supreme Consciousness. Omniscience is there at the heart of existence and hence the knowledge of Reality is there from all eternity. The linguistic embodiment is to be taken as eternal, as this knowledge that is ever-existent must have an ideal mode of embodiment under the guidance of that omniscience and that embodiment can be no less eternal. Fluctuation in self-expression is a mark of finite intelligence.¹ Vedas constitute eternal knowledge as embodied in an eternal form. Thus the form and the thought of the Vedas are co-terminous with the supreme Reality that they reveal. In effect all spiritual apprehension is a revelation or communication. Of course, in support of this contention several secondary arguments are advanced.

¹ *Vide Tales and Parables of Sri Ramakrishna* (page 73).
 'When Siva's bull bared its teeth.'

There is an unbroken continuity of Vedic tradition and there is no memory of, or reference to its author or authors. The function of speech as communication of knowledge is natural and intrinsic to it.¹

Scriptural speech is primeval and original, while ordinary discourse is derivative and secondary. Understanding through verbal testimony cannot be reduced to inference.

This non-temporal character of scripture, in both its substance and its form, follows from the general spiritual conception of reality. Rāmānuja's treatment is brief and obviously implies the complete admission of the proofs of the impersonality and eternity of the Vedas adumbrated by earlier thinkers.

It may appear strange that he does not take the scripture as springing from God. That position is possible for the *Nyāya* school which claims to have established the existence of God on speculative grounds. But in this school and in Vedāntic schools in general, which altogether base their idea of the Supreme on the Vedas, such a course of thought would imply a logical seesaw. 'God exists because that is the verdict of the scriptures, and the scriptures are to be admitted, because they form revelations from God,' The *Mīmāṃsaka*, who is realistic and atheistic in outlook, naturally seeks to rest the authority of the Vedas on their un-originated impersonal existence. Though it appears consistent to do so, it is properly in a theistic or spiritual philosophy of life that supreme wisdom clothed in the supreme form can be spoken of as ever-existing, somewhat in the manner of the Platonic ideas and the word or Logos of the *New Testament* and the eternal objects in Whitehead's philosophy.

It is important to insist that the validity of the Veda mainly rests not on its impersonality or eternity, but follows from the theory of *svataḥ-prāmāṇya* and the manifold application of the criterion of coherence. The impersonality and eternity claimed for the Vedas just ensure their freedom from the defects of human composition and such freedom leaves their *svataḥ-prāmāṇya* secure. Their validity is also supported by the consideration of the inadequacy of empirical thought and the unreasonableness of rejecting knowledge that at once transcends empirical knowledge and is free from contradiction.

¹ 'The basis of language is not conventional, either from the point of view of the individual or from that of the community.'

Russell: *The Analysis of Mind* (page 189).

Further, the rejection of that body of knowledge, as demonstrated in the polemics against non-Vedic schools, would land all philosophy in chaos and confusion.

V

In addition to these primeval authorities namely the Vedas, Rāmānuja mentions *smṛtis*, *purāṇas* and *itihāsas*. They are said to render intelligible the profound truths of the manifold Vedic texts. They are compositions by enlightened seers at the command of the Supreme Being. Such is the *Rāmāyaṇa* by Vālmiki. Such is the *Mahābhārata* of Vyāsa. Such again is the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* by Parāśara. All these works receive tributes of an explicit kind from Rāmānuja. Manu, Yajñavalkya and Apastamba are also taken as authorities of this kind. These three types of supplementary scriptures are said to afford guidance in understanding the Vedic *vidhis*, *arthavāda* and *mantra* on the one hand and the two principal sections of the Vedas, the section expounding the *karma* and section expounding *Brahman* on the other. It is significant that Rāmānuja does not quote from the *Bhāgavata*, the *Pancharātra Āgama* and the songs of the Tamil Vaiṣṇava saints. The last group of texts must have been highly valued by him as it was by his predecessor Yāmunāchārya. The *Pancharātra Āgama* was ably defended by him in *Śrībhāṣya*. The *Bhāgavata* could not have been unknown to him, for a senior contemporary of his, Abhinavagupta is well acquainted with the *purāṇa* and acknowledges its great authority in his commentary on the *Gītā*. A junior contemporary of Rāmānuja, and the next great thinker of the school uses the *Bhāgavata* in his commentary on *Viṣṇusahasranāma*.

The principle underlying the omission can be made out by the remarks with which he introduces the discussion of *Viṣṇupurāṇa*. He says that that *Purāṇa* has recieved universal recognition and hence he is making use of it for supporting his thought. The *Viṣṇupurāṇa* was amply used by advaitic writers, beginning from Śaṅkara onwards and by such distinguished writers like the author of *Panchapādika vivaraṇa* and Vāchaspatimiśra. And even Vyāsa, the commentator on *Yoga-Sūtra* quotes from it.

Hence it is to be concluded that these works are deliberately overlooked and not depended upon for support because they were not accepted as authoritative on so wide and universal a scale. Yāmunāchārya is no doubt quoted from, not for support, but for

representing his own thought in the words of his *paramaguru*. It is quotation not for evidence but for effective self-expression.

Rāmānuja admits that, while the Vedas are fundamentally coherent in their philosophy, these supplementary texts, particularly the *purāṇas* may be mutually contradictory, and may contradict the Vedas, the primary scriptures. Not all these secondary texts are on the highest level. They issue from *Brahma*, the highest of individuals in this world of bondage. He too is subject to fluctuations of vision owing to the action of the three *gunas*. When *sattva* predominates, he proclaims pure truth. When *rajas* predominates he misses truth. When *tamas* predominates he propounds positive falsehood and error.

Rāmānuja takes from *Matsyapurāṇa* the principle of comparative valuation in respect of varying secondary texts and that principle of valuation was proclaimed, it is contended, by *Brahma* in his exalted mood. The conflict would again reappear if there were several such conflicting principles of valuation. It seems that in the huge *purāṇic* literature this principle stated in *Matsya* is the only guidance for relative estimate.

VI

Before concluding this brief survey of the sources of philosophical knowledge that Rāmānuja depends upon for the formulation of his system, it is worthwhile to notice briefly another important doctrine of the *Śrībhāṣya*, a doctrine, which does not appear in *Vedārthasangraha*. Its epistemological significance justifies the inclusion of its consideration here, though it does not fall within the framework of the *Vedārthasangraha*.

Rāmānuja, it is said, admits no error in the logical sense of the term. 'Rāmānuja's view' says Sri S. Radhakrishnan, 'seems to explain away all errors'. This is the much-debated theory of *satkhyāti*. Its precise significance must be determined.

In the section in *Śrībhāṣya* discussing the theories of error, Rāmānuja argues that all other theories reduce themselves to *anyathākhyāti*, the conception of error as misapprehension, or transposition of material' to borrow a useful phrase of Alexander. It is to be noted that he reduces the Prabhākara school of *akhyāti* too to *anyathākhyāti*. After declaring the inclusive character of this view of error, he introduces his own doctrine of *satkhyāti*.

It must be noted that the whole theory concerns not all error but perceptual error. *Śrutaprakāśika* is clear on this point¹. The instances of error discussed are all cases of perceptual error. They are (a) mistaking a shell for silver (b) dreams (c) seeing a conch as yellow (d) mistaking a crystal placed near a red flower to be red (e) a mirage (f) mistaking a firebrand rapidly turning round and round to be a continuous wheel of fire (g) seeing one's face as located in mirror (h) illusions of direction (i) perception of a double moon. This restriction of the scope of the theory makes it less queer than what it is when stated as a general theory of error. This restriction is also justified by the numerous other contexts in which Rāmānuja adopts the standpoint of *anyathākhyāti*. To notice only two such cases: While describing the functions of *māyā*, he definitely ascribes to it the function of generating misconceptions². While speaking of the effects of *rajas* and *tamas*, he ascribes to *rajas* the causation of non-apprehension and to *tamas* the causation of misapprehension. (*Gītā*-18th-32 verse). If this restriction of the scope of the doctrine of *sakhyāti* is clearly understood, it becomes not merely intelligible, but hardly escapable on any systematic treatment of perceptual error or illusion.³ In simple terminology, it means that errors of perception are engendered by distorted or imperfect presentation of sense-material and not by inferential misconstruction and that inferential elaboration and scrutiny in the light of pragmatic verification is needed to correct the erroneous impression generated by the deficient perceptual mechanism.⁴ Hence error in this case is not the product of idealization; it rather needs idealization for rectification.

It is unnecessary to recapitulate the justification of the theory with reference to all the instances of error noticed. No doubt the explanations of these are clothed in the language of outmoded physics and psychology. But the governing principles can be easily restated in terms of modern science.

The central contention is that all perceptual error is of the nature of non-apprehension. What is apprehended in error is undoubtedly objective but all that is objective is not apprehended⁵ therein. That

¹ 'परार्थविषयापरोक्षभ्रमेषुपरिहारः कृतो भवति'

² विपरीतज्ञानजननीम्.

³ See Bosanquet's article in *Contemporary British Philosophy* (page 67).

⁴ See Spinoza's *Ethics*, Part II, Props. 33 & 35.

⁵ See Sheldon's Article in *Anthology of Recent Philosophy* (page 222).

is the central deficiency in error. Many supporting ideas are utilized. The doctrine of *pañchīkaraṇa* which establishes the mutual immanence of empirical objects is one such basis.¹ The objects of the dream-world are creations of God in accordance with the *karma* of the dreamer. Similarities are essential between the objects mistaken and the objects for which they are mistaken. Such similarities are due to considerable identity of constitution. Whitehead says: 'Every actual occasion is set within a realm of alternative inter-connected entities. This realm is disclosed by all the untrue propositions which can be predicated significantly of that occasion.'² The ritualistic directions often recommend substitutes for articles prescribed in rituals. This shows that there is identity between the original article and the substitute. As the Prabhākara upheld, there is an element of non-discrimination.³ The quality of finite apprehension is determined by the transcendental laws of *karma* and divine grace.

In conclusion, the substance of the theory of *satkhyāti* may be reduced to two major propositions.

All schools of error admit, and must admit an element of non-apprehension in illusion. But the other schools posit an additional stage or element, over and above non-apprehension, to account for all the facts involved in error. This account claims to explain all the facts involved in error and the correction of error by the single element of non-apprehension. Hence it possesses the principle of logical economy.

The obvious and irresistible objection to the claim would be that not all error is error of omission. There are instances of positive and active commission. This is the sting or the irreducible factor in error that has caused a good deal of difficulty to the Anglo-Hegelians, particularly Bradley and Joachim. The case of Bradley's discussion of error is interesting. He starts with *anyathakhyāti*. It is housing the wrong soul in the wrong body. That notion of error does not square with his Absolutism. Hence he works out a reconciliation of error with the Absolute in terms of *satkhyāti*. 'Error is truth, it is partial truth, that is false only because partial and left incomplete. The Absolute has without substratum all those qualities, and it has

¹ Whitehead propounds a similar principle of mutual immanence in nature in his great work *The Concept of Nature* in terms of scientific thought.

² Science and the Modern World (page 96).

³ 'Error is non-thought' Radhakrishnan: *An Idealist view of life*. (page 157).

every arrangement which we seem to confer upon it by our mere mistake. The only mistake lies in our failure to give also the complement'.¹

But Bradley goes on to the recognition of the sting of error. It is partial truth no doubt but it insists that it is the whole truth. There is a claim to completeness and comprehensiveness. That is surely an element over and above the mere incompleteness or partiality. Finally he embraces the hypothesis of 'inexplicable certainty' that even that element of wrong emphasis on the fragmentary element as the whole does 'somehow' make its own enriching contribution to the Absolute. The note of eloquent despair with which Joachim ends his *Nature of Truth* is entirely due to this character of error, its positive over-statement of its claim.

From Rāmānuja's point of view the difficulty so exaggerated is due to an insufficient analysis of the notion of non-apprehension or omission. What is missed in error and not apprehended is a determinate entity. The "shellness" of the shell is missed. Now, this determinate character of the shell includes its positive attributes as well as its distinction from every counter-entity. When we fail to apprehend this element, the determinate character, the element of omission is the omission of both what the shell is and its difference from all that from which it is different. The identification of the presented shell with ordinary silver, that is made in error, is part of the total fact of omission. We miss the shell and miss its difference from ordinary silver. Both these two processes of missing the shell and missing its difference from ordinary silver are constitutive elements in the total event of non-apprehension. Thus all the commission that is part of the perceptual error is an element, a constitutive factor, in the omission involved. There is no commission not forming an integral part of the omission in error. Error is privative, but privative of both the positive and negative determinations of the real object. In the case of the part and the whole, the non-apprehension of the rest of the whole involves the obscuration of the fragmentary character of the part. Hence the troublesome sting. This complete conception of non-apprehension would solve all the difficulties in satkhyāti usually raised by its older and modern critics.

¹ Bradley: *Appearance and Reality* (page 169, 170).

The foundational texts for Vedānta are the *Upaniṣads*, the *Vedāntasūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa and the *Bhagavadgītā*. Rāmānuja has written a commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*. Three of his works are devoted to the exposition of the *sūtras*. Unlike the other *āchāryas*, Śankara and Mādhva, he has left no commentaries on the *Upaniṣads*.

This is, *prima facie*, a gap in his interpretative contribution. It is sometimes regretted by his ill-informed followers and is adversely used by his ill-informed critics. But the real fact of the situation leaves no room either for the regret or depreciation. There was a brief commentary on the *Upaniṣads* by Brahmānandin and an elaborate glossary on it by Dramidāchārya, to both of which Rāmānuja wholly subscribes. These two were in existence at the time of Sudarśanaśūri and were well-known authorities at Śankara's time. Respectful references to them are abundant in Advaitic works. Rāmānuja's conception of the *Vedānta sūtra* is that it contains the core of the *Upaniṣads*. He says using the older *purāṇic* association that it is the nectar extracted by the son of Parāśara from the ocean of milk, the *Upaniṣads*.¹ Śankara also says, it may be remembered, that the work of Bādarāyaṇa in the *sūtras* is to string together into a garland the utterances of *Vedānta*.² In the *Upaniṣads*, whatever passages bear direct and uncontroversial interpretation cause no difficulties. Whatever passages need critical investigation in view of apparent contradiction or obscurity or possible misinterpretation are specifically considered by the *sūtras*. In addition, Bādarāyaṇa presents the philosophy of the *Upaniṣads* in a systematic manner in his four chapters. The first chapter demonstrates the inner coherence of the *Upaniṣads*, and the idea of *Brahman* as the ultimate reality is developed therein. The second chapter removes all possible objections, speculative or theological, internal or external and also exhibits the inconceivability of the repudiation of the idea of *Brahman* as presented in the first chapter. The third chapter is devoted to the formulation of the *sādhana* or way of realization. The last chapter determines the nature of the *summum bonum* and the final destiny of the finite soul. Within these four essentially philosophical departments of enquiry, all the principal teachings of the *Upaniṣads*, the discourses that raise doubts,

¹ 'पारराशर्यवचः सुधामुपनिषद्गुष्मान्धिमध्योद्धृताम्'.

² 'वेदान्तवाक्यकुमुजग्रन्थार्थत्वात् सूत्रस्व'.

those that need clarification, those that have been subject to misinterpretation and those that are of central significance in the determination of Upaniṣadic philosophy are marshalled, organized and critically elucidated with 'openness of mind, thoroughness of work and hatred of superficiality.' This is the traditional status assigned to the *Vedāntasūtras* by all schools of *Vedānta*. If a commentator has done justice to the *Sūtras* he has not failed to do justice to *Upaniṣads*. Rāmānuja's *Śrībhāṣya* is one of most elaborate commentaries on the *Sūtras*, if not the most elaborate one.

The foregoing is a formal answer to those to whom the traditional significance attached to the *Sūtras* commends itself. But a deeper examination of the nature of *śrībhāṣya* furnishes grounds for a more substantial satisfaction. *Śrībhāṣya* is neither a mechanical nor a galloping type of exegesis. The Upaniṣadic contexts discussed are thoroughly discussed. There is patience and fullness in its treatment. No great or difficult or intriguing or strikingly reiterated or strikingly unusual Upaniṣadic passage is left undiscussed. The weightiest utterances of the weightiest *Upaniṣads* are subjected to penetrating inquiry and their import is displayed in all its profundity and magnificence. The husk in the texts of the *Upaniṣads* is legitimately left unexplained, sometimes because it needs no explanation and sometimes because the explanation worked out by the other commentaries extant in Rāmānuja's time were acceptable to him. There was very competent supplementation. Sudarśanaśūri in his celebrated *Śrūta-prakāśika* and *Tātparyadīpika* and Vedāntadeśika in the course of his amazing number of philosophical writings of the highest order have completed the task of exegesis. Later on arrived on the scene Rangarāmānuja who produced the usual type of commentaries on all the principal *Upaniṣads*. Kooranārāyaṇa also commented on some *Upaniṣads*. It is interesting to note that the major portion of Rangarāmānuja's commentaries consists of copious extracts from Rāmānuja, revealing thereby the range and volume of Rāmānuja's expository work on the *Upaniṣads*.

It is unfortunate that Thibaut, who laboured with extraordinary ability on the commentaries on the *Sūtras* by Śāṅkara and Rāmānuja and has left translations of both not easy to supersede, should have been the author of a judgement that is hardly defensible. He held, on grounds which he considered sufficient, that Rāmānuja's understanding of the *Vedāntasūtras* was more faithful to the *Sūtras* than that of Śāṅkara. The judgement was immediately resented and has been

called in question by many later Advaitic writers in English. He committed himself to another judgement which has not been resented or sought to be refuted with equal bitterness or vehemence. He opined that Rāmānuja's understanding of the *Upaniṣads* is not correct, while Śāṅkara is nearer to the teachings of the *Upaniṣads*. It is this latter judgement that has been characterized above as hardly defensible. There is nothing wrong, *prima facie*, in such a judgement. But it lacks substantiation in one direction. Indian tradition has always held that Bādarāyaṇa is an authentic systematizer and interpreter of the *Upaniṣads*. Śāṅkara, no less than other *āchāryas*, is of this opinion. The author of the *Sūtras*, according to all of them, expounds the *Upaniṣads* with perfect fidelity. Śāṅkara, even in his interpretation of the *Sūtra* bearing on the 'ānandamaya' of the *Taittirīyōpaniṣad* puts forward an interpretation of the *Sūtra* that squares with his interpretation of that *Upaniṣadic* text. He does not say that the *Sūtrakāra* has erred. He only offers what he considers the correct construction and explanation of the *Sūtras*.

Now Thibaut claims to have caught the core or the real drift of the philosophy of Bādarāyaṇa. That claim is implied in his comparative estimate of the fidelity of the two commentaries. Under that circumstance, it must be possible to estimate or judge accurately the fidelity of the *sūtrakāra* to the *Upaniṣads* he claims to expound. The *Upaniṣads* are clearer and the *Sūtras* claim to settle the meaning of the various texts of the *Upaniṣads*. Surely it ought to be possible to determine whether Bādarāyaṇa understands the texts aright. That examination not having been conducted, it is impossible to assert that Śāṅkara is more faithful to the *Upaniṣads* and Rāmānuja more faithful to the *Sūtras*. The two critical judgements imply that the author of the *Sūtras* misunderstood the philosophy of the *Upaniṣads*. It is not only Rāmānuja that missed the true purport of the *Upaniṣads*. Bādarāyaṇa also according to Thibaut stands condemned for the same failure. For completing this argument, it is necessary to compare the original *Upaniṣadic* texts and the *sūtrakāra's* exposition of them. That critical labour is not performed by Thibaut. In the absence of that essential step, his judgements hardly carry conviction. The truth is, he understands the *Upaniṣads* in the light of Śāṅkara's interpretation of them and understands the *sūtras* in the light of Rāmānuja's interpretation and implies in consequence and ought to imply that the philosophy of the *Vedāntasūtras* is at variance with the philosophy of the *Upaniṣads*. This implication has to be justified by

adequate comparative examination of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Sūtras*. Until that is done, nothing is proved. If Bādarāyaṇa is a right guide to the *Upaniṣads*, Rāmānuja who follows his guidance cannot be unfaithful to the *Upaniṣads*. If Bādarāyaṇa is a right guide to the *Upaniṣads*, Śankara who underatands the *Upaniṣads* correctly cannot be a misinterpreter of Bādarāyaṇa. Hence the upshot of the two comparative estimates is that Bādarāyaṇa is not a right guide to the philosophy of the *Upaniṣads*, a judgement that still awaits substantiation.

It is in this context of regret and depreciation arising from the fact that Rāmānuja did not comment upon the *Upaniṣads* in a formal manner, in detail, and of uncertainty with regard to the fidelity of his thought to the *Upaniṣads*, that the present work, the *Vedārthasangraha* acquires immense significance. It is in the place of a commentary. It is taken by tradition as being better than a formal commentary as it focusses itself on the quintessence of the *Upaniṣads*. Sudarśanaśūri says:—

‘I offer adoration to that sage, Rāmānuja, who brought from the ocean of Vedānta, the nectar of *Vedārthasangraha*’.¹ It is significant that he offers Rāmānuja the tribute that Rāmānuja himself offers to Bādarāyaṇa. The work is a synoptic survey of the *Upaniṣads*. It performs the threefold task of exegesis, co-ordination and concentration on fundamentals. Hence tradition ranks the work higher than mere formal commentary on the several *Upaniṣads* piecemeal in mutual independence. The *Upaniṣads* yield their finer shades of meaning and reveal the inner structure of their inspiration when approached with such a synthetic perspective. From this point of view, *Vedārthasangraha* fulfils the role of a commentary in a profounder sense than mere formal exegesis. It is true that the great commentators of the *Upaniṣads* in the conventional sense like Śankara and Mādhva do the work of interpretation with such a ground-plan of synthetic conception, as a pre-supposition and implicit pattern. The purpose of Rāmānuja in this work is to explicate and articulate that unified and total vision of the *Upaniṣads*. The belief often voiced forth that even the principal *Upaniṣads* embody several divergent types of thought and that some strands of *Upaniṣadic* speculation are original and

¹ वेदार्थसङ्ग्रहसुखां वेदान्ताब्धेर्य आहरत् ।

रामानुजाय मुनये तस्मै भगवते नमः ॥

fundamental to them, while other strands of thought are accommodations or concessions to non-Upaniṣadic influences, is a direct result of the prevalence of piecemeal exegesis. *Vedārthasangraha* repudiates that principle of convenient fragmentation and seeks to exhibit the vision of the *Upaniṣads* in their fulness and integration. We may now proceed to a more inward consideration of the argument of *Vedārthasangraha*.

EXPOSITORY

The work, *Vedārthasaṅgraha*, opens with a declaration of fundamentals. These are the three fundamentals enshrined in the *Upaniṣads* according to Rāmānuja:

The Philosophy of Reality.

The Philosophy of the Way.

The Philosophy of the End.

The first concerns the nature of *Brahman*. The second concerns the nature of *bhakti*. The third relates to the realization or attainment of *Brahman*. Elaborating these principles further the philosophy of the *Upaniṣads* is expanded to cover five departments of inquiry: Inquiry into the self, the *Brahman*, the obstacle to perfection, the method of progressing to perfection and the nature of perfection.

These opening enunciations are meant to map out and outline the scope of the affirmations in the *Upaniṣads*. The first fundamental, namely, the study of Reality is first taken up for consideration. This is ontology in the technical sense of the term. We are given a preliminary statement of three realities or *tattvas*, as traditionally termed.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF REALITY

The Physical Universe: The Physical World is a Real World. It is not an illusory projection. It is not a fictitious mental construction. The subjectivist position is systematically considered in the *Śrībhāṣya* and its unsatisfactoriness is exposed. The central argument urged against that position is that consciousness inherently presents or reveals a world which is not merely its own state. There is no contradiction involved in taking the world presented thus as objective. There is no compelling reason obliging us to consider it phenomenal. To contend that consciousness always and by its own essential nature reveals itself or its own states or contents constituted by itself independent of an objective universe is to condemn all knowledge of subjectivity, a conclusion that robs even subjectivism of its claim to metaphysical truth. Subjectivism emphasizes lack of proof for the existence of an external world beyond the individual consciousness to which it appears. But this insistence on the necessity of proof implies that what is logically necessary, what satisfies standards of strict proof, must be held to be objective and real. Logical necessity implies objectivity. Hence not all thought is thought of itself. Even illusions

are presentations of an objective universe, though partial and distorted.

The Physical Universe is not an All-inclusive System: While the reduction of the physical universe to projections or states of individual consciousness is not sound, the materialist hypothesis is not less unsound. The whole of Reality cannot be interpreted in terms of matter. Fundamentally, Consciousness or the inner world of spiritual existences cannot be explained in terms of matter and energy. The second chapter of the *Gītā* and Rāmānuja's commentary on it amply discuss this position. The self, the knowing principle in man, has an immediacy, unity and permanence that differentiates it from the body and the physical environment. The hypothesis that consciousness is a product of physical nature, an 'emergent' in modern terminology, makes causation a succession of discrete entities, defeating thereby the monistic impulse which seeks to reduce Consciousness to the status of an effect of the physical. It breaks up the continuity of the causal process. Moreover, matter out of which spirit could emerge is more than mere matter. The dimensions of the cause must be construed in the light of the effects. It is perfectly possible to argue that, in cases of apparent emergence of the soul out of the physical system, there is no generation but a partial release of it from the oppressive obscurity effected by the physical system. Creation, birth and waking are not instances of production but only instances of removal of the thick veil of the non-spiritual.

This is a genuine possibility in all cases of emergent evolution. Moreover, the conception of conscious personality as emerging out of specialized configurations of the non-spiritual goes against the facts of knowledge. Recognition, memory, illusion, perception, inference, all presuppose a persistent and identical self. The non-temporal character of the observer is needed for the perception of even temporal phenomena. The unity of the observer is needed even for the apprehension of a plurality as a plurality. This non-temporal and unitary character of the self reveals it as other than a mere phase of a temporal series, an aggregate of simpler components. The observed characteristics of consciousness are incompatible with its being a composite and perishing product of physical conditions.

The Physical Universe is not Self-explanatory: Not only does physical nature fail to afford explanation for the facts of Consciousness and personality, it is not a self-contained system by itself. It is not self-explanatory. It is not possible to explain the mutations in nature,

the process of natural causation entirely in terms of the physical world. The *Vedāntasūtras* point out that causation is inexplicable in nature whether we take it as the self-differentiation of a single principle as in *Sāṅkhya* or as the aggregation of units of physical entities as in the *Vaiśeṣika* system. Causation itself bristles with difficulties. Causation cannot be regarded as phenomenal, for then change and process in nature become illusory. That is not a legitimate doctrine, for the perception of the phenomenal, and the fact of illusions are themselves temporal phenomena and as such are forms of change. Their sublation is more so. An unoriginated and irremovable illusion is no illusion. Thus an illusion of change is also an instance of change. Change being thus real, grounds of change, the conditions that necessitate changes must be posited. Otherwise, nature would be inexplicable through and through. If causation is admitted, there are fresh difficulties. On ultimate analysis, the total system of events that constitute the universe at one moment must be the cause of the total system of events that constitute the universe at the next. Here the central difficulty is that which was urged by Kant in his dialectic and urged by all Indian critics of causation. Does the cause by itself and unconditionally produce the effect? Or does it do so in a specific phase or condition of itself? In the first case, the cause and effect can have no relation of before and after. They will be simultaneous and co-existent. Thus causation as the linkage of successive phenomena is abandoned. If the cause produces its effect under special conditions, its assumption of those conditions being itself an effect in its turn, the whole of the original discussion has to be resumed in relation to this newly detected effect. Thus the process becomes an infinite regress.¹ The dilemma, a genuine one, common to Buddhism, and *Advaita*, Kant and Bradley can only be answered in one way. *That is to hold that the cause produces its effect not by itself, and the special condition that makes it productive is not assumed or brought about by itself but is imposed upon it by another external factor. The special condition is not its effect but is the result of the operation of an agency other than the cause itself.*²

Thus all causation implies an element of passivity and the ingression of a force transcending the causal nexus. This is Aristotle's 'unmoved mover' and Whitehead's non-temporal 'principle of con-

¹ See Russell: *The Scientific Outlook* (page 184).

² See Arambhanadhikarana of *Sribhāṣya*.

creation'. These schools may differ fundamentally. But there is the universally recognized paradox of causation and the only possible resolution of it makes the physical world dependent upon a transcendent fact. This is not *Deus Ex Machina*, which is introducing God to save a bad theory. Here we are invoking something like a God to resolve the paradox that is inherent in any account of the physical world. To posit God to support our errors may be bad but to posit him if necessitated by the undeniable facts of nature is honest enlightenment. The substance of the position is that the processes of nature are inexplicable, if nature is viewed as a closed system. Here the super-physical is not introduced as a violation of the laws of nature but as the only ground of the possibility of there being laws of nature.

Thus the physical universe is real, is a system that does not include all aspects of reality, and is not by itself a closed, self-contained and self-explanatory system.

The Individual Soul: The individual soul or *jīva* is not a phenomenal appearance. It is real. It has already been pointed out that it cannot be reduced to a state of the physical universe. Its transcendence of the physical system is an intrinsic law of its nature. Its association with nature and the consequences of that association are contingent, being brought about by its own *karma*. The self cannot also be considered a phenomenal appearance or illusory product of any other superphysical reality, for ultimately any such reality must be posited and asserted as real on the grounds of the facts of Consciousness. Reality, whatever else it may be, must be at least such that its affirmation has a compelling validity for the affirming Consciousness. Reality of thought or Consciousness is a pre-supposition for the conception of any other ultimate. Knowledge must be admitted as a fact, as a pre-condition for the admission of any other fact on grounds supplied by knowledge. The knowing principle or the fact of knowing cannot be explained away and the known entity be considered real. Reality of thought is an integral part of any construction of Reality. The refusal to recognise this implication is the radical error and inconsistency of *Śunyavāda*. Thus the self or *jīvātma* is real.

