

VISISHTHADWAITA PHILOSOPHY.

For the last three and odd years that your Journal has been in existence, there has never been any contribution presenting consistently the philosophy of the Visishtadwaita. Originated by Sri Ramanujacharya, it stands between the two extreme philosophies, respectively known as the Adwaita and the Dwaita; and accepts all those passages in the Vedas which are admitted by either in support of its own views. There are many points, however, in the subjoined dialogue that both a Dwaitee and an Adwaitee would call into question. The authors of the dialogue promise to answer the objections of the devotees of either sect. In the case of such emergency, the readers of the Magazine and our Brothers in Theosophy, of the Madras Presidency, are referred to Sriman S. Parthasarathy Iyengar, F. T. S., residing in Triplicane, Madras.

A. GOVINDA CHARLU, F. T. S.

CATECHISM OF THE VISISHTHADWAITA PHILOSOPHY.

- Q. 1. What is man's greatest aspiration?
A. *Moksha* (final emancipation), called *Purushārtha* (object of desire).
.. 2. What is *Moksha*?
.. " Enjoyment of *Brahma** after disseverance or disenchantment from all material† connection.
.. 3. What are the means of attaining *Moksha*?
.. " Divine contemplation (*Bhagavad-bhakti*).
.. 4. What is *Bhakti*?
.. " *Gnāna* (Knowledge or wisdom) of *Iswara*, continuous, full of love, and commingling with no other than *Brahma*.
.. 5. What is it that reaches *Moksha*?
.. " *Jivatma* or *Jivan*.
.. 6. What is the nature of *Jivan*?
.. " *Jivan* partakes of the nature of *Brahma* in wisdom; is subservient to *Brahma* and is an indivisible (spiritual) particle (monad); can neither be created nor destroyed; *per se* is changeless and has no form; and yet distinct from *Iswara*.‡
.. 7. What is the nature of *Iswara*?
.. " It has no bad but only good qualities.§ it is ever lasting and universal wisdom; omnipotent, having truth as its principle and final purpose. It is the universal Master, omnipresent, having for its body *chétana* (animate) and *achétana* (or inanimate) nature; and it is quite distinct from *Jivan*.
.. 8. Define *Achit*? || (matter).
.. " It is non-intelligent; of infinite forms; and is of a triune aspect, viz., *Suddha Sativa*, ¶ *Misra Sativa*, ** and *Sativa Sūnya*. ††

* *Brahma*, *Parabrahma*, *Paramatma*, *Iswara*, *Bhagavanta*, denote the same principle.—A. G. C.

† *Prakriti* has been translated into *material* for want of a better term (vide definitions of *Prakriti* further on).—A. G. C.

‡ The *monad* or "*Jivan*" being "*distinct from Iswara*" and yet "*changeless per se*, uncreated and indestructible," it must be forcibly admitted, in such a case, that there are, not only two but numberless distinct entities in our universe, that are infinite, uncreated, indestructible and immutable? If neither has created the other, then they are, to say the least, on a par, and both being infinite, we have thus two infinities plus numberless fractions? The idea, if we understand it rightly, seems to us still less philosophical than that of the God of the Jews and Christians who, infinite and omnipresent, passes eternities in creating, out of himself, souls which, though created, become immortal, i. e., eternal, and, having to be present somewhere, must either crowd off the Omnipresent Presence or become one with it, i. e., lose their individuality like a lesser absorbed by a larger flame. Again, if *Jivan* "partakes of the nature of *Brahma* in wisdom" and is also eternal, indestructible and immutable like the latter, then in what respect is it "*distinct*" from *Brahma*?—Ed. Theosophist.

§ If "*Brahma*, *Parabrahma*, *Paramatma*, *Iswara*, *Bhagavanta* denote all the same principle," and are all immutable, uncreated, indestructible, omnipotent, omnipresent; if again it has "truth as its principle and final purpose," and if at the same time it "*has no bad but only good qualities*," we beg to humbly enquire the origin and the existence of evil in that all-pervading and all-powerful goodness, according to the *Visishtadwaita* Philosophy.—Ed. Theos.

|| *Achit* has been translated "*matter*" (vide answer to Ques. 8)—A. G. C.

¶ *Suddha Sativa*=Pure matter.—A. G. C.

** *Misra Sativa*=Impure matter.—A. G. C.

†† *Sativa Sūnya*=Zero-matter—time made up of minute divisions called *Kata*, *Kāshta*, &c. Read Question 10 B and answer.—A. G. C.

Q. 9. Describe *Suddha Sativa*?

A. It is entirely composed of *Sativa Gana* (quality of goodness); is of a permanent nature; subject to *Iswara's* will; and is found in *Vaikunt(h)a Loka*.

