

THE ĀVIRBHĀVA AND TIROBHĀVA THEORY IN VALLABHA VEDĀNTA : SOME PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

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The present paper deals with the theory of appearance (*āvirbhāva*) and disappearance (*tirobhāva*) according to the Vallabha Vedantins with special reference to Acharya Purushottama. An effort has been made to consider some philosophical problems, which may generally arise in one's mind in following the Vallabha's doctrines and their problem solutions within the framework of Vallabha Vedānta. In this connection an effort will be made to consider how Purushottamaji has encountered the opponents, which remains in the philosophical discussions in Indian tradition.

I

An uncommon cause, which is in operation, is called *kāraṇa* or instrument. *Kāraṇa* or cause is the locus of the power embedded in appearance or manifestation or revelation (*Kāraṇatvaṅca āvirbhāvaśaktyādhāratvam*). Let us see what the power to manifest (*āvirbhāvaśakti*) is. The power, which makes effects existing in the material elements, fit for behaviour is called revealing power or manifesting power (*āvirbhāvaśakti*). The term 'appearance' means 'being fit for an object of usage or behaviour' and 'disappearance' means 'not being fit for an object of usage or behaviour'¹. That both types of power belong to Divinity is proved from the Sruti texts- 'the powers behind appearance and disappearance belong to Lord Krishna (*āvirbhāva-tirobhāva-śakti*

vai mukhavirīṇaḥ') and 'who pained the peacocks' (*mayūrāścītrītā yena*'). The Phenomenon of making something appeared is called *āvirbhāva* (*āvirbhāvayatīti avirbhāvah*). Though the Divine power is stated to be two yet the Lord has manifested Himself by dividing or scattering His power here and there. Each and every factor giving rise to a particular manifestation is called the power of the Lord. That is, the seeds of the Divine power are scattered by Him in all places. These seeds gradually give rise to the manifestation of something from which the Divine power is inferred. It is also supported by the Śruti text which runs as follows:- 'The Divided power of the Divine appears in various ways in different places, as the seeds are found in the place from which all things originate (*viśiṣṭaśaktirbahudheva bhāti bhīṇi yonim pratipādyā yadeva*). In the same way, the power behind the appearance of something in our daily behaviour is the cause of such appearance.

That which is fit for use from something is called an effect of that. From this discussion it follows that the potter's father cannot be the cause of the pot produced by his son.²

In this connection a problem may be raised in the following manner. It is very difficult to determine the appearance and disappearance of an effect if the origination and destruction of an effect are not accepted. Because both appearance and disappearance are in the forms of the capability of cognizing and non-cognizing respectively. Without accepting the fact of origination the existence of an effect cannot be asserted. If an object is stated to exist even it is not originated, there would arise the possibility of perceiving the same even in the case of its prior absence (*prāgabhāva*). It cannot be said that the prior absence is an obstacle to its manifestation. Because 'prior absence' of something is taken as a vital factor of its coming into being (*kāryam prāgabhāvapratiyogi*) as accepted by the Naiyāyikas also³.

It may be said that if an object exists in a cause, it is established as being existent and hence, it is described as merely capable of being raised but it is not a case of origination. If it is so, there cannot remain power in the potential cause to produce effect due to the absence of the instrumentality of producing an effect. In other words, a cause is potentially capable to originate an effect if it is used as an instrument for the same. Otherwise a

cause may remain as non-functional. If an effect is taken to be originated in the cause then the cause, though potential, will have no function due to the absence of instrumentality. In other words, a potential cause is kept as inoperative, as there is no scope for its application due to the existence of an effect in a cause. Due to the nonorigination of the effect there would prevail accidentalism (*ākasmikatāvāda*), which entails that anything can be originated from anything.⁴