But it is not a principle that holds the key to the explanation of the whole of existence. The physical universe is not a subjective state of consciousness. It is not a product of the will of the individual soul. On the contrary, the individual as known to us in experience suffers subjection to nature. It cannot be considered the author or creator of

the world of nature, for it itself needs the instrumentality of the physical, in the form of the body and other physical aids for all its creative workmanship in existence. Superior *karma* cannot be considered as bringing to the individual such cosmic powers, for the law of *karma*, itself a law of reality is not fashioned or sustained by the individual soul. The highest development of powers too is dependent on a law that the individual encounters and does not make. Perfection attained through *karma* cannot be the sustaining ground of that law of *karma*, for, it is subservience to it that has brought about the attained perfection. No complete account of existence can be offered through the category of the finite self. While it is real, it is not all that is real.

Not merely is it not all-explanatory, the all-including reality, it is not even self-explanatory. While the physical nature discloses its internal inadequacies in the context of causation which is impossible in a closed physical system, the spiritual entities, the finite souls disclose their inadequacies in the context of value. The self as known in experience, the self whose reality we found undeniable, is such that it is less than what it has in it to become. Its ideals exceed its realization. There is the phenomenon of imperfection in knowledge and joy. There is a contradiction between what it seeks and what it actually possesses. In one word, contradiction, which is at once a declaration of imperfection and the propelling force in the direction of advancement, is a fundamental feature in finite life. This contradiction has to be explained. It cannot be explained purely or wholly in terms of the finite self. Its very imperfection is due to its seeking a self-contained existence. It contradicts itself because it has been seeking itself. If it had put itself in tune with the whole, whatever that may be, if it surrendered itself to the all-encompassing infinite, through such self-surrender it would achieve self-perfection. Imperfection cannot be explained as proceeding from the operations of merely physical nature. The very weakness that brings about the liability to such subjection to nature is an imperfection that calls for explanation. Ultimately all weakness including the liability to the adverse operations of nature, is a resultant of the finite not acknowledging and living up to its inherent subservience to the all-inclusive Reality.

It is in discord within itself because it is in discord with the whole of which it is a part or member. Refusing God, as the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* puts it, it has lost the splendours of its own existence. Thus analogous to the physical universe, the world of individual selves, is

real, is not explanatory of all existence and is not a self-contained and closed system.

There are some special doctrines about the finite self in the philosophy of Rāmānuja which we may briefly notice: *Attributive consciousness (dharmabhutajñāna)*, *moral responsibility or free causality of the self*, *atomic nature*, *plurality*, *equality*.

The concept of *dharmabhutajñāna* has been accused of obscurity. The reasons for its postulation are said to be unconvincing.

The conception in itself is very simple. The self is said to be of the nature of consciousness or knowledge. This consciousness is twofold. The self is aware of itself. The consciousness by and through which it apprehends itself is substantive consciousness (*svarupabhutajñāna*). The consciousness through which it apprehends all that is different from itself is attributive consciousness. The distinction is necessitated by the fact that the self is real and the self is not all that is real. Between the two types of consciousness, self-consciousness is foundational, as self-consciousness is the presupposition of the consciousness of the entire realm of non-selves. The position reminds one of the 'transcendental unity of apperception' of Kant and the notion of the self or personality as adumbrated by Lotze and Green. The distinction itself is not altogether obscure. Something similar to it is surely met with in Alexander's happy distinction between 'enjoyment' and 'contemplation'. The distinction cannot be repudiated except by the denial of the self or of the objective universe transcending the self. Only materialism and solipsism would find the distinction untenable. Its justification can be cleared up by considering certain conceptions of consciousness opposed to it.

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika in its dominant form does not accept what is termed here substantive consciousness. The self is cognized even as other entities are cognized. There is no immediate self-awareness. This is consistent with the thought that in the state of emancipation, when the self abides in itself severed from the bondage to nature, it is unconscious. But the position cannot explain the fact of world-consciousness itself. World-consciousness presupposes a unitary centre of consciousness, and that centre has to co-ordinate sensory impressions, formulate judgements and evolve inferences. It cannot be merely unity of being but also unity in thought. In the self, being and knowing ought to coincide. An unknown self is not different from a non-self. In fact Vatsyāyana, while arguing out the existence

of the self different from the body, almost accepts the position¹. The self is not externally cognized through the sensory apparatus. It is not a matter of inferences, for there is immediacy in the fact of the self. The term 'immediacy' itself would lose all meaning, if the self were not so. In fact, it is in relation to the self that immediacy is judged. So there is a mode of apprehension by which the self is cognized and which mode is different from sensory perception and inferential construction. This apprehension approximates to self-consciousness.

Sāṅkhya would not accept what is termed here as *dharmabhūta-jñāna*. For that theory the *puruṣa* is, no doubt, constituted of pure consciousness but the empirical process of knowledge is the function of the mind, which is physical in constitution but superphysical in function owing to the proximity to the *puruṣa*. The position is untenable on various grounds.

The *puruṣa* is posited on the ground that he is the *sākṣi* (witness). To be a *sākṣi* is to be knower of the non-self.

The cosmic machinery including the ego and mind, are evolved out of an original confusion of the *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti*. This confusion itself is other than the pure consciousness and it precedes the emergence of the mind and the internal organ. Confusion is a manifestation of consciousness, and that is posited as other than the substantive consciousness.

The emancipation from *samsāra* is brought about by discrimination between the self and the non-self. That discrimination cannot be the function of the mind, for the latter is included in the non-self. That the non-self apprehends the distinction between itself and the self and thereby effects the release of the self is unintelligible.

Ultimately, the *Sāṅkhya* being dualistic must account for the postulation of *prakṛiti*. The justification must be sought in the consciousness of the *sākṣi* itself in some way. If the *sākṣi* does not apprehend *prakṛiti*, *prakṛiti* does not apprehend herself, what proof or ground in knowledge can be pointed out for affirming the reality of *prakṛiti*? *Prakṛiti*, even if existing, can be nothing more than an unknown 'thing-in-itself'.

The *Vijñānavāda* of Buddhism is also relevant to this discussion. All that exists is only consciousness. The distinction between a hard ego on one side and the objective external world on the other is

¹ *Nyāyasūtra-Bhāṣya*, III, ii, 53.

fictitious. The stream of consciousness is the only reality, and to distinguish between self-knowledge and world-knowledge is unmeaning. The position cannot altogether do away with the category of a self, persisting in and through the stream. The *Vedāntasūtras* urge the fact of recognition and similar processes of intellection which pre-suppose the abiding core of self. Within consciousness itself division into subject and object is admitted. Consciousness constitutive of the subjective fragment, consciousness constitutive of the objective-fragment, the consciousness by which the subjective-fragment apprehends the objective fragment, the consciousness that wrongly externalizes what is itself and the consciousness that cancels that illusory externality, have all to be admitted. In this medley of psychical entities why should it be meaningless to distinguish between self-consciousness and the consciousness that is not self-consciousness?

Advaita Vedānta contains the following major principles on this question: Consciousness is subjectless in its pure condition. There is no substance supporting the property or function of consciousness, but pure consciousness itself is the self-existent reality. It is objectless. It apprehends no object. Pure consciousness is not awareness of an object. It is pure awareness. It is indivisible and absolutely one. Distinctions are due to objective phenomena and in the non-phenomenal reality there are none. It is not a flux or stream. It is timeless and super-historical. The objections raised against this position by Rāmānuja and his followers can be briefly stated: They maintain that there is no proof for the consciousness as described.

One usual proof is that it cannot be denied, for the consciousness that denies is the principle that is being denied. The proof is unsatisfactory for it identifies the consciousness that denies with the pure consciousness. The former is relative, has a content, is empirical in character and cannot be the same as the transcendental contentless consciousness.

If the *advaitin* says, 'consciousness is instrumental in making known everything else. All that which is lit up for knowledge is lit up by the light of consciousness', the position is not made better. The efficacy or involvement of the pure consciousness in the process of rendering all else knowable or known stultifies its purity, transcendence and contentless completeness.

If it is again said, 'But pure consciousness is self-conscious. This inner self-awareness is the proof', this explanation is definitely repudiated by *Advaita* itself. The self cannot itself be the knower

and the known, 'The dancer cannot dance on his own head,' as they say. To accept this version of self-consciousness is to concede the concept of the ego, whose differentia is self-cognition. Consciousness would itself congeal into a subject in that case and to conclude to an attributive consciousness in addition is the next logical necessity.

'But,' it is said,¹ 'pure consciousness is unknowable but it is not unknown. There is immediacy though there is no objectification.' With this explanation we are involved in another serious difficulty. If consciousness is immediately revealed and needs no proof, how to account for its phenomenalisation or its appearance as the many. Some obscuration is to be posited and the recognition of the obscured aspect must be brought about for the removal of the obscuration. There is an element of consciousness that abides in illusion and in the state of knowledge. There is an element of consciousness that is non-existent or not evident in the state of illusion and is brought into explicitness and actuality in the state of release. How is the division of consciousness into the substratum and the attribute altogether overcome in this scheme? To say that the freshly revealed element is phenomenal is no answer, for to account for phenomenal appearances was our initial difficulty.

Thus there is no conceivable way by which the distinction between the substantive consciousness and the dependent attributive consciousness can be obviated.

Atomic Nature of the Self: The individual self is held by Rāmānuja to be atomic. Does it mean that it is a particle of matter? It can never be so understood. The distinction between the self and the physical order argued out elaborately is never modified. No material attributes are ascribed to the self. Its transcendence of the physical system is an ultimate truth. Its atomic character can never mean more than the fact that it is not extended. Extension is a property of matter. That is denied of the self. But why should it not be conceived as all-penetrating (*vibhu*)? That would be to consider it infinite and invest it with the attributes of Brahman. It has to be conceived as non-extended as well as finite. The two implications are combined in the concept of the self as atomic (*aṇu*).

Freedom: The self is not only a knower but also a doer. Activity may be an attribute of the material universe also. But self-initiated activity is a prerogative of spirit. Matter and the physical environ-

¹See '*Chitsukhi*.'

ment, through stimulations and promptings, delusions and perversities of suggestion, do mislead the self in bondage. But they never wholly determine its direction of choice. No fall is so great as to make the self a complete and unwilling slave of matter. In the state of bondage and embodiment the self has not attained to its full stature and does not exert its ideal powers of knowledge and action. Hence its activities are ascribed to the influences of the physical. It is fully active in accordance with its original abundance of nature only in the state of perfection. Hence the paradox that it is free in its choice even at the lowest stage of its existence but is fully free only in its highest stage of self-realization. It does justice to itself when emancipated, but never does it lose its initiative and choice even in its lowest phase of life. The distinction between the two senses of freedom long familiar to western thought is finely discriminated by T. H. Green. When Rāmānuja says that the *jīva* is inherently free, he means that bondage is due to the self, that it does not annihilate the self and does not obliterate its initiative. When he says that it is bound by the meshes of nature, he means that its fullness of self-expression is an ideal to be attained through the grace of God in the state of final blessedness. 'The self is pure in itself but the body hangs on to it, how does it happen?'¹ asks Dr. Radhakrishnan. It all happens because the self has bound itself and because bondage has not annihilated it. Rāmānuja's conception of the self is not that of *Sāṅkhya* or *Advaita*, the only two theories of the self against which the criticism forcefully urged can have validity. The self in bondage is never so pure as not to have been the cause of its own bondage and never so impure as to be incapable of emancipating itself from bondage. It can never be so free in bondage as it can be in release.

The three significant ideas on this question may be stated thus: By its own *karma* the self has brought about its bondage; but the bondage is not so complete as to destroy its capacity for achieving freedom from it; fullness of freedom is an idea to be realized by the attainment of God.

Plurality: Why does Rāmānuja adopt a pluralism of the finite selves? These are some of the arguments in support of this view:

There is the fact of experienced plurality. The waking experience of other selves does not get sublated like that of the dream-world. If the individual self is not ultimate, but only a phenomenal compound

¹ *Indian Philosophy*, p. 718.

of illusion and reality, a plurality of such phenomenal compounds is in no way an impossibility. Plurality may not be more phenomenal than individuation. The other selves of the waking state are on the same ontological status as the individual enjoying that waking state. There is the fact of uniqueness of experience among individuals and non-sharing of experience. The grounds used for establishing the existence of the self, like the facts of cognition and volition, prove the plurality of the selves also as there are distinctions in cognition and volition among individuals. If these facts of experience are phenomenal, a non-phenomenal self, not performing the functions like knowing and willing and experiencing in general, is hardly capable of proof. In the state of release, individuation is not destroyed, for individuation is not a product of bondage. Anglo-Hegelians like Bradley and Bosanquet held that the individual is absorbed or dissolved in the Absolute after making its contribution to the Absolute. Pringle Pattison observed that the contribution the individual has to make to the Absolute is its life itself, unique and individual, reflecting the glory of the Absolute and whatever contribution is contained in the maintenance of that vision of the Absolute from the individual centre. Thus maintenance of individuality is part of the contribution to the Absolute.

Equality: While plurality is real, there is no intrinsic inequality in individual selves. This is the force of the *Upaniṣad* statements speaking of the unity or similarity of selves. Empirical inequalities are all due to the variations of embodiment brought about by *karma*. In essence all individual selves are of the nature of knowledge and joy. These reach their unbounded and natural proportions in the state of *mokṣa*. The doctrine of *karma* that explains inequalities of selves and life on the ground of the ethical past of the individuals implies the fundamental equality in their nature. The postulation of that doctrine to free God from the responsibility for inequality implies that God bestows or inflicts on them no unearned superiority or inferiority. Empirical gradations are due to *karma*. Equality is original. In the state of perfection all individuals attain the same degree of the rapturous knowledge of God.

Brahman: *Brahman* is the ultimate of the *Upaniṣads*. The significance of this concept is briefly but pregnantly announced in the opening propositions of the *Vedārthasaṅgraha*. The rest of the work is just an expansion of this initial affirmation. It has to be clearly noted that Rāmānuja is not an advocate of the doctrine of three ulti-

mates. It is true that the three entities, the physical order, the order of finite selves and Brahman are defined and described in the *Vedārthasangraha* as also in other treatises of Rāmānuja. But that does not signify that the three are supreme existences. The philosophy propounded is the philosophy of one supreme Reality. The other two entities, chit and achit, are distinguished and are affirmed to be real, not for purposes of ranking them on a footing of equality with the Supreme, but for delineating the glory of the Supreme. Their unreality is inconceivable, if the Supreme is absolute in its perfection. It is not that Rāmānuja prefers pluralism to monism but that he prefers the concept of a perfect *Brahman* to that of a deficient *Brahman*. The cosmos is a real fragment of the infinite glory of God. This vital clarification is sharply effected in several crucial contexts of the *Vedārthasangraha* itself. There are three forms of atheism according to Vedāntadesika: First, it is atheism to deny *Brahman*; second, it is atheism to affirm that the cosmos of nature and finite individuals are independent of *Brahman*; and lastly is atheism to affirm that this cosmos is an illusory phantasmagoria, for then, *Brahman* would be the victim of the illusion, being the sole reality. Such a *Brahman* would be nothing more than a finite self. Rāmānuja's doctrine, Vedāntadeśika contends, is the repudiation of all these varieties of atheism.

Brahman is Real: *Satya* 'the Real' is the first name of God. The *Upaniṣads* describe *Brahman* as the real. The *Chāndogya* argues that as the world is real, *Brahman*, the source and ground of it cannot be unreal. Even if the world were phenomenal, it would need a real substratum. But the world then would no doubt presuppose a real substratum but would also presuppose real deficiencies. An illusion needs a basis and is the effect of perceptual flaws. The conception of a real world implies no such primordial deficiency and it would imply only a source no less real than itself. What is the proof for such an entity? The proof is the reality and the insufficiencies of the physical and spiritual realms of existence. They are not self-explanatory. The further proof is that the idea of that entity is free from self-contradiction and is free from external contradiction. There is the paramount proof propounded by the doctrine of *svataḥ-prāmāṇya* (self-validity). That which is consistent in itself, is not inconsistent with the rest of knowledge and explains what would otherwise be inexplicable is veritably true. Moreover the attempts to discredit the idea are all self-contradictory.

Brahman is Transcendent: *Brahman* transcends physical nature and finite selves. It is pure. *Brahman* is not subject to mutations like the physical world, mutations which point to a transcendent principle for their explanation. *Brahman* is not subject to evil and imperfection like the individual soul. Evil is essentially mal-adaptation to the Supreme. That, mal-adaptation to which is the source of evil, is not itself a seat of evil. Thus *Brahman* is transcendently pure.

Brahman is Absolute Jñāna and Absolute Ānanda: As *jñāna* it has a self-completeness not found in the physical order and as *ānanda* it has a self-completeness not found in the finite self. Absolute knowledge means that *Brahman* is an eternal knower in perfect immediacy both of itself and all its cosmic and supercosmic glories. Nothing is unknown and nothing is known imperfectly. *Ānanda* signifies joy or delight or bliss. It signifies self-fulfilment. The discords of finite existence are obliterated by the very contemplation of *Brahman*. *A fortiori* it is *ānanda* supreme and unqualified.

Brahman is Infinite: *Brahman* is not merely complete in itself, but comprehends all and is explanatory of all. It is infinite. It is infinite as it abides timelessly. Time subsists in *Brahman* and *Brahman* does not live in time. It is infinite as it is omnipresent. Space subsists in *Brahman* and *Brahman* does not suffer spatial bounds. It is where everything else is and it is where nothing else is. *Brahman* is infinite being the one substance of which, whatever else exists is a 'mode' or adjective. Nothing else is, whose being does not include and involue the being of *Brahman*. There is no affirmation which is not an affirmation of *Brahman*. The world of nature and the world of souls have no existence and are inconceivable except as modes of *Brahman*. Hence when they are affirmed, it is indeed *Brahman* that is affirmed bearing and animating those physical and spiritual modes of itself. *Brahman* is infinite as it is an abode of infinite and boundless perfections of attributes. It has attributes that display themselves in the creation, preservation and destruction of worlds beyond number, through ages beyond number. It has attributes that elicit love, encourage approach and convert contemplation into rapture of devotion. It has attributes that make the attainment of it the ultimate goal of life, a goal that is all-encompassing in its range and all-surpassing in its heights.

These five characterizations of *Brahman* as *satya*, *nirmala*, *jñāna*, *ānanda* and *ananta* are considered definitive of the nature of *Brahman*.

There are three types of *Upaniṣad* statements concerning the relation between the world of the finite reals, nature and the individuals and the Supreme. There are passages clearly enunciating the truth of transcendence. *Brahman* is not physical nature and *Brahman* is not the individual souls severally or collectively. It surpasses and transcends them being changeless unlike nature and being supreme and perfect unlike the individual. These are the *analytical* pronouncements in the *Upaniṣads*. The Supreme cannot be reduced to a finite category or a summation of such finites.

But it cannot be considered as excluding or as excluded by the cosmos of finites. They do not stand by themselves. They are not self-maintaining reals. They are the powers, glories and embodiments of the infinite. This truth of *Brahman's* immanence, of *Brahman's* inner rulership of the universe is enunciated by certain other *Upaniṣad* propositions. It is the central reality holding together and sustaining these finite adjectival realities. The purport of the second class of *Upaniṣad* utterance is to describe the glory of *Brahman*, the glory that comprehends the entire system of finite existences which *Brahman* transcends in its essential being. These passages are described as *explanatory*.

There is a third type of affirmation in the *Upaniṣads*. It is described as *synthetic*. There are passages which assert that *Brahman* is the only reality and it is all that is real. As the subordinate existences constituting the glory of *Brahman* are a part in the total fact of *Brahman's* allembicing reality, it is only *Brahman* that constitutes the ultimate reality. The finites are not a surplus to the complete reality of *Brahman*. They are contributory and integral to its being. Their being is the being of *Brahman* as embodied in them. Hence *Brahman* is all. The Supreme is the only reality, because all the finite reality that there is, is included in the reality of *Brahman*. The *synthetic* passages aim at proclaiming this final singularism of the supreme principle. Their essential force lies in making emphatic the truth that the finite is the glory of *Brahman*. The finite exists because the infinite exists in it sustaining it. Thus the three lines of affirmation are not only consistent but mutually imply and complete each other. Transcendence, immanence and unity are all ultimate principles. They all converge towards the single truth that God is all surpassing and all-comprehending.

In the interpretation of the third type of *Upaniṣad* texts, the *synthetic* texts, there is divergence among Vedāntic philosophers.

Rāmānuja opens the dialectical portion of the *Vedārthasangraha* with a brief statement of three interpretations of these *synthetic* texts, from which he radically differs and proceeds to examine them in great detail. The discussion centres round the celebrated dictum of '*Tattvamasi*'. The importance attached to this single *synthetic* text is due to the fact that intrinsically it is the best enunciation of the synthesis of *Brahman* and the universe and also because it is held the most comprehensive formula in *Advaita Vedānta*. All other passages, considered as stating the final metaphysical truth, are considered either briefer reiterations of this formula or as contributory or clarificatory. The other two classes of texts, the analytical and explanatory, are considered accommodations to or reiterations of empirical thought not meant seriously. They are instrumental in value, if not definite concessions to popular thought. They are assigned purposes other than the declaration of ultimate truth. The synthetic texts are the truest. Among them '*Tattvamasi*' is the finest.

A brief statement of Śāṅkara's school of interpretation may be attempted: In the formula 'That thou art' the term 'that' stands for the infinite consciousness popularly described as God. This principle is the ground of the cosmic process. To it are to be ascribed all the characteristics implied in its being the ground of the cosmos. The term 'thou' stands for the individual soul, immediate and self-evident, indubitable and undeniable. The proposition asserts the identity of the two or rather denies difference between the two. The centre of the cosmos and the essence of the individual are one in substance.

But this identification appears untenable *prima facie*. God is omnipotent and all-knowing. He is the ground of the cosmos. The individual is finite, subject to afflictions and imperfections. How can the two be identical? The answer lies in the fact that the ultimate principle in the cosmos is really attributeless and without predicative determinations. It is pure consciousness and nothing else. It is unqualified, unconditioned and undifferentiated. That is the meaning of the *Upaniṣad* texts that speak of it as pure '*jñāna*' and as '*nirguṇa*'. The individual too is not the victim of sufferings and imperfections commonly ascribed to it. All the empirical experiences belong to and pertain to the empirical personality. The self is pure witness, witnessing these earthly experiences and thus transcending them. It is actionless, sorrowless and is not the empirical intelligence. In substance it is also pure consciousness. Thus there is no contradiction in the ground of the cosmos being one with the essence of the individual.

This very unity asserted implies the falsity of the empirical attributes of the individual and the cosmic attributes of God, which serve as grounds of their mutual differentiation in popular theistic imagination.

The attributes so denied are all relative to the world of phenomena, the natural order of empirical existence. If this world were real, then the attributes of God and man involved in their relationship to that world would have reality. As a matter of fact, the world is an illusion. It is a phenomenal manifestation of absolute consciousness. It is perceived but not real, *Brahman* does not cause this world in any true sense for causation is a false principle. The *Upaniṣad* text, 'on speech depend effects. They are merely names'¹ clearly declares the falsity of the effect and the reality of that which is considered the cause.

From the individual point of view the world of objects present to waking and dream experiences are unreal, as they are mere objects and not the self-evident spirit, and as they are not abiding like the abiding witness. Their very instability and the limitations of their manifestation declare their unreality. Hence the underlying consciousness is acosmic in nature.

Thus pure consciousness, one and undifferentiated, attributeless and acosmic, is the sole reality. There are *Upaniṣad* passages expressly negating the world and expressly condemning pluralism.

'*Neti neti*' denies the reality of the cosmic appearances of Brahman '*Neha nānāsti kinchana*' emphatically declares the unreality of plurality. *Brahman* is consciousness without internal distinctions of substance and attributes. There is nothing second to it, either belonging to its kind or belonging to a different kind.

This undivided, attributeless, acosmic and pure consciousness appears as the world of change and plurality owing to a primeval ignorance or illusion. The elimination of that illusion is the final emancipation. The realization of the truth of 'That thou art' is the only way for that consummation.

It was open to Rāmānuja to seek to modify or oppose this method of interpretation or the very contention embodied in the passage '*Tattvamasi*' taking his stand on the so called dualistic passages or passages which present the omnipresent over-lordship and immanence of *Brahman*. That would make the refutation easy and would get support from the general conception that all the *Upaniṣads* embody a

¹ 'वाचारम्भणं विकारो नामधेयम् ।'

single doctrine. It is legitimate to modify the part in the light of the whole. It would also be in consonance with the Advaitic procedure of attaching ultimacy of significance to some passages of the *Upaniṣads* and to treat others as representing a provisional and lower order of truth. But such an approach to the exegetical situation would not be internal criticism and would not involve a demonstration of the unsoundness of the interpretation of the *synthetic* texts by *Advaita*. Hence postponing the consideration and defence of the *analytical* and *explanatory* texts, he subjects the Advaitic exegesis of the *synthetic* texts themselves to an acute and comprehensive scrutiny. Setting aside the *analytic* and *explanatory* passages for the sake of argument is it correct to interpret the monistic utterances themselves as proposed? That is the question he takes up. The most valued text of '*Tattvamasi*' itself is focussed upon for fullest investigation. He precipitately plunges into the discussion of '*Tattvamasi*,' and lingers long on its elucidation, reconsiders it again and again from fresh points of view and closes the work with a pointed and compact *resume* of its import. It is essential to appreciate this choice of procedure.

The whole section of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* of which the culminating pronouncement is 'That thou art' is analysed, its various stages are clearly marked out and the development of the central argument completing itself in that conclusion is traced with mastery of detail and depth of integral vision.

The first stage is Uddālaka's question whether Śvetaketu has learnt from his teachers about that '*ādeśa*', the commanding Spirit of the universe by learning about which one learns about all. The term '*ādeśa*' signifies the guiding intelligence and supreme law-giver. By understanding the material cause one can understand the effect for the latter is only the same substance in a new state or condition. Hence the description of the ultimate Spirit as one whose understanding includes the understanding of all, implies the thought that it is the material cause of all. The 'all' said to be so understood by the understanding of the one is real, for, otherwise the understanding of the one would lead not to the understanding of all but to its cancellation and the conviction of its non-existence. It is improper to interpret the same term 'understanding' in the two senses of 'understanding its existence' and 'understanding its non-existence' in the same sentence. The dictum of one knowledge including all knowledge could only mean that the 'all' is the effect or is included in the 'one'.

Śvetaketu, not being aware of the possibility of knowing all by knowing one legitimately questions the dictum. The father proceeds to enlighten the son on the identity of substance between cause and effect and points out that the knowledge of the substance in its causal state includes the knowledge of effect, for the effect is just modification of form for a new use and necessitates the use of a new name. Except for differences in utility, form and name, there is no discontinuity in essence and substance between the cause and effect. This clarification renders the previously enunciated dictum intelligible. But still there is no complete clarity. The knowledge of the one principle cannot lead to the knowledge of all, even if there is continuity between the cause and effect, unless that one principle is the cause and the only cause of all the universe.

This required affirmation is made next. It contains several constituents.

'All this was only being'. It means that this manifested word of plurality *was* only Being. That means that it was not non-existent at the time referred to.

'In the beginning.' It was only being at the time of creation. Before it branched forth into many forms with many appellations, it was not non-existent, it was existing fused with or one with Being. It was embedded in that one Reality.

But as a matter of fact it is existing even now in the state of creation, in the state of the effect. What is the significance of saying it existed in the one Reality then, when, as a matter of fact it exists as a part of Reality even now? To answer that query it is added 'one only'. The special significance is that though the world is both in the states of effect and cause, in the original causal state, it was without the differentiations of name and form found in the condition of effect. What existed then was being unanalysable in form and name. This addition brings out the idea that though the world exists as part of Reality in both the primordial and consequent phases, it is indistinguishable in the former and distinguishable in the latter. Causation is nothing but assumption of differentiated names and forms. The causal existence passed into explicitness of distinctions and became the world. Since it is this self-transformation that constitutes creation, the material cause of the world is this one primordial undifferentiated Being. The phrase 'one only' thus brings out that the 'One' is the material cause of the world. The material cause is that, which transforms itself into the effect.

But in empirical causation, in addition to the material cause, an intelligent operative cause, a directing and operating spirit, is found. In the same way, here also, in cosmic causation are we to suppose that there is an operative spirit other than the material cause? This suggestion is ruled out in the phrase 'without a second'. There is no intelligent principle other than the material cause. It is not merely the material cause, but also the intelligent operative cause. The implication is that in empirical instances of production, the material cause is non-sentient and the intelligent producer, being limited in powers, needs material cause for his productive operation. Here on the other hand, the cosmic cause is all-powerful and hence has as its own power whatever material cause is required for production and is all-knowing and hence needs no other operating spirit for the creative action. Its omnipotence and omniscience are thus brought into the forefront by the expressions, 'one only' and 'without a second'. Thus the significance of the 'law-giver' (*ādeśa*) mentioned initially and of the dictum that the understanding of the 'one' leads to the understanding of 'the all' is fully worked out.

