

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION OR COSMOLOGY

The historical perspective and method for unravelling of the origin, or rather, the enigma of a determinate beginning of the world is certainly actuated by a true scientific impulse. If the beginning (becoming) of the world has really been infinite, no amount of history will bring us nearer to its origin; “it is vain to sound the bottomless abyss of the past with the puny plummet of science”. But if we do grant that things had an origin (in time), and their history a beginning, then we escape from the implications of the false historical method, which states that ‘becoming’ or change only exists, in which case, search for understanding evolution is vain and futile. If there had been no beginning, there certainly could be no end, and no end to where we arrive at the end—no perfection, and hence no meaning in evolving. The vindication of a determinate beginning and a real origin as the presupposition of any historical account, commits us to the doctrine of a beginning of the world, atleast, of the present order of things, and gives us a hope of attainment of a perfected order at the End. All real efforts at a metaphysics yield the conception of a unitary principle or substance, from which all creation proceeds towards an attainment of a perfected End. The effort at such a conception is nothing more than an effort, and if the historiological impulse were anything, then we can prima facie accept and not criticize, except for the purpose of demonstrating the strict logical sequence of evolution, from the assumptions basic and integral to that system, and in our case of the Vedanta of Rāmānuja.

It has been explained in the previous chapter, that there is non-difference between the totality of cause and totality of effect and what takes place is only a revelation of behaviour of the cause in time and space because the sūkṣma cidacid-viśiṣṭha Brāhmaṇ passes over (parināmayati) into sthūla-cidacid viśiṣṭha Brāhmaṇ, the undifferentiated becomes differentiated into names and forms (nāma-rūpa).

The cause of the world, has been said to be Brāhmaṇ,¹ in so far as he is the Lord (Iśa), sustainer and controller (niyantar) of the Prakṛti (matter) and the jivas, to whom he stands in the relation of soul (śarīrin), and to whom they stand in the relation of body (Sarīra). In this sense of eternal relation, and ownership and this ownership being never disjunctable (aprathasiddha) Brāhmaṇ, the supreme Spirit, is the absolute cause of the Universe (jagat), and not in any other sense. (Liv.1). Cause and effect

¹ khri Bhāṣya I. i. 2**Janmadyasya yatah**

area as eternally related as soul and body, and it is a unity in difference. Identity is a misleading expression though not wrong. If we prefer to use that word at all, we must be careful not use it in the meaning of Advaita; further, our way of putting it has a synthetic note about it, which surely, the causal relation is. It is a cause-effect continuum.

The original state or condition of Brāhmaṇ, or cause is stated to be at some places, as Sat, or mere Brāhmaṇ with none else, or it is stated to be Asat. “The highest Self, which in its nature of unlimited knowledge and bliss, has for its body all sentient and non-sentient beings— instruments of sport for him as it were—in so subtle a form, that they may be called non-existing; and as they are his body, he may be said to consist of them (tanmaya).” (Liv.27).² “Because the whole body of other things is spoken of as Asat or nonexistent on account of particular attributes not being manifest, of being absolutely dependent”³ The truth of the statement that there was Asat only means, that the universe was in a such a condition of absorption that they, as it were, were not. It certainly was not a Śūnya.⁴ Then his involutive power being manifest (saṃhāra ichha), He alone was.

Thus God through his willing the creation as also involution, and of the complete control he has eternally upon them, becomes by these two facts, the upādāna and nimitta kāraṇa of the universe. The Samkhyan evolutionary hypothesis is accepted by Vedānta and wherever it differs from it, it is only when it is absolutely necessary for its metaphysical theory.

Samkhyan evolutionary theory postulates matter or Pradhāna as the mūlam (origin or source) or the first cause, out of which all nature (viśvarūpa) evolves due to its own immanent desire to please the Puruṣa, to whom it is near. Its three guṇas are the eternal constituents of every one of matter’s categories viz., Mahat (also known in Sāṅkhya as the Buddhi the instrument of ratiocination in the monadic evolution) Ahaṅkāra (which with the manas and the jñāṇēndriyās from the Antahkāraṇa), tanmātrās and also the gross elements. So much so, samkya is also known as guṇa-parināma-vāda. Except Prakṛti which contains these three guṇas in equilibrium, in a very subtle condition, the rest of the categories are in an un-equilibrated condition due to preponderance or lessening of the guṇas over each other, hence they are known as Vikaras or modifications. Prakṛti first passes over into mahat on its contact

² Śrī Bhāṣya I. iv 27.

