

Before a devotee can take to any of the Acharas he has to be baptised either with water or with some kind of spirit, according to the Achar to which he is to be initiated. This baptism ceremony is known by the name of Abhisheka, and is probably the original of the Christian baptism.

The well known Tantra saying:—"Pancha Makar" (literally the five M's) which is cited to show that Madya (one of the M's) means wines and spirits is carefully explained in the Kularnava Tantra (V part, 17 ullas)—the very book which the Kools (the votaries of drink) cite in their support—to signify quite different and higher things. The enquirers in this matter will do well to look for the real meaning in the work indicated.

BENGAPORE, April, 1883.

### VISISHTADWAITA PHILOSOPHY.

By A. GOVINDA CHARLU, F. T. S.

I WISH the Sanscrit text had been given along with the English translation of the Visishtadwaita Philosophy published in your May number, page 196, that our brothers may be in a position to detect any mistranslations by me of the Sanscrit dialogue. I already confessed that I was only the translator, and am not responsible for the opinions expressed in the original text, the authors of which are named in my last article. While the Catechism was being prepared, I raised many questions myself, but the authors assured me that all my objections as also various others had all been satisfactorily answered in the Visishtadwaita works, and in Sri Ramanujacharyar's *Veda-Bhashya*, and that the object of the present Catechism was to give the public a concise idea of this philosophy.

Although I am a Visishtadwaiter, I know very little of that philosophy myself. I have this day requested our brother Sriman Parthasaradhy Iyengar, F. T. S., to devote some leisure to enlightening his brothers on the subject. Meanwhile, I briefly answer the objections raised from what I was able to make out from a hurried explanation given to me by the authors at Melkote:—

(1.) *Parabrahma* being an All-pervading principle, itself being the All, is still considered as a separate substance from *Jivan*, although the former contains the latter, in the same manner that we talk of a part as separate from the whole of which it is a part.\* A part is therefore of the same nature as the whole, yet its distinguishing qualification is the fact of its being a part, viz., the individualization, and dependence on the whole. In this way is *Jivan* considered in relation with, and distinct from, *Parabrahm*.† My own inference is that Advaita and this coincide, the former considering that *Jivan* is *Parabrahma*, modified by the latter into "*Jivan is a part only of Parabrahma*."‡ Considered in this manner, there is one Infinite, made up of numberless infinites.¶

\* We cannot conceive of an "All-pervading whole," being separate from its part. The idea put forward by our learned brother is of course the theistic, but not very philosophical doctrine which teaches the relation of man to God as that between father and child.—Ed.

† Would it not be better and far more philosophical to resort, in such a case, to the oft-repeated simile of the ocean? If we suppose, for a moment, infinity to be a vast and an all-pervading ocean, we can conceive of the individual existence of each of [the drops composing that sea. All are alike in essence, but their manifestations may and do differ according to their surrounding conditions. In the same manner, all human individualities, although alike in nature, yet differ in manifestations according to the vehicles and the conditions through which they have to act. The *Yogi*, therefore, so far elevates his other principles, or let us call them vehicles, if preferred, as to facilitate the manifestation of his individuality in its original nature.—Ed.

‡ We believe not. A true esoteric Vedantic Advaiter would say: *Aham eva Parambrahm*, "I am also Parabrahm." In its external manifestation *Jivan* may be regarded as a distinct individuality—the latter a *maya*—in its essence or nature *Jivan* is—*Parabrahm*, the consciousness of the *Paramatma* manifesting through, and existing solely in, the aggregated *Jivans* viewed collectively. A creek in the shore of the ocean is one, so long only as the land it stretches upon is not redeemed. Forced back, its water rebecomes the ocean.—Ed.

¶ We are at a loss to know what our learned brother can mean by *Jivan* being "dependent" on the whole, unless "inseparable from" is meant. If the whole is "all-pervading" and "infinite," all its parts must be indivisibly linked together. The idea of separation involves the possibility of a vacuum—a portion of space or time where the whole is supposed to be absent from some given point. Hence the absurdity of speaking of the parts of one Infinite being also infinite. To illustrate geometrically, suppose there is an infinite line, which has neither a beginning nor end. Its parts cannot also be infinite, for when you say "parts," they must have a beginning and end; or, in other words, they must be finite, either at one or the other end, which is as evident a fallacy as to speak of an immortal soul which was at some time created—thus implying a beginning to that which, if the word has any sense, is eternal.—Ed.

