

# GOD AND THE WORLD.

## THE ADVAITA

“The Vedic Texts ‘*Ekam cradwithiyam Brahma,*’ ‘*Ekam Eva Rudra Nadwitiyya thas teh*’ mean that there is only One Supreme Being without a second. And this One is the *Pathi* and not the soul. You, who say ignorantly you are One with the Lord, are the soul and are bound up with *Pasa*. As we say without the (primary sound) ‘A’ all other letters will not sound, so the Vedas say, without the Lord no other things will exist.” Sivagnanabotham (ii.1,b).

“ஆணவத்தோடத்து விதமான படி மெய்ஞ்ஞானத்  
தானுவினோ டத்துவித மாடுநாளெங் நாளோ”

“O for the day when I will be in advaita union with the unchangeable One as I am now in union with *Anava (Pasa)*”!

Says Count Tolstoy, “Religion is a certain relation established by man between his separate personality, and the endless universe, or its source; morality is the personal guiding of life which flows from this relation.” And as we have explained in our previous article, even knowledge of a thing means knowledge of its difference and similarity with other things, its relation to things which are dissimilar, and to things which are similar and from the knowledge of such relation, our further acts are determined. Say, if the object be a new fruit we had not seen before, if we find it related to the edible species, we try to eat it; if not, we throw it away. If one should make however a mistake in the identification, from imperfect experience or knowledge, or misled by the nice and tempting appearance of the fruit, woe befalls him when he partakes thereof. All our good and evil flows accordingly from our understanding right or wrongly our relation to men and things and society. And the highest philosophy and religion accordingly mean also knowledge and knowledge of the relation of the highest postulates of existence; and different systems arise as different kinds of relationships are postulated; and in determining the respective views, imperfect observation and experience, passion, and prejudice, trammels created by heredity and society, have all their play; and we have different moral standards followed by men, consciously or unconsciously, as resulting from their already formed convictions.

Proceeding on our own lines of discovering these relationships, we took with us Dr. Bain to help us on to a particular stage. He is a most uncompromising agnostic and materialist (qualified) and yet we were in perfect agreement with him all the way he took us, and if he refuses to go with us further, and sees pitfalls and dangers in such a path and is not willing to brave such, we can quite understand his motives and can only admire his honesty. So far as we went with him also, it was perfect sailing. We were well aware of things we were talking about, there was no mistaking them, the facts were all within our experience, and there was nothing in them which contradicted our experience and we were not asked to

## GOD AND THE WORLD

---

believe things on credit, by appealing to intuition or authority. When reason failed, we were not referred to *Sruti*, and when *Sruti* failed, we were not referred to their own individual yogic experience, and when all these failed, no verbal jugglery was adopted; and nothing was made to look grand by making it a matter of mystery. Our meaning is quite unmistakable, and we use plain language and if it is not plainer, we shall try to make it so.