³ Madhva Bhāṣya II. i. 18.

⁴ “Nor was there Asat; there was gloom.” Rg. Veda X.129.

Others say, Non-being this was in the beginning. (Ch.Up.VI.2.1) This passage has to be taken as a refutation of the tenet of primitive absolute non-existence.. a refutation undertaken for the purpose of strengthening the doctrine that this world has sprung from that which is. Sankara Bhasya (I.iv.15)

with Puruṣa, consciousness of willing (ichha-śakti) being manifest at that stage in matter. It is the initial drive in the original matter to distinguish itself, standing thus as the cause of ahaṅkāra, the particular principle of individuation or centrism, a tendency visible in all matter. At this stage, perhaps as B.G.Tilak says, it can be compared to be the beginning of the Naiyyayic atom or Aṇu⁵. This ahaṅkāra represents a definite cleavage-product standing as the vast triple-divisioned chaos of atomic bed. Here we have three kinds of ahaṅkāra viz., Sattva, (Called the Vaikārika), Rajas (called Taijasa), Tamas (or the Bhūtādi) respectively forming the three kinds of self-assert tendency. And with the rajasic and sattva ahaṅkāras there is splitting of the general evolution into two branches viz., the subjective and the objective, which latter, is mainly the tamasic product and perhaps a little of rajas. Deviating from the main line, ahaṅkāra (sattva and rajas) develops manas and the ten indriyas of sense and action. Splitting from the main tree, the Bhūtādi of the tamasic cord develops the five subtle tanmātrās, which in-turn evolve the five gross elements of ether (ākāśa), air (vāyu) fire (agni) water (apas), earth (annam or Pṛthvi). The last five gross elements standing in no causal relation to any others they are called viṣayās or vikṛitis. By the intermixture and combination of these five elements according to the blind teleology immanent in Prakṛti, the world of nature, a beautiful enjoyable but changing creation, evolves. This, in short, is the Sāṅkhyan theory of evolution. Mūla Prakṛiti is not an effect of anything. Buddhi, ahaṅkāra and the five tanmātrās are both effects and causes of other things, the eleven indriyas including the manas, and the five gross elements are effects, Puruṣas are neither causes nor effects of anything, they are mere chinmātrasvarūpa sākṣins (mere witnessing intelligences or consciousness).⁶

The Vēdāntik view of Rāmānuja, however is, that Prakṛti being subject of the will of Brāhmaṇ and standing in a dependent relation to him as body (Sarīra), is an effect of his, in which case, the primary denotation of the word Mūlam, would go to Him and not to Prakṛti, the dependent existence. The term Avyakta, thus, would apply to the causal condition of Brāhmaṇ, who controls, sustains and enjoys the creation (I. Iv.2.)⁷ Further of this dependence of matter on Brāhmaṇ, which Samkhya does not admit, Rāmānuja refutes it only in so far as it does not admit the 'paravasyata' on Brāhmaṇ is concerned, and by no means intends to deny Un-evolved matter and its manifestations or modifications in themselves⁸. Pradhānam, if it has got any ends to subserve which Samkhyans assert that it does, then it is only in this dependent relation as fulfilling his ends, as his body,⁹ that "Pradhāna and so on are capable of

⁵ Gīta Rahasya: B.G. Tilak (Telugu. Trans. 235 Chap. VIII)

⁶ मूलप्रकृति रविकृति महदाढ प्रकृतिर्विकृतिमस्सप्त!
शोदश विकारो मप्रकृति उप्रूष !!3!! (Sāmkhya Kārika Verse 3.)

⁷ B.G VIII 3-21, Śrī Bhāṣya I.iv.23.

⁸ Śrī Bhāṣya I. Iv. 3.

⁹ Śrī Bhāṣya II. i. 9

accomplishing their several ends” (I. iv. 3) Otherwise, the different essential natures of them all could never exist nor act, much less their activities (II. ii. 1-5). Further, the activity of prakṛiti would have to be construed as something like the blind schopenhaurian will, or the Von Hartmannian Unconscious, which can never explain the intelligent evolution of the world. And only a pessimist will deny the intelligent unfolding of the world-process to whom the intelligence is only a very novel and out of the way product and not the reverse, and intelligence would be as Haeckel conceived and as the behaviourist conceives it today, only as due to neurological and cortical reaction to environment.