At this stage an alternative view is combated. 'Some say that all this was non-being in the beginning. But how can that be? How can what is existent come out of non-existence?' The view combated is what is called *asatkāryavāda*, according to which causation is the creation of a new entity previously non-existent. The argument urged against it is that what is an existent cannot originate from a state of non-existence. The world is existent. How can the world, then, originate from that in which it did not exist? The refutation implies three notions.

The world is indubitably existent in the present state of effect. It is an effect and it did originate from some cause. It did originate from something in which it was existent but only in the causal form. Causation is not anything other than self-transformation into explicitness. Thus the reality of the world, the reality of the causal process and the reality of the effect in an implicit form in the primordial state also, are all set forth in this refutation of *asatkāryavāda*.

The original argument is carried forward. That original undifferentiated Being one, without a second, thought "let me become many". Hence as creative thought is ascribed to the primordial being, its spiritual character is brought out clearly. The form of its thought 'let me become many' brings out the idea that it is the material cause, for it did not resolve 'let me make the many' but 'let me *become*

the many'. Thus the identity of the material and spiritual causes is re-affirmed implying the omnipotence and omniscience of that primordial Principle.

It created the elements. This brings out the truth that the primordial Principle is *satyasankalpa*, that its will irresistibly converts itself into reality and that will and realization are one in its absolute existence.

Then 'it thought "Let me enter these elements, as this *ātman*, the *jīva* and articulate names and forms"'. Here there are three difficult ideas.

What is the meaning of the infinite and all-pervading principle entering into anything, as if the latter was without its indwelling presence previous to that entry? Entry here only means that the indwelling presence becomes the indwelling presence within the same entity in its developed and manifested state. There is no entry in the sense of origination of immanence but only in the sense of the origination of the immanence in the developed and manifested world. So entry into the world means bringing the world into its explicitness of names and forms.

The primordial Being is to enter into the elements 'as the *ātman*, the *jīva*'. The difficulty here is that the *ātman* by itself is not what is said to enter. *Jīva* is not what is said to enter. The *ātman* and the *jīva* are not what is said to enter. There is no 'and' in the text. The term *jīva* is used as a qualification of the *ātman*, the supreme self, that is the primordial Being of this section. Now the question is whether the entity *jīva* is the adjective of the *ātman* or the property of being a *jīva* is the adjective of the *ātman*. The latter meaning is inappropriate for within the thought of the omniscient Architect of names and forms its own omniscient self does never have and can never have the limitations of the *jīva*. Even when identity of *jīva* and *Brahman* is spoken of, it is not to ascribe individuation to the Absolute but for purposes of denying individuation and assimilating the non-individualized essence of the individual to the Absolute. When individuation is sought to be denied by such synthetic statements a term uniquely standing for *Brahman*, like 'that' or '*Brahman*' or 'All-Experiencing-One' is equated with *jīva* and not a neutral term like *ātman* even on Advaitic view. The other alternative that *Brahman* has the *jīva* itself as its adjective is free from any such difficulty. It is reinforced by the *Taittirīya* text on the same matter of the divine ingression into world. It is said there that the Supreme entered into the world and became

the unintelligent and the intelligent, though remaining unaltered in its perfection. It means that by the fact of entry into the *jīva* it became the *jīva*. It became describable by the term *jīva* because it entered into and sustains from within the *jīva* itself. Thus 'entering as the *ātman*, the *jīva*' means ingression of the primordial Soul into the world of material elements, the former carrying and embodied in the *jīva*. The Supreme with the individual as its mode enters into the world of nature and unfolds its differentiations.

The differentiation of names and forms does not mean merely the shaping or articulation of the different forms and names of the manifold created beings. It is 'assumption' of those forms and names. The original resolution was 'let me become many'. In accordance with it the multitudes of forms and names brought into existence are forms and names of the primordial Creative Principle itself. It does not give names and forms but takes them.

Then the *Upaniṣad* propounds the relationship between the creatures and the Supreme Principle. It says that 'all these creatures proceed from Being, abide in Being and are established in Being'. They proceed from the Supreme, for the Supreme is their material and spiritual cause. They abide in it because it is their final support. They are controlled by and are instrumental to it. They live by it and thus are established in it.

The significance of this relation is summed up in the statement 'All this is ensouled by this supreme soul'. All this world stands to *Brahman* in the relation of a body to a soul. Even as the body is animated by the soul, this entire cosmos is animated and sustained by the supreme Soul.

'That is the truth'. This sentence affirms that the only truth about the universe is that it is permeated and maintained by that supreme Spirit.

'He is the soul.' The supreme One is the soul of all. The earlier statement stated the relation from the standpoint of the world of creatures. This statement is from the standpoint of the Supreme. Both together mean that all this has Him as its soul and He is the soul of all.

'Thou, oh, Śvetaketu, art that'. The general principle that all is ensouled by the Supreme and the Supreme is the soul of all, is applied deductively to Śvetaketu himself and he is told that he is that supreme Principle.

The first point of importance here is that the term 'thou' does not mean the body of Śvetaketu on any interpretation. It also does

not mean the individual soul or the *jīva* in view of all that has gone before in the section. It has been elaborately enunciated in the earlier parts of the discourse that all forms and names are forms and names of *Brahman* because the forms and names come into existence on account of *Brahman's* ingression into the creatures. Hence the term 'thou' also signifies *Brahman* itself ultimately. If it is taken to mean merely the individual soul the earlier account of the formation of names and forms and the resolution of the primordial Being 'let me become many' would all stand undone, and we would be relapsing to the usage of words and to the understanding of forms and names, from which the whole discourse has rescued and lifted us to a higher plane of understanding. It is not merely legitimate but utterly necessary to apply the terms designating the creatures to the ultimate immanent atman itself, for those creatures only exist as adjectival to it and the designations of adjectival entities are designations of their substantives.

The second point of supreme importance is that, as the term 'thou' represents the supreme Spirit itself as the soul and sustaining ground of the individual self, the identification of the import of 'that' and 'thou' involves no contradiction to necessitate the abandonment of the specific connotations of the two terms equated in the interests of the intended unity of denotation. That contradiction results from taking 'thou' as signifying the mere individual self as such in abstraction from the ultimate indwelling within it as the ultimate soul. The entire argument as it has progressed upto this point is against such a naive and unenlightened interpretation of 'thou'. Now as the individual is taken in the correct and concrete sense as representing the supreme Deity immanent in the individual, the contradiction is dissolved, dissolving there by the necessity for abandoning the specific connotations of 'that' and 'thou'. The two terms can be taken up in their fullest significance and the identity of their import can be asserted. 'That' stands for the Supreme as the soul and ground of the cosmos, its creative source and inner controller along with all the attributes implied in that relation to the cosmos. The term 'thou' stands for the same Supreme as the inner controller and immanent ground of the individual along with all the implied attributes. It is the Supreme itself that bodies itself forth in the cosmos and in the individual. Not merely is there no contradiction involved in that identification of the soul of the universe with the soul of the individual but it is a necessary deduction to conclude to the individual immanence from cosmic

immanence. The statement of identity is an application of the principle of cosmic immanence, and it would have been a contradiction not to draw that inevitable implication. There is unity of substantive signification in and through diversity of attributive signification. Such is the nature of propositions of co-ordinate predication. The principle of such predication cannot be transgressed even on the other interpretation. When 'that' is taken as representing pure consciousness and 'thou' also in that sense, 'that' is intended also to eliminate the specific connotations of 'thou' and 'thou,' is also intended to eliminate the specific connotations of 'that'. The diversity of such negative connotations, 'that' signifying what is other than 'thou' and 'thou' signifying what is other than 'that' are to be combined with the denotation of the underlying principle of pure consciousness by both the terms. Diversity of predication and unity of substantive signification is confirmed even by that manner of interpretation. The only difference is in introducing a contradiction between the senses of 'that' and 'thou' to begin with and then in thinning down the meaning of the two terms to the common factor of denotation to avoid the artificially imported contradiction and in fixing negative connotations to them. The resulting unity of import is not free from diversities of connotation but is only robbed of diversities of positive connotation. There is no gain in principle but only loss in the richness of affirmation.

Thus, there is no real contradiction in identifying 'that' and 'thou'. There would have been contradiction is not so identifying the two. The contradiction sought to be eliminated by the other interpretation is not genuine. Its solution of that contradiction embodies the same principle of co-ordinate predication, affirming the identity of the substantive principle through diversities of adjectival determinations.

Such in brief is the argument that culminates in the formula and the central significance of that formula. We may gather together the significant points in the discourse that are in conflict with the interpretation offered in the *Advaita* School of interpretation.

The description of the primordial principle as '*ādesa*' as the infinite law-giver is against the conception of that principle as attributeless and acosmic.

The glorification of the understanding of *Brahman* as inclusive of the understanding of the world of infinite plurality implies the incorrectness of taking that world as either independent or as phenomenal. The phenomenal is not understood but sublated by the

apprehension of the real. To understand the same term in the same proposition as meaning both 'comprehension' and 'sublation' is against all rules of interpretation. Moreover the sublation does not proceed from comprehension on the Advaitic view, as *Brahman* is self-luminous and its full comprehension does not mean anything other than the sublation of the phenomenal. Sublation constitutes and does not issue from the comprehension.

The instances of causation offered are the clay and its products, and gold and its products, all cases of transformation or change of state. No illustrations of false appearance like the rope and snake, the shell and silver, and the desert and mirage, are offered. The illustrations imply the view that causation is transformation and not false appearance.

The principle of *satkāryavāda*, the view of the cause as merely a state of subtle unmanifested existence, the reference to the time before creation, and the absence of an external intelligent cause imply the following principles, namely, the causation is a real process, time is not a phenomenal appearance, *Brahman* is the material cause and hence is omnipotent, and *Brahman* is the intelligent cause and hence is the infinite knower.

The refutation of *asatkāryavāda* implies no repudiation of causation as such but the repudiation of a wrong view of causation. The reality of the world is used as the ground for the assertion of the reality of the cause. The world exists prior to creation because it undoubtedly exists after creation. The non-existence of the effect is not even countenanced in the argument.

Brahman resolving to become the many implies its being the intelligent and material cause of the world, thereby implying its supreme power and supreme intelligence. It created the elements. This brings out another attribute and perfection of *Brahman* that its will is realization. It entered with its adjective, the *jīva*, the elements created, for purposes of creating names and forms for itself. All names are names of *Brahman* and all forms are forms of *Brahman*. The unreality of forms or the inapplicability of names to *Brahman* is not even hinted but on the other hand all forms and names are ascribed to it.

The relation of the world to *Brahman* is affirmed. The world is the effect of *Brahman*, abides in *Brahman* and is established in it. The attributes of immanence and supreme inward control and absolute possession and omnipresence are affirmed. The world is not denied

but its independence is denied. *Brahman's* attributes are not denied but are glorified as manifested in the maintenance of the cosmos. The world is ensouled by *Brahman*. It is not abolished but sustained. That is the only truth about the world.

That *Brahman* is the soul of all is summed up. The implication that *Brahman* is the soul and the world of finite souls and nature constitute its body is declared. *Brahman* is all because it is the supreme indwelling soul of all. The utter subservience and subordination, dependence and control of the world is asserted but not its phenomenality.

The soul of the universe is identified with the soul of the individual. The universe and the individual are adjectival to *Brahman*. The substantive is one and the adjectives are many. The unity of the substance in and through the diversities of the modes is affirmed. The reality of the modes, the plurality of the modes, their total dependence on the substance and the singleness of the substance are all affirmed in 'That thou art'. This is the summary of the import of the discourse inculcating '*Tattvamasi*.'

It is a vain effort to seek support for the *Advaita* interpretation of 'That thou art' in the concept of the indeterminate and attributeless Absolute. Determinateness and attributes cannot be got rid of so easily. The 'that', the ground of the cosmos, the undivided consciousness, may not be the cause of the world in a real causal process issuing in real effects. Such a causation would no doubt imply attributes of *Brahman* like absolute power and absolute knowledge. But even if it is regarded as merely a substratum of the cosmic illusion, attributes and determinations cannot altogether be eliminated. Phenomena are not rooted in reality in the way in which real products are rooted in real sources. But they do pre-suppose conditions that render the superimposition possible. They do presuppose a partial suppression and obscuration of the real. Suppression of the real is the precondition for the substitution of the unreal. The suppression is not total for the real must and does shine somewhat through the unreal. Its total concealment would obliterate its self-evident, undeniable character. Thus there is both revelation and concealment as preconditions of superimposition. The knowledge that terminates the superimposition must be the revelation of that aspect of the real whose obscuration made the superimposition possible. Thus in the real itself, there are two elements or aspects, one of them unsuppressed even in illusion and the other suppressed in illusion. The two aspects are either

mutually distinct, or are adjectival to a third principle or one of them is the substantive, the other being adjectival.

A principle that does not admit of this analysis of aspects cannot be the basis of a superimposition. How are attributes and determinations and internal distinctions altogether eliminated in the substratum on the theory of cosmic illusion? Attributes implied in real causation may be avoided but attributes implied in the phenomenon of false appearance are real characteristics of the substratum. An indeterminate and attributeless entity cannot be the substratum of false appearance.

All illusion is the outcome of a deficiency in the cognitive machinery. The deficiency cannot be illusory for it is the pre-supposition of the illusion. If there is only a single perfect reality, by the side of which there is nothing else, there is no possibility of false appearance. The deficiency, being pre-phenomenal and therefore non-phenomenal, must be the characteristic of that single principle or be an independent entity. Either way a *Brahman* with attributes or a *Brahman*, which is not one without a second, is a necessary ground of the possibility of phenomenal appearance. It is open to adopt the third alternative that Brahman itself is that deficiency, one without a second. But as both a deficiency and a real substratum are needed for an illusion, the two former alternatives are better; under this circumstance, how are determinations and attributes altogether avoided in the scheme of phenomenalism?

The evil, imperfection and afflictions experienced by the individual, which in popular theistic imagination serve as grounds for the distinction between God and the individual soul, are here pronounced illusory and as such the individual in essence is pronounced to be one with the universal absolute consciousness. Evil may be illusory but the liability to the illusion of evil is no less an evil. That stands incontrovertibly as a characteristic of the individual. To treat that liability also as an illusion does not abolish the problem but pushes it backwards. The perception of the unreal implies a real liability to such misconception. How then can the individual be considered attributeless?

In effect, if the distinctive attributes of God and the individual are judged to be unreal and phenomenal, the common consciousness in God and the individual may be thoroughly identified but that consciousness is not attributeless. It may be without the attributes of perfection ascribed to God but cannot escape attributes of imper-

fection and liability to imperfection characteristic of the individual. There is identity no doubt with the Supreme, but the Supreme is divested of its supremacy and it is the seat of evil, the redemption from which is sought through the understanding of that identity. So the choice ultimately is not between an attributeless Absolute and God qualified by attributes, but between a Supreme characterized by perfection of attributes and a universal consciousness characterized by the attributes of imperfection. The *Upaniṣads* in general and the text '*Tat tvam asi*' in particular stand for the Supreme, that is perfect in its attributes. That in substance is the contention of Rāmānuja. The purport of 'That thou art' according to the *Vedārthasaṅgraha* is to affirm the glory of the Supreme as the immanent soul of the universe of nature and individual souls. That universe constitutes an adjective of the Supreme.

There are texts in a large number which describe *Brahman* as knowledge or consciousness. They are taken to signify pure undifferentiated consciousness. Rāmānuja observes that as knowledge is a principal attribute of the supreme spirit, the passages signify the attribute and through that they signify the supreme Being who is all-knowing. The principle of this interpretation is accepted by Bada-rāyana himself. There is a large number of texts speaking of *Brahman* as omniscient. In the same *Taittiriya* text *Brahman* is described both as *jñāna* or knowledge and as *vipaschit* or all-knower. The riddles raised by *Advaita* about predication, co-ordinate predication and the necessity indicated of taking the negative connotation of terms have been considerably disposed of. There is no way of assertion in which the subject and predicate are without connotation either positive or negative. Plurality of connotation does not conflict with unity of denotation. Non-contradictory and mutually implicated attributes can and must co-qualify a unitary substance. There is self-contradiction in predicating of a subject, only one characteristic when that characteristic implies and is implied by other characteristics. In this case avoidance of diversities of predication would itself constitute a contradiction. This is pointed out by Vedāntadeśika also in the *Nyāyaparisuddhi*¹. The insight underlying this point is the foundation of the whole of the Hegelian dialectic and is the basis of all reasoning. Purity of knowledge does not ward off the subject and object of know; ledge or the fact of knowledge being relative to subject and object.

¹Sadbādhyaya

it only implies the utter non-existence of ignorance and error. Essential attributes, when spoken of, are spoken of as characteristic of the substances in which they inhere. Importance of the attribute and not the non-existence of the substance is the purport in such modes of statement.

There are many passages which definitely describe *Brahman* as attributeless (*nirguṇa*.) There is a huge number of such negative appellations of *Brahman*. What do they mean? Do they not signify that it is indeterminate? Far from it. There are statements describing the glorious attributes of *Brahman*. There are some passages which combine the assertion of the attributes of *Brahman* and the denial of its attributes. The scope of the negation must be restricted so as not to contradict the affirmations. A general negation is to be narrowed down so as to leave the affirmations uncontradicted. There are again negative terms designating *Brahman* which negate of it attributes constitutive of imperfection. The import of the general negative terms like *nirguṇa* is to be interpreted in the light of the determinately negative terms like 'apahatapāpma, asthula and akṣara' meaning 'sinless, not gross and imperishable'. So the scope of the negative terms is not to be left vague and general but to be determined in the light of the positive terms and the determinately negative terms. To press for the unrestricted and universal sense of the negative terms would contradict the positive affirmation of the attributes of *Brahman* and would render the denial of evil attributes superfluous. Thus a term like attributeless merely signifies the absence in *Brahman* of attributes constitutive of imperfections characteristic of the physical universe and the selves.

What of the famous passage in the *Bṛihadāraṇyāka* 'neti neti' meaning 'not so, not so'? The discourse needs attention. Two aspects of *Brahman* are spoken of there. They are described as the gross and the subtle (*murta* and *amurta*). Though in experience we know the gross existences and the subtle existences, we do not know them as aspects of *Brahman*. The two types of existences known in the world are here definitely pronounced to be the aspects of *Brahman*. A new point of view about them is inculcated and a status is assigned to them by the *Upaniṣad*, unassigned to them in empirical thought. How can the *śruti* negate them of *Brahman*, when the ascription of them as forms to *Brahman* is solely the work of *śruti* itself? If their constituting forms of *Brahman* is false, they need not have been affirmed to be forms of *Brahman* at all. The *śruti* seems to commi-

a needless error in order to effect its rectification. Prevention would be logically more economical than this cure. It cannot be that the *śruti* seeks to deny of *Brahman* all predications and determinations including these forms ascribed to it. Immediately after this twice-proclaimed negation, the *śruti* goes on to speak of the glory of *Brahman*. It says that *Brahman* is the reality of realities. The life-principles, namely, the individual souls, are real. This transcends them in its reality, for it is perfect and unconditioned in its being. There is nothing other than *Brahman*, it is said in continuation, that is higher than *Brahman*. Now the fact that the *śruti* itself is responsible for imparting the idea that the gross and subtle existences are forms of *Brahman* and the fact that after this negation '*neti neti*' the *śruti* goes on to certain affirmations about the transcendent greatness of *Brahman*, prove that the negation contained in '*neti neti*' is not the negation of all forms, aspects and qualities of *Brahman*. It cannot be a total repudiation of all conceivable determination. Both what leads to '*neti neti*' and what follows '*neti neti*' render that interpretation a thorough absurdity. Then what may be its meaning? Bādarāyaṇa tackles the passage in the *Vedāntasūtras* and offers the solution. He maintains that what is negated is the limitation of the forms of *Brahman* to the two forms enumerated. *Brahman* has an infinity of forms and attributes and to presume to have comprehended all the forms of *Brahman* by knowing about these two forms of *Brahman* is sheer error. That the enumerated forms exhaust the forms of *Brahman* is what is denied in '*neti neti*'. Far from denying the forms of *Brahman* the statement asserts the infinity of the forms of *Brahman*. '*Neti neti*' is negative in the letter but embodies a super-abundance of affirmation in spirit.¹

The next text chosen for consideration is the very important proposition of *Bṛihādaraṇaka* 'There is no plurality here, (*Neha nānasti kinchana*)'. It contains an explicit denunciation of pluralism. How is this to be understood? Rāmānuja directs attention to the fact that this proposition is an integral part of a closely connected discourse and the discourse does not conclude with this proposition. It moves forward to the conclusion 'He is the controller of all, the Lord of all, etc'. The culminating affirmation of the discourse is that the Supreme is the all-ruling, all-sustaining and all-animating reality. The consummation of the teaching, therefore, is the thought that *Brahman* is the immanent over-lord of the totality of existence.

¹ See *Idea of God* by Pringle Pattison p. 106.

The exact nature of the monism propounded is determined hereby. The denial of plurality that leads on to this monism should not be interpreted as denying the world of finites or attributes, that are positively taken up in the monistic conclusion as constitutive of the glory and characteristics of *Brahman*; but must be understood as negating the plurality of self-dependent reals. The plurality implied in the positive affirmation of *Brahman* cannot be negated, without self-contradiction. Only the pluralism antithetical to that affirmation must be taken as negated. The denial is a preamble in the discourse to the affirmation. The affirmation determines the scope of the denial preparatory to it. What is incompatible with it is denied and what is an integral part of its import is left uncontradicted and reinforced.¹ This is a straight-forward application of the principle of non-contradiction in interpretation.

After this textual and interpretative criticisms of *Advaita*, Rāmānuja proceeds to independent logical discussion. Before taking up that part for exposition it is worthwhile to recapitulate the soundness of method in the textual criticism, of *Vedārthasangraha*.

Rāmānuja devotes attention entirely to those passages in the *Upanisads* which are monistic in spirit and which are claimed as the pillars of the Advaitic interpretation. He subscribes to the equal validity of the analytical and explanatory texts. But he sets aside for the time being those texts as they are not so valued by the *Advaita*. He seeks to demonstrate that the synthetic texts themselves are antithetical to the notion of an indeterminate, acosmic and attributeless Absolute. It is not a question of exaggerating the value of dualistic texts and explaining away non-dualistic texts or practising text-torture. It is an open and thorough investigation into the non-dualistic texts, the results of which investigation retain validity even if the dualistic and explanatory teachings of the *Upanisads* are explained away.

In the choice of the texts for elucidation great care and judgement are displayed. The most representative ones are taken and the boldest utterances are considered. 'Tat tvam asi' represents all the monistic identifications of the individual and *Brahman* like 'I am *Brahman*' and 'This self is *Brahman*'. 'Satyam jñānam anantam Brahma' represents the whole class of Upanishadic declarations that speak of

¹ See Muirhead in *Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy*. 'Monism when not dogmatic denies not the reality of the separate elements but their separate reality,' (p. 317) and also in *Contemporary British Philosophy*, 'Though independence is phenomenal difference is not' (p. 470).

Brahman as *jñāna* like '*Prajñām Brahma*'. The *Nirguṇa* text is typical of all the negative epithets of *Brahman* scattered throughout the length and breadth of Upaniṣadic literature. '*Neti neti*' is one of the most fundamental and often repeated sentences of the biggest and one of the greatest of the *Upaniṣads*. It also represents all texts that speak of *Brahman* as inconceivable, indescribable and unknowable. The prohibition of pluralism and the negation of plurality contained in '*Neha nānasti kinchana*' is the best representative of that wide group of texts which declare the unreality of plurality. There is no instance of Advaitic text in the *Upaniṣads*, the best representative of which is not elucidated here. The choice of texts covers the whole range of *Upaniṣads* and in each type the most famous and the best formulated texts is devoutly analysed and interpreted.

By far the best discussed text, completely analysed and thoroughly elucidated is '*Tat tvam asi*'. That is the principal citadel of the school of Upaniṣadic interpretation being examined. The scriptures supersede the other sources of knowledge, and among the scriptures the Vedas supersede all the rest. While the *Upaniṣads* supersede the rest of the Vedas, the great passages (*mahāvākyas*) supersede the rest of the *Upaniṣads*. Among the *mahāvākyas*, '*Tat tvam asi*' is the crowning text, leaving nothing unsaid and saying what it says in the best way of saying. It is to this text that Rāmānuja devotes his best interpretative energies. There is patience, fullness and penetration in the treatment. Two scholars of rare eminence, one an Indian and another a European bear witness to the success of the endeavour. Prof. Hiriyana acknowledges that Rāmānuja's interpretation of '*Tat tvam asi*'¹ is 'plausible'. Thibaut, who does not regard that Rāmānuja is quite faithful to the *Upaniṣads*, feels obliged to acknowledge that his interpretation of '*Tat tvam asi*' is a 'satisfactory demonstration'.²

So much for the textual part of Rāmānuja's criticism of *Advaita*. The non-textual part of the criticism concerns the two concepts, namely, the undifferentiated and pure attributeless Absolute and *avidya* which is said to be responsible for the phenomenal appearances.

There is no proof for the attributeless Absolute as described. Perception reveals a world of plurality and that a plurality of entities characterized by differentiating attributes. There is not much dispute on this point on the whole. But there are writers in *Advaita* who choose to dispute this point. 'The purely perceptual element in

¹ Essentials of Indian philosophy.

² Introduction to the translation of Sankara's Sutra-Bhasya.

knowledge reveals the indeterminate universal being in which the differences are not perceived. They are constructed by the falsifying imagination in a subsequent operation. Pure perception is perception of being as such, while the admixture of the construction of imagination pluralizes that Being'. This is a familiar argument and needs only a brief reply. The later differentiating construction must have its roots in perception. Thought does not move from the concrete to the abstract but rather from the less concrete to the more concrete. Sensory immediacy is no revelation of absolute Reality and the constructive enterprize of reason which arranges the sensed facts invests the crude sense data with objectivity. Provisionally ignoring this insistence on the abstract and therefore imperfect character of the immediate experience of sense, we may attend to the nature of immediate perception least conceptualized. Is it a fact that it presents pure Being? Is this immediate perception pure sensation? Or is there an element of judgement in it? If it is pure sensation, it is only a psychical event of subjective value and has no logical or revelatory property. It embodies no claim to truth. If it includes judgement, it must contain an existence and content, or a subject and a predicate. A judgement with no affirmation of content, or character is sheer nonsense. To judge is to judge of Reality as qualified by some character or attribute. A judgement that involves no predication is no judgment. If these two factors, subject and predicate, are there in the primitive perception, all that is required for the determinateness of the real presented in perception is there. Nothing more is needed for establishing the determinate character of the being revealed in perception. Determination and qualification of a 'that' by a 'what' is there in indeterminate perception too, if only it is perceptual judgment. It is called indeterminate because the full explication of its determinate content, awaits further extension of experience bringing in correlatives. The realization of the significance, range and correlations of a character attributed to the real presented in perception is a matter of development depending upon extension of relevant experience. That does not mean that no character is ascribed to the real in the indeterminate perception. If it were so, the said development could never take place, for development is the unfoldment of what is already there implicitly. The constant backward or retrospective reference of determinate perception itself proves the presence of qualifying content in the prior indeterminate perception. The principle is simple. If indeterminate perception is pure excitation of sense with no judgment,

it may be indeterminate but it has no logical and objective value. Nothing being revealed, no pure being is revealed therein. If it involves a judgment, determination of a subject by a predicate is there inevitably and as such no pure being is revealed therein. The significance of the predicate may receive elaboration in later experience but the predicate itself does not originate in later experience. The explicit apprehension may be the result of development but what is apprehended is the very starting point of that development.

Buddhistic logicians Dingaga and Dharmakīrti posited a primitive phase of perception in which the pure perishing particular was supposed to be apprehended. It was added that later imagination or constructive intellection, imposes forms of synthesis on this primitive datum and universalizes it. The difficulty would be to explain the recognitive reference of the sophisticated determinate perception to the earlier phase. Without that reference, a universal cannot be even wrongly claimed to be a universal. In Advaitic thought too the two phases of perception are posited by some writers. But the pure and indeterminate perception is said to reveal universal Being as such while the determinate perception is said to particularize, pluralize and differentiate it. The difficulty here would be to explain the restrictions of the range of that recognitive reference. If no differentiation and character is present to indeterminate perception, why is it that the determinate perception in its retrospective reference refers to some indeterminate perceptions and not to all promiscuously? If there is no restriction of recognitive reference in relation to character and quality, how can determinate perception particularize or pluralize?

Inference cannot prove the existence of an indeterminate Absolute. In the first place it is rooted in perception and cannot transcend the limitation set by that source. In the second place, it functions through the employment of the categories of ground (*sādhana*) and consequent (*sādhya*) and the relationship between the two. Thus attributes and relations are vital to the operation of reason. It cannot furnish the required proof of the existence of the attributeless entity.

Verbal testimony depends upon words and their combinations. Words themselves are the resultants of roots and suffixes. There is determinate import, thus for the words themselves. Their combination into sentences or more extended compositions produce the understanding of very definitely determinate systems of meaning. No word or combination of words can impart knowledge of an indeterminate

principle. There may be unity of meaning in a sentence but it is a determinate unity determined and sustained by the specific contributions of words and the specific order of their combination.

