THE NATURE OF BRAHMAN & THE JIVA
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
RĀMĀNUJA AND VEDĀNTA DEŚIKA
A CRITICAL STUDY

BY
DR. C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

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FOREWORD

Among the systems of Vedānta, Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita are important as seminal systems. The former is unique standing in marked contrast to all other Vedānta systems, and hence its importance among the schools of Vedānta. The importance of the latter is due to the fact that it serves as a paradigm for all theistic systems coming under the Vedānta group. The present Volume by Dr. C. Rajagopala Chari is a scholarly study of the nature of Brahman and Jiva with special reference to Rāmānuja and Vedanta Desṭīka.

The Viśiṣṭādvaita school explains the relation between Brahman and cit-acit on the basis of the soul-body relation. Both cit and acit constitute the body of Brahman, and so Brahman is the soul of both cit and acit. Brahman, though one and nondual, is qualified by cit and acit in an inseparable way with the result that Brahman is Viśiṣṭa. In other words, Brahman which is qualified is one. Rāmānuja and other preceptors of the school claim that this view is supported by the Upaniṣads, the Āgamas, and the Purāṇas. The entire Divyaprābandha comprising the hymns of the Ālvārs also supports this view. As a part of the elucidation and justification of the Viśiṣṭādvaita standpoint, it is necessary to state and refute the standpoint of Advaita. Dr. C. Rajagopala Chari deserves commendation for setting forth the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita covering the historical, doctrinal and polemical aspects of the system in nine Chapters. The presentation of ideas is clear, lucid and logical. I am sure that this book will be useful to scholars and laymen interested in the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita.

(R. BALASÜBRAMANIAN)

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PREFACE

This work is substantially based upon the thesis entitled "The Nature of Brahman and the Jiva with special Reference to RĀMĀNUJA and Vedānta Desīkā - A critical Study"—submitted to Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati for the award of the Ph.D. degree which was conferred in 1986. This work is now being published with the financial assistance of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams under the scheme "Aid to Publish Religious Works". I am grateful to the Executive officer, T T.D. for giving me financial aid to bring out the book. I also thank Mrs. Jhansi Rao, President, South Central Railway Women's organisation, Guntakal Division, and its members for financial assistance.

The main purpose of this treatise is to give a critical and comprehensive exposition of the central concepts of Brahman and the Jiva and their relationship in Viśiṣṭādvaita with special reference to RĀMĀNUJA and VEDĀNTA DESĪKĀ. The treatment is brief in relation to other systems of Indian philosophy, except Advaita, without which the fundamental concepts of Viśiṣṭādvaita cannot be understood. As the present study confines itself to Indian Philosophy exclusively, it is not found necessary to attempt any comparison with Western Philosophy, although there is plenty of scope for such a comparative and contrastive study. The study is mainly based on the original Sanskrit works of Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desīka. As far as possible Sanskrit terms as used in the original works are used and their accepted English equivalents are given. The Jiva is generally referred to as 'Atman' or,
‘Soul’ or ‘Self’, as it has a particular connotation in Viśistādvaïita for which the other terms do not seem to be adequate.

What is essential in a constructive exposition and criticism of any school is not so much the ability to refute other systems as the necessity to show how integral is the system one has chosen to expound. I have in this work attempted to show how metaphysics and Religion are closely inter-related in the issues which confront us every day.

I am beholden to Dr. R. Balasubramanian, Director, Radhakrishnan Institute of Advanced Philosophy, University of Madras for having written a generous Foreword to this book, despite his several pre-occupations.

I am gratefully indebted to Dr. G. S. Herbert, Professor of Philosophy (Retired), S. V. University, Tirupati, who as Supervisor of my studies warmly encouraged me in this venture and gave me excellent guidance and sustained my morale. In preparing my thesis, I had the privilege of being instructed by him in the essentials of Vedānta as well as Western Philosophy. It is a matter of great satisfaction to me that under his aegis, I was able to complete writing the thesis. I cannot thank Prof. G. S. Herbert adequately for what I have received from him.

I express my profound sense of gratitude to Dr. C. Ramaiah, Professor of Philosophy, and Dean of Academic affairs, S.V. University, Tirupati for the scholarly suggestions he kindly offered to me while preparing my thesis. He took special interest in my work and infused inspiration in me at various moments when my interest tended to flag.
I am indebted to Dr. M. Veeraiah, Professor of Philosophy, S.V. University, Tirupati whose constant encouragement and invaluable suggestions have added quality and depth to my thesis.

My grateful thanks to Sri R. A. Jayantha, Reader in the department of English, S.V. University Tirupati, and Dr. V. Rangan, Reader in the department of English, Nagarjuna University for meticulously reading through my work and making instructive suggestions.

My thanks are due to Dr. S. B. Raghunadha-charyulu, Reader, and Head of the department of Sanskrit, S.V. University, Tirupati, and Sri Hussaini, Lecturer in the department of Sanskrit, S.V. University Tirupati for elucidation of the meanings of certain sanskrit terms and also helping me in the transliteration of Sanskrit terms with appropriate diacritical marks.

Dr. P.T. Nayudu, Reader in the department of Geology S. V. University, Tirupati and his wife Dr. (Mrs.) S.A.T. Adilakshmi, Head of the department in the women's development studies in Padmavathi Viswavidyalayam, Tirupati, and Dr. P. T. Srinivasan, Lecturer in M.B.A department, University of Madras have helped me in several ways. I thank them.

My grateful thanks are due to Sri J. Rajagopalachari, General Manager, Northern Railway for his keen interest in my work lending me all the encomium to bring out this book for publication.

My revered father Sri C.S. Raghavan has always been my mentor. I owe my interest in Visistadvaita
to him. Apart from sustaining my enthusiasm in these studies he has directed me to several source books in Visistadvaita. I hope that I will have repaid in a humble measure my indebtedness to him by writing this and dedicating this work to him and my mother.

I would like to place on record how thankful I am to my wife Mrs. C. Padma but for whose unstinted cooperation I would not have been able to carry out my studies at all. Not only has she cheerfully with stood countless inconveniences but involved herself totally in all my endeavours. I am grateful to the Almighty that I have been blessed with such a help-mate.

My thanks are due to Sri D.S.P. Ramakrishna, Manager, Satya Sai Printers, Tirupati, for printing this work elegantly.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

What is the nature of Man's inward being? 'What is the nature of his self?' These questions have preoccupied men since the dawn of Philosophy. Science has pushed our knowledge of the external world towards the microscopic to the point where...
as Heisenberg says, we cannot go farther, and it is also increasing our knowledge of the microscopic world. But no corresponding attempt has been made to fathom the inward world of man, in understanding the nature of the self. The Kaṭhopaniṣad says: "God created man with senses directed outward; man knows, therefore, only external objects, but not his self; only the brave one knows the self by turning the senses inwards." (II.IV.1). The emphasis of the Upaniṣads in general is on knowing the self. Not merely for the individual, but for the whole of humanity, knowledge of the self is as necessary as the knowledge of the external world for self-realisation.

If we recognise that there is co-ordination between the inner and outer natures of man, we have to make a rational study of the inner nature also instead of leaving it to blind belief. There seems to be much in the inner nature of the self to be grasped and utilised for making man fully happy. Man's outlook of the world today is both complex and confusing. This fact makes the problem of the self both important and pressing. As the problem is outside the scope of sciences, it is only the thinkers in the field of Psychology, Religion and Philosophy who can enquire into and elucidate the nature and structure of the inner self.

The self is differently understood by different Philosophical traditions of the world. Every tradition thinks that it possesses the final answer to the
problem. Some traditions give apparently the same answer, but they have significantly different approaches. We also find that sometimes the same tradition contains different and conflicting interpretations of the self. It becomes helpful to know what different traditions of Philosophy teach about the self. It should be noted that the self is not understood by them without reference to an underlying transcendent ground which is called the absolute by many and by some God. However the nature of the absolute is conceived, the self’s relation to it raises problems of ethics which philosophers attempt to handle in different ways. The relationship between the Absolute and the self raises problems such as, ‘whether the Self can have its distinctness in this world and the next’, and so on. These questions are present in all the traditions and answered differently.

The concept of the Self is fundamental in all schools of Indian Philosophy, including the orthodox and heterodox. The reality of the permanent Self is generally admitted. Among the heterodox (nāstika) schools, the Cārvāka alone denies the reality of the Self and identifies it with the body endowed with consciousness as the epi-phenomenon of the body. The Buddhist denies the reality of the permanent Self and regards it as a series of momentary ideas. Only the Jaina admits the reality of the permanent Self as a knowing, feeling and active agent.

All the orthodox schools (āstika) admit the reality of the Self or Ātman as a permanent spiritual
substance. The Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika regard the Self as an eternal substance endowed with cognition, pleasure, pain desire, aversion, volition, merit and demerit. According to this system, consciousness is not the essence of the Self, but an adventitious quality, and the Self acquires consciousness in conjunction with the body and an internal organ namely manas. The Mīmāṃsā also holds the same view. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, regards knowledge as a mode or the activity of the Self. On the other hand Prabhākara regards knowledge as a quality of the Self. In dreamless sleep and release, the Self is devoid of consciousness. Sāmkhya argues that consciousness is an eternal property but not an adventitious or accidental quality of the Self. Feeling and activity are the qualities of the intellect (buddhi), which is a modification of Prakriti. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the Sāmkhya-yoga and the Mīmāṃsā admit the plurality of selves to account for the variety of experiences, bondage and liberation. Advaita admits the reality of one Self or Ātman which is Pure-Being (Sat), Pure consciousness (Cit) and Pure Bliss (Ānanda) and identifies Ātman with Brahman. It regards Jīva as the Ātman limited by Avidyā or the mind body complex produced by it and recognises the empirical reality of the Jīva and denies its ontological reality. Viśiṣṭādvaita admits the ontological reality of the Jīva and regards it as a part (amaṇḍa) of Brahman.

The Sāmkhya and the Mīmāṃsā deny the existence of the God, but admit the reality of the Self, its
exposition of the nature of Prakārti, Puruṣa, and Puruṣottama and of the need for Bhakti and Prapatti as the supreme means to Mokṣa. It was later developed by Rāmānuja and further elaborated by Vedānta Deśīka.

Rāmānuja systematises the whole teaching of Visiṣṭādvaita in its metaphysical, moral and mystical aspects. In his Vedārtha Samgraha, he analyses the defects of Advaita, the Bhedā bheda doctrine and Saivism and harmonises the apparently conflicting texts of the Upaniṣads by his foundational principle of Sarīra-Sarīri relation. His Vedāntasāra and the Vedānta dīpa are short treatises on the Śūtras which bring to light the essentials of Visiṣṭādvaita. But his magnum opus is Śrī Bhāṣya which is an authoritative exposition of the Vedānta Śūtras as Sartraka Śastra. His Gītā Bhāṣya is a development of the Gitārtha Samgraha of Yāmuna and explains the way of Bhakti and provides a ladder from the world of Prakriti to the realm of Puruṣottama. His Saranāgati Gadya is a classic exposition of the nature and value of Prapatti. The Śrīraṅga Gadya gives expression to his devotional yearnings for the Lord. The Vaikuṇṭha Gadya is a rapturous outpouring of the transcendental beauty and bliss of Vaikuṇṭha. These great works are enduring monuments of Rāmānuja's synthetic genius, and they form the main sources for the present study.

Vedānta Deśīka's main contribution was to elucidate further the teachings of Rāmānuja. With his
Viṣṇu-Purāṇa, the Pāñcarātra and the hymns of the Alvarās.

A modest endeavour is made here to study systematically the nature of these concepts in depth, and present an objective statement of these concepts. The study is based on the relevant original Sanskrit texts.

To elucidate the nature of Brahman and the Jīva and their relationship according to Viśiṣṭādvaita, it becomes necessary not only to state the position of Advaita regarding them, but also to examine critically, after Rāmānuja and Vedānta Deśika, the Advaitic doctrine of Nirguna Brahman, Jīva, Māyā or Avidyā, and Mukti. As is wellknown, the Viśiṣṭādvaitic stand regarding these is a qualified acceptance and criticism of the Advaitic position. Hence its nomenclature Viśiṣṭādvaita.

The rise of the Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita starting from Nathamuni (9th Century A.D.), gaining momentum in Yāmuna (10th Century A.D.), and streaming through Rāmānuja (11th Century A.D.), seems to meet its objective in Vedanta Deśika (1268-1359 A.D.). The history of Viṣṭādvaita is marked by the life and teachings of Yāmuna, the grandson of Nathamuni. Yāmuna’s famous work Siddhātṛayav (one of the source books for Rāmānuja’s (Sri Bhāsyā) explaining the main tenets of Viṣṭādvaita following the tradition of Bodhāyana, Dramida and Taṭkte. Yāmuna’s masterly summary of Viṣṭādvaita in the Gitārtha Samgraha offers a luminous
imperatives of duty as divine commands according to each man’s station in life which is determined by Karma and guṇa. His aesthetic philosophy defines Brahman as beautiful and blissful and prefers, Bhakti to rasas as extolled by the aesthetics. He founds the essentials of Viśiṣṭadvaita in his masterpiece Raha-syatrayasāra in which he follows the Sūtra method and develops the whole theme in terms of tattva, ṣīta, and puruṣārtha. The supreme tattva is Śrīman Nārāyaṇa who is Saririn, the Self of the Jīva being its Ādhāra, Niyānta, Seṣi and Swāmin. He is Himself the Upāya and Upcya. Vedānta Desīka emphasises that the prime cause of salvation is the Grace of God who is the Siddhaupāya. The treatise also describes the life of the Prapanna and his integral experience of Brahman in Vaikuṇṭha in the state of Sāyujya. This is also brought out in his Paramapada sopāna in which Vedānta Desīka constructs a spiritual ladder from worldliness to Vaikuṇṭha. His Dayāśataka, a fine reflective lyric embraces all the aspects of Divine love and Divine providence. It has one hundred and eight stanzas suggestive of the varying shades of love and devotion to God. These works of Vedānta Desīka also form the basis of the present study. Further, Pillai Loka-Cārya’s Tattva Traya, Varavara Muni’s Tattvatraya bhāṣya, Srinivāsa Dāsa’s Yatindramata Dipikā, Sudarśana Sūri’s Sūtra Prakāśīkā and Saṃkara’s Bhāṣya on Brahma Sūtras are also made use of here.

The Second Chapter tries to present briefly an historical account of the emergence and growth of
the concepts of Brahman and the Jīva in the Vedic hymns, the Upaniṣads, the Bhagavad Gītā, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, the Pāṇcarātra and the Hymns of the Ālvārs. The purpose of this account is to point out the foundation on which the Viśistādvaita conception of Brahman and the Jīva is built.

The Third Chapter is devoted to the study of the Advaita conception of Brahman and Ātman. For a comprehensive understanding of these concepts in Viśistādvaita, a clear understanding of the Advaitic view is necessary, as Viśistādvaita qualifies the Advaitic position.

The Fourth Chapter is concerned with the “Viśistādvaita conception of Brahman (Absolute)”. In Viśistādvaita Brahman is the Absolute, but it is identified with a personal God, who is called Nārāyaṇa. The Absolute and personality are integrated in Viśistādvaita. Ontologically God must be viewed as the Highest in status and therefore he must be considered as the Absolute. But in consistency with the logic of religious philosophy and in conformity to the demands of religious consciousness, God must also be a concrete person, the inexhaustible source as well as the perfect realisation of the values.

The following aspects of Brahman according to Rāmānuja and Vedānta Deśīka are also critically discussed in this chapter:

i) Brahman as the Ultimate in the Upaniṣads.
ii) The two-fold nature of Brahman as perfect and
free from imperfections (abhayaśāntvatā). iii) The five-fold manifestation of God. iv) Brahman as the Knowable. v) Brahman as not Pure consciousness but as qualified by it. vi) The absence of distinction between Saguṇa and Nirguṇa Brahman. vii) Brahman as the first and the intelligent cause of the Universe. viii) God as the efficient and material cause of the world

Following this account a detailed discussion of Rāmānuja's criticism of the doctrine of Nirguṇa Brahman is given.

The Fifth Chapter is on the doctrine of Māyā or Avidyā. The Vīśiṣṭādvaite view of Māyā or Avidyā as propounded by Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desṭika is formulated partly by a criticism of the Advaitic concept of Māyā or Avidyā and partly by independent and original thought. And hence Vīśiṣṭādvaita criticism of the Advaita doctrine of Māyā or Avidyā has to be examined. The unjustifiability of Śaṅkara's doctrine of Avidyā is elucidated. The ethical meaning of Avidyā according to Vīśiṣṭādvaita and the objections against Rāmānuja's refutation of Avidyā and how he meets those objections are explained.

The Sixth Chapter deals with the "Vīśiṣṭādvaita concept of the Jīva or the Self". This chapter falls into three sections The first section discusses what is not Jīva according to Vīśiṣṭādvaita, thereby refuting the position taken by the different schools of Cārvāka. The second section deals with Vīśiṣṭādvaita
refutation of the self as conceived by the other schools of Indian Thought. The third and the last section elucidates the ‘Nature of the Jīva’ as follows: i) The Jīva as a knower, ii) the Jīva as self-luminous, iii) the Jīva as the essential nature of consciousness or knowledge, iv) the Jīva as an agent, v) the Jīva as atomic, vi) Eternality of the Jīva, vii) Plurality of Jīvas, viii) Classification of Jīvas and ix) the Jīva as part of God.

The Seventh Chapter entitled “The Relation between Brahman (Absolute) and the Jīva (Self)”, brings out in detail what is regarded as the distinctive feature (asādhāraṇa dhāraṇa) of Viśisṭādvaīta. The philosophy of Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desākika is a synthesis of metaphysical, moral and religious experiences and is rooted in the thought that the Brahman is the ground of existence as well as the goal of experience. This chapter explains that as a logical self the Jīva derives substantiality from Brahman and is called Aprthaksiddha viśeṣaṇa, upādeya or āmśa. As the ethical self the Jīva has moral freedom but dedicates itself to the service of God, who is the Sēṣi or Swāmin. The Jīva derives its form and function from Brahman, depends on His redemptive will and exists for its aesthetic satisfaction and is therefore His Śarīra. This includes philosophical and spiritual satisfaction, which suggests the synthetic insight afforded by the Śarīra-Śarīri bhāva which is the differenția of Viśisṭādvaīta.

The Eighth Chapter deals with the Viśisṭādvaīta conception of Liberation (Mukti), the means or path
of Liberation, the state and the destiny of the Jiva in emancipation. The character of the released Jiva and what it reveals regarding the nature of Brahman is also elucidated.

The Ninth and the final chapter presents a summary of the main points made in this study. It is argued that among the various relationships that may be obtained between the Absolute and the Jiva, the Viśiṣṭādvaitic standpoint seems to be more acceptable than the others. It provides for a Personal God as required for the Jiva, and also illustrates how the concept of the Absolute is to be understood.
CHAPTER II

EMERGENCE AND GROWTH OF THE CONCEPTS OF ĀTMAN AND BRAHMAN:
A BRIEF HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

The scope of this chapter presents an historical account of the emergence and growth of the concepts of Ātman and Brahman in the Vedic hymns, the Upaniṣads, the Bhagavad Gītā, the Viṣṇupurāṇa, the Pāncarātra and the hymns of the Ālvars. The purpose of this account is to point out the basis on which the Viśiṣṭādvaitic conception of the Jiva and Brahman is built.

ĀTMAN AND BRAHMAN IN VEDIC HYMNS:

The Upaniṣadic concept of Ātman and Brahman has a long course of history. The concept which had its origin in the pre-upaniṣadic literature viz., the Samhitās, the Brāhmaṇas and the Āranyakas reached its climax of development in the Upaniṣads. Then it found in the post-upaniṣadic period sharply differing interpretations in the different systems of Indian Philosophy.

‘ĀTMAN’ AND ITS SYNONYMS IN THE VEDAS:

The word ‘Ātman’ is traceable even in the Rg. Veda. It occurs about thirty times in it, about twenty two times independently in different case-endings; and eight times as a part of compounds like Ātmadā, Ātmanvat, Ātman Vatībhi, Ātma-iva, Ātman Vantam, Satātma and Satātmānam.1 Besides, ‘tman’ an abridged form of the word Ātman, is noticed about

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seventy eight times in different case-endings in the Rg. Veda, used partly as a reflexive pronoun and partly as an adverb. Although right from the Rg Vedic times down to the present day, the word 'Ātman' has been frequently used in Indian philosophy, it has not had a fixed meaning. It has been used to denote a variety of meanings. Even in the times of Rg Veda, it denoted more than half a dozen meanings such as: (i) Wind [Ātman Vātah] [RV.i.-34.7; x.92.13; 168.4], (ii) Breath [Prāṇa] [RV.i.34.7; vii.87.2; x.16.3; x.92.13], (iii) Oneself [Svayam] [RV. viii.3 34; ix.85.3; 113.1; x.97.4], as standing for reflexive pronoun, (iv) Body [Sarīra] [RV. i.-162,20; i.163-6; vii.101.6; x.97,8] and x.163 5.6), (v) Essence [Sāra] [RV.i.34.7; 115 1; ix.2.10; 6.8; x.97.11; 107.7; 168 4] (vi) Controller )Dhāraviṣ or Sūrātman) [RV.vii.87.2], (vii) Eternal and Intelligent Principle [Cetanātman] [RV.i.164.4].

It is difficult to ascertain how these different meanings for the word Ātman have developed in the course of several centuries. However, some scholars have tried to trace the evolution of these meanings.

Keith is of the view that, originally, the word 'Ātman' possibly implied 'wind' from which sprang the sense of breath. From 'breath' developed the sense of 'Self' and, subsequently it came to stand for 'the reflexive pronoun'. Thereafter it developed one after another the following meanings such as 'body' 'trunk', the essential nature of a thing, 'a principle

2. Louis Renou's Article on the word Ātman 2.11 Para on P.151 of the Journal (Vak) No.2; December 1952, Poona.
distinct from the members of the body, and body itself, ‘Consciousness’ (Vijñāna), and finally, the ultimate Reality of the Universe (Brahman). Keith asserts that it is in the Atharvaveda that Ātman is identified perhaps for the first time with Brahman and recognised as word-soul In the Atharvaveda Samhitā (x.8.44) both these terms Ātman and Brahman are used interchangeably to denote the ultimate Reality. This identification probably anticipated the interchangeability of these two words in the later literature. In the Upaniṣads, Ātman and Brahman, both express the same Ultimate Reality. Sometimes the term Ātman and some times the term Brahman is employed to express the final Reality.

Etymologically the term Ātman has been derived in different ways. Yāska derives it from two roots वात- ‘to move constantly’ and बप - ‘to pervade’ and explains the words in three ways : (Nirukta, iii.15) (i) that which moves constantly, (ii) that which pervades every where, and (iii) that which appears pervaded or contained (by the material body)

According to Pāṇiniyadhātupātha (i 38), it is derived from the root at i e. ‘to move constantly;’ Vedic Lexicographers derive the word ‘Ātman’ in the sense of that which sustains its existence - in all the stages of waking, dream, deep sleep and death etc.  


2. Halayudam, Sadakal padrumah and Sabdartha Cintamami Kosa.
Some of the western scholars have derived this term from other roots. German scholars, particularly Schweitzer, trace its identity with German word ‘Atmen’ and derive it from the root ṣan, ‘to breathe’.\(^1\) Curtius and Grassman derive it from the root ḳaV ( ḳVa), ‘to blow’.\(^2\)

Deussen does not seem to favour the above derivations and also its connections with Greek words as seen by the other two. He suggests instead that it is a highly abstract word which is to be derived from the roots ‘a’ seen in ‘aham’ (I) and ‘ta’ (perhaps from tad-this).\(^3\) Accordingly it denotes ‘this I’, the self which, in due course, is felt to be the final expression for the ultimate fact of existence arrived at by the stripping away the various coverings which envelope the ultimate Reality, namely the coverings of the body, mind and intellect. Keith does not accept this derivation. He favours the derivations suggested by Schweitzer, Curtius and Grassman, as they are closer to the etymology he himself gives the word.\(^4\)

**BRAHMAN:**

The first and foremost among the words which

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3. Paul Deussen quoted by A B. Keith, the Religion and Philosophy of the Vedās and Upaniṣads, Massachusetts, 1925. P. 450 ff.

stand as equivalent to ‘Ātman’ in the Vedas is ‘Brahman’. It occurs over two hundred times in the Rg Veda. Just like Ātman, it is also understood in various senses in the Rg Veda. What is more it occurs in the Rg Veda both in masculine and the neuter genders. The word Brahman can be derived from the root ṛbrh ‘to grow’ or to ‘swell’. In masculine form it denotes the following senses: Brāhmaṇa Singer (Brāhmaṇa stotā) (RV.i.80 1); Great or Mighty (Parivṛdhah) RV.i 158.6); Creator (Prajāpati) (RV.i.164.35; Brhaspati RV.ii 1 3.); Brahman priest (RV.ii.1.2); Prayer (RV viii.31.1); Sacrificial priest (RV i 10 1); Angiras or Maruts (RV.v 31.4); Brahmin (RV.ii.39.1, x 108.6), ‘Brahman’ is used frequently in the neuter gender rather than the masculine gender in the Rg Veda.

Sayana gives various meanings of the word Brahman.¹ They are: Prayer (stotra) RV.i.62.13); Food sacrificial or ordinary (anna or Havis). (RV.i: 104); Cause of Universe (Jagatkāraṇam) RV.iii.29.15; x.114.8); Great Act (Parivṛdam Karma) (RV.i. 105.2; 129.4); Brahmin (RV.viii.35.16; 37.1); Body (Putrādi vardhanakāri Sarīram) RV.ix.67.23); Great (bṛhat) RV.ix.71.1; 97.43) (Brahmanaspati); Rudra (RV.61.7)

Among the western scholars,² Pott derives the word Brahman from the root ṛbrh and asserts that it originally signified ‘god’ and lateron came to mean ‘worshipper’ also. This view is accepted by Grassman, Fick, Bargaigne, Delbruck; Deussen and Lan-


2. Ibid. P. 25-29.
mann. Deriving the word Brahman from \textit{brh}- \textit{to swell} or \textit{to grow}, Martin Häug describes it in such terms as: that which \textit{grows or swells}, that productive power in nature which manifests itself in the growth of the plants and all other creatures. Osthoff connects the word Brahman with the old Irish word \textit{bricht} i.e. \textit{magic or magic formula}, and infers from it the meaning- (priest). In the \textit{Rg Veda} the priest superintended the sacrifice as a whole and by his magic power repaired the flaws in the sacrifice. Hellebrandt and Geldner also agree with the view of Osthoff. Hertel holds the view that the original meaning of the word Brahman is \textit{fire}, both the internal fire in man and the cosmic fire. Muir says that Brahman in neuter gender gives the sense of prayer or hymn; in masculine gender it denotes the person who composes or repeats a hymn or prayer. Maxmuller agrees with Muir's interpretation. He however suggests another possible meaning for it as \textit{propelling power\textsuperscript{1}}. Roth and Bohtling \textit{derive it from} \textit{brh} and assign the following six meanings: the devotion which appears as craving and fullness of soul and striving towards gods, sacred or magic formula, sacred word, sacred wisdom, holy fire, and Absolute or Impersonal God.

Finally the above exposition may be summed up in the words of Keith. He says "that the origin of meaning of Brahman is uncertain. At any rate, the word naturally and normally means Prayer, but there are further developments." Keith adds that "the growth of the idea of Brahmán as a suitable expression for the Absolute must have been greatly

\textsuperscript{1} Maxmuller, \textit{Systems of Vedānta}, P. 49.
furthered by the extraordinary value attached to the prayer and to the spell. The Prayer rapidly passes over to the lower rank".¹

Again, we see in the Vedas that there are words like Visvākārman (RV. x.81.82), Brhaspati (RV.81.82.), Prajāpati (RV.x.121) and Hiranyagarbha (RV.x.121) to connote ‘Ultimate Reality’. But these words do not have these connotations in the Upaniṣads and in the later Sanskrit literature in which they appear frequently enough. In the Purāṇas, they have different meanings. Visvākārman becomes the engineer of the gods; Brhaspati the preceptor: and prajāpati the chief of the gods and one of the three powers of Brahman, who is regarded as the creator, preserver and destroyer. Hiranyagarbha finds no mention in the Purāṇas and later Sanskrit literature. Even in the Upaniṣads he takes a low place in the hierarchy. A closer study of the Vedic literature reveals that the words Visvākārman, Brhaspati and Prajāpati played an important part in the development of the meaning of Brahman, and were later on replaced by the word Brahman, probably, during, or towards the concluding period of the Brāhmaṇas.

In the Saṃhitās, the words; Puruṣa, Haṃsa, Suparṇa, Ajóbhaga, Prāṇa, Jiva, Satya, Visvākārman, Brhaspati, Prajāpati and Hiranyagarbha, and so on also denote, like the word Brahman, Ātman. In the Upaniṣads, however, only a few words such as Brahman, Puruṣa, Haṃsa, and very rarely, Suparṇa, Jiva, Prāṇa and Satya are used interchangeably for Ātman.

ĀTMAN AND BRAHMAN IN THE Rg VEDA SAṃHITĀ:

The Upaniṣadic concept of the self and the Absolute (Ātmān and Brahmān) goes back to the Rg Veda Saṃhitā. One might discern the beginnings of the idea of Ātmān in the sense of the Ultimate Reality, in the conception of a single and all-pervading force underneath the many supernatural forces. This conception took place over a period of time, through the successive stages. To start with, two or more gods seem to have been united, such as Indrā Varuṇa (two) and Indra-Mitrā-Varuṇa (three). Subsequently all the gods were linked together to form the concept of Viśvadevāh. Subsequently was conceived the notion of all the gods welded in one single intangible transcendental entity (Anasūtha), under the names of Prajapati, Viśvakarman and Hiranya-agarbha. The culmination of this unified relation can be seen in the intuitional out bursts of the Asyavāmasya Sūkta, the Puruṣa Sūkta and the Nāsadiya Sūkta of the Rg Veda.¹ Yāska (Nirukta, x.iv 1), the post-vedic authority and some modern scholars also bear out this view.²

1. RV. 164-66; 164-46; x.90; x.129.
2. (i) Journal of the Department of Letters, Volume XV, Calcutta University, 1927, P. 108 in the article ‘Upaniṣads as the landmark in the history of Indian Thought’ by Carlo Formichi-
(ii) Kapila Sastri, Lights on the Upaniṣads, P. 23 cited by Dr. R.C. Dwivedi, Selections from Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads, Delhi 1965, Introduction P. XLI.
We see the conception of the unity of the universe emerging in certain later hymns of the Rg Veda. We find in the Rg Veda a remarkable quest after that one eternal, unfathomable, unspeakable unity from which all gods, worlds and creatures originate. Paul Deussen\textsuperscript{1} maintains that a perception of unity had been reached as early as the time of the Rg Veda (i.164: x.121 and 129) which later on in course of time found very positive and distinct expression in the concept of Ātman (The First Principle, as Deus- sen calls it).

In the Asya Vāmasya Sūkta (RV.i.164), the seer makes queries about the unity, the First Principle, the unitary cause of material and immaterial things. In elucidating the idea of one All-Pervasive Reality the seer declares:

"They call Him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni and He is heavenly nobly winged Garutman To which is one, sages give many a title; they call Him Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan." (RV.i.164.46)

Yāśka, interpreting this mantra says that ‘one Ātman is described variously as Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, Divya and Garutman’ etc (Yāśka, Nirukta, vii.4.5). Griffith also holds the view that “all these names are names of one and the same Divine being, the one Supreme Spirit under various manifestations.”\textsuperscript{2} This intangible Entity under various appellations: Anātha, Visvākarman, Bṛhaspati,

\textsuperscript{1} Paul Deussen, The Philosophy of the Upanisads, P. 856, Edinburgh, 1908.

\textsuperscript{2} Griffith, A.T.H. - Hymns of the Rg Veda, Volume I, P. 227, Banerces (India) F/N 46.
Brahmanaspati, Puruṣa, Aditi, and Brahman etc., was conceived as the creating power of the Universe.

The material out of which this Universe was shaped was not considered as separate from or outside that single intangible entity (Anastha) (RV.i. 164.46), but it was out of the same entity that the universe was created. In other words, the creator and the created are not considered as separate and different. But the creator after creating the universe, is immanent in it. This is evident from the reciprocity of the cause and effect as seen in some of the Rg Vedic hymns: Daksha is born of Aditi and Aditi is Daksha’s daughter (RV.x.72.4). Water (Āpah) produced Hiraṇyagarbha and Hiraṇyagarbha produced water (Āpah) (RV.x.90.5). From Puruṣa, Virāj was born and again Puruṣa was born from Virāj (RV 121.7-9). This idea developed further to include the transcendental aspect of the ultimate Reality; Thereby the creator was seen as immanent in the creation as well as transcendent: “His one quarter became these various creatures and things and his rest of the three quarters are eternal in the highest heaven (RV.x.90.3). There was neither existence nor non-existence, all was indiscriminated Salila (RV.x.129 1,3). This latter view of the Ultimate Reality (Atman) was later branded as highly secretive and inexpressible [anirvacaniya].

Not only the Ultimate essence of the universe was sought in a spiritual, intangible, eternal and all pervasive entity, but the presence of a principle in an individual being and its nature were also ascertained in the Rg Veda Samhitā. The moving principle in an individual being was known by various names such as gopa, Suparna, Jiva, amartya and ajobhaga. It is qualified by the word ‘moving’ as at the time of
death it leaves the body and acquires a new form and goes to the Pitṛloka (world of the manes) or Devaloka (world of gods). The individual principle, being a part of the universe, is not separate from the intangible spiritual entity (Puruṣa or Brahma); for, the Universe, of which it forms a part, itself, is the effect of that transcendental entity.

Apart from this deduction that the individual principle is a part of the Essence of the Universe, some positive assertions in this respect are available in the Rg Veda Samhitā. It is stated ‘the immortal self (amartya) has the same origin with the mortal’ (RV.i.164.30-38); ‘universe’s mighty keeper has entered into me, the simple,’ (RV.i.164.21). Again, the principle immanent in the whole universe and the principle in an individual being are analogised to two birds sitting on the same tree. The two birds are said to be knit together with the bond of friendship (RV.i.164.20).

The expression: “bond of friendship” is poetical in nature and philosophically it connotes the identity or one-ness of the two. Neither the Jīva nor any other thing in the universe is separate from the Ultimate Essence (Brahman or Puruṣa). This idea of one-ness is conveyed in the saying of the seer! ‘To what is one, sages give many a tittle.’ They call him Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan (RV.i.164.46). For the same Reality appears diversely in different things, creatures and forces of the universe by its immenence in their physical and spiritual constituents, it is known by various names.

Where these fine birds [Suparṇa i.e. senses] hygiene ceaselessly their portion of life eternal and the sacred synods;
There is the universe’s mighty keeper, who, wise, hath entered into me the simple (RV.164.21).
Two birds (Suparṇas) with fair wings, knit with bonds of friendship, in the same sheltering tree have found a refuge.
One of the twains eats the sweet fig tree’s fruitage;
The other eating not regardeth only (RV.i.164.20)

Though the moving principle in the Jīva is basically this whole i.e. Anastha or Brahman, yet out of ignorance he mistakes himself as limited and bound by the confinements of the body. The confinement of the mind is responsible for his ignorance.

ĀTMAN AND BRAHMAN IN YAJURVEDA SAmHITĀ:

The succeeding period of the Vedās, marked by the age of the Yajurveda Sāmhitā keeps on the philosophical line of the earlier period by repeating the old mantras of the Rg Veda Sāmhitā and by using some new words. However, a small portion of the Sāmhitā is assigned for this purpose as a major part of it deals with the sacrificial ritualism which ultimately reaches the pinnacle of its glory in the Brāhmaṇas. The philosophers of the day, name the ultimate Reality as Prajāpati who is also the highest God of the religion of sacrifice of the time and who is thus identified with Yajña or sacrifice.

In brief, it can be said that Prajāpati or Yajña in this age, in the ultimate analysis, is the God of religion and Reality of Philosophy. Philosophically, Prajāpati is an incomprehensible Reality, the ultimate cause of every thing, but without any cause for Himself. He is stated as the basic unity of all the
diverse names and forms of the universe. He is the essence of the universe and of an individual being. The universe here also is conceived as an ideal creation of Prajāpati as it is said that he thinks and becomes the universe. Vena is another name applied for the Ultimate Reality in this period. He is stated to have become this universe by one quarter of his transcendental being, while the rest of his three quarters remain unmanifested. This expression is analogous to the concept of the transcendental and immanent aspect of Reality as envisaged in the Rg Veda Saṃhitā.

The Yajurveda Saṃhitā thus simplifies and retains the old concept of Reality and heralds the concept of Parabrahman and Aparabrahman, Unity of individual and Ultimate Principle, and the idealism of the Upaniṣads.

**ATMAN AND BRAHMAN IN ATHARVAVEDA**

**SAṃHITĀ:**

After the Yajurveda Saṃhitā, it is in the Atharva Veda Saṃhitā that we come across the concept of Ultimate Reality though the Sāma Veda which is believed to succeed the Yajurveda, could not pay attention to philosophical enquiry. The Vena, the Brahmaprakāśana or Nārāyaṇa, the skambha, the Ucchista Brahman, and other mystic hymns and the entire fifteenth Kānda known as Vrātya Kānda of the Atharva Veda retain the philosophical tendency and the spirit of the Rg Veda Saṃhitā. The contribution to the concept of Reality by the Atharva

1. Yajurveda Saṃhitā, 32. 1.
2. Ibid., 32. 11.
vedic seers seems to be substantial. From the point of view of spiritual knowledge, the Atharvaveda Samhitā is superior to the Rg veda Samhitā. It not only repeats some hymns of the previous age concerning Reality but it also contributes a lot of new material to the concept of Ultimate Reality and develops the thought further considerably. It takes a lead over the Rg veda and Yajurveda Samhitā in respect of elaboration of the concept and the relation of Brahman, universe and individual. It is here that the philosophical maxim: what ever is in an individual that very is in the universe is confirmed for the first time. However traces of such a statement cannot be ruled out in the Rg veda Samhitā. The transcendental and immanent aspects of the Ultimate Reality are also mentioned in the following statements: 'One quarter of Reality is manifested and rest of the three are in extreme secrecy (AV.ii.1.2). 'Only a portion of Skamha becomes this universe,' (AV,x. 7.8.9). 'One half of Prajāpati is manifested in the form of the Universe and the other half is in extreme secrecy; Vrātya first stirred Prajāpati who in turn generated every thing (AV.xv.1 2 ).