Though one has to suffer for anthropomorphic beliefs one is bound to hold, and which as Prof. Schiller says, everyone is confined to, the only alternative being to prefer a good one to a bad one truth is “in the beginning” was spirit; neither temperament or whim, not feeling or arbitrary will, lies at the root of (Creation) world-process, but Divine Intelligence, the Logos is the prime ground of all things. Reason as the rule and not reason or chance as the exception in this world we can understand, but the reverse we cannot comprehend. Regularity is found in nature as there is spirit, world-reason in it. The process of nature takes place according to strict mathematical principles—more geometric as Spinoza would say¹⁰.”

Thus it is for Vedanta, Brāhmaṇ is the first cause, the ultimate category from which everything evolves. The evolution of the world in the order of unfoldment is spoken of¹¹ in various ways in the Upaniṣads, “From paramātman ether; from ether air, from air fire; from fire water; and from water earth were generated”. This sequence of elementary distinctions of the Bhūtādi is due to the subtle Prakṛiti manifesting more and more grossly (though not wholly as it is infinite)¹², in its descendent wave, and finally attaining the grossest form of earth, water being subtler than earth, fire more than water, air more than fire and ether of Space more than air, and Prakṛiti is subtler than all these Paramātman and ātman are subtler than Prakṛiti, being spiritual. It is that the manifestations in sequent order are due to more and more qualitative differentiation of the sensum according to the capacity of the Sūkṣma indriyas to evolve gross physical organs, to stimulate the functioning of those organs of sensation¹³.

¹⁰ Philosophical tendencies of the Present day. L. Stein Vol, iii pp. 429-430.

¹¹ आत्मना आकाशसंभूतः आकाशाद्वायुः, वायोरग्निः अग्निरापः
अद्वाः पृथिवि! पृथिव्या ओषधिभ्योऽन्नम्! Taitt. Up. 2.1

¹² Saṅkhyā says that even whilst the Prakṛiti evolves it does not completely pass over into another condition. A fragment of it alone manifested as the sensorium. Bhagavad Gīta agrees with this.

¹³ Speaking on the subject of the number of organs, the Sutras mention them to be eleven only. Now we are aware of only five organs of sensation and we do have organs of activity. What is

शब्दराग क्षात्रमस्य जायते भवः॥आत्मनः

रूपराग तधाचक्षुः धाणम् गन्धजिज्ञय ! Mahā Bhārata

Brāhmaṇ is the cause of Prakṛti's movements as it is inert per se. First he wills the evolution of Mahat or the cosmic greatness (it is held that this should not be treated as the Buddhi the material category as consciousness is not a material entity but the characteristic attribute or mode of the Intelligent Self). Then the second aspect is that of cosmic will to be distinct and the evolution of the five primal cosmic elements of ether of Space, air, fire, water, and earth. Some people say there were only three elements: fire, water, and earth, leaving ether of space out because it is not a substance but that in which things move. This grand cosmic adjustment is prior to formation of any individual bodies or things or even worlds. This is called the general creation (advaraka srishti).

After this general creation has taken place, Brāhmaṇ keeps the seed which contains the cosmic soul (which is the aggregate of individual souls who are yet under bondage or influence of karma which has not been consummated by them in the prior creation) into the cosmic waters. And out of it is born the Golden egg, and from it the Cosmic Deity who is also known as Hiranyagharbha, is born. And from Brahma issues the whole sadvāraka srishti the special creation. As the Rg. vēda says हिरण्यधर्मस्समसताग्रे भुतस्यजातः पति रेक आसीत्. The Taittiriya text says “first arose water,” which could only mean that of the gross pure creation that was the first, the rest being more subtle manifestations. “Even before water there was Puruṣa,” is another text. (Katha. Up. 2-6)¹⁴ From this Puruṣa, first tejas, water, earth, and through their intermixtures all other things came about(Ch. Up. 6. 2. 6). Again it is said that from Puruṣa the five elements rose in order (Taittiriya. Up. 2-1) The last statement of the Taittiriya Upanishad is accepted by Vedanta Sūtrās (II.iii. 1-15). Thus Maṇu says “: In this water was placed a seed (bija) and from that arose Brahma, and from him and world arose.” And further it is even said “that on subjective side the Pranās, Manas, the indriyās, and the composite elements were born.

