

VIŚISTĀDVAITA
AND
THE VISION OF UNITY

In all religious thought there is a hardcore of identity of intent. This is the central teaching from which all diversity arises. It is not necessary to emphasize it so much but for the fact that men are more easily attracted by the glamour of the superficial manyness, superficial in the sense that nothing really takes rise from them. They are in one sense Vikrtīs, modifications, expressions, manifestations of the fecund one – the parkṛti. But even this fecund original matrix depends on a deeper ground the spirit – the puruṣa. Thus the great scripture – the Gītā teaches us to go back searching for the One that is the ground of the many.

The many need not be taken to be metaphysically unreal, axiologically even useless, or experientially ugly or terrifying, deceitful. All these reactions arise because of the essential attractiveness of the many in the one. Divorced from this central Oneness, they fall apart from each other and lead to the experiences of reaction of each one of the many in regard to and in relation with the others. The illusory theory is valuable in so far as it helps the concentration of attention on the basic ground. Identity theory is valuable in so far as it brings about the unity of the ground and the surface manyness and grants significance (Tatvamasi) to the experience of oneness of the Two. The organic experience of inseparability

Between the one and the many explains the process of becoming as a gradual process of evolution which more and more restores the śarīra – nature of Prakṛti to God instead of the individual who finds himself as the petit master of it in a sector of its existence. Śrī Rāmānuja focuses the essential need of yoga. To turn the tattvas, categories into real and living entities in their synthetic unity or dynamic oneness is a great realization. Viśtādvaita is a good name to describe the relationship of Nature and soul to God, but the relation of identity by the soul

or seeker (mumuksu) between God and itself, between God and Nature and its place in relation to both is a unique enough Yoga. It cannot be merely known through the knowledge of the tattvas; it has to be experienced as a positive unity in an integral union in all one's parts. Through jñānā, through works and through devotion one must realize the unity of the triple categories.

The Supreme Lord showed in his great vision the Supreme Omnipervading nature of His being within which all have found a place – fighters on both sides as well as spectators – The all supporting nature of His Being included the spatio – temporal infinities. He is the self of all, the Purusottama, who is greater than the Impersonal and the Personal, the unchanging and the changing, and who supports both of them. Such a wonderful vision is the fulfillment of the knowledge of the Tattvas but that is not quite enough.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa points out not only one should know, but one should also enter into it. God is to be known and also entered into. This is not quite a metaphorical statement; more than anything in Yoga, this entering into Brahman or God is a preliminary to the entering of Brahman into oneself. This is the Brahma-bhuta consciousness. The correlative word is Jivabhuta – to become the soul, or rather to enter the soul, or rather to enter the soul of the creature as the enjoyer of experiences 'privately' in isolation and in the privacy of the cave.

This inter-entry of the soul into Brahman is conceivable because the Lord is the Supreme Vast Brahman. One gets enveloped by God – isavyasam idam sarvam – as the great Upanisad says. This is more easy perhaps for it is a great liberation – mokṣa, an experience of non-limitation by one's several bodies and activities inherent in them. For it is verily a union with Brahman that is called Mukti. Yoga gets its siddhi in this experience. All knots are cut asunder. Prakṛti falls away along with its tentacles of ignorance. Mystic experience (atmanubhava) of Mokṣa is this much alone. There is a possibility of conceiving or experiencing this as freedom within the body wherein the soul does not experience the binding sense of the body as it has united itself with and lost itself

in Brahman. In the ecstatic knowledge of the identity between the Brahman and the soul, which can be well described as knowing God as one knows oneself, interiorly, there is a great sense of liberation in knowledge (jñānā). But a liberation in Being happens to many only when the Divine Lord is merged into one as salt is dissolved in water, or the water of the River enters into the Ocean. This grants a great inflation of Being. The finite being becomes continuous with the infinite Being without any barriers barring the sharing of the infinite existence. Here alone arise problems of great concern to the metaphysician. How can the finite get extinguished in the Infinite? And if it did originate from it, how did it ever gets its finitude out of the infinite; and if it always was of it and in it how did it disengage itself even if it be illusorily from that Sat existence? It thus becomes not so much a serious problem for the mystic as much whose axiological interest is in the union or identity with the Divine which is his greatest siddhi and fulfillment. It may be called ātmānubhava or Brahmānubhava, Kaivalya or Moksa. This fourth Purusartha is the goal. Why then worry about problems which a Gītāte the intellect alone? Men transcend philosophy when they seek and attain salvation or Realisation or Mukti.

The problems of Philosophy are debunked in religious mysticism since they are dissolved with the dissolution of the soul or finite being. But such unanimity in regard to this experience is not had. For the problems of philosophy are not strictly intellectual problems alone. They are problems which transcend the dichotomous analysis and Polarizations of Reason. That the experiences of the higher consciousness cannot be adequately rendered by intellectual categories is well known from the writings of Kant, the greatest of critical writers. But there are yet categories to be gained and experienced. Transcendental categories which pass beyond the Nihilism and agnosticism of Reason. Faith or a 'return to the Heart', since as Vavanargues says 'Great truths are discovered by the heart' may mean not an abandonment of Philosophy but a deepening and intensification of it so that there can be a philosophy that discovers the Supra relational and integral of Being. Brahman is the Saccidānanda – a trinity of Being inter penetrated by

the unity of the Three elements so to speak of the Divine Nature. All Tattvas issue from this triplicity. That is why we find the higher mind of the founders of the Darsanas discerned these Tattvas not from reason but from above. But these darsanas had the misfortune of being interpreted in an intellectual manner by later scholastics in order to be neatly fitting into a rational form, that is not at all capable of rectification by integral philosophers. Thus a careful 'Samanvaya' approach to the darsanas is the need of the moment not only because it would correct the error of their emphases but also intimate the living truths in them.

Śrī Venkatanātha did try in his *Nyāya Pariśddhi* in respect of logical thought. A logic of the organic must be different form the logic of the mechanical, even as the logic of the infinite should be different from the logic of the finite.

There is need for the integration of the logic of the Organic with the logic of the infinite.

The application of Viśistādvaita to the many sidedness of Reality is to develop the possibilities of a fuller and complete Religion informed by the saving solution. Whilst we may al, as orthodox followers of the Śrīnivāsa Iyengar the Grand old sage of Viśistāvaita would say, relive and rethink he possibilities of it in other spheres than the religious so that religion could permeate and transorm life.