CHAPTER 5

CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD

According to Sri Nijaguṇa Shivāry, from the point of view of Shambhulinga or Ultimate Reality, the world does not exist. But this Nijaguṇa has not stated squarely in an unqualified manner in view of the adhikāri-bheda or the hierarchy of philosophical and spiritual fitness which he recognises. So Nijaguṇa has adopted a unique method of explaining the status of the world. He has propounded three theories about the status of the world depending upon the adhikārabheda of the knowers of Reality, viz.

(i) Vivarthavāda for the mandādhi-kāri (the least fit),
(ii) Drsti-sristi-vāda for the madhyamādhi-kāri (the moderately fit) and (iii) Sarvātmavāda for the Uttama-dhi-kāri (the most fit).¹

1) Vivarthavāda

This is the theory which maintains that the world of manifold phenomena is a mere distorted projection or appearance (vivartha) of Brahman.² What is real is Brahman alone and this world is not a real transformation of Brahman but is a mere illusory modification or appearance of Brahman.

¹. Anubhava Sāra, 2.8. 3-5
². Ibid, 1.4.14.
Brahman is the basis of the illusory appearance of the manifold universe, like the rope which is the basis for the appearance of snake in the rope-snake-illusion.¹ The rope is not undergoing any real change but due to the ignorance of the viewer it appears like a snake in an optical illusion i.e., the rope — although it is regarded as the cause for the appearance of the snake in-as-much-as it is the basis of the illusory snake — does not transform itself into snake. On the other hand, it only appears as a snake due to ignorance.² In the same way Brahman — although is regarded as the cause for the appearance of the world — does not transform itself into the manifold universe. Brahman, who is changeless, appears as the world due to the anirvachaniyamaya. While following 'Saṅkāryavāda' Nījaguṇa, like the Advaitins, has departed from the 'pariṇāmavāda' and has admitted the vivarthavāda. For an effect there should no doubt be a cause or ground but the cause or ground itself is not really changing into the effect. Nījaguṇa says: though Brahman or pure-cit is the Upādānakāra (material cause) of the world one need not for that reason expect a like-nature in the effect or

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1. Ibid, 1.4.14.
2. Ibid, 1.4.15.
the world, which is not of the nature of Cit but is acit or jada.¹ Nijaguṇa has cited various examples to justify this argument of his. He says: milk, which is the material cause for the curd, is sweet but the curd is saur and not sweet.² Similarly he cites the examples of flower and its fruit³ and cowdung and scorpions, and Dēvadatta and the nails and hair which grow out of his body.⁴ Nijaguṇa, like Shamkara, does not believe in real change and advocates, like him the view of the apparent manifestation of the manifold from the one real cause. Brahman is thus said to be the adhistāna or the ground-cause for the appearance of the world, just as the rope is the ground-cause for the appearance of the snake in the rope-snake-illusion. Brahman is not undergoing any change in his nature while appearing as the manifold universe just as a shell is not undergoing any change in its nature while appearing as silver in the shell-silver-illusion.⁵ "The world, which is an appearance of Brahman due to maya, seems to partake the nature of Brahman, just as silver seems to partake the real glittering nature of the shell in the shell-silver illusion: the world is said to exist as it seems to participate in the

¹. Anubhavaśāra 1.8.1
⁴. Ibid, 2.5.9
⁵. Ibid, 1.6.4-5
sat aspect of Brahman; it is said to appear as it seems to participate in the cit aspect of Brahman; it is said to be liked since it seems to participate in the ānanda aspect of Brahman."\(^1\)

The world, like māya (as it is the product of māya), is neither real (for the only reality is Brahman) nor unreal (like the son-of-a-barren women); for it exists as long as the Brahman-intuition is not dawned upon an individual and ceases to exist with the onset of the Brahman-intuition. Hence it is said to be 'anirvachaniya' or 'mithya' like the snake in the rope-snake illusion.\(^2\) 'Mithya' is a technical term according to the meaning of which the world which is described as 'mithya', is not an absolutely non-existing entity but is a dependent entity or a conditioned reality. It is real for all practical purposes but is not eternal as it is liable to sublation. Hence the world is not 'sathya' or real in the sense in which Brahman is. Brahman is that whose existence or reality never gets contradicted and sublated at any time. Hence Brahman is ever real.