तस्मादेतद् ब्रह्म नामरूप मन्त्रज्ञ जायते, एतस्माज्जायाते प्राणो मनस्सर्वेन्द्रियाणिच खं वायुर्जोतिरापः प्रिक्ष्वे विक्ष्वे धारणे.

maintained is that even though we may evolve more powers, sensu eminentiori, what really takes place is that they may be more perfect but a divine vision must yet be a sensation of light, a divine hearing an auditory sensation.

¹⁴. Adbhyāh pūrvamajāyata

There are several statements in the Upaniṣads which speak of water or air as 'thinking', 'seeing', or 'brooding' and out of it issue the next category or categories. It is quite true to reason to suppose that He who is in water, whose body is the water or in air and possessor of it, willed the evolution of the next category and produced them. The indirect and somewhat anthropomorphic if not animistic attribution of thought to the elements is not wrong at all, once we grant that there is spirit working through nature and souls, realizing itself through these its own ends of delight.

Summarising the whole group of statements and placing them in the best possible perspective we have :-

Firstly, a theory that never denies the Saṅkhyan evolution of the categories, indeed there is an acceptance of the evolution of the categories according to the principle "Guṇāguneshu varānte," in which case, we have the twenty five categories. And as the Vēdāntists accept Brāhmaṇ as the cause going one step further than Saṅkhya , there are bound to be twenty-six tattvas, but the categories are considered to be effects, as such Brāhmaṇ is not counted as an effect, in which case, it reduces the number of categories by one. The number of tattvas thus remains the same in both. This theory is explicitly maintained in the Yatindramata Dīpika (4th chapter). And it is also hinted at many places in the Bhāṣya.¹⁵

Secondly, there is the other theory which holds that out of Brāhmaṇ, the elements in order, were manifest. And that Brāhmaṇ placed a seed, and entered along with the individual soul (some add with Śrī or Lakṣmi, the eternal partner of God) in the primal waters which developed in to the golden egg and out of it arose Hiranyagarbha, and after him and under his cosmic supervision, the whole creation of names and forms, beings and things developed. The panchekarana or trivritkarana takes place only after Brahma is born. Panchakarna is described as follows: the five primal elements being mixed in particular proportions as to make all distinction of natures in the world. The five original elements were taken and one half of each was regarded to have been kept in tact; the other half was regarded as being divided into four equal parts, four such parts form half, which in combination with the other half produced the transformed evolute of the original element; therefore every element is in every other, the distinction lies only in the preponderating character of one element which gives it the specific name it possesses. For example, water contains all the five elements within itself but that the preponderance of water tattva makes it known as water; so also every other phenomenal entity. In this creation (vyashti srishti or special creation) there are no absolutely pure tattvas, but all are mixtures of the five elements and the preponderance of one entity in a substance determines as against every other, its characteristic name and form. The Vedānta Sūtras however, do not find any

¹⁵. Śrī Bhāṣya:-

reason to go beyond the Chandogya Text of trivritkarana or the intermixture of the three elements which arose first.¹⁶ “Each element is indeed of a three-fold nature, owing to primary tripartition; but as in each mixed element one definite element prevails—so that each element has a distinctive character of its own—a definite designation is given to each”

“In the scriptural account of creation preceded by intention on the part of the creator, it is said that each of these elements was made tripartite constitution of all things is apprehended by perception as well. The red colour in burning fire comes from (primary elementary) fire, the white colour from water, the black colour from earth—in this way Scripture explains the three-fold constitution or nature of burning fire. In the same way all things are composed of elements of all kinds”. “The elements possessing various powers and being unconnected could not, without combination produce living beings, not having in anyway mingled. Having combined, therefore with one another and entered into mutual associations—beginning with the principle called mahat and extended to the grossest elements—they formed an egg” etc., Having entered it into these three beings viz., fire, water, earth, with my self which is qualified by the collective soul let me differentiate names and forms,¹⁷ i.e., let me produce gods, and all other kinds of individual beings and give them names and to that end, since fire, water and earth have now mutually combined let me make each of them tripartite and fit them for creation”. The former says Rāmānuja, is the meaning, of the text “that divinity thought, let me having entered these three beings with this living soul-self, differentiate names and forms—let me make each one of them tripartite.”¹⁸

Thus the primary tripartition took place before Brāhma was born, as he is also born from the egg, Brāhmaṇ himself being the cause of the original tripartition. Further upto the creation of the Brahmānda (mundane Egg) the creation was immediate and after that, mediate¹⁹.

