

THE THEORY OF CAUSE OR CAUSALITY

In any metaphysical enquiry, the origin of reality or of the actual, is a most important problem and on that depends all speculation of an ultimate category or substance. Causality as a law is a synthetic principle and not an *a priori* truth. In the order of experience no inherent necessity can be demonstrated. In the uniformity which is observed with which sequences of 'perceptions' take place or rather regular connexion between causes and effect no inherent necessity can be demonstrated either. Yet the causal law is a condition precedent and necessary for the existence of thinking beings. The necessity, however, is logical and not sensorial. Causality, understood thus, means regular succession of antecedent and consequent, such that a specific change in one thing at one moment is followed by a specific alteration in the same or another thing at another moment. This implies continuity and connexion between cause and effect, and we should like to believe, although we cannot always show, that causes are related to effects in such a way that the causes produce, determine and explain the effects¹. Novelty accordingly means, a hitherto unobserved potential in the cause, or relation, which formerly did not occur. Vedanta says, the effect is nothing but the cause modified and in consequence the effect is known when the cause is known (completely), the desired knowledge of all things resulting from the knowledge of one thing is possible and appropriate². This belief in the logical necessity of the intrinsic (organic) relation between cause and effect is known as Sat-kārya-vāda. Those who deny this intrinsic thought necessity in the relation between cause and effect and maintain that there is production of a radically new order of existence from its cause and disparate from it, throw a far heavier strain upon our belief. Even they cannot assert that there is no capacity (Śakti)³ on the part of the causes or collocation of causes to become an effect or effects. In which case, to become an effect would mean nothing other than passing into another condition. "Activity applied to a cause gives rise to those effects only the potentiality of which inheres in that cause." Thus Asat-kārya-vāda is wrong and in the last resort is simply an illogical defence of novelty as if novelty means illogicality. In the light of the principle of organic or intrinsic relation, novelty is equally and more logically explained. As an argument Asat-kārya-vāda is self-contradictory; as an assumption strictly

¹. Śrī Vēdanta Dēsika maintains this view in his Rahasya-traya sāra, cf. "Our minds and their bodies": Laird:pp.62.

². Śrī Bhāshya 1. I. 1.

³. Nyāyankar Vaiśēṣikas do not agree to the postulate of Śakti, but Rāmānuja says that even if they do not they have to postulate I.1.3.

pushed to its logical conclusion it leads to Sat-kārya-vāda. The cause-effect relation, expressed synthetically, is one of Unity-in-distinction or difference.

The cause of the world must be one, which contains or has within it, the potentiality of the world or all existence. The first cause (which indeed we have to postulate and cannot help postulating) must be something; it cannot be nothing. If non-existence be at the beginning, then, that which arises from Śūnya must be another Śūnya.⁴ *Tucchādupr̥taḥ tucchamēvakāryam syāt.* The Buddhistic doctrine of absolute momentariness, which perhaps (as Rāmānuja hints) Buddha taught as a disciplinary measure in order to abandon the changing flux of experience, so to devote oneself to the fundamental issues of moral life, which unfortunately they have converted into a metaphysical creed, led them into either mere Representationism or its consequence and *cul de sac*, Solopsism, or else to the final consummation of Scepticism and Nihilism⁵. Further on the doctrine of absolute momentariness the origination of the world cannot be accounted for, *kṣaṇikatvapakṣē*, for immediate cessations of experience (existence) after appearance mean that before the effect had been or could be, the cause is not and in that intermediate stage, there is neither cause nor effect nor even a passing of one into the other. Thus there can be firstly, no effectuation or passing into one another, secondly, there is nothing which can become something, *ex nihilo nihil fit*, thirdly, this is not true to experience at all, for we do not see cessations of existence though we certainly experience the passage of one form into another form or *avastha*. The Cause or the First cause, therefore must be the material from which and of which this world is an effect. The effect is a process, and not a particular state, and the whole process must in a sense be treated as the effect of the cause. Only then can any definite knowledge be gained as to the nature of the cause. And if we do maintain that the cause is the ultimate potential of all these Real differences, then we cannot know the whole except through the knowledge of the highest evolute or the last term, that is the Ultimate Spirit or Brāhmaṇ-as-completely-manifested in the evolutionary unfoldment. Sāmkhya and Yōga schools accept Sat-kārya-vāda. According to them, “the effect is an entity, because a non-entity can never be brought into existence, because of the determinate relation between the cause with the effect because everything cannot be possible by any and every means, because a competent cause can do only that for which it is competent, and lastly because, the effect is non-difference from the cause.” (Sāmkhya kārika 9.61.)⁶ From this they infer that the world-cause is that which is the material substance, subtle, unintelligent, the inferred Pradhānam. This

⁴ Śrī Bhāṣya. II, ii, 19,25, 27 and 30.

