

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF YĀDAVARAKĀŚĀ

Yādavaprakāśa is known to the philosophical works as the first Vedāntic teacher of Śrī Rāmānuja. Due to certain amount of independent thinking on his Śrī Rāmānuja underwent persecution at the hands of his teacher and left him, seeking to formulate his own system on the lines of interpretation of Dramida, Tāñka, and Yāmunācārya. It is stated that Yādavaprakāśa became in later in later days a disciple of Śrī Rāmānuja. Yādavaprakāśa philosophical writings had not the good fortune to survive long after him<sup>1</sup>, and all that we know of his system is to be gleaned from the ramrs made by Śrī Rāmānuja in his ŚrībhāṣYāmuna and Vedārtha-sangaraha and form the Śrutapakāśikā – commentary of Sudarśaṇa Bhaṭṭa, and from the writings of Śrī Venkaṭanātha<sup>2</sup>. Prof. P.N. Srinivasacarya has shown that Yādavaprakāśa's bhedābheda

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<sup>1</sup> Of his works, *Yatidharma- samuccaya* only is now available.

<sup>2</sup> In his *paramata bhanga* from which the present account is taken, venkaṭanātha does not mention the name Yādavaprakāśa at all. On the other hand he refers these doctrines to Brahmadata, a writer far earlier than even Śrī Śankara and certainly earlier to Bhāskara. In his *Tattvamuktākālāpa* and *Sarvāthasiddha* also he mentions Brahmadata and not Yādavaprakāśa . That these ideas belong Yādavaprakāśa is to be gleaned, however form Sudarśaṇa. Bhatta's commentaries *Śrutaprakāśika to Śrī BhāṣYāmuna* and *Tatparyadīpika to Vedāthasangraha*. He considers that *Yādavaprakāśa* followed the view of āśvarathya as expressed under *Vedāntasūtra* 1.4.20 (cf. *Śrutaprakāśika* II.i.26-31 and 32-36). THUS we could say that Yādavaprakāśa was not the founder of a new school of Upaniṣadic interpretation; rather he was a *bhedābhedavādin* of the earlier variety than that of Bhāskara, whose philosophy Śrī Venkaṭanātha stigmatizes as *pracchanna Jaina*, because it follows the *anaikāntika* view of the Jaina school.

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had great similarities with Śākta system, though it leaned more towards the difference aspect rather than the identify aspect<sup>1</sup>. It is definitely in the sense that it accepts the reality to be spiritual at bottom, but is realistic and not illusionistic.

In this system the supreme category *śeṣi* Brahman. It possesses self – luminosity and all – power. It *śeṣi* the aggregate (*samaṣṭi*) of all the categories. Though part less, it, through its omnipotence, becomes triple or of many parts. Thus, there are three eternal portions, *Īśvara*, *Purṣa* and *Prakṛit*. Pure being or Brahman is present in all these portions though it remains distinct from them even like the waveless oceanic different form the foam and billows and waves that are in different portions of it. During the period of *pralaya*, these three portions get absorbed in the Pure Being in its unending portion, and at the time of creation, they come back to birth. These, however, are eternal in the sense that they come back constantly and form its eternal portion.

*Īśvara* is a portion of Brahman. He shares the powers of undependable knowledge, ruler ship and others of Brahman. *Manomaya*, *vānmaya* and *prāṇamaya* are the three divisions or portions of *Īśvara* nature. These are due to the three functions that *Īśvara* performs as *manas*, *vāk* and *prāṇa*, and the lords of these three are *Āditya*, *Agni* and *Candra*. These differentiations could be likened to the fourfold self-differentiation of *Nārāyaṇa* as *Vāsudeva*, *Sankarṣaṇa*

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<sup>1</sup> P.N. Srinivasacharya: *Philosophy of Bheda bheda*, (Srinivasavaradachar and Co. Madras) pp. 170ff and p.0192, and S.N. Das Gupta: *History of Indian Philosophy* Vol. III pp.301-2

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*pradhymna* and *Aniruddha* in the *Pāñcarātra* system. *Manas*, *vāk* and *prāṇa* correspond to the *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* of *prakṛit* (matter). These three, *manomaya*, *vānmaya*, and *prāṇamaya* become the presiding principles of mind, soul and breath in all creatures. These are the instruments (*karaṇas*) of both the

freed souls and Īśvara himself according to the three kinds of activities that they perform. Because of this, these are the *devas*<sup>1</sup> who are the modes (*prakāras*) of the freed souls and Īśvara .