To render these two theories of creation, synthetic complimentaries of each other, we have to show that they are not contradictory but complimentary and implicative of each other. We have seen that even in one of the passages extracted from the Śrī Bhāṣya that the mahat and the other tattvas are recognized. Our only aim would be to show that the primary evolution consists of cosmic extension or growing vast (typified

¹⁶. II.iv. 17-19. ŚrīBashya

¹⁷. “Having created that (Hiranyagarbham, Golden Egg) he entered into it; having entered it he became ‘Sat’ and ‘tyat’, (souls and things) Taitt, up. II. 6.”

¹⁸. Śrīrīnivaśa thinks that Trivritkarana implies Panchakarana prakriya, and adds that others posit a septiplicatory process by combining Mahat, and Ahaṅkāra, Yat, Dīpika pp. 77.

¹⁹. (Yat. Dīpika pp. 85)

by the Mahat)and a cosmic attempt to differentiate on the side of Bhūtādi (since the sūkṣma organs can only develop under the stress of the environment and reveal themselves in the bodies of souls, the which they cannot do, because the souls are not yet brought into contact with nature at all for them to assume bodies according to their karma) forming the primary elements which form the place where Brāhmaṇ places the seed to develop into the Brahma and wills the panchekarana or trivrtkarana. After Brāhmaṇ enters the cosmic waters with (and not as the advaitins hold) and seed containing the individual souls, the individual contact between the souls and Prakṛti, is established, the Brahmānda with its world within its bosom, gets established in sequence. In this special creation, each soul attracts to itself such forms as God wills, which of course, is dependent upon his karma and according to the function he is to do in this world of creation as an instrument of God. The individual Buddhi and antahkarana and Manas with the prāṇa are latter and belong only to the sadvāraka srishti. In either case, what is true of the general creation, the macrocosm, is still true of the microcosm; the major tripartition yields to a minor tripartition or even a septiplicatory partition²⁰ as the Yatindramata Dīpika suggests, and yet count as we may, there remain only these twenty-five categories.

The Bhagavad Gīta accepts the view that Aparā Brāhmaṇ to be the lower and the individual souls as the higher. It clearly accepts the Samkhyan categories in the verses;

भूमिराणोऽनपी वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च!
 अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिर---!! 4!!
 अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृति विद्धि मे पराम्!
 जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् !!5!! ए.क्र.7द्यण क्.

The diagram affixed would fairly show the evolutionary process according to Śrī Rāmānuja .

Time (kāla) is not a myth, but a real entity, being as eternal as nature itself; not that time is nature, nor nature time, but that they are coeval. The processus of volution are both timed, and the involutive or evolutive Will (the samhāra and Sṛṣṭi) manifests itself or takes place accordingly.

²⁰. Cf. Maha Bharata Asva. Xxxv-20—20 & x1vii-12-15.

In the world of process everything takes place according to time and cannot occur as whim would have it. Time is the master. It is maintained by Rāmānuja that released souls are masters of time and everything happens as they will, according to their will to enjoyment, (Bhōga). Though the respect for cosmic will in them would be dominant enough to make them desist from exercise of will to defeat the ends of time.

At the end of the present kāla (period) of evolution, which runs for a particular finite period, the involutive impulse of Brāhmaṇ manifests itself, and the whole process gradually withdraws into the primal state passing through the very stages of descent, as it had ascended, finally resting in that very subtle condition (Tamah)²¹ when it is indistinguishable from Brāhmaṇ, when the souls which have not been released are in such a fragile contact with matter such that they could not function, the released souls enjoying the absorption of meditation signifying an essential unity of indistinguishableness of experience, in kaiṅkarya (service). Indeed in a passage, Time is said to be Brāhmaṇ²², in the cosmic process coeval with nature willing nature's performance in time. The whole creation first takes place subtly in the kārana mahat before it takes place in the gross or the actual. The idea passes, in a sense, from will to fact, from potential to actual in nature.