² Vaibhāsika, Yōgachāra, Soutrantika, and Madhyamika Schools. Cf. Indian Phil. Radhakrishnan

⁶ Śaunaka “ what has existed is alone brought into manifestation; how can a substance which has not subsisted begin to subsist’. *sad eva niyate vyaktim, asatas sambhavah kutah* ‘ Sri Vishnu Dharma ch 104’

material substance is capable of revealing its potentialities of differentiation in the very subtle form of three qualities or guṇas of sattva (harmony) rajas (activity and passion) and tamas (passivity, darkness and evil). These three guṇas are in equilibrium. But by the Sannidhānam or transcendental nearness to the Puruṣa, being thrown into inequilibrium, it evolves its effects in the serial order of Mahat, ahaṅkāra, the subjective organs which reveal the beauties of the world to the passive spectator, namely, manas, the five organs of sense and five organs of action and the objective nature namely, the subtle ground (tanmātras) and the five elements⁷. All these are material categories (tattvas) and only the Puruṣa the intelligent inactive witness, the *inferred* separate being, who constituting the spiritual entity and principle, explains the somewhat characteristic property of intelligent unfoldment in the creation of the universe, and even a purposive direction of its thrustings; for the Prakṛti capable of activity by itself evolves the world for the experience and delight of the Puruṣa, and not for her own sake as she is non-intelligent⁸. These two entities, or rather final principles, are the ultimate reals. Though in a recent exposition of Saṅkhyan theism⁹, the dependence (parārthativāt) of Prakṛti on Īśvara is sought to be proved, the orthodox opinion had been that there is no God for Sāmkhya, and even if there be one as in the Patāñjala-Yōga doctrine, he is not an immanent God, not a God that real theism requires and demands of Him.

The ultimate cause, *causa materialis*, is Pradhāna, and the *causa efficiens* or rather *causa instrumentalis*, is the samyōga of Puruṣa and Prakṛti, where the Puruṣa is a mere unimplicated spectator (sākṣi) unnecessary to the whole process, but necessary atleast, in the sense of being a spectator of the drama for the drama to be. In Samkhya. then, non-implication of the Puruṣa as its sorest point, as all activity, even of conscious or cognizant activity (Buddhi), is relegated to the unintelligent principle Prakṛti, which cognises and unfolds, for the sake of an un-enjoying (nirāśraya) intelligence, which is mere intelligence, just as a dinner table is kept full of excellent dishes for the enjoyment of one who cannot enjoy. Thus Samkhya is unsatisfactory not in so far as its evolutionary process is concerned (I. Iv. 3), but in so far as that system has no real place for intelligence and where I declares it to be necessary, it is most unnecessary, and that exactly is the sorest point involving self-contradiction. The inference which Saṅkhya draws that the Puruṣa is, whilst it maintains that there is no implication of Puruṣa in the process is illogical, and founded on the false principle that he is chinmātram, mere intelligence, which might be shrouded by and destroyed in character by, perhaps, mixture or alliance with matter, or else for a further reason, that if the Puruṣa is at any time implicated in the process

⁷ Mūlaprakṛtiravikṛtiḥ mahadātadyāhprakṛtir vikṛtiyas sapta |
śoḍaśaśca vikāro, na prakṛtir navikṛtiḥ puruṣah ||

⁸ Sam. Karika 17

⁹ Theism in Samkhya. A.K.Majumdar Modern Review feb-mar 1927.

he could never get out of it. The latter reason the Samkhyans present as the why of their not accepting the implication of Puruṣa in the material unfoldment. If we can show that the cause of the world, i.e., the *causa efficiens* is really an effective intelligence than the Samkhyan *saṃyōga*, and that the intelligence is implicated though never destroyed or transformed in character as intelligence it is, then we would escape a logical and empirical pit-fall. Matter can never have the power to intelligent activity, indeed, for any activity. It is also maintained that the laws of periodicity of evolution and involution cannot be accounted for without referring them to an intelligence law giver. Matter exists for another, and has its root-ground in another, for which it exists as a dependent existence. It is ‘*paravaśya*,’ subject to another or to the Highest Brāhmaṇ or the Para. Matter’s existence is dependent on an intelligence which enjoys it and guides it to its own ends, and gives it the dignity of an actual effective existence or reality. In Saṅkhya however, we are face to face with an un-reconciled dualism between matter and spirit. And the causal sequence also stands without explaining the origination or otherwise of the spirit, or matter. There are two causes standing in the mid-air.