'Why not hold that the indeterminate principle needs no proof as it is self-evident? It is a pre-supposition of all proofs and does not require to be proved by them'. This is an easy road apparently but in reality is full of difficulties. While the *ātman* may be self-evident, the conception of self-evidence is not so self-evident. It may mean undeniable because the denial itself is a form of what is denied, or that it is a pre-supposition of proofs and so self-proved, or that it is positing and affirming itself-and as such the *ātman* is both subject and object in itself, or that it is immediate, though unobjectified. Not one of these definitions can be adequately defended without postulating the determinate character of the entity claimed to be self-evident. The point of this criticism has already been developed in connection with the idea of attributive consciousness (*dharmabhutajñāna*). The fundamental criticism may be briefly restated.

If the self-evident entity immediate and self-certified, is wholly and absolutely revealed in experience, in every phase of mundane existence, if nothing more is there for discovery in it, the pluralistic superimposition would be impossible, for every imposition of the false and the phenomenal presupposes a suppression or obscuration of the real. If partial suppression or obscuration is admitted, as it ought to be, the removal of which alone would stultify the misconstruction, the reality cannot be indeterminate or without distinction of aspects. If the sun seen during the solar eclipse is all that there is in the sun, it ceases to be an eclipse. If there is more in the sun than what is seen of it during the eclipse, surely the sun is not without inner determinations of aspects or parts or attributes. The revealed part and the concealed part are constitutive of the same entity. How can that entity be indeterminate? How can those two parts be utterly identical without residue on both sides? Śāṅkara appears to admit as much when he says that *Brahman* is known to all as it is the same as the *ātman* affirmed by and evident to all and that there is also need for philosophical inquiry as philosophers are not agreed about the specific characteristics of *Brahman* (*Viśeṣas*). There is thus self-evidence but no complete self-evidence. Hence the need and justification for Vedāntic investigation.

The only way out of the difficulty would be to abandon the theory of superimposition. That alternative would not merely deny

the idea of superimposition but would imply the denial of the phenomenality of the world of plurality and determinations. The myth of the sole reality of the attributeless *Brahman* would not survive that admission.

The principle of *avidya* as the ground of the cosmic illusion is fundamental to the doctrine of *Advaita*. A monism that does not involve the doctrine of the unreality of the world and the postulation of the original nescience as the ground of the appearance of the unreal, is not the monism of Śāṅkara, however monistic it may claim to be. Śāṅkara is particularly hard on attempts to affirm the unity of *Brahman* and at the same time to conserve the reality of the world of differences and change. He recognizes that all other interpreters of the *Upaniṣads* shrink from the doctrine of pure monism and that they deviate from the true philosophy of the *Upaniṣads*. He says that he is most revolutionary among the commentators of the *Upaniṣads* and that he is so because he wants to be most conservative in relation to the *Upaniṣads* themselves.

This postulate of *avidya* is subjected to comprehensive criticism in the *Śrībhāṣya*, a criticism that sums up and completes whatever meagre criticism of the postulate was attempted by the pre-Rāmānujaite thinkers and anticipates in powerfully drawn outlines whatever criticism appeared in post-Rāmānujaite evolution of Indian philosophy. Even as Green's introduction to Hume is an 'arsenal of unassailable arguments' against the empiricist tradition in philosophy, the *Śrībhāṣya* is an arsenal of every fundamental argument against the doctrine of cosmic illusionism and every possible variation of it. The *Vedārthasaṅgraha* is not so spacious or full in its dialectics against the doctrine of *avidya*. But it formulates trenchantly some major lines of refutation.

'What is the work or effect of the principle of *avidya*'? The effect of *avidya* is to conceal the real and thereby make the misconstruction of the real through an illegitimate transference of the unreal possible. What is the meaning of concealment? Concealment or obscurization is a process of interruption, prevention, or destruction of knowledge. To conceal the real is to curtail or annihilate the illuminative efficacy of consciousness. Consciousness on this theory is non-composite, attributeless, one and entire, without distinctions of dimensions or aspects and it is beyond the possibilities of origin or growth. Hence the concealment postulated can be nothing less than total annihilation of *Brahman*, the pure illuminative consciousness. It cannot be assign-

ed the work of affecting only empirical consciousness and not the ultimate transcendental self, for the empirical consciousness is itself the resultant of the original concealment and obscuration.

'What is the ontological status of *avidya*?' Is it an ultimately real principle? If it is, there is a final metaphysical dualism. Is it also a phenomenal entity, appearing to be real but not being ultimately real? If it is phenomenal, as the appearance of the phenomenal to a consciousness pre-supposes a deficiency or defect in the cognitive functioning of that consciousness, a defect prior and basal to the phenomenal appearance of *avidya* must be postulated. If that defect too is phenomenal there is infinite regress. If that defect is not postulated, *avidya* that appears to a consciousness uncontaminated and unconditioned by any defect cannot be phenomenal. If the phenomenal does not-pre-suppose any deficiency in the cognitive function, even the postulate of *avidya* as responsible for the world-illusion is a superfluous postulate. If a real defect, non-phenomenal in its nature is admitted, it is to be construed as either one with the infinite consciousness or different from it. If it is different from it there is radical dualism of ultimates. If it is one with *Brahman*, *Brahman* itself by its nature is to be regarded as the source of the perception of the phenomenal. As *Brahman* is indestructible and unalterable, the perception of the phenomenal must also be indestructible and unalterable.

'What again is the status of the elimination of *avidya*?' Is the 'disappearance of false outlook' itself false? Or is it an ontological verity? If it is false, since nothing false could ever exist independently of a misperceiving consciousness, that misperceiving consciousness would survive the destruction of *avidya*. The misperceiving consciousness is itself *avidya*. Thus one instance of *avidya* presenting the appearance of the annihilation of cosmic *avidya* would remain unannihilated. Moreover the falsity of elimination proves the reality of what is supposed to be eliminated and thus the cosmic *avidya* along with its effect, the world, would be ultimately real. If the disappearance of the false outlook is something real, an ontological verity, it has to be either one with *Brahman* or different from it. If different, there will be an ultimate dualism. If one, as *Brahman* is eternal, unchanging and self-luminous, the elimination of *avidya* would also be eternal, unchanging and self-luminous. Elimination being an ever-accomplished and self-luminous reality, that which is eliminated namely the cosmic *avidya* and its effects, could never appear at all.

‘What is the nature of that enlightenment that brings about the elimination of *avidya*?’ It is not the pure unconditioned consciousness that is both subjectless and objectless, and non-relative in character. The pure consciousness shines undimmed and unaffected in and through the operations of *avidya* also for it is the witness and substratum of all phenomena. There is no question of its coming into being. But the knowledge that removes *avidya* comes into being and its not coming into being is the ground of the possibility of *avidya*. Its coming into being coincides with the disappearance of *avidya*. So the liberating enlightenment is not the same as the foundational pure consciousness. So much is plainly admitted in *Advaita*. If this knowledge is other than *Brahman*, it must be phenomenal, for the noumenal Reality is one without a second. Now all phenomena are effects of *avidya* and must be eliminated by *vidya*. If this eliminating *vidya* itself is phenomenal, there is need for another *vidya* to eliminate it. Unless it is eliminated there is no complete emancipation and to posit a second eliminating knowledge to eliminate the first eliminating knowledge leads plainly to an infinite process. *Advaitins* seek to get over the difficulty by saying that the *vidya* that eliminates *avidya*, not merely eliminates *avidya* but also eliminates itself. Even if this conception of self-elimination were logically intelligible which it is not, there is the further difficulty urged before in connection with elimination in general. Elimination is phenomenal and the phenomenal is what is set up by *avidya*. The *avidya* that brings about the perception of the self-elimination of the *vidya* that is supposed to eliminate *avidya*, remains uneliminated and hence complete emancipation is still unattained.

‘What is the nature of that self-or mind, of which this emancipating knowledge is the function?’ All relative and empirical knowledge is the function of a subject and is about an object. This liberating enlightenment is relative and empirical. Is that self or knower to whom this knowledge belongs phenomenal or noumenal? If the knowing self is phenomenal, the elimination of *avidya* by the knowledge that arises in that self would cancel that self also. It is a self-destructive process. The impossibility of such self-destruction has been urged by the *Advaitins* in refutation of *Śūnyavāda* and in support of the self-evident and self-luminous character of the *ātman*. If the eliminating knowledge eliminates all phenomena but not the phenomenal self of which it is a function, there is no completeness in the release from *avidya* attained.

If the subject or knower of that emancipating knowledge is the pure and absolute *ātman*—an alternative ruled out by the non-relative and unconditioned character of that *ātman*—the further difficulty is to conceive how that transcendental and noumenal *ātman* can be the locus of the cognitive process involved in that knowledge.

'Is it the knower in its inherent nature unconditioned by any superimposition?' If so, the concept of the *ātman* posited is radically altered, and we have as the ultimate self the knowing self affected by the relativities of the cognitive situation in a final metaphysical sense.

If the cognitive functioning of the self is phenomenal, the situation does not improve. That phenomenon of knowing must be eliminated for complete release. It cannot be self-eliminated on the ground urged before. If there is a new eliminating knowledge posited for its elimination, the whole question would re-appear concerning the cognizing self associated with that eliminating knowledge, whether its cognitive functioning is phenomenal or noumenal. There is no escape from the *adinfinitem*. Further, elimination of the unreal appearance cannot include within the body of what is eliminated itself—the knowledge that eliminates, the self to which that knowledge belongs and the fact that that self is the cognizer in that knowledge.

It is often maintained that the nature of the phenomenal is really to be inexplicable. To suppose it to be explicable is to suppose that it is not phenomenal. Inexplicability far from being an objection to the doctrine of the unreality of the world and the *avidya* at the root of it, constitutes in fact one of the justifications of the doctrine. But there are explanations and explanations. An explanation needed for postulating the reality of an entity may not be available for the theory of the falsity of *avidya* and the world. That in itself is not a refutation of the theory and may be its justification. But an explanation is necessary and must be possible for regarding what is supposed to be ordinarily real as phenomenal and false. The phenomenal world, for instance, is supposed to point to a real substratum and to require as a pre-condition the operation of a cosmic *avidya*. It is supposed to be removable by enlightenment. In fact that liability to disappearance at the rise of knowledge is offered as the very definition of the phenomenal. Explanation on these heads is not only called for but very vital for supporting the theory of the phenomenality of the world. Explicability in the manner in which a real entity is explained may be absent and that very absence may be a strengthening factor for the

theory of unreality. But explicability in the manner in which an unreal appearance must be explained is very essential. Inexplicability of the unreal even as unreal cannot be a strength for the theory that propounds its unreality. An illusion may be incapable of explanation in the manner in which reality is. But it must be capable of explanation, with regard to its origin, substratum, the victim of that illusion, the method and means of its correction and so on. The demand for explanation cannot be put down.

How and from what source is knowledge of the falsity of the phenomenal world derived? From the *Vedas* in general and the *Upaniṣads* in particular and from the great utterances like '*Tat tvam asi*' it is derived. But all this is phenomenal and it is available in the learning process as part of the world of phenomena. Upaniṣadic knowledge like all other empirical knowledge is infected with the falsifying *avidya* at the very root. Its power of sublating false appearance is taken away the moment it is understood to proceed from a falsifying deficiency itself. A student learning that all knowers, knowing and known, are phenomenal and are due to *avidya* at once realizes that the scripture that he is learning is itself a product of *avidya*. How can that which is known to originate from error be considered reliable as a guide for eliminating the errors of world-experience? Either the scripture must be taken to be non-phenomenal, or its power of sublating the phenomenal is non-existent. In the absence of that power, the reality of the world would stand unrefuted. The world-destroying scripture destroys itself and to the extent to which it destroys itself the world stands undestroyed.

There is one attempt to circumvent the force of this argument. It is urged that the affirmation of the scripture that there is a single universal Being as the substratum of all is incapable of contradiction or sublation. There is no entity whose essential being is not already affirmed in this universal affirmation. Hence as there is no possibility of contradicting the scriptural affirmation, with a view to affirm the being of anything else, the scripture enjoys invulnerability. It may be phenomenal in its being but it transcends phenomenality in its import. The unreal can lead to the real. The argument is fascinating. But there are difficulties.

Firstly non-contradiction from a correct and logical standpoint may be impossible. But ill-conceived and error-inspired contradiction to the affirmation of that single universal Being is not impossible. It

is actually perpetrated by *Śūnyavāda*. That contradiction cannot be silenced on the ground that it proceeds from flaws, for, after all the scripture also is admitted to proceed from the original-flaw of *avidyā*. An error can clash with another error but cannot triumph over it. Secondly contradiction stultifies an affirmation by disclosing its defective origin. In this case the defect is already known and known through the scriptures themselves which declare everything other than *Brahman* to be due to *avidyā*; as such the freedom from subsequent contradiction or even freedom from the liability to contradiction is of no utility. What such contradiction would have established, namely the defective origin of the assertion contradicted, is maintained and established by that assertion itself. When there is conviction of deficiency, non-contradiction is of no service whatever. Thirdly the completest non-contradiction from every other possible assertion is possible only for the *Śūnyavādin*, for the concept of *śūnya* incorporates into itself all possible contradiction. The concept of *Brahman* does not enjoy that degree of invulnerability. Fourthly, when the means is unreal, the end cannot be real. When knowing is non-existent, the known, known through that knowing, cannot be existent. The admission of the possibility of knowledge being unreal and the object of knowledge being real is to play into the hands of *Śūnyavāda*, which admits the *śūnya* and rejects the knowledge and knower of the *śūnya*. Fifthly, a philosophy that offers an account of reality and denies the reality of that account has done nothing and proved nothing. The assertion of the reality of 'proof' is the pre-condition for the assertion of the reality of the 'proved'.

It is true the *Khandāṇa-Khāṇḍa-Khāḍya* challenges this contention and points to the practice of the *Mādhyamikas* who deny the reality of the knowing process and affirm the ultimacy of *śūnya*. The answer confuses psychical possibility with logical tenability. When Kumārila and other anti-Buddhistic thinkers urge this necessity for the admission of the reality of knowledge, they do not mean that argument is practically impossible without it. They only mean that it is logically untenable without it. Inconsistency is a psychological possibility and can be an actuality too, but it is not less erroneous on that account.

'When there is a conflict between empirical understanding and the understanding imparted by scripture, how are we to proceed?' It is said by a very important group of writers that in such a case of conflict empirical understanding should be set aside and the scriptural understanding must be considered more authoritative. Here the

question would be 'Through what source of knowledge have we learnt the superiority of the scripture?' If it is said that empirical understanding gives that information, it is to be discredited, as all other deliverances of empirical understanding are to be discredited. If it is said that the scripture proclaims its own superiority over empirical understanding, such proclamation has no value for scripture cannot be more authoritative simply on the ground of its own statement that it is more authoritative. That statement itself forms part of the body of information whose greater authoritativeness is under dispute. Further, 'Why and for what defect is empirical understanding to be considered less authoritative?' It is maintained that it is infected with the pluralistic and realistic predilection and thus is vitiated by the deficiencies of its own origin. But scripture itself is part of the empirical and phenomenal universe and is thus a product of *avidya*. When the deficiencies of source are common why prefer the scripture to *pratyakṣa*?

But as a matter of fact there is no such possibility of genuine conflict. Moreover, the general principles governing the conception of the authoritativeness of the scripture, like freedom from defects, freedom from contradiction, and the self-established validity of all *pramāṇas*, are principles adumbrated by empirical understanding. Scripture that cancels all empirical understanding cancels the very grounds of its own authoritativeness. The criterion of its superiority is supplied by modes of knowledge other than itself. If it condemns them as false, it condemns the criterion by which its superiority has been established. Thus the postulate of *avidya* is irrational. The conclusions that have emerged from the examination of the school may be summed up. The *Upaniṣads* do not advocate the doctrine as claimed. There is no proof whatever for an attributeless and acosmic *Brahman*. The postulate of *avidya* as the originating cause of the phenomenal world is untenable.

The next view considered in the *Vedārthasaṅgraha* is that of Bhāskara. The explanation of the synthetic passages of the *Upaniṣads* offered by him is simpler. He holds '*Brahman* is neither attributeless nor acosmic and the world of plurality is not a mere appearance. The truth is that *Brahman* is one and indivisible, absolute and perfect. But by the operation of *upādhi* or limiting adjunct, it becomes the many individual souls. By the realization of the basic unity, the individuals recover the lost unity with the original whole. Between

Brahman and the individual, the relation is one of identity and difference. In the final state of release there is pure identity.'

The difficult point in this explanation is to locate the imperfections and the evil characteristics of individual lives. *Brahman* is non-composite and without inherent divisions of parts, independent of and prior to the operation of the limiting adjuncts. Hence the limiting adjunct operates upon *Brahman* itself; so the imperfections resulting from individuation all belong to and stain the undivided *Brahman* itself in its integral wholeness. Pluralization is not phenomenal on this view and evil is not illusory. Hence the perfection of *Brahman* is simply abandoned in this scheme.

The idea of a single self, constituting all individual souls is not intelligible. To the objection that individuals have contradictory experiences of pleasure and pain, knowledge and ignorance, the astute Ānandabodhāchārya gives a powerful reply¹. He asks 'What is the meaning of the contradictory nature of experiences?' Experiences are contradictory if they are incapable of co-existence in the same individual life. The answer brings out clearly the underlying fallacy of the objection according to the *Nyāyamakaranda*. The experiences are mutually contradictory because they cannot happen to the same individual at the same time. Since there are such experiences they point to a plurality of selves. There is plainly circular reasoning here. The experiences are contradictory because they cannot belong to the same self. The selves are many because they have these contradictory experiences. The contradictory character of experience is supported on the ground of the impossibility of their co-existence and the impossibility of their co-existence is supported on the ground of their contradictory character.

Sudarśanasūri replies to this criticism. He maintains that plurality of selves is asserted not on the ground of the contradictory character of experiences. It is asserted on the ground of the observed non-sharing of experiences. It is not the sharing through communication, observation, inference or sympathetic induction, that is meant here. If the selves are simply one and the same, none of these processes ought to be necessary. As a matter of fact all the experiences of all the individuals must be simultaneously and as a matter of nature, the experiences of each, independent of all external aids like communication, inference, observation or sympathetic induction. Telepathy

¹ See the *Nyāyamakaranda*.

does not affect this argument because that is an extra-ordinary process and it ought not to be so extraordinary, it ought not to be super-normal, if the selves are one. There ought to be normal and natural sharing of experiences.

Another line of argument is also found. Discontinuity of memory, loss of memory and the phenomenon of split-personality are supposed not to damage the concept of the unity of the individual. Why then should the non-sharing of experiences damage the fundamental unity of the individual selves? This too is very forceful argument. But discontinuity or loss of memory is a matter of degree. The memory mass may vary but some mass is there. Split-personality is an acute and pathological form of this variation. Total obliteration of the memory-mass is not a matter of experience. But in this non-sharing of experiences there are no degrees or variations. The very super-normality of telephatic communication or Yogic experience needs explanation on the postulate of a single self. While loss of memory is the exceptional circumstance in the individual mind, the sharing of experience is the exceptional circumstance in the inter-individual field. The slightest element of memory and the known phenomenon of the fading of memory are enough to support the idea of the continuity of the individual. But there is no such mass of shared experience, however slight and no knowledge of the phenomenon of the losing of the shared experience. Of course, more fundamental, than all these considerations is the fact that the purity and perfection of *Brahman* lose all meaning if the individual experiences of impurity and finitude belong to it in a noumenal sense as maintained.

It may be maintained that there is a plurality of bodies and corresponding to it there is a plurality of inner divisions in the universal soul. It is these component divisions that are affected by the bodies and not the entire *Brahman*.

The point here is that the bodies are spacio-temporal entities and are subject to movement in space and decay in time. The total self is omnipresent and is immovable. When an individual physical organism moves from one constituent part of *Brahman* to another, there is liberation for the former and bondage for the latter. The movement of the body would always involve this unaccountable discontinuity and bondage and release of individual souls. One-to-one companionship of the units of two parallel pluralities is inconceivable when one of them is motionless and the other inherently subject to motion. While the individual souls are thus loosely associated with the bodies

Brahman is never free because the bodies operate on some part of *Brahman*. The *jīvas* are comparatively free and *Brahman* knows no freedom.

On this view *Brahman* undergoes genuine transformation. It actually differentiates itself into a plurality of individual centres of consciousness. It is hard to reconcile this doctrine with the idea abundantly affirmed in the *Upaniṣads* that the essential and substantive nature of *Brahman* is immutable. It may be and is maintained that it is not *Brahman* that undergoes transformation but the *śakti* (power) of *Brahman*. But the *śakti* must be clearly conceived. Does this *śakti* constitute an effect of *Brahman*? In that case the transformation of the nature of *Brahman* is not obviated. Is that *śakti* something that is one in substance with *Brahman*? Then also transformation of *Brahman* in its very substance is not obviated. Is it something different from *Brahman*? In that case, there is no transformation in *Brahman* of course. But there is no self-differentiation of *Brahman* either.

Yādvaparakāśa holds that *Brahman* is one sea of universal being and that it differentiates itself into the three blocks of ice as it were, God, individual souls and nature. This differentiation is inherent to *Brahman* and not the result of any *avidyā* or *upādhi*. The individual and *Brahman* are identical as well as different in an equally ultimate sense. Even in release individuation is not wholly dissolved but subsists along with universalization.

The distinction between *Īśvara* and *Brahman* is untenable. The *Upaniṣads* describe *Īśvara* as the cause and ground and the inner soul of the universe. They explicitly deny the existence of any other entity either equal to or superior to *Īśvara*. No where is *Īśvara* spoken of as a fragment or effect of *Brahman*, the absolute being.

As *Brahman* differentiates itself into the *jīvas*, all that happens to them, the evils and imperfections, the ignorance and privation, would ultimately affect the universal Soul itself. Its freedom from evil would be a mere myth. But it may be contended that not the whole of the universal Being is involved in the individual. *Brahman* is not exhausted in the *jīva*. There is a part of *Brahman* not involved in the formation of the individual. In that transcendent part there is housed all the perfection affirmed, though the immanent part which has gone into the composition of the individual, there is imperfection. This method of escape is a chimera. An absolute and divine Being, pure and perfect in one part of its being and imperfect and afflicted in another part, does not have enough divinity or absoluteness left

in it. Mixture of good and evil is the mark of finitude. *Brahman* in this scheme does not transcend that essential condition of finitude. This fragmentary perfection is not adequate to raise it to the status of the Supreme.

The whole conception of *bhedābheda* (unity-cum-diversity) as conceived in the schools of Bhāskara and Yādavaprakāśa is illogical. It is impossible that an entity can be one with and different from another entity in exactly the same sense, at the same time and in precisely the same aspect of it. Some division of aspects has to be posited for escaping the contradiction. Whether that improves the situation or not, the very positing of that division of aspects implies the full recognition of the principle that absolutely incompatible predications cannot be made of the same entity in absolutely the same sense. That recognition is substantially the abandonment of the original startling contention of *bhedābheda* in its uncompromising form. It is said that two entities are the same by virtue of the universal inherent in them and are different by virtue of their individuality. This is a seemingly happy solution. But a precise understanding of the universal aspect and individuality must be attempted. Is the universal the same in every sense as the individual? Is it utterly different? Or is it one with as well different from it? If the universal inherent in individuals is identical wholly with the individuals, the contradiction sought to be removed by the analysis of these two aspects, universal and individual, gets re-affirmed with renewed validity. If the universal and individuals are wholly different, unity and difference characterize two different entities and there is no unity-cum-difference posited of the same principle. The universal is identical, the individuals are different, and the universal and the individuals exclude one another. An alternative, more consistent with the original standpoint, would be to say that universal and the individual have in their turn mutual unity-cum-difference. The evident objection is that the solution re-opens the original question and thus leaves the original question unanswered. Further, in the case of two individuals in which the same universal is inherent, there is a fresh contradiction breaking out. As the universal is identical with the individual A and is identical with the individual B, then A and B must be mutually identical. As the universal is also different from A and B, their mutual identity, proceeding from their common identity with the universal, stands withdrawn or suspended. Thus we have to assert that the individuals are mutually identical and at the

same time cannot assert that they are so. This assertion of identity and the cancellation of that assertion is an inevitable contradiction resulting from the idea of the universal Being one with and at the same time different from the individuals. The central principle of criticism is that contradiction can be solved by the distinction of aspects in the subject of contradictory assertions and to the extent to which we reduce that distinction of aspects, we abandon the solution claimed to have been effected.

Incidental to this discussion but integral to the whole philosophy of the *Vedārthasangraha*, a clarification of the concept of '*prakāra*' or 'mode' is effected. *Prakāra* is what is predicated of a subject in a judgement. It may be a quality, a generic attribute, an action or even a substance. The distinctions of these categories do not alter the situation. A category is affirmed as qualifying an entity. The category so affirmed is the *prakāra* and the entity of which it is affirmed is the *prakārin*. Now what is the relation between the two? Is it one of identity? If so there is no affirmation, no qualification and no judgement at all. Bare repetition is no judgment and when there are meaningful repetitions like 'What I have written, I have written' there is an implied and in fact a very effective predicate or characteristic affirmed of the subject. Are the *prakāra* and *prakārin* totally exclusive of each other, exclusive to the extent of being independent and even contradictory? Then also there is no sensible judgment and no qualification of any existence by any characteristic. The real relation between the substance and the mode, the subject and the predicate, the *prakārin* and *prakāra*, is one of distinction and total dependence of the *prakāra* on the *prakārin*. The *prakāra* is dependent on the *prakārin*, for its very conceivability and for its existence. There is distinction without alienation. The unity is the unity that consists in the inseparability of the characteristic from that which it characterizes. The distinction is that the characteristic must be different from what it characterizes in order to make a difference to it. The distinction is not of a nature to reduce the unity and the unity is not of a nature to reduce the distinction. This is the unity in and through variety that is embodied in all judgment. Confusion with regard to this relation of *prakāra* and *prakārin* is the cause of the self-contradictory thesis of *bhedābheda*.

Advaitins beginning from Mandanamiśra have sought to refute the very notion of *bheda* or difference. It is significant that Śāṅkara does not resort to this manner of refuting difference. Vāchaspatimiśra

Sriharsa, Vimuktātman, Ānandabodha, and Chitsūkha all repeat the argument with modifications of detail. The fundamental argument may be summed up as follows:

(1) In the primitive act of perceptual apprehension what do we apprehend? Do we apprehend a thing and its difference from other things simultaneously? We cannot say we do so. Difference is a relative category. It presupposes the apprehension of the thing. Only after we apprehend an object, on the basis of what we apprehend in it, we can distinguish it from all other objects that do not possess what we apprehend in it. So the thing and its difference from other things cannot be simultaneously apprehended. If there is successive apprehension, it is not possible to hold that difference is first apprehended and then the thing that differs. Difference is relative and it needs reference to the thing that differs. Hence the first apprehension must be of the non-relative thing and subsequently the difference of it from the other things must be discerned. But perceptual apprehension loses its perceptual character in the succeeding acts of apprehension. It is perceptual only in its initial instant. Later apprehensions are constructions mixed with recognition and do not have the authentic immediacy of the first act of apprehension. So difference must be construed as a falsifying imposition on the pure non-relative material presented in perception.

(2) How is the difference related to the thing that is different? Are the thing and its difference one and identical? They cannot be, for a thing is non-relative and difference is relative in character. Difference for its apprehension needs reference to the thing and other things from which it differs. Are difference and the thing that differs different from one another? If so, there is a second difference in the picture, and the whole difficulty about the first difference gets repeated in relation to the second. There is the fallacy of infinite regress.

(3) Differentiation presupposes the apprehension of the entities differentiated. The entities must be apprehended as reciprocally different if differentiation among them can be made later. If they were to be apprehended as mutually non-different, no subsequent differentiation is possible. Different entities must be noted as different for us to differentiate them and that grasp of different entities presupposes the act of differentiation. This is clearly a logical seesaw. The answer to these arguments, as stated in the *Vedārthasangraha*, may be summed up as follows:

(1) The argument assumes that perceptual apprehension has no duration. That is an indefensible assumption. It may be admitted to be without duration for the sake of argument. What is apprehended even in the most primitive judgment is an entity with its characteristics. Otherwise it would be no judgment. What is apprehended therein is the basis for whatever differentiation comes to be made later on in the light of the increasing acquaintance with the entities from which this entity may be different. Explication of the differentiation is a matter of growth and belongs to the subsequent history of the perceiver. But the entity and its characteristics that serve as the basis for later differentiation have been apprehended even in the most primitive apprehension. The thing and its properties are different from other things and their properties. They have been apprehended to start with. But the full scope and manner of their difference is a matter for subsequent elaboration in the light of the future experience. The refutation confuses the ground of differentiation with explicit differentiation. The ground is non-relative, while the differentiation is relative. The fundament is non-relative and is grasped to start with. Its correlations are made out with expanding experience. The impassable gulf between primitive apprehension and later elaboration by thought is a creature of fancy.

(2) Difference is the nature of the thing itself, its essential *sva-roopa*. The difference is what a thing is. The full comprehension of its uniqueness depends upon the apprehension of correlatives. But that which leads up to that comprehension in the light of the apprehension of correlatives, is pre-supposed and must be apprehended before. What constitutes the essence of an entity is its unique essence. That essence is apprehended but the detailed appreciation of its uniqueness entails reference to the correlatives. Thus there is no difficulty in conceiving of difference understood in this positive sense as constitutive of the thing itself. It can also be conceived as a quality or a characteristic of the thing. Difference not merely marks off the thing from all counter-entities but also marks off itself from the thing and from everything from which it is different. A similar two-fold functioning is attributed to self-consciousness. There is no possible objection to this concept of two-fold-functioning (*svapara-nirvahaka*). Thus no infinite regress ensues as feared. The central principle is not to understand difference in a negative sense as privation or mere cancellation of a correlative. It is positive, either as substantive or attributive. The negative determination of that substantive or

attributive may be relative but its fundamental nature being positive can be an object of initial apprehension, not requiring correlations.

