

But I think it more fair to leave these points to be brought up in the discussion with all the force that individual conviction can give.

It is well to remember, that we seek truth, not the triumph of a party. And it is also well to remember, that where the question

of authority comes in, the only authoritative fault-finder would be that man who had realized all that Kali-Worship has to give.

And He found no fault. Rather, He uttered a message in the name of the Divine Mother that is to-day going out into all the world, and calling the nations to Her Feet

VISISHTADVAITISM

IN your review of Sri Bhagavad Gita with Sri Ramanujacharya's Visishtadvaita commentary translated by me into English (Page 29 of Prabuddha Bharata for February 1899) there are certain points about which you have expressed a wish to hear me. To meet your wishes and as having been furnished an opportunity to contributing something to your paper, as a reading of interest both to *Advaitins* and *Dvaitins*, I write a few lines for the present. More, if you care for it.

Outside the pale of Vedantism, Religions like, for instance, Mohammedanism and Christianity, which teach the Doctrines of Personal God, of the way of devotion (*Bhakti* or God-Love as I tersely put it), the Doctrine of Grace &c.—are under the impression that such tenets as these are peculiar to themselves, and are therefore foreign to Vedanta. To correct this impression and to show that Ramanujacharya's Visishtadvaita clearly demonstrates that all these Doctrines form part and parcel of the Vedanta; it has been necessary to adduce some evidence towards substantiating that position. If therefore you find scattered

throughout the book in the Foot-notes useful parallels between Vedantic and Ex-Vedantic systems, the conclusion according to you is not self-advertisement¹ but that Ramanuja's religious spirit is of a cosmopolitan character, and that he aimed at a Universal Religion—which is being practically carried out to this day, as far as India is concerned.

As to the *Drama* of the Universe about which you wish me to say something:—A *Drama* is both *tragedy* and *comedy*. You evidently take it in the sense of comedy. *Comedy*, if one would say, he would be one kind of extremist; *tragedy*, if another would say, he would likewise be another extremist. But *drama* covers both; that that is the fact no one will deny. If as you say, it is a *tragedy*, and a *real tragedy*, you would not care to live a moment in the world;

¹Whatever may the meaning be sought to be conveyed by Mr. Charlu here we are sorry that he should force us to point out the passage which we thought was not quite becoming to himself or his subject. We did not mean the foot-notes at all as he seems to think. We meant the passage in page XVIII beginning "As in the past, so in the present, mankind will hail with satisfaction a work, etc., etc."—Ed.

but the stern fact that all of us are so tenacious of life and its pleasures (albeit their fleeting nature) is sufficient evidence rebutting the absolutely *tragic* view taken of the universe, or the view that would be taken by the pessimist.

Be it tragedy or comedy, is it according to you 'very real'? If it is a drama—whatever that term may signify—to Ramanuja, it must be more so to Sankara? And to the latter, it is never 'very real' as it is to you, but a great *illusion*.

On this point, further, I would invite you to read the Vedanta-Sutra (II-i-33) '*Lokavat tu lila Kaivalyam*'—This sutra is neither Ramanuja's nor Sankara's, but Badarayana-Vyasa's. What would you understand by the term *lila*?—*tragedy* or *drama*? Both Ramanuja and Sankara agree that it is *drama*; whether it is Real or Unreal is another question. But as to you so to Ramanuja, it is *not real* to Sankara! If Ramanuja therefore views the Universe as a 'dramatic display' it is in the wake of the Sutra quoted.*

As to the rigorous *advaita* Srutis, certainly there are many. But there are rigorous *dvaita* Srutis also, you will admit. (I cannot enter into details here of course). And there are a third set known as the *Ghataka Srutis*, which undertake to harmonize between *advaita* and *dvaita* Srutis. It was here as you will see, the special mission of Ramanuja, to demonstrate this harmony and hence the inevitable System of *Visishtadvaita* running through the totality of

the Upanishads taken together. The Brahma-Sutra I. i. 11, you refer to, is I. i. 12, according to Sri Bhashya. It is: *Srutatvaccha*. If you wish to know exhaustively how Ramanuja interprets the *advaita* texts thereunder quoted, you ought to read the *Sri Bhashya* on that Sutra and of the Sutra I-i-2: viz. '*Janmadyasya Yatah*'. But I may briefly state that to Ramanuja, *advaita* is indeed Unity, but a *compound* Unity, the constituents whereof are inseparable, or exist in the relation of *substance* and attribute, or *substance* (a term of Spinoza) and *mode* or soul and body, expressed in Sanskrit terminology; as *Guni-Guna*, *Pranari-Prakara*, *Sariri-Sarira bhava*. I invite the readers to a perusal, among several others, of the exhaustive footnotes under pages 233-234 of the Gita, which will throw much light on this point.