Considering the above-mentioned problems in view it may be contended that the meaning of the term *utpatti* or origination may be taken in a different sense. The origination of something does not always signify 'remaining in an exposed way' (*bahirbhāva*). It may be taken as an adoption of a particular situation (*avasthāviśeṣa*) as we find in the following examples. A particular situation of a clay (*mṛdāvasthā*) turns into another situation of a piece of lump of clay (*pinḍāvasthā*), which may again transform into the form of a jar. This position is also not satisfactory. Because, even a particular situation (*avasthāviśeṣa*), being accidental, may be taken as originated⁵. The view that the change of situation is an effect is also not proper. If it is so, a son may be taken as a change of situation of a father. From this it would follow that there would be the destruction of the father as that of the lump. If it were said that there would be no destruction of a cause just as thread is not destroyed in a cloth, it (thread) would have covered all. In such cases a son may be taken as a part of father. In the same way the sprout etc are the parts of the seed, but not the change of situation or status (*avasthāntara*). If it is said that the causeness lies in the seed etc. by virtue of its part, it cannot be accepted, because the origination in the form of bifurcation is already shown as vitiated. Hence, it is better to accept *utpattivāda* as per the *Vaiśeṣikas*⁶.

Even if it is accepted that there is an origination, the appearance and disappearance as accepted by the Vallabha Vedāntins are very difficult to establish. It may be asked whether these appearance and disappearance are eternal or non-eternal. The former is not correct, because the objects like jar etc. are sometimes cognized and sometimes not. Even the cognizance and non-cognizance of them cannot remain together due to their opposite character. Moreover, had these appearance and disappearance been eternal, a volition to produce or to destroy a jar would be useless, as it will go

against the perceptual fact. If an object having diverse characteristics becomes fictitious, the appearance and disappearance of an object would also be taken as fictitious leading to nihilism⁷.

The second alternative that the appearance and disappearance are non-eternal is also not tenable. Just like other effects they are to be taken as manifested from their cause in the case of *āvirbhāva* and so disappeared in their cause in the case of *tirobhāva*. The origination itself has to be originated or brought into being by another origination before it can properly function leading to Infinite Regress (*anavasthā*)⁸.

From the above discussion it can be concluded that the theories of *āvirbhāva* and *tirobhāva* rooted in the theory of *Satkāryavāda* are not to be supported easily. In reply, Purushottamaji has proposed the following suggestion. These *āvirbhāva* and *tirobhāva* are the results of the eternal power of the Lord operating out of His will (*ucyate tau hareḥ śaktiniyatāvicchāya tatah*)⁹. These two powers are the causes of the *āvirbhāva* (appearance) and *tirobhāva* (disappearance). It is not true that there is no necessity to assume such additional power due to not having any proof. For, as a cloth and a jar is produced from the thread etc. and clay etc. respectively we can ascertain the generating powers in these cases. The power is neither the nature nor the essential character of the cause. If it were so, the power would have been present everywhere giving rise to the origination of a cloth etc. from less thick threads and also to the origination of the sprout from the fried seeds. In the same way fire could burn the grass etc. even when there is the impediment of the moonstone. Due to these impediments these activities are not found. Hence it can be concluded that certain additional power different from its nature or essential character has to be admitted in the cause.¹⁰

If it is argued that an object is originated due to the desire of the Lord, it is also not true. It will go in favour of *asatkāryavāda*. Now a few questions have been raised in connection with the meaning of the term 'utpatti' i.e., origination. Is it prior absence (*prāgabhāva*) or transformation (*dharmāntara*)? It is not to be taken as a prior absence, because if it is not originated, it would be contradicted to the usage- 'A jar will be originated now' before its origination. It is also not to be taken as a transformation. Because it may remain in the cause as an effect is not at all originated. If

it is so, it can be understood as originated.¹¹ Hence the theory that something is originated from the non-existent object does not stand in the eye of logic (*tasmādata utpattirna yuktimadhirohati*). On account of this it follows that an object bearing properties (*dharmī*) always exists before (*dharmī purvasiddhaḥ sarvathaivādhyupeyām*)¹² and hence it is eternal (*sanātanaḥ*). If an object bearing properties (*dharmī*) is taken as eternal, it becomes identical with Brahman, which is evidenced from the Śruti text- "This world is that *Puruṣa*' (*Puruṣa evedam*), 'He is the whole world' (*'sa vai sarvamidam jagat'*)¹³. As the power of the Lord is already existent beforehand, the cause associated with power becomes manifested. From this the appearance and disappearance come into being.