The concept of the individual (soul or Jīvā) as found in the Rg veda Samhitā is treated in the Atharvaveda Samhitā elaborately. The earth, air, water, the Sun, the Moon, the Fire etc., being created by Brahman are further stated to be responsible for different parts of an individual being (AV.xi.8.13, 28, 29, 31). Having created the body fully, the same Ultimate Reality is said to have entered it, the 'Pura,' and with respect to this body (Pura'), he came to be known as Purusā (AV.x.2.28.31.32.33). Not only in an individual being but also in everything in the universe, in what ever stirs, flies, stands, breathes, ex-
hales, winks; unwinks, there throbs one single non-dual Reality as their material and efficient cause. Ony in appearance and ignorance they are many but fundamentally they all are one. Ignorance persists till one has not realised the Reality. After realising the Reality, the Ātman (Brahman), One rises beyond the horizons of diversity and fear, as well as death, decay and blemishes connected with it. The realiser becomes realised (Reality) and restores to himself eternity, bliss and self-sufficiency which apparently were lost in the state of ignorance (AV.x.8.44). Incidentally it may be stated that this contributes to the concept of Mokṣa in the Upaniṣads.

ĀTMAN AND BRAHMAN IN THE BRĀHMAṆAS

The age of the Atharva veda Śaṁhitā is succeeded by the BrāhmaṆas. The general characteristic of the BrāhmaṆa period is sacrificial ritualism and in this respect it has an affinity with the Yajur veda Śaṁhitā. Here too Prajāpati is the supreme God of religion of sacrifice, and the metaphysical Reality of Philosophy. Yajña, the sacrifice is identified with Prajāpati. Sacrifice came to be considered as the visible form of the incorporeal Reality (S'atha Patha BrāhmaṆa.iv 3.43)

As in the Ṛg Veda, in the BrāhmaṆas too, various types of speculations about the Ultimate Reality of the universe are undertaken: Here too Prajāpati is considered as the Ultimate Reality of the universe He is the creator, the ruler and the preserver of the world, and is considered as the Lord of the Universe. The choice of Prajāpati as the symbol of the unity of the world of diversity is one of the striking proofs
of the great influence of the Rg Veda upon the period of the Brähmaṇas.¹

To start with, Prajāpati enjoys the status of Brahman in the Brähmaṇas. He is not only the efficient but also the material cause of the universe, and He is said to have entered into the form of the universe in the garb of name and form.² But the Brähmaṇa of the Atharva Veda i.e. Gopatha Brähmaṇa, replaces Prajāpati by Brahman or Atharvan.³ The Brahman of the Gopatha Brähmaṇa is said to have set things in order by entering them with form and name.⁴ Brahman is also called Svayambhū i.e. the one who exists by Himself and is the cause of the universe. Brahman who is considered as the representative of the universe is identified with Ātman, a tendency which is for the first time, is noticed in the Atharva Veda.⁵

It is worthy of note that there are certain contexts traceable in the Brähmaṇas where Prajāpati is not considered as the Ultimate Reality. It is said,⁶ that waters ‘apah’ are the first in order as Prajāpati’s predecessors. In another context, it is asserted; the first thing is not-being, then arises Prajāpati, and then the Brahman. Some times the first principle is

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2. Satapatha Brähmaṇa, xi 2.3.1-6, and also Taittiriya Brähmaṇa, ii.2.7.1.
3. Gopatha Brähmaṇa, i 1
4. Satapatha Brähmaṇa, i 4.58-11 and xi.2.3.1-6, Taittiriya Saṃhitā, ii.5.11.4, Pañchavimśa Brähmaṇa, vi.4-7; xi.1.3. Maitrāyaṇīya Saṃhitā, iv.6 4.
5. Atharvaveda, x.8.44.
6. Satapatha Brähmaṇa xi.1.6.1; xiv.8.6 1.
defined as neither being nor not-being. It is a spiritualistic transcendental entity which is the basic cause of the Universe.

But the most remarkable contribution to the concept of Ātman during the Brāhmaṇa period is made by the Śaṅkilya Vidyā. This Vidyā expounds that the ultimate essence of Prājapati of the Sacrifice and of the universe is mind from which developed speech, breath, the eye, the ear, the wind and the fire. The final Reality is summed up as the Self, made up of intelligence, with a body of spirit, a form of light, and of an ethereal nature which pervades the regions and upholds the Universe though itself devoid of speech and mental effects. Again it is said that the Puruṣa in the heart is as a grain of rice or granule of millet like smokeless Light, that it is greater than heaven, the atmosphere and the earth and all existing things.

The self of spirit is also the self of man. On passing away from life and attaining liberation, one attains that Reality or becomes one with that Reality. In this context the unity of the individual and of the Universe is realised as one. The highest Reality is described as qualified and also unqualified. It is transcendental as well as immanent. All these elements of Śaṅkilya Vidyā contributed a lot to the Upaniṣadic concept of Ātman in respect of its transcendental, immanent, spiritual and incorporeal aspects. It is here that the philosophy of the Brāhmaṇas merges into that of the Upaniṣads.

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1: Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, x.5.3.1; Taśtirītya Brāhmaṇa, ii.2.9, Kauśitaki Brāhmaṇa, xxvi.3, Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa, iii.
The above idea as conceived by the thinkers of the Brāhmaṇa marked a turning point in the history of Indian thought. Sacrificial ritualism slowly started losing importance. The allegorical and philosophical interpretations given to sacrifice in the Āraṇyakas, in course of time led the way from Karma-Kanda to Vāna-Kanda of the Upaniṣads. The philosophical study of Ātman, the Ultimate Reality, which hitherto was casual or a subordinate study, became the sole subject of meditation, so much so that the age itself came to be recognised as the age of the study of Ātman or the Upaniṣads.

The foregoing account of the philosophical thought of the pre-upaniṣadic age thus reveals that the thought of the Upaniṣads did not develop in isolation of the thought of the previous age, but that it inherited and developed further the tradition of thought descending successively from the Samhitās, the Brāhmaṇas and the Āraṇyakas.

Atman and Brāhmaṇ in the Upaniṣads:

In the early Upaniṣads, the word Prāṇa (breath) is used often to indicate the self. Later, Prāṇa came to be gradually dissociated from its physiological characteristics and spoken of as ‘Puruṣa’ or ‘Indra’ and even as Brahma. Since every organic function should have its own Prāṇa or vital power associated with it, in ‘Śāṅkilya Vītiyā’ it became possible to speak of Prāṇa as Puruṣa; and eventually as an inner Puruṣa who is the soul of Prāṇa. ( Antarātman Puruṣa-śāh... Prāṇasyatma).

Prāṇa occupies a prominent place in the majority of the Upaniṣadic texts. The Brhadāraṇyaka (1.5.) enumerates the fivefold division of self into Prāṇa-
Apāna-Vyāna-Udāna and Samāna, and states that the form and character of Prāṇa is inscrutable. The Chāndogya (iii.14) and Brhadāraṇyaka (vi.1.3.) introduce the famous fable of the dispute of the faculties and the pre-eminence of Prāṇa, and conclude with the statement: “Prāṇa indeed is all this that there is, no matter what”. (Chānd up. iii.15). Thus the Brhadāraṇyaka speaks of the formless creator as having entered the body right up to the tips of the nails and assumed there the name and function of Prāṇa. (i.4.7). The Aitareya designates Prāṇa as Ātman which enters the body (Puruṣa) by tearing out an aperture (Vidriti) in it. The same text also asserts that the essential characteristic of Ātman is Prajñāna or intelligence. Like the other texts which declare Prāṇa to be the source and support of everything, so also the Aitareya speaks of Prajñāna as the supporter of all things. Psychic life has its basis in Prajñāna (V.3) and is also explicitly stated in the Kaushitaki: “He, having first seized speech...smell... eye...ears...etc., by the intellect, becomes able to utter the names, smell the smells, see the forms, hear the sounds.” (iii.6).

From this standpoint, Prāṇa assumes a vital position in relation to several functions within the Puruṣa. The Chāndogya (iii.13) speaks of the five openings (Sushayah) of the heart each guarded over by each of the five Prāṇas while Brhadāraṇyaka (i.5.3) speaks of the Ātman as being constituted out of the triad of speech, mind and breath. The Taittiriya (ii.2) completes this downward career of Prāṇa by making it merely one of the Sheaths (Kos) of the Ātman. The Kena denies the Prāṇas the power to exercise any functions independently of the Ātman. Ātman is “the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind,
the speech of the speech and the Prāṇa of the Prāṇa”

In the same strain the Chhāṅgleya designates the Ātman as the impeller of the cart in the shape of the body. Prasṇa (i.ii.) also says that the Ātman is said even to produce the Prāṇa and its sub-divisions and control them. Ātman is said to go from one body to another accompanied by various Prāṇas, (CP. Bṛih. Up.i.5). In the Upanisads like Prasṇa (i.ii), Chāndogya; (iv), with their distinctive ‘Saṃvarga Vidyā’, or Kauśitaki (ii. iii), Prāṇa still continues to occupy the thoughts of the seers and is considered as a synonym of the Highest entity (Prāṇo Brahma or prāṇosmi Prajñātma). Thus it may be said that Prāṇa and Ātman, Life and consciousness represent two distinct stages in the evolution of the concept of the self.

According to the Upanisads, the word ‘Ātman’, which is derived from ‘an’ which means to breathe, is the breath of life. Further, the meaning of Ātman is extended to cover life, self or essential being of the individual. It is the principle of an individual’s life, the soul that pervades his breath (Prāṇa), his intellect (Prajñā) and yet transcends them all. Ātman remains when everything that is not self is eschewed. Our true self is a pure existence, self-awareness unconditioned by the forms of mind and intellect. When the self is free from all the outward events, there arises from inward depths an experience, secret and wonderful. Such an experience gives self-knowledge. Annapūrṇa Upanisad asks us to inquire into the nature of our inward being (1-40).

Who am I? How came this world? What is it?
How came death and birth? This, inquire
Within yourself; great will be the benefit
(You will derive from such inquiry)
Atman on the subjective side is conceived as the highest that man is while on the objective side, it is the underlying substratum of the universe. While on the objective side Atman is called Brahman, and described as the ground of all knowledge and bliss, on the subjective side it becomes the basis for all experience. A discussion of the concept of the self is undertaken in the Upaniṣads at two different levels: i) the self as Brahman on the level of intuition, and ii) the self as the reality of the universe at the conceptual plane.

Atman as the ultimate reality is expounded in the Chāndogya (vi) in the form of a dialogue between a father Uddalaka and his son Śvetaketu. The father undertakes to initiate his son into the knowledge of the Atman. “In the beginning there was an absolutely homogeneous Being ‘One without a second’, by sheer inner necessity it developed itself into a infinite multiplicity and pervaded that multiplicity. This is ‘atman’ in its actual manifestation, that which is the essence in every human being: Śvetaketu ‘That thou art’ (Tattvamasi)”. In another section of the same Upaniṣad the nature of an ultimate principle is sought to be enunciated through successive stages of the development of the concept of the Atman. “The self which is free from evil, free from old age, free from grief, free from hunger, free from thirst, whose desire is truth, whose intention is the real-it should be sought after, it should be desired to be comprehended. He obtains all worlds and all desires who, having discovered that self, knows it” (viii.vii.xii)

The Brhadāraṇyaka states the nature of the Atman in the same vein: “This, verily, is his form which is free from craving, free from evils, free from
fear. That verily is his form in which his desire is fulfilled, in which the self is his desire, in which he is without desire and free from sorrow.” (iv.iii.2.1).

The most remarkable feature on the basis of which the Upaniṣads can claim distinctness over the Vedic perspective consists in their identification of Ātman with Brahman. It is in this respect that the Ātman comes to be declared as incomprehensible.¹

**BRAHMAN:**

The earliest philosophic view with regard to the supreme Being appears to have arisen out of an attempt to answer the question; whence this universe? Consequently the Vedās and Upaniṣads abound” in innumerable creation theories each seeking to trace the universe to some first cause and describing how and why the universe is created from the first cause.

**COSMOGONY OF THE EARLIER VEDA:**

We may now briefly refer to some of the Vedic and Upaniṣadic accounts of the creation of the world, so that we may have a comprehensive understanding of the Absolute. The earliest awakenings of philosophy inevitably take to cosmology. It is interesting to note how a gradual change has taken place with regard to the starting point of the creative process simultaneous with the progressive systematisation of the Upaniṣadic cosmologies. The early Vedic speculation rarely rose beyond the physical principles like water, air, fire as the primordial stuff of the universe. These principles did not satisfy the critical

¹. Brhadāranyaka, iv.iv.22.
mind as they lacked self-initiated movement which is the first requirement of the First Cause. Accordingly we have either to put a divinity into the physical element (adhiṣṭānadevata) or else make the physical element merely the first product of a power which is superior to it. It was the ritualistic and mythological figure of Prajāpati the Lord of Creation, that managed to hold ground during the major part of the Brāhmaṇa period as the creator. Prajāpati was brought in as the first principle in the texts of the Brahmanic group like Ait-Āraṇyaka (11.i.3) or Chāndogya (ii.23.2) but thereafter Prajāpati was supplanted by Ātman (Ait Āraṇyaka 4.1-3; Brhi. Up.i. 4.1-6) or Brahman (ii.1-5 mentioned in Taittiriya), Ātman or Puruṣa (Mundaka i.1 7-8) or Sat towards the end of the Brāhmaṇa period (Chānd.Up.vi 2-3).

During the Upaniṣadic period we find the preeminence of Prajāpati fast diminishing. From Prajāpati, we pass on to Brahman. Apart from the question of the origin of the concept of Brahman, it is interesting to note how Brahman in the Rg Veda understood to mean Prayer came to denote the Absolute in the Upaniṣads.

COSMOGONIC SPECULATIONS OF THE UPANIṢAD:

Some of the cosmogonic speculations of the Upaniṣads are quite naive. As in the Vedās, water, air, fire, space and breath were regarded in turn as the source of the world. In the Taittiriya, we read that in the beginning this world was Non-Being out of which Being was born (11.7). In the Chāndogya we are told that this Being which came out of Non-Being became the egg of the universe (iii.19 1-3).
But in the same Upaniṣad, (vi.2.1-4) the question is raised as to how Being could come out of Non-Being, and it is held that everything was Being at the beginning. In the Nāṣadiyaśūkta of the Rg Veda, it is said that there was neither Being nor Non-Being at the beginning (RV.x.129). According to all these views, the source of the world is some impersonalistic principle, whether physical or abstract.

The source of the world has been understood in personal terms also by the Upaniṣads. In the Brhadāranyaka, the Ātman is said to be at the beginning of the world, and to have divided itself into man and woman (i,4,1-4). In the Aitareya, the Ātman is said to have first created the world-person, and then through him the whole universe (i,1-3). In the Taittiriya, the world is regarded as the emanation from the Ātman (11.1). In the Svetāṣṭarā,Īsvara or God is said to be the creator of the world (iii.2). In the emanation theory we have roots of the later Pariṇāmavāda, that the world is due to the transformation of Brahman. The Chāndogya, points out that Brahman is the Reality and everything else is mere name and form (11.4, 4-9). The Brhadāraṇyaka declares that every thing in this world is Ātman (ii. 4,13-14) and that Ātman contains no duality between subject and object, the perceiver and the perceived. The Māṇḍūkya (6,7,9) tells us that the Ātman is non-dual and is beyond the reach of our thought and senses. The main trend of the Upaniṣads is to regard the reality as the self or as residing in the self.

There are some passages in the Upaniṣads which speak of the identity of the Jiva and Brahman. The Mahāvākyas like "That thou art?" (Tatt tvaṃ asi) Chāndogya vi,8,7), and "I am Brahman" (āham brāhma-
The Svēta-vaṭāra compares the finite self to a swan going round and round on a wheel, which becomes immortal when it identifies itself with Brahman (1.6). The Mundaka tells us that, just as a spider produces a web out of itself, the Brahman produces the world (1.1,7). The same Upanisad gives other illustrative comparisons. It says that, just as spark comes out of fire, so does the world out of Brahman, and as the rivers flow into, and disappears in the sea, the knower of Brahman merges in Brahman (11 1.1).

**BRAHMAN AS IMMANENT AND TRANSCENDENT:**

The Chāndogya (vi,2-6) tries to show that the portions of the three cosmic principles—viz. Tejas, Ap, Ānja—permeate all grades of existence. It shows how these three principles also can be traced back (vi, 2-3-4, vi,8-4 6) to the First Principle which is ‘sat’ or existence. This passage illustrates immanence of the Absolute in the world.

Several other examples are given to illustrate the immanence of Brahman. The illustration of the seed kin and banana tree is given (Chānd. vi,12). Here we cannot watch the seed grow and may not tell what other factors besides the seed kin have contributed to the growth of the big. banana. The same is not the case of salt in water. (Chānd.vi.13). It is observed the little lump of salt disappears in water, and can be seen to be immanent in every

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1. Tejas signifies energetic principle (Fire).
2. Ap for all liquid existence (Water)
3. Ānja for all solid-existence earth or food.
drop of it. If water is kept aside for a long time without disturbance, the salt reappears as a sediment at the bottom. The next illustration given in the same Upanishad is that of the blind folded man from Gandhāra. He has an idea of his own Country, but he cannot express it. Every bit of landscape he rejects as non-Gandhāra brings out by implication the positive as well as the negative aspects of his idea of his country. This illustration is a further advance on the previous one, as the immanent entity is not a concrete physical entity, but an abstract and ideal one.

The following texts may be cited as further proof of the doctrine of immanence:

i) “I remain in the world five fold, ten fold, one fold, thousand fold, and not even one fold, whose knows that I have pervaded this, he attains it, were they to know it otherwise, they would become otherwise” (Bhāṣhkala Up.19). (ii) “Brahman, the immortal, is this that is in front, Brahman, this behind us, Brahman also this that is to the South and to the North, below and above it is Brahman that has spread forth: Brahman, the highest is all this that there is” [Mundaka, 11.ii.11]. [iii] “The Brahmahood and Kshatriyahood, these worlds, these gods, these beings, all this that there is, is the Atman [Bṛhadāraṇyaka, ii 4-6].

The Upanisadic texts like “Vaisvanara vidya”1 describe the inner and outer, terrestrial and celestial aspects of reality known as Brahman or Atman. These texts do not merely say that the Reality is just the sum total of these aspects, but assert that

1. Chāndogya, V.11 ff, SB, x.6.1., Bṛhadāraṇyaka ii.i, Kaushitaki iv etc.
there is something over and above them all [abhī- or ativimāna]. This view is more or less the final conclusion reached whenever the inquiry after the Absolute starts from an investigation into the phenomenal world. In the same way the author of the Taittirīya tells us that "at the time of creation, God entered everything, that he created and after having entered, became both the ‘this’ and the ‘that’, the defined and the undefined, the supported and the supportless, knowledge and not knowledge. Reality and un-reality - yea, he became the Reality, it is for this reason that all this is verily called Real". [1.6]. This passage also declares the immanence of God in all things, and tells us that what thus comes to exist is the Real. The whole universe, therefore, which is God’s handiwork, as well as God’s garment, is filled and inspired by God, who is the inner controller and soul-

The Upaniṣads also enquire into the question of immanence from the point of view of transcendence of the Absolute. On such occasions it is natural and inevitable that they stress that the Absolute which is immanent is also transcendent at the same time. The following passages from some of the Upaniṣads substantiate this point. The Svetāsvatara says explicitly: “That illusive power (māyā) one should understand as the source (of the universe), where the great Lord is the controller of that power; this whole world is pervaded by what are merely the portions of Him”. In this passage ‘portions of Him’ suggests transcendence [iv.10]. In the Chāndogya is the well known text, “In the beginning, my dear, this world was just Being [Sat], one only without a second’. It be thought itself: ‘Would that I were many’. Let me procreate myself”, [vi,2-1]. In the
Aitareya, we read "In the beginning, Ātman (self, soul), Verily, one only, was here, no other winking thing whatever. He bethought Himself: 'Let me now create the worlds'" (i.1.3). In the Brhadāraṇyaka, the ultimate principle of Brahma is stated to have been bored with his loneliness; and by way of overcoming boredom, He devided Himself into many things and beings of the world. For it is declared that "no one with a self-contained, self-centred or lonely existence is capable of enjoying himself" (1.4-3). The same Upaniṣad also asserts that "He who dwells in beings, who is within all beings, whom no beings know, whose body is all beings, who controls all beings from within, He is thy self, the inner controller, the immortal" (iii.7.15). The Brhadāraṇyaka tells us that God is the Soul of souls. "Just as the spokes of a wheel are held together in the navel and felly of a wheel similarly in this supreme souls are centred all these beings all gods all the individual souls—the Supreme Soul is the king of them all" (ii,5-15). In another passage the same Upaniṣad tells us by a change of metaphor, that "Just as little sparks may come out of fire, even so from the supreme soul of all Prāṇas, all worlds, all gods, all beings come out. This is to be mystically expressed by saying the Supreme Soul is the verity of verities, the Prāṇas, as well as other things mentioned along with them, are verities, of whom the universal soul is the Supreme Verity (11.1.20).

It is observed that while the Upaniṣadic philosophers are all pre-occupied with the idea of the Absolute, some emphasise its immanence, some others its transcendence, while yet others stress both.

SAGUNA AND NIRGUNA BRAHMAN;

The Upaniṣads present differing conceptions of
the Absolute or Brahman. The references to them are scattered over the different texts early and late and they have to be pieced together to formulate consistently satisfying concepts. The chronology of the Upanisads is of little help in this regard. An early Upanisad such as Brhadāraṇyaka and later Māndūkya tend to be idealistic and nirguṇa. For example the purely nirguṇa description of Brahman is epitomised in the ‘Neti-Neti’, ‘Not this not this’ formula of Yājñavalkya. The most developed expression of the concept is given in Māndūkya. It makes a distinction between the conception of God and the Absolute and regards the conception of the Absolute as philosophically even a higher one. “The Absolute is neither inwardly cognisant, nor outwardly cognisant, nor on both sides together. It is not a cognition mass. It is neither knower nor not knower. It is unseen, unpriacticable, ungraspable indefinable, unthinkable, unpointable. It is the essence of the essence of the experience of Self-identity; in it all this universe ceases. It is tranquil, blessed, and without a second”.” (Māndūkya 6.7). It is true that there are a few Saguna characterisations of the Absolute in the above passage but the general description of it is couched in nirguṇa terms. However much Upaniṣadic philosophy may describe the Absolute as nirguṇa, the very negation becomes an affirmation, and it cannot rid itself entirely of some Saguna characterisation.

The Brhadāraṇyaka describes the Absolute as “the not-gross and the not-subtle, the not-short and the not-long, the not-glowing and the not-shadowy, the not-dark, the not-attached, the flavourless the smell-less, the eyeless, ear-less, the speech-less, the
mind-less, the prana-less, the mouth-less, the uninternal, the unexternal, consuming nothing, and consumed by none.” (iii.8.8.). This is pure nirguna characterisation of the Absolute.

The Katha mixes up nirguna and saguna aspects of the Absolute as does the Mundaka. The Katha tells us that the Brahman is “Soundless, touchless. formless, tasteless, imperishable. smellless. beginning less. endless, greater than the great and eternal, garnering which one is able to escape the clutches of death” (i.3.15). The Mundaka tells us that the Brahman is “unpointable, ungraspable, without family and without caste. with eye and without ear, without hands and without feet, eternal, all pervading, omnipresent. extremely subtle, imperishable, and the source of all beings” (i.1.6).

The typical formulation of the nirguna characterisation is in the famous formula “Neti Neti”, which is itself interpreted in nirguna as well as saguna signification. In most of the passages from the Brhadaranyaka in which this famous expression occurs, the intended meaning is that Brahman is characterless and indefinable. “The Atman is ungraspable for he cannot be grasped; he is indestructible for he cannot be destroyed; he is unattached because he clings to nothing; he is unbound, he does not wriggle, he is not injured…know this to be the secret of immortality, said Yajnavalkya to Maitreyi, and forthwith he entered the order of Samnyasa.” (Brhadaranyaka, iv.5.15; cf. also Brhadaranyaka, iii. 9.26; iv.2.4; iv.4.22).

There is however one passage in the Brhadaranyaka where an attempt is made to give a saguna connotation to the expression “Neti Neti”: “It is for this
reason that they describe the Absolute as "Neti Neti"—there is nothing which exists outside it the Brahm being all inclusive." (ii.3.6). The inclusive character of the Absolute leads to a transcendental view in a latter passage of the same Upaniṣad where the Absolute is described as full both "Of light and not-light, of desire and not-desire, of anger and not anger, of law and not-law, having verily filled all, both the near and the far off, the this and the that, the subject and the object" (iv.4.5).

We thus see how the Upaniṣadic characterisation of the Absolute passes from the negative stage of 'neither--nor', through the affirmative stage of 'inclusiveness', to the transcendental state of 'either or'.

There are Upaniṣads such as Svetāsvatara which conceive the Absolute or isvara as positive and saguna. This view of the Absolute finally paved the way for theism. Even an early Upaniṣad like the Kauśitaki emphatically asserts the absolute power of God and the relative freedom of Jiva or man who is dependent on Him for everything (ii.14.15).

There is no warrant for the Common place view that the early Upaniṣads differ from the latter like Mundyaka, Kaṭha and Svetāsvatara and so on, the Indian mind steadily advanced to thinking from monism to theism. But even in the early Upaniṣads there is evidence, though scattered, for the view that the ultimate Reality as a 'Personal God' and not as mere impersonal consciousness. It is the singular distinction of the long line of thinkers of Viṣṇu-advaita like Yāmuna, Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desika and others to have established that the Upaniṣads present the concept of 'personal God'. Rāmānuja
has called attention to a number of Upanisadic texts that describe Brahman as possessing many attributes. Thus we have the declaration that one who knows the bliss of Brahman has nothing to fear (Taittiriya, 11.9). This indicates Brahman has substance and the relationship of the finite Self with Brahman is exemplified in the subject-object relationship.

It is therefore clear that the concept of 'personal God' as the self-revealing and self-determining Supreme, self-conscious mind or consciousness is contained in the spirit of the Upanisads. The Upanisads teach us that a personal experience of Brahman alone can redeem us from all sorrows. This cannot be true of the type of knowledge that is completely Abstract and impersonal.

The Upanisadic texts relating to the Saguna and Nirguna aspects of Brahman are interpreted differently by the three systems of Vedanta each according to its presuppositions. The Visishtadvaitic point of view will be dealt with in detail later in the course of this study.

THE RELATION BETWEEN THE SELF (JIVA) AND THE ABSOLUTE (BRAHMAN):

On this issue too, the Upanisadic texts seem to present different points of view. The three systems of Vedanta offer different interpretations of these texts. Apparently, the Upanisads seem to maintain a difference between Brahman and the Jiva. The Mundaka says that Brahman and the Jiva are said to be an eternal pair of birds occupying the same tree, of the two birds one eats the tasteful fruits while the other merely looks on, without eating anything (iii.
In other words the one is the enjoyer the other is the seer. Now this enjoyment refers to the fruits of actions, and it is the Jīva that enjoys them. Thus it becomes bound by the actions and comes under bondage. The Kaṭha says "There are two that drink of righteousness (rita) in the world of good deeds, both are entered into the secret place (of the heart) and in the highest upper sphere. Brahma knowers speak of them as light and shade" (iii.1). The reason for distinguishing them as two is that while both "Drink of righteousness" one is characterised by evil and therefore said to be shade and the other which remains untouched is light. Brahman is powerful and great, the Jīva is sunken, grieving impotent and deluded.

In the Maitrī Upaniṣad, we find this view is in the process of making. The evil qualities of the embodied Self are set sharply in the foreground. And starting with the assumption that the Brahman is the Self in the body, this Upaniṣad progressively shows that Brahman cannot be identical with the embodied self. Thus it starts by describing the body as "ill smelling, unsubstantial, a conglomerate of bone, skin, muscle, marrow, flesh, semen, blood, mucus, tears, rheum, faeces, urine, wind bile and phlegm... afflicted with desire, anger, covetousness, delusion, fear, despondency, envy, separation from the desirable, union with the undesirable, hunger, thirst, senility, death, disease, sorrow and the like" (Maitrī Upaniṣad, 1.3). And it repeatedly asks itself "who is the driver?" (11.3). It begins by accepting the view that Brahman is the Self, but is careful to add that if He is the Self, He does not share the evil nature of the body. "He assuredly indeed...is reputed as standing aloof, like those among qualities, Obstain
from intercourse with them. He verify is pure, clean, eternal unborn, independent. He abides in his own greatness, by Him this body is set up in possession of intelligence, or in other words, this very one, verily, is its drive."

(II 4).

The Svetâvatara seems to reflect the furthest development of the Upaniṣadic theory that the embodied Self is different from Brahman like the Muṇḍaka, for a while, it regards the finite Self and the universal Self as two (iv 7). It postulates the theory that Brahman, the Ultimate, is a many-in-one. "This has been sung as Supreme Brahman. In it there is a triad". "There are two unborn ones; the knowing (Lord), the unknowing (individual Self), the omnipotent and the impotent" (i.7,9 and 12). In this way the finite Self which was distinguished by some philosophers from the universal Self would seem to be regarded as an eternally distinct element held within the unity of the supreme being.

A point which must be noted here is the tendency to describe Brahman as having glorious qualities as compared with the imperfections of the Jīva. Brahman by contrast appears as the all powerful and all glorious. The greatness of the Supreme Being, His transcendental powers and His perfections are described more in the later Upaniṣads than in the earlier ones. What is more significant is the term Iś'ha (Lord) together with its compounds comes to be applied to the Supreme Being only in the Svetâvatara, while with one or two exceptions it is not to be found in the early Upaniṣads and occur only in scattered references in the other Upaniṣads (Kathā vi.5,12,13; Īśa I; Muṇḍaka iii. 1.2.3; Praśna ii. 9 and 11). The reason for this is that the ‘Lord’ implies among other things
the distinctions of the Supreme Being from the Jiva. This is clearly conceived in the Svetāsvatara. The term is essentially religious in significance and points to the presence of a religious element in the Svetāsvatara. According to this Brahman pervades it from without. This view is maintained that though Brahman exists in the individual, He does not share in the latter's imperfections. He exists merely as a witness and is not responsible for the deeds which bind the individual to Sāṃśāra.

However some of the Upaniṣadic thinkers tend to identify Brahman completely with the Jiva, although many of them assume that the migrating soul is not the same as Brahman in all respects but has still to become Brahman. The identity of the Jiva with Brahman is expressed by the text 'That thou Art' (Tattvamasi) in the Chāndogya (vi.8.16) and also by the “in truth this is that” (etadvaita) Brhadārānyaka v.4). In the Svetāsvatara also it is said that by union with Brahman, by the knowledge of identity with Him, one attains in the end, cessation of the illusion of phenomena (1.10). The Katha speaks of Brahman as the light and the Jiva as the shadow. Explaining the term shadow some Upaniṣadic interpreters describe the Jiva as the projected image of Brahman. There is a lot of discussion and divergent opinions regarding the above view are expressed. Prasna affirms identity of the Jiva with Brahman. “As all these flowing rivers move towards the ocean, or reaching the ocean lose themselves, removed are their name and form and they are called the ocean itself, similarly the sixteen parts of this realiser or knower, on getting the Purusa itself” (vi. 5). The words ‘Astam gacchanti’, which mean literally sets or gets lost may cause alarm those who think
that the loss of individuality is a loss of all consciousness and essence. Here one loses finitude to find the infinite. So it is said in Samkara Bhāṣya in Chandogya: “Casting off the false or spurious individuality and on attaining the supreme light, as endowed with his own true form, he becomes the supreme puruṣa” (viii.12-8). It is the finite Self that is concerned with the very idea of its merging in the infinite Self. But the moment he sheds his individuality he becomes identified with the Supreme Reality surpassing one’s comprehension.

The Upaniṣads do not make the Absolute as a mere unity of persons but keep the absolute unity of the Absolute or Brahman intact and yet allow full scope and value to the individuals in the sphere of existence. The finite Self is not a fiction empirically, but a reality. He cannot be called Jiva on attaining the supreme, but attains a fulness casting the fetters of the finitude. Hence it is not a loss but a regaining of the true nature of the Jiva.

From the above discussion it is clear that there are number of passages in the Upaniṣads to support the idea of one Reality which is termed variously such as Ātman, Brahman, Puruṣa and the like, which is called Absolute. The Upaniṣads accept one Absolute, namely Brahman, is beyond doubt. But whether the Absolute is Saguṇa or Nirguṇa, is with internal distinctions or without internal distinctions, is an issue over which there are sharp difference of opinion and disagreement.

**BRAHMAN AND ĀTMAN IN THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ:**

'We have seen how the Puremonism of the early
Upaniṣadic thinkers, according to whom the supreme Being is an unknown all-pervading conscious principle, gradually developed, till in the later Upaniṣads notably the Svetāsvatara, the Supreme Being came to be thought of in moral and religious terms. In the later philosophical classic, the Bhagavad Gītā, this process of clothing the Absolute in religious terms begun in the Upaniṣads, becomes not only explicit but predominant, although the Absolute or Supreme Being continues to be referred to as imperishable, the un-minifest, Ātman or Puruṣa, terms made familiar by the Upaniṣads.

The Bhagavad Gītā accepts the Sāmkhya doctrine that all the manifestations proceed from the unmanifested state (viii. 8) The Gītā says “All this world is pervaded by Me in my unmanifested form; all beings exist in Me; but I do not dwell in them” (ix.4). “Animating my Prakriti I project again and again this whole mutable of beings, helpless under the sway of Prakriti” (ix-8, x.20) and finally “At the end of a Kalpa, all beings go back to my Prakriti; at the beginning of another Kalpa, I send them forth again.” (ix.7). The same idea is expressed in another form in Chapter VIII where Prakriti is called ‘Ksheṭra’ i.e., ‘field’ or ‘body’ and the self is called ‘Ksheṭrajñā’ i.e., the knower of the body.

It is to be noted that although both Prakriti and Puruṣa are stated as beginningless and that all ‘guṇas’ are said to be born of Prakriti (in Chapter xiii.19), it does not mean that they are independent of each other because it is stated in Chapter xiii.21 that Puruṣa associated with Prakriti experiences the guṇas born of Prakriti. This experience of the self is that of a detached observer, as it is described in the
next verse...". "And the supreme Purusa in the body is called the looker-on, the Permitter, the supporter, the experiencer. the Great Lord and the Highest Self" (xiii.22) and also "As the one Sun illumines all the world, so does He who abides in the Kshetra illumines the whole Kshetra" (xiii.33). However, "Being without beginning and devoid of gunas, this supreme self, immutable though existing in the body neither acts nor is affected". It is never tainted by the activities of the body.

It is difficult to understand how the Jiva which experiences and enjoys in the body cannot be affected by them. The Gitâ explains that all beings exist in the Cosmic Soul and although it brings forth and supports beings, it does not dwell in them ix.4,5; vii.12; x.42). This may sound ambiguous but from the general tenor of the Gitâ and the Upaniṣads, it appears to refer to the transcendental nature of the Self. If the Universal self is merely immanent in the Universe i.e., exists in the Universe and not outside it, it may be said that there is a real identification between the body and the self, but it is of the very essence of Vedântic thought that the Cosmos is not to be identified with Brahman. It is only a manifestation of Brahman which really transcends the Universe.

The Gitâ advocates that Jivas are part of God (xv.7). The Jivas are part of Paramâtman just as light of luminous objects, such as the Sun, fire etc., are parts of their Source. Just as cowness, horseness, whiteness, blackness are the attributes or adjuncts of the cow, the horse and of coloured object and are parts there of, and just as the body of a man, a god, or a beast is a part of the Soul embodied therein, in
the same way, the Jivas are parts of Paramātman. In the Gītā the word ‘āṁśa’ is used which means a part of a whole. The attribute or adjunct of an object is its part.

Though the Gītā says that Prakriti and the Jivas are eternal and beginningless (xiii.9), it asserts that God, Jivas and Prakriti are distinct and separate entities. God is spotless, pure omniscient, all-pervading, and the Jiva is opposed to God in nature and characteristics. Just as light is different from the source of light like the Sun etc., so also God who is the āṁśa (whole) is different from his part (āṁśa) namely the Jiva.

According to the Gītā there are two persons (Puruṣas) in the world. the perishable (Kṣaṇa) and the imperishable (akṣara). But there is another. the Highest Person, who is called the Supreme Self, Paramātman. “Because I transcend the perishable and am also higher than the imperishable, therefore am I known in the world and in the Veda as the supreme—person.” (xv.16-18). Kṣaṇa stands for the embodied soul whereas the liberated soul is Akṣara. The Gītā makes a distinction between Kṣara and Aksara Purusas (xv.7). Incidentally, it may be mentioned that Rāmānuja in his Bhāṣya on the Gītā regards Kṣarapurusa as the totality of bound finite spirits connected with unconscious matter, or embodied in organisms; and the Aksarapurusa as the totality of disembodied liberated purusas dissociated unconscious matter.¹

Gītā advocates theism and affirms the reality of the immanent and transcendent God. God is the

¹ Rāmānuja’s Bhāṣya on Bhāgavad Gītā, xv 16.
creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. Gitā enunciates the reality of Prakriti and its effects, the world, and the reality of Jivas, His eternal parts. He is the first cause and the ultimate ground of the Universe. He is the infinite seed of all creatures and their Lord and moral governor (ix.27).