To Ramanuja, a *cold abstract* God is non-entity. In other words a quality-less Brahm is to him negation. This is the old bone of contention between the *Advaita* and *Visishtadvaita* Schools, called the *Nirguna-Saguna-Vada*. The *Advaita* school postulates a Higher and a Lower Brahm, but to the *Visishtadvaita* School there is but one Brahm, which is *something with* Qualities and not a *nothing without* Qualities. To man's consciousness, as it is constituted, meditation or devotion to, a quality-less 'Thing-in-itself' is impossible. Vyasa-Sutra (III-iii-11). '*Anandadayah pradhanasya*,' is among others, elucidatory of this Question. If you admit at least *ananda* as a characteristic of the Deity, then you may have the consolation of a God who loves us; and you may well prefer this

*Plato and Heraclitus, (of Greece) held this view. Those who care to pursue the subject further may read the topic embraced by the Sutra '*Nuprayojanaratat*.'

ananda-qualified God to an absolutely *no-qualified* abstraction² !

In the space of a short contribution, further expansion of the topic is inadmissible, but let me invite your readers to satisfy themselves as to what Ramanuja's views are, as to the *nirguna-vad*, and as to the *advaita* texts in the Upanishads, by reading the exhaustive commentaries of Ramanuja on Bhagavad Gita stanza 12, Book II, and stanza 2, Book XIII. On the latter, I particularly ask you to peruse the pages 410-414, where passages occur such as: "The contention of 'Brahm devoid of qualities' (= *nirguna-vada*) is justified," etc., etc.

Let me in conclusion thank you for your very fair review of my work; and let me hope, that with the sympathy and appreciation of such impartial critics as you, I may be able to more fully expound the Doctrines of Ramanuja in the 2nd volume which is under preparation (D. V.). But let me note that your review is more on my unimportant preface of a few pages than on the important bulk of the work of Sri Ramanuja's Gita commentary which evidently has not been read through leisurely. (I am not sure, too, that you have looked at the Important Tables). You will therein

find that *Brahma-Juanam* according to Ramanuja consists in short, of His *Svarupa, Rupa, Guna, and Vibhuti*. God to him is One. And he is of these several aspects, every one of which is true, and none of which is an illusion. There is no place to enter into details;—but let me remark that under *Vibhuti* comes the Universe, about the real or illusory character of which there is so much controversy between the Advaita and the Dvaita Schools. Ramanuja is very strong about asserting that whatever *is* is real; and in this, he finds yet another modern exponent in the person of Dr. Lewis G. Janes, M.A., (U.S.A.) who in his paper on 'Science, Metaphysics and Natural Law,' says: 'Rationally interpreted, all the evidence at our command asserts the inexpugnable verity of a universe external to our consciousness; a universe related to us in certain determinate ways which we cannot alter by one jot or tittle by our subjective volition.' '*Chid-achidoravina-sambandhah, Isvarena*' as Sri Ramanuja would put it.

A. GOVINDA CHARYA.

[The Advaita recognises the necessity and utility of all systems of belief. In its economy there is room for the most infantile expression of the spiritual hankering as well as for the loftiest flights of monistic speculations. It labours under no difficulty therefore when it

²We would respectfully beg to remind Mr. Charlu that according to the Advaita, Ananda is *not* a characteristic of God but Ananda *is* God. The same is the case with the other two words expressive of the God-head. Sat and Chit. Advaita teachers take the greatest pains to emphasize that Satchitananda cannot be said to be the correct name of God for the sufficient reason that He is nameable, being the infinite, and name means limitation,—but that it is used only because a better one has not yet been conceived of.—Ed.

³Mr. Charlu is welcome to claim Dr. Janes as a "modern exponent" of Ramanuja and we are sure our valued American friend will appreciate the distinction. But in justice to the Doctor we ought to tell Mr. Charlu that he has misquoted him. Dr. Janes talks of the extreme subjective attitude in the place and not of '*what is*' or the Absolute Reality, where Mr. Charlu levies in on his alliance. Dr. Janes's idea of the Absolute Reality will be found in Prabuddha Bharata, No. 32, pp. 36-37.—Ed.

meets with Dvaita or Visishtadvaita passages in the Srutis. Overzealous partisans of Advaita may have tortured these texts to serve their purpose; but while it was incumbent upon the other schools to do so to keep their heads high, the Advaita did not stand in need of such methods of procedure to preserve its natural supremacy. It is quite right that there should be easy steps in the Sruti to enable man to climb the tree of knowledge and that each step should be considered equally useful and important. The Advaita gains everything and loses nothing by accepting this broad and natural point of view.