The gradual evolution of tattvas from the subtlest Tamah, into the grosser and more defined forms in the advāraka srishti, yield to still more defined and individual forms in the sadvāraka srishti, the properties of each element partaking that of the other; thus, evolving the most complicated developments in the construction of the individual organs. The gross organs are a sequence of the contact between the subtle organs and the gross exterior on which they are subsequently built. Thus it follows that when a soul is born into this world it has a potential store of all the organs (antahkarana, consisting of the intellect, manas and the ten organs,) which manifest grossly according to the ability of the soul (which is others known as karma or adṛṣṭa, of the soul) as man, god or animal or plant or even stone²³ (III. I. 24)

And when the unreleased soul leaves its body, it carries with it the sūkṣma Sarīra or sheath, which clings to the soul as the determinant of the next birth and the tendencies which would manifest themselves then. This sūkṣma sarīra, also known as the linga Sarīra, is also material, being formed by the sūkṣma organ and the prāṇās (the rajasic cleavage which forms the driving force in the organisms), and has a deeper stamp of habits upon it which form the prenatal tendencies and the peculiar constitution or mental make-up, not to be explained as the hereditary accretions of the individual. It is indeed a psychological fact that there is not only an adaptation of

²¹. ŚrīBhāṣya I. I-1 (.125). cf. B>G. viii. 18.

²². Bh. G. xi 32.

²³. Yat, Mata Dīpika

the bodily organs towards stimuli, but there is equally an adaptation of the psychical or mental attitude toward the same stimuli, and the mind as well as the body, tend to repeat the same responses and attitudes in the event of the same or similar stimuli recurring, unless by a volitive impulse that habitual adaptation is broken. In that direction alone lies release from material complexes and mental attitudes and material environments. In this sense of physical events binding us from free activity by causing habits to be formed, we can say that action binds, and added to the law of cosmic Justice, makes the definition of karma as something which binds. And only when our actions are divine i.e., according to the will of God and tuned to universal ends or offered as gifts or service to God, do they lose the sting of bondage; Karma then never binds, न कर्म लीप्ते नरे (Isha. Up. 2).

It is this Sūkṣma or linga Sarīra that hinders the self from its own natural and free volitive impulse and self-luminosity.

It may not be out of place to briefly sketch, the difference between Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita with respect to this cosmological problem. For sankara, as already remarked, these worlds are unreal effects of a real “cause” manifested due to the influence of Māya and ajñā. It is certainly true to assert that individuals suffer from ignorance of their true status, but that God or Brāhmaṇ should lend himself to this imperfection of Māya or ignorance in order to manifest these unreal worlds, even for the sake of his own enjoyment, seems too unreal a theory, of the fact that the enjoyer of the play himself loses the consciousness of his status, despite the assertion made, that the category of Brāhmaṇ is uninvolved in the process and they the category of Īśvara is not affected by Māya which, in a sense, creates him²⁴

The Un-differenced Being overlaid by Māya, or by wearing the Māya-cloak, Vikshepa Shakti of Māya becomes the Īśvara, full of predications which not real, i.e., not applicable to it per se; for Brāhmaṇ is Nirguṇa²⁵. They are only the way our intellect visualizes or describes to itself the character of the illimitable Brāhmaṇ. Īśvara as the wearer of Māya (Māyavachinna) is master of Māya and does not

²⁴. Bhāskhara in his refutation of the Māyāvāda says that the attempt to make the Īśvara at one time the involved or (samsarin) of the universe, the first-born of the Brahman, and at another time the overcome of the māya just like Brahman, the person who is infinitely better than the ordinary individual, is making Īśvara the contradiction of himself. There is no more spurious and illogical explanation of the Absolute or Īśvara than this. According to him it appears that the Brahman is the Īśvara and with his two types of Achetana-shakti and Jiva-shakti creates the worlds, the former being really eternal, existing till pralaya, the latter a vanishing distinction, that will be absorbed at the end of his gradual evolution into the divine. Thus he argues for krama mukti. Cf. Phil. Bhāskhara. P.N. Srīnivasacharya. Madras University Lectures 1927.

²⁵ Sākṣi cētakevalō nirguṇasya

become deluded by the same²⁶. There is only one Māya as such only one Īśvara²⁷. All qualities (guṇas) are interpreted to mean by Advaita, as the combination of the gunic triplicity of Prakṛti. But as Rāmānuja says, there is difference between the gunic triplicity and general term quality (guṇa), interpreted to mean Viśēṣanas.