Gitā does not teach Pantheism. It teaches Panentheism. God is not the world and the world is not God. The world and all the creatures exist in Him. He pervades them all as their inner guide. He is the eternal and imperishable essence in all finite things and spirits as a thread running through beads. He is the life of all the creatures and their seed, but is not identical with them. He pervades the universe by his unmanifest form and invisible spirit in the visible world (viii.20; vii.9-10; ix 4).

Gitā also lends support to the doctrine of immanence. It is stated that God is the indwelling spirit in all creatures. He is the origin, middle and end. He is best of all things, beings and qualities and is the source of good and evil. (xi.38, vi.31, ix.6, viii 22).

God is not affected by the imperfections of the empirical objects and Jivas. He transcends the empirical objects and Jivas entangled in them (ix.5-7). He is incorporeal, partless, undivided infinite spirit. The entire universe is a manifestation of a single fraction of Him and He transcends it to the infinite beyond and exists in perfection. He is immanent and transcendent (x.20; ix. 38 & 41; vii.7; xv.1-3; xiii.15).

Gitā regards Prakriti or māyā as the power ofĪśvara. Māyā is a divine power inseparable from
God. Prakriti supervised by God produces all animate and inanimate creatures. They are reabsorbed in dissolution. Prakriti is un-manifest (avvākta).

All manifest objects, animate and inanimate, spring from the un-manifest Prakriti and ultimately dissolve in it. Prakriti is controlled by God who creates all the creatures through her. It is real (vii.14; ix.7-8, 10).

Purusa, is the enjoyer of pleasure and pain, and it is the experiencer of all Physical and Psychological objects. It enjoys sattva, rajas and tamas, the products of Prakriti through the Psychological organism. Its attachment to gunas binds it to Samsāra and makes it transmigrate from one body to another. This is the Jiva or individual self. But there is the supreme self (Paramatman) immanent in it. It is the spectator, permitter, sustainer and witness of all actions of the individual self. Thus the individual self is distinguished from the supreme self in Bhagavad Gītā (xiii.19-22).

Gītā affirms that one and the many are real. The Jivas are real. They are unborn and eternal. God and the Jivas are eternally with each other. According to Gītā the released Jiva enters into the being of God (iv.10; xiv.19; xviii.55), the eternal and immutable abode (viii.28; xv.5; xvii.56, 62) which is beyond death (ii.15; xiii 12, 25; xiv.18, 27). Though the Jiva thus enters into God, it does not merge in Him losing its individuality completely; for it abides in Him (v.19-20) enjoying contact with him (vi.28) filled with tranquility (ii.72; iv.39; v.12, 24-26; vi.15) having attained the highest bliss (v.2; vi.28), the highest perfection (vii.3; xiv.1) and a natural similarity (Sāmarthya) to that of God (xiv.2). At creation it does not come into birth nor at dissolution is it des-
troyed (xiv.2). In this way the Gítá teaches that in release the Jiva becomes closely united with God enjoying communion with Him and sharing His peace, bliss and perfection.

**ATMAN AND BRAHMAN IN VIŚU PurāṇA:**

Saṃkara drew upon the Vedás, Upaniṣads and on the Gítá for his interpretations of Atman and Brahman. But Rāmānuja, following the tradition of Draimāda and Taṅka, relied for his account of Atman and Brahman not only upon these śrutis but also on smritis such as the Purāṇas, the Viśnu-Puśraṇa in particular, the Pāñcarātra, and the Tamil hymns of the Álavārs. And hence the need to give a brief account of Atman and Brahman as found in these texts.

To begin with the Viśu Purāṇa, Rāmānuja in his Śrī Bhāṣya abundantly quotes from the Viśu Purāṇa. According to this Purāṇa, the Highest Reality is Vasudeva who is the possessor of innumerable auspicious qualities and who is also free from all impurities (vi.5, 72-74). It is thus theistic in character and recognises distinctions between matter, Jiva and God.

Viśu Purāṇa upholds the view that God is the omniscient and omnipotent, creator, who is independent, supportless, immutable, who is endowed with knowledge, strength, supernatural powers and who is immaculate, eternal and devoid of increase, decrease, origin and passions (vi.1, 47-49). God is endowed with all auspicious qualities, splendour, strength, supernatural powers, knowledge, virility etc. He maintains all created things and beings with
a fraction of His power, and He is higher than the Supreme rulers of the world, and devoid of afflictions, nescience, egoism, love, hate and fear of death (vi.5,84-85). God is of the nature of knowledge. His form is infinite and spiritual and transcends all physical things and events. All physical things are inseparable from Him and He transcends Prakriti and its modifications. He is not veiled by any cover and is the Supreme Soul of the world. He is the Lord of the individual creations and of the collections of them. He has an unmanifest form. He is the ruler of all. all seeing, all knowing, all powerful, pure, stainless, supreme and uniform (vi.5, 86-87) Supreme Brahman, Vāsudeva is ‘Bhagavat’ and no other, (vi.5, 72-75, 79-76; ii.12, 42-44). Vāsudeva is the Supreme Lord and there is no being other than Him, and the world is founded and pervaded by Him. Unmanifest Prakriti and manifest world are His body (Vaisnava Kāya). All created things and beings are His body (tanu) (i 22,56).

According to Viśnur Purāṇa God has three powers: the Supreme Power (Parā-Sakti), the power of individual souls or Jivas (Ksetrajña-Sakti), or power of nescience (avidyā); and the unconscious power (Karma Sakti). Viśnur Purāṇa says that the entire world is the expression of Karma Sakti of God. His Ksetrajña Sakti resides in all the embodied Jivas veiled by nescience (avidyā) and endowed with different degree of consciousness. All Jivas are pervaded by His Ksetrajña Sakti and suffer the misery of transmigration, as it conceals their intrinsic knowledge (vi 7,61-63; i.22,55). Both Prakriti and Jivas are veiled by God’s essential power (Viśnur Sakti), which separates them and causes them to subsist in Him. They are sustained by His essential power.
All His powers subsist in Him (ii.9, 29-31). God has two forms, corporeal (mūrta) and incorporeal (amūrta), mutable (Kṣara) and immutable [aKṣara], God is immutable and the world is mutable and it is the expression of a part of His power (i.22, 53-55).

Different embodied Jivas are endowed with different merits and demerits God creates the world of diverse objects for the Jiva’s enjoyments and sufferings according to their merits and demerits (v.p.I, 4,51-52). The Jivas subsist in Him and are controlled by Him and are not real apart from Him. The world springs out of God or His Karma Sakti, exists in Him and is controlled by Him. God is of the nature of knowledge also. The Jivas are real and eternal while the world is only real but non-eternal.

Parāśara, the author of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa says, “the whole cosmos is the body of Hari or Viṣṇu” (i.22-38). He also explains the part-whole relationship that exists between the cosmos and Brahman in terms of the following illustrations: Light and a luminous object, Power and a powerful object and Body and Soul. “Just as the light or a luminous object fixed to a place like fire, spreads through space, the power of Brahman spreads all over the cosmos. The objects of creation being animated and pervaded by the Supreme Soul constitute His body” (i.22).

Viṣṇu Purāṇa further makes it clear that the Jiva can never become God. A liberated Jiva can acquire some qualities of divinity or similarity to Him; but can never be identified with Him. God restores the Jiva to its pristine purity by his power, even as fire purifies a piece of iron, but does not make it identical with Him (ii.14.27 & 30).
The Agamas claim to be established by a line of great saints of integral Theism (Pancaratra) of which Sri Krishna is said to be one of the founders. In other words Lord Visnu or Narayana Himself is said to be the promulgator of the Pancaratra. It is said to have been spoken by Narayana himself. Yaman in his Agama Pramanya says that the Pancaratra is an authority for Vijnana Yoga, and states that its validity is assumed as it claims its origin in Vasudeva or Narayana. Yaman in his Agama Pramanya says that the Pancaratra is an authority for Vijnana Yoga, and states that its validity is assumed as it claims its origin in Vasudeva or Narayana. The Divine Lord discussed in the Upanisads and the Puranas. Ramana also accepts the Pancaratra as authority and in his commentary on the Brahma Sutras, he quotes from the Sattvata Samhita, Paushkar Samhita and Parama Samhita. Vedanta Desika in his Pancaratra Raksha reiterates the position of Yaman that Pancaratra accepts Visnu or Vasudeva or Narayana as the Highest Reality. He is self-existent, self-caused, omniscient, all-perceiving and the sole supporter of the universe. All things are included in Him and He is not limited by Space and Time.

According to the Pancaratra, the Jiva is pure-consciousness tinged with avidya or guṇas. It is associated with merits and demerits of past actions (karma). Association of the Jiva with adra is beginningless and is brought about by God. The merits and demerits are due to avidya. When the Jiva is dissociated from the merits and their cause namely avidya, it is merged in God. The liberated Jiva abides in God in a state of identity in difference. Bondage

is due to disfavour of God, and liberation is due to His favour. God associates the Jiva with avidya and dissociates it from them. He removes the fetters of the Jiva through His grace. The Jiva is freed from merits and demerits through the destruction of Karma and becomes one with God. Thus the released Jiva realises its innate consciousness.

The emanations (Vyūhas) of God mentioned in Sri Bhāṣya by Rāmānuja have been worked out in detail in the Pañcarātra which is central to Viśistādvaita. Four Vyūhas emanate from Viśnu: Vasudeva, Samkarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Vasudeva possesses all the six attributes namely, Knowledge (Jñāna), Strength (Bala), Sovereignty (Aivārgya), Virility (Virya), Power (Sakti), and Splendour (Tejas). Samkarsana emanates from Vasudeva, Pradyumna from Samkarsana and Aniruddha from Pradyumna. Each Vyūha is possessed of six attributes of Viśnu, of which only two are manifest: Knowledge and strength are manifest in Samkarsana, Sovereignty and virility in Pradyumna, Power and splendour in Aniruddha. Each Vyūha has two activities, creative and moral, which are mediated by his two manifest qualities. Vasudeva is the author of Pure creation. Samkarsana makes non-pure creation dimly manifest. Pradyumna differentiates puruṣa and prakṛiti. He creates the group-Soul, primordial matter, and subtle time. Aniruddha creates manifest matter and gross time. He is the author of mixed creation and becomes the ruler of the universe. They have moral activities. Samkarsana teaches the Sāstras or the theory of mono-Theism. Pradyumna executes in

action. Aniruddha grants liberation.\(^1\) God as Supreme is sometimes identified with and sometimes distinguished from, the Vyūha Vāsudeva. When they are distinguished, the Vyūha Vāsudeva is said to emanate from the Supreme (Para) Vāsudeva.

Accepting the Pāñcarātra as authoritative, and in his commentary on the Vedānta Sūtras, Rāmānuja quotes from the Sāttvata Saṁhitā, Pauskara Saṁhitā and Parama Saṁhitā. The Sāttvata Saṁhitā states that a worshipper of Supreme Brahman (Vāsudeva) acquires the power of discrimination and that the knowledge of Brahman is the subtle form of six powers of Lordship. The Pauskara Saṁhitā says that the Supreme Brahman (Vāsudeva), is attained by means of prescribed actions attended with knowledge Saṁkarsana, Padyumna and Aniruddha are the presiding deities of the Jīva, manas, and ahāmkāra respectively. The Parama Saṁhitā considers Prakriti to be eternal, always modifiable, composed of three guṇas, and the field (Kṣetra) of embodied Soul’s knowledge and actions. Their relation to prakriti is beginningless.\(^2\)

Pāñcarātra gives the concept of Lakshmi. Lakshmi is the great power of Viṣṇu. They are identical with each other, though they are distinct. In the beginning the great power was not distinguished from the Absolute. Then it appeared as action and becoming, force and matter. Even in dissolution Lakshmi and Viṣṇu remain distinct from each other. There is an inseparable relation between them like

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1. Schrader—Introduction to Pāñcarātra, pp. 88-89.
2. Vedānta Sūtras, ii:2-41; ii:2-42.
that of a substance and its attribute. Viṣṇu is the inactive transcendent Absolute. Lakshmi is the active, dynamic and immanent principle. Her creation is the expression of the Lord’s desire, and Her power of action is identical with Viṣṇu’s Will-to-be. Pure creation is the first phase of the manifestation of Lakshmi. It consists in the manifestation of the attributes of God which are super-natural. They are knowledge, strength, sovereignty, virility, power and splendour.¹

In the ultimate analysis it may be said that the nature of God is such that He is the transcendent being beyond all descriptions. Such a view appears to be impersonal, but really it is super-personal, for it includes all that is presented to the cosmos as primeval cause and ground of all, as the self of all, as the worshipable form of auspicious and as incarnating personality. And all these five forms are required for the complete realization of the Jīva. The Jīva itself becomes one with the divine Lord, Vāsudeva. His multiple forms perceive themselves as parts of Him. The Jīvas are numerically infinite. The world itself or Nature is also part of Himself in a different sense and is eternal though being modified. The Lord when he creates the world manifests the unmanifest, the potential (Śūkṣma) subtle condition is ‘evolved’ into the gross and visible (Śtuła) or patent condition. All the Jīvas on the one hand and the Prakriti on the other are His āms’as.

Thus the Pāṇcarātra view substantially contributes to the metaphysics of Visistādvaita.

¹ Rahasyatrayasāra, 23 P. 159.
The Ālvars are Tamil Vaiṣṇava saints who lived before the time of Rāmānuja. Nammālvār is the chief of the Ālvars, and is considered to be the most philosophic among the Ālvars and acknowledged as the best representative of their central teachings. It is in his hymns that we find expressions of the philosophic conception of the Absolute, where as the other Ālvars direct their attention to God’s characteristics in one or other of His avatāras. Nammālvār’s Tiruvāyumolī (Bhagavad Viṣaya) is one of the major sources for Yāmuna and Rāmānuja.

The nature of the body as referred to by Nammālvār in his Tiruvāyumolī is as follows (10.7.10): The Ātman is to be distinguished from the body. The body is the complex of twentyfour categories viz. the five cognitive senses, the five conative senses, the five subtle essences (tanmātras) of the body, the five elements, prakṛti, mahat, āhaṅkāra and the will-these constitute the living body. No doubt the Ātman has its own separate being but its ultimate being is Brahman and is indistinguishable from it.

According to Nammālvār, the Jīva is conscious, Self-manifest, and atomic. It acquires merits and demerits by its right actions and wrong actions respectively. It goes to heaven for its merits; goes to hell for its demerits and is born on earth for its merits and demerits. God is said to reside in it as the Supreme Soul-neutral spectator of its thoughts, emotions, volitions and actions. The Ultimate fulfilment of the essence of the Jīva consists in taking refuge in Him. The body of a Self is limited and
non-eternal and has birth and death. But the Self in
the body is eternal.

Nammālvār having understood the nature of the
Atman by the grace of the Lord, describes it in the
following verse (Tiruvāyomli, 8.8:5): “The Soul is
eternal and is essentially characterised by intelligence
(Jñāna), the Self which the Lord has condescended
to exhibit to me as His mode or related to Him as a
Predicate is to the Subject, or attribute is to substa-
ence; the self which cannot be classified under any
category, as this or that; the Self, the nature of which
is beyond the comprehension of even the enlighte-
ned; the Self whose apperception by the strenuous
mental effort called Yoga (Psychic meditation) is
even then not comparable to such perception or
direct proof as arising from the senses conveying the
knowledge of the external world; the Self (as reve-
aled to me by the Lord) transcending all other cate-
gories of things, which could be grouped as ‘body’
or as the ‘senses’ or as the ‘vital spirit’ (Prāna) or
as the ‘mind’ (manas) or as the will (budhhi), because
destitute of the modification and corruptions to
which all these are subject, the Self which is very
subtle and distinct of any of these, neither coming
under the description of ‘good’ or ‘bad’”. In brief
the Ātman is an entity which does not fall under the
cognisance of sense knowledge.

The Jiva’s conceit of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ in its body
is due to God’s power of māyā. Bondage cannot be
destroyed unless egoism is eradicated and refuge is
taken in God. God’s māyā deludes even the wisest.
He is endowed with mahā-māyā, inscrutable power
of infatuating all the Jivas. So an aspirant should
meditate and serve Him always dedicating his body,
mind and wealth to Him. God is affectionate like mother and does good to all Jivas.¹

The Jiva is stated as being dear to the Lord of Lakshmi. It is His gracious desire that all the Jivas should enjoy His blissful state and attain their goal. The Jiva is therefore by its essential nature, entitled to the service of the Master. But due to beginning-less maya it has fallen into the wilderness of matter subjected to the cycle of births and deaths, and finally attains immortality by realising its true nature.

The Álvàrs consider the nature of the Jivas according to their status, as follows: Those Jivas which are eternal have a clear conception of their essential nature, as well as their relationship to the Supreme Person to whom they are sub-ordinate. Therefore they dedicate themselves to His service and live in Sri Vaikuntha and accompany the Lord wherever He proceeds.² Some Jivas get the name mukta (released) after they leave the worldly bondage through God's grace and enjoy rendering service to the Lord in 'Sri Vaikuntha'. The bound Jivas (Baddha) are those who suffer the worldly ills. Owing to beginningless Karma,³ their essential nature (svarupa) is concealed with the result that they have diverse standards of knowledge, potency and other attributes. They could not have perfect knowledge of themselves nor can they have a uniform realisation of God. They include Brahma, Rudra, Indra and other dinizens of heaven, sages and ordinary men.⁴

1. Tiruvãyîmoli, i.2-3; i.3-10; i.4-9; i.5-3.
3. Periya Tirumoli, 4.7:7; Periya Tiruvantati, 22; of Periya Tirumoli, 1.1:1;
BRAHMAN:

The significant imports which are conveyed by the names Viṣṇu, Vasudeva, and Nārāyaṇa are meant to be denoted by the name Nārāyaṇa itself, which the Álvārs use frequently to refer to the Supreme Being who is identical with Brahman. The Álvārs hold the view that Nārāyaṇa is the creator, protector and destroyer of the universe. Nammalvar says “At a time when there was yet no created world or creature, after deluge, the Lord as the originator planted the fourfaced Brahma, the three eyed Śiva and created the three worlds from His navel;” the first great God who through such measures as creating it, having it, devouring it, releasing it by spitting and striding it, protects the universe in the past, present and future.” The same idea is repeated in a number of verses in his important work, Tiruvāyomli, “My Lord both created and lodged the universe within Himself (for preserving it).” In his other poem Periya Tiruvantati, the Álvār refers to God as Creator who brought into being all the various forms of creation on a widespread scale.

This accords well with the upanisad-ac sense that the Brahman intended to become itself many and be

1. Periyalvar Tirumoli. 4.6; Periya Tirumoli. 1.1; Non-mukan Tiruvantati. i; Tiruvayomli, 1.2:10.
2. Tiruvāciriyan, 2; cf. Tiruvāyomli, 4.10:1; 7.4:9.
3. Tiruvāciriyan. 6; cf. Tiruviruttam. 74; cf. Tiruvāyomli. 10.5:3; 10.7:9.
4. Tiruvāyomli, 2.8:7; 3.1:10; 4.5:10; 7.1:3; 8.1:5; 8.4:2; 9.3:2; 9.9:2.
5. Tiruvāyomli, 2.
It is not the world alone that is produced by His will. Music, Vedās, Itihāsas, Purāṇas, Manu-smritis and other books on Dharma, which are all transformations of sound in particular settings are also the products created by His Will.

The created products continue to exist through God’s will. It is His will that shapes the world out of Himself, and makes it endure as long as He desires. Thus it is preserved and protected by Him. The Lord gives to the Jīvas the ways and means of leading a good life. The Jīvas, however, put those means to bad use and add to their suffering. When suffering grows boundless, the Lord puts an end to it through His will which is mysterious. The Lord not only allow the world to continue but protects it from sufferings which befall the Jīvas. Merits and demerits are the chains that fetter the Jīva, and so he is caught up in the see-saw of Saṃsāra. Nammālvār says that the mystic identity is realised through the pervasion of divine effulgence in oneself and also His presence is something that makes for total freedom. The devotees, attaining such freedom are led to the highest abode (Vaikuṇṭha). God welcomes man for such divine experience. It is the destiny of all devoted Jīvas.

It may be concluded that Nammālvār in his Tiruvāyāmoli has delineated the course of the spiritual mystical approach in all its various forms. He has epitomised the experiences of the other Ālvārs in

1. Taittirīya up. 2:6
2. Nanmukam Tiruvantati. 76.
3. Nanmukam Tiruvantati. 32,
their experience of God as the Ultimate Person beyond sense and rational knowledge. He has represented his own experiences as revealing God who is the Mystical Highest as well as the philosophical Absolute and creator of all. The ultimate realisation that leads one to ‘Vaikuntha’ reveals the glorious journey to infinity—which is the culmination of the spiritual sojourn.
CHAPTER-III

ADVATA CONCEPTION OF BRAHMAN AND ATMAN

For a comprehensive understanding of the concept of Brahman and Atman in Visistadvaita, a clear understanding of the Advaitic view of Brahman and Atman is necessary, as Visistadvaita qualifies the Advaitic position. Therefore in the present chapter an attempt is made to give an account of Brahman and Atman according to Advaita.

Advaita may be summed up as follows: The Brahman of the Upanisads is the only Reality and everything else, this manifold world, is unreal is a mere appearance; the Jiva is identical with Brahman, the ‘one without a second’, which the scriptures define as Existence (Sat)-Knowledge (Cit) - Bliss (Ananda) (Brahma Satyam Jagan mithyā Jiva Brahmvana nāparaḥ). The Taittiriya says “Brahman is existence, Knowledge, Infinite” (2,1). Brhadāraṇyaka describes “Brahman is knowledge, Bliss” (3.9.28). This identity of the Self and Brahman is clearly stated in texts like: “Thou art that” (Chānd. Up. 6.8.7), I am Brahman’ (Brh. Up.1.4.10) and “The Self alone is to be meditated upon” (Brah. Up.1.4.7).

Saṅkara says that in order to understand the nature of Brahman it is important to know all the particulars involved in it. He holds that Brahman alone is real. It is different from the phenomenal, the spatial, the temporal and the sensible. Brahman is what is assumed as foundational, though it is in

no way regarded as substance. 1 Saṃkāra calls Brahman as non-dual Advaitam. It is "wholly other" but not non-being. 2 He regards Brahman as nirguna. Though the words used in the texts are negative, their meaning is intensely positive. A negation is only an affirmation of absence. Saṃkāra denies Brahman as both being and non-being of the type with which we are familiar in the world of experience. It transcends the opposition of permanence and change, whole and part relative and absolute, finite and infinite which are all based on the oppositions of experience. 3

Saṃkāra proceeds to show that Brahman is not a person, since personality cannot be realised except under the limiting conditions of ego. When Brahman is said to be nirguna it only means that Brahman is trans-empirical, since gunas are products of Prakriti, and Brahman is superior to it. The gunas qualify objects and Brahman is not an object. So the Upaniṣad says "nirguna guni". Thus Saṃkāra holds that we get the notion of Ātman or Brahman if we divest it of all that surrounds it, discriminates it from the bodily frame and strip it of all contents of experience. It is reached by a process of elimination by denying all attributes that are super-imposed. Through this process of elimination we arrive at a conception of undifferentiated consciousness (nirviśeṣa cintātātram) "which is unaffected even

1. Vedānta Paribhāsha - i
2. Saṃkāra Bhaṣya on Brahma Sūtras iii.2.22.
   Up. iv.1.
when the body is reduced to ashes and the mind perishes”.¹

This process of successive denial of attributes brings us to the famous upaniṣadic formula negatively discursive of ‘Braman’ or ‘Ātman’, ‘Neti neti—not this, not this’. ‘The Self is not this’, ‘not this’. This is a negative method of approach found in the upaniṣads which serve as the basis of Śaṅkara’s nirguṇa Brahman. Thus we find Yājñavalkya declaring, “He the Ātman, is not this, not this (neti neti), Ātman is inconceivable for he cannot be conceived, unchangeable since he is not changed, untouched as nothing touches him”.²

The threefold nature of Brahman given by the Upaniṣads constitutes its essence and distinguishes it from the empirical world which is unreal and is also of the nature of misery. The empirical world and the Jivas are neither parts of Brahman nor are they its properties. The real is devoid of internal differentiations and external relations. Being, Consciousness and Bliss constitute the very nature of Brahman and they are not Its attributes. Though they are not different from Brahman, they appear as if different.

**BRAHMAN AS EXISTENCE (SAT):**

There are two ways of understanding the nature of Brahman as Sat. i) Objective and ii) subjective.

i) Objective Approach: Ātman and Brahman have the same characteristic of being (Sat). Ātman is Brahman. The purely subjective nature of Sat is also purely

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1. Sarva Siddhānta Saṃgraha xii.8.41.
2. Brhadāraṇyaka Up. v. 15.
objective. As Ātman seems to be mere abstract subjectivity to the eyes of the intellect, Brahman seems to be mere objective. So the first point Śaṅkara asks us to note here is that Brahman is the essence of pure self and as such it is understood from an objective point of view. While all that is not Self is particular, conditional and contingent, the Self as such is unconditioned and one without a second. Brahman or Self is ‘Sat’ in this sense. The scripture declares “Existence alone, dear one, was this in the beginning, one only without a second”. Existence has neither external relations nor internal differentiations. Sat has no internal modes. It is infinite and partless. The real is devoid of parts and has no modification. In his commentary on the Śaṅkara defines ‘being’ as that which exists and cannot be negated. He says that we can negate only the determinate or the limited existents. Unlike limited objects which are determined, being is limitless and therefore it is devoid of negation.

ii) Subjective Approach: Bhāratītirtha, in his ‘Pañcadasśi’ examines the status of consciousness and shows how pure consciousness alone is real non-contradicted by experience. In the three states of experience, viz. Waking, dream and deep sleep, ‘consciousness’ is constantly present, neither rises nor sets. It is ever existent eternal light. This is the subjective way of understanding Sat.

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1. Chāndogya Up. vi.2.1, Pañcadasśi ii.19.
2. Pañcadasśi ii.20 and 21.
3. Ibid., ii.22 and 23.
4. Ibid., i. 5 and 6 and i.7.
BRAHMAN AS CONSCIOUSNESS (CIT):

The doctrine of self luminosity (cit) is one of the foundational tenets of Advaita Brahman as consciousness (Prajñāna) (Ait. Up. iii.3). Here this Self is self luminous (Bṛh. Up. iv. iii. 9 and 14). The Self alone is its light (Bṛh. Up. iv. iii. 6). Reality is not bare existence. It is consciousness as well as self-illuminated. Being self-luminous, it illumines all other things without depending on any external aid. "Who can cognize that by which every thing is cognised? By whom can the knower be known?" asks Yājñavalkya and answers: The Self knows all, but it is not apprehended by any means of knowledge.  

Since consciousness is the essential nature of the Self, Brahman is often referred to as consciousness (Cit). Sāṅkara's contention here seems to be as follows. When I know an object, for instance, I am conscious of its existence as something distinct from what I know at the same time as myself. In such acts of knowing duality between the subject and the object arises. But when I say 'I am conscious of myself, there is no such duality. I am conscious of myself as such. That is to say, what I know myself is the same as consciousness. Thus consciousness is an essence of the Self alone. Sāṅkara therefore calls Brahman pure consciousness. The logical corollary to this position is that Brahman cannot be conceived otherwise than as existing in its self-consciousness. It is a contradiction to say that Brahman is consciousness and yet does not exist as such. Here we should avoid the possible misunderstanding that consciousness and existence are two different qualities of the Absolute. These are not qualities but in fact

1. Pañcadasa i iii.18.
expressive of its essential nature. Consciousness is existence vice-versa. Apart from its essence Brahman becomes a mere abstraction.

BRAHMAN IS INTELLIGENCE - BLISS

(ĀNANDA):

The Self is not only pure consciousness but it is also bliss. The real seat and centre of happiness is the Self. "This which is of the nature of the impertite essence is the supreme bliss; that of all other beings enjoy but a fraction". The bliss of Brahman as contrasted with material happiness is unsurpassable. In the 'Anandavalli' of the Tattiriya Upaniṣad the calculus of happiness is made to culminate in Brahman-Bliss which is declared to be unexcellable. Bliss is freedom from suffering. Since Brahman abides in its own consciousness, it is the joy of its own freedom and harmony. Free from all determinations and distinctions, it shines but in its own form. Having nothing to realise, it is eternally fulfilled (nityatṛpta). It is ever in a blissful state (Ānanda). Conceived in its full essence, Brahman is Sat. Cit and Ānanda (Saccidānanda). Those who realise it attain liberation from bondage because of the realisation of its identity with Brahman.

The Self or Brahman is thus characterised in Advaita as Existence (Sat), Consciousness (Cit) and Bliss (Ānanda), the three terms being used as the adjectives of the Self. A question arises here: 'Is not the limitlessness of the Self impaired by these adjec-

1. pañcadaśī xv.2.
2. Śamkara Bhāṣya on Brahmasūtras, i.1.13.
tives which qualify and as such determine the Self? Sankara answers the question in his commentary on the Taittiriya. He explains the different types of adjectives and shows in what sense, being, consciousness and bliss qualify the Self. It is well-known that there is a variety of adjectives. In some cases like the blue lotus, the adjective “blue” merely demarcates a substantive lotus from similar substantives. In other cases, it serves a different purpose, that is, it does not distinguish one substantive from another, but merely express the pure nature of the substantives. These adjectives do not determine similar objects. Similarly, with being, consciousness and bliss also. These adjectives do not set a limit to the Self, but on the contrary indicate its very nature. Therefore, we should not think that Advaita regard the Self as a substance qualified by the attributes of being, consciousness and bliss. These terms only point to the identity of the Self. But they are not its attributes. Thus the Absolute is the non-dual Brahman or Atman the Self, identity of pure existence, consciousness and bliss.

But again a difficulty may arise here with regard to this characterisation of non-dual reality as ‘Saccidānanda’ the identity of being, consciousness and bliss. It may be argued that to describe the Self as ‘Saccidānanda’ is to impose on it attributes where the very approach to Self has been negative, that is, the process of elimination of attributes. Besides, the Self has not even been described as one (except in the sense of second less). but only as non-dual.

Sankara seems to be aware of this difficulty and admits that even the description of Brahman as ‘Saccidānanda’ is imperfect although it expresses the
nature of the reality in the best way possible. He adds that it is only 'brahmanubhava,' that gives us the highest insight into brahman, and one like bhava who has it answers every question about the nature of the Atman or brahman by Silence. But Vidyā gives the highest possible conceptual account of brahman by equating it with the attributes of being, consciousness and bliss and points to the identity of the Self.

SAGUṆA BRĀMĀṆ :

As an interpreter of the Upanisads, Sāmkara was obliged to offer a reconciliation of the negative and the positive descriptions of Brahmāṇ found in them. Commenting on the spatial conception of Brahmāṇ, Sāmkara says that it is meant to convey the ideas to others (Upalabhyārtham) or to serve the purposes of worship (Upasanaṁ). We rise to the highest, that is, Brahmāṇ, through Isvara who is the creator or governor of the universe and therefore the highest in relation to us. While Brahmāṇ is devoid of attributes (Svarupalakṣaṇas), qualities of creaturship etc., attributed to it are accidental ones (Tatstathalakṣaṇas). Thus there are two views of the Ultimate, higher and lower. Brahmāṇ cast through the moulds of reason is Isvara. It is not the highest reality, but yet it is the best image of the truth possible under ordinary experience. Sāmkara, however, is opposed to all attempts to think of Isvara as the

2. Sāmkara Bhāṣya on Brahmāṇyutras, iii.2.17.
3. Sāmkara Bhāṣya on Brahmāṇyutras, Chand. Up. viii.1.1, Sāmkara Bhāṣya. i.1.20; 24.31; i.2.11.14; iii.2.12.33.
Absolute. The moment we think of it, thus it becomes a part of the world of experience.¹

We have so far discussed what Brahman is in respect of its essential nature (Svarūpalaksana). There is nothing in its nature that can compel it to undergo any modification or change of form. It is ever the same, free from activity and change. Since we are far from Brahman realisation, we cannot but strive and make efforts to attain it by means of our day to day experience. This is the practical standpoint (Vyāvahārika-driṣṭi). Now let us look upon Brahman as the cause, the creator, the maintainer and the destroyer of the world and therefore as omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and the like. We also attribute to it many other auspicious qualities. But all such qualities are only accidental (tatastha lakṣaṇa) and do not touch the essential nature of Brahman (Svarūpalaksana).² We have here the conception of what Śaṁkara calls Saguṇa Brahman,³

Īśvara, according to Śaṁkara is the determinate (Saguṇa) Brahman. He makes a distinction between the Absolute and Īśvara giving a familiar example—⁴ A shepherd in actual plays the role of a king in a play and becomes a ruler. It is obvious that the shepherd is a ‘king’ only from our individual point of view, but not in relation to the actual mode of his being. Similarly the description of Brahman as the

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1. Śaṁkara Bhāṣya 1.1.31.
2. Śaṁkara Bhāṣya 1.1.31, iv.3.14; Brh Up. 8.8.
3. Brahmasūtras Acc. to the commentary of Śaṁkara-Swami Visveshwarānanda, Advaita Āśram, Calcutta, Topic.2. PP. 20-23)
4. Śaṁkara Bhāṣya on Brahmasūtras, i.1.18.
essence of consciousness and bliss brings out what is in its real nature, whereas the description of it as the cause, creator etc., of the world brings out the nature of Brahman from the relative or human standpoint. Here we have the distinction between the Isvāra (the cause) and the world (the effect), the subject (the knower) and the object (the known), the Isvāra, the worshipped, devotee worshipper. The distinction between Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman rests on two modes of approach namely intuition and intellect. Corresponding to the two standpoints of intuition and intellect, Samkara distinguishes between Brahman as qualified (Saguna) and Brahman as Absolute (Nirguna). The former is called Isvāra or God and regarded as Supreme personality. Samkara takes great pains to prove that the reality of Isvāra, when once it is ascertained from the scripture, can be reconciled with the demands of reason. Isvāra is the ultimate ground of the explanation of the moral and physical phenomena. From the phenomenal point of view, he is the ideal Being (Purushottama), possessed of all perfections (vibhūtis). He is conceived as endowed with a will which expresses itself in creation, maintenance and destruction of the world. While the world is characterised by the presence of pleasure and pain Isvāra is not in any way affected by either, since he is free from all such conditions. Since he is free from sensuous desires and inclinations he is not tainted by any of them. As pure spirit he is moved to activity by sheer spontaneity of his law. Nothing can determine his will, nor can anything elude determination by his will. Everything in the world

1. Samkara Bhāṣya on Brahmaśūtras ii.1.18.
2. Ibid., iii.46.
bears the mark of immanence. The fact that the world manifests order and purpose is itself a proof for the fact of divine immanence. As pure consciousness, God permeates every object of the world. But it is due to our ignorance (avidyā or ajñāna) that he appears to be particularised in an apparent diversity of objects with names and forms.¹

The conception of God-head depends upon the standpoint we adopt. If we believe God to be the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world, we adopt the practical standpoint (Vyāvahārika drśti). From this point of view both God and the world are real and are explained in their mutual relationship. But for Śamkara, such a view is relative and cannot account for absolute Reality. But from the transcendental level (paramāarthika sattā) the Vyāvahārika level is only accidental (tattastha laksana). The Absolute is indescribable in true essence (Svarūpa laksana) and cannot be the creator of anything. All the attributes such as creatorship, goodness, omniscience etc., are the various forms of conceptual determination of what is indeterminable as such. All forms of characterisation proceed from the reality in or outside this world. By an instinctive mode of thought, we seek to define the ultimate in terms of something else, and call it in terms of the relative. God is therefore real from the relative standpoint. The conception of God as an object of worship holds good when a distinction is made between the worshipper and the worshipped. Śamkara also recognises such attempts as legitimate and formulates what he calls progressive liberation (Krama-mukti).

¹ Śamkara Bhāsya on Brahmāsūtras, i.iii.19.
Thus he makes room for faith in his philosophical system. He accommodates the concept of God as 'sataryāmin'. But the divine being is viewed as being transcendent also due to His true essence. It is Brahman which is described as inexpressible, because the notion of God as immanent cannot reveal It in all its fullness.

THE DOCTRINE OF MĀYĀ:

The doctrine of māyā is the chief characteristic of the Advaitic system. The world is regarded as māyā in the sense of illusion since it is not accepted as real. It is in the Māndukya-Kārika of Gaudapāda we find the doctrine of māyā stated in terms of illusion or unreality (iv.51-52,67). Śaṅkara says in his introduction to his Bhāṣya on the Taittirīya, “What is eternal cannot have a beginning and whatever has a beginning is not eternal”. Thus he says that the world is unreal since it is sublated by true knowledge. The world neither is nor is not and so its nature is indescribable. The abstract expression of this phenomenality of the world is māyā. Now what is the relation between the real Brahman to the unreal world? For Śaṅkara the question is illegitimate. He holds that Brahman and the world are non-different, and so the question of the relation between the two does not arise. The world has basis in Brahman. But Brahman is and is not identical with the world, because the world is not apart from Brahman. The world is an illusion (māyā) since it is not the essen-

1. Śaṅkara Bhāṣya on Bhāmasūtras, i.1.21.
2. Ibid., ii.2.4.
3. Ibid., i.1.20.
tial truth of the infinite reality of Brahman. Saṁkara asserts that it is impossible to explain through logical categories the relation of Brahman and the world. "The real is never known to have any relation with the unreal". The world somehow exists and its relation to Brahman is indefinable (anirvacaniya).