We found accordingly that our present experiences and facts of cognition resolve themselves into two sets of facts, two grand divisions, totally distinct, and yet in inseparable relation, and we called them respectively mind, and matter, ego and non-ego, subject and object, atma and pasa, chit and achit, sat and asat. We noted their inter-dependence and inter relation; as regards the nature of the relation itself, it was in a sense of inexplicable. We could say positively that the relation is not one of causation or succession, not mere order in place and it could not be that of the whole to its part, not one acting on the other, or using the other as its instrument, not that of container and contained, nor no relation at all; and we could not thus picture this relation in any one of the modes known to us in our actual experience; and the only analogy available to us in nature, namely that of vowels and consonants helped us a good deal to have some idea of this relation. It is not one, it is not two, and our Acharya asks us to keep us quiet, “ஏகமிரண்டென்னாமற் சும்மாதிரு” but still even this position requires a naming and for want of a better name too, we use the word ‘Advaita’ to such relation. The word Advaitam implies the existence of two things and does not negative the reality or the existence of one of the two. It simply postulates a relation between this two. The relation is one in which an identity is perceived, and a difference in instance is also felt. It is this relation which could not easily be postulated in words, but which perhaps may be conceived and which is seen as two (Dvaitam) and at the same time as not two (Na Dvaitam); it is this relation which is called Advaitam (a unity or identity in duality) and the philosophy which postulates such relation is called the Advaita Philosophy and it being the highest truth also, it is called the *Siddhanta* (The true end). This view has therefore to be distinguished from the monism of the materialist and idealist, and from the dualism of Dr. Reid and Hamilton. But Dr. Dain and others of his school would regard themselves as monists, but in that case, the distinction between this monism, may we call it qualified monism, and the monism of writers before the advent of the present agnostic school must be carefully observed. There is no wrong in using any name for anything, out when particular associations have been already established, it serves no purpose except to confound and confuse to use old words with new meanings introduced into them. In a sense, this view is also the true monistic view. Say from the individual standpoint, when the man is in a pure objective condition, his mind becomes merged in the body; the mind identifies itself thoroughly with the body and is not conscious of its own distinction from the body. By this process of merger and complete identification, the apparent existence is only one, that of the object; when the mind is free from all object consciousness, the object world vanishes as it were, and there is only one fact present and that is the mind, and nothing else. Without mind however nothing else can subsist, and when the mind is in its own phase, nothing else is *seen* to subsist. And how appropriate does the interpretation of that oft-quoted and oft-abused Vedic text, ‘*Ekam advitiam Brahma*’ by Saint Meikandan seem now! When we arrive at the postulate of God, we arrive at the third padarthas, and nobody has yet been found to

## GOD AND THE WORLD

---

postulate an existence higher than these three. And these constitute the thri-padarhta of most of the Hindu schools. They differ no doubt in the definition and description of these three entities as also in the prescription of their relationships. This third postulate could not be arrived at by direct perception, observation and experiment. We think however it can be proved by strict logical methods, by such proof as is possible and we are at liberty to postulate it to explain the residuary facts unexplained by the Materialists and Idealists. By this postulate will explain facts left unexplained by these people and if it will not contradict any of the facts of human nature and probabilities, there is no harm in having It for a workable hypothesis. We believe also that the Materialists and Idealists leave many facts unexplained and that this third postulate is necessary to explain these facts. We, however, do not propose to go into this wide question now. We only propose to discuss God's relation to mind (soul) and matter just at present. And the relation we postulate is the same as between mind and body which we have already postulated and we call it by the same name 'advaita' And the couplet we have quoted from Thayumanavar conveys the idea most beautifully, and the merit of expounding this beautiful view of 'advaita' must in the first place be accorded to *Saint Meikandan*, whom *Saint Thayumanavar* himself extols as the “பொய்கண்டார் காணாப்புனித மாமததுவித மெய்கண்டான்,” The Seer of *Advaita* 'Truth'. God is related to the soul as the soul is related to the world. God is the Pure subject, non-ego God is Sat (the true existence), Soul is Asat. As however we have called the world Asat, we are not willing to extend the term to soul also; and it, besides occupies a peculiar position between God, Sat, on the one hand and the world, Asat, on the other hand; and hence the term *Satasat* has been applied to it. The term means that which is neither God nor the world (maya) but which when joined to either becomes completely identified with each. When unite to the body, it is completely identified with the body, and when united to God, it is completely identified with God. We have already observed that when the soul is united to the body it is completely identified with it, it has not ceased to exist, as the body ceased when the soul was in its own plane. The very existence of the body implied the existence of the soul, thought for the nonce the soul was not conscious of its separateness and individuality and distinction from the object or body. Just in the same way when the Jiva is in the Highest union with Sivam, the Jiva is not conscious of its separateness, and individuality and distinction from God. If this consciousness was present there will be no union; and if the soul was not itself present, to speak of union in Moksha and Anubhava and Ananda will also be using language without meaning. And this characteristic of the soul is very peculiar. It is named சார்ந்ததன் வண்ணமாதல் or அது அது வாதல், 'becoming one with that to which it is attached.' The Hindu Idealists try to arrive at the postulate of the soul precisely by the same mode of proof as is furnished in sutra 3 and 4 of Sivagnanabotham, and arriving at this postulate which is found to be above the 24 tatwas, above the elements, above the tanmatras, above the Gnana and Karmendriyas, above the four andakarna, they have not paused to discover its further nature and characteristics, and have straightway proceeded to identify it with God whom they have read of in the Srutis, and have not tried to learn the relation between these two; and all the absurdities of the Mayavada school are clearly traceable to not understanding the nature of the soul aright. These further aspects of the soul and its relation

## GOD AND THE WORLD

to God are therefore well brought out in sutras 7, 6 and 5. And how this Jiva can possibly become Sivam and in what sense, is beautifully out in 6, 2. (e).