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2. Paramāṇubhavabodha, 5.15.1.
Nijaguna has accepted 'Vyavaharika' (or practical i.e. empirical) reality for the world. There are, according to him, three grades or levels of realities; they are: (i) Pratibhasika-satta, (ii) Vyavaharika-satta and (iii) Paramarthika-satta. The Silver in the shell-silver illusion is regarded as Pratibhasika Satta (ephemeral or apparent reality) which is experienced as real for a while and turns out to be illusory from the standpoint of the shell which is Vyavaharika-satta. The vyavaharika-satta (empirical or practical reality), which is real from the standpoint of ordinary life and usage, will be sublated from the standpoint of Shambhulinga or Ultimate Reality which is the Paramarthika-satta. The Paramarthika-satta is never contradicted or sublated. Hence it is the Ultimate Reality.

ii. Dristi-srishti-vada

This theory of the world has been advocated by Nijaguna for mandadhirakis. According to this theory the world is not objectively existent but is only subjectively imagined as in a dream (drisirishti). The dream, though it lasts but for a minute, one might imagine to have lived through for centuries.

3. Anubhava sara, 1.6. 10-11.
called external world is really an internal one and the so-called object of apprehension is an apprehension itself. The object, according to this view, is not the locus of knowledge. Knowledge is external as it persists always. It does not require the presence of an object. Nor can it be supposed that the object produces consciousness for consciousness is ever present. So the presence of object is superfluous. Hence the whole universe is appearing as if it is real due to one's own imagination as of golden ornaments. And it appears to be real if seen and not real if not seen. Further, this world appears differently due to the different samskāras of different people as the one and the same object like rope will appear as snake, garland, and stream of water etcetera. Thus drsti is the jñāna covered by avidya and sṛsti is the jñeyā projected by this drsti. This world is not at all existing. It is appearing like a dream. The jīva, the three worlds with their multiplicity etc., are all appearing falsely like the dream. There is no difference whatsoever between waking and dream experience. Thus, according to this theory, the worldly experience is

1. See Gaudapadakarika, 1. 6-7.
2. Paramārtha Geete, 5.9. (See also Shivaputra Swāmi's commentary on it, pp. 131-132)
3. Paramanubhava Bōde, 2.9.
4. Paramartha Geete, 9.9. (Lines : 1-6)
a pure subjective illusion. There is no objective datum and each jīva creates for himself his own illusion. Thus, according to Nījagūṇa, what is real is the self and there is no creation of the world. Ṣrīvāra, world etc., are the creations of this jīva. Illusory perception of each of these happens to him subjectively and has no corresponding objective phenomenon as its ground. For example, the pen I see, according to this theory, has no existence before I happen to have the perception that there is the pen. As soon as the pen-illusion occurs to me I say that there is the pen. Thus, according to this theory, the world is not objectively existent but is only subjectively imagined. Objects are creations of perception. As George Berkeley would say "esse ist percipi". The world exists as it is perceived. It has no other independent existence except the fact of its perception. Dṛṣṭi-srīṣṭi-vāda thus denies existence to the empirical world independent of perception. According to it creation is simultaneous with perception and the objects do not exist when they are not perceived. Further, the whole world is manomaya like a dream. In a dream, though there is no objective content, many things appear and they disappear after the dream. So also the whole universe with its multiplicity, both sentient (cētana) and insentient (acētana), appears through manas and if manas

1. Paramārtha Geete, 2.1.
2. Paramārtha Geete, 5.9 (Mē-ṇadu Kandāguntenisithu Kāṇada hothadanillenisaithu)
3. Ibid, 5.8 (Jagavadarindamanāmayavendu Bagedaṛuva Kanasinaṭeranendu)
is not there nothing appears. In support of this theory Nijaguṇa cites the āruti statements, in the twelfth verse of the sixth sutra of the first chapter of 'Anubhavasāra'.