It is said in the Śruti- 'May Lord *Viṣṇu* who has painted peacock, made the parrots green and made the ducks white be pleased on me' (*Mayūrāściritā yena śukāśca haritīkṛtāḥ/Hamśāśca svetagurutaḥ sa me viṣṇuḥ prasīdatviti*'). From this statement it is known that the powers as shown in these are from the Divine. The Lord divides Himself and wants to create. Keeping this volition in view the Lord manifolds His power in those forms.¹⁴ In the same manner, the appearance and disappearance also are due to His powers. The two terms-*āvirbhāva* and *tirobhāva* may be interpreted in two ways. The term '*āvirbhāva*' means 'external manifestation' of the effect remaining in the inner part of the material elements (*upādānantahstham kāryam vahiḥ prakāṣam karoti*) through the power pertaining to auxiliary and material cause. In the same way, the power, which puts the externally manifested effect in the inner part of the elements by way of veiling the manifestation, is called *tirobhāva*.¹⁵

If a *dharmī* possessing appearance etc. originates from something where there is a property in the form of the power of *āvirbhāva*, the latter is cause of the former. The factors, which cause the disappearance, are called the causes of *tirobhāva*. It can be said that the effects are destructible. In the same way the origination and destruction in the forms of manifestation and non-manifestation of a non-eternal object can be explained. In this context it is not at all essential to depend on the other causes due to having the Divine desire as the regulator¹⁶.

As the powers of *āvirbhāva* and *tirobhāva* are from the Divinity,

these are to taken as eternal forms of the Divine. Hence every creation of Him is beautiful. As the main creation is taken as a Divine sport (*līlāsṛṣṭī*), which is eternal, the transnatural and natural events are to be taken as the part of the Divine sport.¹⁷

II

It has been said that if a dharmī possessing appearance etc. originates from something where there is a property (*dharma*) in the form of the power of *āvirbhāva*, the latter is the cause of the former. The factors, which cause disappearance, are called the causes of *tirobhāva* (*evam ca yanniṣṭhāvirbhāvaśaktirūpāddharmādyasyāvirbhavanarūpadharmisiddhistasya tatkaraṇamityucyate*). In this context the power embedded in appearance is called *dharma* and the phenomenon of appearance is called *dharmī*. In the case of disappearance (*tirobhāva*) the power in it is called *dharma* and the fact of disappearance is also called *dharma*. In the latter case why both are described as *dharma*. If the power embedded in appearance is called *dharma*, the fact of appearance (*āvirbhāvanam*) is a *dharmī* no doubt due to its function as the bearer of power. In the same way, the power embedded in disappearance is *dharma* from which a *dharmī* in the form of disappearance (*tirobhāvanam*) comes into being, but not as *dharma* as mentioned by Purushottamacharana.