Saṁkara supports Gauḍapāda’s theory of ajāti or non-evolution. The world is not evolved or produced but seems to be so on account of our limited insight. The world is non-different non-independent of Brahman. "The effect is the manifested world beginning with ākāśa the cause is the highest Brahman. With this cause, in the sense of the highest reality, the effect is identical having no existence beyond it". Saṁkara does not accept the view of Saṁkya which advocates Pariñāmavāda. Saṁkara propounds the theory called Vivartavāda. Both these theories agree in holding that the effect is already contained potentially in the cause and is not a new creation. However, Vivartavāda goes a step further and holds that the transformation of the cause into the form of effect is only apparent. The analogy of the rope and the snake is employed by Saṁkara to illustrate the difficulty of this problem. The riddle of the rope is the riddle of the universe. Why does the rope appear as the snake? We can only say that Brahman appears as the world even as the rope appears as the snake.

Saṁkara brings out that world though dependent on Brahman does not affect Brahman. Vivarta literally means a turning round, a perversion. The

1. Saṁkara Bhāṣya on Māṇḍūkya Up. ii.7.
3. Ibid., ii.1.19.
Vivarta, or perversion of Brahman is the world of space etc. Vivarta signifies the appearance of the Absolute Brahman at the relative world of space and time. We have parinama or transformation when milk is changed into curd, and Vivarta or appearance when the rope appears as the snake. The different illustrations used by Śaṅkara, such as the rope and the snake, the shell and the silver, the desert and the mirage, are intended to indicate the onesided dependence of the effect on the cause and the maintenance of the integrity of the cause. In the case of parinama the cause and the effect belong to the same order of reality, while in Vivarta the effect is of a different order of being from the cause. The world resides in Brahman even as the illusion of snake is said to reside in the rope.

Māyā has the two functions of concealment (āvaraṇa) of the real, and the projection (vikṣepa) of the unreal. The world of variety screens us from the real. Since māyā is deceptive in character, it is called avidyā or false knowledge. It is not absence of apprehension but positive error. When māyā is attributed to Brahman, the latter becomes Ṣaṅvāra. "The one motionless unconditioned, then became by its own power of māyā, that which is known as maker." Māyā is the energy of Ṣaṅvāra by which He transforms the potential into the actual world. His māyā transforms itself into two modes of desire (Kāma) and determination (Śaṅkalpa). It is the creative power of the eternal God and is therefore eter-

1. Śaṅkara Bhāṣya, ii.1.28.
2. Vedānta Paribhāṣā, i.
3. Śaṭasloki, P.24 op. Pañcadasī, xi.
nal, and by means of it the Supreme Lord creates the world. Māyā has no separate dwelling place. It is in Is'vara even as heat is in fire. Its presence is inferred from its effects. It is identified with names and forms. In their unevolved state it inheres in Is'vara and in their developed state it constitutes the world. In this sense it is similar to Prakriti. Is'vara has less of reality than the Absolute Brahman.

MĀYĀ AND AVIDYĀ:

When we look at the problem from the objective side, we speak of it as māyā, and from the subjective side, we speak of it as avidyā. Even as Brahman and Atman are one, māyā and avidyā are one. In other words, māyā is looked at from two points of view, subjective and objective, the individual and the universal. The phenomenal self and the phenomenal world are mutually implicated facts. Avidyā and Prakriti are coeternal and belong to the world of experience. The Atman which is pure knowledge somehow lapses into avidyā, just as Brahman which is pure being, turns aside into the space-time-cause world. Thus avidyā and māyā represent the subjective and the objective sides of one fundamental fact of experience. It is called avidyā since it can be dissolved by knowledge, and the objective series is called māyā since it is coeternal with the supreme personality.

1. Pañcadasī.
2. Śrī Bhāṣya, 11-1-14.
Now we may note certain significations in which the term māyā is used in Advaita:

i) That the world is not self-explanatory indicates its phenomenal character and is signified by the word ‘māyā’. ii) The relation between Brahman and the world has meaning only if we admit pure being from the intuitive standpoint and demand anexplanation of its relation to the world from the logical standpoint. We cannot understand how Brahman is related to the world of multiplicity. iii) Brahman is viewed as the world only in the sense that the world rests on Brahman, but Brahman is not touched by it, and the world which rests on Brahman is called māyā. iv) The appearance of Brahman as the world is also called māyā. v) If we think of the empirical world and employ the dialectic of logic, we get the concept of Īśvāra or the perfect personality with power of self-expression. This power or energy is māyā. vi) Existence springs from the energy of Īśvāra transformed into the limitation (Upādhi) the unmanifested matter (avyakta Prakriti). It is the object through which Īśvāra develops the universe.¹

ĪŚVARA AND JĪVA:

According to Advaita both Īśvāra and Jīva are empirical realities. Pure consciousness is the common element to both, just as heat is common to fire and its sparks.² Brahman is the reality in both. God and Selves are phenomenal appearances. Brahman, limited by the pure Sattva of māyā, appears to be

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1. Saṃkara Bhāṣya, ii.1.14 vide also ibid i.4.3;ii.2.2
2. Saṃkara Bhāṣya on Brahmaśūtras, ii.3.43.
Iśvara, and Brahman limited by the impure adjuncts of body-mind aggregate (avidyā), appear to be the Jivas. Iśvara is non-different from Brahman, and the Jivas also are Brahman in essential nature.¹ They are parts of Iśvara as it were but Iśvara is devoid of parts and as such the Jivas cannot be his real parts.

Iśvara is not deluded by the influence of māyā and therefore not subjected to samsāra due to avidyā, namely non-discrimination between the Self and the non-Self.

Though Iśvara and Jiva are appearances of Brahman, they are not identical with each other. Iśvara is the Lord as the creator of the world of names and forms. The Jivas are incapable of creating the world of phenomena. Iśvara is omniscient, omnipotent and perfect. The Jivas are devoid of all these powers. Iśvara is eternally enlightened and liberated. The Jivas are bound and liberated only through right knowledge. Iśvara is the inner ruler of all beings, and his powers are manifested in different degrees in the Jivas according to the different degrees of purity in their minds which are their limited adjuncts.⁴

Iśvara is perfect. He causes those Jivas to do right actions whom he intends to liberate from bondage. He causes those to do wrong actions whom

1. Śamkara Bhāṣya on Brahma Sūtras, ii.3.43.
2. Ibid., ii.19.
3. Ibid., ii 4.20.
4. Ibid., i.1T.22.
he intends to degrade.\(^1\) The Jīvas alone are active agents and enjoyers.\(^2\) Īśvara is not affected by the enjoyment of the Jīvas, since he has right knowledge.\(^3\)

Empirical life and non-empirical life (life after liberation) are opposed to each other like darkness and light. Īśvara is omniscient and devoid of false knowledge and is not subjected to empirical life. But the Jīvas have false knowledge and so undergo the miseries of S'amsara. They are Brahman in metaphysical nature. The divine nature of the Jīvas are manifested when the right knowledge of their identity with Brahman dawns upon them. So the difference between Īśvara and the Jīvas is not real but apparent.

**BRAHMAN AND THE JĪVA:**

Śaṅkara discusses different views of the relation between the individual Self (Jīva) and Brahman (Absolute) as mentioned in the Brahmasūtra by Āś'marathya, Aṇḍulomi and Kāś'akṛtsna.

Āś'marathya takes his stand on the Upaniṣad texts which compare the relation of Jīvas to Brahman to that of sparks and fire. As the sparks issuing from a fire are not absolutely different from fire since they participate in the nature of fire, they are not absolutely non-different, since in that case they would not be distinguishable either from the fire or from each other. So the Jīvas are neither different from Brahman which would mean they are not of the

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1. Śaṅkara Bhāṣya on Brahmasūtras, i.1.28.
2. Ibid., i.2.11.
3. Ibid., i.2.11.
nature of intelligence, nor absolutely non-different from it, since they would not be different from each other. So Āśmarathyā concludes that Jivas are both different and non-different from Brahman.¹

Audiojomi regards the Jiva as different from Brahman when it becomes impure in contact with the adjuncts of body, sense organs, manas and buddhi. But he regards it as non-different from Brahman when it is divested of the limiting adjuncts by right knowledge and meditation. The bound Jiva is different from Brahman. The liberated Jiva is non-different from Brahman. The Jiva loses its individuality and realises its identity with Brahman in the state of liberation.²

Kāś'akṛtsna regards the Jivas as identical with Brahman. The Jiva is non-different from the immutable Brahman.³ Though Āśmarathyā regards the Jivas as different from Brahman, he seems to hold that they are related to each other as effect and cause, since the Jiva depends upon the Brahman. Audiojomi looks upon difference and non-difference of the Jiva from Brahman as due to different conditions. It is different from Brahman in the state of bondage and non-different from Brahman in the state of liberation.

2. Sāṅkara Bhāṣya i.4.21.
3. Ibid., i.4.22.
Kāśīkṛtsna's view accords with the śruti which says 'That thou art'. The Jiva is identical with Brahman and is not a modification. If it is a modification, it would be merged in Prakriti or māyā or dissolution and would not be immortal. So the names and forms which subsist in the adjuncts do not really belong to the Jivas.

Śaṅkara accepts the view of Kāśīkṛtsna, and argues that the Jiva cannot be a part of Brahman (Absolute) since Brahman is without parts, and is beyond space and time. It cannot be different from Brahman since there is nothing different from Brahman which is one without a second.¹ It cannot be the modification of Brahman, since Brahman is unchangeable. We cannot also regard the Jiva as the creation of God, since the Vedās which speak of the creation of fire and other elements do not speak of the creation of the Soul. So the Jiva is neither different from, nor part of, nor a modification of the Absolute Ātman (Brahman). It is the Ātman itself. We do not realise its real nature, since it is covered by the adjuncts (Upādhis).²

Refuting the teaching of Āśmarathya, Śaṅkara says: "If the Jiva were different from Brahman, a knowledge of the Brahman (highest self) would not imply the knowledge of the Jiva (individual self) and thus the promise given in one of the upaniṣads that through the knowledge of one reality everything is known would not be fulfilled".³ Comment-

1. Śaṅkara Bhāṣya, iv.3.14.
2. Śaṅkara Bhāṣya on Munḍ. Up. ii.2.1, Katha Up. ii.2.1.
3. Śaṅkara Bhāṣya, i.4.20.
ting on the Taittirīya, Śaṅkara says: “It is not possible that one can ever attain identity with another altogether distinct”,¹ and as the Upaniṣads speak of the knower of the Brahman becoming Brahman, the knower must be one with Brahman.

Knowing that the relation between the Absolute (Brahman) and the Jīva is incapable of logical articulation, Śaṅkara suggests certain analogies which have developed into distinct theories in the later developments of Advaita.

In one context Śaṅkara uses the simile of one cosmic space and parts of space to describe the relation between the Brahman (Absolute) and the Jīva. The space limited by a jar for instance, is nothing but the cosmic space limited by some structure. When the jar is broken the two spaces become absolutely identical. Similarly, the Jīva is essentially the Ātman, but owing to the adjuncts (upādhis) it appears as different. Once these limitations are removed, the unqualified identity between the Jīva and Brahman is realised. This analogy was developed by some of the later Advaita thinkers into a separate theory of limitation known as Avacchedavāda. According to this theory the Jīva is the Ātman limited by antahkaraṇa.

It is argued against the theory of limitation that it leads ultimately to unsatisfactory moral results. When one Jīva goes to heaven on account of its merit, the intelligence limited by it in heaven will he different from that which was limited by it while it was on earth. This will neutralise the consequences of Karma performed in the earth, and will also

¹ S. B. on Taittirīya Up. ii.8.15.
lead the Jiva to attain the fruits of actions not performed by it. Therefore it cannot be said that the same Jiva goes to heaven. For, that would be to attribute motion to what is all-pervasive.

To secure the identity of the enjoying Self, the critics of the limitation Theory fall back on another simile used by Sāmkara and develop it into another theory namely the Theory of Reflection or Pratibimbavāda. In his commentary on the Bṛhadāranyaka, Sāmkara uses the simile of reflection. Here he argues that the reflections of the Sun and the Moon in water are a mere appearance, and the reflection of the red colour of a flower in a white crystal also is a mere reflection of the flower. On removal of the water; the Sun and the Moon only remain, and on removing the red flower the whiteness of the crystal remains unchanged. Similarly, the elements and the individual souls are reflections of the one reality in avidyā and nothing is real except Brahman. On the abolition of avidyā the reflections cease and the real alone remains. The absolute is the original (bimba) and the world is the reflection (pratibimba). Again, the universe in its variety of forms is sometimes likened by Sāmkara to an ocean reflecting the ray of the Sun in various ways. The differences of reflections are traced to the different forms of the waves, while the Sun remains the same all through. Similarly, the Absolute which is without a second appears as different through its reflections in different adjuncts.

1. SB, ii.3.50; S.B. on Gaudapāda Kārikā, i.6.
Some of the later followers of the Advaita view develop the suggestions implicit in the above analogy into a distinct theory viz. pratibimbavāda. According to it, the Jīva is a reflection of the universal Self in the internal organ. According to the avacchedyavāda, avidyā is subtle matter in the form of the inner organ and it is an avaccadaka or visṣapaṇa or an essential part of the Jīva. But according to the supporters of the Pratibimbavāda, the inner organ is merely an upādhi, which receives the reflection of the Self and therefore is present to it, but does not form any essential characteristic of the Jīva.

Pratibimbavāda, however, is not free from difficulties. A thing devoid of form cannot cast any reflection and no reflection can be cast in a formless reflector. Pure consciousness and avidyā, both being formless, the reflection theory falls to the ground. Besides, if the Jīva be a reflection of Brahmān, it is different from Brahma and therefore not real. But the author of Vivarṇa suggests a way out of this difficulty in what has been called ‘bimba-pratibimbabhedavāda’ (non-difference of the original and the reflection). The reflection is thus said to be the original itself: “The rays proceeding from the eyes are struck by the reflector, turn back and make the actual face perceptible. The reflection is thus the real itself”. This view however, also cannot stand scrutiny. If this view is to work, it is required

1. Vedānta Paribandha, i. (Antāṅkaraṇesu Pratibimbam Jivacaitanyam)
2. Indian Philosophy, Dr. S. Radvakrishnan, Volum II, P. 608.
that there should be a really existent separate medium apart from Brahman. This contradicts the non-dualism of Brahman. Those who reject both the 'limitation and reflection' theories declare that the Jīva is the unchanging Brahman ignorant of its true nature. Saṃkara and Suresvara are inclined to this view.

Thus none of the above theories succeeds in advancing a satisfactory explanation for the relation between the Jīva and Brahman. They fail to grasp the spirit behind the analogies used by Saṃkara and virtually make the Jīva something different from Brahman. Saṃkara, on the contrary, uses the analogies so as to emphasise the underlying unity of the finite self with the infinite self, in spite of their seeming differences. He uses the analogy of reflection in order to make clear the adventitious nature of Jīvatma. To his mind there seems to be no discrepancy between regarding the Jīva as a reflection and considering it to be one with Brahman. Those who came after him, however, strained the analogies too far and ranked themselves either as Pratibimbavādins or as Avacchedavādins.

1. Saṃkhya Pravacans Bhāṣya, i.152 and 153.
CHAPTER IV

VISISTADVAITA. CONCEPTION OF BRAHMAN (ABSOLUTE)

In the previous chapter we have discussed the conception of Brahman in Advaita. Now, we shall consider the conception of Brahman in Viśistadvaita.

In Viśistadvaita also Brahman is the Absolute. But it is identified with the personal God, who is called Nārāyaṇa. Thus Absoluteness and Personality are integrated in Viśistadvaita. Ontologically, God must be viewed as the highest in status and therefore He must be the Absolute. But in consistency with the logic of a religious philosophy and in conformity to the demands of religious consciousness, He must also be a concrete person, the inexhaustible source as well as the perfect realisation of the values. The word ‘Absolute’ here, in the religious context is not to be understood in which Sāmkara or Bradley have used it.

1. RAMANUJA: Sri Bhāyān 2.42. Nammāḻvar Tiruvāyumolī 1.2.10, Viśnupurāṇa vi.5,72,75,79,76.
Rāmānuja in his commentary on Brahmaṣūtras quotes from Sattvata Samhita, Pauskara Samhita and Parama Samhita and Vedānta Desika in his Pañcaratra. Raksha accepts Viṣṇu or Vasudeva or Nārāyaṇa as the Highest Reality.

2. Vidyārthi P.B. Knowledge, Self and God in Rāmānuja.

3. The Absolute of Sāmkara and Bradley do not meet the requirements of religious consciousness. This is obvious from Rāmānuja’s conception of the relation of Aprthakṣīddhi between Brahman, matter and Jivas, a kind of inseparable relation. According Sāmkara (Sat) existence has neither external relations nor internal differentiations. (Pāñcadasa 11.20,21,22,23.)
Visīṣṭādvaita is non-relativistic, devoid of all relations. Brahman is not the opposite of the ‘relative’. The Absolute is not to be abstracted from everything in experience as it may amount to the denial of His supremacy and absoluteness. God’s transcendent perfection and concreteness are understood only to the finite things and beings of the world. Perfection implies transcendence in immanence, and immanence in transcendence. Absoluteness must not be regarded as having His absoluteness affected by relations. The divine-person is the all-inclusive whole, and unity is not subversive to multiplicity but is inclusive of it. Unity and multiplicity are distinguishable but not separable. Visīṣṭādvaita takes the stand that things have their own existence no doubt but they are housed in the Absolute Person. They are His attributes and just as attributes though distinct from substances, are not separable from them, even so everything being an attribute of God is included and preserved and not negated by Him.

God as Absolute has the following meanings in Visīṣṭādvaita: (i) God is Absolute in the sense that in Him there is an impenetrable essence whose depth cannot be measured by the finite intelligence of man. Though immanent in the Jīva and in the world, He reserves to Himself the mystery and essence. Absoluteness of God means the affirmation of His transcendence. God’s character is not exhausted in

1. Śrī Bhāṣya iii. 2. 28.
2. Ibid., 1.1.1.
His relations to us. All the glory and majesty found in nature and history falls short of His divinefecundity. Our relationships with God are real, but they do not exhaust His nature. (ii) Nothing can exist outside God. All things and beings, whose existence and sustenance are allowed by Him work only through His power and energy. He is the supreme will and all other wills are conditioned by Him. But His supremacy is not of such a nature as to allow the existence of only one will. (iii) God is the ground who includes in Himself, the conditions of all things and beings. The world and the Jivas point to God as their explanation. (iv) God is not touched even by the slightest taint of imperfection and finitude to which the Jivas and the world are exposed and liable. (v) God eternally possesses the realisation of the spiritual values manifested in man's cognitive, aesthetic and moral acts. We cannot attribute these capacities and functions to nature. The realm of Nature is not the realm of Value. Values have significance only to the spirit, and may be regarded as the diverse gifts conferred on man. Only God as Absolute is the source and centre of all values. (vi) God has relationship with the things and beings of the world, without falling a victim to

1. S\'ri Bh\'sya with S\'utra Prak\'s\'ika. P. 127.
2. S\'ri Bh\'sya. 1.1.1.32; Kanopani\'sad, ii.3.
3. Mah\'mam\'yanopani\'sad 1.6 B.G. ix.5; Gita Bh\'sya vii.4.5; S\'ri Bh\'sya, i.1.23.
4. S\'ri Bh\'sya ii.1.34. Srinivasachari, P.N.; R\'m\'n\'uja's idea of the finite Self Chap. 3.
5. S\'ri Bh\'sya iii.11.2.
6. Vidyarthi, P.B; Knowledge, Self and God in R\'m\'n\'uja. Vide also B.G. ii.21-26; ii.3.20.
the limitations caused by them. Everything is real only as referred to God, very much as a body is real with reference to the Jiva.¹

**BRAHMAN AS THE ULTIMATE OF THE UPA NiSADS:**

Visistādvaita describes Brahman as ‘Sruti-Sirasi Vidipte’ meaning that the Supreme Reality is specifically and pre-eminently revealed in the Upaniṣads. Brahman, the ultimate of the Upaniṣads, is described by Rāmānuja as the most Supreme.² Rāmānuja defines Brahman in comprehensive terms. Brahman is the Reality of all Realities (Satyasya satyam).³ It abides in matter and the Jivas and yet transcends them. It is perfection par-excellence, self-complete, absolute knowledge and joy. Brahman is free from imperfections, comprises within itself all auspicious qualities and finds itself involved in originating, preserving, re-absorbing, pervading and ruling the universe.⁴ Thus Brahman is signified as the Supreme Person (Puruṣottama) who transcends all imperfections and abounds in infinite classes of auspicious qualities of un-surpassed excellence.

According to Rāmānuja the main import of the scriptures is to show that Brahm, which is antipaganistic to all evil and constituted by supreme bliss, is different from cit and acit. That which is

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2. Ibid., i.1.1.
3. *Bṛhadāranyaka* Up. 11.3.6.
antagonistic to all evil must be blissful in nature. Taittiriya (11.5) confirms this view: “Different from this Self which consists of understanding is the other inner self which consists of bliss.” Rāmānuja says that the business of the scripture is not to mention the successive multiple inferior stages of the Jīva or bliss. The Jīva which enjoys a small share of bliss mixed up with endless misery cannot possibly constitute bliss. Brahman, in so far as it is opposed to all evil, pain and misery, is the abode of the highest bliss. The Jīva being alike in the state of bondage as well as in liberation will have consciousness as its attribute.

The Taittiriya text defines Brahman as ‘Satyam, Jñānam, Anantam, and enables us to realise the infinity of Isvāra. Rāmānuja explains this text as follows: The statement of the text affirms that Brahman is different from primordial matter and the Jīvas. The term ‘Satyam’, the true, means that Brahman is the absolutely ‘non-conditioned being’. This excludes the entity of matter which is subject to continuous mutation and the bound Jīva associated with it. These two are not absolutely non-conditioned for they undergo many states in different forms. The term ‘Jñānam’ means the eternally free intelligence and this term excludes the freed Jīvas on account of their once-limited knowledge. Similarly, the term ‘Anantam’ implies that ‘the Supreme Being is free from the limitations of time, space and condition’. This excludes the eternally free (nityas) who are like other Jīvas but smaller than the smallest atom. Brahman therefore is a concept which

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.2. (Tr) Thibaut, Sacred Books of the East Series, XLVIII, P. 123.
implies transcendence and perfection. These three attributes are applicable to one and the same Brahman as they are eliminative in character as alleged by some Advaitins, who argue that three different states of empirical and illusory experience of false (anṛta), inert (Jaḍa), and limited (Vicchine) are controverted by these three terms. They also maintain that these three terms have one and the only meaning and declare that pure consciousness is real which cannot be sublated. Rāmānuja opposes this Advaitic view of pure consciousness as real. The above definition contains several attributes which are non-contradictory and so define the same Reality which is qualified by plurality. The reality is undifferentiated ad distinguished from other objects. The plurality of these qualities does not imply plurality of Reality. The linguistic rule of syntactic equation of terms denoting the same thing but connoting different attributes (Sāmānādhikaranya) defined as "permitting the coexistence of distinct qualities mutually non-contradictory in one and the same entity and in the light of this rule the above attributes of Brahman become meaningful as they enable us to know Brahman”.

Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desīka while interpreting the second Vedānta Sūtras (Janmādyasyayataḥ) define Brahman as the creator, sustainer and des-

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1.
2. Sāmānādhikaranya means syntactic equation of terms denoting the same thing but connoting different attributes, Grammatical apposition.
3. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1.
4. Ibid., i.1.2.
troyer of the world Creation (Sriṣṭi kāraṇatva) and destruction (thaya kāraṇatva) are combined here in this synoptic definition just to show that three different Supreme beings exist for the above three different functions, though they do not have independent existence apart from one another. Any one of these three functions is enough to define Brahman, for none else other than Brahman is invested with such extraordinary powers. It is also the intention of the Sūtrakāra to show that one and the same Brahman is responsible for the origination, maintenance and destruction of this universe.¹

TWO FOLD NATURE OF BRAHMAN AS PERFECT AND FREE FROM IMPERFECTIONS (UBHAYALIŅGATVĀ)

Brahman is devoid of evil and imperfections. Viśiṣṭādvaita says that this is what is pointed out by the very texts regarded as ‘nirguṇa’ texts. By denial of imperfections in Brahman, His perfection is affirmed. He is not only free from any imperfections but is also an abode of all perfections.

Viśiṣṭādvaita conceives the God-head as the whole of Reality, and an abode of infinite eternal and auspicious qualities like truth, goodness and beauty.² Brahman is not only Real (Reality or Sat-

1. Sri Bhāṣya, i.2,9, Nyāya Siddāntiyanam, P.225. (P.B. Annangaracharya’s Edition) Bānārṣeṇa Basava Tṛaya, and B.G xi 46. Vedanta Desika...Rahasyatrayasāra (Artha Pāñcika) and B.G. xi,46,47.
2. Ibid., i.1.1.85: Viṣṇu Purāṇa vi,5,74-79
yam), Self consciousness (Jñānam), and infinite (Anāntāni), but also Supreme good (Ahaṁ), Beautiful (Sundarām), and Blissful (Anānandamāyam). This ubhayālingatva of Brahman is affirmed by Rāmānuja in his commentary on the Sūtra.¹ These qualities of ‘Satya’, ‘Jñānam’ ‘Anantāni’, ‘Ahaṁ’, and ‘Anandam’ are Brahman’s determining qualities. The explanation of the Advaitic philosophers given to the term ‘ubhayālingatva’ as relating to Saguna and Nirguna Brahman is not compatible with the content of the text. The Chāndogya (viii 7.1) lays down that Brahman is free from any imperfection and at the same time it is the abode of all auspicious qualities. The scripture declares that Brahman is both free from imperfections (Akhilaheya prátya-nika) and full of auspicious qualities (Kalyānāikā- tanasvarūpa) at one and the same time. This in fact is the concept of ubhayālingatva as explained by the Savants of Viśiṣṭadvaita. The Absolute is thus conceived as a Perfect Personality.

If we have to maintain the nature of ubhayālingatva in the sense in which Rāmānuja explains, a problem arises as to the reconciliation of the saguna and nirguna passages in the Upaniṣads. In the light of the exposition of Rāmānuja, Vedānta Deśika examines the nirgunavāda and comes to the conclusion that the Advaitin’s explanation cannot stand scrutiny.²

1. Sri Bhāṣya, iii.2.11
He argues that there can be no nirguna Brahman. For such a concept violates the conclusions of the scriptures that define Brahman. How can we reconcile them—the saguna and the nirguna texts? Both these types of texts cannot be equally held valid as they are contradictory. It is not possible to establish any one of them rejecting the other, for it would mean that Brahman would be either nirguna or saguna. As both these are self-established and valid, we cannot also make an option in favour of any one of them and reject the other. It may be argued that according to the principle or rule in the pūrvamīmāṃsā (apacchedanyāya), the text describing sagunatva gets cancelled by the nirguna texts. But this is also not possible, for the principle of ‘apacecheda’ cannot operate in an instance where mutual order and mutual contradictions are definite. Hence the mimāsakas conclude that the principle of Sūruti-liṅgādhikarana must be applied to decide the force in the case of any one of the two mutually contradictory texts appearing in a definite order. According to this principle, the saguna texts become weightier. Moreover it is not necessary to bring in the principle of ‘apacecheda’ regarding the saguna and nirguna texts. These texts deal with different matters and as such are not at all contradictory. The saguna texts pertain to the infinite auspicious qualities of Brahman.1 Thus both types of statements become valid and complementary. The same principle is to be followed to explain the incompatibility between immutability (avikārtva) and nirvikārtva, as well as bodylessness (āsariratva) and bodied

Immutability (nirvikāratva) is to be found in divine nature but (svaṅkāratva) is found in Viśīṣṭavastu. Just as changes (vikāras) of the body such as childhood, youth and old age, can never stain the Jīva, similarly, the changes (vikāras) in primitidal matter and the Jīva, the attributes of the Absolute do not touch the substratum (visēṣya).

The conflict between bodily (sāsarāratva) and bodylessness (aśāsarāratva) is also likewise explained. The Absolute is formless but is not incapable of assuming any form it likes for the good of the humanity. He does not take any body as a result of previous Karma, like the Jivas and asāsarāratva signifies that the divine being is the master of Karma and not subjected to it. The above analysis shows that Brahman, the Absolute of philosophical enquiry, is always qualified by ‘Ubhayāṅgatva’ on account of His being a home of all perfections without any taint of imperfections.

The Brahman of the Upaniṣads is the ‘Supreme God’ (Śarveśvara) of religion. Rāmānuja describes the glory of the Supreme in His ‘Sarpanāgati Gadya’ and affirms His supremacy (śarveśvaratva). Acit is bereft of consciousness and so has no volition. Though the Jīva has cognition, connation and volition, he is not the controller (niyanta) of either the physical world or its entities. His capabilities are very limited. God is all-pervasive (vibhu). He is in contact with all the objects other than Himself and this is impossible for any other entity. Rāmānuja also quotes the Gītā in support of his contention: “He, who is worshipped by all actions of all is God” (IX.24);

1. Nyāya Siddhanjanam, P. 226
God is also defined as (Sarvaphalaprada). It is God's will or saṃkalpa that is responsible for the granting of fruits of all kinds of activities to all. Karma by itself is inert and is incapable of yielding any result by itself. It is the all-knowing God who is thus served through those Karmas that grants us the corresponding results.¹

God is described as the ground (adhāra) of all things through the spiritual relationship of Aṣṭak-siddhi.² The definition excludes time, as time is not an adhāra through aṣṭak-siddhi relation. He is defined as the first and the intelligent cause of all effects in the universe. Time is excluded here also, as time is not responsible for all effects in the transcendental region (nityavibhūti), being itself subservient to God. No effect is possible without God. God is also defined as one who has all objects other than Himself and His attributive consciousness as His body. As one cannot be the body of oneself Is'vāra is defined as the Inner-self of all beings.³

The attributive consciousness cannot be the body of that same Jīva and so the attributive consciousness of God is also excluded in the above definition. Similarly truthful thought and will by

3. Śrī Bhāṣya ii.1.28; Brh. Up. iii.7 & 111.7.1; Taittiriya Up. iii.24; Chānd. Up. viii.
Himself (svatāḥ satya saṅkalpatvam) is also an apt definition of God. Though the Jīva is to attain truthful thought and will (satyasāṅkalpatva) of liberation, his state is totally subject to the will of God. It may also be said that God is the Divine Being who is to be contemplated upon by the aspirants for liberation from saṃsāra.

Vedānta Desīka in his Nyāya Siddhāṅjanam describes Brahman, the Supreme Lord of the Universe as follows: The entity of Īśvara is different from primordial matter as well as the Jīvas. He who is the over Lord of all objects other than Himself is God. Īśvara is the transcendental Divine being who is one and Absolute. The Īśvara of religion means the same reality as meant by the Brahman of the Upanisads. The divine personality is the centre of knowledge and is all pervasive unlike the Jīva which is atomic by nature. The pervasiveness (vyāpakatva) is the distinguishing differentia of God. He is one who utilises the world for His own purposes as the entire world of matter and the Jīvas are subservient to Him. The s'eśitva or the principal of all, also differentiates Īśvara from the Jīva, whose very nature is being subservient to Him. It is impossible to define any other entity as the Supreme Being.

THE FIVE FORMS OF THE SUPREME:

Vīśeṣṭādvaita expounds that the one Absolute identified with Viṣṇu exists in five different manifes-

1. Śrī Bhāṣya i.1.1. 75-83. Tatttirīyā Up. vi.2, Chānd. Up. vi. 3.2, B.G.11,12, xv, 18.
2. Vedānta Desīka - Nyāya Siddhāṅjanam, pp.87 & 105; Srinivasa Dasa - Yatindramata Dīpikā 37.
tations. Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desaīka describe the fivefold nature of God in the following manner. The All powerful God, the Parabrahman assumes five forms out of compassion to redeem the humanity. They are: [i] Supreme (Para), [ii] Emanation (Vyūha), [iii] Incarnation (Vibhava), [iv] Inner Controller (Antaryāmin), [v] Idol (Arcā).

Para, the self realised Absolute of Paramapada is said to be Supreme Vāsudeva or Nārāyana or Brahmā. All the six divine qualities of Knowledge, Strength, Lordship, Valour, Energy and Splendour are to be thought of in this supreme form. In Vai-kūnta the Lord is seated on the serpent Śeṣa supported by His consort Lakṣmī, and eternal and liberated Jīvas. Vai-kūnta is beyond time, change and modification and is the place of Supreme Bliss. It is the sphere of His eternal sports which are unmanifest.

Lakṣmī, the imaginative symbol of the creative energy of God, is the Divine mother of the Universe who sometimes intercedes with God on behalf of weak and erring humanity. She is the power eternally united with the Lord. She is also endowed with eternal, flawless, unlimited, supreme, innumerable auspicious qualities, powers of sovereignty and goodness. Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī are two aspects of one and the same Divine unity.

1. Śrī Bhāṣya i.i.2.40. Viṣṇu Purāṇa P.vi..5.79; Schrader - introduction to Pāncarātrā pp. 88-89
2. Śrī Bhāṣya i.i.2.40.
3. Ibid.,
4. Ibid.,
The Lord exists as Emanciations (Vyūha). The Vyūha form is sometimes said to be three and sometimes four. As the qualities to be meditated upon are the same both in the Pararūpa and Para-Vāsudeva, the first form of the Vyūha, this kind of triple classification is followed. The four Vyūhas with their respective qualities and activities are given as follows:

Para-Vāsudeva is endowed with all the six qualities which are predominant and He is enjoyed by the liberated. Samkarṣana is filled with knowledge and strength and promulgates the Śāstras and causes Pralaya. Pradyumna possesses high degree of sovereignty and virility and creates the universe and makes Dharma prevail. Aniruddha has consummate potency or power and splendour, and protects the world and teaches the truth.¹

Vedānta Desṭīka says that the Lord divides Himself into these four forms to make meditation on Him possible for different kinds of people.² The Lord will have all the six qualities, though in the above Vyūhas certain qualities are more predominant than the others.³

INCARNATION (VIBHAVA): The several incarnations of the Lord on this empirical universe are expressions of Divine mercy. The mystery of the

¹ Sri Bhāṣya, ii.2.40 and 42; Viṣṇu-Purāṇa, vi.5.79; Yatindramata dipikā (ix.132) and Rahasyatrayasāra
² Rahasyatrayasāra - 5, P. 92.
³ Tattva Muktā Kalāpa, iii.69 (P.B, Annangarā Chārya’s Edition).
Lord’s incarnations is expounded in the Gītā (iv.6, 7,8) and establishes that ‘Avtāra’ is the living expressions of the redemptive grace of the merciful Lord.

Vedānta Des'ika adduces that the following aspects are known from the Divine incarnations: (i) The incarnation is an actual truth. (ii) The incarnation of the Divine is the embodiment of Divine nature in full measure. (iii) The body of the incarnate is of the s'uddha or pure satva and not Triguṇa. (iv) The cause of the incarnation is the will of the Divine. (v) The time of an incarnation is during moral crisis, when Dharma has to be safe guarded. (vi) The purpose of an incarnation is to save the virtuous, to punish the wicked and to redeem the sinners from sin.1

God descends upon earth and stays for some periods along with His devotees, trying to raise them to Divinity. These are historic incarnations, meant for the maintenance of law and order in the world and for the propagation of the Vedās, and to give an assurance of salvation to one and all. This truth of incarnation is a spiritual one and so—cannot be interpreted in terms of space and time.2

INNER CONTROLLER (ANTARYĀMIN):

God dwells in the hearts of all, as their inner self and controller and this Divine immanence is an is an act of infinite compassion. The redeemer is

1. Rahasyatrayasāra - 29, P. 247.
2. Srinivasachari, P. N., The Philosophy of Vis'īstā-dvaita, P. 156 58.
not to be reached at some remote place, but He is nearer to us than we are to ourselves. He enters into the hearts of the beings and guides them in their volitions and actions in accordance with their Karma. He is their friend, protector, moral governor and providence.

IDOL (ARCĀ):

The Absolute Parabrahman also assumes the form of images and this is the arcā incarnation, which is the living presence of God. Arcā worshipped in temples is a reservoir of redemptive mercy of Is'vara who enters into a formless form of His own without being affected by the changes of Prakriti and Purusa. The arcā has some advantages over other forms to the devotees. They are: (i) The arcā has the possibility of attracting materialistic minded people towards Himself, by his infinite beauty and splendour. (ii) The devotees can enjoy with his eyes the Divine beauty of the Lord and meditate upon Him steadily. (iii) The arcā is the concretion of Divine grace and is a refuge for the entire universe that worships Him, as He is accessible to one and all. (iv) Worshipping the arcā is a source of delight and solace to the devotees.

1. Tattvatraya; Tattvatrayabhāsya P. 139. vide also Sarvadharṣ'ana- saṅgraha, iv.
All the five forms of the Absolute are equally real and auspicious. The Divine form is a home of Divine perfections which is accessible to all devotees.

**BRAHMAN IS KNOWABLE:**

According to Advaitism, the scriptures ordain that Brahman as unknowable. It is also argued that Brahman is undifferentiated consciousness which alone is real, and that the empirical world is only an appearance. So it is contended that the fact of knowing Brahman can never be possible, as it can never become an object of knowledge.

Rāmānuja carefully examines this argument and shows that several incompatibilities would arise if Brahman were to be regarded as undifferentiated consciousness. On the authority of the scriptures, he too holds that there is one Reality, namely Brahman, but according to him Brahman is characterised by cit and acit which are equally real but inseparable from it.