(3) The logical see-saw urged is also disposed of by the foregoing. Different things are apprehended independent of explicit differentiation and so they presuppose no such differentiation. Grasp of difference does not presuppose the apprehension of the different things for it is constitutive of that apprehension. Difference is a form of being and not of non-being. Non-being may be implied but it is not non-being that implies. That which implies is the fundament capable of direct and non-derivative apprehension. The controversy is an old story and its conclusion is the old one that intellectual elaboration of perceptual presentation is not its falsification but legitimate development. Thought is not the destroyer of immediate experience but its fulfilment.

The difficulties connected with the idea of the transformation of the Absolute remain undiminished in force. On the whole, Rāmānuja contends, that the doctrines of *bhedābheda* are more fallacious than the pure *Advaita*. The latter at least seeks to preserve the transcendent purity and perfection of the Absolute through the hypothesis of the falsity of evil. The former theories openly admit the reality of evil and the real transformation of *Brahman* into individual centres that are subject to evil. Of these two, Bhāṣkara at least ascribes the fall of the Absolute to the operation of an adjunct, to an external principle of corruption. Yādavaprakāśa invests the Absolute itself with an inherent *nisus* to self-differentiation. Hence the latter doctrine descends deeper in sacrificing the divinity of the Absolute. It is, in effect, the least pious of the three.

After this long polemical interlude Rāmānuja turns with evident delight to a constructive and completer statement of the principle underlying '*Tat tvam asi*'. Now he takes into consideration the three types of passages together, the analytical passages distinguishing *Brahman* from the world of nature and the world of finite spirits, the explanatory passages precisely determining the nature of the relationship between *Brahman* and the other two categories of existence, and the synthetic passages identifying *Brahman* with all and particularly the individual soul. In the light of this total consideration, the exact import of '*Tat tvam asi*' is sought to be determined. Transcendence of *Brahman* is an absolute fact. The immanence of *Brahman* is also an absolute fact. The *Upaniṣads* describe *Brahman* as the soul, 'the inner controller immortal' of all existence. Nature and individual

souls constitute the body of *Brahman*. By body we understand an 'inseparable mode,' a mode which is altogether dependent in its fundamental nature on the soul, the controlling spiritual principle. Inseparability is inseparability in existence and inseparability for knowledge. This relation implies a further truth. All terms designatory of the modes are designatory of the substance of which they are modes. While there is no independence in existence, no independence for knowledge, there is no independence possible in designation and description also.

A term signifying a mode, signifies the substance characterized by that mode. This truth emerging from the statement of the relationship of *Brahman* and the world supplies the guiding principle, for the interpretation of '*Tat tvam asi*' and all similar synthetic texts. '*Tat tvam asi*' considered in itself also cannot be interpreted as affirming the simple unity of the attributeless and acosmic *Brahman*. The claims of such an interpretation have been finally determined to be untenable. Thus governed by the principle of coherence with the rest of the Upaniṣadic texts, analytical and explanatory, the synthetic texts, must be interpreted on a sounder and concrete basis. That basis is the insight supplied by the explanatory texts that the world of nature and finite spirits are incapable of description by themselves. and that no terms in enlightened usage can denote them without denoting the fundamental supreme Soul immanent in them. They are in *Brahman*, they are truly known when they are known to be in *Brahman* and they are correctly spoken of when spoken of as being in *Brahman*. So the term '*tvam*' cannot signify anything but *Brahman* itself as pervading and sustaining the individual soul. The individual soul gets referred to in its true nature as qualifying *Brahman* which latter is the principal import of the term. There is no substantive affirmation of finite existences. Even when they are affirmed, it is *Brahman* that is substantively affirmed and the finite existences are incorporated in the affirmation as adjectival to that principal referent. With this clarification of the meaning of '*tvam*' everything about '*Tat tvam asi*', acquires definiteness and intelligibility. '*Tvam*' represents *Brahman* as the inner soul of the individual soul. '*Tat*' represents *Brahman* as, the immanent controller of the universe. The dictum embodies the ultimate truth, that the principle whose expression the universe is, is the same principle which upholds from within the inner reality of the individual. The truth of fundamental identity in and through adjectival diversities is brought out. This is the reason why it is not

said *Brahman* has the *jīva* but that *Brahman* is the *jīva*. The *jīva* is no self-existent entity. It is *Brahman* that exists with the *jīva* as its body and mode. Hence even the term *jīva* signifies *Brahman* characterized by the *jīva* as its mode. The final truth sought to be enshrined in such synthetic texts is that *Brahman* is the supreme Reality and all finite existence is adjectival to it, included in it and sustained by it. *Brahman*, which is transcendent has this immanent supremacy as well. *Brahman* is the ultimate. *Brahman* is the cause and the sole cause. *Brahman* is the effect. There is oneness of substance underlying and co-ordinating all pluralities of existence and all transformations of existence.

At this stage, a new question, of great gravity is raised. '*Brahman* is said to be immutable and perfect in all *Upaniṣads*. But it is being maintained that it is the material cause of the manifested universe of nature and selves. To be the material cause is to undergo transformation. How can *Brahman* be both immutable and the material cause?' For purposes of answering this question it is requisite to analyse the notions of cause and effect as applied to the supreme Principle.

The effect is not *Brahman* by itself unqualified by physical nature and finite souls. The effect is not physical nature and finite souls by themselves, for the fundamental reason that the later can never be except as modes of *Brahman*. So the true effect is *Brahman* as embodied in nature and finite souls in their state of actuality and manifestation. The cause is not *Brahman* by itself. Nothing can be cause, without the powers, required for its causal efficacy. Nature and individual souls, in their undeveloped and potential state constitute one of the powers of *Brahman*. Further an absolute origination of either nature or individual selves is denied by the *Upaniṣads* and is also logically inconceivable. Just as the *chit* and *achit*, form modes of *Brahman* in their manifest condition, they are modes of *Brahman* in their potential condition too.

Thus the cause truly understood is *Brahman* embodied in nature and individual souls in their unmanifested state and the effect truly understood is *Brahman* embodied in manifested nature and manifested individual spirits. Thus of *Brahman*, the effect, shining through the well-differentiated world, *Brahman* itself, embodied in the undifferentiated world, is the cause. The substantive nature of *Brahman*, the transcendent supreme, is the intelligent cause of the world. *Brahman* embracing the world of nature and spirit as its mode is the material cause and material effect. There is transformation of this

inclusive totality from the primordial state to the consequent state.

In the totality passing to the state of explicitness and returning to the state of potentiality and subtlety, the substantive and adjectival factors never lose their distinctiveness of nature. Physical mutation belongs to nature and does not belong to finite souls or God. Increase or decrease of the range of consciousness belongs to the finite souls and does not pertain to the other two. The role of immanent sovereignty and unsullied perfection are unique and abiding characteristics of *Brahman*. While there is transformation of the totality, there is localization of the effect of such transformation. 'But' it may be asked: 'When the modes change, can the substance in which they are inherent, remain unchanged?' It does not remain unchanged, but the change taking place in it is not the change that happens to the modes. *Brahman* is in the state of cause, when it wills to be in that state. It is the inner soul of the world, in the latter's primordial state of deficient actuality. When *Brahman* is in the state of effect, it is so by its own will. Then it is the inner soul of the world in the latter's state of manifest actuality. Thus the changes in *Brahman* are the changes that are responsible for the changes of its modes. Its manner of governing and controlling its modes corresponds to the exact state in which the modes are maintained. Thus the change in modes no doubt implies change in the substance, but not the same kind of change. There is change in the manner of control. Changes like mutation or the alteration in the scope of consciousness do not pertain to the central reality. The change in *Brahman* that is implied in the change of the world is not the kind of change that happens to the world. It is change in the method of operational immanence, which is an integral part of the immutable perfection and sovereignty of *Brahman*. Absence of such a change would not merely not constitute perfection, but would positively imply deficiency in the sovereignty of *Brahman*. Thus *Brahman* is the spiritual cause of the world as the supreme Spirit. *Brahman* is the material cause as the all-inclusive totality.

The world, it has been said, is the body of God. 'In what sense, and for what reasons, is the world held to be constitutive of the body of God?'

If transcendence and immanence are absolute facts, there is no other way of picturing the relation of the world to *Brahman*. Uniqueness of God and the inclusiveness and immanence of God can be conceived in no other way. Phenomenality of the world of nature

and of the individuality of the finite spirit is through and through disproved. Nature and the finite spirit are real. But they are not self-sufficient and self-explanatory. They are sustained from within by the omnipresent Spirit. The supreme Spirit transcends what it sustains in its intrinsic nature and perfections. The scriptures speak of the dependent and sustained reals, as constituting the 'glory', 'part', 'power' and 'body' of *Brahman*. There is compelling reason for them to do so, in view of the reality and dependence of the world and the uniqueness, omnipresence and immanent control of God. The analytical passages imply the principle in their delineation of the overlordship of God. The synthetic passages explain themselves with that principle. The passages, described as explanatory, definitely formulate this relationship in terms of body and soul. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, in one of its clearest and fullest treatments of this question, describes the cosmos of nature and individual selves as forming the body of God. The whole of the later vedic thought is struggling towards this key-concept. Yājñavalkya's other discourses all presuppose and supplement, re-assert and work out this fundamental conception. The early *smṛiti* texts like *Apastamba* and *Manu* echo the conception in bold terms. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* are unanimous on this question of the universe forming the body of *Brahman*. It is precisely for this reason that Bādarāyaṇa's *Sūtras* are known as the *Śārirakasūtra*. The central problem of a philosophy of the Supreme is the problem of transcendence and immanence. In envisaging the problem there is no speciality in the *Upaniṣads*. But all the uniqueness and greatness of the *Upaniṣads* lie in their clear formulation of this profound and comprehensive conception. Post-Upaniṣadic thought, not excluding the religious thought of poets like Kālidāsa, is abundantly confirmatory of this idea with the fullest realization of its importance. The philosophical situation created by the concept of a supreme reality and the dominant affirmation of the scriptures are the reasons and evidences for the notion of the universe as constitutive of the body of God. Vedānta-deśika contends that the philosophical greatness and uniqueness of Rāmānuja lie in his making this outstanding idea of the *Upaniṣads* the foundation and pivot of the scheme of his philosophy. That *Brahman* is the soul of the universe is the original and foremost assertion of the *Upaniṣads*. The re-assertion of that idea in all its amplitude is the soul of the philosophy of Rāmānuja.

'In what sense is the universe of physical entities and individual selves the body of *Brahman*?' The term body should be defined in such a way as to apply to all types of bodies, bodies known empirically and bodies spoken of in scriptures. It is illogical to formulate a narrow definition of body and then to contend that the description of the universe as the body of God is just figurative. The *Upaniṣads* particularly the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Subala* do not lend themselves to such indirect or metaphorical interpretation. There is abundance of straight-forward insistence. The most comprehensive definition of a body is that it is a substance, whose existence is bound up inextricably with its dependence on the soul, whose activities are controlled by the soul and whose value lies in its contribution to the soul. Dependence in existence, subjection in operation and subservience in value, are the differentia of the body. The soul is that entity which supports the body in its existence, controls it in its activities and is ultimate in value to which the value of the body is instrumental. Existential, operational and teleological supremacy is the differentia of the soul. The relation is co-terminous with the being of the body. The body is inseparable from the soul in all these aspects. It is inconceivable apart from this three-fold subordination to the soul. Hence it cannot be properly named or described in abstraction from this subordination. Now the universe of physical nature and finite souls eminently fulfils these requirements of the definition of the body. Hence the scriptures legitimately speak of it as constituting the body of *Brahman*.

After thus completing the circle of ideas involved in the interpretation of synthetic texts in general and '*Tat tvam asi*' in particular, Rāmānuja proceeds to a wider field of interpretation, comprehending all the varied texts of the *Upaniṣads*. He takes up what he describes as the 'heart of all scriptures' meaning the substance of the teachings of the *Upaniṣads* on the nature of *Brahman*. He begins with a consideration of the marvellousness of the nature of *Brahman*.

The first element of marvel is the uniqueness of *Brahman*. There is nothing equal or superior to *Brahman*. It transcends all. It is antithetical to all mutation and imperfection. It is pure and boundless knowledge. It is absolute reality. It is bliss supreme. It is infinite, transcending limitations of space, time existence and attributes. This uniqueness, transcendence and utter magnificence of God is a primeval marvel.

But transcendence is not the only marvel in God. The world he transcends is not a self-maintaining, self-ordering and self-subservient

system. He is its supreme controller. He shapes it into numberless forms and reduces it into an indistinguishable mass of virtual non-being. This is the second element of the marvellous in God.

But His relationship to the world is unique. It is totally unlike the mutual relativity of finite things. He sustains them without being one of them. He enters into cosmic processes without losing His transcendence. In fact His power to sustain the world is by His Supreme transcendence. His self-sufficiency and fullness of inward perfection is not reduced or altered by His exercise of cosmic control. His self-distinction from what He controls is the very ground of His omnipresent control of all. It is not a case of reciprocal dependence. It is the ground of all reciprocal dependencies in the world. The infinite is related to the finite in a unique way, a way in which no finite entities are related. This is the third element of the marvellous in God.

God is not an external architect of the cosmic structure, manipulating an external machine. He is the inner soul and core of the cosmos. It is not that He acts upon the world but that He acts within it thus unfolding His measureless splendour through the medium of the finite. He does not simply produce the world. He reproduces Himself in the world. This is the fourth marvel of God.

Not merely is God a supreme marvel in Himself, but also He invests the world which He fills completely with marvellousness. It loses its vacuity, but becomes when correctly apprehended the self-revelation of the Divine. The supreme wonder in nature is its being the garment of God. All that seems ugly, trivial, or insignificant, acquires a new dimension on this view. Nature and finite souls are packed with God and are suffused with the hues of the Divine. What is great and majestic, stirring and sublime, is so because it is a transparent medium for the self-disclosure of the Divine. God is not merely a marvel in Himself but also he moulds nature into a wondrous manifestation of Himself. This is the fifth marvel of God.

God is one and undivided in His supreme reality of infinite perfection. But He becomes the many. He maintains abiding unity of existence in and through infinite plurality of self-manifestation. How is this possible? The terms possible and impossible have different meanings in different contexts. Perfection is impossible for creatures. But for God imperfection is impossible. The finite can attain to some excellence in one direction. Completeness of all-round excellence is

impossible for it. But for God incompleteness in excellence, one-sided perfection is impossible. The very uniqueness of God establishes this truth. Unity of existence is a type of perfection. Infinite variations in self-manifestation is a type perfection. God being unique combines in Himself these two perfections, not possible for finite entities. Analogies should not limit our perspective of the Supreme. The co-existence of several perfections is not merely possible but is implied in the very concept of godhead. This is the sixth element of marvellousness in God.

But the cosmic glories of God do not exhaust His glories. His attributes displayed in the creation, support and dissolution of the world, His attributes displayed in relation to the destiny of the individual do not exhaust His attributes. He has super-cosmic glories and attributes not directly involved in this cosmic function. The whole universe is but a part of this boundless realm of self-manifestation. Three parts of His *vibhūti* are transcendent. Only one part is displayed in the shape of our mighty world. This inexhaustiveness of divine potency and glory is the seventh element of God's marvellousness.

To a vision to which the super-cosmic glory of God is manifest, the cosmos shrinks in proportion. What is unrevealed in this world of ours is so immense in its vistas and magnitudes, in its heights and depths, that in that fuller vision, this world of ours, dwindles into insignificance. It is narrowed down to an infinitesimal point. All its immensities and varieties fade into a single fraction. Its distinctions and dimensions that stagger a limited view lose their conspicuousness in the larger vision of God. What is marvellous to the earth-bound view, becomes an unnoticable triviality in the perspective of the infinite. The wonders of the world lose their wondrousness and gather themselves into a modest and humble fragment of the boundless Beyond. This again is the eighth element of the marvellous, the dissolution of the earthly marvels.

To such a vision of God comprehending the cosmic and the supercosmic, beholding the infinite majesty of God, the pluralities of cosmic manifestation, do not have their pluralizing effect. All is one supreme beauty and power, loveliness and grandeur, the one spirit of boundless light and joy, to which nothing is alien, in which nothing is lost and for which nothing is big. Such is the ninth element of the marvellous in God. Well may Akrura exclaim 'Oh, Lord; for me who is joined to thee, there are no other wonders to behold. There are no

wonders I have not seen in thee. There is nothing which I have seen in thee, which is not a supreme wonder.'

Rāmānuja classifies the principal affirmations of the *Upaniṣads* and works out lines of interpretation.¹ The governing principle of interpretation, he maintains, must be the principle of non-contradiction and non-rejection. The well-knit and unified structure of Upaniṣadic philosophy must not be distintegrated and no principal affirmation must be construed in such a way as to be divested of its chief interest and purport. There should be no incoherence and no explaining away. In fact, he implies that the eye for coherence will reveal the inner depths of thought in each of the parts and a full and deep inquiry into the import of the part discloses the pervading coherence of the whole. Every principal variety of Upaniṣadic utterance adds an integral element to the total architectonics of *Vedānta*.

There are texts which emphasize the immutability of *Brahman*. They are to be taken as affirming that the substantive nature of *Brahman* is not liable to mutation like the physical universe. The texts which speak of *Brahman* as attributeless, are to be taken as determining *Brahman* to be antithetical to material qualities like *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and to all similar imperfections. The texts that deny plurality are to be interpreted as asserting that, as all finite existences are modes of *Brahman*, It alone exists as the Supreme, all-comprehensive Reality. The texts that speak of the uniqueness, the universal sovereignty and the surpassing attributes of perfection of *Brahman*, simply mean that these are Its fundamental characteristics. The texts that speak of *Brahman* as pure *jñāna* or as pure *ānanda* or as both have a two-fold significance. The substantive nature of *Brahman* has as its definitive attribute pure knowledge of the nature of *ananda*. The substantive nature of *Brahman* itself, being self-luminous, is blissful self-consciousness. The synthetic texts work on the basis of the principle of organic relation, (*śarīrātmaabhāva*) proclaim that all that exists, exists as an embodiment of *Brahman* and to affirm anything is to affirm *Brahman* in it. There are no diversities of substantive existences. There are only diversities of adjectival existences, belonging to and embodying the single supreme Principle.

'But then' Rāmānuja questions himself sharply and asks 'what is your final view? Do you uphold unity of existence? Or unity as

¹ See for a similar classification of texts (a) Sankara's *Sūtra-Bhāṣya*—'Ānanda-mayādhikaraṇa.' (b) Jayathirtha's *Nyāyasūtra*—Ānandamayādhikaraṇa.

well as diversity? Or mere plurality of existence?' The fairness of this self-criticism is undeniable. He proceeds to answer equally sharply and precisely 'We uphold all the three. The question proceeds from a false disjunction. It divides complementary aspects of a single truth and treats them as alternatives. It is false unity that implies the phenomenal character of the diversities of existence. It is false plurality that destroys the fundamental unity of Reality. It is a false synthesis of the one and the many, that commits self-contradiction. Real and genuine unity, plurality and synthesis of the one and the many are integral aspects of the fundamental truth of the Supreme. The scriptures know of no such untenable disjunction. Hence we too admit all the three conceptions. We admit unity because *Brahman* is one and all finite existences are just modes of this single ultimate principle. We admit unity-cum-plurality, because the same ultimate reality embodies itself in a plurality of forms as the inner soul of all physical entities and individual souls. We admit plurality because *Brahman*, the perfect reality, transcends the individual soul and physical nature and the individual souls transcend physical nature. Not one of these formulations exhausts the truth and not one of them falls outside truth'.

'But' a new critic objects 'the teaching of the *Upaniṣads* is "*Tat tvam asi*". It is this knowledge and realization of unity that is said to bring about emancipation from bondage'. To this Rāmānuja replies that equally emphatic are other texts and in fact clearer and more direct which say that discriminating knowledge of God, the individual soul and nature is the means for emancipation. The critic may contend, 'but those latter texts belong to a lower frame of reference. They are not to be taken as teaching the highest truth or to be teaching real emancipation.' Rāmānuja further develops his answer. If a choice is necessary why should not the former teaching of identity be abandoned and the latter be preferred as teaching the highest? In fact they are clearer and more direct in what they inculcate. Why should conflict of texts necessarily imply the falsity of the unfavourable text? There is no real solution through that exclusion of unfavourable data. An integrating and harmonising principle must be found. The *Upaniṣads* are our data. All texts speaking of emancipation and the knowledge leading to that idea are of equal validity. Salvation lies through reconciliation. In fact a deeper analysis of the texts superficially assumed to be conflicting reveals the fundamental unity of thought. The texts that speak of the knowledge of unity as leading to

the *summum bonum* are fundamentally right. *Brahman* is the immanent soul of all. It is the supreme Reality. There is nothing that is not a mode and adjective of it. The ultimate is one. Surely the realization of this truth is the road to perfection. The text that speak of the knowledge of distinctions as leading to the *summum bonum* are fundamentally right. *Brahman*, the immanent soul of all, transcends all. It transcends all, in its inherent perfection and freedom from mutation and evil. The finite soul transcends the physical order, however much it may be bound up with it in its state of bondage. This knowledge of distinctions is surely a liberating knowledge. The conflict conjured up is a creature of partial vision and abstraction. In reality the latter passage, incorporates into itself all that is contained in the monistic text of '*Tat tvam asi*'. It enunciates the three reals, physical nature, finite souls and God. It draws attention to the distinctive attributes and nature of the three. It proclaims the transcendence of the infinite real, as well as its immanent control of the finite reals. *Brahman* abides in three forms. It is transcendent and perfect and shines in the measureless splendour of its perfections. That is one form of *Brahman* its supra-cosmic aspect. *Brahman* is the inner controller and sustaining ground of the individual soul. It supports, controls and uses the latter. This is the second form of *Brahman*, its aspect as the soul of souls. *Brahman* is the immanent controller and sustainer of the physical order. It supports, controls and uses the latter. This is the third form of *Brahman*, its aspect as the world-ground. The distinction of the three reals and the three forms of *Brahman* are the matter for the final liberating knowledge.

'*Tat tvam asi*' also is not properly construed if it is understood as exclusive of the aforesaid distinctions. Rāmānuja's detailed examination of the discourse has made the position clear. Here he quotes two ancient authorities on *Chāndogya*, Vakyākāra and Dramidācharya both of whom have decidedly judged the discourse to be teaching *Brahman* as possessing infinite perfections of attributes. In substance that discourse also incorporates into itself the distinctions enunciated in the other passage. There is fundamental unity of texts. Divisions and contradictions, necessitating choice and rejection, are superimpositions of misguided and superficial interpretation.

One minor point of dialectical interest may be briefly considered. '*Brahman* is the absolute and infinite Reality. The *Upaniṣads* are clear and emphatic on that principle. If within it the substantive and adjectival aspects are distinguished and *Brahman* is

identified with the substantive aspect and the world and finite souls are subsumed under the adjectival aspects, the assertion that it is absolute and infinite breaks down. Either *Brahman* is the totally inclusive of both the substantive and adjectival aspects, in which case it is absolute and infinite but at the cost of its complete identity with *Īśvara* or it is merely the substantive element in the totality and therefore not inclusive of the adjectival and then not absolute and infinite.' The criticism is fairly common and merits consideration. The Upaniṣadic passage from the *Svetāśvatāra* discussed above and the precise interpretation of it by Rāmānuja furnish the answer and explanation. There are three aspects of *Brahman*. *Brahman* considered as the pure substantive principle of transcendence and infinite perfection is one aspect. *Brahman* considered as immanent in the finite spirit, sustaining and ensouling it is the second aspect. *Brahman* considered as immanent in the insentient world of physical existence, sustaining and controlling it is the third aspect. The totality of these three aspects constitutes *Brahman*. *Īśvara* in himself is no doubt a part of *Brahman* (the totality) but the other parts of *Brahman* are also the same *Īśvara* as indwelling and maintaining the selves and nature. To consider nature and individual souls as constituting limits to *Īśvara* is to take them in abstraction from the indwelling *Īśvara* and in such abstraction they cannot limit *Īśvara* because they do not exist in such abstraction and cannot even be named in such abstraction. The universe constitutes a limit to God only when it is regarded as independent of God. When its sole being and intelligibility lie in its being adjectival to God, it is illogical to describe it as constituting a limit to God. The three aspects of the Absolute are not God, and the *jīva* and the world but God in His supra-cosmic aspect, and God sustaining the *jīva*, and God sustaining the physical universe. The critics confine God to His supra-cosmic aspect and take the universe as non-adjectival to God and perform the miracle of proving God's finitude. The two assumptions are the radical errors that Rāmānuja is never tired of repudiating. He cannot be accused of an inconsistency which results from committing the fallacies which he attacks. Thus God is not a part or fragment of the Absolute, but only His supra-cosmic aspect is a part of the Absolute. The finite soul and nature are not parts of the Absolute on an independent footing, but God's two aspects as immanent in the finite soul and nature are parts of the Absolute. The Universe that could exclude or limit God is a universe that does not exist. The universe that exists is a mode of God. Philo-

sophy for Rāmānuja is not seeing this *and* that but seeing this *in* that and that *in* this. This is the fundamental significance of the concept of *Nārāyaṇa*.

The *tu quoque* argument is of no logical value in itself. Sudarśana-sūri says that it is valuable when it reveals that the thesis and antithesis are open to the same objection and the way of meeting the objection is the same for both. In *Advaita* too the Absolute cannot be wholly the same as the attributeless and acosmic *Brahman* for there is *māyā* also as part of the absolute totality. The answer to this objection is that *māyā* is phenomenal and not noumenal and hence can neither be a part of the Absolute nor limit it. For the moment we shall waive the argument that *māyā* being the ground of all phenomenal existence, must be non-phenomenal. The infinity and inclusiveness of *Brahman* is safeguarded by insisting upon the ontological status of *māyā* as phenomenal. In exactly the same way the infinity and inclusiveness of the *saguna Brahman* of Rāmānuja can be safeguarded by insisting upon the ontological status of the universe as through and through dependent on *Brahman*. An inseparably dependent universe neither limits *Brahman* nor can it claim to be a part of the totality in its own right.

Bradley says 'God is not God, till he has become all in all, and a God which is all in all is not the God of Religion. God is but an aspect, and that must mean but an appearance of the Absolute.' The criticism implies that religion is once for all committed to the view that God is only a part of reality and that there is a very precise and only one sense of being 'all in all.'¹ To dictate to religious consciousness what it must demand is unsound intrinsically and religions at their best have always sought after God conceived as an all-inclusive and supreme reality. Being 'all in all' must mean, if it has any sensible meaning at all, that God is a supreme and perfect principle and the whole of nature and man are its modes. To interpret being 'all in all' to mean a blank identity of pure experience, and to reduce the cosmos inclusive of the individual soul to the status of a phenomenal appearance, is to invest that ultimate principle itself with finitude and imperfection. A unity on which a plurality is phenomenally superimposed by itself is neither pure, nor divine. The objection to the Bradleyan treatment of the idea of God is not merely from the religious standpoint that it is an arbitrary misinterpretation of the fundamental

¹ See Metz's *Hundred Years of British Philosophy* page 343.

religious spirit. It is also essentially unsound as pure philosophy. How an absolute Spirit one and secondless, can become either the subject or the object or both of an imperfect understanding is a difficulty that damages beyond repair any such rash absolutism.¹

The *Vedārthasangraha* proceeds next to the discussion of another vital issue. '*Brahman* is a soul of souls.' It is the immanent ground of all individual selves. Hence all activities of individuals are the activities of God in them. There is no freedom and moral responsibility on the part of individuals. To admit the freedom and initiative of individual selves is to set a limit to the immanent control of *Brahman*. To deny it is to make moral responsibility and along with it the whole structure of moral and spiritual progress illusory. Evil becomes an act of God. Suffering becomes his arbitrary infliction of pain on selves, who have done nothing by themselves to deserve it. Admission of this view of the arbitrary causation of suffering would conflict with the goodness of God.

This is an eternal problem for all philosophies which affirm that an infinite and perfect spirit is the central Reality. Explanation of evil as phenomenal or only relative to a phenomenal point of view is no solution. Then it is not evil that needs explanation but error. The hypothesis of cosmic *avidya* would no doubt explain away suffering but it has to explain the possibility of *avidya* in the supreme Spirit. *Avidya* cannot be said to belong only to the individual self, for the individuation of that individual self is itself a result and function of *avidya*. That way does not lie the solution.