To the Vallabha *Vedāntins* God is omnipresent and hence the theory called *Asatkāryavāda* cannot find its room. In each and every form of effect there is the power of the Divine and hence all appearances and disappearances are taken to be eternal forms of the Divine. Hence it has been shown earlier that these appearances etc. are not at all new origination, as they implicitly exist in the cause in the form of Divine power. To them effectuation is the transformation or change of form and no new beginning. For example, the physical energy may be transformed into chemical energy, which again transforms into energy of life or vital energy leading transformation of the energy of life and mind. In all these there is no real creation anywhere but only the appearance of new forms in the self-same original material through redistribution and rearrangement of its constituents. Causation is *abhivyakti* or manifestation as distinguished from *utpatti* or origination. An effect e.g., a jar is consubstantial with the cause

and is non-different from it so that as the cause is existent the effect must also be existent. In order to prove that an effect is non-different from the cause we may undertake the following considerations. A cloth is non-different from the threads of yarn, for it is perceived as contained in other thing as its substrate. If a thing is different from another thing, it is not perceived as contained in other thing as its substrate. For example, a cow, which is different from a horse is never perceived as contained in horse as its substrate. Besides, between the thread of yarn and the cloth there holds the relation of a material cause and its effect. Therefore, they are not different objects. This thesis may again be justified from the standpoint of the Divinity.

The above-mentioned theory may be substantiated in the following manner. Due to certain arrangements the effect becomes tirohita or non-manifest while in other arrangements it comes to manifestation. When the tortoise withdraws its head into its shell, we do not say that the head has ceased to be but only that it has ceased to be manifest and when it protrudes its head out of its shell, we do not say that its head comes into being but only that it comes into view. There is no beginning of all effects including liberation in the forms of the attainment of bliss and the cessation of sufferings. Although such liberation is identical with Divinity, it is already achieved. The cessation of suffering is already achieved due to its identity with the Lord. In the world also the attainment of what is already attained and the avoidance of what is already avoided are patent aims. For instance with regard to gold that is in one's hand but has been forgotten, the instruction of a reliable person saying- 'The gold is in your hand' makes one attain it as if it were not already attained. Or when one has mistaken a garland for a snake, the words of a reliable person saying- 'This is not a snake' make one get rid of the snake that was already got rid of. Hence there is nothing in this world, which is really a new.

If the manifestation and non-manifestation are taken as Divine sports (*līlā*), some problems may crop up in respect of law of Karma. A question may be raised whether these *āvirbhāva* and *tirobhāva* that are nothing but *līlā* are arbitrary or systematic. If this is arbitrary, the law of karma will collapse. If this is systematic, i.e., *līlās* are in keeping with the result of karma done by an individual being, they are not to be taken as *līlā* in the

true sense of the term. To the Naiyāyikas God creates the world after keeping the result of *karma* of an individual in view. If God's *līlā* in the form of *āvirbhāva* etc. were irrespective of an individual's action, there would arise the defects like *kṛtaprapñāśa* (non-attainment of the result of *karma* done by an individual being) and *akṛtābhyugama* (attainment of the result of *karma* not performed by an individual). If every action is dependent on God's desire, it may be asked whether this desire depends on *karma* of an individual or not. If God or His desire is bound by the *karma* of a *jīva*, He will have no autonomy, which is not desirable. If God's desire is taken as superior, *karma* may seem to be impotent having no power of its own. If *karma* is taken as superior, one could ask what function God serves. If God has no function, it will lose its godliness. If God and *Karma* both are accepted as superior, God has to depend on *karma*. Hence He will be no longer a powerful being or omnipotent due to the loss of autonomy.

Lastly, these *āvirbhāva* and *tirobhāva* theories can be interpreted from the metaphysical point of view. If an individual takes refuge to Lord, the Divine bliss is realized everywhere, which is called *āvirbhava* and at the same time the suffering is ceased, which is called *tirobhāva*. Just like a material object there is the appearance of the Divine bliss and the disappearance of the sufferings when an individual surrenders to Lord ('*yadāvirbhāva ānanda āvirbhavati sarvataḥ/ tirobhavanti santāpastam śraye gokuleśvarīm/*') In fact, this state of being is the state of liberation.