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika accepts like Samkhya, this clear-cut dualism between matter and Spirit. It postulates the material substance in the form of atoms (*aṇus*) which are of four kinds with exclusion of the atoms of *ākāśa*, which is conceived to be the underlying substance of the ether of space.¹⁰ There are also infinite number of spiritual points (*ātman*s) which are capable of consciousness in conjunction with matter or the world made of material *aṇus* or atoms, in combination at the will of *Īśvara*. God thus becomes an effective *causa efficiens* of the universe. But even this bringing together of these material and spiritual entities is actuated by an immanent principle of *adṛṣṭa*, which is said to be in action in the primary motions on the part of the atoms and of the *manas*. (II-ii-11.) “अग्रेरुर्ध्वज्वरुमं वायोस्तिर्यग्गमनमणुमनसैक्ष कर्मेत्यवुषुकारितानि. But in bringing this principle of *Adṛṣṭa* as quite different from God, just like the principle of Justice or Pre-established Harmony of Leibniz, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is giving no real efficiency but instrumentality to God which because there is intelligent arrangement perceivable in the world, is brought in to be an omnipotent power to effectuate the mutual putting together which the principle of *Adṛṣṭa* is incapable of doing. Thus it follows that once creation has been set in motion, the world will go on as a clock, *Īśvara* being no longer necessary. Such a God is not of the world, such a God is the God of Deism, an external agent. However compared to Samkhya, the efficient cause of the World in Vaiśeṣika is more effective, because centred in an intelligent being unlike the former’s material causality of the unintelligent, and the slender *causa instrumental* is of mere nearness or *samyoga*. All the same, the defect is quite

¹⁰. Cf. Hindu Realism; J. Chatterjee says that atoms, is not the correct translation of *aṇus*, which are points having neither spatial or characteristic features. Hence an apparent comparison with Democritus is not sustainable.

apparent in this theory also; not only is there no immanence, it is a mechanical evolution, having no value, where if at all, Īśvara would interfere with the process constantly enough. “But in the world of creation, the things do not appear to be produced at any one moment by any particular person at any particular time,” (I-1-3.) since it is a process¹¹ In the case of its being constantly interfered with, the Occasionalism of Guilenx will be the resultant as a western parallel. And this none can admit, who believes in the immanent teleology of the Universe. “The constant interference on the part of an external (creator) cause is wholly opposed to the notion of divine immanence in things,” and unless one is going to lift this mere externality to one of transcendent immanence in the processus of creation, it will ever remain an unsatisfactory solution of not only the causal problem but also of the notion of God as divinely immanent in this creation of His. The value of the denial of mere blind teleology of Prakṛtic creation, and the refutation of mere externality of the intelligent creator as in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, lies exactly in their refutations; for Īśvara must not only be the immanent but the transcendent cause of the world. The reason, however, for the Nyāya postulation of the External creator lies in the dictum that the effect is different from the cause and is absolutely a new and disparate production, hence the non-implication of Īśvara in the world process which is of the character of an ‘effect.’ Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory is based on Asat-kārya-vāda and on mere difference.

We have already shown why the intelligence is non-implicated in the world-process in Samkhya -Yōga, because it accepted identity between cause and effect. This truth is what the Vedanta of Rāmānuja and indeed all schools of Vedanta accept. This of course, is, as will be showed,¹² only one half of the theory of Causality according to Rāmānuja. Matter is the ultimate constituent of existences in Saṅkhya, and spirit is a necessary appendage. Saṅkhya realizes that even the unfolding of Prakṛti in its own right, is reasonable only if it be for the sake of a sentient subject. The object exists for a subject, this is a truth that Samkhya realizes and is fully aware of. Vedanta wedded to no such absurd dictum of pure difference as Nyāya, tries to justify the view that the material (Upādāna) and efficient (nimitta) cause of the world is Brāhmaṇ. Vedanta accepts Sat-kārya vāda or the intrinsic and organic relation between cause and effect.

Considering first Advaita in respect of this special problem, Advaita postulates that before the world began, no difference was manifest, everything was shrouded in mṛtyu or Death. Not that there was a mere void, Śūnya, for then causes and effect were in their seminal condition of unmanifestedness. Of course, this is exactly the position held by the Saṅkhyans. Causes and effects are eternally existent. All

¹¹. Cf. Humes “Essay on Particular Providence and a future Sstate” where he refutes Providential Cause since such a cause is no where possible.

¹² See conclusion

causes in their causation destroy their previous manifestation in introducing their present manifestation, for the same cause cannot exist in two forms at the same time. But the cessation of the previous manifestation does not mean the cessation of the cause itself. The clay for a moment leaves its lump form, and passes into the pot-form, but does not cease to be clay all the same. And further, the effect is also an eternal existent, for the effect form does not accidentally emerge into existence but is eternally existent for if the effect is not potentially existent in the cause no amount of exertion can bring it forth and through “no activity can the non-existence of the effect become existent, as little as the son of a barren woman can be made existent by any effort¹³”. Thus it follows that the effect is identical with the cause *karaṇadananya tatkaryam*, and consequently the whole world is an effect of *Brāhmaṇ*, as such they also are identical. So far as the former half of the statement is concerned we agree, but as to the transference of this relation between the World and *Brāhmaṇ*, whilst maintaining that *Brāhmaṇ* is real and the world (effect) is unreal, considered even in a transcendent sense, we are not disposed to agree. According to Śaṅkara (whose attachment to monism was incomparable) with his peculiar monistic bias, *ekatva* or oneness is real, but plurality or *nānātva* is unreal, and is due to *avidya*, or in other words, Plurality is the unreal effect of the *Ekam* or One, the real cause. This plurality, indeed, is the effect produced by *Māya*, or the principle of division and difference which are illusions and is the power of the Lord or *Īśvara*. “Being associated with this principle of illusion, *Brāhmaṇ* is enabled to project the appearance of the world, in the same way as a magician is enabled by his incomprehensible magical power to produce illusory appearance of animate and inanimate beings. *Māya* thus constitutes the *upādāna*, the material cause of the world, or if we wish to call attention to the circumstance that *Māya* belongs to *Brāhmaṇ* as a *Śakti*—we may say that the material cause of the world is *Brāhmaṇ* in so far as it is associated with *Māya*. In this latter quality, *Brāhmaṇ* is more properly called *Īśvara*, the Lord¹⁴.”