(2.) Good and bad are relative ideas. Whether we recognize anything as good or bad, it is indisputable that both must be in the All-pervading—the *Parabrahma*. If bad is then considered to be ignorance proceeding from *Ahankaram*, i. e., conscious individuality (*Jiva*)—the part of the whole (see above)—then good comes to be applied to the whole, the *Parabrahma*, in the same manner that all consciousness may be said to proceed from unconsciousness by reason of its differentiation.

(3.) *Jiva*, *Iswara* and *Maya* are considered to be *real*, all the three in this light, i. e., as long as anything has existence, it is real or true, although that existence may not last for ever. The Advaiter says that only that which is immutable is true, and all things temporary and liable to change are illusionary; whereas the *Visishtadwaiter* says that as immutability is real in the eternity, so mutability is also real for the time being, and so long as there is no change. My own inference is that all the difficulty here lies in the words, but that the idea is one.\*

(4.) *Jivan* is said to be dependent and independent, in the same sense that a minister, a *dewan*, is independent in exercising authority, and dependent on his king for the bestowal of that authority.† This apparent contradiction, man's *Svatantrya* and *Paratantrya* was anticipated in number 26, and was answered in the 29th art. of the Catechism. Nos. 24 to 28 certainly seem full of mystery, incomprehensible and contradictory. I myself thought that the whole argument was moving in a circle, and begging; and No. 29 was therefore intended to clear up the mystery. A subtle distinction is made between *Iswara's* will and *Jiva's* Karma; *Iswara's* will or Karma being the ever-active state of the whole—the *Parabrahma*;‡ and the *Jiva's* Karma being the particularisation;—the outer circle moving, and setting its inner circles in motion, each particular circle having with the general motion, its own individual whirl within the parent circle.

(5.) "*Iswara dwelling in his heart*" has its own specific meaning; but the statement is not to be understood to mean that *Iswara dwells nowhere else*. Question 30 begins with "*Iswara being omnipresent*." Answer to Question 30 therefore does not in any way imply shaking off *Iswara*. *Jivan* becoming *Mukta* is described as passing from one state to another and living with *Iswara* in the state of *Mukti* in his (*Iswara's*) condition called *Bhagavibhuti*, (read note on *Vaikunt(h)a Loka* No. 21.

(6.) Please insert the following corrections:—

For:—	Read:—
" <i>Sativa</i> ,"	" <i>Satva</i> "
" <i>Gana</i> "	" <i>Guna</i> "
" <i>Prithur</i> "	" <i>Prithvi</i> "
" <i>Bhoggatnea</i> "	" <i>Bhoggatva</i> "
" <i>Brahmaivachavati</i> "	" <i>Brahmaivubhavati</i> "
" <i>Bhūtmadi Marga</i> "	" <i>Bhūtmadi Marga</i> "
" <i>Bhogavibhuti</i> "	" <i>Bhogavibhuti</i> "
"final state. <i>Moksha</i> "	"final state, <i>Moksha</i> ."
"Genuine state. <i>Vaikunta</i> "	"Genuine state, <i>Vaikunta</i> "
" <i>Sprakrita Loka</i> "	" <i>Aprakinta Loka</i> "

(7.) I perfectly agree with the editor in saying that truth stands as the one white ray of light decomposed into several colours in the spectrum; and I add that the one white ray is true as well as the decomposed colors. This is the Theosophic view.

*Ed. Note.*—Not quite so, we are afraid. The eye-deceiving colours of the spectrum being dismembered and only illusionary reflections of the one and only ray—cannot be true. At best, they rest upon a substratum of truth for which one has often to dig too deeply to ever hope to reach it without the help of the esoteric key.—Ed.

\* We would like our learned brother to point out to us one thing in the whole universe, from the sun and stars, down to man and the smallest atom, that is not undergoing some change, whether visible or invisible, at every smallest fraction of time. Is it "man's personal individuality"—that which the Buddhists call *attavada*—"delusion of self"—that is a reality elsewhere than in our own *Maya*?—Ed.

† The comparison of the king and the *dewan* is meaningless with reference to the subject illustrated. The power of conferring authority is a finite attribute, inapplicable to infinity. A better explanation of the contradiction is therefore necessary, and we trust our brother will get it from his inspirers.—Ed.

‡ This is indeed a "subtle distinction." How can *Parabrahma* be "the ever-active state of the whole" when the only attribute—an absolutely negative one—of *Parabrahma* is passivity, unconsciousness, etc., and how can *Parabrahma*, the one principle, the universal Essence or the *TOTALITY* be only a "state of the whole" when it is itself the *WHOLE*, and when even the Vedantic *Dwaiters* assert that *Iswara* is but a mere manifestation of, and secondary to, *Parabrahma* which is the "All-Pervading" *TOTAL*?—Ed.