.. 10. Describe *Misra Sativa*?

.. " It is composed of all the *Gunas*, viz.—*Sativa*, *Raja* and *Tama*;* is a mask (a veil or mist) to man's *gnana* and *ananda* (knowledge and bliss); produces illusionary or false knowledge; is permanent; is a play thing to *Iswara* (?); has form; and is called *Prakriti*, *Avidya* and *Maya*:—*Prakriti*, because it has form and is therefore changeable. *Avidya*, because producing false knowledge. *Maya*, for being the cause of the wonderful objective Cosmos.

.. 10B. Describe *Sativa Sūnya*?

.. " Time, made up of seconds, &c.

.. 11. Describe the evolution of the objective cosmos out of primordial matter (*mulaprakriti*)?

.. " As follows:—*Mulaprakriti*, † *Mahat*, ‡ *Ahankaram*, § *Subda tanmatram*, || *Akasa*, ¶ *Sparsa tanmatram*, ** *Vayu* (s), †† *Rūpa tanmatram*, ††† *Tejas*, §§ *Rasa tanmatram*, |||| *Apa* (s), ¶¶ *Gandha tanmatram*, *** *Prithivi*, ††† and Permutations and combinations of these.

.. 12. What is the method of *Laya*? (Relapsation or absorption.)

.. " Each of the differentiations merging back into its precedent cause, as *Prithur* relapsing into *Apa* (s), &c. *Laya* means the disappearance of all effects into the ultimate cause. This is expressed by saying that all effects attain the state of *Aksharāvastha* (undifferentiation) in *Mulaprakriti* or *Tamas*, which dwells in unison with *Paramatma*.

.. 13. What do you mean by *Ekibhāva* (oneness-like, assimilation)?

.. " It means that *Tamas* lies in *Iswara* in *Sūksmāvastha* (undeveloped cause), undistinguishable by name, form, or division.

.. 14. Are *Jiva*, *Iswara*, *Maya*, real existences (truths or realities)?

.. " All the three are true. †††

.. 15. What are cause and effect?

.. " Cause is *Iswara* containing all *Chith* and *Achith* in *Sūksmāvastha*. Effect is *Iswara* containing them in *Sthūlāvastha*. The combination of this trinity (*Chith*, *Achith* and *Iswara*) is the *Upadana* (materials of construction) of the *Jagath* (cosmos). In effect, the characteristics of each are different, those of the one not obtaining for the others.

.. 16. How? Explain.

.. " For example, take a cloth woven of three different-coloured threads, white, black, and red. The three interwoven together make one harmonious whole, and still exist separately and having their own qualities, whiteness, blackness and redness (B). In effect there cannot be such a thing as blackness in white, and whiteness in black thread. (8). For *Jagath*, the triune combination is *Upadana*, and there is no interchangeableness or correlation among the three functions, viz., the enjoying (*Bhokritwa*=experiencing) pertaining to *Jivan* (*Chith*), the enjoyed (*Bhogyatwa*) pertaining to *Prakriti* (*Achith*) and the dispensation or administration (*Niyantritwa*) pertaining to *Iswara*.

* *Sativa*=Quality of unalloyed goodness and purity.

Raja=Quality of foulness, action.

Tama=Quality of darkness, ignorance.—A. G. C.

† *Mulaprakriti*=Primordial or primal cosmic matter. ‡ *Mahat*=Swelling or bulging. § *Ahankaram*=Budding or germination=conscious individualization. || *Subda*=Principle of sound (audibility). ¶ *Akasa*=Space. ** *Sparsa*=Principle of touch (tangibility). †† *Vayu* (s)=Air. ††† *Rūpa*=Principle of form (visibility). §§ *Tejas*=Light (includes *Agni*=fire). |||| *Rasa*=Principle of taste (gustability), ¶¶ *Apa*. (s)=Water. *** *Gandha*=Principle of smell (odourousness). †††† *Prithivi*=Earth (earthy matter)—A. G. C.

Note.—Such is the cosmogony of the universe according to *Vedanta* Philosophy. *Mulaprakriti* is thrown out of balance by a predominance of one or the other of the three *Gunas*, said to be brought about by *Iswara*,—*Mulaprakriti* is seed; *Mahat* its swelling; *Ahankaram* its germinating, &c.—A. G. C.

††† This answer is incomplete, hence unsatisfactory. We would like to know in what sense is each of these three understood to have real existence?—Ed. Theos.