*Prāṇmaya* is the *antaryantarymin* function of Īśvara in relation to the souls and matter. Because of this, Īśvara, along with the other categories and their respective *devatās*, becomes the agent (*kartā*). The *manomaya* of the Īśvara residing in the sentient soul (*puruṣa*) who is the outer agent, is also the impellor (*kārayitā*). The *Vāṇmaya* –aspect or function of Īśvara is the cause of all process in all creatures (*pariṇāmayitā*).

The Puruṣa category (*cit*) is the second portion of Brahman. Puruṣa is One and He has the power of being the enjoyer (*bhoktā*). From this one soul category issue many emanations or fulgurations which are individual souls, monadic in size, eternal, and infinite in number. These get established in material bodies. The emanations or fulgurations are of two kinds, bhaddhas and siddhas are the perfected or attained souls. These again are of two kinds, namely, ājāna0siddha and yogasiddha. The former are eternal instruments or servant of Īśvara , the latter are those who possess the eight

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<sup>1</sup> The senses are called devas in the Upaniṣads.

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attainments such *aṇimā*, *iaghimā*, *garimā* etc., that arise from the practice of direct contemplation of Brahman. Baddhas (bond-souls) suffer from three kinds of bondages: (1) bondages due to identification with their bodies and thus with the categories of matter and desire from them (*prakṛit-bandhana*). (2) desire for the pleasures of the senses such as soul taste etc leads to the second kind of bondage (*vaikārika – bandha*), and (3) the third bondage arises from activities, (*dakṣiṇā – bandha*). These three prevent brahman from manifesting its attributes in the soul. Thus we find that only some of Brahman's qualities such as self – luminosity get manifested generally in the soul – category unlike as in the case of Īśvara , in veiled or hidden. Even, here, we find that there is a possibility of the

individual soul manifesting the Brahma - guṇas when it gets rid of the veil and bondages of the body, senses and activity and contemplates on Brahman or the Īśvara . the freed souls are to see in whom the seven attributes of Brahman manifest themselves. The freed soul can either be separate or united with Īśvara as it desire or wills. Realisation consists in identifying oneself with Īśvara or Brahman so as to be able to manifest the attributes of Īśvara or Brahman in itself. The eternity of the individual goes not get lost, nor its personality annulled; but it becomes more and more capable of revealing Brahman within itself. Thus, there is realisation of *bhedābheda* (consciousness of identity indifference). The souls may be considered to be many and eternal, but they are all one in their collective aspect.

Prakṛit is the inconscient portion of Brahman. It is of three kinds: *kāla*, *paramākāśa* and *avyakta*. *Kāla*, *paramākāśa* and *avyakta*. *Kāla* (time) is divided into creative, sensitive and dissolution periods. *Paramākāśa* is the pure ether or space, not identifiable with the ākāś that is a category under the *avyakta* (matter). It in conjunction with Īśvara manifests three radiances namely, *jñāna* - *prabhā*, *ānanda-prabhā*, and *kriyā-prabhā*. *Paramākāśa* is also known as *vāk* and *akṣara* (imperishable). *Ānanda-prabhā* grants sense delight to the soul in respect of objects. *Kriyā-prabhā* is breath (*prāṇa*). A mixture or combination of these three *prabhās* is called *parā-prakṛit*, which is the higher or unmanifest matter, the source of the lower matter. Thus, *paramākāśa* in conjunction with Īśvara forms the *parā-prakṛit*. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* from the three *guṇas* of *prakṛit* as *manomaya*, *vānmaya* and *prṇamaya* functions of Īśvara sustain these *guṇas*. In actual order of creation it is sometimes seen that *tamas* originates first and then the others, though it is, logically to be considered that out of *sattva*, *rajas* comes into being, and out of *rajas* *tamas* comes into being. From these the other categories proceed to manifest themselves.

It could be seen from the above summary of the teachings of this school of *bhedābheda*, that the *bheda*-aspect is real and *svābhāvika*, being grounded in the nature of Brahman itself and not, as in the *bhedābheda* of Bhāskara,

ianupādhika or accidental and due to external limitations. The differentiates of one category are not capable of passing into the differentiates of the other categories. Thus the citcategory, though it does co-exist with acit and Īśvara categories, continues to evolve within itself so as to remove the veils or bondages that only bind it and do not determine its being as finite, conscient nature (cit-sthiti). And, the removal of the bondages does not entail its becoming either Brahman or Īśvara . what it does attain is the *siddha* – hood of being either the pure instrument of the bondages does not entail its becoming either Brahman or Īśvara . What it does attain is the *siddha*-hood of being either the pure instrument of Īśvara , manifesting more and more through its translucency being the powers and plenitude of Brahman through the Will of Īśvara or else, of being a locus of perfect manifestation of the *siddhis* that accrue through the realization of the unity with Brahman directly as the ground and source of its own differentiation. Brahman is realised as the One ground of phenomenal manifestation (or the triple manifestation), as the One in the many, and this experience of Oneness with brahman in one's own being, links up the individual, that is distinct from it, with the other forms of manifestation of Brahman in its Īśvara and prakṛit aspects. The realisation consists in perceiving the difference and oneness as One or as Unity. the Divine is one and many, one and triple; and is the business of icit, *finitised* or monadic to recover the consciousness of its oneness with Brahman directly or through the higher category, namely, Īśvara . thus , reality or Brahman is śeṣi dynamic, and its apparent astaticism as ground of all is not contradictory to its dynamic being or manifestation.