Let us trace the outline of Rāmānuja's answer to this basic question. He is emphatically in agreement with all major schools of Indian thought and the fundamental spirit of Hinduism in regarding natural evil as a result of moral evil. That is the substance of the doctrine of *karma*. While the atheistic schools admit the doctrine on other grounds, *Vedānta* as represented by Bādarāyaṇa urges that doctrine on the basis of the nature of God as absolutely good. Suffering cannot be an unmerited phenomenon in a universe sustained by *Brahman* pure and perfect. Inequalities of destiny cannot be capri-

¹ G. F. Stout: *Nature and God* (Page 226)—'Mistakes pre-suppose minds which make them—finite minds.... Now according to the theory these finite minds are themselves mere appearances. But to what can they appear except to themselves? And how can they appear to themselves if they are themselves mere appearances? How can imperfect apprehension which is to account for the distinction between what merely appears to be and what is real, be itself merely apparent?'

cious or arbitrary turns of fortune. If *Brahman* is exclusively and arbitrarily responsible for the destiny of individuals all individuals should have attained the *summum bonum* timelessly. To reconcile therefore the existence of natural evil with the perfection of the Supreme, the doctrine of *karma* or the law of moral causation is upheld.¹

But the doctrine would solve the problem if individuals are free in their volition. They are not free if the Supreme is the all-controlling master of the universe. Freedom of the individual is a limitation to the power and sway of God. Here Rāmānuja joins issue. Freedom is real. The finite self has initiative of moral action in a real sense. But freedom is not a limitation of the rule of the Supreme. That freedom itself is conferred upon individuals and sustained in actuality by *Brahman*. Freedom is not something that the Supreme encounters from without but something that it brings about and maintains. The creative power of God is not merely in fashioning and preserving physical entities with no spontaneity of action. It shows itself best in the maintenance of individual spirits who have liberty of choice and who can mould their own destinies. Freedom is not a restriction of God's power but is a function of that power. Lotze had the profound insight to grapple with this issue in the right manner. He said that God is not really a creator if He merely creates material entities incapable of self-initiated and self-directed activity. The fruition and fullness of this creative power lies in creating entities capable of relative independence which will become centres of force by themselves. Thus human freedom is not the denial of Divine omnipotence but the fullest manifestation of it. It is this thought that James Ward and Pringle Pattison had in mind when they spoke of God as 'the creator of creators'. Human freedom is a gift of the Supreme. Sudarśanasūri says 'The freedom of the *jīva* is not a curtailment of

¹ The only serious criticism of the doctrine is from Pringle Pattison. His main point is that absence of memory of previous births rules out the reformation to be brought about by karmic retribution. But (a) absence of the oppressive remembrance of the evil past is necessary for facilitating possibility of a new direction of life. (b) Mere memory of past deeds and the present experiences cannot bring home the causal law. Knowledge of sequence is not knowledge of the causal law. (c) Reflection on suffering as such can establish the conviction in that law as in the case of Lord Buddha's enlightenment. (d) The present life itself supplies enough causes and effects for making out the causal law. On the whole the criticism implies a wrong view of the apprehension of causal laws.

the freedom of *Īśvara* but an expression of it'.¹ Sometimes this idea is expressed through the term 'self-limitation'. But that is not the right term as it implies some privation or positive withdrawal of control. The individual is maintained in the exercise of his initiative by the Supreme; withdrawal, even if possible, would annihilate the freedom and the individual self along with it.

Why is there this freedom? What purpose does it serve in the economy of the universe? What attribute or characteristic of God necessitates the reality of individual freedom? The one universal answer given by the philosophy of Rāmānuja is that freedom is necessary for the realization of value. If perfection is the final goal of individual life, freedom of choice implying the possibility of even utter self-ruination, is necessary for it. Seeking is the pre-condition of both the quest for and valuation of the highest ideal in question. There is no joy in unsought fulfilment. The simplest definition of evil is that it is what comes when unwanted and leaves when wanted. The highest good, namely, the realization of the Supreme, pre-supposes the fullest seeking. Tagore puts the truth beautifully:—'To all things else you give; from me you ask'. 'God looks for the devotees' appeal for protection'² says an ancient text. God awaits the birth of desire for Him. Vedāntadeśika enunciates this principle: 'The Lord is a fulfiller of man's aspirations. Hence, when a man seeks as good some end, He grants it, even though it is in reality not good'.³

'But even then infliction of pain, however much it may be deserved by the individual, is an evil incompatible with Divine perfection'. The Supreme is the one source of joy, peace and blessedness for the individual. Finding frustration and self-contradiction, when not seeking the Supreme is a negative demonstration of the truth that in God is the supreme good of life. The Natural evil that befalls a godless life is the fullest proof and vindication that the only source of joy and fulfilment is God. It would have been a self-contradiction, if an individual defying the call of the supreme, found peace and self-realization. That would prove that *Brahman* is not the only *ānanda* in the world.

¹ जीवस्य स्वातन्त्र्यम् ईश्वरस्य न स्वातन्त्र्यवैकल्यावहम् । किन्तु तदतिशयावहमेव ।

² रक्षयापेक्षां प्रतीक्षते ।

³ 'अपुरुषार्थप्रदत्त्वपरिजिहीर्षया अर्थतः अनर्थमपि अर्थितं दिशति भगवान् ।'

(*Niksheparaksha*.)

'But why should there be this process of individuals seeking fulfilment in *Brahman*? What is it in the nature of God that necessitates conditions under which the finite self might seek God and delight in Him?' This too is a difficult question. It is easy to offer a commonplace answer that it is the nature of things and no more explanations need be demanded or offered. But the philosophy of Rāmānuja offers a line of explanation.

The term *Brahman* means both that which is infinite and abundant in itself and that which can bring abundance to others. It means that it is a perfect reality and is the source of perfection. It is *ānanda* in the double sense of being joyous in itself and being a source of joy. The ultimately real is the ultimate value. It is value in itself and to itself. It is also a source of value. Self-maintenance in plenitude of perfection and self-giving for plenitude of perfection are both the characteristics of the perfect. From this standpoint the Supreme is in need of self-giving, is in need of seekers. It is not, as Vedāntadeśika says, moon-light in mid-forest (*aranyachandrika*). It is 'food' (*anna*) says the *Viṣṇusahasranāma* and the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad*. Parāśara bhatta says in commenting upon the term that *Brahman* is inherently a source of *ānanda*. Now this possibility has to be worked out. This aspect of *Brahman* as something that can confer plenitude of joy must be realized. It implies no deficiency in *Brahman*, for it is full in itself. There is only deficiency in the sense that the possibility of imparting perfection is to be realized. This is attributing a purpose to God that does not imply imperfection in Him. God seeks seekers, so that He could fill them with boundless joy with His boundless presence. His only joy (*bhoga*) says Rāmānuja is union with the devotees. Parāśara bhatta says that He is 'eater of food' (*annadā*). He delights in those who find self-fulfilment in Him. That releases His pent up powers of imparting *ananda*.¹ He suffers as it were from the abundance of gifts he can give and hence is hungering and thirsting for devotees. This is the reason why, according to Rāmānuja, the *Gita* describes devotees of God as generous. The implication is that they offer God opportunities to fulfil himself through self-giving. Hence they are generous to Him. '*Ārthikalpaka*' is one of the names of God that Rāmānuja repeats in his prayers. It has been commented upon by the great commentators as meaning both 'One who is the

¹ See Plato's *Timaeus*, Ward's *Realm of Ends* and Muirhead's *Plutonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy*, p. 439.

wish-fulfilling tree to devotees and to whom the devotees are wish-fulfilling trees'.

Thus the line of explanation may be summed up as follows: God delights in giving delight. To attain delight in Him, seeking is necessary. That seeking must be a free seeking. Freedom is a gift of and not a limit to God. Suffering in a godless life is the result of the fact that God is the only *ānanda*. There is no suffering without moral causes by way of *karma*.

From these major principles we may draw answers to two popular objections: namely, 'a God who suffers suffering in this world is no God, and the moral evil of the individual must constitute an evil in *Brahman* itself for the individual is an inseparable mode of *Brahman*.'

Suffering is the consequence of the self-contradiction to which an individual runs through his pursuit of ends other than God. It is the result of a self-mutilation through the rejection of the highest good. That such a result must inevitably follow that course of life is a law of reality, which like other laws is a law of God. If peace and blessedness, joy and self-realization could come to an individual, in spite of his not seeking the only true good that there is it would be a sheer self-contradiction. It is because *Brahman* is the only value, the supreme all-inclusive value, denial of *Brahman*, refusal to seek it, is real death and self-annihilation. Suffering is the symptom and mark of that self-annihilation. It is not altogether an evil from a fuller point of view for it demonstrates that the endeavour for self-integration and well-being on the part of the finite apart from its seeking God is fated to be defeated. The defeat is no loss spiritually. It forces reconsideration of final values.¹

The mode that the individual self forms of God is a unique mode in that it is a spirit. Spirit is invested with freedom. Individual freedom is the result of God's omnipotent will. But the direction of its exercise is not determined by God, for the absence of such determination is the very meaning of freedom. No doubt the individual is a mode and that an inseparable mode of God. Its very essence, its capacities of intelligence and action, are sustained from within by the immanent Divine presence. But the terms of those gifts and the nature of the initiative vested in the individual are such that the manner and direction of their utilization are the individual's responsibility. Surely God's immanence in the *jīva* does not end in the destruc-

¹ See Vedāntadesika in the *Nyāsatīlakam* 14.

tion of the *jīva* and destruction of freedom of initiative is the destruction of the *jīva*. God is the author of the general conditions required for the spontaneous pursuit of values. One of those conditions is the liberty of choice and the possibility of pursuing wrong ends, ends that are antithetical to the end for the realization of which freedom is an essential pre-requisite. If that possibility is exploited, the individual is doing nothing for doing which God has not furnished him with capacity. But God is not the factor that compels or engineers that exploitation of the possibility of evil. Such is the meaning of freedom. It is a unique attribute of the individual. It is a gift of God and frees God from responsibility for evil. The freedom of the individual reconciles and necessitates the fullest immanence of God and the fullest freedom of God from evil. In reality any substraction from Divine immanence would mean substraction from individual freedom and that would imply substraction from God's transcendence of evil.

A minor question of definition may be disposed of briefly. 'What is freedom? Is it motiveless action? That would be pure chance and an impossibility. If motives are admitted, the motives being constituted of desires, action is determined by desires. The desires are not determined or generated by the self. They are psychical occurrences of which the individual is not the author. How then can he be free?' This is a controversy that has been waged in western thought for centuries. It has been effectively met by T. H. Green. Motives are no doubt desires. But not all desires become motives. Only those desires through the realization of which the self seeks its good become motives. The self is the criticising, discriminating and selecting agency. It is useless to argue that the strongest desire governs the man. That desire becomes strongest through which the man seeks his good. In abstraction from his choice, the desire would be merely a wish and would have no strength to become a motive. The strength of a desire is the strength that the moral self puts into it by its choice. Śāṅkara has offered precisely the same answer.¹ Sudarśanaśūri says 'The individual is a free agent, for, he can put down a desire, when he realizes that its realization is fraught with undesirable consequences or when he perceives an end that is more desirable than the object of

¹The *Gītā-Bhāṣya*, 3-34.

that desire'.² Thus desires are not the controlling forces but are the materials on which the self works discriminatingly with a scale of values. This is the meaning of self-determination. There is great wealth of thought on the question in the works of Rāmānuja Sudarsanasuri and Vedāntadesika and what has been presented above is a meagre selection.

Rāmānuja identifies the supreme, the highest *Brahman*, with the deity designated as *Bhagavān*, *Hari*, *Viṣṇu*, *Vāsudēva*, *Puruṣottama* and *Nārāyaṇa*. The most inclusive name is supposed to be *Nārāyaṇa*. He enters into a discussion for defending and supporting this identification. The aim of the discussion is to combat four possible counter-conceptions. (a) The supreme Reality is something transcending *Nārāyaṇa*. (b) The three deities, *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*, are together constitutive of that highest principle. (c) The three deities are different principles but are equal in status. They are the ultimate principles. (d) It is *Śiva* or *Brahma*, that is equated with *Brahman* and not *Viṣṇu*.

The exact nature of this discussion must be apprehended. In the first place, this is not a philosophical issue. The conception of supreme Reality in the purely metaphysical sense does not stand or fall with the identification of that supreme Reality with *Nārāyaṇa*. The controversy for instance is not of the same kind or level as the discussion of the attributeless and acosmic *Brahman*.

In the second place, it is not a sectarian controversy in the popular sense. It is not one cult propagating hatred of another cult and the consequent villification of its deity. The Gods are not discriminated as 'mine' and 'thine', All Gods are 'our' Gods for they are all proclaimed in 'our' scriptures. Vedāntadesika severely rebukes those Vaiṣṇavas who discredited Vedic rituals on the ground that they involve the worship of deities other than *Viṣṇu*. It is not an inter-tribal warfare for totemistic superiority.

The whole discussion is within a limited frame of reference. Its purpose is to ascertain whether the Vedas, *Upaniṣads* and the best of the later religious works identify the supreme with *Nārāyaṇa* or not. It is essentially a textual or interpretative inquiry. Such an inquiry is not unnecessary. To be indifferent to the deities in general holding fast to the idea of *Brahman* would be right if the sacred

² प्रत्यवायस्य वा, अतिशयितफलान्तरस्य वा ज्ञाने सति इच्छान्तरनिवारणमामर्थ्यदर्शनेन पुरुषस्वातन्त्र्योपपत्तेः कर्तृत्वं युज्यते ।

scripture had maintained such an attitude of indifference. To treat all gods as different or equal manifestations of some higher principle would be justified if the sacred scripture had not incorporated its idea of that higher principle into the idea of one of these deities. Do the scriptures treat the several deities of the Vedic and Purāṇic religious world with equal indifference? Or do they accord an equal regard and adoration to all of them? Is there no deity in the very conception of which all that is involved in the notion of the Supreme is wholly and explicitly included? As these questions must receive consideration in the light of the data presented in the primary and secondary texts of authority, the inquiry is not superfluous. While it is not a philosophical issue, it is not pure sectareanism in terms of competing gods of opposed cults it is purely a textual investigation objective and critical within that frame of interpretative reference. The inquiry is an effort at reconstructing the real thought embodied in the scriptures.

Ramanuja comes to the thesis¹ 'The *Vedas*, together with the accessory sciences, proclaim *Hari* to be the cause of the creation etc., of the universe. They do so supplemented and amplified by the propositions and principles enunciated by the sages, who are the greatest among the knowers of the *Vedas*'. It means that these testimonies yield only one information on the question and that is that *Hari* is the supreme Reality. He works out his thesis through the entire gamut of relevant Vedic pronouncements, relevant both by way of confirmation and by way of apparent contradiction. The *Purāṇas*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and important smṛitis like *Manu* are all pressed into service. Even the *Rgveda* is not innocent of the glorification of *Viṣṇu*.² The *Puruṣasūkta*, the *Mahopaniṣad*, the *Subalopaniṣad* and *Mahānārāyaṇīya* are explicit on the matter. The use of lesser testimonies *Purāṇas*, *Itihāsas* and *Smṛitis*, is not in substitution for the *Veda* but in supplementation thereof.

In the choice of texts for support there is careful reliance on the universally acknowledged ones. Hence the exclusively Vaiṣṇavite texts of *Pancharātra*, the sayings of the *Ālvars*, the sayings of *Āchāryas* like Nāthamuni and Yāmuna and even the *Srimad Bhāgavatam* are

¹ वेदवित्प्रवरप्रोक्तवाक्यन्यायोपबृंहितः ।

वेदाः साङ्गाः हरिं प्राहुः जगज्जन्मादिकाणम् ॥

² *Rigveda*, 7-40-5.

left out of consideration. People who find fault with Rāmānuja for relying on *Purāṇas* and *Āgamas* ought to realize that he maintains his central thesis exclusively on the support of the texts they themselves uphold. Moreover, he vindicates his position through the Vedic and Upaniṣadic texts always prior to and independent of the vindication through the *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas* and *Smṛitis*. The latter are taken as aids and clarifications. The validity of these secondary scriptures is vigorously upheld by Sankara in his *Sutra-Bhāṣya* (1-3-33). In Rāmānuja's view the whole body of the Vedic literature inclusive of the *Upaniṣads* and all that is best in the secondary sources like the *Purāṇas*, *Itihāsas* and *Smṛitis*, teach that the deity, *Nārāyaṇa*, is the supreme Reality. The fullest significance of the concept of *Brahman*, according to the scriptures, is embodied in the concept of *Nārāyaṇa*. *Nārāyaṇa* is the pervading reality, in Him abide all beings, through Him does the finite individual progress to perfection and in Him do all finite souls reach their ever-lasting and infinite fullness of life. The three fundamentals of Upaniṣadic philosophy, namely, the supreme Reality, the supreme Way and the supreme End are all enshrined in the single term '*Nārāyaṇa*,' for He is 'the truth, the way and the life' (See Vedāntadesika's *Rahasyatrayasāra* (*Moola Mantrādhikāra*)). It is not without great significance that Śankara too displays an obvious preference for *Nārāyaṇa*. For example, in his commentary on the *antaryami Brāhmaṇa* in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* he has identified '*Antaryāmin*' with '*Nārāyaṇa*', when the original text does not call for any such specific identification.

While it is true that the whole inquiry is of the nature of an exegetical investigation, it is not altogether independent of a deeper philosophical motivation. In the general framework of Hindu religious thought the three outstanding deities *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* are assigned the three basic functions of the supreme Godhead, creation, protection and destruction. Of these three functions, the *Vaiṣṇava* movement tends to regard the function of protection and maintenance, the activity of upholding and uplifting the universe of individual souls, as the central and fundamental function of the Supreme. The other two are derivative functions, instrumental to the primary activity of preservation and sublimation. Creation and destruction as such, absolute and literal, are not admitted in *Vedānta*. Further, they are processes incidental to and subordinated to the sole teleology of the universe which consists in 'soul-making' or 'development of souls' towards the consummation of their release into the blissful vision

of the Supreme. Every manifestation of God, all incarnations including the apparently destructive ones, are phases of a single and inclusive movement of the saving of souls. Even karmic retribution of the severest type is a process of purgation and rejuvenation¹. There is nothing in the doings of God that is not instrumental to His supreme purpose of 'self-giving.' This idea of the supremacy and inclusiveness of the function of protection among the functions of Divinity is at the back of the exaltation of *Viṣṇu* or *Nārāyaṇa* as the Supreme God-head. This point of view underlying the entire *Vaiṣṇava* theology is the central theme of one of the greatest devotional compositions in the tradition of Rāmānuja, which tradition is exceptionally rich in devotional poetry. The '*Dayāśataka*' of Vedāntadeśika is solely devoted to the adoration of the 'compassion' of God, an attribute which the poet describes as the 'empress among the attributes of God' and as one but for which the other attributes of God would not be excellences. There is nothing grander, nothing profounder, and nothing more moving in the entire poetical heritage of Vaiṣṇavism than the *Dayāśataka* which reveals in clear relief the deepest philosophical motive embodied in Vaiṣṇavism. It gathers into itself all the tributaries of *Vaiṣṇava* inspiration and swells into a mighty Ganges of devotion, at once rich in the volume of its thought and deep in the intensity of its religious feeling and sweeps the readers irresistibly into the very heart of the vision absolute.

So far we have considered the philosophy of Reality. Now we shall pass on to the consideration of the philosophy of the end.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE END

The *Vedārthasangraha* includes in the body of what it describes as 'the heart of the entire *śāstra*' a formulation of the supreme end of life. The significance of the *summum bonum* is to be determined. What do the *Upaniṣads* mean by the idea of *mokṣa* (liberation)? *Mokṣa*, as determined by the *Upaniṣads* signifies for Rāmānuja the vision of the Supreme. Before determining the attributes of that vision, we may consider the conceptions of the *summum bonum* whose rejection is implied in the description of it as such a vision of the Supreme.

¹ See Parasara Bhatta's *Ranga Rajastava* "सुहृदिव निगलाद्यैः" etc.

Materialistic values are not constitutive of the highest good. The grounds for the rejection of their claim to ultimacy may be briefly enumerated. Vedāntadeśika enumerates seven deficiencies in earthly pleasures. They are triviality, transitoriness, their origination from suffering, admixture of pain in them, their being productive of pain, their proceeding from a false conception of the self, and their suppression of the higher potencies of the inner man. The *Gītā* characterizes the earthly pleasures as rājasic and tamāsic. Rājasic pleasures are negative pleasures and are of the nature of relief from pain. They are valued because they cause the suspension of preceding pains.¹ The tāmasic pleasures are the effects of the suppression of intelligence and demand the protective ramparts of ignorance. In fact a succession of pains is the characteristic of mundane value. Variation of pain is mistakenly conceived as positive pleasure. Hence the unendurability of earthly pleasure after a certain duration of experience. That there is some amount of happiness in empirical life may be admitted. But its presence, instead of relieving pain, through the very effect of contrast intensifies suffering. Acclimatization to suffering as to darkness is prevented by flashes of pleasures and then the succeeding gloom is rendered intenser.

Materialist Hedonism like that of *Omar Khayyam* as represented by Fitz Gerald proceeds from a false metaphysics. It bases the doctrine of the futility of life on an agnostic and fatalistic metaphysics which is essentially unsound. It advocates a programme of 'love, wine and song,' which too, for their adequate enjoyment, require the suppression of critical intelligence to which the mortality and futility of all things would be too obvious. Wisdom awake would shock out of existence the petty revelries in wine, women and verse. Sad truths cannot be so perfectly exiled in a world not planned for human happiness. Moreover, these things themselves are not eternally assured possibilities and not inherently compatible with themselves. They are not unconditional and ever attainable pleasures. To value them as the savings from the wreckage of life is itself the height of optimistic folly. They too contain the profoundest possibilities of tragedy.

Pleasures of the mind, it may be contended, are on a higher plane. They constitute 'Freeman's worship' in the language of Bertrand Russell. On the unyielding rock of despair, we can found an inner empire of 'Promethean' idealism dedicated to the contemplation

¹ See Plato's *Republic*, Book: 9

of truth, beauty and goodness. But why are these pleasures supposed to be higher? What makes them superior to the cruder hedonism of the flesh? The only possible answer is that they bring to expression the dimensions of human personality not capable of expression through the lower enjoyments. Their superiority rests upon the superiority of the self or the impulses, of which they are the embodiment. That the inner man is more fundamental than the outer man, that man as mind and heart, is fuller and finer, than man the 'accidental collocation of unthinking atoms' is the basis and the only basis for such qualitative discrimination of pleasures. Thus the doctrine of free man's worship surreptitiously and imperceptibly passes into the idea of the highest good as self-realization. That latter idea is left unsupported on account of the anti-idealistic metaphysics of its advocates like Russell. It is an attempt to have the advantages of Platonism without its metaphysical commitments.

Even a perfect materialist must confess that the values that are permitted by his philosophy do not fully answer the demands of human nature. He has to grant that the 'reality-principle', is in conflict with the 'pleasure-principle'. He can at best say that they are the values that his philosophy leaves undamaged but not that they are all that is desirable. From the standpoint of axiology even materialism must regret its own truth. It can claim for its axiology the 'highest possible' value and not 'the highest' value. The whole claim to the formulation of the highest value is virtually abandoned by the materialistic criticism of religion as 'wish-fulfilment'. That is conceding that though truth is on the side of materialism, the values are against it. The concept of value, the idea of the good or the right, is ruled out by the very premisses of a naturalistic view of reality. It is not merely true that such a view of reality cannot frame the concept of the highest good, as the most desirable system of values, but cannot also propound the very conception of an ideal or value. The metaphysics of materialism cannot permit the idea of 'free will' or moral responsibility. That idea would imply and establish the inadequacy of materialism as an account of existence. But as Kant, Hartmann and T. H. Green and an endless host of Indian philosophers have pointed out the concept of the good carries with it the necessary presupposition of freedom. The 'ought' implies a 'can'. Exclude spiritual and moral freedom and you exclude the philosophy of values. Materialism should confine itself to what 'is' and it cannot admit what 'ought' to

be. Under such circumstances to speak of materialistic values is sheer inconsistency.

If as pure metaphysics a materialistic view of reality is unsound, to exalt material values is to limit ourselves to the lower when the higher is possible. By no process of serious reasoning can materialism be supported as an adequate or self-consistent school of philosophy. As Śāṅkara says to attempt to understand it clearly is to refute it. Men are materialists because they have not cared to formulate materialism to themselves. Much refusal to think is necessary for persuading oneself to be a materialist.

That an irresistible dialectic of history produces a state of peace and happiness and that the dialectical movement for its triumph needs no human free will or self-determination is a myth not less fantastic than any ancient myth. Facts and the logic of facts do not subserve human desires with such mechanical efficiency in the world we know. Production of well-being without human devotion to well-being is a superstition of superstitions. The old doctrines of providence or 'enlightenment' at least posited God or the omnipotence of human reason to produce the paradise on earth. The newest doctrine discards the requisite postulates and makes mere material forces perform the super-natural feat of establishing the millenium. What is more incredible than human credulity? There is no end to the demonstration of the unsoundness of axiological materialism.

But surely self-realization is the supreme good. There is no doubt that this is a nobler and truer point of view. But if it is formulated in such a way as to exclude the ideal of the vision of the Supreme there are equally insuperable difficulties. Self-realization not subordinated to and not forming an integral part of the perception of the Infinite is an untenable ideal.

Self-realization may mean the recovery of the pure self from the subjection to matter, whether phenomenal or real. There is the fundamental difficulty as to how the self lost its powers of purity and light and got mixed up with the material universe. It is hopeless to ascribe the subjection entirely to the power of matter. In that case exertion on the part of the self for escape would be of no avail and re-capture by matter is not an impossible eventuality. Somehow the self must itself bear the responsibility for getting into bondage and only then the release as well as the permanence of release can be possibilities. What is it in the self that made it a victim of embodiment, a slave of nature? The cause must lie in some internal disinte-

gration or disablement of the self. That weakening is to be accounted for only in one way. The self belongs to the Supreme. It is adjectival to the Supreme. If it exercises its freedom and refuses the Supreme and does not seek it, such experiential (and not ontological) dissociation brings about its powerlessness. It is such powerlessness that is signified by its bondage in matter. Bondage is a consequence of the axiological refusal of God. The part loses its wholeness and all the vitality that comes of such wholeness, when it divorces itself from the devotion to the whole.¹

To put it simply: isolation from God is the cause of the alienation from its own bounty of powers and purity. Such alienation is what is expressed in the fact of embodiment. In effect it stands that the mere seeking of the self to the exclusion of the Supreme is the cause of the losing of the self in the machinery of matter. Surely such a direction of self-realization defeats its own purpose. It is for this reason that even those schools of thought that did not rise to the proper conception of moksha, went so far as to acknowledge the devotion to God as an important factor making for self-realization. Yoga and Nyāya may be taken as illustrations. The *Gītā* is emphatic that surrender to God is the only means for rising beyond the realm of *māyā*. There is no self-realization without devotion to God.

Further, in the preliminary stage of spiritual progress, when the aspirant is not in full enjoyment of his own real nature, he might conceive of his self-realization as the *summum bonum*. But when that real self of his becomes manifest to him, when he is freed from the veils that covered his own self from his view, he apprehends his real self. That apprehension alters his whole conception of value. There is the birth of the real purpose in him then. There is a transvaluation of values. For a self enmeshed in bondage, the release from matter may appear the loftiest blessedness. But when that blessedness is reached, a new conception of the highest value takes possession of the soul. The *Gītā* says that a jeeva who is 'become free,' (brahmabhuta) develops 'Supreme devotion (*para bhakti*) towards God.' There is no joy for the individual except in the vision of God. When the individual misconceives his own nature, he wanders after other ends. But when he comes into the possession of his real nature freed from all delusions

¹ See *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology* p. 90 by Mac Taggart: 'Nothing could be less harmonious than the state of a finite being who was trying to realise an ideal of isolation'.

and obscurity, he comes to a burning realization of his true destiny. He is so constituted that there is no delight (*rasa*) for him except in God. So for the man in the shackles of mundane existence, self-realization is the highest good. But for a spirit, which has attained self-realization, the approach to the vision of God will be the highest good.

Moreover, to think of attaining to the pure state of self without attaining the perception of the infinite is an impossibility. Rāmānuja ascribes three functions to *māyā*, the delusive machinery in existence. It conceals God. It produces misconception with regard to one's own soul. It leads to the error of identifying the self with the non-self and that of looking upon the self as an independent entity. It consequently produces a wrong sense of values. Transcendence of *māyā* through the omnipotent grace of God whose operation is secured through surrender to Him, causes a three-fold release. Firstly it awakens the consciousness of the atman to the presence of Brahman. Secondly it removes the misconception with regard to the individual self. Thirdly it destroys the wrong sense of values and brings home to the self that its highest good is to behold the Divine and highest evil is to lose that blessedness of vision. Thus self-realization coincides with the beginning of the perception of the Infinite and the emergence of the true ideal that the vision of God is the supreme perfection. Therefore to think of self-realization in abstraction from God-realization and from the birth of the desire for further God-realization is to err fundamentally. The idea of *kaivalya* (isolation) as the recovery of self from the bondage in matter to the exclusion of the vision of God is wholly wrong.

Lastly, to add only one more metaphysical consideration: The individual self is adjectival to God. It has not got any existence, or conceivability apart from the substantive principle. It cannot even be spoken of independently. Being so, how can it be realized and made true to itself, apart from the full awakening into the consciousness of its subordination and subservience to the Supreme? Obscuration of that ontological status would mean the realization of self as what it is not. There is an element of *tamas* as well as *rajas* in the obscuration of its subordinate and instrumental character. Whatever goal we reach which is tainted by *rajas* and *tamas*, is a transitory goal, belonging to the realm of *karma*. It is a species of bondage not substantially different from the bondage from which it is looked upon as an escape. Such a self-realization of the 'transcendental ego' that is not adjectival

to Brahman is an error and an evil. Thus even axiological subjectivism is an untenable point of view.