- Q 17. Are *Jiva* and *Prakriti* the body of *Iswara* ?
 A. Yes
 „ 18. Do the terms used to designate the body (*Sarira*) denote also that which has the body (*Sariri*) ?
 „ „ Yes.
 „ 19. „ Give an example.
 „ „ When we say “cow,” we do not mean merely the cow’s “body,” but the cow as a living entity.
 „ 20. „ But what do the following aphorisms mean in the *Vedantasara* ? viz :
 a. *Ayamātma Brahma.*
 b. *Thatlwamasi.*
 c. *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma.*
 d. *Aham Brahmasmi.*
 e. *Aham manus (h).*
 f. *Brahmaveda Brahmaivachavathi, &c. &c. &c.*
 „ „ They mean this :—*Parabrahma* has *Jiva* for his body ; he has *Prakriti* for his body ; *Chit* and *Achit* forming the body to the indweller, *Iswara*, as the *primum mobile*.*
 „ 21. Does *Jivan* get *Moksha* here, or what ?
 „ „ After travelling by the paths of light (*Archiradi*) †, breaking through the circle of matter, and being welcomed by the four-faced *Brahma*, ‡ shaking off the *Linga Sarira*, entering *Vaikunt(h)a Loka*, § and assuming the same form as *Iswara*, it then enjoys *Parabrahma*.
 „ 22. Is *Mukta Jivan* able to dwell in *Vaikunt(h)a* only or can he go elsewhere ?
 „ „ It can do both under *Iswara Itcha* (will of *Iswara*).
 „ 23. Are *Jivas* any fixed number ?
 „ „ No ; they are numberless.
 „ 24. How does conditioned existence (*Samsāra*) happen to *Jiva* ?
 „ „ Through eternal companionship with *Achit*.
 „ 25. How does the connection arise ?
 „ „ Through *Karma*.
 „ 26. What is *Karma* ?
 „ „ *Iswara*’s ordination or will. ||
 „ 27. What does *Iswara* ordain ?
 „ „ “Thou be’st happy,” “thou be’st unhappy,” and so on.
 „ 28. Why does *Iswara* so will ?
 „ „ On account of the good and bad acts of *Jivan* ? ¶
 „ 29. Since *Jivan* is subservient to *Iswara* and *Jivan* is able only to do that which he is ordered to do, how can *Iswara* punish him ? And how does *Iswara* point out, by means of *Sāstras* (Laws or Institutes), what is good and what bad, to subordinate *Jivan* ?

* And if for “*Iswara*” we say the “ONE LIFE,” of the Buddhists, it will come to just the same thing. The “ONE LIFE” or “*Parabrahma*” is the *primum mobile* of every atom and is non-existent apart from it. Take away the *chit* and *achit*, the *gunas*, &c., and *Iswara* will be no where.—*Ed. Theos.*

† *Archiradi*—The illuminated, enlightened way, full of wisdom, knowledge—The heavenly path opposed to that leading into *Avernum* (*Bhūtanadi Marga*)—A. G. C.

‡ *Brahma* here means demiurgus—the creative primary emanation from *Parabrahma*.—A. G. C.

§ *Vaikunt(h)a Loka*—*Iswara*’s *Nityavibhuti* called *Bhogavibhuti*. *Nityavibhuti*—Permanent, lasting, final state. *Moksha Bhogavibhuti*—Real or genuine state. (*Vaikunt(h)a*) *Lilavibhuti*—State of imitation, sham, or mimicry (our phenomenal world)—A. G. C.

|| In such case the *Visishtadvaita* philosophy either teaches that man is irresponsible and that a devotee of that sect can no more avert or change his fate than the Christian Predestinarian, or that he can do so by praying and trying to propitiate *Iswara* ? In the first case *Iswara* becomes an unjust tyrant, in the second—a fickle deity capable of being entreated and of changing his mind.—*Ed. Theos.*

¶ But since *Karma* is “*Iswara*’s ordination or will,” how can *Jivan* be made responsible for its acts ? *Iswara* creating or willing the *Karma* of each man, and then punishing him for its badness, reminds us of the Lord God of *Israel* who creates man ignorant, allowing not a hair of his head to fall without his will, and then when man sins through ignorance and the temptation of God’s creature—the Serpent, he is eternally damned for it. We suspect the *Visishtadvaita* philosophy of being as full of incomprehensible mysteries which *Iswara* “has not so ordained” that they should be questioned—as missionary Christianity itself. Questions and answers from Nos. 24 to 27 are entirely incomprehensible to our limited conceptions. First of all we are told that the conditional existence of *Jivan* is “through its eternal companionship with *Achit*,” a state due to *Karma*, i. e., *Iswara*’s “ordination or will,” and yet further on it is said *Iswara* so wills “on account of the good and bad acts of *Jivan*.” These two propositions seem to us to be entirely irreconcilable. What “good or bad acts” *Jivan* had to do, and in what state of existence it was before *Iswara* ordained or willed it into its conditional existence, and whether even those acts were not due to *Iswara*’s “ordination,” are questions still clouded with a perfect mystery. We hope, however, that our Brother, the compiler of the above Catechism, will clear our doubts upon these delicate points.—*Ed. Theos.*