This theory contends that our experience is inexplicably provided to us under the influence of avidya and that beyond that experience no objective common ground exists. In this respect Dristi-Sristi-vāda approximates to the Vijñanavāda of Buddhism, only with this difference that while Buddhism does not admit of any permanent being Nijaguṇa (Advaitavēdanta in general) admits the unchangable Transcendent Reality, namely Brahman or Shambhulinga, as the only truth whereas the illusory reality and momentary perception are but impositions on it.

iii. Sarvātma-vāda

Nijaguṇa has advocated this theory for the uttamādhiṅkāri. From the standpoint of Absolute Shambhulinga there is no world at all, everything is Shambhulinga.

1. Ibid, Ibid; see also Goudapadakarika 3.29.
2. From Bruhadaranyaka up., 4.3.10 and Taittriya up., 2.7.
4. Jñanapratipadana sthala, 31.3 (Shambhulingave jagavellavu)
This world appears to be jada although its cause, i.e. Brahman, is of the Swarūpa of Caitanya due to avivekā.\(^1\) For, if we analyse through sruti, anumāna and yukti, it will be proved that this world is of the nature of Samvit or Ātman.\(^2\) Nījaguṇa has proceeded to give Yukti in order to prove that this world is of the nature of Ātman. For example, when a person enters his house from outside where there is sunshine he will see it dark inside the house and it is only after a while that he will begin to see it bright. In the same way when there is ignorance one thinks that the world is jada but after realization he finds Ātman everywhere.\(^3\) Further, this world appears as jada due to ajñāna just as a wooden-elephant appears as a real elephant to one when he is a child and after one grows up he will come to realize that it is a wooden-elephant. In the same fashion after spiritual enlightenment one will realise that everything is Brahman.\(^4\)

Nījaguṇa also seeks to prove that this world is of the nature of Ātman through Anumāna. He says that there

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1. Anubhavasāra, 1.8.
2. Anubhavaḥsaṣa, 1.8.3 (Magane Kelejagam bageyindacitte-nisi nigamānumanayuktyantara- ngolim mige nōde Śamvidenabēku)
3. Ibid, 1.8.4
4. Ibid, 1.8.5
is no difference between Ātman i.e. the one who knows and the world i.e. that which is known by Ātman, because the world is knowable like content of dream.¹ Further, this world, he says, is not different from Sat or Ātman because it is of the nature of that Sat like the pot which is of the nature of clay.² Furthermore, this world, he says, is not different from Ātman because it appears without having any reason in Ātman like the dream.³

In the next⁴ verse Nī jaguṇa gives the Sruti Pramāṇa to this Sarvātmavāda or the doctrine 'All is Ātman'. Ātman is above, is belove, is in West, is in east, is in north and South, therefore all is verily Ātman.⁵ Hence Nī jaguṇa says, the world, the different tattvas etc., which were, are, and will be, are all Ātmaswarūpa.⁶ So from this point of view the creation of the jagat, jīva and Shiva (Īśwara) are Kalpita (conceived) in Brahman.⁷ Nī jaguṇa further says in connection with Sarvātmavāda that the world is Ātmaswarūpa (of the nature of Ātman), barring the names and forms, which are 'pusi' or false.⁸ That is although Ātman

¹. Ibid, 1.8.7
². Ibid, 1.8.9
³. Ibid, 1.8.10
⁴. Ibid, 1.8.11
⁵. Chandogya Up., 7.25.2; See also Bruhadaranyaka Up., 2.5.15.
⁶. Anubhavāra, 1.8.12.
⁷. Ibid, 1.8.13.
⁸. Ibid, 4.2.1.
or Brahman appears like the world, this world is not the paramārthikasatta (ultimate reality) just as although a tree-trunk may appear like a thief the appearance of the thief does not constitute ultimate reality. ¹ In this connection he quotes the Sruti² which declares that Brahman alone is real and the world of names and forms is unreal just as the clay alone is real and not the pots etc., made out of it, which are all due to names and forms. ³ Here a question may be asked: "If this world, jīva and Shiva are all mere kalpitas' in Brahman, then, how can one attain mokṣa through the 'pusi' or Kalpitasādhanās like Guru, Shāstra etcetera?" Nijaguna declares that even though the Sādhana is mithya the phala or result is real just as even though a dream and the erotic experience in it might be 'mithya' or unreal the resultant ejaculation is real. ⁴