This leads to the following positions by parity of reasoning :-

1. If this principle of individuation and differentiation, which is also the principle of illusion, has any residence it must be in *Brāhmaṇ*. And if *Brāhmaṇ* is mere consciousness (*chinmātram*), then it may even completely hinder its shining out, even through distorted ways, not to speak of the annihilation of Intelligence or consciousness itself.
2. Though it be held that this power of *Brāhmaṇ*, is not the same as *Brāhmaṇ* himself, according to the rule ^the power of the existent is not the existent,

¹³ cf Deussen’s Philosophy of Vēdānta

¹⁴ Śaṅkara Bhāṣya. Sacred books of the East, Vol. 1 introduction

even as the power of the fire is not the fire¹⁵. Yet it must be admitted that this power and the ground of this power are organically united. But is it so admitted, for such an admission would involve the serious deduction that Brāhmaṇ is imperfect, not what he is represented to be, the unconditioned pure, existence uninvolved in Process? This process though it be due to Avidya.

3. If this Śakti be Māya, and that again in turn be due to Avidya, it means in other words, characterizing Brāhmaṇ as essentially unknowable since the whole world we know, of, is poised on illusory principles. It may even lead of the indirect utterance that if the plurality that we know is unreal, the metaphysical mania towards a very unadulterated ēkatva(oneness), is also an unreality. In so far as the undifferenced Brāhmaṇ is real, so far and so far only, the differenced Brāhmaṇ is real. That this sometimes is the opinion of Śaṅkara also can very well be granted.

What really follows from such an assertion is that for Advaita, the cause alone is real, the effects are unreal, and what is that but the recanting of the Sat-kārya-vāda which says that causes and effects are eternal atleast that the effect, Kārya, is sat or real and true. In reality what the advaitins of the Māyavāda type assert is Sat-kāraṇa-vāda and not Sat-kārya-vāda. In which case, there is no causal problem for Māyavāda at all¹⁶.

The school of Bhāskara, on the other hand, which tried to mediate between Advaita of Māyavāda and Rāmānuja, says that the cause as well as the effect is real, and that there is identity and difference (bhēda-abhēda) between them, but it believes that the effects are due to limiting adjuncts (upādhis) which condition the one cause. The multiplicity of the world (the effect) is due to upādhis. Brāhmaṇ is the Sole Real and absolute existence. Brāhmaṇ appears as many individuals due to the principle of individuation, just as ether contained in a pot is different from and yet identical with ether outside being continuous with it. There is thus identity (abhēda) demonstrated between ākāśa and Bhatākāśa.

But the argument that refuted the previous theory refutes this also, in spite of the fact, that this really follows Sat-kārya-vāda. There are Bhāskara's theory as in Advaita, two entities, Brāhmaṇ the cause, and the Upādhis which make it differenced as against Avidya and its consequent Māya in Advaita. The upādhis are not explained just as the indescribable Avidya and still more indescribable Māya, are also

¹⁵ K.C. Bhattacharya: Studies in Vedantism. Cal.Uni

¹⁶ cf Study of Patanjali. Dr. S.N.Das Gupta.

unexplained, though in both the cases they explain the differences or multiplicity. And just as in the other case, the upādhis must have their abode in Brāhmaṇ, if not so their abode is nowhere. And since release consists in getting rid of Māya in the one case, and upādhis in the other, in the former case, Brāhmaṇ the intelligent would suffer from illusion and ignorance, as in the latter, Brāhmaṇ the unlimitable and the unlimited, the indivisible would be limited and divided, and in neither case, can there be release if the eternal (sanātana) Avidya and Upādhis have their seat in Brāhmaṇ, and if not there ballasted from reality where would they reside?—If knowledge of reality and release is the aim of all spiritual effort as they themselves claim, then there is no getting out of the bond of Upādhis or Avidya with the help of these theories, not to speak of a logical explanation of the problem of truth and reality, which overtly or covertly deny relations and qualities to the Absolute. Bhāskara no doubt grants Saguṇa Brāhmaṇ unlike Advaita and refutes in his Bhāṣya the Māyāvādin and his Nirguṇa Brahma-vāda.