Elimination of these two notions of the highest good makes the field clear for a fuller determination of its nature. It has been described as the vision of the Supreme. It is a vision not of the same kind as our sense-perception. Sense-perception is always a fragmentary apprehension of the actual. It is this fragmentariness that necessitates inferential elaboration and interpretation to complete the process of knowing initiated by perception. The vision, though more immediate than sense perception, is not fragmentary like it. It is complete and comprehensive (*paripūrṇa*). It is not of the same kind as understanding through reasoning. That understanding relates to finite entities shot through and through with relations. The infinite is something that is the pre-supposition of relations among finites and is not related to them in the way in which one finite entity is related to another. It is the whole, the parts of which are the theme for inferential apprehension. That is the reason why reasoning cannot by itself lead us to the idea of Brahman. Brahman is unique, transcendent and all-inclusive. Hence it does not fall within the scope of mediate inferential construction. It is an immediate and complete apprehension of the infinite. But is it purely an apprehension? Is it mere cognition?

It is a vision that is of the nature of joy and love. The perception of reality, the suspension of which is the source of all conflicts and afflictions, cannot be mere perception. It is a perception that possesses inherently and in its fundamental sense, the nature of joy pure and absolute, intense and complete. It is an experience (*anubhava*) as well as bliss and love (*ānanda* and *prīti*). It is knowledge (*jñāna*) as well as enjoyment (*bhoga*). To possess it is to lose oneself in love.

That love is one that prompts complete surrender of self, dedication of personality and worship that involves the fullest offering of self to the Supreme. It is a state in which the will of the finite is surrendered to the glory and worship of the infinite. This is the meaning of describing it as service (*kainkarya*). Rāmānuja affirms these characteristics of the supreme vision of God through the terms '*paripūrṇa*', '*viśāda-tama*', '*prīti*' and '*kainkarya*'. It is an immediate and full apprehension of the Infinite, and of the nature of love and joy, maturing into fruition in worship, dedication and service.

It is an end in itself (*ananyaprayojana*). There are no ends, no joys, for the attainment of which the vision is a means. It is an all-inclusive joy. Mundane joys are partial and perishable, because they

do not involve the vision of the Supreme. In this vision it is the all-inclusive Supreme that is the object and hence nothing falls outside the range of vision. It cannot be a means to another end for all other ends lose their value, when God is apprehended. Rāmānuja says in the *Vedāntasāra* 'that is the infinite, which being perceived, nothing, else can be seen, heard of or discerned as good.'¹ There is nothing good that is not included in the delights of the supreme vision and there is nothing else that would retain its character of being good when that supreme good is attained. This vision is eternal and everlasting. An experience passes away through two possible causes. The subject may lose love for its continuance. The object may get beyond the subject. Here the individual soul, purified by unclouded vision, in full possession of its essential nature, knowing that the only and the fullest 'rasa' according to the law of its being is God cannot wish away the experience. There can be no subjective ground for the discontinuance of the vision. There can be no objective ground either. The Supreme delights in the delight that the finite derives from it. Lord Kṛiṣṇa says that the highest devotee is His supreme care and the cherished possession of everlasting value. How can then the merciful and the loving Lord get beyond and abandon the devotee? Hence there is no possibility of the vision breaking off. It is an abiding achievement of love supreme. It is for this reason that Śrī Bādarāyaṇa concluded his work by the words 'there is no return according to scriptures' (*anāvṛittiḥ śabdāt, anāvṛittiḥ śadbāt*). Thus the vision, complete and infinite, of the nature of both love and worship, is an end in itself and is real immortality.

'But,' it may be objected, 'Rāmānuja pictures salvation as the passage to another world called Vaikuntha. *Mokṣha* for him is the acquisition of citizenship in the kingdom of God conceived definitely in a regional sense'. This is a popular understanding of the position. Let us see what it all means.

There is no doubt that Ramanuja admits the existence of a transcendent realm of pure sattva described as *paramapada* or *Vaikunthā*. He adduces innumerable scriptural statements in support of the doctrine. But he is equally emphatic that the essence of mokṣha is the vision of God and the entry into the kingdom of God is a factor subordinate to that ideal. The transcendent world is paramapada in a fundamentally secondary sense.

¹ See also the *Dayasataka*, 44 and *Stotraratna*—27.

The regional notion of salvation is not radically untenable as supposed. If salvation is an ideal to be realized 'in time' through *sādhana*, there is nothing impossible in its being an achievement 'in space.' What is interesting in this connection is the peculiar synthesis of space and time effected in recent science. Professor Eddington in his *the Nature of the Physical World* (p. 351) actually supports the plausibility of the regional conception of salvation as salvation is a consummation to be effected in time, on the ground of the fusion of the categories of time and space in modern scientific thought.

Further, what does *Vaikuntha* mean? What does *paramapada* mean? Rāmānuja and his distinguished commentators Sudarśana-suri and Vedāntadesika had a definite sense when they used the word *Vaikuntha*. The word is etymologically explained and we are told that it signifies a situation or state of existence in which there are no hindrances to the apprehension of God. '*Paramapada*' also receives the interpretation that it is a state of being in which there is no rajas and tamas. The Vaiṣṇava conception of *Vaikuntha* never abandons this spiritual interpretation in terms of its subservience to the ideal of the vision of God. Thus *mokṣa* is not passage into *Vaikuntha*. It is the attainment of the vision of God and *Vaikuntha* is valued on account of its being spoken of in scriptures as being completely destructive of the conditions that would hinder that vision of God. We ought not to forget the great prayer of Vedāntadesika addressed to Varadarāja. 'O Lord if only I could behold without interruption Thy beauty that passeth all understanding I swear I would not yearn for even *Vaikuntha*.'¹

'But,' it may be objected again, 'Rāmānuja's idea of *mokṣa* is through and through eschatological. He does not admit the ideal of *jīvanmukti*. It is a state to be attained after the dissolution of the body.'

This is an important comment on the ideal of *mukti* as propounded by Rāmānuja. Its value as criticism, and as an adequate representation of what Rāmānuja understands by the highest ideal must be thoroughly determined. We may focus discussion on a few leading facts of the case.

No doubt Rāmānuja denies *jīvanmukti*. But in what context? He always criticizes the ideal of *jīvanmukti* as propounded by Advaita

¹ निरन्तरं निर्विशतस्त्वदीयम् अस्पृष्टचिन्तापदमाभिरुप्यम् ।

सत्यं शपे वारणशीलनाथ वङ्कुण्ठवासेऽपि न मेऽभिलाषः ॥

as inconsistent with its premisses. The advaitin has no right to admit the ideal of *jīvanmukti*. If the liberating knowledge abolishes all bondage, what a *jeevanmukta* attains is full *mukti*. What is the sense of calling it liberation-in-life? If traces of *karma* remain, if the body persists owing to continuance of the forces responsible for bondage even after the rise of the releasing knowledge, that *karma* and those forces are not subject to elimination by *vidya*. The perception of the double moon continues even when it does not delude, because the optical defect responsible for it is not removable by mere knowledge. It is a defect incurable by enlightenment. If empirical life persists after enlightenment, that cannot be due to *avidya*. If it does not persist, there is *mukti* pure and simple and no adjectives or qualifications of it are justified. This limitation of the frame of reference within which Rāmānuja's refutation of *jīvanmukti* occurs is totally lost sight of by modern writers when they unconditionally assert that he rejects the ideal of *jīvanmukti*.

There is something peculiar in demanding not merely the possibility of immediate release but also the possibility of the continuance of the embodied state after that release. Rāmānuja and more emphatically Vedāntadeśika assert that immediate release is possible for one who can no longer stand the postponement of release (*artaprapanna*). If that immediate release implies immediate death in the physical sense, why is that not a desirable ideal? How is *jeevanmukti* a superior ideal? Immediacy of release is the paramount necessity. Such an immediate release is admitted. Why refuse the other not very undesirable consequences of that release? This insistence on liberation-in-life and not mere instantaneous liberation implies a concealed materialistic bias, an over-valuation of the state of mundane life. It implies a conditional and not a total appreciation of the goal of life. Total appreciation would mean a readiness for it even if it meant the immediate dissolution of the body.

We may indicate the further consequences. It implies an unphilosophical view of death. That death is not a loss but a gain, not a foe but a welcome guest, not a destroyer but a messenger of our Beloved, is the only view of death consistent with a spiritual philosophy convinced of its validity. If immediate liberation is announced to us by this 'messenger of the Beloved,' why shrink from the ideal? Or is it that unless release is a fact of immediate realization, it remains a mere dogma, a hope without the substance of certainty? It does not so remain. It remains a mere hope says Vedāntadeśika, as long as our

longing for it is not keen enough to convert it into reality. It is a dogma only for those who seek to postpone its validation. Nothing separates us from the ideal except the weakness of our desire for it.

If mukti means the vision of God, as it certainly means for Rāmānuja, it is not excluded from this life. The origin of the supra-mundane is in the mundane. This vision of God is a possibility here and now. In the great *Śaraṅgati Gadya*, the Lord is made to answer the devotee 'you have already become a mukta'. Commenting on this *Śudarśanasūri* says: 'Oh, when does this blessedness come to me?' asks the devotee. The Lord replies, when the question "Oh, when? Oh when?" develops into an intense pain of love in you, immediately then you will have this blessedness.' Nothing keeps the ideal away except the dullness of the fire of love in us. This present life, here and now, does not exclude the possibility of the vision of the Divine. Vedāntadeśika elucidating the same passage says in conclusion 'You have begun to be free.' There are plenty of other evidences to establish the thesis that the present life, according to Rāmānuja, does not exclude the possibility of the vision of God. Only one more instance may be mentioned. Commenting on the 9th chapter of the *Gītā*, on the word '*pratyakṣhavagamam*,' he understands the Lord to be saying, 'When a *bhakta* meditates on me through the meditation that is of the nature of *bhakti*, I become perceptible to him immediately.' Vedāntadeśika prays for the experience constitutive of the *summum bonum* here and now, in the grand conclusion of his *Dayāśataka*.¹ 'May the compassion of the Lord grant me the experience of liberation here and now'. So the present life, here and now, however much a state of bondage and embodiment, does not exclude the possibility of the vision of God and thus can originate the state of release, for the vision of God is the whole content of the ideal of release.

We should not ignore a complementary side of the same truth. While the present life here and now does not exclude the vision of God, it does not exhaust it. The sublimation of the mundane cannot

¹ "तत् कदा इत्ताह 'एवम्भूतोऽसि' इति; कदा इति त्वरा तव यदा स्यात् तदा त्वम् ईदृगवस्तोऽसि ।"

² नातः परं किमपि मे त्वयि नाश्नीयं मातर्दये मयि कुर्व्व तथा प्रसादम् ।

बद्धादरो वृषगिरिप्रणयी यथासौ मुक्तानुभूतिमिह दास्यति मे मुकुन्दः ॥

obliterate the supramundane. Just as Brahman is immanent in the world but is not exhausted by it, even so eternal life can spring from this life but does not terminate within it. The timeless vision of God though immanent in time does transcend time. Perfection originates 'here and now' and grows and expands beyond all 'heres' and all 'nows'. The vision of God may become an assured possession of the perfect soul, but it has eternal novelty, moving on from joy to joy, from completion to completion, the realization of every possibility engendering new possibilities and with them new vistas of realization. God is self-fulfilled (*satyakama*) and also self-fulfilling (*satyasankalpa*). Even so the apprehension of God is never a finished fact. 'Religion' says Whitehead 'is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind and within the passing flux of immediate things, something which is real, and yet waiting to be realized; something which is a remote possibility, and yet the greatest of the present facts'. Such is the vision of the Supreme. In the conception of *mokṣha* as an ideal to be worked out beyond the present life, it is this inexhaustibility of the boundless wealth of possible realization that is embodied. To discard the supra-mundane is to limit the limitless.

Further, the supra-mundane is not exclusive of the mundane. The citizen of the kingdom of God is not incapable of becoming the citizen of our world. Indeed, within the range of the vision of a *mukta* this world of ours, with all its cares and beauties, its pleasures and pains, its limitations and horizons of possibility is contained. The supra-mundane contains and includes the mundane. Ramanuja is definite on that point. The final vision of God includes the vision of God as revealing Himself in the glories of our world also. Only in that vision our world will appear truer and better, as an integral part of the Supreme, a fact which is obscured in our bound perspective. Even the travails and tribulations, the errors and ugliness, are taken up into the fuller view, and they appear re-interpreted and transmuted into elements of beauty in that vision beatific. The imperfections of our world are generated by our godless conception of it and our godless values. When the purified soul beholds it the imperfections disappear and the unmingled beauty of the cosmos as the revelation of the Supreme shines in its innate effulgence. We truly possess the mundane when we transcend it. Even as the river is not lost in the sea but is brought to rest and fulfilment, the life of the *mukta* brings to rest and fulfilment his prior life as the *buddha*. The *mukta* may also come to participate in the mundane, for illumining it and for serving

God in that *vibhūti* also. Thus while the *summum bonum* exceeds this life here and now, it contains, completes and transmutes it and may bring about re-embodiment in it for divine purposes. There is nothing lost when God is gained.

We will pass on to another aspect of the matter. What is the status of the individual in this vision of the Supreme? Does he retain his individuality? If he is resolved into the object of his vision, the vision is no fulfilment and no perfection for him. The highest good must mean the highest development of the self. It cannot signify the loss or merger or absorption of the self. Moreover, the greatness of the content or object of experience must increase, intensify and enlarge the self that experiences. There is a positive correlation between the object and the subject and not a negative correlation. The self is hardly itself, when cut off from the contemplation of the supreme Reality. Hence its vision of that reality must bring it to fullness of actuality. It is for this reason it is said in sacred literature that release is the birth into true personality. The metaphor of 'absorption' commonly used in connection with great experiences simply means the totality of the employment of the resources of the spirit in those experiences. A lesser object engages a lesser amount of the resources and capabilities of the spirit. An infinite object utilizes the entire capabilities of the spirit for a full apprehension and appreciation. And such experience precisely because it is so absorbing, elevates, develops and completes the self into the full contour of its spiritual possibilities. There is no pre-occupation with the self. Hence it is a full object-centred experience. The magnitude of the experience and the complete fulfilment of the powers of experience do not annihilate or reduce the self. It brings it into fruition of individuality. The more the self gives of itself to the object, the more it becomes what it has in it to become. Even then self-consciousness is not effaced for it is the pre-condition of all consciousness. Only the attributive consciousness is wholly exercised on the infinite expanse of the Supreme. The whole fallacy of the doctrine of the resolution of the self into the field of its vision in the great experiences is due to the failure to distinguish between the substantive consciousness of the self by the self and the attributive consciousness absorbed without reserve and residue in the contemplation of the object. Such absorption is self-increase rather than self-effacement. The false ego may be destroyed but the real ego emerges into light and power just on

account of the destruction of the false ego. Thus there is no dissolution of individuality.

'Then,' it may be asked, 'a final irreducible dualism remains. The subject of vision and the object of vision remain counterposed. The vision is a relation between two existences. Is that the Vedāntic ideal of release? What of those countless passages in the Upaniṣads which speak of the released self as passing into or becoming Brahman?' This is a natural criticism and fully anticipated by the originators of the school Rāmānuja maintains that this is not a correct rendering of the situation. The self has vision of the Supreme. What is there that is not included in the Supreme? The subject of the vision apprehends itself as forming a part and adjective of the Supreme. There is self-vision as an integral part of God-Vision. Not to have it so is to conceive of the self as independent and to conceive of the glories and modes of God as exclusive of the self of the devotee. Both are irrational conceptions not compatible with the metaphysics propounded. If the vision is authentic, it is a vision of God containing the individual self blessed with that vision as forming one of the modes of Him. When the devotee finds his God he finds his self also within Him. When mother Yaśoda looked into the mysterious expanse of the universe in her son's mouth she saw herself also there. It is a vision that excludes exclusions.

Rāmānuja, as usual, subjects himself to a severe self-criticism. What is this *summum bonum*? Are we never to get rid of this subordinate status even in *mokṣa*? What release is it to get into everlasting fetters? The true definition of evil is subjection. The true definition of the highest goal is freedom from subjection. Do not our ancient texts say that 'it is sorrow to be dependent, and it is bliss to be self-dependent'? Does not our wise Manu say that 'Servitude is a dog's life'?

In answer to this attack he develops some very important truths. The ancient texts may be easily met. They are interpreted as meaning that there is no relation of master and servant between any two finite individuals. Our only master is God. Hence the attitude of subservice to any one other than God is sorrow indeed. Independence from all other finite individuals is bliss. Servitude is truly a dog's life when it is servitude of the unworthy, of those who are unworthy of receiving service. The only one who is worthy of all the services of all is God. To quote texts for texts there are equally other authoritative texts which inculcate devoted service of the Lord.

The propositions 'subjection is evil' and 'the highest good is freedom from subjection' deserve a little more analysis. In the first place our conception of good and evil depends upon our conception of what we are. Different sentient beings pursue different and mutually conflicting values. That phenomenon is due to the fact that they have different notions of what they are. On this general principle the idea that independence is the highest good proceeds from the notion that one is identical with the body. It is so because the individual transcends the body and is in his intrinsic and inalienable nature dependent on the Supreme. Such being the metaphysical truth, his pursuit of independence as the highest good must surely be due to his taking himself to be other than what he truly is.

'But,' it may be objected, 'whatever may be the origin of the conception of values for different sentient beings, for each there is happiness in what it seeks. Let one who thinks of himself as subservient to God find his bliss in such subservience. But for others with different views of what they are, there is happiness in what they value. Thus at least for others independence is the supreme value.' This could have been so if values other than the vision of the Supreme could bring real and unconditioned happiness to their seekers. Unfortunately it is not so. The self cannot be satisfied with what is sought for its sake from a false conception of what it is. It revolts at such a misreading of its nature and finds itself in conflict with that which is presented for its satisfaction. Reality is stronger than illusions. Values founded on a false philosophy of the self disappear into dis-values when realized. Moreover, intrinsically there is nothing that can be a source of joy and value, except the vision of God. This is demonstrable a thousand-fold through a critique of material values. What earthly pleasure fills all with happiness? Each seeks different and conflicting things. That shows the relativity of values. What is relative is not intrinsic. Ends found pleasant by some are not so found by others. If they were intrinsically so they would be pleasant universally. The same object or condition found pleasure-giving at one stage, becomes a positive pain and an affliction at some other. What does it demonstrate? It demonstrates that it is not an intrinsic value. The all-determining force of *karma* invests certain things with some value for sometime or some individuals. It is all a delusion. The only ever-lasting and universal good, the good that is boundless in its inclusiveness, is the vision of Brahman. There is nothing intrinsically and infinitely blissful except the Lord. And the self is so con-

stituted that it cannot attain to an abiding and complete satisfaction with anything other than God. Hence the opposition to the notion of subservience to the Supreme as the *summum bonum* arises from two errors, the error of supposing that there are intrinsic values other than God and the error of supposing that you can satisfy the spirit in man with values founded on a misconception of the nature of that spirit. While our conception of what we are produces our conception of the highest good, the satisfaction we derive from that good when attained, depends upon what it is and what we are. While the search may be governed by errors, the satisfaction capable of being derived depends upon realities. That nothing other than God is the supreme joy and the self can find no joy in anything else are facts that condemn false values sooner or later. We may defeat truth in our imaginations but it defeats us in the moment of realization. Thus is the status of the individual in the *summum bonum* determined. Independence, whose value is stressed in the objection, is nothing but self-determination. The self is so constituted that it is deprived of its true being and original nature, when it declares independence of Brahman. True slavery therefore is independence of God. True freedom is service of God. The subordination to God emancipates the self and restores to it its innate powers. Subordination it may be, but it is an emancipating subordination, a situation in which real self-determination is rendered possible. We are truly ourselves when we live in the commanding presence of the *Lord*.

The nature of the highest good as the vision of the Supreme has been outlined. The antithesis of it has to be considered both for purposes of a fuller understanding of the highest good and for determining the *sadhana* or pathway for realizing that good. Evil has been described in the *Vedarthasangraha* in a few broad strokes through pregnant phrases and from them we have to gather the picture of evil and its progression to further evil.

The first and fundamental factor is the absence of the vision of the Supreme. This is the greatest evil, and the cause of all other evils. This failure to apprehend the Divine involves a misapprehension of all the finite categories. Nature gets to be looked upon as independent and the individual soul too gets to be considered a self-dependent spirit. That in the long run leads to the error of supposing that the self is nothing other than the physical organism. This self-misconception is a direct consequence of the ignorance of the Supreme. The innate purity and transcendence of the self cannot be maintained

when the fact of its being an adjective of the Supreme is ignored. The misconception of self as identical with what it actually transcends leads to further results. It leads to the perversion of values. The nature of the ideals pursued depends upon the conception of the self. When that conception is erroneous wrong ideals come to be conceived as desirable. That the true end of the finite is the vision of the Supreme is suppressed and that real evil is the absence of that vision is not comprehended. An alternative scheme of values, centering round material pleasures and pains, comes to be formulated. That scheme of values is sought to be realized in action, through active devotion of will. Since the ideal is wrongly conceived, the resources of the spirit are abused in the performance of karma, which consists in doing what ought not to be done and not doing what ought to be done. Perversion of values, consequent upon the erroneous idea of the self, resulting from the failure of the vision of God, leads to the perversion of life and to the accumulation of moral merit and demerit (*punya-pāpa*) the latter being what leads to material sorrows and the former being what leads to material pleasures.

Now, *karma* (*papa-punya*) has four consequences: In the first place it establishes tendencies conscious and unconscious to perform similar actions. Secondly it reduces the moral worth of the individual. Virtues that follow from the previous cultivation of virtues are rendered impossible by the cultivation of vice. Vice delimits the prospects of the moral future. Thirdly it leads to pleasures and pains, the experiences that are the effects of moral merit and demerit. Lastly these consequences require, as a precondition of their experience, a limitation of the powers of the self. If there is knowledge of God, surely earthly pleasures will not appear as values and earthly pains will not appear as calamities. If there is a correct apprehension of the nature of the self, bodily fortunes and misfortunes do not produce their appropriate emotional effects. If there is the right conception of what is good and what is evil, pleasures and pains of a material character lose their powers of pleasing and hurting. Thus, for *karma* to produce its proper results, the self must be considerably blinded, misconceived and perverted.

Now the third consequence of *karma*, the production of experiences of pleasure and pains necessitates re-embodiment. This re-embodiment brings about the appropriate limitations and perversities of the soul necessary for undergoing the consequences of perverse action. Thus, while the lack of the vision of God is the root of the

pursuit of material values, the continuance of that lack of vision is necessary for the fructification of those material values. Bondage which is another term for embodiment for undergoing the consequences of *karma* leads to three types of experiences; namely the experience of pleasure, afflictions, and the neutral state. These experiences may arise from the action of the non-sentient environment or the sentient environment or the constitution of the mind and body of the individual. Under the influence of these experiences the individual does indulge in further *karma* that will repeat in its working the causation of a fresh embodiment and so on. Thus the ceaseless wheel of *karma* rotates.

The exact effect in spiritual terms of the three types of experiences, experiences of emotional neutrality, pleasures and pains must be understood. We have noted two facts about them. They originate from the absence of the vision of God and their capacity to affect the individual requires the maintenance and continuance of that absence of the highest good. The third fact about them is of radical importance. They are obstacles to the love of the vision of God. To view any existence with indifference on the ground of its irrelevance to our hedonistic aims is to view it as not being an embodiment of God. The consideration that all is an embodiment of Brahman would confer spiritual importance on all. To view earthly misfortunes as positive calamities is to forget that the only calamity for man is the failure to gain the vision of God. To view with satisfaction and revel in the enjoyment of material pleasures is to ignore that the true happiness of man lies in the discovery of the Supreme. Enjoyment of earthly pleasures creates an attachment to things whose renunciation is necessary for realizing the highest good. Thus the three types of experiences sustain the individual in a false perspective of values, which is antithetical to and preventive of the true perspective according to which the attainment of the Supreme vision is the *summum bonum* and all else is evil. The loves, hatreds and indifferences of life, prevent the emergence of the true love for God and that true hatred for situations that do obstruct that love and the true indifference to things that have no bearing on the practice of the love of God. Thus, fostering an opposite scheme of values, the worldly life extinguishes the right point of view as to what is really good and what is really evil. The worst result of bondage is the extinction of the love for freedom. An ungodly life is an evil not merely because it brings the threefold afflictions but also because it obstructs the emergence

of the love of God. This latter consideration is the weightiest from the spiritual point of view. Worldliness is bad both as a source of suffering and as a source of attachment to worldliness itself. The first and fundamental evil is the lack of vision of God. The last effect of that evil, its most dreadful effect, is the extinction of the love for that vision. Its intermediate effects are the afflictions which man hates for wrong reasons and seeks to overcome through wrong methods. We shall now consider the philosophy of the way.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE WAY

One of the three fundamentals of the Upaniṣadic philosophy according to Rāmānuja is the 'doctrine of the way'. What is the means for attaining to God-vision and for annihilating the fears inherent in the ungodly life?

Nothing by way of human effort is a direct and self-sufficing means to the attainment of the vision of God. This is a basic truth. No process of nature is a process independent of God. It is an operation of the Supreme. In the teleological sphere of human action and consequences of action, the *Mīmāṃsaka* attitude is that *karma* by itself, through its own causal efficacy produces the results good or bad. Even when an intermediate factor is recognised as in the concept of (transcendent potency) *apurva* that factor is conceived as other than the Supreme and the intervention of the Divine factor is considered superfluous. Now, Vedānta is definitely against such a supposition. It maintains that the law of *karma* is sustained by Brahman. Actions and fruits of actions are linked as means and end by God. Thus even in the sphere of mere moral causation God is the direct cause of the attainment of the ends of action and the action by itself does not possess the power of causation. Thus, while even physical causation and the moral causation of good and evil are sustained through the agency of God, it goes without saying that the *summum bonum* can only be a gift of divine grace. This is no mere inference on the basis of these two cases. There are positive statements in the Upaniṣads that Brahman reveals itself only to those whom it chooses for its revelation. The vision of God is not an achievement. It is a gift of God. This fact implies no pessimism or uncertainty. On the contrary it makes for an exalted hope that what depends on the grace of God is more certain to happen than what would solely depend upon human strength. The power and goodness of the Supreme are more certain

realities than the powers of man. God's love of man is infinitely keener than man's self-love and omnipotence knows no failure. Blessed are we that our salvation does not depend upon our uncertain capabilities but rests ultimately on the nature of God. Further, whatever capabilities man may have, are dwarfed and mutilated in the state of imperfection. Their existence itself is a gift of God and their proper utilisation is also the result of divine grace. Even when they are properly utilized, the ultimate means for the attainment of the supreme vision of God is God Himself.

But divine grace involves no violence to individual personality. It does not operate in the direction of securing the *summum bonum* when that direction of its operation is not desired by the individual. This too is a fundamental law of the supreme working of Divine grace. All good is a gift of God. But no gift is thrust on unwilling and undesiring individuals. This is neither a limitation nor a denial of the compassion or omnipotence of God. The vision of God is a fulfilment of individual personality and not a suppression of it. It will not be such a fulfilment, when it is inflicted upon loveless souls. Its very quality as the supreme good demands individual aspiration and longing for it. God, as Vedāntadeśika puts it, gives evil when evil is desired, though it is evil, because it is His fundamental nature to fulfil the desires of the individual. Thus love for perfection is a fundamental pre-supposition of perfection. This does not make God's grace conditional. That aspiration must receive fulfilment is itself a law that is an expression of the unconditional grace of God. This dependence on aspiration is for rendering the fulfilment a real joy and substantial self-realisation. It is out of sheer grace that Divine grace awaits the birth of aspiration; otherwise it would be a violation of personality. Grace despotic would be less of grace, than grace responsive to and demanding human longing for grace. Reality the condition is just an occasion. Human longing for divine grace is not the cause or condition generating that grace. It just affords the condition under which the fruits of grace will have their natural effects on the individual. Grace leads to supreme joy when it is longed for and thus the longing constitutes not a cause of grace but the cause of the proper appreciation of the fruits of grace. Hunger is not the cause of food but the condition for the enjoyment of food. Even so longing for the blessed vision of the Lord just furnishes the condition for the adequate enjoyment of the vision.

Thus the love of the vision of the Supreme is necessary. This in essence is *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is love of God carried to the extent of longing for the divine grace that would bring to the individual the vision supreme. 'We must choose to be chosen'. God reveals Himself to those who love Him to the extent of longing for that self-revelation of God. Love not developed to that intensity and altitude does not lead to revelation.

Rāmānuja, describes this highest *bhakti* as a form of knowledge. It is 'intellectual love'. He is opposed to the popular and unscientific distinction between knowledge and love. The knowledge of God, who is the supreme reality, supremely blissful, itself passes into the love of God. Knowledge of the Supreme and the love of the Supreme are not two distinct psychical processes. To know God and not to have that knowledge converted into love is a sheer impossibility. True knowledge is knowledge of God and true love is love of God. The identity of the object brings about the fusion of the two reactions of the individual spirit to God. The self is not an aggregate of faculties. Its functioning is a single process both of the nature of love and knowledge. This identification of love and knowledge is a definite teaching of the Upaniṣads. When it is said that the Supreme reveals itself to those whom it chooses, the fact of their being choiceworthy is implied and there can be no worth in the chosen except love that hungers after that choice. The seer is said to find Brahman through the 'heart', which clearly means love. At the same time knowledge is said to be the means of release. There is no doubt that the unity of love and the liberating knowledge is affirmed by all these passages.