NOTES

- 1 'Tatra tāvad vyāpāravadasādhāraṇam kāraṇam. Kāraṇvañca āvirbhāvaśaktyādhāratvaṁ. Upādānasthaṁ kāryam ya vyavāharagocaram karoti sa śaktih āvirbhāvikā. Āvirbhāvaśca vyavahārayogyatvaṁ, tirobhāvaśca tadayogyatvaṁ.' *Prasthānaratnākara*, p.39, 3rd Ed. Edt. by Goswami Shyam Manohar, Maharashtra
- 2 'Te dve yadyapi bhagavataḥ śakti 'āvirbhāva-tirobhāvau śakti vaimukhairinah' iti 'mayūrāściritā yena' iti ca vākyād āvirbhāvayatīti āvirbhāvah iti arthāt, tathāpi bhagavita vibhajya tatra tatra sthāpitā iti tasya

tattadāvirbhāvakatvāt at tattacchaktitvaṃ'. Ucyate-tathātvañce 'visiṣṭaśaktirbahudheva bhāti bijāni yoniṃ pratipādyā yadvad' iti kathanāt. Evañca vyavahāre yatra yadāvirbhāvika śakith tat tasya kāraṇaṃ, yasya ca yato vyavahārayogyatvaṃ tat tasya kāryaṃ. Itthañca yathā tathā āvirbhāvatirobhāva-vāde prapañcītaṃ asmābhīh, etenaival etenaiva kulālapiturapi na kāraṇatā iti siddhaṃ phalopadhānābhāvāt.'

Ibid

- 3 Nanvidamanupapannam. Kāryotpattināśāvanupagacchataṃ kāryāvirbhāvatirobhāvayorapi durnirūpitatvāt. Tayoranubhavayogyatātadyogyatātadyogyataftmaktvāt. Utpattimaṇṭarena kāryavartamānatāyāścāsākyavacanatvāt. Anyathā prāgabdhāvādaśāyāmapi tatpratyakṣaprasangāt. Na ca prāgabdhāve eva pratibandhaka iti vācyāṃ, tasya kāraṇatvāt.' Avirbhāvatirobhāvavāda, from *Avatāravādavalī* by Puurstrottamje.
- 4 'Kiñca kāraṇe kāryasattāyāṃ tatpaścādhāvitvenābhimatasyāpi kāryasya kāraṇāt purvaṃ sttvena siddhatvāddarśanayogyatvamātraṃ vācyāṃ, natu tajjananaṃ. Tathā sati śaktasya śakyakāraṇābhāvādasaktiprasakteḥ. Tataśca kāryānutpādasyākasmikavādasya vā prasangaḥ.' *Ibid*
- 5 Athotpattirna vahirbhāvah. Kintu mṛdavasthā gatā pinḍāvasthā jātā, sa gatā ghaṭāvasthā jātetyādipratitstantvavasthā anupamaṛdena paṭāvasthādarśanaccāvasthāviśesa eva seti vidhāvyaṭe. Tadapyavasthāveseṣasya kādācitkatvājjanyatvam vācyameva.' *Ibid*
- 6 'Tat sutarāmeva durvacāṃ. Utpatteraniruktatvāt. Avasthāntaraṃ kāryamityapyasangataṃ. Tathā sati putro'pi pitravasthāntaraṃ syāt. Thathā ca pinḍāvasthāvātpiturnāśaḥ syāt. Tantuvadānāśāngikāre'pi sarvo vyāpriyeta. Ato'mśa eva putrah. Evamankurādirapi bijāmśa eva. Na tvavasthāntaraṃ. Samānanyāyāt... vahirbhāvarupāyā utpatteḥ pūrvameva duṣṭitatvāt. Ato vaiśeṣikapratipanna utpattivāda eva sādhiyān.'
- 7 Tau nityāvanityau va. Nādyah. Ghaṭādivastūpalambhānupalambhayoḥ sātayatyaprasangāt. Na ceṣṭāpattih. Tayorviruddhatvena sahvasthānāyogāt... ghaṭādyāvirbhavanāya tirobhāvanāya ca sādhanē pravṛttidarśanena pratyakṣavirodhāt. Tādṛgaviruddhadharmāśrayabhūtasya dharmīno' siddhau tayorapyāśakyatvena śūṇyavādāpatteḥ ca.' *Ibid*
- 8 'Na dvitīyah kāryāntaravattayorapi svakāraṇādvahirbhāvsya svakāraṇe' ntarbhāvasyāvācyatvena puṇastadiyayorapi tayostathātvenānavasthāpātāt.' *Ibid*