Similarly the theory that Brahman is unknowable is also refuted by Vedaṁa Desīka. He argues that several scriptural statements exhort the aspirants to know Brahman, and that a host of similar texts not only declare that Brahman is knowable,

1. **Mundaka 1.1.6; Kena Up. 11.3; Taittirīya Up. ii.1.** Brahman is unknowable not in the sense that He cannot be known, but unknowable by empirical modes of knowing.
but that It must be known for emancipation.¹ This position appears to be a paradox. Some scriptural statements say that Brahman cannot be attained by words or the mind, whereas some other statements ordian that Brahman can be known. How are we to solve this problem? Vedānta Des'ika continuing the argument maintains that there is no contradiction between these scriptural statements. They cannot be mutually contradictory, for if they were so, then they would serve no purpose. So it must be understood that the statements which describe Brahman as unknowable mean that it is impossible to know the Absolute Brahman in its entirety as It is infinite. We cannot know the Reality in all its totality. Our knowledge of Brahman can only be partial and never complete.² This is the import of the scriptures that describe Brahman as transcending our province and intellect. If, on the otherhand, it is maintained that the statements defining Brahman as knowable are to be taken in a figurative sense, then it inevitably contradicts the spirit of the scriptural texts. The unknowability of Brahman cannot be proved even by inference even as it cannot be proved by the scriptures. If one were to draw an inference, "Brahman is unnameable and unknowable because of this" etc., should be its form. Here Brahman is the minor term (pakṣa) and it is to be asked whether the major term (sādhya) is found in the pakṣa or not. If it is answered in the affirmative, then, how can a knowledge of the sādhya opposed to the pakṣa be possible? If it is answered in the negative, then it is

2. Ibid.,
futile to continue the reason as the sādhyā will have no locus (āśraya). Likewise, many incompatibilities ensue even regarding the sādhyā. On the other hand counter syllogisms are also possible. The object of dispute is knowable and nameable because it is shining. (Vigitiṁ, Vedyam, Vāeyomca bhāsamānatvat). It is impossible to attribute this quality of indescribability (avāchyatva) and unknowability (avedyatva) to anything else anywhere. When that is the case, how can that be possible of the Supreme Reality which can be denoted or expressed by all the words (sarva s'abda Vāchya)? So it is the established conclusion of Viṣistādvaita that Brahman is knowable and that the scriptures ordian the Brahmananda cannot be fully measured through the statement ‘This is the discussion of the Bliss (Saiṣānaṇdasya Mimamsāy bhavati). Otherwise statements such as ‘the best purport of the words is that I am known through all the Vedas’ (Vacasām Vācyamuttamam sarvasca vedihī ahameva vedyahat) and the like cannot be explained.¹

THE ABSENCE OF DISTINCTION BETWEEN SAGUṆĀ AND NIRGUṆĀ BRAHMĀN:

Viṣistādvaita does not accept the Advaitic distinction between Sagunā Brahman and Nirguṇa Brahman. Sāmkara, while making such a distinction, explains certain sections of the Vedānta Sūtras such:

2. Ibid.,
as Sad-Vidyā, Ubhayaliṅgatva, Kārya Brahman etc; in support of his view. The 'Sat' which is taken as 'Advitiya' and 'Nirguṇa', that is indeterminate Absolute, is said to be Īśvara, the determinate, called Saguna Brahman, which is finite and a mere appearance. But Nirguṇa Brahman is pure undifferentiated consciousness. Thus, Īśvara the God of religion is less real than the Absolute Brahman.¹

Rāmānuja, on the otherhand, affirms that the Absolute Brahman of the Upaniṣads and Īśvara of religion are one and the same. He holds that the Advaitic view involves self-contradiction. It cannot be accepted that Brahman evolves into the universe of names and forms, if it is to be rejected later as an illusory development. The process of creation (sṛi-ṣṭi), then cannot be applicable to Advaita.² Secondly, the above distinction is subjected to the fallacy sacrificing the scriptures or sutra (Sūtraḥani) and fabricating which is not heard (aśruta Kalpanā).³ The Bhedābheda schools of Bhāskara, Yādava Prakāśa and Nimbārka have refuted the theory of Nirguṇa Brahman and this portion of their argument is serviceable (helpful) to Viśiṣṭādvaita, though their own expositions are not accepted in toto by Viśiṣṭādvaita.⁴ Brahman is not undifferentiated consciousness for the mere reason that consciousness is only an attribute which necessarily stands related to a substratum. If it is asked “why then Brahman is described as consciousness,” Rāmānuja answers thus: “The essential characteristic of an object describes the essential nature of the object through

¹ Samkara Bhāṣya on Brahmasūtras, i.1.20, 24,31; i.2.11.14; iii.2.12.33; ii.1.18. i.iii.19;
² to 4. Šrī Bhāṣya i.1.1.
that characteristic. So the term Jñāna denotes that Brahman is of the essential nature of knowledge”. This conclusion is substantiated by various scriptures that Brahman is omniscient and as possessing by its very nature infinite knowledge, strength and valour.¹

Statements like Nirguṇam, Niraṅjanam, are explained by Rāmānuja in a significant manner. They are meant for denial in Brahman of all that is defiling. Brahman is essentially pure and is opposed to all that is evil and defiling. To quote, “Those who acknowledge the validity of the different means of knowledge, perception and so on, and what is vouched for by sacred tradition—the existence of a highest Brahman—free from all shadow of imperfection, of measureless auspicious qualities; all knowing, immediately realising all its purpose”.² This statement does not deny plurality outright but denies only plurality of objects outside and not ensouled by Brahman. Statements like ‘Neti-Neti’ also do not discard everything else other than Brahman as ‘not-this-not this’, but they only affirm that Brahman is more than anything else that is conceivable.³

Rāmānuja’s exposition of the term ‘Nirguna’ establishes the following points: (i) The distinction and difference between Brahman and the Jīvas.

1. Taittiriya Up. (2.1); Aitareya Up. Part v, Śrī Bhāṣya i.1.1.
2. Śrī Bhāṣya - Vedānta Sūtras, (Tr.) George Thibaut, Sacred Books of the East Series. XLVIII, P. 124.
(ii) The Validity of all the śrutis, smritis, and itiḥāsas, ignoring any of them as is done in other schools, for an understanding of Brahman. (iii) Divine Purity though the supreme is characterised by cit and acit as its body 1 Rāmānuja explains the relation between the infinite and the finite by means of ‘Śamānādhikāranya’, which is an inseparable relation between a substance and its attribute or a ‘Dharmin’ and ‘Dharma’. 2 This truth of substance-mode (Pra-kāri-prakāra) relation is the key to understand the relationship between Brahman, matter and Jīvas. Neither is there undue stress here on unity or abheda resulting in the illusory theory of the world in entirety, nor a bheda or total difference. But it is a synthetic truth of Unity in Reality.

Rāmānuja answers clearly the question: ‘how can the nature of Brahman be above all imperfections, and constitute mere blessed qualities’? The Jīva which possesses imperfections is a part (amśa) of Brahman. Then the question arises whether those imperfections of the Jīva affect Brahman who is the inner ruler, abiding within the Jīva. Rāmānuja says that Brahman is not affected by the imperfections of the Jīva. 3

The opponents of Rāmānuja argue that since Brahman is connected with the imperfect bodies also, all the imperfections of those bodies should

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.21; iii.3.33; i.2.8; iii.2.20; iii.2.12.
2. Rāmānuja expounds the inseparable relation between Dharma or attribute and Dharmam or the possessor of attribute by means of Aprthaksiddhi.
3. Śrī Bhāṣya ii.3.40; Bhagavad Gītā XVIII.61.
cling to Brahman. Even if we regard that Brahman is not subject to Karma, its connection with various imperfect bodies would cause imperfection and suffering unavoidably, just as the connection with blood and purulent matter, would make a man unclean. Therefore Brahman who possesses blessed qualities and who is considered as the sole cause of the world cannot escape from the imperfections of the world, since it abides within matter and bodies.

Rāmānuja replies that in śrutis, smritis, itihāsas and purānas. Brahman has been described as having double characteristics. The first characteristic is that Brahman is free from all imperfections, and the second, that Brahman possesses all auspicious qualities. The Chāndogya, (viii.1 5) says, (i) “The Supreme person is free from evil, free from old age, free from death, free from grief, free from hunger and thirst”. (ii) “He comprises within Himself all blessed qualities by a particle of His power the whole mass of beings is supported” Therefore it is appropriate to think that all the imperfections belong to the Jīva which is connected with various bodies and which is under the control of Karma, and thus no imperfections can cling to Brahman.

**BRAHMAN IS NOT PURE CONSCIOUSNESS**

**BUT QUALIFIED BY IT:**

The Taittirīya (2.1) says that, “Brahman is Sat-yam, Jñānam, Anantam.” The word ‘Jñāna’ does

1. Śrī Bhāṣya ii.3.41.
2. Śrī Bhāṣya, ii.3; 40 41.
3. Ibid., (Tr.) George Thibaut, Sacred Books of the East Series, XLVIII, P. 608.
not refer to mere knowledge but to the possessor of it. The Aitareya also, after stating that ‘Prajñāna is Brahman’ refer to the Lord as the possessor of the Supreme intelligence by the expression, ‘he (Viṣṇa)’ by means of this Self possessed of intelligence’ (Ait. Up, Part V). Therefore, it is clear that this Brahman is truly a Knower.

Rāmānuja repudiates the Advaitic view of Brahman as Pure consciousness (nirvisēsacinmātram). The conclusion that is naturally arrived at on the basis of three predicates viz. Satyam, Jñānam and Anantam is that Brahman is Saguṇa (Savīsēsā). The qualityless Reality is neither real nor realisable. All the sources of knowledge prove only a qualified Reality and Rāmānuja’s contention is that there is no Pramāna to establish Brahman as pure consciousness.1 Neither perception nor verbal testimony can establish Brahman without attributes (nirvisēsā Brahman).2 The indeterminate perception (nirvikalpaka Pratyakṣa) which necessarily involves the apprehension of certain qualities of the object is also incapable of cognising an unqualified object. Nor can inference prove it. Consciousness is an illumination of an object to a subject and never about nothing.3 The relation between subject and object is between distincts and the theory of sublation does not apply to these, as it applies only to contradictions.4

Vedānta Desika argues in his ‘Nyāya Siddhānjanam’ that if pure consciousness is self-proved, then

2. Ibid., 41 to 45
3. 4 Ibid.,
it must possess the quality of consciousness and the quality of being self-proved. Therefore it cannot be a qualityless entity. If it is argued that attributelessness (nirvisēṣatva) is the quality of Brahman, even then it is not non-qualified, because it remains qualified by the quality of being bereft of attributes. So Viśiṣṭādvaita contends that Brahman is of the nature of consciousness (cīdrūpa) and also that it has consciousness (caitanyā) as its quality. Brahman is not mere Pure consciousness (nirvisēsa cinmātra), but it is necessarily qualified by a host of perfections and has attributive consciousness (dharma-bhūta Jñāna) which is eternally all pervasive unlike the Jīva which is subject to limitation during Śaṃsāra. Plurality of qualities does not mean plurality of substratum. A number of non-contradictory attributes can define the same object distinguishing it from others. The auspicious qualities of Brahman are classified into two categories, those which are definitive and those which are derived from the definition of the characteristics that determine an object (Śvārūpa nirūpaka dharma) and the defining attributes are Real Reality (Śatya-tva), Knowability (Jñānatva), Infinity (Anāntatva), Purity (Amalatva), and blissfulness (Ānandatva), and the defining details (nirūpita svarūpa viśeṣakā dharma) are Divine and auspicious form (Divyāmāṅgalā Vigrāha), Redemptive power (Rākshakatva), bestowing salvation (Mokṣapradatātva), and such others which are innumerable.²

Vedānta Des'ika further says that Brahman as infinite consciousness cannotts Its eternally all-pervasive character. As light is distinct from luminosity, similarly, the Divine Self (Divyātmā) of the universal Being is the principle of self-awareness (Pratyak) is distinct from His attributive consciousness (dharma-bhūta Jñāna).¹ Though the Absolute is the transcendental Reality, it is at the same time immanent and includes everything else in the ultimate analysis.

BRAHMAN IS THE FIRST AND THE INTELLIGENT CAUSE OF THE UNIVERSE:

Sadvidyā of the Chāndogya (vi.2.1.) deals with Vedāntic cosmology. In this section Uddalakā, the teacher, asks his son Svetaketu whether he has learnt from his teacher about adeśa, by knowing which everything else is known. Here the term ‘adesa’ refers to the Absolute Reality which is the material cause as well as the instrumental cause of the Universe. The teacher initiates his son into the Vedāntic truth of the Supreme Being in this section. The Supreme Being is the ground of the Universe by knowing whom everything else is known. By knowing the cause we come to know the effects, since the same substance enters into different states and assumes different forms.² The instance of clay entering into many states of pots and pitchers as well as other utensils illustrates the non-difference between the cause

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2. Chāndogyopanisad, vi.2.1. Śrī Bhāṣya i.i.15., P. 40, (Volume 2) and Sacred Books of the East Series, XLVIII, P. 454.
and the effects. Clay is the immanent cause (Upādānakārāṇa) of all types of pots and pitchers of clay. The understanding of clay includes the understanding of all its effects as it is their material cause. Similarly, the ultimate spirit is the material cause of all. The understanding of this one includes the understanding of all. This concept of Sarvavijñāna from Ekavijñāna proves the reality of the ‘all’ since the act of understanding the ‘all’ implies their reality and inclusion in the ‘one’.

The non-difference between the cause and the effect is illustrated by Uddalaka by means of some examples. What is after all an effect? It is only an assumption of a different state and configuration. There is difference in the utility form and name but the substance is the same. The effect is in the cause in a subtle state. That which is in a subtle state in a cause assumes a gross state and becomes the effect. Nothing that is non-existent can assume existent. So the Śadvidyā’s affirmation that knowledge of the one leads to the knowledge of all affirms that it is the one and the only cause of the universe. The Unity of the causal relations is thus emphasised by the concept of the knowledge of all obtained from the knowledge of the one. This concept propounds that Brahman is the material cause of the Universe. Uddalaka taught his son Śvetaketu as follows: “Being alone, this was in the beginning, one only, without a second. It willed ‘Let me become many’ and thus multiplicity has come into being. (Chāndogya Up. vi.2.1).

GOD IS THE EFFICIENT AND MATERIAL CAUSE OF THE WORLD!

Just as Śaṅkara deduces the illusory nature of
the world from the illusory nature of Māyā, its material cause, in the same manner, Rāmacūrja derives the real character of the world from the reality of its material cause (Prakṛiti). In the Chāndogya, it is stated that even before creation, the world was real (vi.8.6). The whole world has originated from the Prakṛiti which is real, is grounded in it and is merged in it finally. Before creation the world was in Prakṛiti in a very subtle and unmanifested form, and in that form the world was ‘asat’. ‘Asat’ here means unsuitability for bearing names and forms due to extreme subtlety.¹ The world, being a modification of Prakṛiti which is real, is also necessarily real. What exists cannot be unreal or false, Things enter into different states successively. The previous state of a substance passes and the subsequent state comes into being without bringing into existence any new substance. Prakṛiti is not merely what it is, but also what it becomes, and this becoming of Prakṛiti gives rise to the world of manifold objects. In the causal state Prakṛiti is subtle and undifferentiated, but in the state of effect, it evolves itself into names and forms thus constituting the empirical world.

According to Rāmacūrja, evolution of the world from Prakṛiti takes place through the instrumentality of thought and will-power of God.² When the com- motion is caused in the three guṇas the subtle Prakṛiti gradually becomes more and more gross and becomes suitable for creating the world. Creation is gradual throughout the whole course (i.e. from the initial stage to the final result).

¹ Sṛī Bhāṣya, ii.1.18.
² Sṛī Bhāṣya ii.1.25. Taittirīyā Up. vi.2; Chānd. Up. vi.2.3; Gitā, ix. 10.
Vedānta Desīka also reconciles God’s immutability with His being modified into the world in a similar manner. His subtle unmanifest body is modified into the manifold gross world. He, as the soul of the world, endowed with infinite auspicious qualities and of the nature of bliss, remains unmodified in His essence. Thus His essence remains unchanged while His body undergoes modifications.¹

Now let us consider Rāmānuja’s criticism of Saṅkara’s doctrine of Nirguṇa Brahman: Rāmānuja contends that Brahman cannot be, as held by Saṅkara, non-differentiated pure consciousness, for no proof can be adduced to establish non-differentiated objects. All sources of knowledge (Pramāṇas) prove the existence of qualified objects only.² Saṅkara holds that Nirguṇa Brahman is self-manifesting. Rāmānuja says that the so-called self-manifest experience can be proved only with reference to the Jīva which has that experience. In statements such as ‘I experience this’, ‘this’ is an object qualified by some attribute. No indeterminate or unqualified object is ever experienced.³ The nature of an experience is self-manifestation but not the object given in experience. Experience manifests an object to the knowing Jīva. This is so in all the three states of the Jīva viz., waking, dream and deep sleep.⁴ In fact Saṅkara himself admits attributes like existence, knowledge, bliss

1. Tattva muktā kalāpa, sarvārthasiddhi, pp. 295-96 Benaras, 1900.
2. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1..1.49. Rāmānuja on Brahmasūtras, vol. 1&2, ubhaya Vedānta granthamāla Trust, 25, Nathamuni Nivas, Madras-17.
3. Ibid.,
4. Ibid.,
etc., in Brahman. Hence Rāmānuja argues that Brahman is given in experience with attributes but not as nirguṇa.

Rāmānuja analyses perception both determinate and indeterminate and shows that in any type of perception the qualified object alone is given. He first takes into consideration indeterminate perception (nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa) and argues that even in such perception the object given is qualified by some attribute or other. Indeterminate perception is the first stage in perceptual knowledge Rāmānuja says that even at this stage an attributeless object is not perceived. It is only an object with indistinct qualities which is perceived. At the stage of indeterminate perception, a cow is perceived in the form of general configuration with unclear qualities. The indistinct qualities perceived in indeterminate perception enables the Jīva to remember the qualities of the object distinctly and attribute them to the object, resulting in determinate perception. If no attributes are perceived in indeterminate perception, they would not be remembered and there would not be determinate perception. Indeterminate perception apprehends an object devoid of some but not of all attributes. In indeterminate perception as no knowledge is given beyond the configuration of an individual, that is, it does not enable us to cognise the attributes common to all the individuals of a class, it is considered to be indeterminate.

Passing on to consider determinate perception, Rāmānuja argues that at that stage, the individual object is cognised as having distinct attributes and

1, 2. Śrī Bhāṣya, i 1.1. 50, 51.
also as an individual belonging to a class etc. In such perception, not only a particular configuration of an individual but also the genus to which the individual belongs are perceived.\textsuperscript{1} In determinate perception we cognise a definite and distinct object and also its genus. For example we cognise that a particular object is a cow, which leads to the cognisance of the class of cows.\textsuperscript{2}

Rāmānuja holds that inference also gives knowledge of a determinate and qualified object. It depends upon the invariable concomitance between two things, probans or middle term and probandum or major term. Thus ultimately inference depends upon perception and consequently it does not give knowledge of an attributeless object.\textsuperscript{3}

Testimony also proves the existence of a determinate object. A word consists of a root and a termination. Every word denotes an object which is different from another. Different words have different meanings. A sentence, therefore, which connects the meanings of words in it can denote only objects qualified by difference. So testimony also proves the existence of qualified and determinate objects.\textsuperscript{4}

The argument that perception cannot cognise difference since it apprehends mere 'being' and that difference is indeterminable is repudiated by Rāmānuja. He holds that: (i) A determinate and qualified object alone is perceived, and (ii) Such an object is invested with difference. (iii) Just as colour, taste etc., give us knowledge of their different sub-

1 to 4. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1. 51, 51, 52, 50.
stances, so also different kinds of experiences manifest different objects. (iv) Even if 'difference' is said to differ from the nature of an object it does not lead to a vicious infinite nor does it involve vicious inter-dependence. Rāmānuja holds that even if perception exists for a moment only, it apprehends an object with its particular arrangement of parts and other qualities, even if nothing remains to be perceived in the next moment.

Sometimes it is said that perception apprehends a mere 'being'. As all objects come under the category of being, it would not be possible to distinguish one object from another. If mere being is apprehended by all perceptions, perceptions of qualified objects such as the existence of a Jar, or of a cloth etc. would not be possible. If mere 'being' alone is apprehended by perception, the difference characterised by the particular arrangement of the parts of an object, which is distinct from its mere existence, would not be perceived. Rāmānuja holds that in addition to 'being', the object with its distinct qualities is also cognised in perception. For example, a person who requires a horse avoids a buffalo, because he perceives the buffalo with its distinct qualities. Further, if all perceptions apprehend mere 'being', they perceive what is already perceived and there would not be a difference between perception and recollection. Each perception is distinct and apprehends a distinct object. If all perceptions apprehend the same object - mere 'being' - there would be no blind or deaf persons, since one perception would apprehend all objects. But there are blind and deaf per-

1, 2, 3. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1. 50 to 52, 53, 54.
sons. The eyes do not perceive mere ‘being’, but objects qualified by colours. The skin does not perceive mere ‘being’ but objects qualified by touch. No sense organ can perceive mere ‘being’.¹ Further, Rāmānuja points out that if perception cognises the unqualified pure ‘Being’, Brahman which is of the nature of Pure ‘Being’ (according to Sāṃkara) would be an object of valid knowledge and so material and perishable.² For whatever is knowable is material and perishable as per Sāṃkara’s view. So Rāmānuja argues that perception apprehends an object qualified by difference, a particular arrangement of parts and qualities but not mere ‘being’.³

Rāmānuja also refutes Sāṃkara’s contention that a jar or a cloth etc. are exclusive and contradictory of one another and states that there would be only contradiction between the existence of an object and its non-existence at the same time and in the same place, like rope and an illusory serpent. So mere difference, Rāmānuja says is not the cause of false-hood.⁴

Sāṃkara says that Brahman is self-existent and self-proved and does not require any proof. Rāmānuja refutes this view as follows⁵: Mere ‘being’ is not the only reality. ‘Being’ is perceived to be different from experience. The difference between them is proved by perception and is not contradicted by any other valid source of knowledge.⁶

Sāṃkara contends that experience is self-manifest. Rāmānuja says that this view is false on the following grounds. (i) When the knowing Jiva

¹ to 6. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1. 54, 54, 54, 55, 55, 56.
manifests or cognises an object, then alone its experience manifests itself.\(^1\) (ii) Experience of other objects is inferred from its effects or expressions-acceptance or avoidance of it.\(^2\) (iii) One's own experience is also an object of one's recollection: "I experienced an experience in the past." Sāmkara argues that an experience which is the object of another experience ceases to be experience. Rāmānuja does not agree with this view and says, (i) that if Sāmkara's view is valid, one's past experience and another's experience being the objects of experience would cease to be experiences.\(^3\) (ii) If another's experience is not inferred from his speech, the relation between words and their meanings or objects being imperceptible-then no words would be used and no pupils would approach a teacher because his wisdom would not be inferred from his words.\(^4\) (iii) But the Jar and other material objects are not of the nature of manifestation and so are not experiences, not because they are the objects of experience but because they are unconscious and so are not of the nature of experience.\(^5\)

Rāmānuja says that there is no experience which does not cognise an object, for an objectless experience is never perceived.\(^6\) An experience is proved to be self-manifest, for it is perceived to manifest an object. If an experience does not exist at the time of manifesting an object, there is no way of proving that it exists and it is self-manifest. If an experience is not an object of another experience it is as good as non-existent. There is no experience which does not cognise an object even in deep sleep and swoon. If there is such an experience there would be recollection of it on waking from sleep or on regaining

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1 to 6. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1. 56, 56, 56, 56, 56, 61.
consciousness. But there is no recollection of such objectless experience. Rāmānuja thus rejects Saṃkara’s concept of selfless and objectless experience.

Next Rāmānuja considers Saṃkara’s argument of experience being unproduced and indivisible. It is invalid because (i) the Jīva though unproduced is different from the body and the sense-organs and hence indivisible. (ii) the Jīva is admitted by Saṃkara to be different from avidya and that the difference between them is false, there is no difference between avidyā and the Jīva i.e. the Jīva is identical with avidyā and hence it is divisible.

Saṃkara argues that experience cannot have any knowable qualities. Rāmānuja, refuting this argument, says that Saṃkara himself admits eternality and self-manifestness to be the qualities of experience. They are not the nature of experience since they are different from each other in their nature. Experience is the manifestation of an object to the Jīva. Eternality is experience at all times. Both experience and material things are manifested by experience. Manifestation is common to both these experiences. Self-manifestness can be only an invariable attribute of an experience.

Further, a question arises. Is an experience proved to be real or not? If it is proved to be real, then its attributes are also proved to be so. If it is not, then what is the Jīva? Saṃkara regards the Jīva as mere experience or Pure consciousness. Rāmānuja says that Saṃkara’s view is wrong for an experience cannot cognise itself as the Jīva. An experience

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1. Sri Bhāṣya, i.1.1. 62, 2 to 4. Ibid., i.1.1. 62-63. 5. Ibid., 63.
makes an object manifest to the Jīva, and it is an attribute of the Jīva. As such, the Jīva is permanent, and is proved to be permanent by recognition also. The production, existence and destruction of an experience are proved by perception. If a momentary experience is the Jīva, as Saṃkara contends, then, there would be no recognition like "I perceived this in the past." An object perceived by one past experience cannot be recognised by another future experience. But recognition is a fact of experience. Further Saṃkara regards mere experience as the Jīva. Though Saṃkara regards Jīva as eternal, mere eternal experience cannot account for recognition which has such a form as "I perceived this". Recognition clearly testifies to the 'I' who perceives and the 'I' who recognises the object. So Saṃkara's argument that there is mere experience or Pure consciousness which is self-manifest is false.¹

¹ Sri Bhāṣya, i 1.1 63.
CHAPTER V

THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ OR AVIDYĀ: ACCORDING TO VISĪṬĀDVAITA

The notion of ‘māyā’ is as old as Rg Veda, where it is stated that “Indra is perceived as manifold by māyā” (vi.47.18.) The Brhadāraṇyaka says of him: “He transforms Himself in accordance with each form that form of His was for the sake of making Him known. Indra on account of māyā is perceived as manifold. For to him are yoked hundreds of organs”. (II.15.18). In the Svetāsvatara also the word ‘māyā’ occurs in various places. At one place it is said: “Know thou that Nature is māyā and that the great God is the Lord of māyā. The whole world is filled with beings who form his parts” (iv.10). In all these quotations from RgVeda onwards, the word ‘māyā’ is used not in the sense of illusion or unreality but in the sense of power or energy of Brahman, by which Brahman is transformed into different forms of Prakriti. A detailed definition of māyā is given in Sarvopanisād (iv) as follows: “That which is beginningless, fruitless, open to both proof and disproof, neither real nor unreal - unreal - non-existent, when because of the immutability of its own substratum, the cause of change is ascertained; existent - when it is not so ascertained - thus that which is undefinable is called māyā”. Elsewhere in the same upaniṣad it is called indescribable or ‘anirvacanīya’. The Brhadāraṇyaka calls Brahman at one place, “The Reality of realities or the Truth of truths” (ii.1.20), meaning thereby that the changing world is real and Brahman which permeates it is the Absolute Reality behind the
relative Reality of the cosmic world. The Gītā has adopted this upaniṣadīc view. It has used the word māyā not in the sense of illusion but as the essential Divine energy by which Brahmaṇ transforms a part of itself into the cosmic world. The Gītā says: “The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings causing all the beings, by his māyā, to revolve as if mounted on a machine” (XVIII.61), “Though I am unborn of changeless nature and Lord of beings, yet subjugating my Prakriti, I come into being by my own māyā (iv.6). “Verily this divine māyā of mine, constituted of the guṇas, is difficult to cross over; those who devote themselves to Me alone, cross over this māyā” (vii.14). “Veiled by yoga māyā (i.e. union of the three guṇas) I am not manifest to all. This de- jaded world knows Me not. the unborn the immutable” (vii.25).

The concept of ‘Avidyā’ appears in almost all the systems of Indian Philosophy, although there are divergent opinions regarding its specific nature. The Viśiṣṭādvaitic view of it as propounded by Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desṭika is formulated partly by a criticism of the Advaitic concept of ‘māyā’ and partly by independent and original thought. That is to say it has some thing new and original to say regarding it. In Sāṁkhya, avidyā is termed as ‘aviveka’; in the sense that it is a failure to discriminate between the Self and the not self. Nyāya also interprets it as avidyā or ajñāna. Sāṁkara on the other hand recognises māyā or avidyā as the objective matrix of the world and describes it as positive (bhāvarūpa), indescribable (anirvacanīya) and illusory from the transcendental point of view. This view of avidyā is repudiated by Rāmānuja as an aberration, as Sāṁkara fails to distinguish between the trans-
cendental Self and its accompanying quality, namely, knowledge, which is its basic characteristic (vis'esa-
na). After Rāmānuja’s refutation of Śaṁkara’s posi-
tion in his Śrī Bhāṣya, Vedānta Des’ika added to his scheme of refutation in his Tattva Muktā Kalāpa
and Sarvārtha Siddhi.

The word ‘māya’ or ‘avidyā’ is used by Rāmā-
uuja in two different senses, metaphysical and ethi-
cal. According to the metaphysics of Rāmānuja,
Prakriti is called avidvā, since acit is the principle
that prevents the Self from realising its essentially
conscious nature. Prakriti being unconscious is na-
turally opposed to knowledge or avidyā. It is the
material cause of the world and possessor of the
three guṇas (triguṇātmika) like the avidyā of Śaṁ-
kara. But as a category Prakriti of Rāmānuja pos-
sesses a status different from the status of the avidyā
of Śaṁkara. In Advaita, avidyā is a terminable prin-
ciple and is not the ultimate truth. It puts forth
appearances only and does not create the real world.
The knowledge of Brahman not only reveals the fals-
sity of the world but also implies the falsity of māya
or avidyā. But Prakriti as conceived by Rāmānuja
though called avidyā, is real and as such it is begin-
ingless and endless. The speciality about its reality
is that it is real as a mode of God from whom it
derives its substantiality and meaning. For Rāmā-
uuja, the world is real. He therefore raises seven
objections against the avidyā theory of Advaita which
we shall explain one by one.

AŚRAYĀNUPAPATTI :

The first objection is that there can be no sub-
stratum (aśraya) för avidyā. Neither the Īva nor
Brahman can serve as a basis for the principle of illusion. The Jīva being itself a creation of nescience (avidyā) cannot be regarded as its substratum. To trace the locus of avidyā in the Jīva is to commit the fallacy of mutual dependence. Brahman also cannot be the locus of avidyā, as Brahman is supposed to be self-luminous (svayamprakāśa). Self-luminosity cannot be supposed to be enveloped under any condition. If it is believed to be covered, there will be the cessation of the true nature of Brahman since Brahman is nothing but self-luminosity. Thus, as there is no locus for avidyā, it is absolutely meaningless.¹

TIRODHANĀNUPAPATTI:

The second objection is that if we believe in avidyā, then we have to believe also in the obscuration or concealment of pure consciousness, which would be absurd. Brahman has been admitted as self-revealing consciousness by the advaitin. Being self-manifest (svayamprakāśa), Brahman can never be subject to any kind of obscuration. Obscuration means two things, i) counter-action of a barrier preventing origination of knowledge and ii) destruction of knowledge. Pure knowledge is not a product, and so it is not liable to destruction. It is eternal and persisting. How and why self-manifesting pure consciousness makes itself obscure by avidyā is an insoluble riddle.

SVARŪPĀNUPAPATTI:

The third charge deals with the essential nature of avidyā. As long as it is a thing at all, it must either

¹ Sri Bhāṣya, i.1.1. 96.
have the nature of reality or the nature of unreality. Avidyā cannot be admitted as real because in that case, Saṃkara’s Philosophy would cease to be a philosophy of non-dualism. Neither can avidyā be regarded as the unreal cause of an unreal world, since such an admission will result in committing the fallacy of infinite regress (anavasthā). If the false knowledge of the false world is caused by a false avidyā, then this knowledge of the false avidyā must be due to another principle of falsity and that too, to another and so on.1 If it is held that avidyā is revealed by Brahman, even then the position does not improve. Brahman is eternal and avidyā will, always be eternal and as such will always be known by the individual souls. Since avidyā will never terminate, there will be no liberation for the suffering souls of the world.

ANIRVACANĪYĀNUPAPATTI:

The fourth charge is brought against the anirvacanīya theory or indefinability. Things of the world are experienced either as real (Sat) or unreal (asat). A thing which is different from both real and unreal (Sādāsad vilakṣaṇa) can never be logically accepted. There is no use of describing any entity as indefinable (anirvacāniya) when such an entity can never be logically established on the ground of any evidence. All cognitions relate to entities or non-entities. If it is held that object of a cognition has neither positive characteristics of an entity nor the negative

1. a) Vedārtha Samgraha, P. 76. Printed and Published by Lazarus & Company, Benares.
characteristics of a non-entity, then all things may become the objects of all cognitions.

PRAMĀṇĀNUPAPATTI:

Naturally the next question is whether there is any means by which ‘avidya’ is brought within the range of our cognition. Rāmānuja says that there is no means by which such an avidya can be arrived at and established. This difficulty in the way of the theory of māya is spoken of as Pramāṇānupapatti. Thus the fifth objection against avidya is that it is not supported by any means of Pramāṇa. Since avidya is different from being ‘both’ real ‘and’ unreal (sadāsad vilaksana), it cannot be known by perception which is only capable of giving us ‘the’ knowledge of an entity or of a non-entity and it can never be indefinable. Since there is nothing to serve as a sign or reason to conclude that avidya is indefinable, it cannot also be known through inference. Finally it cannot be known through scriptural testimony, for the scriptures describe māya as the real world - producing power of Isvara and it has nothing to do with ‘unreal ‘avidya’. On the advaitin’s view even the scriptures are a part of the metaphysical error or the world illusion. If that is so, then the whole foundation of knowledge is thereby destroyed.

NIVARTAKĀNUPAPATTI:

Advaitins argue that avidya is destroyed by the knowledge of the identity of the Jīva with Brahmān. For, knowledge of an undifferentiated and attributeless Brahmān alone can root out avidya completely.

1, Śri Bhāṣya, i 1.1. 102.
and finally. But Rāmānuja argues that such a knowledge is impossible. Knowledge always involves discrimination and determination. Consequently, knowledge which has an attributeless Brahman for its object is impossible and cannot be the complete knowledge of truth. Obviously such an impossible knowledge of the attributeless Brahman cannot be the remover of avidyā postulated by advaita.¹

NIVRITTAYĀNUPAPATTI:

The last objection of Rāmānuja to this theory of avidyā is that avidyā as postulated by the advaitins has to be irremovable. This goes against their own theory of liberation. Brahma Jñāna is not (according to advaita) the knowledge of Brahman but it is knowledge that Jīva is Brahman. This is pure knowledge and it is different from the knowledge of identity which is called Nivartaka Jñāna. According to Rāmānuja, Nivartaka Jñāna being different from Brahman must be regarded as a form of avidyā even according to Advaita since anything different from Brahman falls in the realm of avidyā. Advaita contends that Nivartaka Jñāna destroys avidyā and then destroys itself like a blazing fire which after destroying the forest destroys itself. That is, it is self-consuming. This view is not acceptable to Rāmānuja because it does not appear sound. For we find that in the case of the fire burning a forest, ashes remain even after the fire is extinguished. So also if we hold that avidyā can be burnt away, we must necessarily admit that it will continue to exist in the form of its own ashes. Absolute liberation, therefore, is wholly unattainable.

¹ Srī Bhāṣya, i.1.1. 97-117.
For the above reasons, the removal of the advaitin's hypothetical nescience (avidyā) is not acceptable.

Vedānta Deśīka also refutes advaita doctrine of nescience (avidyā). His views are contained in his Tattvamuktākalāpa and Sarvārtha-siddhi. He argues that the so called avidyā has no power of veiling any entity like light. Insentient things like a jar etc: are manifested by an entity different from their nature. So they can be veiled from being manifested. But Brahman is self-manifest and so cannot be veiled by avidyā. Brahman is of the nature of self-manifestness. So it is incapable of being veiled. If Brahman were veiled, it would cease to exist. The cessation of Brahman's manifestation would be the cessation of its existence, since it is of the nature of manifestation. As Brahman manifestation is a fact, it would follow that there is nothing like nescience veiling it.

Advaita contends that Brahman is veiled by avidyā because it depends upon a mental mode for its manifestation. This contention is false according to Vedānta Deśīka. He discusses several alternatives and argues that acceptance of any alternative would lead to some difficulty or other. He says that "the mental mode not being produced cannot destroy avidyā. So obstruction to the production of the mental mode should be admitted. So when avidyā exists, the mental mode which destroys it cannot be produced. When avidyā is destroyed, the mental mode has no function to perform. If the mental mode is said to be produced after it destroys avidyā, then there is interdependence. When the mental mode is produced, there is destruction of obstruction to the production of knowledge. When this
obstruction is destroyed, the mental mode is produced. So Brahman cannot be veiled by avidyā"). Further, in all illusions a substratum and a defect are found to be true and what is attributed is found to be false. According to Vedānta Desīka illusions are not without a substratum. The substratum of an illusion is true. Brahman, the substratum of the so-called world-illusion is true because the Sūrūti asserts Brahman is truth, knowledge, and infinite. Brahman is real. Prakṛti is also real. It is uncaused, eternal, and material cause of the world. It exists in all times. The world is produced by Brahman and is real and not a false appearance. Hence there is no place for the advaita doctrine of nescience.