அதுவென்னு மொன்றன்றி அதுவன்றி வேறே  
யதுவென்றறி யறிவுமுண்டோ - அதுவென  
அறியவிரண்டலலனாங் கறிவுணிற்றல்  
அறியுமறிவே சிவமுமாம்.

God is not one who can be pointed out as “That.” If so, not only will He be an object of knowledge, it will imply a *Gnatha* who understands Him as such. He is not different from the soul as an object of knowledge. He becomes one with the soul pervading its understanding altogether. The soul so fooling itself is also Sivam.

Chapter II of Light of Grace has also to be read in this connection; and Saint Umapathi Sivacharya asks a question to bring out the importance of this great characteristic of the soul. “Are there not objects in this world which become dark in darkness and light in light? he asks, and the answer given by himself elsewhere is “the eye, the mirror and akas are such objects.” The eye loses its power of seeing in darkness, and recovers it in light; and the others become dark or bright as darkness or light surrounds it. Saint Thayumanavar also refers to this peculiarity in several places and calls the soul யாதொன்று பற்றின தனியியல்பாய் நின்று பந்தமறும் பளிங்கனையசித்து நீ. ‘You who are like the mirror or crystal removed of dust, becoming of the self-same nature of one to which it is joined.’ Here the Light is God, darkness is Maya and the Mirror or Eye or Akas is the soul. We all feel that there is a sentience which suffers this change from light to darkness. If this sentience is identified with God himself, surely the change must descend on his head. We have not yet been able to understand (of course we are ready to confess we do not belong to the superior class of mortals said to possess ‘the sharpest intellects, a bold understanding’ to which ranks our brother of the *Erahmavadin* elevates himself – vide p. 749 current volume) how when they postulate only one padarthas, One self, and no Jiva, how God can be saved from all the impurity and sin and ignorance present in nature. To say that the Sruti says that God cannot be tainted by such contact is only begging the question and is no answer. To assert that the Infinite God by this false imposition, Avidya had become divided into millions and millions of finite beings and without stopping to make good this statement itself by proof except by giving an analogy (which analogy is found to fail most miserably in most important details) and to assert with the same breath, that this sub-division is false is a mere myth, a dream, that there is no universe, men or Gods, you or I and then to say further that you and I, gods and men and the world are all God seems to be the height of absurdity and not born of ‘the sharpest intellect, a bold understanding.’ If so, we must have altogether a different definitions of these terms. We will close this paper by quoting two verse from Saint Thirumular and we challenge comparison with them with anything else found in any writing ancient or modern to express the truth of the double aspect and relation we have been describing above with the same aptness and richness of illustration.

## GOD AND THE WORLD

---

மரத்தை மறைத்தது மாமதயானை  
மரத்தின் மறைந்தது மாமதயானை  
பரத்தை மறைத்தது பார்முதற்பூதம்  
பரத்தின் மறைந்தது பார்முதற்பூதம்

The tree was concealed in the mad elephant;  
The tree concealed the mad elephant.  
The Supreme was concealed in the world;  
The Supreme concealed the world.

பொன்னை மறைத்தது பொன்னணிபூஷணம்  
பொன்னின் மறைந்தது பொன்னணிபூஷணம்  
தன்னை மறைத்தது தன்கரணங்களாம்  
தன்னின் மறைந்தது தன்கரணங்களாம்

The gold was concealed in the golden ornament;  
The gold concealed the golden ornament.  
The 'I' was concealed in its own senses;  
The 'I' concealed its own senses.

These two verses though they look similar are not the same and we will expound their meaning in our next.

---