We are happy to have the admission from Mr. Charlu that there *are rigorous* Advaita Srutis as there are Dvaita ones. But we cannot clearly make out if it is a personal opinion of his or if it is the opinion of modern Visishtadvaitins as well. We are led into this ambiguity by his statement that according to Ramanuja "Advaita is indeed Unity, but a compound Unity."

With the object of being further enlightened on this point we may here put in our objections to this method of explaining away the Advaita. This is clearly an attempt of the over-zealous kind stated above. The Visishtadvaita philosophers might have stood in particular need of it because naturally wishing to stand at the head they would try to bend the Advaita Srutis to fit in their thought grooves first of all. But a very little attention would show any reasonable person that it is an attempt to do the impossible. A 'compound unity' is absurd as a circular straight line, or which is the same, Brahman "with qualities." With all deference to Mr. Charlu and the school to which he belongs, we would venture to state that the conception of Brahman with quality argues an imperfect understanding of the nature of the infinite. It is true we cannot fully grasp the true nature of the infinite—but we may surely know this much that *it is*

not finite, nor is it the sum-total of finite things or attributes. Nor can the infinite be more than one. How could attributes be predicated of it? Attributes—because they are more than one—are finite. If they are put alongside the infinite as parallel straight lines the infinitude of the infinite is destroyed. Things transcending the infinite co-exist with the infinite and thus limit it. If they are parts of which the infinite is the whole no better fate awaits it. That which is the sum of finite things or attributes cannot be infinite. Brahman is infinite and described in the Srutis by negations. By qualifying Brahman with attributes the Dvaitin and the Visishtadvaitin not only cut themselves off from Reason but from Sruti too.

For purposes of worship and Vyāvahâric life Sankara's conception of a Lower Brahman is sufficient. Indeed there is very little difference between it and Ramanuja's God, so far as attributes and powers are concerned.

But the whole difference lies in the one being conceived as a part and parcel of the universal illusion (Sankara's God) and the other being beyond that illusion and in fact the creator and the controller of it (Ramanuja's God).

Because we cannot grasp the infinite Brahman—which by the way is the only reality—the Sruti gives us a substitute for it as a temporary measure so that when our intellects are sharp and strong she may lead us to the highest, says Sankara. According to Ramanuja this qualified finite God is the highest.

Let us see where these implications land us. Sankara's God being a part and parcel of the universal illusion cannot be held responsible for this piece of magical practice. He himself is a child of Mâyâ and therefore not its cause. But the same thing cannot be said of Ramanuja's God. Even if it be granted for argument's sake that pleasure and pain balance each other in the world what business had he to create

such an imperfect thing? If it is said that he did not create it, somehow or other Mâyâ created it in the beginning and made him the ruler of the creation; he only sends effects to people of their own karma:—Why did he allow Mâyâ to do it if he was omniscient and omnipotent?

In fact the Visishtadvaita conception of the

Universe and God is untenable if driven to logical extremes. But it has its undoubted sphere of usefulness. Our only object in making the above criticism is to emphasise the oft-repeated truism that one cloak should not be attempted to be made to suit all bodies.—Ed.]

MR. TATA'S SCHEME

WE are not aware if any project at once so opportune and so far-reaching in its beneficent effects was ever mooted in India, as that of the Post-graduate Research University of Mr. Tata. The scheme grasps the vital point of weakness in our national well-being with a clearness of vision and tightness of grip, the masterliness of which is only equalled by the munificence of the gift with which it is ushered to the public.

It is needless to go into the details of Mr. Tata's scheme here. Every one of our readers must have read Mr. Padshia's lucid exposition of them. We shall try to simply state here the underlying principle of it.

If India is to live and prosper and if there is to be an Indian nation which will have its place in the ranks of the great nations of the world, the food question must be solved first of all. And in these days of keen competition it can only be solved by letting the light of Modern Science penetrate every pore of the two giant feeders of mankind—Agriculture and Commerce.

The ancient methods of doing things can no longer hold their own against the

daily multiplying cunning devices of the modern man. He that will not exercise his brain, to get out the most from Nature, by the least possible expenditure of energy must go to the wall, degenerate and reach extinction. There is no escape.

Mr. Tata's scheme paves the path of placing into the hands of Indians this knowledge of Nature—the preserver and the destroyer, the ideal good servant as well as the ideal bad master,—that by having the knowledge, they might have power over her and be successful in the struggle for existence.

By some the scheme is regarded as chimerical, because of the immense amount of money required for it, to wit about 74 lacs. The best reply to this fear is: If one man—and he not the richest in the land—could find 30 lacs, could not the whole country find the rest? It is ridiculous to think otherwise, when the interest sought to be served is of the paramount importance.

We repeat: No idea more potent for good to the whole nation has seen the light of day in modern India. Let the whole nation therefore, forgetful of class or sect interests, join in making it a success.