Vedānta Desīka further raises the following questions. Is Brahman the knower of avidyā? Is Brahman the knower of avidyā without depending on a defect? Or is it the knower of avidyā depending on a defect? If avidyā is manifested to Brahman's consciousness in the absence of a defect, the world also should be manifested to it without avidyā. If avidyā is manifested to Brahman depending on some other defect, it would mean that avidya depends upon another imagined avidyā, and thus it would lead to the vicious infinite. If the vicious infinite is sought to be avoided by assuming a beginningless series of avidyās, since avidyā does not depend upon any other defect and as is cognised by the taintless consciousness of Brahman, then the truth of avidyā would be undeniable. If avidyā is manifested without depending upon any defect, all indefinable

things of the world also should be manifested to consciousness without depending upon any defect. But no object of the world is manifested to consciousness without depending on something else. It cannot be argued that avidyā is manifested at the time when it is super imposed on the Self and that exists in its nature when there is no super-imposition. For, avidyā is proved to exist by the consciousness on which it depends and it cannot exist when it is not manifested to consciousness. If avidyā is said to be manifested to God’s consciousness, it would be real, since His consciousness is untainted, and He will cease to be God if His consciousness is tainted. If the independent Brahman is said to be a defect which is necessary for the manifestation of avidyā, then avidyā which is said to be beginningless in its nature can never be terminated. And Brahman being eternal, avidyā will also be eternal. In such a situation, Vedānta Desīka concludes, avidyā cannot be known by Brahman.¹

ELUCIDATION OF THE UNJUSTIFIABILITY OF SĀmkARA’S DOCTRINE OF AVIDYĀ:

Avidyā as expounded by Sāmkara baffles our attempts to understand it. All of us are aware of a positive entity which is an object of knowledge. Since Sāmkara describes avidyā as indescribable and, as indescribability (anirvacaniya) can never be explained in any form, it seems to be an absurd hypothesis to hold that avidyā is an object of knowledge. If it is held that both the knowledge of an entity and of a non-entity can give us knowledge of something

¹ Sarvārtha Siddhi, P. 308-310.
which is neither an entity nor a non-entity, then all things would become the objects of all knowledge. This appears to be a very anomalous philosophical position.

Rāmānuja also holds that it is the pure knowledge which should be opposed to avidyā, and so Brahman as pure knowledge should stand contradictory to avidyā. If avidyā is a matter of positive experience then it should be followed by the negation of Brahman, for two contradictory principles cannot become the content of experience at the same time. Further to hold Brahman as concealed by avidyā is to admit that the nature of Brahman as self-revealing consciousness is destroyed. Pure consciousness is never a product and as such, it can never be destroyed. Concealment by avidyā would tantamount to being destroyed. So it would not be correct to hold that Brahman is at any time concealed by avidyā. Moreover if concealment is taken as a partial covering of Brahman; then Brahman will cease to be partless, and that will go against the fundamental position of Advaita. It cannot also be maintained that being hidden by avidyā, Brahman is only indistinctly manifested, because revelation itself cannot be described as distinct or non-distinct.

The use of the negative prefix ‘a’ in avidyā or ajñāna implies that it can be understood only with reference to the cognition of the nature of knowledge. To state briefly, ajñāna pre-supposes jñāna and is relative to knowledge. If darkness is considered as being opposed to light, then darkness cannot be understood without pre-supposing the knowledge of light. If advaitins hold that avidyā can be removed by the knowledge of Brahman, then avidyā or
ignorance means knowledge of the reality of the world. In this sense alone ajñāna or ignorance can be held as contradictory to true knowledge. So it is not the non-knowledge of the true nature of Brahman that will be removed by the knowledge of the falsity of the world, as these two do not have the same object and cannot therefore be treated as contradictory to each other. If they are non-contradictory, one cannot be the destroyer of the other. So the contention that the knowledge of the true nature of Brahman leads to the destruction of ignorance cannot hold.

Advaita holds that avidyā can be perceived directly and it refers to such perceptions as “I am ignorant”, “I do not know myself or any other”. But Rāmānuja thinks that such perceptions do not prove the immediate and direct experience of avidyā. On the other hand, they refer to the prior-nonexistence (prāgabhava) of the knowledge of an object. For direct perception, avidyā must refer to a specific object about which there is ignorance. This cannot be, since in that case avidyā itself will disappear with knowledge of the object. If no specific object is referred to by avidyā, then it cannot be perceived, for like pure contentless knowledge, pure contentless ignorance too, can never be directly apprehended. The experience “I did not know anything during deep sleep” is an inference grounded on the absence of memory of any knowledge during deep sleep. It is not a proof of the direct apprehension of avidyā. Hence, avidyā or ajñāna, in the sense of a positive but false and illusion-producing entity cannot be upheld. For Rāmānuja, Prakriti is only the real and positive tattva (which can be called avidyā) which is regarded as the real cause of the world.
ETHICAL MEANING OF AVIDYĀ:

In the ethical realm of philosophy, Rāmānuja has used the word avidyā in the sense of Varṇāśrama Karmas which bring about the expansion and contraction of the dharmabhūta jñāna of the Jīva. Avidyā in this sense is a positive entity having the power to obscure attributive knowledge (dharmabhūta jñāna) and creating a false sense of agency in the Jīva. Consequently, the attitude of the Jīva towards the world becomes distorted, and he thinks only of the enjoyment of the worldly comforts for which he thinks he is born. Avidyā in the form of Karma thus becomes the generating cause only of the experience (bhoga) by the Jīva and not the object of experience (bhogyā) which is Prakriti. Owing to the inadequate expansion of the dharmabhūta jñāna, the Jīva develops a false attitude towards the world and ignores God as the ultimate source of everything. Therefore, avidyā in the sense of Karma is a principle of obscurations.

From the above discussion of avidyā, it is clear that Viśiṣṭādvaita does not use the term in any rigid sense. It conceives avidyā as a craving for anything that develops in the Jīva in his pursuit of mundane pleasures which stand in the way of God-realisation. It may be pointed out that the use of avidyā in the sense of Karma (action) is not an innovation of Rāmānuja. Sāṃkara also in his commentary of the ninth verse on the Ḫa has interpreted avidyā in the sense of ‘Vaidika Karma’. Rāmānuja perhaps felt that since creation and dissolution cannot take place unless assisted by Karma, it is therefore proper to identify avidyā with Karma and to hold that it is the cause that brings about the diversities in the experiences of Jīvas.
OBJECTIONS AGAINST RĀMĀNUJA’S

REFUTATION OF AVIDYĀ:

Mahāmohopadhyāya Śrī Ananta Krishna Sastri in his book ‘Sāta Bhūṣāṇi’ (P. 92-101) raises some objections against Rāmānuja’s refutation of avidyā. To Rāmānuja, knowledge is opposed to ignorance and as such ignorance is never revealed by it. On the contrary knowledge always destroys ingorance.

The author of ‘Sāta Bhūṣāṇi’ criticises this stand of Rāmānuja by affirming that pure objectless consciousness is not opposed to ajñāna. It is only the Vṛtticaitanya which contradicts ajñāna and cannot therefore exist with it. The experience of ‘I do not know’ reveals Śāmānya-Jñāna of the soul and this is not opposed to ajñāna. On the other hand, ignorance is revealed by this awareness.

He also points out that ignorance is not a negative category according to Advaita. The prefix ‘a’ here does not imply non-existence of knowledge prior to the apprehension of an object. It is used here to denote that avidyā is opposed to phenomenal knowledge obtained through the use of Pramāṇas. The third charge against Rāmānuja is that according to him, it is the attributive consciousness (Dharmabhūtajñāna) that is contracted and expanded by the Karmas of the Jīvas. Substantive consciousness (Dharmibhūtajñāna) is self-revealing and not revealed by attributive consciousness (Dharmabhūtajñāna). Since contraction of the attributive consciousness cannot bring about a corresponding contraction of the substantive consciousness, Something else besides Karma has got to be accepted to explain the obscuration of substantive consciousness.
Lastly, in the philosophy of Rāmānuja it is stated that Karma is regarded as the cause of the expansion and contraction of the attributive consciousness which are simply the effects. Being an effect, the expansion of attributive consciousness will not be able to destroy Karma. Unless avidyā Karma is destroyed, liberation cannot be attained.

**Objections Met:**

The above objections are no doubt grave, but can be met. Firstly, it may be pointed out that Rāmānuja has understood and explained knowledge which is altogether different from that which is maintained by Advaita. According to Rāmānuja, knowledge always refers beyond itself to objects and subjects and is never revealed in the absence of objects. It has a referential transcendence and always reveals an object besides its own nature. Sāṃkara admits Pure consciousness as ultimate, but Rāmānuja denies altogether the existence of such knowledge. Even the knowledge of a liberated Self is not contentless. God himself becomes the content of knowledge of an emancipated Self. There is therefore no such thing as pure consciousness (nirvis'esa caityanyā) serving as the substratum of ignorance. Ajñāna of a particular object is always contrary to the knowledge of that particular object. As such it is also a destroyer of that knowledge. As knowledge and ignorance are incompatible, knowledge can never be the revealer or substratum of ignorance.

Further, Rāmānuja does not admit the existence of a Self as consciousness (Jñāna Svarūpa Ātman) totally devoid of the attitude of knowing objects. Whether bound or liberated, awake or asleep, the
Jiva is always revealed as the knower, though the contents of knowledge are relative to different psychological states through which the Jiva passes. Unless the Jiva is admitted as a form of knowledge only and not as a knower, the existence of pure consciousness cannot be established. If such Pure consciousness is not established there cannot be any locus for ajñāna.

In fact the Advaita line of thinking cannot give us a glimpse even of any undifferentiated pure consciousness at any stage of our life. Brahman itself is known through a mode of internal organ (Vritti of antahkaraṇa) and as such, in Brahma Jñāna, Brahman will become the object of that specific Vritti of antahkaraṇa. How can we then believe in the existence of a knowledge which does not involve a reference to any object? Secondly, if ‘a’ in avidyā or ajñāna implies that it is contrary to knowledge obtained through the Pramāṇas, then it is evident that ajñāna cannot be submitted to any proof. As such ajñāna as expounded by Advaita cannot be established by any Pramāṇa.

Thirdly, in the opinion of Rāmānuja, the experience of ‘I did not know myself’ does not imply a perception of ajñāna during deep sleep. In deep sleep pure ‘aham’ becomes the object of knowledge of the Jīva. Since antahkaraṇa is operative during deep sleep, there is no memory, and in the absence of the memory of our knowledge of pure ‘aham’ during deep sleep each one of us feels as if he did not know even himself in that stage. Knowledge of ‘I am’ persists in deep sleep and attributive consciousness is never veiled. The presence of attributive consciousness only remains unmanifested
because of the absence of the specific objects of our empirical knowledge and the question of assuming the existence of a separate principle of obscuration for attributive consciousness does not arise.

Lastly, Râmânuja does not seem to have felt the need for assuming the existence of a separate principle to serve as the destroyer of actions (Karmas). Karmas will be automatically destroyed as soon as their effects are produced. In brief it can be said that actions will be destroyed by their results. For example, performance of Jyotiṣṭoma sacrifice results in the attainment of heaven, as soon as heaven is attained, that particular sacrifice comes to an end. Moreover, when the expansion of attributive consciousness is complete, all attachments to worldly pleasures and pains cease immediately. The fire of knowledge destroys completely Sāṅcita karmas and Kriyamāna karmas. Daily and occasional duties (nityanaimittik karmas) too when directed towards God or towards the expansion of attributive consciousness are automatically destroyed when the effects sought for are produced.
CHAPTER VI

VISĪSTĀDVAITA CONCEPTION OF THE JĪVA (SELF)

Man has been the subject of study and speculation from very early times. In India the seers have arrived at the truth that Jīva is different and distinct from matter. Study of the nature of the Jīva and his relation with Universe has been important in Indian thought from the Vedic days. The following questions arise with regard to study of the Jīva. Is the Jīva self-explanatory? Is there a creator of the Jīva? If so, how is Jīva related to that creator? Is Jīva one with or different from the creator? What is the nature of matter? How and why is the Jīva connected with matter?

Visīstādvaīta advocates the unity of Reality while the world of matter and Jīvas is also admitted as a part of Reality. The Absolute of Visīstādvaīta is characterised by its attributes of cit and acit unlike the undifferentiated Absolute (Brahman) of Advaita Rāmānuja postulates one Supreme Reality on different grounds of Visīstāikya or the unity in the form of organic whole involving several attributes. “Brahman is qualified by plurality but is not itself plural”.1 Rāmanuja explains the relationship of the world with Brahman in a realistic way following Pariṣkṛita S āktivāda according to which the cit and acit are admitted as the power (Sākti) or inseparable attributes of the Supreme. The physical universe subject to mutation as well as the Jīvas that depend

1. Srinivasachari, P.N., Philosophy of Visīstādvaita, P. 101.
upon various conditions, are not self-explanatory, for they are not the creators of the world. Though the Jivas qualified by matter have substantive being, they have no independent existence as they form the modes of the Supreme. Rāmānuja holds the validity of all the Upaniṣads, and takes the standpoint of synthesis in which all scriptural statements become equally significant. The cit and acit form the real modes of the Supreme Reality being inseparably related to it as its attributes. The Sadvidyā of the Chāndogya which declares that the Supreme was one without a second before creation implies that even at that stage, Brahman was characterised by cit and acit in subtle form. Creation is nothing but the manifestation of Brahman in the cit and the acit of the gross state. The cit and acit exist as one with Brahman in a subtle form even before the creation of this world of names and forms. The cit and acit existed as a part of Reality in the causal stage. The differentiation into names and forms came into existence after creation when cit and acit became distinguishable entities.

According to Viṣistādvaita Ātman denotes the Self or the Jiva. Yāmunācārya’s important works form the basic texts of Viṣistādvaita. Rāmānuja has directly been guided by the works of Yāmuna. Yāmuna’s ‘Siddhi Traya’ is one of the source books for Rāmānuja’s Śrī Bhāṣya. Yāmuna, Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desīka repudiate the conceptions of the rival theories of the Jiva or the Self by exposing their inconsistencies and as being contrary to the facts of experience. The concept of Jiva is explained by stating first what it is not, and by a criticism of the negative definitions, the positive meaning of the Jiva is constructed. The Jiva according to Yāmuna
is quite distinct from the physical body, sense organs, mind, and vital breath.

**THE JĪVA IS DIFFERENT FROM THE BODY:**

The followers of Bṛhaspati (Cārvākas) hold that the body itself is the Jīva. They say that as body is the aggregate of several parts, Consciousness might be attributed either to any one of the parts or every part of the body. To that effect one of the Sūtras runs: Consciousness emerges from the elements of earth, water, fire and air, just as the intoxicating quality springs from herbs etc.¹

Yāmuna argues that the body cannot be the Jīva because it is contradicted by perception. He proceeds to argue that the body is not the Jīva, since the Jīva is perceived different from the body. In the perceptual judgement, "I know this", 'I' is the Jīva and 'this' - is the object. The body cannot be both 'I' or the knower and 'this' or the Known. In the experience 'I know this', the consciousness of 'I' is directed in-ward to the Self, and the consciousness of 'this' is directed outward to an object. If the gross body is the Jīva, its parts would be manifested in the perception of the Jīva. The gross body is composed of parts and cannot be perceived without its parts being perceived. But when manas is withdrawn and fixed on the Jīva by controlling the activities of the sense organs and parts of the body, then the parts of the body are not manifested in the perception of the Jīva. There is a general rule that only the

¹ Yāmunācārya—Siddhātraya pp. 6-8, (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi-1, 1900)
parts of the composite whole which are perceptible are perceived in the perception of a whole. The instance of triad of atoms (tryañuka) which is cited as disapproving the general rule does not really disprove it for there is no warrant for accepting the existence of atoms over the above triads which are devoid of parts and which are perceptible in Sun's rays passing through the hole of a window. Even granting the existence of infinitesimal atoms, the general rule is not falsified, because it applies only to the perceptible 'parts'. Again it cannot also be contended that this rule applies only in the case of the complex whole cognised by external organs as there is no warrant for the same. Besides, in perceiving a whole composed of parts an internal organ by itself does not operate. In the case of air, it is known as the substratum or the seat of touch alone, since it is devoid of colour and other qualities. Its parts are manifested in its tactual perception as the parts of the jar are perceived through the tactual organ. So the general rule is not violated by the instance of air also.

Knowledge of the Jiva does not involve knowledge of bodily organs. Hence the Jiva is distinct from the body. Even cognitions like 'I am stout' establish the Jiva distinct from the body. Identity of the body with the Jiva is illusory. What is the object of the 'I' notion (ahampratyaya) in experiences such as 'I am fat' and 'I am lean'? Any entity within the body is an object of the 'I' notion. The body which has childhood, fatness etc., and which is perceived with the eyes is not its object. The experience of 'I' is not a matter of visual perception. We speak of 'my body' as we speak of 'my house'. In such statements the difference between the body and the Jiva
is perceived and the two are treated as different by us. The Jīva is an object of direct perception and the words 'I' and the 'Jīva' have the same meaning. But the words 'I' and the body do not have the same meaning, because the Jīva is distinctly perceived as different from the body. The body related to the Jīva is spoken of as 'I' in a figurative sense only.¹ The external objects are perceived as different from the Jīva because they are endowed with colour, magnitude number and other qualities which are opposed to the Jīva. Persons who have no capacity for discrimination, wrongly identify the Jīva with the body because of their non-perception of such qualities of the Jīva. The Jīva resolves, remembers and reasons according to its volition. The body acts according to the volition of the Jīva. So the illusion of identity between the body and the Jīva is generated in the minds of indiscriminating persons. But persons who treat the Jīva to be of the nature of 'I' devoid of parts perceive it as different from the gross body composed of parts. However, it might be mentioned that the body is not perceived through the external sense organs, like a jar.

The body which is not the Jīva is an aggregate and a means to the realisation of the end of another being or Jīva. But the Jīva is simple and is not a means to the realisation of the end of another being. Therefore, the body cannot be known as the Jīva. Yamuna borrows this argument from Samkhya. All objects, colours etc., and internal objects—pleasure, pain etc., are perceived as the objects of the experi-

¹. Siddhātraya, P. 9 (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi–1, 1900)
ience of the Jīva and the Jīva is perceived as the principal, whose end is realised by them. The body is a means to the Jīva’s end because: i) it is an aggregate and ii) all aggregates like beds, seats, houses etc., are the means to the Self’s end. The aggregates are not perceived to be the means to the ends of the other aggregates. So the Jīva is not an aggregate. If it is one, it would also be a means to another being’s end. But it is not so. And so the Jīva as an aggregate is contradicted by non-apprehension. If it were a means to another aggregate, there would be an endless series of aggregates. The hypothesis of infinite series should not be resorted to, if it can be avoided. The infinite regress can be avoided if the Jīva is admitted to be simple.

Consciousness is not a quality of the body because: i) it cannot exist in the body, although it is not distinctly perceived that it is different from the body, ii) Consciousness is different from the other qualities of the body.\(^1\) All special qualities of the effects are produced by their material causes. The atoms of the body are its material cause and devoid of consciousness. So consciousness cannot be produced in the body. Yāmuna says that Brhaspati’s argument, that consciousness is produced by earth, water, fire and air in the body, just as intoxicating power is generated by the particles of rice, is wrong, since the intoxicating power is not a special quality of the ingredients of liquor. If consciousness is admitted to exist in the atoms of the body, there would be many conscious beings in it and consequently there would be no relation to a principal, and an

\(^1\) Siddhātraya, pp. 10-11 (Chowkambā Sanskrit Series, Varanasi-1, 1900)
accessory would be required between the Jiva and the body. There would be no recollection also, since one consciousness would not remember what was perceived by another consciousness. Further the Carvaka contention that the motely colour in a piece of cloth is not produced by the colours in the component threads is wrong because i) the motely colour is a mixture of colours and ii) it is produced by different colours in the component threads. Though the motely colour does not exist in each thread, still it exists in them collectively as is perceived. The threads of different colours produce a cloth when they are woven together. So the motely colour exists in the threads collectively. But that is not the case with regard to consciousness. A particular consciousness is not produced in the body by the bits of consciousness in the atoms of the body, as consciousness does not exist in its component atoms. Hence consciousness is not a quality of the body.\(^1\) Pleasure, pain and the like also are not the qualities of the body. The qualities of one’s body and other bodies are perceived through the external sense organs. But consciousness, pleasure, pain etc., are not so perceived, and so are not the qualities of the body.

The body is not the Jiva because i) The Body has a particular arrangement of parts ii) It is made of gross elements, iii) It has colour and other qualities of matter. iv) It is full of holes. v) It is produced. vi) Without consciousness, a body is no different from a corpse, vii) It is not endowed with any other body. The Jiva on the contrary, is partless.

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1. Siddhitraya, p. 12 (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi-1, 1900)
non-physical, unproduced, endowed with a body, and devoid of holes and physical qualities.¹

Moreover the body and the Jiva are quite distinct and impossible of being identical. The association of the Jiva and ‘I’ is used for the body only in an indicatory sense and even then some inner principle other than the body is implied.² The Jiva is Pratyāk, which is Self-luminous, where as the body is Parāk, or a known entity. These two ought to be two different entities.³ Yāmuna also says that the Jiva is a different and distinct entity from the body according to the Bhagavad Gītā and the Purāṇas also.⁴

Rāmānuja virtually adopts, as in other respects the points and arguments advanced by Yāmuna.

Vedānta Deśika refutes the Carvāka identification of the Jiva with the body and the contention that the body is endowed with consciousness. He says: I speak of ‘my body’. So my Jiva is different from my body which is its instrument. The Jiva is neither an aggregate of the consciousness of the different parts of the body, nor each consciousness of its component molecule, since each would have different purpose, and there would be no unity of purpose. But the Jiva has unity of purpose. Further the Jiva is perceived to be different from the body. If the Jiva were a conglomeration of the parts of the

¹. Siddhitraya, pp. 8-12, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi-1, 1900).
². Siddhitraya, p. 15, (Uttamur Veeraraghavachar’s Edition)
³. Ibid., P. 13.
4. Ibid., P. 18, and also Gītā, ii.13-25. Bhagavata, 11-22.
body with their consciousness, it would be vitiated by their defects. But it is not so. Further, if each part of the body has consciousness, then the Čārvāka argument that the parts (Particles) of the body combining with one another produce consciousness just as the particles of rice produce the intoxicating power of liquor, becomes invalid. If the Jīva is admitted to be a stable knower, it is admitted to be different from the body. Therefore it becomes established that the Jīva is different from the body.

**JĪVA IS DIFFERENT FROM THE SENSE-ORGANS:**

Some Čārvākas identify the sense-organs with the Jīva for the following reasons. i) Sense-organs are not cognised as ‘this’ so that they are not considered to be the objects of ‘I’ consciousness. ii) They are not endowed with sensible colour and other qualities of external objects, so that their parts may be manifested in their cognitions and iii) The cognitions produced by their operations are connected with them.

Yāmuna rejects the above views on the following grounds: Either each sense-organ is conscious, or all the sense-organs are collectively conscious. In the first alternative, an object perceived by one sense-organ would not be remembered by another. But we have such an experience as “I touch the object that I saw in the past”. In the second alternative, an object would be perceived and remembered collectively; all sense-organs would be lost, if one sense-organ were lost. There would be no recollection of anything, if one sense-organ were lost.

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1. Nyāya Siddhānta-pāramitā, pp. 57-58 (Benares, 1901)
2. Siddhīttraya, P. 12-13, (Cowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi-1, 1900)
Vedânta Deśika says that the Jiva is not the sense-organs because: i) The sense-organs are many, ii) They cognise different kinds of objects. iii) One cannot remember the objects perceived by the other sense-organs, iv) The Jiva is not one of the sense-organs as there is nothing to determine which of them is the Jiva, v) It is not perceived to be well or ill when the entire body and its sense-organs are healthy or diseased.  

Thus the Visishtâdâvaitin refutes arguments of the Cârvâka and holds that consciousness cannot be identified with any one or all of the sense organs collectively.

JIVA IS DIFFERENT FROM MIND (MANAS):

Some other Cârvâkas regard the mind (manas) as the Jiva to obviate the above difficulties. They argue that i) manas guides all the sense-organs, ii) it is the substrate for perception and recollection. iii) because manas is one, there can be recollection of an object perceived through another sense-organ, iv) manas, being permanent and co-existent and co-terminus with the body, there can be recollection of things even when the sense organs are lost.

Yâmuna says that i) manas is not the Jiva, because it is an instrument or organ like eyes and so on, ii) it is an organ of perception and perceive all objects both external and internal, which are not simultaneously perceived by the appropriate sense-organs even though they are close to them. So it has to be admitted that there is another organ, namely

1. Nyâya Siddhânjana, pp. 57-58, (Benares, 1901)
manas without whose aid they are not perceived and with whose aid alone one object is perceived at a time. iii) The perceptions of pleasure, pain etc., also require an organ as they are acts or cognitions of colours, etc. Manas is an organ of such internal perceptions, and cannot be their agent. An agent is independent where as an organ is dependent. An agent acts according to its volition with its ability to produce an action to realise an end. But an organ dependent on the Jiva for its action made to act by the Jiva as an agent and is an instrument of action. Manas cannot possess both the qualities of an agent and of an organ which are opposed to each other. So manas is only an organ of internal perception.

iv) Yāmuna says that the opponent may argue that manas knows itself to be an active agent in remembering the objects perceived through other sense-organs. In that case, there is only a dispute about the name: What is called manas by the opponent is called the Jiva by Yāmuna. That is, the Jiva which perceives colours through the eyes etc., and perceives, pain etc., through the internal organ. If the opponent calls this manas, then he would be accepting Yāmuna’s view. Further the use of the word manas for the Jiva is opposed to the popular notion and should be rejected.

Vedānta Deśika accepts Yāmuna’s view and states that the Jiva is not manas because i) the Jiva is the agent while manas is its organ, and ii) manas is an insentient product of egoism.

1. Siddhiitraya, pp. 13-14. (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi-1, 1900)
2. Nyāya Siddhañjana, p. 57-58; Sarvārtha Siddhi, p. 152 (Benares, 1900).
JIVA IS DIFFERENT FROM VITAL BREATH
(PRAṆA):

Some Cārvākas argue that the Jiva is vital breath (prāṇa). We come to know the presence of the Jiva in the body only in the presence of Prāṇa, and the Jiva is not seen in a body bereft of Prāṇa. Hence it is concluded that Prāṇa itself is the Jiva. Prāṇas are vital for the existence of the body and this theory of its self-hood is quite suited to explain the facts of death, and transmigration.¹ The body, the sense-organs and the mind appear to be subordinated to Prāṇa, for they function only in its presence, and cease to function in its absence. So the Prāṇātmavādin contends that Prāṇa is the Jiva. Consciousness belongs to Prāṇa since like external air, it is only air, and because in the state of deep sleep even when the self-hood is devoid of activity, Prāṇa possesses activity. Indeed it is only due to this activity that even in the case of a person who is asleep, transformation of substances that have been eaten and drunk into the seven-fold tissues of the body (dhātus), inhalation and exhalation takes place.

The Viśistādvaītin argues that to hold the view that Prāṇa is the Jiva is against all experience and also opposed to the Scriptures. According to Rāmānuja’s classification of matter, the Prāṇas are only particular types of wind (vāyuvis’esas) and so consciousness cannot be attributed to them. Vāyu is a material (Jaḍadravya), a material evolved out of sparsatanmātra originating in turn from Ākāśa. That Prāṇa is indeed air clearly shows that it is not-

self as it is mixed up with fire, water and food and resides in the Viscera. The air is inhaled and exhaled in and out of the throat, mouth and nostrils and is sensed like pots and others similar to it by the organ of touch.

The doctrine that Prāṇa is the Jīva is refuted in the same manner in which consciousness is negativ ed of the body, and therefore does not call for separate disproof. Vedānta Deśīka also holds a similar view.1

The Bṛhadāranyaka narrates the experience of Bālāki with King Ajātaśatru who enlightens him on the nature of the ātman, that it is different from the body, the sense-organs, the mind and the Prāṇas.2 Ajātaśatru took Bālāki to a person sleeping and shouted at him, but the person did not get up. It was only when the King pushed with his hands, the sleeping person got up. It may be asked why did not the ātman ‘always aware and awake’, get up before pressure was exerted on him. This is a relevant objection and Yāmuna answers that the Ātman, no doubt never rests in sleep. But he has withdrawn himself into the inner recess of the Puritraṇḍī during sleep and united with the supreme in that state as declared in the Scriptures. But when disturbed by means of pressure he slowly comes back to the external regions and is taken over by physical adjuncts.

Thus, the Jīva is different from the body, the sense-organs, manas and Prāṇa though it uses all these as its instruments.

2. Bṛhadāranyaka 11.1.15; Siddhārtraya, p. 25. (Uttamur Veeraraghavachar’s Edition)
According to the Buddhists, the Jiva is a complex of the continuity of momentary conscious states succeeding one another. Like Hume, in Western Philosophy, the Buddhists adopt the psychological and analytical attitude towards the Jiva. These sensations which succeed one another are casually connected so that the preceding state gives rise to the succeeding one. There is no identity but continuity. They explain this continuity with the example of the flames of a lamp continuously burning though changing every moment. This un-interrupted continuity is mistaken for identity by the Buddhists. Thus according to them there is no permanent self-identical principle. Belief in a self-identical permanent principle is a delusion.

Yāmuna, Rāmānuja and Vedānta Deśīka repudiate this Buddhist conception of the Jiva. They point out that based on the above view of the Jiva, memory and recognition cannot be explained. If the conscious states are always changing and if the Buddhist does not recognise the existence of one permanent Self, there cannot be recognition of objects as having been known before. Things perceived in the past are recognised, the recognition of them being of the form 'this is just that'. Even the knowledge of similarity mistaken for identity to the objective world would be unintelligible, for this is also conditioned by the existence of a permanent Self which
the Buddhist refuses to acknowledge. Therefore, the Buddhists' view that similarity existing in objects is mistaken for identity must recognise the oneness of the Self. What one person has perceived, another cannot know to be the same.¹

Further, it is not possible to assume the continuity of impressions without the conception of a permanent substance which constitutes the abode of the impressions.² Continuity of impressions forming a series cannot come into being if the cognitions disappear and do not possess any permanent feature or character. When each cognition perishes after a moment, it is difficult to establish how it affects the succeeding cognitions which have not as yet come into existence.³ Apart from these difficulties, the Buddhist lays himself open to a fallacy of arguing in a circle when he maintains that the series beginning with Nescience and the like causes the aggregate and the aggregate in its turn gives rise to a series beginning with nescience and the like. And further, mere nescience which renders an unreal thing to appear as real is not effective as to cause the aggregate to come into being. The illusion of Silver in a shell does not cause two pieces of shell combine together.⁴

Vedānta Deśīka in his Nyāya Siddhāñjanam urges that if the Jiva is a series of momentary

1. Siddhitrayam, p. 17-20; (Chokhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi-1. 1900), Śrī Bhāṣya, 11.2.24.
2. Śrī Bhāṣya, 2.2.18; Vide also Nyāya Siddhāñjanam, p. 118 (P.B. Annangaracharya’s Edition).
3. Siddhitrayam, p. 17-20; Śrī Bhāṣya, 2.2.27.
cognitions, and if the cognitions are destroyed after each moment, there cannot be unity, continuity, recognition and recollection. The Jīva is a permanent spiritual principle, which is a knower, doer, and enjoyer, which is different from a series of momentary cognitions. The Viśiṣṭādvaitin thus holds that the Buddhist view is untenable.

CRITICISM OF THE JĪVA AS CO-EXTENSIVE WITH THE BODY:

REFUTATION OF JAINA VIEW:

The Jaina thinkers hold that the Jīva is of the size of the body in which it remains encased. The Jīva both expands and contracts according to the size of the body. This view reduces the Jīva virtually to the status of material objects. Such a view does not seem to be reasonable as whatever is subject to expansion or contraction is non-eternal. If the Jīva becomes non-eternal, then there is the possibility of the fruits of what is done and the enjoyment of the actions that have not been done creating confusion in the moral sphere.

Rāmānuja in his Śrī Bhāṣya (11.ii 33) argues that the Jaina view that each Jīva has the body it occupies has a serious defect. For if Jīva, which was commensurate with the body of an elephant, has to enter into the body of an ant, it would become incomplete as it then occupies less space.

Vedānta Desṭika says that the Jīva is not co-extensive with its body, as it contradicts the Śruti

1. Nyāya-Siddhāṇjanaṃ, p. 58 (Benares, 1901)
2. Sarvadarś'ana Saṃgraha, p. 87. (Madhava Charya)
which asserts the Jiva to be immutable. The experience 'I am fat' is due to false identification of the Jiva with its body. A yogin's Self entering into many bodies assumes various dimensions and becomes divisible, since the Jiva is co-extensive with the body. In the state of emancipation, the Jiva would become devoid of dimension due to the destruction of the body, and would cease to be a substance endowed with attributes. If a substance devoid of a dimension were said to be a substance, it would be ubiquitous.

The Jaina speaks of the rise of the released Jiva to transmundane space. It requires a body for its movement since a bodiless Jiva without dimension cannot move from one place to another. A Jiva with dimension alone can move upward. A body with a definite dimension is determined by the Karma of the Jiva. But a Jiva depending on a body determined by its Karma would not be released. Release is attained when all Karmas are destroyed. The Jaina contends that a body of a fixed magnitude assumed by a released Jiva is due to four kinds of Aghatika Karma. When the four kinds of Karma are destro-

1. When Karma penetrates the Soul it is transformed into eight kinds of Prakriti which make up the Karmāṇa Sarīra. Four Karmas deal with the states of the individual being:

i) Āyuska: Which determines the length of life in one birth. ii) Nāma: Which produces the various circumstances of elements which collectively makeup an individual existence, the body with its general and specific qualities. iii) Gotra: Which determines the nationality, caste, family and social standing of an individual. iv) Antarāya: Which obstructs the inborn energy of the Self and prevents the doing of good even when there is desire for it. Each kind of Karma has its predestined limits within which it must be purged off.
yed, the Jīva on its way to release can move upward with such a body, and the released Jīva enters into an ethereal body or assumes other bodies at will. Vedānta Des'ika urges that the Jaina does not admit of a released Jīva's volition and enjoyment and therefore it cannot assume bodies at its will in order to move. So its fixed natural magnitude common to bondage and release must be admitted. It is atomic and eternal. So the Jīva cannot be co-extensive with its body.¹

CRITICISM OF MĪMĀMSAKA'S DOCTRINE OF THE JĪVA:

According to Kumārila Bhatta “the Self qualified by a cognition inferred from cognisedness or manifestness (Prakāś'ya) of an object produced by the cognition is an object of mental perception”.

Yāmuna contends that: (i) The perception of one’s own Jīva according to Kumārila is an illusion. When a Jīva perceives an object, it does not know its difference from its previous condition. A Jīva does not know at that time whether such an object is known, or not known by it, and whether it is known by this Jīva, or by another Jīva. Such a cognition does not exist. If such a cognition existed, it would exist even when the cognition and the cognising Jīva were not manifested. But when a cognising Jīva is not manifested, the peculiar character of an object known by one’s own Jīva or by any other Jīva cannot be manifested. (ii) If cognition were inferred from cognisedness or manifestness of an object, there

¹. Tattva Muktā Kalāpa, Sarvārtha Siddhi, pp. 183–85. (Benares, 1900).
would be the experience 'I knew', and there would be no experience 'I know', since the cognition is already past when it is inferred from cognisedness in an object. (iii) Cognition cannot be inferred from the so called cognisedness of an object, because invariable concomitance between them is not known. iv) Cognition cannot be known by mental perception because it is known by the Jiva. If a cognition were perceived through manas, there would be no difference between a cognition known by one's own Jiva and a cognition known by another Jiva.

Hence the Jiva qualified by a cognition inferred from cognisedness in an object is not an object of mental perception.¹

Prabhākara holds that the Jiva is known as a knower when it knows an object.

Yāmuna argues that: i) When an object is known, the Jiva, another entity, is not necessarily known. Knowledge of one entity does not necessarily entail that of another entity. If that were true, the knowledge of any entity would prove that of any other entity, which is not possible. ii) The different forms of objects are known by their distinct cognitions due to their contact with the sense-organs. When the objects are thus known by their cognitions, the Jiva—their substrate—is not known. iii) Prabhākara argues that we have always an experience such as "I know this". If such an experience is not apprehended, this view could be rejected. Suppose the Jiva is known as the knower whenever ob-

2. Siddhitraya, pp. 43-44, (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi·1, 1900)
jects are known, even then, it must be admitted that the cognition is self-manifest, since an existing cognition is never found to be unmanifested. The existence of objects is known by their cognitions, since they are not perceived in deep sleep despite their existence at the time owing to the absence of their cognitions. Hence the Jīva also should be reasonably admitted to be known by a cognition. Although it is proved by reasoning that the Jīva is manifested in deep sleep even when the cognitions of objects are not produced, ordinary persons have no cognition of the Jīva in deep sleep. A person whose sense organs have ceased to operate cannot have cognitions. But yet he has cognition of the Jīva in deep sleep, because on waking from sleep he has recollections such as ‘I slept so long’. So the Jīva is not always known as the knower of cognition of an object. iv) The cognition of an object is the cognition of an object. It cannot cognise the Jīva or prove its nature since the Jīva is not its object. That which is not the object of a cognition cannot be proved by the cognition. The cognition of a colour cannot prove the existence of a taste. A cognition and a knowing Jīva are not the objects of a cognition of an object; it cannot prove their existence.\(^1\)

Yāmuna urges that a Jīva, the knower of all objects and of their cognitions is admitted by all as Self-manifest and self-proved. An entity is proved to exist by its knower. A Jīva is found to be the knower of an object and of its cognition.\(^2\)

1. **Siddhitraya**, p. 46.  
Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi-1, 1900

2. **Siddhitraya**, p. 47, (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi-1, 1900)
CRITICISM OF NYĀYA - VAIS'EŠIKA VIEW OF THE JĪVA:

Nyāya tries to establish the existence of the Jīva by inference on the ground that it is the substratum of the qualities like cognition, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion and volition.

Yāmuna argues that if invariable concomitance between the aforesaid qualities and the Jīva has been perceived, on the strength of which the Jīva is inferred from the qualities, then the inference is needless, since the Jīva has been perceived.