From what has followed from the above;

1. The unintelligent cannot be the cause of the world .(II.iii.1.)The intelligent alone must be the cause of the world, it alone is the ‘womb’ as the Sutra says. (I.iv.28. and Mun.up. I.i.6.) for by no means can the non-intelligent explain the process, its direction and final end. Brāhmaṇ according to the deepest instincts of mankind, or rather shall we say, the firm-ground intuitions and religious ideals is nothing less than the entire cause, namely, the material or immanent and efficient or transcendent cause of the world. If Brāhmaṇ were merely an operative cause of the universe like the Naiyayic Īśvara that is the God of Deism, or the mere remover of obstacles being himself all-perfect and all governing as in the Patanjala Doctrine, the knowledge of the entire world would not result from the knowledge of Brāhmaṇ; not any more than we know the pot when we know the potter or vice versa. यदि निमित्करणमेव जगतो ब्रह्म, तद् तादिज्ञात्र समस्तं जगदिज्ञातं स्यत् नहि कुलालदि विज्ञानेन डटादि विज्ञायते. Brāhmaṇ, just as the God of Spinoza, further is the immanent cause of the universe and because there is glory and beauty revealed in the process of unfoldment, there is evidence of end which can only be that of an activity of Spirit. Ends to which the universe of process thrusts to are not to be relegated to matter, or energy “which are mere entia rationis,” but to spirit or world-reason. And no evolutionary process can be explained without the concept of end. So much so even the sutras suggest that the world is for the sake purely of Īlā of God, *Lokavattu Īlā kaivalyam* (II-I-33) All Philosophical explanation must look to the concept of end, be it ever so much as an attainment or self-revelation of character. Perfection of character in the beings animate consists in the enlargement of their sphere of consciousness or rather intelligence so as to attain and appreciate in greater degree the entire relations and end of the world process. The destiny of the World or Jagat is spiritual—is Spirit.

Brāhmaṇ is thus the goal—the final End. And as Nature in entirety as with the souls depends for its being on Brāhmaṇ; understood in the light of the concept of end, forms his mode or body (Sarīra).

The relation between cause and effect is organic and intrinsic and sat-kārya-vāda is right and it is the postulate that is acceptable to logic. The acceptance of this position is the thorny spot in the Advaita of Māyavāda and the bhedabheda theories, which when strictly applied leads the former to the thrilling anti-climax in the swing of the pendulum of chit-svarūpa Brāhmaṇ. Indeed Brāhmaṇ according to Advaita, is as unreal as Māya. It leads to the Śūnya anirvacanīya if not of Madhyamika metaphysics. If this relation, that is, Sat-kārya-vāda should be loyally adhered to, and if a static Eleatic Being should be denied, then, the effect is as real or as unreal as the cause, and if He be really the cause by which we mean the ultimate reference of all things and real by himself, then the reality of the World is equally established. The totality of cause (Brāhmaṇ with un-manifest Nature) is identical with the totality of effect (Brāhmaṇ with manifest Nature).

Yet regarding the perfection of Brāhmaṇ, the cause, though equally as real as the effect, is yet superior to that of the effect or Nature on its power of transcendence. All confusion arises from the confusion between the different conceptions of reality and perfection as Prof. S.Alexander writes in his ‘Basis of Realism.’ Physical things are as real as mind but not as perfect. When we speak of degrees of Reality we must be careful to ask whether we do not mean degrees of perfection.’ And in differentiating between the reality and perfection of a thing we really apprehend that the cause has more perfection than the effect. In order to make clear that such indeed is the view of Rāmānuja, it is well to show an instance. He says that dreams are not unreal. “The conscious states experienced in dreams are not unreal; it is only, their objects that are false; these objects only, not conscious states, are sublated by the waking consciousness.”¹⁷ He further says that not only dreams but even perceptual illusions, mirage, and hallucinations are as cognitions true. “The cognition of silver in the shell is a true one.”¹⁸ The difference between their perfection and those of the conscious states lies in their non-utility and their non-coherence with normal life and experience. The sublation of those experiences consists in their actual utility or non-value and not in their experiential character.¹⁹ The waking state does not slay the existence of the lower or the higher. Accepting as a matter of fact that the material world is less perfect, since its meaning is only had through a mind, and its value which makes it a truth dependent upon logical cognising and valuing—not that its existence is

¹⁷. Śrī Bhāṣya I.i.1. (pp. 75 and 119-124 : trans.)

¹⁸. Ibid (pp. 120).