A. 29 *Iswara* gives to *Jivan* organs (body), &c., free-will, and capability of knowledge, and a code explaining what must be done, and what must be avoided. *Jivan* is dependent, but has still enough independence given him to execute the work entrusted into his hands. *Iswara* deals out reward or punishment accordingly as *Jivan* uses the functions he is endowed with, in conformity with *Sāstras* or not. (Consider the consequences of the use or abuse of power with which the king invests his premier).*

Q. 30. *Iswara* being omnipresent, what is the meaning of *Moksha*-attainment in other *Lokas* ?

A. As soon as full-wisdom (*Brahmagnana*) is obtained, i. e., the state of complete illumination, *Jivan* shakes off his *Sthūlasarira* ; being blessed by *Iswara* dwelling in his heart, it goes in *Sūkshma Sarira* to *Sprākṛita Loka* (non-material world) ; and dropping *Sūkshma Sarira* becomes *Mukta* (emancipated). †

„ 31. How do you know all this is true ?

„ „ From *Sāstras*.

„ 32. What is *Sūtra* ?

„ „ The Sacred Scriptures called “*Veda*” ‡ which is *Anadi* (had no beginning), *Aparushēya* (non-human), *Nitya* (unaffected by past, present, or future), and *Nirdosha* (pure).

TUMKUR, } A. GOVINDA CHARLU, F. T. S.
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Editor’s Note :—For various reasons we are unable to print, along with the above translation, its Sanskrit Text. It may be reserved for future use and portions of it published as occasion may require, to answer the possible objections that may be brought forward by our *Adwaites* and *Dwaites* brothers. In our humble opinion, since there cannot be but one and only Truth, the thousand and one interpretations by different sectarians of the same and one thing are simply the outward and evanescent appearances or aspects of that which is too dazzling (or perchance too dark and too profound) for mortal eye to correctly distinguish and describe. As already remarked by us in *Isis Unveiled* the multitudinous creeds and faiths have all been derived from one primitive source. Truth standing as the one white ray of light, it is decomposed by the prism into various and eye-deceiving colours of the solar spectrum. Combined, the aggregate of all those endless human interpretations—shoots and offshoots—represent one eternal truth ; separate, they are but shades of human error and the signs of human blindness and imperfection. However, all such publications are useful, since they fill the arena of discussion with new combatants and that truth can be reached at but after the explosion of innumerable errors. We invite our *Dwaites* and *Adwaites* Brothers to answer.

THEOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS RIOTS.

SOME far-sighted and promising correspondent, anxious to penetrate the mystery of the recent Kotahene riot between the Buddhists and the Roman Catholics to its very roots, makes a desperate attempt to connect it with “Colonel Olcott and Theosophy.” The correspondent belongs to the *Ceylon Observer*. *Tel maitre, tel valet*.

A Heathen Emperor is said to have struck out from his life those days when he had failed to benefit one human being, at the least. § The Christian Editor of the *Ceylon Observer*, as we have but too well occasion to know, on that day when his paper will come out without containing

* Precisely as in the Christian Catechism. Hence the latter as much as the former, to the strictly philosophical mind, are—unphilosophical and illogical. For either man is endowed with free-will and then his *Karma* is his own creation and not at all the “ordination or will” of *Iswara*, or he is irresponsible and both reward and punishment become useless and unjust.—*Ed. Theos.*

† “Emancipated” then from *Iswara* also ? Since “*Iswara* is dwelling in his heart and that the heart forms a portion of *Sthūla Sarira* which he has to “shake off” before he becomes emancipated and enters into the non-material world, there is every reason to believe that *Iswara* is “shaken off” at the same time as *Sūkshma Sarira*, and with all the rest ? A true *Vedantin* would say that *Iswara* or *Brahma* is “*Parabrahma* plus *MAYA* (or ignorance).”—*Ed. Theos.*

‡ That is just what is denied by most of the Pandits who are not *Visishtadvaitis*. The *Sāstras* can be regarded identical with the *Vedas* as little as the many hundred of the conflicting commentaries upon the Gospels by the so-called Christian Fathers are identical with the Christianity of Christ. The *Sāstras* are the repository of the many individual opinions of fallible men. And that fact alone that they do conflict in their endless and various interpretations with each other, prove that they must also conflict with the subject they comment upon. Hence—that they are distinct from, and not in the least identical with, the *Vedas*.—*Ed. Theos.*

§ “*La Clemenza di Tito*,” by P. Metastasio.
 “Perduto un giorno ei dice
 Ove fatto no ha qualcun felice.”