Nijaguna Shivayōgi has discussed about the creation of the world (which, according to him, is really not created) in his other works, ⁵ merely for explaining to a person who believes that this world is real. Nijaguna has

1. Ibid, 4.2.3.
2. Ibid, 4.2.4.
3. Chandogya Up., 6.1.4
4. Anubhava sāra, 4.2.9-10
5. See Paramānubha Bödhe, 1.7.1 to 1.3.8; and Paramartha Geete, 2.1 to 4.9.
not denied that the scripture speaks about creation. But he points out that the scripture does not declare that the creation is real. The non-duality of the self\(^1\) and the illusory nature of plurality are also taught in the scripture.\(^2\) If creation were real, says Nijaguña, this latter teaching would be void of meaning. The real purport of the scripture, he says, is to be found in this latter teaching. And so, he concludes, the creation which is spoken of must be an illusory one.\(^3\) The scriptural passages dealing with creation, he says, device (upāya) to introduce the true teaching which relates to the non-dual reality.\(^4\)

The Vivartha-vāda, the drsti-sristi-vāda and the Sarvātma-vāda have been discussed by Nijaguña only from the points of view of the disciples. But from the standpoint of the Absolute-Reality-itself, he says, world does not exist at all. It is absolutely non-existing.\(^5\) Nijaguña says: this world can neither be said to be the Pariṇama or effect of Brahman nor the vivartha or appearance of Brahman, nor Vilaksana or different from Brahman nor existent in Brahman. It is, he says, non-existent in all the senses.\(^6\)

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1. See for example, Bruhadaranyaka Up., 4.5.7.
2. See for example, Ibid, 4.4.19
3. Paramartha Gaete, 5.10
4. See Paramanubhava Bōdhe 1.5, and 2.15.
5. Paramanubhava Bōdhe, 3.11 (Sūtra)
6. Ibid, 3.12.1
Nijaguṇa, like Gaudapāda, has not accepted the theory of origination. In fact he has questioned the very law of causation. He says: We cannot either say that the effect is already pre-existent in its material cause or that it is a fresh creation, because if the effect is already existent in the cause, there is no need for any casual operation. For it is meaningless to say that what is already existent is born. And if the effect is non-existent, it can never be produced. Brahman, says Nijaguṇa, is not the cause of the world, for Brahman is pure-cit and the pure-cit will not change. Nor is maya the cause of the world because from the point of view of the Absolute, maya is non-existent. Nor is Iswara the cause of the world. For, if Īśwara takes the form of the world, jīva etc. through change, he will cease to exist—like the tree which will cease to exist after changing itself into the house— and, consequently, there will not be the lokaniyamaka or the controller of this universe which Īśwara is. Hence there is no cause for this world which is absolutely non-existing.

Nijaguṇa, further, says that neither for the Absolute Reality nor for the absolutely non-existing entity there exists birth or death. Therefore there is no origination

1. See Gaudapadakarika 3.48; 4.71
2. Paramanubhava Bōdhe, 3.11.4
3. Paramartha Geete, 9. 5-7
4. Paramanubhava Bōdhe, 3.11.4
what-so-ever. This world, says Nijaguna, which is non-existent in the beginning and non-existent at the end, is non-existent even in the present.¹

This world appears in four ways due to different perspectives or points of view says Nijaguna.² For instance, from the point of view of the 'Sruti' this world is 'Tucchha' like the sky-flower. From the point of view of 'Yukti' this world is 'Anirvacanīya' like the silver in a shell-silver illusion. From the worldly or 'Loukika' point of view the world is real like Âtman. And from the point of view of 'Vyāvaharika-satta' (practical reality) the world is a mere appearance like the jugglery.

1. Jñānapratipādanasthala 31.1: 'Vidita vidadyanta-dolage neenilla madyadolāva rūpu ninage nijavahudu?' This appears to be, more or less, the translation of Gaudapada's statement: 'Adavante chayannāsti vartamānēpi tattatha' - Gaudapadakarika, 2.6.

2. Paramānubhava Bōdhe, 4.9. 7-8