The nature of the knowledge said to be the means of release must be clearly understood. It cannot mean mere verbal understanding of the texts like 'That thou art'. No view seriously holds that mere understanding of texts is the road to salvation. Understanding of texts in an inward and profoundly convincing manner culminating in the direct experience of the Absolute may be held to be the means of the final freedom. It is of course possible to argue that texts are properly understood only when such inward conviction and immediate realization are brought about by such understanding. The first understanding of texts is not to be dispensed with altogether as the starting point of the spiritual process of understanding is in this first grasp of the texts. Now this lower understanding of the texts, though servicable is not the means of release. Continuance of bondage and all that it involves are observed even in the case of erudite scholars.

It must be understanding of the nature of realization, immediate and direct, that may be held the means of *mokṣa*. There are difficulties in this view of knowledge also. The final vision of God is not a means at all; It constitutes the end itself. It is the vision of the Supreme that is effected by the Supreme. It is not a matter for human achievement. Thus the emancipating wisdom is not textual understanding, for that is not sufficient for the purpose on hand and it is not the direct realization of God, for that realization is the end and fruition of all spiritual endeavours. *Sākṣatkāra* is not a *sādhana*, it is *phala* itself.

Then what is that knowledge that is the means of the *summum bonum*? Rāmānuja answers that it is knowledge of the nature of meditation, unbroken and evergrowing. It is not mere cognition. It is cognition that involves volition. It is practising the remembrance of God steadily. It is sustaining oneself in the ceaseless thought of God. This meditation must become so perfect as to become almost a perception in its vividness and intensity of the awareness of the Supreme. Since God is of the nature of joy, this meditation takes on the form of love. That love must mature into its utmost form. Then we have *Parabhakti*. *Parabhakti* is a process consisting of knowledge, taking the form of meditation, which develops into perceptual vividness and concreteness and which ultimately becomes one with the absorbing devotion to God. The Upaniṣads do not distinguish the liberating knowledge from meditation and they do not distinguish this meditation from love or bhakti. When the *sādhana* develops to this perfection, the Supreme reveals itself. That revelation, if lasting, is *mukti* itself. If it is momentary it adds to the intensity of love that is called *parama bhakti*. In the end there will be the final liberation of the nature of the ever-lasting vision of God, which is the fulfilment of knowledge, will and love.

This highest *bhakti* is itself the culminating phase of a long process of spiritual culture which is described as bhaktiyoga, the pathway of devotion. The *yoga* consists of the various manifestations of the spirit of devotion like praise, adorations, worship, chanting the names of God and devout remembrance of God.¹ It consists of the physical and spiritual cultivation of the practices and moods of devotion. Devotion fed and nourished by these processes develops in intensity and range and matures into *parabhakti*.

¹ Stuti, smṛiti, namaskṛiti, vandana, yajna, kirtana, guṇasmarana, vachana, dyana, archana, pranama.

The practice of the process of devotion depends upon and is aided by three contributory factors. The knowledge of the Supreme and of all that concerns the philosophy of the spirit must be earnestly acquired through devotion to the holy scriptures and to the holy preceptors. It is on this solid foundation of knowledge that spiritual life should be built up. The mind of man is subject to the three *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Of these *rajas* and *tamas* are spiritual hindrances. They must be subdued and if possible annihilated. The method for effecting that purification is *karma-yoga* as taught in the *Bhagavad Gīta*. *Karma-yoga* is not the principal means of release but it is the means of means, as it is necessary for developing purity of mind for the wholehearted cultivation of *bhakti-yoga*. In addition to the practise of *karma-yoga*, the aspirant must cultivate proper dispositions (*ātmaguṇa*) like control of the mind, control of the senses, austerity, purity, forgiveness, straight-forwardness, discriminations as to what is to be feared and not to be feared, compassion and non-injury. (*Śama dama tapas śoucha kṣama ārjava bhayābhayaśthanaviveka daya and ahimsa*). These dispositions along with *karmayoga* effect the purification of mind. There is another basic factor which lies at the root of this soul-culture, and operates as the saving factor at every critical turn in spiritual progress and completes the whole march and pilgrimage of the spirit. That is *prapatti* or *sarāṇāgati*. *Sarāṇāgati* is surrender to the Supreme. It involves three elements namely, firm conviction that one belongs essentially to God (*svarūpasamarpana*) the firm dedication of the fruits of one's endeavour to God (*phala-samarpana*) and the transfer of one's responsibility in the matter of spiritual progress to the Supreme (*bhārasamarpana*). It implies the definite surrender of the sense of being the 'doer' and the offering of this 'doer-ship' to God. This surrender of spiritual responsibility for one's own perfection, is what initiates, carries through and perfects the whole adventure to the Lord. Such a surrender truly perfects the progress of the spirit, for then, the progress does not depend upon the finite resources of the 'seeker' but upon the infinite resources of the 'sought'. All care is at an end and superfluous, when one has taken the care to throw all his cares at the feet of the Lord. Life is at its best when it is placed in the hands of the Best. No sorrows, fears or doubts ought to haunt one who has accomplished this final sacrifice, the sacrifice of the ego at the altar of the Supreme.

Now this surrender may be of two kinds. It may be for purposes of perfecting and completing the process of *bhakti*. The end is *bhakti*

and surrender is the means thereof. Through *bhakti* the devotee ultimately attains to the grace of the Lord that blesses him with the vision supreme. There are devotees who feel themselves incompetent and unenlightened to proceed in this arduous pathway of devotion. They may also be too impatient for waiting for the perfecting of this *sādhana*. For such people *saraṇāgati* is prescribed as the direct means of release. It is not that *bhakti* is discarded; *bhakti* as *sādhana* is discarded. *Bhakti* that is an essential implication of the vision of God becomes part of the goal sought after. From *saraṇāgati*, the progression is direct to the realization of the *summum bonum*. It is throwing oneself wholly without reservation and without fears at the sovereign mercy of the Supreme. There is nothing that cannot be accomplished through such self-surrender. Even the *summum bonum* is attainable through such final surrender. The rest is all joy and fulfilment for the devotee who has unburdened himself of spiritual cares at the feet of his sovereign Beloved.

There is a feeling among scholars that the doctrine of *prapatti* is a *pancharātra* invention without roots in the Upaniṣads. That is to over-look the *Taittirīya* section on 'nyāsa' and 'Ātma-yāga', the 'namaha' of the *Isa* and other Upaniṣads. Even the *Katha Upaniṣad* and the *Śvetasvatāra* are explicit on the matter. The *Rāmāyana*, *Mahābhārata* and the *Gītā* in particular give paramount importance to *prapatti*. That the *pancharātra* deviates from the Vedic teaching is an ill-proved thesis. While a total ascription of the theory of *prapatti* to the *Pancharātra* is wrong, there have been attempts to assimilate it wholly to *bhakti*. Vedāntadeśika devotes a whole treatise *Nikṣepa-rakṣa* to a refutation of the attempts to subsume *prapatti* under *bhakti*. The position is essentially simple. Surrender to God is an all-accomplishing means at the disposal of man. When he resorts to surrender for purposes of attaining to perfection of *bhakti*, it is a part of *bhakti*. But it can also be resorted to for the purpose of securing the final vision of God itself doing away with *bhakti* as a further ultimate means. This reconciliation is definitely outlined in Rāmānuja's devotional compositions. It goes to the exceptional credit of Vedāntadeśika to have expounded the doctrine of *bhakti* and *prapatti* fully and explicitly, thus elaborating the basic intuitions of Rāmānuja on the issue. While the denial of *prapatti* as an independent means is thus repudiated, there is another tendency to repudiate *bhakti* altogether and to exalt the role of *prapatti* as an exclusive and the only means of moksha. This too is an error and goes against the

fundamental teaching of Rāmānuja. It again goes to the exceptional credit of Vedāntadeśika to have combatted and refuted such fanatical advocacy of *parpatti*. *Bhakti* and *prapatti* are both the means for securing the grace of God.

The pervading characteristic of Rāmānuja's treatment of the doctrine of the way is the spirit of synthesis. He works out a five-fold synthesis. Firstly the *sādhana* according to him is a synthesis of divine grace and human efforts in such a way that the supremacy of God and the ethical responsibility of man are both preserved. Secondly it is the synthesis of knowledge and works in such a way that knowledge retains its primacy and karmayoga is considered contributory to it. Thirdly there is the combination of knowledge and *upāsana* constituting a single process of active meditation on Brahman. Fourthly meditation culminates in *parābhakti* or supreme devotion. Fifthly the claims of *bhakti* and *prapatti* are harmonised with due regard to their distinctive natures and the forms of their combination.

Rāmānuja's philosophy of the Supreme includes another fundamental doctrine which we must consider now. He characterises Brahman as the aesthetic absolute. He attributes to It supreme beauty. It is not merely the supreme Reality, pure and infinite and of the nature of *jñāna* and *ānanda*. It is of the character of transcendent beauty. His main reasons for this doctrine are four. (1) The Vedic and Upaniṣadic texts abound in descriptions of Brahman in definitely aesthetic terms. The radiance of form and the transcendent beauty of Brahman are repeatedly affirmed. There is no rational possibility of discarding such aesthetic characterizations of the ultimate, while the whole reality of Brahman is made known to us only through the same scriptures. Brahman is unknowable through other avenues of knowledge and this exclusive avenue does attribute to Brahman beauty. (2) The *smṛities*, *purāṇas* and *itihāsas* also corroborate and amplify the aesthetic characterisation of Brahman. (3) Sages and saints who have gained the ecstatic vision of the Supreme have lost themselves in rapture over the infinite beauty of God. (4) It is specially insisted that the transcendent form of the Supreme can be intuited only through a mind of absolute purity. The senses and the ordinary apparatus of apprehension are of no avail in this sphere. Only the purest mind can get access to the divine beauty. Now errors are possible and illusions are inevitable for a mind that is deficient and impure. When the mind is perfectly cleansed, it can see nothing but

absolute Reality. This consideration by itself is a sufficient guarantee of the reality of the aesthetic aspect of Brahman.

This contention by itself is not implying anything impossible. There have been great thinkers in the West also who upheld the ultimacy of the aesthetic approach to reality. Plato in his *Symposium* has pictured the world of reality in aesthetic terms. Whitehead in modern times has contended that the universe is fundamentally an aesthetic order. Other types of order are derivative and subordinate. Nothing but the semitic prejudice could exclude the aesthetic idea of God. When the beauty of God is spoken of, we are not materializing the Divine. Beauty is not a material category. Matter expressive of spirit is beauty. That the universe of matter is a revelation of the supreme Spirit is a natural thought. To conceive of the Supreme as being external to material nature in every way is not to recognize its omnipresent self-manifestation. An extra-cosmic God is a limited being. A philosophy of Divine immanence and the view of matter as a vehicle for divine Self-manifestation do necessitate the aesthetic conception of God. Beauty cannot be merely phenomenal. It must ultimately characterize the supreme Principle. Aristotle laid down the dictum that poetic truth is of a higher order than historical truth. There is a more penetrating insight into the real in aesthetic experience than in ordinary experience. All masters of Western aesthetics have subscribed to this dictum. In Indian aesthetics the great problem of aesthetic pleasure is tackled in connection with the treatment of the tragic emotion. How do the normal moods and emotions, of varying hedonic qualities, get transmuted into joy in aesthetic experience? The fundamental answer is that in that experience *rajas* and *tamas* are eliminated and pure *sattva* prevails. Every experience contains potentialities of joy which get realized when it is lived through under conditions of pure *sattva*. But *sattva* is a source of joy and also a source of illumination. That is the quality that should be cultivated for discovery of truth. To be in *sattva* is to be undeluded. So the very condition that transmutes ordinary emotion into aesthetic joy invests it with the gift of illumination. There is a core of truth in every aesthetic joy.

Further, how to account for the element of joy itself that is an essential ingredient of the aesthetic attitude? The Upaniṣads are emphatic on that point. There can be no joy except in Brahman. The infinite is the all-inclusive source of delight. The finite is at conflict with itself when it loses its hold on the infinite. When it establishes

itself in union with the whole, it gains internal harmony, peace and joy. To speak of beauty as delightful and to divorce it from the real is a violation of the fundamental spirit of the Upaniṣads. All views that seek to explain the aesthetic value purely in subjective terms, as consisting in the co-ordination and equilibrium of psychical factors, overlook the fundamental philosophical principle, that the finite subject can attain no self-integration without integrating itself to the infinite Reality. If beauty is a factor making for integration of personality, it must surely be due to the fact that it integrates personality with the supreme Reality.

It is true that ordinarily beauty and reality are not to be identified. That is a provisional alienation. When finite beauties and finite reals are under question, the alienation is natural. But when infinite beauty is thought of, it must be one with infinite reality for it involves perfect *sattva*, the factor making for the apprehension of reality. When infinite reality is conceived, it can not be supposed to exclude the reality that is integral to beauty. The final fusion of beauty and reality is an inescapable result.

'But,' it may be asked, 'is it not sheer anthropomorphism to describe Brahman as beautiful?' That necessitates a critical approach to the question of anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism is interpreting the ultimate principle on the analogy of human personality. It is a perfectly invalid procedure when analogy is made the sole ground and proof of the interpretation. If on other grounds a view of reality is established and we discover that the picture of reality established makes it analogous to human personality, it is illogical to condemn that picture for that analogy. Analogy is an insufficient method of proof and is an equally insufficient weapon for disproof.

There is no view of reality, not excluding the coarsest naturalism, which escapes the charge of anthropomorphism altogether. The coarse naturalist thinks of himself as a physical entity and he interprets the universe as a thoroughly physical system. How is anthropomorphism abolished in this philosophy? Can this philosophy be condemned on this ground? Mere correspondence between the human and the real is not enough to constitute anthropomorphism. That correspondence must be the only ground offered in support of the view of the real. Then the view is untenable. An exactly similar situation obtains in all philosophies of Idealism. The interpretation of the absolute in terms that make it analogous to the spirit in man

is not by itself an error. That analogy, if used as the sole premiss for the theory of the Absolute, may constitute an error.

Rāmānuja's view of the Supreme never minimises its transcendent nature and the supra-cosmic aspect. The uniqueness of the Infinite is never given up.¹ How can such a view be mere anthropomorphism? When the 'body' of God is spoken of it means the whole universe of nature and finite spirits. This whole universe is pictured as an infinitesimal part of the total form of God. The immensity of divine Beauty contains and surpasses the cosmos. Its supra-cosmic aspect reduces to insignificance its cosmic aspect. How can all this be mere anthropomorphism?

'But,' it may be objected, the concept of personality is ultimate for Rāmānuja. That is enough to invalidate the system'. Why is the category of personality necessarily finite? The answer concerns itself with an account of the manner in which the awareness of the self is supposed to be arrived at. 'The apprehension of the non-self is primary. Subsequently the distinction and contrast between the non-self and the self is apprehended. As an effect of this contrast the idea of the self emerges. Thus in the very awareness of the self, the contrast to the non-self is involved. Hence the self is a finite category'. This is a rough statement of a common criticism. It implies that the awareness of the non-self does not pre-suppose the awareness of the self. As a matter of fact, all awareness, all manifestation of attributive consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*), presupposes substantive consciousness, (*Svaroopa-bhūta-jñāna*). The identification of the non-self as non-self is a derivative process. The self is the positive principle and non-self is the negative principle. The apprehension of the positive is non-relative, while that of the negative is relative and derivative. The essence of the self is not contrast from the non-self, but self-affirmation, which is the basis for the apprehension of the non-self as well as for all apprehension of similarities and contrasts. Thus to make the awareness of the self a derivative of the contrast from non-self is fundamentally wrong. This is in substance the defence of the concept of personality put forth by Lotze.²

Bradley is keen on discrediting the notion of personality. He refuses to inquire into the notion of personality. He does not examine Lotze's account of the nature of the self.³ But he satisfies himself by

¹ See Lotze *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 171.

² Lotze, the *Microcosmus* and the *Philosophy of Religion*.

³ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 471.

urging that those who define personality or self in such a way as not to make finitude essential to it are intellectually dishonest. They want a God who is personal in the sense of a spirit other than the finite spirits, but defend the notion of personality as not involving finitude. This is the intellectual dishonesty supposed to have been exposed. The dismissal is unconvincing. It is quite possible that the meaning of personality developed by Lotze and others may be sound, while their use of it may be wrong. How does the use constitute a refutation of the fundamental interpretation of the notion of the self? Further, the transcendence of the Supreme and the 'otherness' of the finite spirits is not based on the concept of self as such. It is at least in Indian thought based upon the consideration that a pure and infinite Consciousness, one without a second, cannot be the ground of the illusory universe and illusory individuation.¹ On other grounds, that remain unassailable, even if the concept of personality is wholly given up, the fact of Brahman transcending the finite spirit is established.

Bradley supposes that his criticism of the notion of the self is quite fatal to the category of personality. The basic elements of that criticism are the following: A large portion of what is thought of as the self is capable of becoming the non-self. Self-consciousness, as an understanding of the self-by the self is impossible for there is a core in the 'felt' back-ground of the self which can never become an object to its explicit consciousness. The criticism is fatal to a defective formulation of the nature of the self.² If the self is conceived as characterized by attributive consciousness, which is both an element in personality and capable of objectification, the possibility of large elements of the self becoming non-self is explained quite clearly. That the core of the self, the 'felt background,' is incapable of becoming an object to itself is also easily understandable, for the substantive consciousness is 'self-luminous' and is not to be lit up and objectified by the attributive consciousness. But it is not for that reason without self-consciousness altogether. There is the self-consciousness involved in its being a 'felt' background and not an 'unfelt background' and it is the background of the subject and not the object. Self-consciousness constitutive of the self is not a consciousness that externalizes the self in opposition to itself. All the confusion involved in the

¹ See Pringle Pattison. *'Idea of God'*, p. 277.

² Metz. *Hundred Years of British Philosophy* 388. *Muirhead Platonic Tradition Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy* p. 276.

criticism is due to a failure to distinguish between the attributive consciousness and substantive consciousness. The criticism is fatal to those doctrines of the self that do not uphold the vital analysis of the self into substantive consciousness and attributive consciousness. It is doubtful if Bradley has completely succeeded in overcoming and superseding the idea of self-consciousness in his account of the absolute experience. The Absolute is experience and it is without internal divisions of subject and object. The absence of division between the subject and object in experience is the precise character of self-consciousness. With the admission of this much of self-consciousness, the whole category of personality re-enters the citadel of the Absolute.

No objection to the category of personality can validly be based on the verdict of mystic experience. Mystic experience though insistent on the indissoluble oneness of God and man never minimises the utter transcendence of God. It is a unity that does not cancel the divinity and supremacy of the highest Reality. Moreover, as Whitehead observes with perfect accuracy, there is no consensus of opinion among mystics on the personality of the Supreme.¹ It is to be believed that there are various types of mystic experiences answering to the three types of Upanisadic texts, the analytical, explanatory and synthetic. Those varieties are capable of a harmonious interpretation and the one-sided emphasis on the purely synthetic mystics is not less fallacious than taking the synthetic texts of the Upanishads as exclusively true.²

Let us return to the concept of Beauty. There are two fundamental elements in beauty, immediacy and transcendence. The immediacy is what is obvious and was emphasized by Hegel in his affirmation of the essential sensuousness involved in all beauty. It is rooted in perceptual or imaginative presentation. There is no getting over of this factor of immediacy. What is not so obvious is the element of transcendence. That in the experience of beauty there is a factor that elevates, and sublimates consciousness to a higher plane of self-realization is a matter that has not received universal recognition. It is the failure to recognize this element that gave rise to the Platonic depreciation of poetry, though Plato, it must be admitted described the ultimate reality in aesthetic terms. It is the emphasis on this

¹ 'Religion in the Making'—55.

² See 'Evelyn Underhill's introduction to Tagore's *Hundred Poems of Kabir*.'

factor that marked Aristotle's defence of poetry. Disperagement of this aspect of elevation would reduce aesthetic experience to the level of pure sensual enjoyment, a reduction that destroys the autonomy of the aesthetic experience. The greatness of the Kantian critique of aesthetic experience lies in the definite recognition of the fact that the experience involves a fusion of the phenomenal and the noumenal, the sensuous particular and the universal and the world disclosed to the theoretical understanding and practical reason.¹ This ideal element is difficult to define and it is difficult to describe the precise manner of its operation in experience. The error of imputing explicit ethical consciousness would also destroy the autonomy of the consciousness of beauty. Aristotle introduced the notion of 'catharsis' as explanatory of the elevating function of the tragic poetry. There are conflicting accounts of catharsis and Aristotle does not explain the process in clear terms in his works available to us. There are at least four distinct views.

According to Lessing it means the purifications and moralisation of emotions. According to Ross, a contemporary Aristotelian scholar, tragedy mitigates the emotions through 'abreaction'. Milton understood catharsis as analogous to Homoeopathy. The best explanation seems to be that of Hegel. He maintains that the emotions evoked by poetry and lived through in poetic experience are apprehended in an unclouded perception and are understood reflectively. To reflect on a passion is to overcome it.² Reflection on the emotions is the method for over-coming subjection to them. This view accords well with Indian aesthetics according to which rajas and tamas are eliminated in poetic experience, and thus the resulting experience is itself an elevation. This elevation is not an effect or aim of the experience of beauty but is the very condition that makes the experience an experience of beauty. 'bhāva' (emotion) becomes 'rasa' (enjoyment) when released from rajas and tamas. *Sattva* when thus freed introduces a new scale of values, a new standard of perfection, which transcends empirical hedonistic scales and standards. It is this emergence of the trans-empirical scale of values that accounts for the consolations of tragedy as well as the 'divine discount' that is released in the enjoyment of sweetest sights and sounds that poets like Kālidāsa have marked

¹ See Bosanquet's 'Life and Philosophy' in the volume *Contemporary British Philosophy*—57.

² See Carriffs' *Philosophies of Beauty*—p. 163; Spinoza's *Ethics* Prop. III Book 5 and also the *Complete works of Swami Vivekananda*—Vol. I—page 174.

with unerring insight. Pleasures of sense do not wholly satisfy and sorrows of life do not wholly depress. It is this emergence of the supermundane sense of values that accounts for the uniform element of 'rasa' and 'ānanda' in all aesthetic experiences. It is again this sattvic factor that makes the forms of beauty more living and more substantially real than the things of common experience. The ideal is more real than the actual. Thus in all genuine beauty there is immediacy of apprehension as well the power to sublimate. This double-sidedness of the aesthetic is particularly noticeable in the experience of the sublime. In that there is a supersession of the empirical man and the affirmation of the spirit in man on a higher plane.

Rāmānuja describes Brahman as the aesthetic Absolute for the reason that it is 'śubha' and 'āśraya'. 'śubha' means that which elevates, sublimates and raises the contemplating soul to perfection. 'Āśraya' means that which is accessible, available for experience, an object of immediate experience. Brahman is immediate as well as transcendent. It is nearer than the nearest and can lead the soul to the highest *summum bonum*. The finite entities are accessible but are not elevating. The infinite nature of Brahman as *sat*, *chit*, *nirmala*, *ananda* and *ananta*, is what invests the contemplating soul with perfection, but is not accessible to common consciousness. It is Brahman, as beauty in its aesthetic aspect, that combines this twofold perfection of utter *saṁlabhya* and utter *paratva* 'intimacy' and 'ultimacy' to borrow the terms of Prof. Webb. This aspect of Brahman is the final justification for ascribing beauty to Brahman.¹

'But why does Brahman assume or possess this aspect of aesthetic self-manifestation?' The question receives a definite answer. Rāmānuja maintains that it is out of His compassion to the finite spirits that the Lord reveals Himself as transcendent beauty. The principle is well-illustrated in the truth of avatars. Avatars are principally for the purpose of making Himself accessible to mortals and to perfect them ultimately through such intimacy. As Kṛṣṇa, the Lord became the object of daily observation to mortals, stole their eyes and hearts and converted them into finest devotees by the revelation of his all-captivating beauty and perfections.² Sudarśanaśūri, says that God's beauty is for winning over the souls of mortals given to earthly

¹ See Vedāntasika. 'Dvayadhikara' in *Rahasyatrayasara*.

² See introduction to the *Geeta Bhashya* of Ramanuja.

temptations.¹ Vedāntadeśika puts the whole thought in a single verse of *Dayasataka*; 'God's compassion is the milky ocean. When a devotee purifies his mind and meditates on Him, out of that ocean emerges the nectar of divine beauty'.² The ancient story of the churning the milky ocean for getting 'amrita' is used with magnificent effect.

This is the common foundation of the entire Vaisnava tradition which describes God's beauty as a manifestation of His love and compassion. Tagore has laid his finger on the very soul of Vaiṣṇavism in his *Sādhana*. 'The Vaiṣṇava religion has boldly declared that God has bound himself to man and in that consists the greatest glory of human existence. In the spell of the wonderful rhythm of the finite he fetters himself at every step and thus gives his love out in music in his most perfect lyrics of Beauty. Beauty is *his wooing of our heart*. It can have no other purpose.'³ Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa gave expression to the same fundamental truth in his inimitable way. 'To a devotee God manifests Himself in various forms under the cooling influence of the deep devotion of his worshipper, the infinite reduces himself into finite and appears before him as a being with form.'⁴ Ultimately the transcendent beauty of God is an expression of His love and compassion.

While Rāmānuja expatiates on the beauty of incarnations, it should not be imagined that this beauty is a temporal mode of Divine self-manifestation. It is an eternal aspect of the Absolute. Those who reach perfection apprehend Brahman in all its manifestations and thus apprehend its love and compassion which reveal themselves through infinite Beauty. Nothing Divine stands cancelled for the perfected vision of God. There is no state of perfection to which the Divine in both its aspects of immediacy and transcendence does not stand self-revealed. Such self-revelation is the boundless beauty of God, ever accessible and ever elevating. It is said that Hanuman could ascend to the world of Vaikuntha if he so chose; but he preferred the incarnation of the Lord as Śrī Rāmachandra, in which incarnation he saw certain aspects of the Godhead more prominently displayed

¹ संसारचित्तवशीकरणार्थं भगवतः सौन्दर्यम् ।

Commentary on *Saranagatigadya*.

² The *Dayasataka*, p. 22.

³ 'The perfect decks itself in beauty for the love of the imperfect' the *Stray Birds* LXII of Tagore.

⁴ The *Gospel of Ramakrishna*, p. 784

than they could be in the larger perspective of the transcendent realm. Hence he chose to live in our world contemplating the glories of the particular incarnation!¹ The idea is that the attributes of the Divine like love and compassion are more manifested in our world of sorrow and imperfection. The devotee with the higher vision, though free from sorrow and imperfection, delights to contemplate the love and the compassion of God that manifest themselves through beauty. Thus the aspect of the Divine as beautiful is an enduring element in the absolute being of the Supreme.

Rāmānuja gathers together into one comprehensive statement the appreciations of divine beauty scattered in profusion throughout the sacred literature, the Vedas, *Upaniṣads*, *smṛtis*, *purāṇas*, *itihāsas* and the *Pancharātra*. He not merely synthesizes them but adds to the statement a refreshing and animating spirit of his own which is at once the spirit of poetry and of prayer, of metaphysics and mysticism and of a luminous commentary and of supreme adoration.

The concluding verse of the *Vedarthasangraha* describes the characteristics of the philosophical attitude. They are 'devotion to truth, width of vision, depth of insight into what is essential and openness of mind'. Rāmānuja says that the *Vedarthasangraha* has been composed for those who are endowed with these gifts. If the unqualified fail to appreciate it that signifies no blemish in a work. The men of wisdom and insight, impartial and devoted to truth, are the only men that matter and it is to such seekers that the work is addressed.

¹ See *Atimānusa stava* of Kooranatha.

OTHER WORKS OF THE AUTHOR

Sl. No.	Books	Publisher	Opinion
1.	Vedārtha-saṅgraha of Ramanuja—English Translation	Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Mysore.	"The translation is faithful, fine and scholarly" Pandita Raja Sri. D. T. Tatacharya.
2.	Vishnu-Tattva-Vinimaya of Madhva—English Translation	Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Mangalore.	"It is a remarkably fine and faithful rendering" Dr. R. Nagaraja Sarma.
3.	Naishkarmya-Siddhi of Sureswara—Introduction—English Translation and Notes	Prasaranga, the University of Mysore, Mysore.	"I take this occasion to tender you my sincere congratulations and appreciation of the manner in which you have conveyed in English the meaning and significance of the famous original" Sri. C. P. Ramaswami Iyer.
4.	Sri Ramanuja on the Gita	Sri Ramakrishnashram, Mangalore.	"This is an important and impeccable book written with singular conviction and remarkable ability" Swamy Adidevananda.
5.	Sri Ramanuja on the Upanishads	Prof. Rangacharya, Memorial Trust, 16, Sunkuwar Street, Triplicane, Madras.-5	"This is a unique and masterly attempt". Agni-hotram Ramanuja Thatha chariar.
6.	Introduction to the Vedārthasaṅgraha (First Edition)	Sri Sharada Press, Mangalore.	"A very valuable and scholarly production, In fact, this introduction serves the purpose of an independent treatise on the Visistadvaita school of Philosophy". Sri. V. Krishnamacharya. "Each and every difficult question raised and answered in the Vedārthasaṅgraha is explained and elucidated here in a thorough and convincing and masterly way. A modern publication more helpful in understanding Visistadvaita than this introduction can hardly be found" Pandita Raja. Sri D. T. Tatacharya.