¹⁹. The thing we determine to be unreal because it is sublated; the idea is non- sublated, and therefore real (76 p). cf. Outlines of Phil. Russell p. 66.

dependent upon mind and least of all minds, is its existence slain or even transformed in character by mind that is knowing it, or owning it? No. In the former case of knowing, it attains meaning or value, in the latter case of owning, it lives under light of higher function or perfection but never loses the character of the ‘that’ that it is. In a word, “the reality of the consciousness though more perfect, does not interfere with the reality of material constituents on which it is built,” Our knowing act does not make the object, and does not distort the initial presentation, the ‘that’ to make it the ‘what’; on the other hand, knowing only lets the cognising subject be ‘aware of’ and ‘enjoy’ the ‘that’ as it is, nothing added to it unless it be said that to elicit meaning or to express the expressive ‘that’ in terms of ‘what’ it is to the conscient mind, were an adding, which is absurd. We apprehend reality not mere phenomena, the physical mechanism being intended as it were for the apprehension of and enjoyment of nature and of God in nature.²⁰ To deny reality, to nature or fact of experience or sensum is, in other words, as already hinted at, to deny God or spirit its most characteristic phase of enjoyment, namely, the world. Spirit is the immanent drive in all creation, physical and spiritual. Without a purposive direction, the universe would be imperfect, let alone its non-value and uncomprehendable nature. Spirit is the superior distinct, transcendent to the process in which it is immanent because of the greater perfection over nature which it alone possesses and utilises. Spirit is permanent, and permanent because we apprehend that in all the varying and perhaps transient beauty of its dependent i.e., nature, it inflicts its purpose and final perfecting impulse, which is not that of a want or of an achievement, but that of an enjoyment of its perfection on its own right through the individual souls or finite minds as their antaryāmin or inner self.²¹ Spirit is prior to nature, because it is the last expression of nature or rather its destiny, and first because last, original because expressed in nature which per se as object has no value, but seeking valuation as the Karmabhūmi, the field of activity, throughout the long run of progressive evolution for the sake of spirit. In this organic relation between nature and spirit, nature is not belittled nor spirit imperfected; it is an affirmation of the superiority of Spirit. It is only an assertion of an essential unity in creation which implies non-contradiction between complementary elements; a war between matter and spirit is certainly not the way to escape from the beauty or purposive direction of nature to give it the name of an ‘effect,’ in the language of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, or a Kārya, a work or process of manifesting Beauty and Goodness, from which character alone we, at any rate, infer God.

²⁰. ‘The entire world (is) and object of fruition for the individual souls in agreement with their respective good and ill deserts (Śrī- Bhāṣya I-I-I pp. 124).

²¹. “What is the cause of experiences pleasurable and painful, is not the mere dwelling within a body, but rather the subjection to the influence of Good and evil deeds, and such subjection is impossible in the case of the highest self to which all evil is foreign. (I-ii-8 pp. 265) It is this character that claims the Brahman as the transcendent-immanent, and superior distinct.

Rāmānuja seeks from his realistic point, to justify the relation between Absolute spirit and Nature and the individual souls who are its dependents, as one of cause and effect. The relation between cause and effect is organic and intrinsic. The organic relation between mind and body, or spirit and body closely applies and obtains in the relation between cause and effect. There is no spirit without body, for then, that is ineffectual; nor a body without spirit, for then, the body is inconceivable. To make his meaning clear, Rāmānuja clearly enunciates that a body is whatever a spirit absolutely controls, sustains and enjoys for its own benefit. “Any substance which a sentient soul is capable of completely controlling and supporting for its purposes and which stands in an entirely subordinate relation, is the body of the soul” अतोयस्य चेत्स्य यदव्यं सर्वात्मन स्वार्थे नियन्तुम धारयितुम च शक्यं, तच्छाषतैकस्वरूपं च, तत्तस्य शरीरलक्षणमस्थेयम् (II-1-9). This triple functioning on the part of the body and the triple complementary exercise on the part of the spirit is the crux of the relation. In this sense, property would be, as it were, an extension of the body and could be not illegitimately called the body of the owner. The body is, as much as property, the extension of personality. In the light of this above definition, Rāmānuja draws his original conclusion that the cause is the soul of the effect, and the effect is the body of the cause. But be it noted, only in this particular peculiar sense that to be the ‘cause’ is to be capable of conditioning another existence which then will be regarded as its ‘effect.’ Thus wherever there is an operative centre for a force to manifest or wherever a will manifests, that may be considered to be its body then. The manifestation of power and evolution takes place in nature, and through minds functioning in nature, under the aegis of Spirit. “The world and minds are the body of the Spirit.”²²

This position is substantiated in the following upanishadic passages.

“He of whom the earth is the body, of whom water is the body, of whom the fire is the body, of whom the mind is the body, of whom ether is the body, of whom, death (mrityu) is the body, he is the inner self of all, the divine one, the one God Nārāyaṇa “(Subala Up)” He who dwelling within the self whom the self does not know, of whom the self is the body, who rules the self from within, He is thy ruler within, the Immortal“(Brih. Up. 3-7-3-22).

