

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

We have seen that the highest unity is had in a real embodied person in so far as he holds the entire universe or reality in a subordinate relation absolutely and eternally. He is Spiritual and Infinite and Perfect.

The individual souls who are parts of the universe, though spiritual are units or monads within the Highest Object and thus form parts of His body, or if we may say form integral portions of that whole One. The Lord is the One supreme Subject, and Person, *Puruṣottama*, distinguished alike from the souls as partial subjects of experience, and from the world of matter, which is the pure or mere object in the epistemological sense. Through His unlimitedness and uniqueness of being he holds all the worlds as His possession, which He supports and pervades and manifests and enjoys. All relations are sustained by His love, which is the only power that is capable of being at the same time freedom.

There is no reason to suspect that this fundamental relation with the Highest Subject involves the lesser subjects in any imperfection. Imperfection is not entailed by dependence or subordination to the Highest. It is incident only on the involvement of the individual in his own egoism and in the world which he seeks to possess and enjoy as his own possession. Nor can it be said that the lesser subjects, being many and not unique in their activities, became inanimate objects or things. Nor can it be said that these individual souls because of their spiritual nature could be dissolved into a vast ocean of Consciousness. The drops of the Ocean cannot be annulled even by the greatness of Ocean; the rays of light cannot be absorbed in the glare of their source: the parts cannot be surrendered even in the fullest presentation of the whole. The whole is a whole of parts, and this whole must be considered to be the body (*śarīra*) of the Lord in the very same sense in which we claim our body to be ours 'The doctrine which makes God, a whole of parts, even like the Absolute of Western Idealism, is wrong since it is essentially a mechanical or pseudo-organic conception. Idealists labouring under the mistaken dualism of mind and body hope to resolve the world into mere foci of consciousness or souls fulgurated from a central source of light and spirituality, and seek to explain the souls as parts of one whole. The logical interrelation of these parts with the whole leads to that telescoping of all individuals into the bosom of the Absolute which now presents the spectacle of a metaphysical continent. It is impossible to grant this construction of an Absolute any life or movement or value since the Spirit is not traceable anywhere in it. It is just the body of the Lord that has been traced not the nature of the Absolute reality, the Spirit that sustains the interrelations of the Nature. There is thus presented the necessity of going ahead of the theist and the pantheist and of affirming that the Absolute of the metaphysical epistemology is just the Nature of Spinoza, for Rāmānuja's *śarīra*

cannot exist apart from the *śarīrin*, the Lord and Supreme Person who realizes therein the supreme values of Truth and Goodness and Beauty, Auspiciousness and Supreme Freedom through Love. Instead of making the Absolute the complete and self-fulfilling and self-fulfilling Existence of Ideal, it becomes necessary to make the Puruṣottama greater than the Akṣara, the immutable, and not, as the idealists contend, make God, less than the Absolute.

Thus it becomes possible to build up a clear and consistent philosophy of Religion on the basis of this organisatic theory. Life instead of being depleted of all content and reality becomes restored to value and vitality and morality and realisation of beauty. Instead of having to reverse our conduct and deepest intuitions and criteria of reality and worth, we are promised here a great and intimate experience of God through the realization of our dependence on Him. Not experience merely of God but also abiding relationship, not merely the cognition or knowledge of all reality but also the deep elevating numinous consciousness rich with infinite radiance due to contact and co-existence and unity with the Divine Lord is the goal of human life. The Life of the individual becomes transformed and transfigured, and man achieves the Supreme Birth into the consciousness of that transfigured relationship of unity which emphasises without annihilating the nearness and fullness of the individual in his Self.