When Brāhmaṇ is over-laid by another kind of Prakṛti viz Avidya,²⁸ He appears as the infinite Jīvas who suffer from Māya and avidya. Multiplicity, variety and every differentiation is due to this avidya (malina-sattva-pradhanam). And it is this avidya that makes individual ahamkāras. This avidya again is a not a single entity but many and of different kinds, and because of that alone are there so many individual souls, subject to Māya, having, however sufficient individuality to run through a series of lives.²⁹ Individuality(Aham) is thus characterised as material category and identified with the Samkhyan Ahamkāra and treated, here unlike, Sāmkhya, as a vanishing distinction, which the Purushas certainly are not.

The third branch of Ajñānam is the Tamah Pradhānam overlaying itself on the nirguna-chit-svarūpa Brahman, who it must be carefully borne in mind, is not involved in any of these transformations or generations, gives rise to the sukshma and sthula creation of things (vritti-avachchinna and vishayavichinna chaitanyam) conditioned by the vrittis or acts and states and vishayas or gross nature.

Accordingly there is no svarūpa-bhēda (difference in nature or essential character) between Jivas and Brahman and indeed, just as the sun seen in different lakes or mirrors appears as so many, Brahman deflected and reflected by antahkarana (ahamkāra and other instruments of cognition or understanding) and tamahpradhānam appears as so many jives or subjects and things or objects respectively. They are identical in essence.

Sri Vidyāraṇya describes this in a metaphorical way. Just as a picture during its production undergoes four stages, Brahman also undergoes four transformations. First in the case of a picture on a clear pure white cloth is spread on a particular ground(anna rasam), then it is dried. After that colour (maśi or a particular colour background) is painted over it. It is only after that, the picture is painted. Here the

²⁶. Panchadasi, 1.16.

Māyābimbō vaśikṛtyatasya sarvajña Īśvar

²⁷. “ajamokam”

²⁸. Panchadasi 1. 16.

²⁹ Perhaps at that stage, if we conceive avidya as a real upādhi (not unreal, as advaita conceives it to be) the distinguishing of Brahman into jives by such upādhi limitation would compare with Bhāskaras’ theory, for to him the difference is real, and their relation is one of identity and difference; And further for him too the Brahman is Mere Chinmātrasvarupa(intelligence or consciousness)

Suddha-sattva-Pradhānam, which is otherwise known as Māya, as the first fruit of Ajñanam or the higher phrase of “prakṛiti” is laid in contact with Brahman, the Sākshi(witnessing)chaitanyam(consciousness), also known as the Akhanda śuddha chaitanyam (the infinite unconditioned and indivisible consciousness). It gives rise to Īśvara, who thus becomes the antaryāmin (inner self) of all creation and its sustainer. And through contact with malina (having Rajasic and Tamasic) division of the self same prakṛiti (which can be compared to the maśl of the illustration) the jives are made manifest. And by connection with the malina pradhānam, the Virāt-rupa of Brahman, as Nature, is manifest. All the while, during these changes (vikāras) the Brahman is merely passive on whose surface (apparently) alone beat a million waves turbulently.

Thus creation, according to Advaita, is due to this imposition of ajñāna (Prakṛti) and its evolutes Māya and avidya, which as the first and second (sattvic and rajasic) gives rise to Īśvara and jives, whilst the last or the tamasic evolute gives rise to the organization of Nature, it being subsequence to the first influence (tirodhana) of Māya, under the will and control of Īśvara.

The above sketch is enough to show the difference between the two systems and how far they are removed from each other. The difference seems to be mainly in the conception of the advāraka srishti; the rest, namely, the sadvāraka srishti, taking place according to trivikaraṇa or panchikaraṇa and Sāmkhyā tattvic evolution.

The evolutionary hypothesis of Rāmānuja, is based on the scriptures and the Pāñcarātras, which describe that there are four vyūhās of God or four attitudes of God, one as the Lord of the jives in the aggregate i.e., Sankarshana; the lord of the Mahat as the Pradhymna and the adhithāna Puruṣa of the Manas, as Aniruddha. Vāsudeva or Nārāyaṇa being Brāhmaṇ is himself the Supreme. A criticism of the theories of vyūhās is out of the scope of the present subject and the Śrī Bhāṣya though it defends the Pāñcarātras whilst criticizing the other orthodox schools, does not give any actual support to it in its pages.³⁰