Rāmānuja says, that the relation between Brāhmaṇ and the Universe is an eternal relation, and any one term cannot be stressed without stressing the other term too legitimately. Brāhmaṇ is the cause, and is the conditioner of the effect, namely the Universe (jagat), for its being what it is. Without his volition (ichha) nothing can take

²². अतस्सर्वगा चिदचिदस्तुतया तत्प्रकारम ब्रह्मै.

place (I.i.3). The undistinguishable darkness (Tamas)²³ of Pralaya, the whole or the One Ekam. Is the condition of the reality. It is the condition when these manifestations are drawn in even as the tortoise legs are drawn in, and is so subtle to be never a fact of experience, where the sentient souls are suppressed from valuing according to their relative largeness of intelligent activity or consciousness. This inferred state or avastha of Brāhmaṇ is undistinguished and undistinguishable by us. It is the absolute sleep of nature, and is a consequence of the involutive impulse of its Lord. The will to manifest on the part of Brāhmaṇ, is the condition that lets this evolution start its usual run. “That which is Being, i.e., this world which now owing to distinctions of names and forms bears a manifold shape was in the beginning one only owing to absence of distinctions of names and forms” सदेवसोम्य इदमग्रसीतू एक्मेवादितीयम or even there were no other beings functioning, Nārāyaṇa was the only existent. एकोहावै नरायणासीतू न ब्रह्मा मेषाणो न नक्षत्राणि नापो नाग्निर्नसोमो नसूर्यः स एकाकि नरमेत तस्य ध्यानास्तस्य, (Mahā Nārāyaṇa Up. 1.1.) The differentiation which takes place in beings animate and inanimate, is an effectuation willed at a “determinate” beginning by the spirit or Brāhmaṇ, who is the complete owner or ruler of the Universe or Jagat, and guiding nature which is in its furled or coiled state of potential such that distinction could not be forecast on its unevolved surface. For Rāmānuja the effect is the cause made manifest, distinct with the evolution of real differences and emergences and plurality, that is, distinct with names and forms. For such an evolution, the effect is dependent on its cause; it is sustained by the cause since the effectuation is not like a particular painting; it is a gradual unfoldment, a process in time; since, the primal state—an inferred potential—contains not only the possibility of the present ‘this,’ or ‘now’ and the ‘then’ and the ‘had-beens,’ but also the ‘hereafter’, the final goal, that is itself as completed in actuality. Whilst treating the ‘now’ and the ‘then’ as imperfections you cannot by any means treat them as unreal. They are imperfect surely, but unreal they certainly are not.

According to the definition already given, the body (Sarīra) of the cause would certainly be the effect, of the dependence, of the sustenance, and of the enjoyment, of the Cause or Spirit in it. The activity of real enjoyment is an action of real manifestation of self or self-expression. Rāmānuja maintains that the activity of manifestation is an activity of divine impulsion born out of his own glory and not merely one of such character that makes others say that such a God is silly God, if not a cynical player of an unworthy game., Further such a manifestative impulse is to make the individual selves realize the glory of the world and of Himself, the perfect, in and through them. For him, as for the several selves, to be is to manifest; in the one,

²³. तमसि च स्वश्रीरत्यापि पृथाडिर्देशामर्हाति सूक्ष्मगशापत्या स्वास्मत्रेकनामापत्रे सति तथाभूततमशशरीरं ब्रह्मा, पूर्ववादिभक्त नामरूपचिन्मिक्षप्रपन्नशरिर स्यामिति शद्प्यायक्रमेण जगच्छरीरतया आस्मानं परिणामतीति सर्वपुवेगान्तेषु परिणामोपदेश

it is a manifestation of divine glory and eternal values through the selves whom he helps towards a greater approximation to perfect functioning and appreciation of reality; for the other the whole functioning of the universe, its unfoldment of nature is for the gradual evolution of their spiritual character; in a word, this universe or Nature (Prakṛti) is the Sphere they shall more and more subjugate and utilizing spiritualise, and use the power behind themselves and behind nature. It is at once the barrier and the help towards their perfection. It is a “vale of soul-making.” It is because of the Divine mercy of God that the world of souls becomes emergent so as to attain perfection and nearness to the Divine.

According to Vedanta of Rāmānuja, the cause of universe is ultimately Spirit and matter, for as the statement goes “Brāhmaṇ only, and with it Prakṛti as rule by Brāhmaṇ, is the cause of the world” and not any one of them without the other. In the beginning then, the two primary entities of matter and spirit were manifesting themselves, the spirit controlling the matter. (Śrī Bhāṣya 1-iv-22) परमेव ब्रह्म जगत्कारणम्, प्राकृति रिति. Samkhya is right in postulating Prakṛti to be the ultimate material cause of the universe, the impulsion or the efficient cause however, being the Spirit, which latter is not accepted by Samkhya as it does not accept the organic unity of matter with Spirit or Brāhmaṇ, in which case the ultimate causality would devolve upon the owner of Prakṛti or Brāhmaṇ, and not on Prakṛti merely. The spiritual origination of the world could be satisfied, not by any amount of Bergsonian biological imagining or Fichtian Dialectical ‘Anstoss’, but only by the acceptance of matter to be nothing other than what it appears to be namely, the material of which the world is made. The spiritual origination if it means anything at all, is only in this conception, or rather, the misapplication of the causal category with regard to the relation of those factors revealing mere dependence and in no way derivation of the one from the other. The spiritual prius if it means anything significantly is because of the initial directions and purposes revealed in the process. The physical beginning as the quotation from the Śrī Bhāṣya suggests is only the Spirit Matter and not any single entity among them. The Logical prius involves, however, two views; (1) the inference of physical potential at the prius, (2) the inference of end or goal, the full expression of spiritual purpose as in the potential physical prius. The spiritual expression as the prius would be the teleological potential which the Brāhmaṇ without his modes is, the physical expression of the prius, however, would be the material (upādna) potential which the Brāhmaṇ with his modes or Prakṛti is. The teleological cause also is Brāhmaṇ or spirit alone and is therefore the efficient cause also. Brāhmaṇ-as-with- Prakṛti, forms the material cause. And in a more definite way should it be held that of the substantial modification of the three entities that pass into another condition, the most modifiable entity in very nature (Svarūpa though not in