The Naiyāyika may argue that the Jīva has been perceived in a general way, and that it is inferred as the substratum of the aforesaid qualities, because i) they are effects, ii) they are non-eternal and iii) they are qualities like sounds and the like. The Jīva is their substratum. They are not generalities, particularities and inference because they are non-eternal. Nor are they substances and actions, since they inhere in a ubiquitous substance. They are special qualities, because they are non-eternal and perceptible through one organ namely manas, like colour, sound, odour etc., which are the special qualities of the physical elements, which are perceptible through one external sense-organ each. They are not the special qualities of the gross elements, as they are perceived by their Self through its internal organ. They are not perceived through the external sense-organs and by the other Jīvas, like sounds, colours, odours and the like. Space, time and manas have no special qualities and their qualities are not perceptible. So cognition, pleasure, pain etc., are not their qualities. They are not special qualities of
bodies as they are not produced by their qualities, and do not exist as long as bodies exist. They are not the qualities of the gross elements, time space and manas, and yet they are special qualities. Hence by elimination, they are the special qualities of the Jīva. As sound is inferred to be a special quality of ether, so also cognition and the like are inferred to be the special qualities of the Jīva.

The Nyāya argument is not adequate to prove the existence of the Jīva as the substratum of cognition, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion and volition. Even when a middle term (probans) is present and absent in cases in which the major term (probandum) is present and absent, respectively, it can prove the existence of the Jīva. A Kevalāyatiśekī (purely negative) probans or reason does not attain the status of a valid probans or reason, because it is absent from the positive instances, in which the inferrable object (probandum) exists like an uncommon probans. Nor can a proban which exists in the positive instances in which the probandum exists, prove the existence of the Jīva as it is not perceived to be absent from the negative instances from which the probandum is absent like a common probans. Even if all the doubts as to the presence of vitiating conditions in all places and times are eliminated since its invariable concomitance with the probandum cannot be ascertained from the perception of its presence in the positive instances alone in which the probandum is present. Nor can the invariable concomitance of a probans with the probandum be ascertained by the perception of the absence of the probandum from some instances from which the probans is absent, as the absence pervades infinite space and is incapable of being perceived in it entirely,
and there is also doubt as to its existence in part in other places. It is not known whether the absence of the probandum is due to the absence of the probans or whether it is for some other reasons.

Hence the Nyāya thesis that cognitions and the like are the special qualities of the Jiva which is different from gross elements, time space and manas, is not proved because they are inferred to be the special qualities of an unknown substance other than the afore mentioned substances, since Jiva is not definitely known to exist.¹

The Jiva cannot be established by reasoning, for the reason that the Vyāpti between the internal qualities and the Jīvā on which this reasoning depends cannot be established beyond doubt.

CRITICISM OF THE ŚĀMKHYA DOCTRINE OF THE JĪVA:

The Śāmkhya like the Nyāya school adopts inference as the means of establishing the Jīva, and proves the existence of the Jīva by the following inferences: (i) Bodies, sense-organs, and the like are aggregates of the elements and for that reason are the means for the realisation of the ends of the simple Jīvas or Selves, like beds, seats and houses. If the Selves were aggregates, they would also be the means for the realisation of the ends of other entities and so to infinity. To avoid infinite regress, the Jīva is supposed to be simple. ii) bodies and the like being of the nature of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas

¹ Siddhitraya, pp. 37-38 (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi-1, 1900)
are directed by the conscious Jīva which is not made of them. They are known by the Jīva, which is their knower.

Yāmuna refutes the Sāṃkhya arguments and says i) that the Jīva transcending bodies and sense-organs is proved to be their guide and knower, but its difference from Sattva, Rajas and Tāmas due to its simplicity is not proved by the Sāṃkhya inference. Further, an aggregate may be a means for the realisation of an end of another aggregate and so an endless series of aggregates may be supposed - which is flawless. since the supposition of an endless series of causes and effects is not irrational. ii) The Jīva is simple, detached, unmodifiable, transcendent and of the nature of Pure consciousness and therefore cannot realise its end through bodies, sense-organs and the like which are aggregates. But the Jīva conceived by the Sāṃkhya is detached and unmodified and therefore cannot favour or be favoured by bodies, sense-organs and the like. Sāṃkhya may argue that though the Jīva is not favoured by them, it wrongly conceives itself to be favoured by them.

Yāmuna urges that Jīva's false conceit does not affect the state of bodies and the like and makes them its means. He asks: What is subject to the false conceit and what is its cause? The Jīva is absolutely pure and unmodifiable and cannot be subjected to false conceit or illusion. The internal organ (buddhi) is unconscious according to Sāṃkhya and cannot therefore be subjected to illusion. Sāṃkhya may argue that the internal organ (buddhi) is subject to illusion, as it is made conscious by the reflection of the Jīva in it, and also it is translucent.
Yāmuna says that the argument is invalid, since the colourless Jiva cannot be reflected in colourless buddhi. Sāmkhya may argue that a reflection of the Jiva resembles it. What is the meaning of resemblance? It means similarity to the Jiva. If buddhi is similar to the Jiva devoid of all modifications, then it becomes devoid of all functions. So it cannot be subject to illusion and affected by pleasure, pain and so on which are modifications. The Sāmkhya may argue that buddhi is intelligised by the Jiva and becomes subject to illusion. This argument is not sound since the Jiva according to Sāmkhya is pure consciousness and does not intelligise any sentient entity like buddhi. If buddhi is said to resemble the Jiva in the sense of it being made immaterial, even immateriality also is not different from being a knower. So buddhi cannot be made a knower by the Jiva which is Pure consciousness. Sāmkhya supposes the proximity of buddhi to the Jiva in order to explain by it the reflection of the Jiva in buddhi. The distinct quality of the conscious Jiva, namely its knower-hood, cannot be reflected in unconscious buddhi, even as the magnitude of the Sun cannot be reflected in water. Sāmkhya argues that buddhi presents its functions such as valid knowledge and illusion and the objects apprehended by them to the unmodifiable Jiva owing to its proximity and gives the illustration of a Vassal who presents his revenue to his King. Yāmuna says that this argument is invalid, as buddhi can present its modes to a knower but not to Pure consciousness. For Sāmkhya, the Jiva is Pure consciousness, and not a knower. Further, the King is active and employs his subordinates to do some functions on his behalf to serve his end. But for Sāmkhya the Jiva is inactive and incapable of acquiring any excess due to its relations to bud-
dhi. So buddhi cannot be the accessory of the Jiva and serve its end. Thus the Sāmkhya inferences for the existence of the Jiva are proved invalid.¹

**VISISTĀDVAITA CRITICISM OF ADVAITA DOCTRINE OF THE JIVA OR SELF AS PURE CONSCIOUSNESS:**

Rāmānuja raises several logical objections against Śaṅkara's doctrine of the Jiva as Pure consciousness. He argues that there is no consciousness apart from cognition of an object, since consciousness without an object is never experienced. Consciousness abides in a Jiva and cognizes an object. There is no consciousness without subject and an object.² The experience “I know a jar” shows that the self knows an object, and that Pure consciousness does not know an object. The act of knowing cannot be the agent of knowledge or the knower and the object of knowledge. The knowing Jiva is permanent while its cognitions, pleasures and pains are temporary, and they are produced and destroyed.

The Jiva is of the nature of ‘I’, the manifestor of an object which is of the nature of ‘this’. If the Jiva is not of the nature of ‘I’, it would not be an inner spiritual principle, but would be an external object.³ If the Jiva were not of the nature of ‘I’,

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1. Siddhārājā, pp. 38-41. (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series. Varanasi-1, 1900)
2. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1. 63, Śrī Bhāṣya (Rāmānuja) on Brahma Sūtras, Vol. i & 2, Udbhaya Vedānta Granthamāla, 25, Nathamuni Nivas, Madras-17.
3. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1. 64,
and if release were the destruction of ‘I’ or the ego, no one would strive for liberation. So ‘I’ or the ego is the knower of the inner self.1

The Jiva, ‘I’ or the ego, is not manifested by any other entity, for it is self-luminous. Just as a luminous body manifests itself and other objects, so also the Jiva which is of the nature of consciousness manifests itself and other objects. Consciousness is the nature and an attribute of the Jiva.2 Therefore the self-luminous Jiva is a knower, and not mere knowledge3. Scriptures uphold the above view: “He who thinks, ‘I smell this’, is the Self” (Chand. Up. viii-xii.4) which established the ‘I’ as the Self; ‘As the lump of salt in taste without interior or exterior, is entire, and is purely salt in taste, even so is the Self without interior, is entire, and is Pure consciousness”, (Bṛh. Up. iv.v.13), which shows that the Self is essentially consciousness; “In this state, he himself is the light” (Bṛh. Up. iv. iii. 9), which shows that the Self is self-luminous: “The knowledge of the knower is never lost” (Bṛh. Up. iv. iii. 30) which shows that consciousness is its permanent attribute—even in the state of release. The Sutra-kāra also says, “Therefore he is a knower” (ii. iii.18).

Rāmānuja says that Śamkara’s view that consciousness is not non-intelligent (ajāda) and therefore the Jiva, is untenable for the cause of ajādatva is not known. Therefore Rāmānuja contends that the Jiva is not mere knowledge, but the knower, the ‘I’ which alone is manifest to itself by its very being.4

1. to 4. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1. 64, 65-66, 66, 68.
Rāmānuja also says that it is not correct to say that this ‘I’, the knower, is a product of ignorance due to super-imposition, even as mother-of-pearl is taken for silver. For, in this case of super-imposition, our experience would have been, ‘I am consciousness’, even as mother-of-pearl and silver are experienced as non-different, and not as ‘I am conscious which actually what we experience. The experience ‘I am conscious’, however shows that consciousness is an attribute of the ‘I’ and different from it, just as the statement ‘the man with a stick’ shows that the stick is an attribute of the man and different from him. As our experience in the latter case is not merely of the stick, but of ‘the man with a stick’, so also in ‘I am conscious’ our perception cannot be merely of consciousness, but of a knower with consciousness as his attribute.

Śaṅkara says that the ‘Knower’ means the agent in the act of knowing and for this reason consciousness cannot be an attribute of the changless Self. The ‘knower’ or agency is something changing and Jaḍa and abides in the ego (ahaṁkāra) which is itself unreal and ever changing. Rāmānuja argues that the ‘Knower’ cannot be ahaṁkāra. Ahaṁkāra like the body, is something known externally, and a product of Prakriti and therefore material, and so like the body, it also cannot be the ‘Knower, which is something inward, and which knows this ahaṁkāra even as it knows the body. Just as the ahaṁkāra, according to Śaṅkara cannot be the consciousness, for that very reason it cannot, be the ‘Knower’, inasmuch as it is known by this ‘Knower’. Nor is it true that to be a ‘Knower’ is to be changeful, for, ‘Knower’ means the substrate of the attribute, kno-
knowledge even as the knowing Self is eternal, its attribute, knowledge, also is eternal.¹

Though knowledge is eternal, yet it is capable of contraction and expansion and is contracted in the embodied state of the Jīva due to its past Karma, and so it appears to rise and disappear along with the activities of the senses and the Jīva possesses the quality of an agent. A change like this is admitted, but what is denied is that the Jīva undergoes modifications like matter. In this sense it is said to be changeless. This agency is not an essential nature of the Jīva, as it is created by action and therefore the self is unchanging. This knowership subject to this particular kind of change, namely expansion and contraction, belongs to the Jīva, which is of the nature of knowledge and cannot belong to Ahaṃkāra.

Rāmānuja asks whether consciousness receives a reflection of ahaṃkāra, or whether ahaṃkāra receives a reflection of the Jīva as is contended by Sāṃkara? Consciousness is not admitted by Sāṃkara to be a Knower, and so it cannot receive a reflection of the Jīva. Nor can ahaṃkāra receive a reflection of the Jīva, as it is insentient. Both are invisible and cannot have reflections.

Again it is not logical to say that the ahaṃkāra manifests consciousness as abiding in it, for consciousness is self-proved and self-luminous according to Sāṃkara, and so it cannot be manifested and that too by ahaṃkāra (which is non-intelligent). If it is manifested it would cease to be consciousness according to Sāṃkara.

3. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1. 69,
Even if consciousness were an object of another act of perception—which Saṃkara does not accept, but which is accepted for argument’s sake—still ahamkāra cannot help to manifest it, for it would mean the removal of something which obstructs such knowledge, and we do not see any such obstruction. To say ignorance obstructs it, and this ignorance is removed by ahamkāra cannot be accepted, inasmuch as knowledge alone can, according to Saṃkara, remove ignorance. Further, ignorance cannot reside in consciousness, for ignorance and knowledge have the same seat and the same object. Ignorance and knowledge abide in the same person and with respect to the same thing. That is to say, knowledge, as well as ignorance abide in a ‘Knower’, and not in Pure knowledge or consciousness. From all this we find that ahamkāra cannot in anyway help in the manifestation of consciousness.

Again, manifesting agents do not manifest objects as abiding in them. And so Saṃkara’s contention that consciousness is manifested by ahamkāra, as abiding in it, is not correct. A flame, for example does not manifest objects as abiding in it. The nature of such manifesting agents is such that they always promote the knowledge of things in their reality. Even when a face is reflected in a mirror, the manifest is light and not the mirror. The mirror only reflects the light, and so the face appears in the mirror and laterally inverted. Ahamkāra not being a reflecting surface like the mirror, such a distorted reflection of consciousness cannot take place in it. Moreover, consciousness being self-proved cannot be an object of perception and is not perceived by the eyes. Therefore, no reason can be shown how consciousness can be manifested by ahamkāra.
as abiding in it, whether in reality or due to any misnomer.¹

Śaṅkara says that there is no consciousness of `I' in deep sleep, and that only Pure consciousness exists in that state. Rāmānuja argues that this view is invalid, as one who gets up from deep sleep does not say, "I was Pure consciousness, free from the notion of 'I'", but rather says 'I slept happily', which shows that the 'I' persisted in deep sleep as a 'knower'. No doubt he also says, 'I did not know anything at the time', but this does not deny the existence of everything including the 'I', but shows only that there were no objects of knowledge. If the statement denies everything including 'I', then it would deny Pure consciousness also. But then, one after deep sleep also says, 'I did not know myself then'. It means the sleeping person was not conscious of himself. But the 'I' which is a uniform flow of self-consciousness, persists in deep sleep also though not very clearly. Śaṅkara also accepts that the 'I' persists when he says that pure consciousness exists in deep sleep as a witness of nescience. For to be a witness is to be a 'Knower'. Pure consciousness cannot be a witness. A Knower alone is called witness.²

Further Śaṅkara argues that in the state of release the 'I' does not persist. Rāmānuja replies that the 'I' exists also in the state of release; otherwise release would mean the destruction of the Jīva, for the 'I' is not an attribute of the Jīva, but the very nature of the Jīva. That the 'I' exists in release is also inferred, for it shines to itself and therefore shi-

¹ & 2. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1. 72, 74.
nes as the ‘I’ It may be said that, in this case even in the state of release, it will be ignorant and bound like the embodied Jiva, which also shines to itself. Scriptures deny such a possibility and moreover the inference is faulty, for what causes ignorance in the embodied state is not ‘shining to itself’ or consciousness of the ‘I’ but Karma. Ignorance means want of knowledge about a thing. The ‘I’ is the very nature of the Jiva. So how can the ‘I’, which is the knowledge of its real nature, possibly bring about ignorance or bondage? Further, scriptures like Brhadāraṇyaka (i. iv. 10) (vi.5,15), Prāśna (iv.9), Chāndogya (vi.11.3.), Gītā (xv. 18), and Bādārāyana in his Brahma Sūtras (ii.3 19) also affirm that Jīva is a Knower.

The inescapable conclusion, therefore, is that the ‘I’, the Knower is the Jīva and not Pure consciousness.

Vedānta Desṭika abridges the arguments on Jīva and propounds in his ‘Nyāya Siddhāṇjanam’ that the ‘I’ (ahamartha) is the Jīva giving the following reasons:

i) The Jīva is experienced as the Self luminous Pratyak Principle ‘I’ (Śruta Prakāśikā, p. 46, Sūtradarśana Śūri, a sub-commentary on Rāmānuja’s Śrī Bhaṣya). ii) Knowledge is perceived as a fact of this ‘I’ and experiences like ‘I am a Jñātā’. ‘I know’ and others prove that Ahamatva and Jñātṛtva are in one and the same locus. iii) The yearning for liberation from the misery of Saṁsāra is possible only if Ahamartha is to continue for all time to come (Śrī Bhaṣya i.1.1.). iv) The statements of the Supreme, the

1. Śrī Bhaṣya, i.1.1. 74.
liberated as well as the spiritual aspirants found in scriptures, confirm that Ahamartha alone is the Self (Sruta Prakāśika, p. 47). v) A person getting up after sleep says Ethāvantam Kālām Suptoham. If antahkarana instead of the ahamartha, was the Jiva, this kind of reference would have been impossible. This goes to establish that the ahamartha is itself the Jiva. vi) The statement ‘I did not know myself’ (māmnājñānam) does not negate the cognition of the substantive consciousness during sleep but shows that the different characteristics of the body like Devatva. Manusyatva, Sthūlatva, Krīṣatva as well as external relations of time and space were not cognisable then, as there was even during sleep self-experience, without any break in the middle. vii) After sleep people generally continue the work left over by them in the middle. Memory of the events before sleep goes to prove that ahamartha stands for all time.¹

**NATURE OF THE JIVA:**

**JĪVA AS KNOWER:**

Chāndogas (those who chant sāmaveda) declare “He who has the awareness of ‘let me smell this’ he is the Self” (Chānd. Up. vii. xii.4). Similarly, after the question “what is the soul?” has been raised, Vājasaneyins offer the same definitions of the soul, namely, ‘He who is in the midst of the senses and the vital breath, who has knowledge of the essence and who is the light inside the heart, he is the Person, (Bṛh. Up. iv. iii. 7). It is only in the manner

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indicated already that the true nature of the soul has been described as follows: "He who is experienced by every body, who is filled with knowledge concerning diverse objects, who resides among the senses and breath as their director, who is the inward light in the region of the heart, and who shines for his own sake as the 'I', is the Puruṣa." The followers of the Atharva Veda say "Truly, this entity, the seer, hearer, smeller, taster, thinker (mantr), knower (bodhr), doer (kartā), he who has knowledge for his essence, is the Puruṣa" (Pras'na Up. iv). Similarly the following and other passages are found: "Lo: Whereby would one understand the understander?" (Bṛh. Up. ii. iv. 14). "The seer sees neither death nor sickness, nor the evil in the world (Chānd. Up. vii. xxvi 2); "He (the highest light to which the Jīva reaches up) is the supreme person". "The Jīva experiences him in diverse ways...not thinking of the body cast behind in the midst of his kin;" (Chānd. Up. viii. xii 3); "Even so, the sixteen parts (kates) of the experiencer (Jīva), which depend (for their existence, nature and continuance) on the Highest Person, on reaching Him, become incapable of entangling Him in Pleasure, Pain, etc. "(Pras'na Up. v). Different from that mode of mind is another inner soul consisting of knowledge."

From this it is seen that knowledge is possessor of knowledge and not Pure consciousness as held by Advaitins. Therefore it is clear that the Jīva is truly a knower.

Viśiṣṭādvaita regards the Jīva as a knowing subject.1 Yamuna in his Siddhi Traya says that every

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, ii. iii. 19, Sacred Books of the East Series, XLVII, p. 546.
one has the experience "I know this". 'I' in that experience is the knower considered as the Jīva. The existence of the Jīva is accepted. It is known in an epistemological situation. The Self has consciousness as its characteristic. It is through this characteristic the Self knows the object. Consciousness comes into prominence in an epistemological situation. It is described as knowledge, cogition, apprehension and the like. Thus consciousness helps in the knowledge of the Jīva. The Jīva is not directly known by itself. The Jīva is known as a substratum of the consciousness. It is a fact that we have knowledge of the objects. Consciousness gives that knowledge. But consciousness has no existence of its own. It can exist only as the attribute of the Jīva. Thus the Jīva as a knower must be understood as the Jīva knowing through consciousness. Apart from consciousness the Jīva cannot know. Yāmuna makes this very clear when he says that when we analyse the proposition "I know this", we come across consciousness of the object and consequently the substratum of the consciousness namely the Jīva. He says that the Jīva as a knower has to be understood as the Jīva has the attribute of consciousness through which it knows the object.¹

Further, Yāmuna says that perceptual knowledge gives knowledge of the objects at the present time. But knowledge cognises the past and the future objects also. If knowledge cognises the present objects alone, the past and the future objects would

¹ Siddhātraya, p. 22, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series. Varanasi-1. 1600, Śrī Bhāṣya (Rāmānuja) i. 1. 1. on Brahma Sūtras, Vol. i & ii, 25.
be unknown. If it is not so, it is unreal like the hare's horns. Knowledge is meaningless without a knower and a knower is not mere knowledge. Perception is always in the form "I perceived this". If there were mere knowledge recollection, it would be in the form "Knowledge perceived this". But it is not experienced in that form. Thus Yāmuna says that mere knowledge is not a knower.¹

Rāmānuja also holds that the Jīva is a knower, since it is proved by the experience "I know". In discussing the Vedānta Sūtras, (iii 3.19) Rāmānuja states that the essential nature of the Jīva is to be a knowing subject. The doctrine that the Jīva is essentially a conscious principle may be said to be Upānīṣadic in origin. From early times in the Upaniṣads, it is seen that the Self (Ātman) is identified with that within us which perceives, sees and understands. Rāmānuja himself bases his view on Upaniṣadic passages such as "He who knows, let me smell this, he is the Self etc." (Chāndogya Up. viii.12.4-5; 1-5; 12-3.) "He who is within the heart, surrounded by the Prānas, the person of light consisting of knowledge". (Brh. Up. iv. 5. 15)

The above passage may seem ambiguous and may or may not refer to the Jīva as Rāmānuja understands it. However they reveal the prevailing assumption that whether it be the finite self or the universal self which performs these conscious functions, that is the real Self which is the knowing principle in the body. While accepting this view Rāmānuja makes it clear that the Jīva is not mere know-

1. Siddhātraya, p. 22; 24 and 25. (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi-1. 1906)
ledge or pure consciousness, but an individual who has consciousness as his essential characteristic. He thus emphasises individuality of the Jiva as against the advaitic view which overlooks all distinctions between the Jiva and Brahman.

Rāmānuja states that consciousness inevitably presupposes a Jiva on the one hand and the objects on the other. If consciousness presupposes a Jiva to which it belongs, it is this Jiva which is the agent in consciousness and not consciousness itself. Since consciousness is only the activity or the function of a Jiva, it is the Jiva that is ultimate, not consciousness.

That consciousness is the activity of a Jiva which is other than its conscious states is seen from the fact that consciousness consists of momentary mental states, which require a permanent Jiva as their substrate and relating principle. Recognition for example would be impossible unless there is a permanent Jiva not to be identified with any of its mental states, but persisting through all its experiences and relating its present state of consciousness with its previous conscious states.

Rāmānuja in his Śrī Bhāṣya states that while the subject of consciousness is constant, its attribute that is consciousness varies from time to time. How then consciousness and conscious subject be one? "For recognition implies a conscious subject persisting from the earlier moment, and not merely consciousness."

Therefore it may be concluded that consciousness

1. 1. Śrī Bhāṣya, i. 1. 1, pp. 56-57.
presupposes a conscious Jīva which is not identified with consciousness itself.

Rāmānuja says, “In general we may say that where there is light, it must belong to some thing, as shown by the light of the lamp. The Self thus cannot be mere consciousness; the grammarians more over tell us that words such as ‘consciousness’, ‘knowledge’ etc., are relative; neither ordinary nor Vedic language uses expressions such as ‘he knows’ without reference to an object known and an agent who knows”, “All which shows that the Self luminous Self is a knower, i.e. a knowing subject; and not pure light (non personal intelligence)”.¹

Thus Rāmānuja’s analysis of consciousness leads to the conclusion that consciousness presupposes a conscious Jīva and this Jīva cannot be identified with pure consciousness as the Advaitin claims.

In Tattvamuktā Kalāpa, Vedānta Desṭika discusses the Jīva to be an inner principle. It manifests itself by its nature or through its knowledge. An external object, material or immaterial is manifested to another entity or Jīva. The material object is not the inner principle, since it does not manifest itself to itself.² Vedānta Desṭika urges that a cognition and a Jīva endowed with the quality of cognition are distinct from each other. The Jīva is a substance while cognition is a quality. The Śruti says, “There is no destruction of knowledge of a knowing Self”. So both

¹ Sṛī Bhāṣya i. 1. 1. p. 60.
² Tattvamuktā Kalāpa (Vedānta Desṭika), Benares, 1900. Sarvārthasiddhi (Vedānta Desṭika), A commentary on Tattvamuktā Kalāpa, p. 166.
the Jiva and the knowledge are eternal. Only the Jiva’s inessential and adventitious qualities are destroyed. The law of parsimony cannot over-ride the authority of the Sruti.\(^1\) When the Sruti speaks of the Jiva as of the nature of knowledge, it speaks of knowledge as its essence. It speaks of the Jiva as a knower. Knowledge is both essence and attribute of the Jiva. If it were not of the nature of knowledge as Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika holds it would be insentient. So the Jiva is not mere knowledge. Knowledge manifests an object. The Jiva is self-manifest. It manifests itself as the ‘I’.\(^2\) Vedānta Deśika proceeds to say that the Jiva is not manifested as devoid of ‘I’ as the advaitin holds. The Jiva is of the nature of ‘I’ and is manifested as such. It is never manifested as Pure consciousness. It is manifested as ‘I’ in deep sleep also, since a person has the recollection in waking from sleep “I slept happily” \(^3\)

Visisṭādvaita thus regards the Jiva as a knower since it is proved by the experience ‘I know’.

THE JIVA IS SELF-LUMINOUS:

According to Visisṭādvaita, the Jiva is known by itself as it is of the nature of consciousness. Rāmānuja asserts the existence of consciousness, and that its being self-luminous depends on its connection with a Jiva. When this connection is dissolved consciousness itself cannot be established, just as

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2. Ibid., pp. 163–64.
the act of cutting cannot take place when there is no person to cut and nothing to cut. Hence it is certain that the knowing agent i.e. 'I' is the inner Self. The following scriptural passages confirm this: i) By what should he know the knower? (Bṛh. Up. ii.4.15), ii) Him who knows this, they call the knower of the body (Bhagavad Gītā, xiii.1). iii) For this very reason it is a knower (Vedānta Sūtras, ii.3.18). From the purport of these and many other passages, Rāmānuja argues that the Jīva is not Pure consciousness and says that consciousness is an attribute of the Jīva. The Jīva is Self-luminous in the sense that it is not dependent for its light on some thing else. To be self-luminous means to have consciousness for one's essential nature. And that which has light for its essential nature does not depend for its light on some thing else. This is analogous to the flame of a candle. The fact that the lamp illumines other things with its light, does not mean that it is not luminous or that its luminosity depends on some thing else. The fact is that the lamp being of luminous nature shines itself and illumines with its light other things also. To explain this, a particular substance such as fire can subsist in two forms namely as light (Prabhā) and a luminous matter (Jyoti). Although light is a quality of luminous substances, it is in itself nothing but the substance, not a mere quality; for it exists also apart from its substrates and possesses colour which is a quality. So long as it has attributes different from qualities, it is a substance but not any thing else. But practically it is treated as quality because it always has the substance for its substrate and depends on it.

Similarly the Jīva is essentially intelligent (cid-rūpa) and has intelligence (Jñāna) for its quality.
To be essentially intelligent means to be self-luminous. The Scripture confirms this view. i) There that person becomes self-luminous (Brh. Up. iv.3.14), ii) That one who is made of knowledge among the Prāṇas is the Self (Brh. Up. iv. 3. 14), iii) From this consisting of mind, there is a different interior Self consisting of knowledge (Taittiriya Up. 11. 4). iv) The Self is the knower (Vedānta Sūtra ii. 3. 18).

The purport of the above passages, according to Rāmānuja, should be understood in a sense that the self-luminous agent is a knower (Jñāta) and not pure non-personal consciousness as claimed by the Advaitins. In our normal life we say that where there is light it belongs to some thing, which is evident from the light of a lamp. Similarly the Jīva thus cannot be Pure consciousness.

Vedānta Des'ika in his Nyāya-Siddhāñjanam discusses that the Jīva is self-luminous and it does not need any other consciousness to know it. The consciousness by which it apprehends itself is substantive consciousness (Dharmi Jñāna). The consciousness through which the Jīva apprehends all things other than itself is attributive consciousness (Dharmabhūta Jñāna). Scriptural statements also say that the Jīva is self-luminous. Self-luminosity means that it shines forth itself and not to all at all times. Though we know of the Self in others through our attributive consciousness its luminosity is not hampered-¹

What is the nature of Substantive consciousness?

Is it qualified by the characteristics of atomic (anu-tva) eternality (nityatva), subservience (k'esatva) and others? No. The characteristics of the Jiva namely its atomic nature, eternality and subservience are grasped through the attributive consciousness and so do not shine forth at all times. The substantive consciousness (Svarūpabhūta Jñāna) shines forth independently where as its qualifications shines through its attributive consciousness. The Jiva shines forth qualified by the concept of oneness (ekatva) Self awareness (Pratyaktva), and Convenience (Anukū-latva).

No Jiva doubts its oneness, self-awareness and convenience. There are two opinions even in this matter. Some savants say that ekatva, pratyaktva, and anukūlatva also shine forth like the ātmasva rūpa, but some are of the opinion that these attributes are illuminated by substantive consciousness alone and that they are not self-luminous.

It may be asked here, whether the above three characteristics are the substantive nature of the Jiva or its attributes. In the first case, these do not form its attributes at all, and so the relationship of substance and attribute does not arise. If these are accepted as attributes of the Jiva, different from it, then one has to admit that the substantive consciousness illumines also things other than itself. This would contradict the theory of attributive consciousness which is said to illumine all things other than substantive consciousness.

The above objection does not affect the theory admitting the self-luminosity of the Jiva together with the above three characteristics. Those charac-
teristics form inseparable attributes of the Jiva and so the illumination of the Jiva necessarily comprises the illumination of these also. All objects other than the Jiva are being illuminated by its attributive consciousness. There is no harm in its not enlightening the never to be separable attributes of the Jiva, as these form the very core of the foundational substantive consciousness. Thus it is concluded that the Jiva shines forth to itself qualified by ekatva, pratya-ktva and anukula-tva. The Jiva shines forth in these ways in all its states namely waking, dream and sleep and others. At the time of Samadh, the eighth stage of yoga, it is said that one experiences the Jiva with all its distinguishing attributes.

The substantive consciousness (Dharmabhūta Jñāna) is of a three-fold nature, is a ‘Pramatā’ as it independently cognises itself qualified with ekatva-Pratyaktva and others and apprehends the objects of the world through its attributive consciousness (Dharmabhūta Jñāna). Its own substantive nature is also an object of apprehension and so is also a ‘Prameya’. In addition to this it is also a valid source of knowledge (Pramāṇa) as it is substantive consciousness.

The attributive consciousness (Dharmabhūta Jñāna) is of a two-fold nature, namely Proof (Pramaṇa) and object of cognition (Prameya). This is a source of knowledge as it is responsible for apprehending all objects like a table, a chair, or a house.

2. Ibid., p. 213.
As past knowledge becomes object of the present, even object to be known (Prameyatya) is attributed to this. This attributive consciousness shines forth invariably to its substratum and so it is not Valid knowledge (Pramatā). All objects different from the above are only object to be known (Prameya). They are always to be apprehended through the attributive consciousness and being non-sentient they are not aware of themselves.¹

THE JĪVA IS OF THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS OR KNOWLEDGE:

We have discussed the view that the Jiva is substantive consciousness. The Taittiriya define Brahman as ‘Satyam, Jñānam, Anantam Brahma (2-1) and on the analogy of this the Jiva is also said to be Jñāna svarūpa. An objection is raised basing on the word Jñānam, questioning the connotation of the word to mean substantive consciousness. Grammatical analysis reveals that the word Jñānam is said to yield the locus of Jñānaśrayatva) and not Jñānasvarūpa. The Brhadāraṇyaka confirms the fact of the pervasion of consciousness giving the analogy of Salt in a Salt crystal (iv 5-13). The statement in the Taittiriya namely “Vijñānām Jñānam, tantu”, etc., only points out that Jñāna is prominent in the Jiva. This is further confirmed by Rāmānuja also, in his Sṛi Bhāṣya (ii.3.29). On the basis of the above references the objection is raised that the Jiva is only a substratum of consciousness and never Pure consciousness. But this is untenable as the Pras’no-

paniṣad declares that the Self is only consciousness, besides its being a substratum (āśraya) (3-9). The term ‘Boddha’ declares in general terms the knowership (Jñātṛtva) and gives in detail the particular kinds of knowing by the previous terms and later affirms its Jñānasvarūpatva by the word Vijñānatma. Without accepting this, self-luminosity cannot be established.

Vedānta Desṭika quotes the inferences used by ‘Vijnāchittā’ to prove the self-awareness of the Jiva as follows.⁴ There is vyāpti between Jñānatva and Svayamprakāśatva as found in the case of the attributive consciousness. Self-luminosity of the object does not depend upon anything other than the state of consciousness. On the analogy of attributive consciousness it cannot be argued whether substantive consciousness cannot illumine other things besides itself. Both substantive consciousness and attributive consciousness have the characteristic of Jñānatva in general, but from inherent experience we realise that the Jiva illumines itself where the attributive consciousness illumines other objects just like light and luminosity. Both the light and luminosity have the common characteristic of tejasatva⁵ but they function differently. The light illumines itself where as luminosity illuminates itself as well as other objects.⁶

Here an objection may be raised: It is established that the Jiva is conscious in substance, and the term consciousness is equally applied to

2. Ibid., p. 213
this as it applied to attributive consciousness. From our daily experience, we observe that knowledge is caused through the subject-object relationship. But substantive consciousness is bereft of the subject-object relationship. How can the term Jñānam or consciousness be applied to this. Vedānta Deśīka replies to the objection as follows: The subject-object relationship explains only the aspect of derivation. But this is not the main purpose of connotation to the term consciousness. Consciousness (Jñānam) is that which is directly and independently responsible for the Vyavahāra of an object. For any activity connected with an object, we must have first a knowledge of the object, then desire for its usage, and thirdly an effort for Vyavahāra. The attributive consciousness is directly responsible for apprehensions and further activities. Similarly the Self-conscious Jiva is directly responsible for its fitness for activity or Vyavahāratva, and so the term consciousness is applicable, in its primary sense, to the Jiva also.¹ The attributive consciousness is invariably about an object to a subject. But substantive consciousness is not so. It is unqualified by ‘Viṣayās'raya Vais'īṣṭa’. But this Self-conscious Jiva is not the same as in the system of Advaita, for this is qualified by attributes such as knowability (Jñānatva), Substantive (Drvyatva), based on knowledge and Substance (Jñānadrayās'rayatva), Eternality (nityatva), Atomic (aṇutva), specification (niyamatva), the supported (adheyatva), subordinate (s'ēṣatva), blissful (ānandatva) etc.²

¹ Nyāya siddhāňjanam, (P.B. Annangarāchārya’s Edition) p. 213.
² Ibid.,
JīVA IS AN AGENT: HUMAN FREEDOM AND DIVINE WILL:

Is the Jīva an agent of action? Or is it an inactive non-doer? Is agency of the unconscious guṇas of sattva, rajas and tamas super-imposed on the Jīva?

The Gītā says, "All actions are done by the guṇas and the Self being deluded by egoism thinks itself to be the agent"; "A wise person sees the guṇas alone as the agent of action"; "Prakriti is the cause of causes and effects; the Self is the cause of the experience of pleasures and pains" (iii.27; xiv. 19; xiii. 20). So Prakriti is the agent of action or doer and the Self is the enjoyer. Bādarāyaṇa, rejects this view and affirms that the Jīva is an agent or doer, otherwise the scriptural injunctions would be meaningless [ii.3, 33].

The Śruti says, "One desirous of heaven should perform the sacrifice", "One desirous of release should meditate on Brahman." These texts enjoin the conscious Jīvas desirous of heaven and release to perform these actions, which are the means of attaining the end. The scripture enjoins; injunction is impulsion to act, impulsion is done through enlightenment. But no one can enlighten the unconscious guṇas-sattva, rajas and tamas or the insentient ego. In the state of bondage, action is due to the Jīva's relation to the guṇas, and not to the nature of the Jīva. The Smriti says: "Attachment to the guṇas is the cause of action in the state of bondage to embodied life". "The body, the active Self, the sense-organs, the various actions and daīva [adrśta]-merits and demerits - are the five causes of action". He who
regards the Jiva alone as the cause of action in bondage has an incomplete view of the knowledge of the cause of an action. So it is in such a sense that the Jiva is the agent of action or doer.¹

The Brhadāraṇyaka says that the Jiva takes the organs and moves about as it pleases in its own body at its will (ii.1.18). This text which says that the Jiva takes the organs and wanders about in the dream state, clearly shows that the Jiva is an agent. The Taittiriya says; “Intelligence performs sacrifices, and it also performs all acts” [ii.5]. Here ‘intelligence’ refers to the Jiva, thereby showing that the Jiva is an agent. It may be objected that the word ‘intelligence’ refers not to the Jiva but to the internal organ [buddhi]. In that case, the scriptures would have used the word ‘not’ in the nominative case, but in the instrumental case, as ‘Intelligence’. If the Jiva were not the agent but merely an enjoyer, then as all the Jivas are equally connected with Prakriti, all actions would result in the enjoyment of all the Jivas or of none. Even if internal organs are different in different Jivas, still as all the Jivas are infinite and all-pervading, they will be equally connected with all internal organs and so there would be no distribution of results of actions. An agent alone enjoys the results of his actions. If the Jiva is not an agent, but Prakriti is an agent, then the results of actions would be enjoyed by Prakriti and not by the Jiva. So there will be an inversion of the power of enjoyment. Further, if the Jiva is not an

enjoyer, there would be no proof of its existence. If the internal organ were the agent, then Samādhi would be impossible. For in Samādhi, the meditating person realises his difference from Prakriti. This experience would be impossible for the internal organ, in as much as it is a product of Prakriti. So we have to accept the Jīva is an agent.