Rāmānuja is the first thinker of importance who laid stress on the relationship of body and soul as explaining the Unity-category. The unity category may manifest itself in various ways of identity, and identity and difference, but the truth about all types of Sāmānādhikaraṇya, co-ordination-relation is entirely the body-soul relation. Having accepted this relation of fundamental importance which saves the reality of things and facts and experiences there is no reason to expect that what is presented in consciousness to a subject is unreal. On the other hand, reality is something that belongs to the Object also and cannot be referred to the subject alone, for it is the truth of the object that is in question not the subject's existence or experience. It is this reality of the object that is to be guaranteed by perception, inference and scripture (pramāṇāni) and not the individual's existence. Further knowledge is the specific relation of cognition informing the subject about the object, and can never be divorced from its special function of intimating to its subject truth about the thing the subject has apprehended through its consciousness. Illusion is merely the wrong intimation due to defect in the subject, or object or in the medium itself. This has been discussed already under illusions of perception. The problem of illusion is the problem of how we are able to apprehend a thing other than what it is. If we are unable to explain it we call it inexplicable, but not that it is ignorance that makes it inexplicable by over laying itself, or rather that the object itself is illusive ignorance. Such an anstossing of subjective ignorance to objective existence is a perverse way of going about explaining knowledge. Thus most kinds of idealism are not wrong in so far as they seek to affirm the transcendent reality of spirit or God, but wrong in the reasons they give. It was Bergson who wrote: " The truth is that there is one, and only one,

method of refuting materialism: it is to show that matter is precisely what it appears to be."¹

There is no need to deny reality to matter and no need

to convert it into a manifestation of spirit, or a perversion of spirit, or reversion or fulguration or emanation of spirit. It is necessary however to point out that there is no inward occult power in it just as the materialists and cārvākas claim, no inner power or vitality just as the vitalists and sāmkyans claim for it, nor any other characteristics. Realism of the common-sense variety demands the acceptance of matter different in kind from Spirit. But then in regard to the problem of their actually available relation we have to state reasons that are acceptable. It is not a necessity of metaphysics to affirm that which is above the understanding of the common sense, or to discover ways and means of reducing the ordinary man's view to nullity and illusion. There is no such contradiction between physics and metaphysics as to make either metaphysics or physics impossible. All the same metaphysics shows that the fullest explanation of reality is discovered not only in the realm of ordinary experience but also in supra-physics supra-perceptual, supra-inferential reality of spirit. This level is the level of the Śabda, of scriptural testimony, which alone can give us knowledge of the Super-perceptual Divine Nature as also our own inward nature, That however does not entail the reduction of the perceptual and inferential and the ordinary man's world to illusion and ignorance. Rāmānuja thus finds it necessary to affirm the firmest and fundamental unity between the physical and the spiritual, between the world and God, souls and God, and nothing fulfils this realistic criterion of relationship better than the organic conception which is universally applicable on all planes.

Spirit is the Self, is master, enjoyer, destiner; matter is the body, is servant, enjoyed and destined and ordered. The souls too are subordinate, dependent absolutely on the Lord, existing for His enjoyment and service. Thus we find that Rāmānuja does not make the world an object of illusion but an object of enjoyment and control and service to God.

It has been beautifully said that four persons went out on a walk to a garden. One gentleman said that the flower Rose was beautiful in form, another added that its smell was fragrant and another touching it said that it was wonderfully soft, and the fourth added that it has honey also within it. Thus each one of these later statements added to the richness of the experience. None of them contradicted the rest. Thus the reality of the integral Godhead involves the acceptance of the reality of every thing as related to Him integrally, that is organically as body to that Self. Multiplanal existence is God's. multidimensional is His Nature. The God of Religion is not the

¹ *Matter and Memory*, p.80

Absolute but more. He contains and manifests wonderful infinities and auspiciousness. He is the rich source of all bliss and fullness of perfection. From Him all freedom and creation, proceeds in the context of material and temporal existence. Reality is granted by Him to all, for without him nothing can even be.

Thus does metaphysics find its real basis in Religion. To Rāmānuja goes the credit of restoring Religion to its real status and revealing that the individual is not God or Brahman but that he belongs to Brahman and that he is dependent on Him alone. Rāmānuja restored to Vedānta its God, the Supreme Subject and Supreme Object of all knowledge and Love.