Svabhāva as triguni) is Matter or Prakṛti.²⁴ The appropriate materialism of Samkhya lies in this fact, that the real modification of natures occurs in material constituents and not in the spiritual substances viz. the subjects whose change in nature is not substantial but only in the range of consciousness, which further is not the characteristic of the highest because of the superiority and intelligent nature of the Brāhmaṇ and o the fact of the eternity of his perfect nature. Effect, the Bhāṣya defines, “as its substance passing into another state.” कार्यत्वम हि नमैकस्यदव्यस्यावसस्थान्तरापत्ति. From this point of view even the subjects do undergo a change of state or avastha. The soul which becomes activistic or kshētragna and contracted or expanded in the relative range of consciousness” is also from this point of view an effect,” ‘with this difference’ from the Prakṛti which undergoes a substantial modification in nature so as to be unrecognised from its ultimate or original natures, “that the other condition which is represented by the soul is of different kind from that which constitutes non-sentient things such as ether and so on. The origination and so on which are characteristic of the objects do not belong to the subjects and the latter or eternal”.

The ruling element of the world, that is, the Lord finally, who has the sentient and non-sentient beings for his modes, undergoes a change in so far as he is at alternate periods the embodied in all those beings in their alternating states. The two modes and he to whom those two modes belong thus undergo a common change in so far as in the case of all of them the causal condition passes over into the different condition.”

उबयप्रकारविशिष न्यन्त्रंशे तदवस्यतदुभय विशिष्टारूपस्कारो बवसि; कारणावस्याया अवस्यान्तरापत्तिरूपो विकारः प्रकारद्वये प्रकारणो च समानः

(II-iii-18.)

The subtle chid-achd-Visiṣṭa Brāhmaṇ passes over into the gross chid-achd-Visiṣṭa Brāhmaṇ. Though operating with changing contents which reveal his own effectuating purposes, namely, perfect love, perfect beauty and perfect goodness, He is not in any way hampered by exemplification in process or evolution of these eternal values which form His essential Svabhāva and He remains ever the constant unchanging principle “just on account of His being their inner ruler and self,”

परमात्म तु त्योस्वशरीरभूतयोर्नियन्त्रतयात्मभूतस्तदतपुरुषाक्षैर्विकारैक्ष (६-८-२७.)

²⁴ Bhatta’s Hymn the Lord. II. 31 cf. Pillai lokacharya Tattva Traya III. 30. God is the material cause for what is possible to an magnificent spider, which while keeping its immovable, becomes, through its body the material cause of cobwebs by evolving etc, cannot but be is possible to the lord.

“The creation of the world by God is not an arbitrary fiat of God though it must not be understood to mean anything than a free act of God. It is not anything that he might act or refrain from acting at his pleasure, “for, as Śrī Vedānta Charya also says, the evolution of this world is a very fundamental act of God without which he cannot be true to his nature as the Lord or Iswara. His redemptive impulse, his superiority of Nature, his perfection and power, in a word, all that makes for power and ideal and perfect, demand this expressive functioning on his part.

जीवगत्यन्त विलक्षणातया प्रख्यातेन सर्जन्यन्व पुरुषोत्तमेन ईषः पर्ति विक्षस्य धरणि²⁵

In the words of Ulrici, we can say that “In truth God is not first god and then creator of the world, but as God he is creator of the world, and only as the creator of the world is he God. To separate the two ideas from one another is an empty abstraction, affirming at once an unmeaning difference which contradicts the unity of the divine nature. Hence just as God does not become creator of the world but is from eternity creator of the world, so the world too though not eternal of itself exists from eternity as the creation (or act) of God.” This passage expresses the same view as that of Rāmānuja and refutes such metaphysic as it placed on mere absolute difference of the Dvaita and such unreal metaphysic as the Sankarite abstractionism and cloudy monism of the western idealists. Rāmānuja affirms the eternity of the Prakṛti and individual selves which constitute the universe or Jagat in their subtle or gross form, as eternally bound in an organic union (without which relation of absolute dependence they would be mere abstractions), to Brāhmaṇ. This proves the eternity of cause and effect, also in this way, that all the expected consummations or “compossibles” would be potential in the initial condition of the undistinguished.

²⁵. Isha Up. Comm. Śrī Vēdānta Desika.