The first criticism level against this school<sup>1</sup>, is, that it does not explain the fact as to how the parts of a homogeneous substance will to share the qualities of the whole. For, not only Īśvara but cit and acit will have to manifest to the full the

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<sup>1</sup> Of course, the main points of the orthodox schools against this view are based on theological and textual criticism.

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attributes of the substance. Secondly, the conception of identity, and difference, characterizing a thing simultaneously, is impossible, because though it is correct to affirm that 'A' could be identical with B' and different from C at the same time, it cannot also be stated that A is both identical with and different from B at the same time. Contradictory attributes cannot characterize or qualify the same object. The third criticism is that if it be held that identity and difference is on a par with the relation between universal and particular (jāti and vyakti), the relationship between cit and Brahman, cit and acit and cit and Īśvara are not of this kind. The relationships are of part and whole or between part and part. Fourthly the view that Divine Omnipotence can explain the divisionism of spiritual substance so as to yield the Īśvara soul and inconscient matter, which are of different kinds and are stated to be eternal, must either accept the evolutionary process of gradual projection or emanation which is followed by gradual grossing and apparent self – veiling of Brahman-consciousness (luminosity) by means of its own consciousness – force or will (*māyā*) or else it must uphold this view in an arbitrary manner. The theory of degradation of consciousness, of luminosity, so as to appear inconscient may not be impossible to an omnipotent power as delightful play, though it is an extraordinary conception because luminosity is liberation; and none, so far as we know, seeks bondage. But there is just the possibility that Brahman may seek to manifest its supreme fullness in and through its own almost inconscient formation. If this view be accepted, it must be possible for acit to evolve into cit, and cit evolve into Īśvara and that would entail the non-eternity of these three partitions. But, if the partitioning of the seamless Brahman is merely a case of general creation of permanent or eternal planes of possibility of manifestation, then Īśvara, cit and acit become planes of Experience.

in its system the evolution or involution, by means of the omnipotence of Brahman or its *māyā* or *upādhis*, is not postulated<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, any kind of progressive spiral evolution or Realisation, according to this school, consists in apprehending the Oneness of Brahman beyond and above all the many and in and through every one and the multiple. The abstraction of identity as well as the abstraction of difference from the concrete identity – in – difference of

experience, due to the preoccupation of the theoretica interest or the pragmatic claims, are extremes (*antās*) which must be reconciled in the experience of identity or eternal Oneness in manes and eternal manyness in Oneness. The practical statement of the system leans towards emphasizing the differences as aspects of Oneness, and sādhana-aspect or the nisus of freedom emphasizes the fact that differences must grow in the consciousness of oneness which is their truth and being and source – a consciousness that many are to recover their pristine purity of manifestation of the attributes of divine luminosity in

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Philosophy of Bhedābheda*, p.171 'Acit is the object which can develop into this subject' – thus writes Prof. P.N. Srinivasacarya. But this seems to be unsupported by the texts.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Life Divine*, wherein its author Sri Aurobindo , develops a *bhedābheda* view, that is truly dynamic, and escapes from the limitations of Yādavaprakāśa .

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and through their monadic structure (*anutva*). But it was realised by Yādavaprakāśa that the eternal reality of the three categories of Īśvara souls and Nature could not be considered to be such as to be a static process, and it is only by a dynamic synthesis of these three that reality could be granted a real status. Such a conception was the organistic thesis of Śrī Rāmānuja who shewn that in the concept of organism, Īśvara soul and body fall into a pattern of unity Īśvara , becomes the slef (*antaryāmin*) of the souls as well as of the Nature. Both form His body and exist for Him and his delight. God is the *sarvaśarīin*. once this *śeṣi* perceived then thr whole being and its manifestations become sacramental in character; the Divine universe results. This is the reason why it appears that Yādavaprakāśa accepted the philosophy of Śrī Rāmānuja as the logical sequence of his own. The perfect realisation of the individual (his true siddha-hood) lies in becoming a perfect instrument of God, Īśvara and in being free from his earlier limitations and bondages due to ignorance arising from identification with lower form or plane or being.