- 9 Kārikā No.2, *Ibid*
- 10 Tathāhi-kāraṇagatau śaktiviśeṣavatau. Na cātiriktaśaktikalpane mānādyabhāvah śankyā. Tantuturibemādibhyaḥ paṭotpattidarśanāttatra tatra tajjananaśakterniścayāt. Sā ca na svabhāva nāpi svarūpaṁ. Tatha sati tasya sarvādikatvācchirnebhyo'pi tantvādibhyo ghatādyutpattiprasaṅgāt. Bharjitabijebhyo'pyankurotpattiprasaṅgācca. Maṇisamavadhāne'pi vahnestrnādidāhaprasaṅgācca. Atah kālena bharjanena ca nāśyā manisamavdhāno pratibaddhya ca kācit svabhāvāt svarūpāccātiriktaiva sāṅgikārya.' *Ibid*.
- 11 'Nanveaṁ satiśvarecchayā vastūtpattirevāṅgīkriyatāmiti cet. Maivaṁ. Asatkāryavāda utpatteraśakyavacanatvāt. Tathāhi-utpattiranāma prāgabhāvo dharmāntaraṁ vā. Nādyah. Tasyājanyasya kāryaprākkālavartiveneḍānīm ghaṭotpattirbhaviṣyati iti pratityābhilāpayorbādhaprasaṅgāt. Nāntyah. Tasyaikaniṣṭhatve kāryānutpadaśāyāṁ kāryasyāsattvātkāraṇādiniṣṭhatvameva tasya vacyaṁ, tathā sati tadviśayinyutpadyata iti pratitiḥ syāt.' *Ibid*
12. Kārikā no. 1, p.190
13. Kārikā no. 3, *Ibid*.
- 14 "Pūrvokta api śaktayo bhagavata eva. Bhagavataiva ca vibhajya prajāyeticchayā tatra tatra rūpe sthāpitāḥ.' *Ibid*
- 15 "Kiñca āvirbhāvātirobhāvāvapi bhagavataḥ śktī... āvirbhāvātirobhāvaśabdau ca kāraṇavyutpannau, bhāvavyutpannau ca. Tatrādyapakse-āviḥ prakāṣaṁ bh-āvayati, upādānānantahsthaṁ kāryaṁ vahih prakāṣaṁ karoti yā nimittagata upādānagatā ca śaktiḥ sā āvirbhāvaśhdavācyā. Dvitiyapakse-āvirbhavanamāvirbhāvastirobhavanam tirobhavaḥ. *Ibid*.
- 16 'Evaṁ ca yanniṣṭhāvirbhāvaśaktirūpāddharmādyasyāvirbhavanarūpadharmisiddhiḥ tasya tatkāraṇamityucyate. Yannisthātirobhāvaśaktirūpadharmādyasya tirobhavanarūpadharmasiddhiḥ tasya tannāśakamityucyate... Anenaiva nyāyenāvirbhāva-tirobhāvayormityatvaṁ sadātanatvaṁ bhagavadrūpatvaṁ cāvaseyam. Icchāyāśca niyāmakatvāna tayorutpattiyadyatvaṁ kāraṇāntarāpekṣā'. *Ibid*
- 17 'Brahmopadanastirtvavastha. Mukhyāyā lilāsrṣṭestu nityatvenābhinnatvāt prakṛtāprakṛtābhyam lilāsampattiḥ.' *Ibid*.