Summary : Śrī Rāmānuja, then, accepts the reality of process, and of intelligent process. The Intelligent Cause or spirit is always present in the process as the antaryāmi, in all beings, and every blade of grass contains him whilst none can exhaust him; as such he sustains creation by his immanent presence and transcendent governance. The derivation of real distinctions by a real imposition, as in Bhāskhara, or by an unreal imposition, as in Advaita theories, only try to escape the vital problem of Discontinuity or multiplicity, with the help of the specious simplicity achievable by denying any reality to it or declaring it to be a real though a passing or

³⁰ Sr Bhāṣya. II. ii. 42-43

vanishing phase. In Reality we never come across, as Śrī Rāmānuja is not tired of saying, continuity, or shall we say, a bare 'that', an uncharacterised 'somewhat'. Every presentation even the bare 'thatness' has got a distinct character making it recognizable as a 'that'.³¹ Even presentationally we cannot achieve the continuum of bare presentation. That discontinuity is as vital as continuity or Unity cannot be denied, whether we treat one of the terms as true or false. And in so far as we cannot but bring them under one or the other, why should we not recognise that the problem is a real one and that the terms cannot be unless they are real, and that is precisely the reason why our problem is not and cannot be solved unless we get rid of these subterfuges of thought? It is better and it is a logical desideratum that, as Bergson says, "We must accept a strict dualism between matter and Mind"³².

There is one way of escape, however, from the atomicity (aṇu character) of matter, only if we allow a dubious theory of infinite souls which occupy and hold to themselves different bodies and that the generations of these vortices of subtle electrons are formed by the initial impulsion of the vast ether of space to distinguish itself. These material differentiations then, must be due to the first will of God, and the different kinds of bodies, from stones onwards to the highest gods, due to the conjunction of the souls with those material atomic structures. There is a single reign of law in matter which the Veda calls Rta, which varuṇa exercises, which is the same for all, from the atom and electron to the steller spheres in the far distant skies. There is in the electron the same degree of un-predictableness which we find in the living beings. As to what conclusion we have to draw from such observations we don't know with the little knowledge which we at present possess. If it means the Leibnizian monadic organisation of a universe, then, perhaps, it may explain; but as to how space and time could at all be dismissed as mere 'veridical hallucinations' or 'confused perception' or 'ideal categories of thought' we can say next to nothing. But if we accept that view then, we will have to explain them away in precisely the same way as he (Leibniz) did. But according to Śrī Rāmānuja, as already stated space and time (kāla) are real.³³ For him there are three kinds of souls, the ever-free, the realised, and the bound of all degrees featuring in the stones, trees and the insects, animals, mammalia and vertebrates consummating in the man whose self-consciousness is a distinct feature of his and gods who also strive for freedom. The ever free souls(nityas) are engaged in the conduct of the evolution in their multitudinous ways in various strands. For the view that all evolution started from the amoeba is not exactly correct. As Bergson in his Creative Evolution says that though the initial beginning was from such a source as that, due to a variety of reasons or

³¹ ŚrīBhāṣya I. i.1

³² Matter and Memory: H.Bergson.

³³ 'Time is real. If one wishes to save the concepts, progress development and freedom, one must accept time as real'. L. Busse

survival of the fittest, by mixture of the germ-plasm with other species, by the influence of the environment, by the emergence of new types, by the sudden creative activity or Spirit or intelligence due to no actual observed influence, we have posits three major cleavages of evolution, determined by reflex-activity of intelligence by the instinct activity of intelligence by the intellectual activity of intelligence. But Berson whilst envisaging a still higher type such that of intuitive activity, does not say that there had been such a development as he does not find it in himself. Somehow there is an unexpressed view that man so far is the highest in the emergence of intellect. This latter is mere prejudice. If the highest in each of the lower developments is almost indistinguishable from the lowest in the just above it, so also we who are aware of the intuitive must accept the evolution along different lines of the intuitive beings who are striving for the perfection of their natures. The perfect are those who fully conscious of the purposes of the Intelligence which is cosmic life and Being. This awakening to the Life of the spirit is that which defines a Free soul, and they are then greater than all the Devas of the world. For intuitive character of a being does not at the same time mean the ability of knowing the purpose of the highest. These perfect beings are of the nature of the highest, and take new bodies and forms which are necessary for the fulfilment of those purposes. They form as it were the spiritual hierarchy, fulfilling the legitimate function of the world. To whom work is worship, and service of Life is the Goal. To them as to the Highest, there is no bondage, in the sense we mean, but is an exaltation of glory and power, their expression is unique and perfect.