It is objected that if the Jīva is an agent, it would result in eternal activity on the part of the Jīva. The Vedānta Sūtra (39) refutes it and says that, just as a carpenter, though possessing the instruments, may or may not be active according to his desire, the intelligent Jīva also is sometimes active and sometimes inactive as it pleases it. On the other hand, if the internal organ were the agent, it would be constantly acting and also like a sentient Jīva it cannot perform or refrain from action according to its desire, since it is incapable of such a desire due to its being insentient.\(^1\) The Advaitin’s view that an agency is an attribute of the unconscious ego and not an attribute of the Jīva, because it is an attribute and is known is false. Agency is the natural form of the Jīva. Vedānta Desīka in his Nyāya Siddhānjnam argues that if the Jīva were not an agent, it would not be an experiencer of the fruits of its free-actions, happiness and misery.\(^2\)

Rāmānuja in his Śrī Bhāṣya says that the Jīva’s agency of action is subject to the control of God who resides in the heart of every creature as its in-

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2. Nyāya Siddhānjnam, p. 60; Sarvārthasiddhi, p. 167. (A commentary on Tattvamuktā Kalāpa)
ner controller. The Jiva's freedom is limited by the divine will. Brhadāraṇyaka declares: "the Supreme Lord, the Self of all, residing within all souls controls them as their inner Self" (iii.vi.22). The Gītā also says: "He who dwells within the Self, but is within... and who controls the Self from within" etc. (xviii. 61). These texts say much the same thing.

An objection is raised that if the agency of the Jiva is dependent on God, scriptural injunctions and prohibitions would be meaningless. The Sūtra (41) explains the position by refuting this objection. God makes the Jiva act by granting it permission taking into consideration the effects put forth by it; but action is not possible for the Jiva without the permission of God. Though God's permission is essential, yet the responsibility for the initial volition rests on the Jivas. Hence, injunctions and prohibitions have a scope. The text "He makes those whom He will raise do good deeds" etc. (Kausitaki Up. iii.8) does not mean that God Himself makes men do good and evil actions, but it means that God favours or rewards those who resolve to be virtuous by aiding them in their endeavours and vice-versa. He makes those who are resolved on evil actions take greater delight in such actions, which take them downwards. "To them, ever steadfast and serving Me with affection, I give that buddhi yoga by which they come unto Me" (Gītā, x.10); "Those malicious and cruel evil doers, most degraded of men, I hurl perpetually into the wombs of asuras only in these worlds" (Gīta, xvi.19). Thus God rewards those who are favourable and devoted to Him and punishes those who are extremely hostile and indifferent to Him

Sudarsana Suri, in his Sutra Prakasika, a sub-commentary on Ramanuja’s Sri Bhasya avers that God is the impeller and permitter of the Jivas to act freely God grants them relative freedom to do merits or demerits, as a King gives limited freedom of action to his minister. God does not give absolute freedom to the Jivas as a King does not give absolute freedom to the minister. Thus, Sudarsana Suri holds that this view reconciles relative human freedom with God’s absolute freedom and makes scriptural injunctions meaningful. Vedanta Desika says, that the Jiva is free to do right or wrong action and it is an enjoyer of its fruits. If the internal organ (buddhi) or ego (ahamkara) were an agent it would be an enjoyer. But it is unconscious and so cannot be an agent and enjoyer.

Ramanuja does not reject human freedom but regards it as relative and subject to the will of God. It is subject to the Law of Karma or moral law of which God is the ruler. God alone is conscious of the Jiva’s merits and demerits and dispenses their appropriate fruits at proper time. The Jivas cannot attain perfect purity and similarity of the nature of God without wearing off merits and demerits alike.

JIVA IS ATOMIC:

The Mundakopanishad speaks of the Jiva as atomic: “This atomic Self” etc. (iii.1.9). Again we have in Svetasvatara: “That Jiva is to be known as a part of the hundredth part of the tip of a hair divided a hundred times” (v.9) which shows that the

1. Sutra Prakasika, ii.3.41 (Sudarsana suri)
2. Nyaya siddhantam, p. 60 Benares, 1901)
Jiva is of infinitesimal measure. Brhadāranyaka (vi. 4, 2) and Kauśitaki (i. 2) also refer to the atomic Jiva.

Rāmānuja also hold the same view. Though the Jiva is atomic and resides in the heart, it can experience sensations throughout its body. Just as Sandal paste applied to any particular part of the body gives pleasant sensation all over the body, the Jiva though of atomic size and occupies only one part of the body, yet may experience sensations extending over the entire body, through its attributive knowledge like light which can expand. The Jiva is atomic and the substratum of consciousness, and yet its attributive consciousness can expand. Consciousness, an attribute of the Jiva, can exist apart from it, just as the odour, an attribute of the earth, can exist apart from it. Consciousness is an essential attribute of the Jiva. It exists as long as the Jiva exists. So consciousness is sometimes said to be the Jiva. Sometimes it may not be as much manifested as this in the waking state, even as man-hood is only dormant in a child and becomes manifested in a youth. So the Jiva is a Knower and atomic in its essence.

If the Jiva were ubiquitous and of the nature of consciousness, it would either simultaneously have consciousness and ignorance, or would always have consciousness, or would always have ignorance, but would not sometimes have consciousness and sometimes ignorance. But in the state of bondage it has sometimes consciousness and sometimes ignorance.

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1. Śrī Bhāṣya, ii.3, 20-22.
2 to 4 Ibid., 29, 29, 30
This is possible because the Jīva is atomic and has the quality of consciousness, which is produced by the sense-organs. If the Jīva were ubiquitous it would always be connected with the sense-organs and would always have perception. So it is atomic and of the nature of consciousness, which is also its quality.\(^1\)

It is objected that the Śruti speaks of the pervasive Supreme Self also to be atomic and residing in the heart of every creature. Vedānta Desṭīka urges that its atomic nature is due to a limited adjunct. It is objected that if the Jīva were atomic, it would be imperceptible like an atom of earth. Vedānta Desṭīka argues that if the Jīva were ubiquitous, then also it would be imperceptible like any other ubiquitous substance, and it would not be an object of mental perception. The Śruti asserts the Jīva to be atomic, and cannot be over-ridden by hypothetical reasoning.\(^2\)

**ETERNALITY OF THE JĪVA:**

The Jīva is eternal. It is non-destructible. It is not an adventitious feature but a fact of reality. It is true that there are several scriptural passages: i) All these creatures have their root in the true, they abide in the true and they rest on the true (Chāndogya Up. vi. 8-6). ii) From where these beings are produced (Taittirīya Up. iii.1.1.) etc.,

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1. Śrī Bhāṣya, ii.3. 20-32.
which assert that the Jīva is a product of creation like ether and fire.

In contrast to these passages there are several others: i) The intelligent one is not born nor does he die (Katha Up. i.2.18), ii) There are two unborn ones, one intelligent and strong, the other non-intelligent and weak, (Svetāsvatara Up. 1.9) establish the eternity of the Jīva. However several other passages affirm in many ways the continuity of the Jīva, and establish its eternity (Aṣṭāḥṣaṅkha Rg. Veda, v x-16-4; Nirukta, xii-29,30,32,33; Athārva Veda xiii-2-36; ix-5-1; Satapatha Brahmana, xi-2-1-1). The Gītā also affirms the eternity of the Jīva (ii.17,20 21).

According to Viṣṇu-ḥita, the Jīva is immutable in its essential nature. There is only change in the attributive consciousness but never in the inherent nature of the Jīva. In view of the scriptural statements, a doubt arises as to the definite nature of the Jīva. Rāmānuja adopts the doctrine of Pārīṣṭamāvāda which implies that the change of substance into its effects is real. He holds that the Jīva is not created. It is unborn and eternal. From this point of view the Jīva should be an effect or mode of Brahman and has existed in Brahman from eternity. So also the elements. At the time of creation the elements undergo a change in their essential nature and therefore they are said to be originated but the Jivas undergo no such change. There is only an expansion of their intelligence making them fit to enjoy the fruit of their Karma and so are said to be uncreated. Hence the texts which speak of their creation mean only the expansion of their intelligence like sparks emanating from fire.¹

1. Śrī Bhaṭṭa; Ṛ. ii. 17.
The three entities namely material objects of enjoyments, the enjoying Jivas and Brahman as the ruler, are distinct in themselves. Origination and destruction which are the characteristics of the objects and the Jivas such as suffering, enjoying do not belong to Brahman since Brahman is eternal and free from all imperfections. The cit and acit in all their states constitute the body of Brahman, while Brahman constitutes their Self. When the cit and acit are in subtle condition, Brahman is said to be in the causal state and this is called Kārya Brahman. In their gross state with names and forms, Brahman is said to be in the effected condition. This is called Karāya Brahman. When Brahman passes over from the causal state into the effected condition, the aggregate of non-sentient things undergoes an essential change of nature and become fit for enjoyment as individual objects. What the sentient beings undergo on that occasion is nothing more than a certain expansion of intelligence capacitating them to experience the results of their own actions of their previous births. To say that the Jivas have an origin means that they are associated or dissociated with bodies, the effect of which is that their intelligence is either contracted or expanded. To deny the origin of the Jiva and to affirm its eternity means that the Jiva like non-sentient elements of creation does not undergo any change in its essential nature.

It may then be asked, if the Jivas are eternal and had existed even before the creation of the universe, are the statements such as “sat alone was in the beginning” (Chand. Up. 6.8.7) inconsistent? Rāmānuja says that they are not. What is meant by ‘alone’ there, is that this world now due to distinction of names and forms bears a manifold shape,
whereas in the beginning there was one only due to the absence of names and forms.

If the eternity and immortality of the Jiva is not admitted, a difficult question arises as to how the inequities in life may be accounted for. If God created these inequities, He must be deemed to be partial and irrational which He is not. Some basis for God to act upon must be granted, and this basis is Karma. We have therefore to admit immortality. Otherwise we are driven to such absurd conclusion, that one Jiva reaps what he does not sow and that another Jiva does not reap what he sows.

PLURALITY OF THE JIVAS:

Vishishtadvaita says that there are a plurality of the Jivas. Privacy of the experience of the finite centres which is unsharable, is a fact, which cannot be denied unless we elect to pass over the most obvious facts of life. Ramanuja argues therefore, that the Jivas are many and not one.

Vedanta Desika also states that the Jivas are many and different from one another. This is a fact of our experience. Every individual has his own unique experience of pleasure, pain, recognition and memory and has unique cognition and volition. Everyone has a unique psychological organism. One Jiva differs from another in the power of its consciousness during the state of Samsara. So we have to conclude that there are as many Jivas in this world as there are psycho-physical organisms. If there were only one Jiva in all the bodies, one's cognition would have to result in the cognition by all, one's experience of pleasure and pain would be inevitable for all
others, one’s death or birth would result in the death or birth of all the others. But all these are not experienced, and so this confirms the plurality of Jivas

Vedānta Deśika in his Tattva muktā Kalāpa proceeds to explain that it is a matter of common knowledge that we are all self-contained unique centres of experience. No one remembers anything which has been perceived by someone else. My memory of something experienced by me in the past is exclusively my own private affair. This is possible only if I have known ‘that something’. It cannot be said that I should remember anything which has been known by others. If there were only one Jiva in all the physical bodies, then it would never happen as it does happen, that he alone who saw the Jar, should also be the person who remembers it and not others.

The Saṁkhya as well as Naiyāyikas realise this and accordingly admit the plurality of Jivas. The plurality of Jivas is a fact of experience based on distinctions of cognition, volition and experience by the individuals. This is also supported by the scriptures. The Jivas are real and many and they continue as such for all time to come even in the state of release. The individuality of the Jivas is ever maintained.

Then what is the position of various scriptural

statements advocating the unity of the Jīva? Vedānta Desīka in his Nyāya Siddhāñjanam says that in these texts the unity of attributes is intended, but not unity of the Jīvas.\footnote{Nyāya Siddhāñjanam, p. 214 (P.B. Annangarācharya’s Edition).}

The Jīva residing in different bodies is of the same nature qualified by Aṇutva, s'esaṭva, jñanasaṃrūpatva, pratyaktva and so on. The assertion of the oneness of the Jīva implies a close similarity of different Jīvas residing in different bodies. These statements only signify that all the Jīvas have, by nature, common characteristics and so belong to the same category.

Such assertions of oneness are made possible under five circumstances as detailed by Vedānta Desīka:\footnote{Ibid., p. 215 (This is abridged in a stanza by Vedānta Desīka).}

i) When two people give up their mutual differences in opinion and unite, as seen in two political powers, there is ‘avirodha’ and in this sense the statement ‘they are one’ is possible.

ii) If two people have mutual agreement and have confidence in each other they possess ‘antaraṅgatva’. And there is provision here for the usage of the term ‘aikya’ or unity.

iii) If two things are of the same kind or Jāti, then also this aikya is possible.

iv) When two people have the same experience, there is ‘bhogaikya’ and this also leads to the declaration of unity.

v) If two things have an inseparable relationship at all times in all places and in all states, then also there is provision for the expression of unity.
Vishis\text{\textsc{\textasciitilde}}\text{\textsc{\textdash}}advaita has admitted the equality of all Jivas in their essential nature, and it also holds that during the state of release, there is equality even in the power of their attributive consciousness. Plurality with perfect equality is possible in the state of release. This conclusion is drawn on the basis of the scriptures.

The Jivas are in essence, of the nature of knowledge and joy, and there is no intrinsic inequality in them. During the state of Sa\text{\textsc{\textasciitilde}}\text{\textmacron}\text{\textacircumflex{\textmacron{\textasciitilde}}}\text{\textsc{\textasciitilde}}\text{\textasciitilde}s\text{\textsc{\textasciitilde}}\text{\textsc{\textasciitilde}}\text{\textasciitilde}ra, the Jivas are unequal due to the contraction of their attributive consciousness brought about by the bonds of Karma. It is only Karma that is responsible for the empirical inequalities of the Jivas. These Jivas regain their natural and unbounded proportions in the state of liberation, when all the Jivas attain the same degree of rapture or \textacuted{\textasciitilde}nanda.\textsuperscript{1}

The states of Sa\text{\textsc{\textasciitilde}}\text{\textmacron{\textasciitilde}}\text{\textasciitilde}s\text{\textsc{\textasciitilde}}\text{\textmacron{\textasciitilde}}\text{\textasciitilde}ra and release cannot be satisfactorily explained without accepting the reality and plurality of Jivas.\textsuperscript{2} Vishis\text{\textsc{\textasciitilde}}\text{\textasciitilde}advaita realism tackles this problem in the light of the scriptures and gives a comprehensive solution. The destruction of Karma (avidy\text{\textmacron{\textasciitilde}}) is a positive factor resulting in the explanation of the attributive consciousness paving the way for the rapture of Divine communion. The statements of non-difference between the released Jivas and Brahman are also not incompatible, as they signify the one cosmic principle, to which all others both cit and acit are inseparable modes. The Jivas are infinite in number and are different from Brahma.

\textsuperscript{1} Ny\text{\textmacron{\textasciitilde}}\text{\textaccentu{\textasciitilde}}ya Siddh\text{\textmacron{\textasciitilde}}\text{\textmacron{\textasciitilde}}njanam, 215 (P.B. Am\textacuted{nangar\textacut{\textasciitilde}}r\textacut{\textasciitilde}ch\text{\textmacron{\textasciitilde}}\text{\textmacron{\textasciitilde}}\text{\textasciitilde}r\text{\textasciitilde}ya's Edition)

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 215.
man. The Jīva by nature is, ānanda svarūpa, and also a substratum of joy. So it is called “Svatah Sukhi”

CLASSIFICATION OF JĪVAS:

According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, the Jīvas are of two types, those bound by Karma (Samsārin) and those not bound by Karma (Asaṁsārin).

Some Viśiṣṭādvaitins maintain that the eternally bound Jīvas (Nityasaṁsāri) are destined to be bound by Karma for all time to come on account of their excessive sins owing to which they are cast into the lower strata. They also quote the Gītā which says that tāmasic souls are hurled into eternal damnation. They also cite the words of Parāśāra, the author of Viṣṇu Purāṇa who affirms the eternity of lilāvibhūti (world of matter with Jīvas) and confirm that the worst sinners would continue in bondage to account for the eternity of the world.

There is another point of view which explains that those who despise God would remain in bondage on this earth for a long time, but a time would come when these forlorn Jīvas would get a chance of salvation due to some kind of merit or other done knowingly or otherwise. These think-


2. Vide i) Rahasyatrayasāra, iv (There are some Viśiṣṭādvaitins who believe in those who are forever bound to the wheel of Samsāra (nityabaddha).

ii) Vide also Tattva Muktākalāpa, ii. 27-28, (P.B. Annangarāchārya’s Edition)
ers affirm that every Jīva is destined to attain its liberation sometime or other.¹

Everything in this world is ruled by the will of God and there would be no incompatibility even if the world of lilāvibhūti becomes empty due to all selves attaining liberation by the will of God. If the theory of eternally bound Jīvas is accepted, it might cause doubt in the minds of the aspirants who strive for individual effort for an upward evolution. Hence it is generally accepted that all Jīvas are worthy of attaining liberation, and this depends upon their yearning for self-realisation.

The liberated (asamsāri) Jīvas are of two types, namely the eternal (nitya) and liberated (mukta). The eternals never experience the world of Karma and they are established in the eternal service of the Lord. The liberated (mukta) Jīvas after casting off their mortal coils enjoy eternal bliss in the presence of the Supreme in the highest abode of the Lord. Their attributive consciousness which was contracted during samsāra attains natural proportions forever. Though there is some distinction between the eternals and the liberated on account of their contact or otherwise with samsāra, it must be noted that there is no difference or inequality in their divine experience. There is no graduation of joy there, and everyone will be blessed with the same degree of joy as described in the text, “Paramam Śāmyam Upaithi”.

The embodied Jīvas (saṁsāri jīvas) are engulfed in nature under the influence of matter. These Jīvas, though they are in essence of the nature of knowledge

¹ Dayāś'atākam—Vedānta Des'ika, p. 79.
and bliss; are caught up in the mesh of Prakriti groping through the cycle of births and deaths. These Jivas are in need of liberation after getting rid of samsāra to attain the infinite joy of divine communion.

The eternally liberated (nityas) are ever free from the taint of Samsāra. The liberated had formerly the contact of Karma. By virtue of their Sādhana, they endeared themselves to the Lord, by whose Grace they could get rid of worldly misery and attain Divine Communion. Sādhanā is applicable only to the Jivas embodied in matter.¹

Savants of the past enumerated three tattvas (categories) namely, the Bhokta, Bhogya, and Prerita. This kind of categorisation has the support of the scriptures and is significant. Though other entities like time and qualities are implied in this, these tattvas help the Jīva to discriminate itself from matter. The world of nature (Prakriti) is the object of enjoyment (Bhogya), the Jīva is the enjoyer (Bhokta) and the Supreme Lord is the Prerita. The Jīva considers that the matter is enjoyable and identifies itself with matter and gets into the perils of rebirths. The Self-Body contact is the origin of all troubles and this 'Prakriti Sambandha' is the result of the previous Karma of the Jīva.

The world of matter is called 'Triguṇam' namely Sattva, rajas and tamas. The combination of these three gunas in different proportions is responsible

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, ii. 3. 25. (Even the Gods are bound Souls and so can follow the discipline of Sādhanā).
for different activities. The Gītā describes in detail
the influence of these guṇas on the mental make up
of the individuals according to which they involve
themselves in this world. The material of the uni-
verse is made up of the stuff of twentyfour entities.
Besides these, there are vital airs or prāṇas which
are explained as only different types of air (vāyu).

The Jīva has a gross and a subtle body: The
gross body only changes from birth to birth and the
subtle body is not destroyed till liberation. The sense-
organs and the Prāṇas are taken along with it by the
Jīva when it transmigrates from body to body. So the
Jīva cannot disown the effects of its good or bad
actions. This is due to Jīva’s identification with mat-
ter due to avidyā. In fact this is the resultant of the
displeasure of God due to its transgression of divine
laws. This is responsible for the contraction of the
attributive consciousness due to contact with Pra-
kriti.

The Self-Body contact and the sense-organs are
also a blessing in disguise for it is only through their
agency that the Jīva observes discipline for its libe-
ration. Creation is not an act of divine mercy for it
affords an opportunity to the Jīva to work out its
liberation. The Jīva inevitably needs a body and-
sense-organs for functioning and with the body
thus given by the Divine Lord, it can achieve its libe-
ration.

The Jīva’s association with the body is also a
source of peril. Matter is described as ‘Mamamāyā

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, 11.48: Tattva muktā Kalāpa, 1-53
(P.B. Annangarācharya’s Edition).
durtyayāḥ by the Lord Himself and its powers are hard to overcome. It retards the spiritual progress of the Jīva at every step. Matter screens from us the nature of the Jīva and universal self. It limits our knowledge and creates a sense of pleasure in itself. It obstructs our attempts of Self-realisation and God-realisation.

**JĪVA AS PART (PRAKĀRA) OF GOD:**

An elaborate analysis of this aspect of Jīva is made in the Seventh chapter.
CHAPTER VII

THE RELATION BETWEEN BRAHMĀN AND THE JIVA

This Chapter considers in detail the relation between Brahmān and the Jiva which is regarded as the distinctive feature (asadhārāṇa dharma) of Visī-
stādvaita. The philosophy of Rāmānuja is a synthe-
sis of metaphysical, moral and religious experiences and is rooted in the thought that Brahmān is the ground of existence as well as the goal of experience. The Supreme Being is also the supreme good and the Ultimate Goal of all religious endeavour (Karaṇāṁ tu dhyeyah). The Absolute of thought is also the Inner-Ruler-Immortal and the Lord of Love and Bliss. The glory of God and His goodness are fulfilled in His redemptive grace. The governing idea of Rāmā-
uja’s thought is that Brahmān is the first and final cause and that there is no contradiction between the Absolute of thought and the God of religion. Brahmān constitutes the real Reality of the Universe (tattva), the means of realisation (hita) and realisa-
tion itself (Purushārtha).

Rāmānuja insists on the equal validity of all the Upaniṣadic texts and claims for his interpretation the authority of timeless tradition and verifies it on the authority of Dramidacārya for whom Rāmānuja has the highest esteem. This method of interpreta-
tion is not accepted by the Advaitin and the Dvaitin who distinguish between primary texts and secon-
dary texts (Pradhāna texts and Guna texts). Śaṅkara directs attention to the mahāvākyas and derives his chief thoughts from them. But Rāmānuja lays stress on Śruti as a whole and relies on logical stability.
It is in this way that Rāmānuja deduces his first principles of realism (Satkhyāti) and co-ordination (Sāmānādhikaranya) and establishes the truth of the Jīva as a mode (Prakāra) of Isvāra. Both cit and acit are shown to be modifications (parināma) of Brahman. The Jīva is a mode (prakāra of Isvāra in the sense that he is an essential attribute of Isvāra sharing in His substantiality. Rāmānuja regards this conclusion as the central concept of his system. His theory of cit and acit as modes of Brahman affords full scope for personality as well as the infinity of Brahman. The precise nature of the relationship between the Jīva and Brahman can be studied with reference to logic, ethics and religion.

LOGICAL RELATION BETWEEN BRAMAN
AND THE JĪVA :

(i) BRAHMAN AS THE CAUSE-JĪVA AS
THE EFFECT :

The Jīva as a mode of God may be viewed as satisfying the demands of reason. Thought employs the categories of causality, substance and subject and deduces the logical relation between Brahman and cit. The Sadvidyā in Chāndogya states the ontological problem thus: “What is that by knowing which everything else is known (eka-Vijñanena Sarva Vijñānam)” and then proceeds to solve it thus: “Sat alone existed in the beginning; it willed the manifold.” This famous text declares Brahman as the cause of the universe and is therefore called Kāraṇasruti and it furnishes the key to Rāmānuja’s interpretation of causality and creation in terms of immanent individuality.
CAUSE AND EFFECT: Visistadvaita recognises the identity of cause and effect in the sense of continuity and rejects atomism as well as abstractionism. The atomic theory of Vaiseshika asserts the distinction between cause and effect and treats reality as a mere aggregate of unrelated reals. The Sankhya view of Pradhana realises the immanence of the cause in the effect but its presentation of the Cosmos in mechanical emanation fails to account for the uniqueness of intelligence and purposes found in experience. The Advaitin holds that causal manifestation is itself a process of illusion to be destroyed by the perception of self-identity. Ramanuja closely follows the Sutras with the aid of traditional insight and spiritual intuition and establishes his own interpretation. He says that the effect is not, as Vaiseshika maintains, a creation out of nothing, but presupposes the logical and temporal priority of the cause. Causation involves sequence as well as consequence. The cause is not the contradiction of the effect but is co-ordinated and continuous with it. The potential passes into the actual and thereby becomes its ground. It is a process of self-manifestation implying unity, continuity and agency. In this way Ramanuja establishes the identity of cause and effect.

The Jiva interpreted in the light of causality becomes the effect (Upadeya) of Brahman. Ramanuja employs this logical concept in the explanation of the theory of reality propounded by the Chandogya text: (vi.2.1) 'Sat alone existed in the beginning. It is said “let me become manifold”. It states the unity

1. Sri Bhasya, i.4.15,  
and continuity of Brahman in the states of involution and evolution and thus explains the manifold of creation as the self-modification of the ‘One’. Sat does not refer to the absolute unity in the state of involution (pralaya) effected by a process of progressive abstraction. The absolute of involution is only a potentiality or non-manifestation and not a negation. “Brahman eternally separated itself into finite centres but is not really external to them. Sat in the causal state connotes Brahman containing cit and acit in posse such a way that their indeterminateness is practically identical with their non existence”.  
1. Cit and acit become one with Brahman without losing their distinctness. The same ‘Sat’ becomes effect by mere volition when it concretised itself into the cosmos ‘Sat’ the potential passes into the actual by its own determination and thereby becomes its ground and constitutive principle. The cosmos is a concretisation of Brahman. Each involves the other.

The infinite Brahman finitises itself in Purusa and Prakriti by investing them with name and form. The one is not the many in the pantheistic sense of emanation. The text attributes creation to the volition of Isvara or the brooding of Brahman and treats evolution as a real temporal process. By His mere will, Brahman evolves the twentyfour categories of matter and by incarnating Himself directly in the Jiva being the twentyfifth category.  
2. He is avesacidacid visista-prapañca-sarira. Brahman stands to the Jiva in the same relation as the soul

1. Sri Bhāṣya, i.4.27 and Sacred Books of the East series, XLVIII, p. 403.
stands to the body. He emits creation at the beginning of each Kalpa by sowing the seed of soul into the womb of matter. The universe is a soul-making process. Reality weaves itself into the warp and woof of creation. The cosmos with its infinite variety is instinct with divinity. Isvara is called Akṣara on account of His pervasive identity exhibited in the related manifold. He is known as Brahman on account of His growing into the cosmic variety. He is the Paramātman, permeating all beings. The universe as the effected manifestation of Brahman, is constituted by Sat, and thus, by knowing the cause, the effect is likewise known. The Upaniṣad gives an illustration for this truth in the text: Vacārāmhaṇam Vikāro Nāmadheyaṃ Mṛttiketi Eva Satyam. By knowing a lump of clay its modifications like pots, and pitchers are also explained. In Vedārtha-samgraha, Rāmānuja discusses the meaning of this text and establishes causality as “the unity of composition as well as unity of manifestation”. Brahman is the source as well as the sustenance of the cosmos and therefore forms the inner causality or Self. He is the stuff as well as the spirit of creation. The manifold is the making of the immanent one. Cit and acit are the infinite and eternal modes following temporarily and logically His causality. In the logical or causal state He is the unity of composition and in the effected state he forms the Unity of manifestation. In this way the theme of the Upaniṣad is fulfilled and is in accordance with the Mīmā-

2. Śrī Bhāṣya, ii. 1. 19.
3. Ibid., ii.2.23.
msa method of textual interpretation: the logical criterion of consistency and the grammatical truth of coordination.¹ The Jiva is the effect of Is'vara in the sense that the Highest Self in the effected state is exhibited in co-ordination with another connoting the same in the causal sense.

Truth of conclusion refutes the falsity of rival theories. The māyā doctrine exalts the one at the expense of the many and its absolute is nothing at all. The Advaitic analogy of the son of a barren woman is refuted by the retort of the child denying its parentage. Non-differentiation is not a negation of the finite. It is only the denial of the finite as a separate entity. If the manifold is the making of māyā, then māyā itself has to be accounted, and the cause of māyā cannot be māyā.

The Bhedabhedavādin postulates the reality of limitation inhering in Brahman and accounting for creation. But the defect of the doctrine lies in predicating error and evil to Brahman who is absolutely perfect and good. The Bhedavādin, with his laws of eternal differences has to sacrifice the Śrutis with an undoubted monistic meaning. Rāmānuja relies mainly on the mediating texts (Ghataka Śruti) and finds it easy to reconcile monism and pluralism by the notion of causal immanence and unity. By realising the cause, the effect is also realised. Brahman reveals Himself in creation in the moulding of matter and the “making of souls”. The manifold is metaphysically distinguishable from Is'vara but not really separable. The cosmic stuff derives its substantiality and individuality from Brahman as its Self.

¹ Sri Bhāṣya, ii.1.15.
and thereby forms its inseparable mode. The identity of the causal relation is not a bare identity between Is'vara and Jiva but an operative identity of Brahman with potential forms of cit and acit and the same Brahman modified by their manifestations in name and form in response to the laws of karma. These modes thus express the creative and redemptive impulse of God. Rāmānuja's theory thus harmonises the sense of distinctness with the sense of unity by applying the principle of "unity of manifestation and unity of composition".

(ii). BRAHMAN IS THE GROUND OR SUPPORTER OF ALL (SARVĀDHĀRA):

The logical Self attributes the concept of ādharatva or support and thinks of Brahman as the source of the cosmos. Brahman is the ground of all that exists. Therefore the relation between Brahman and the cosmos, Brahman and the selves is the supporter-supported relation (ādharadheya Sambandha). The import of this relationship is that nothing can exist without the support of Brahman.

The first basic truth of ontology that calls for explanation is the knowledge of Brahman as the supporter (ādhara), and is revealed by the Taittiriya text that Brahman is Satyam, Jñānam and anantam. Satyam signifies that Brahman is the unconditional Reality and distinguishes it from cit and acit. The term Jñānam connotes eternally all-pervasive character of His consciousness in the universal and par-

ticular aspect. Brahman is ananta or infinite and this distinguishes it from nature and the Jivas. It is free from all limitations of space, time and causality.¹ The concept of ‘ādhāra’ is implied in the following verses: “The Kathopanisad says that “when He shines, everything shines after Him; by His light does all this shine” (ii.5.15). “The Mahānārayanopanisad declares “The author of this universe is the hub (Bhuvanasya Nābhiḥ) of this universe” (1.6). The Gītā speaks of Brahman as the supporter of all creatures (Bhūta Bhṛit) (ix.5). Rāmānuja in his Śrī Bhāṣya says that “some texts declare a distinction of nature between non-intelligent matter, intelligent beings, and Brahman, in so far as matter is the object of enjoyment, the souls the enjoying subjects and Brahman the ruling principle” (i.11.23). The Gītā expresses itself similarly “Thus eight-fold is my nature divided, lower is this nature; other than this and higher know that nature of Mine which constitutes the individual Soul, by which this world is supported” (Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya, vii. 4. 5). “All beings at the end of a Kalpa do I send them forth. Resting on my own nature again and again do I send them forth. The entire body of beings which has no power of its own, being subject to the power of nature” (Bhagavad Gītā, ix. 7.8). “With me as supervisor, Nature brings forth the immovable and the movable, and for this reason the world ever moves round” (Bhagavad Gītā, ix.10) The great Brahman is my womb, in which I place my embryo and thence there is the origin of all beings” (Bhagavad Gītā, xiv.3).

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¹ Sri Bhāṣya, i.1.2. Nyāya Siddhāñjanam, p. 229. (P.B. Annangarāchārya’s Edition)
Rāmānuja in his (Sṛi Bhāṣya, i.1·1.) explains the above passage thus: “This last passage means that the womb of the world is the great Brahman i.e. non-intelligent matter in its subtle state commonly called Prakriti: With this I connect the embryo i.e. the intelligent principle. From this contact non-intelligent and the intelligent due to My will there ensues the origination of all beings from Gods down to lifeless things”.

In his Rahasyatraya Sāra, 3, (pp. 78-79) Vedānta Desṭika elucidates that Brahman is the supporter (ādhāra) and the universe is the supported (ādheyā). The universe of selves and matter abides in the Absolute and depends upon it for its existence and functioning. These subserve the end of only Brahman in the ultimate analysis. Brahman supports all existents as the ground of its determining attributes (Svarūpa nirūpa dharmas) such as Satyam, Jñānam and Anantam as well as the defining details (nirūpi- tasara viśeṣaṇas). Just as the Jīva sustains the body and uses it for its own purposes, similarly Brahman sustains the Jīva as its inner soul or controller and uses it for its own satisfaction. Brahman is the ground of the universe of cit and acit which in their essential nature (svarūpā s'rita) are rooted in Brahman and completely controlled by Him alone by His will (sankalpā s'rita).

(iii). SUBSTANCE AND QUALITIES: SUBSTANCE-ATTRIBUTE (MODE) RELATION : (VIŚEṢAṆA-VIŚEṢYABHĀVA OR PRAKĀRA-PRAKĀRIBHĀVA)

Substance and quality are chief categories of
Reality and Ramanuja interprets the Jiva as an attribute of Brahman. Reality is always qualified and all conscious experience involve differentiation (Viveka Vivastamaya). Ramanuja defines experience (anubhuti) as involving both self-cognition and the cognition of external objects. When the attribute is the essential property of the substance, it may be called its mode or Prakriti. Gastva or the characteristic quality of the cow is the invariable mode of the cow (niyemenapракāra). But in the judgement a person wielding a stick (dandī) or wearing an earring (kundalina), the predicate is a separable accident of the subject and it cannot be termed its mode or prakāra.

The Self is an eternal thinking subject (cid rūpa) and has intelligence (caitanya) for its quality. The judgement ‘I know’ (aham jānāmi) presupposes the distinction between the thinker and the object of thought. The ātman is self-posed. It is its own certitude, but a mere thinker without any thought is an empty form in which all distinction is dissolved. The Advaitin’s explanation of the quality as a contradiction of the substance is not borne out by experience at all. Neither sense-perception nor reasoning predicates a Reality devoid of differentiation. The denial of the attribute is the denial of the substance itself. Contentless cognition is like a predication of barrenness to a mother. It therefore follows that intelligence as a quality necessarily involves an intelligent substance metaphysically different from it. The subject is ever conscious of itself and its objects. Each necessarily involves the other in evolution as well as involution. The Self as a mere complex of qualities lends us in Buddhistic nihilism. A mere substrate without qualities results in scepticism.
Consequently Rāmānuja distinguishes between substance and attribute inseparably associated with, but yet distinct from it. For example in the proposition ‘Devadatta has a stick’, Devadatta is different from the stick. This applies to the finite Self as well as to the infinite in all their psychic conditions. The Taittirīya predicates eternity (Satyam) intelligence (Jñānam) and infinitude (anantam) to Brahman only in this sense. In the same way the sūtras assert eternity and intelligence to the finite Self. In both the cases the knowing subject is eternally distinct from knowledge.

Following this logical interpretation of knowledge, Rāmānuja develops the doctrine of Jīva (Praksāra) as an essential attribute of Brahman (Praksārin) and applies the conclusion to the Chāndogya thesis—the problem of the one by knowing which everything else is known. The solution is summed up in the judgement ‘Thou art That’ Rāmānuja determines its meaning in the light of the grammatical rule of co-ordination and the Mīmāṃsā doctrine of connotation. According to the grammarians (Vaiyākara-纳斯), co-ordination is the power of words having different meanings to denote only one thing. The judgement ‘this is that Devadatta’ refers directly to personal identity and continuity. It conveys the idea of the same substance modified by several attributes predicated at different times and places. Sāmkara’s interpretation of absolute identity violates the grammatical rules and is opposed to the logical theory of predication. The Upanisadic judgement ‘Thou art That’ cannot therefore be bare identity, established by eliminating the attributes (viśeṣanās) according to the principle of Jahad-ajahad jñāna (the principle in Advaita of affirming the identity of Jīva and
Iśvara by eliminating the differences). The attribute is not a sublation or the negation of the subject. With the negation of quality, the substance is likewise negated. Without differentiation, it evaporates into airy nothing. The judgement in question shows co-ordination between the cosmic Self and the inner-self of individuality. The judgement really refers to Sāvītesa Brahman as opposed to nirguna Brahman of Saṅkara. In the judgement ‘Thou art That’, ‘That’ refers to the same Iśvara in a different aspect as the inner controller of the finite Self associated with the body.¹ This meaning is made clearer by the application of the Mīmāṃsa argument that words connote genus (jāti) and attribute (guna) also connote individual (Vyakti) and substance [gunin]. The concept has its meaning only in the perempt. The concept of go-tva [the generic character of the cow] extends in its meaning to the individual cow.² Every attribute refers to the reality of which it is the attribute in so far as it is an essential quality (niyamena prakāra).³ In the same way substance may constitute the body of some other substance and thus become its determining quality [visēsa]. A word connoting the body connotes also the Self of which it is the body.⁴ We may therefore conclude that words like God, man etc., refer ultimately to Brahman of

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¹ & 2. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1, p. 130, 136.


4. Śutra Prakāśikā, p. 307 [Volume I, Grantha Edition] [Śarīra Vachi Sabdamam Sarītī Paryantata]
which they are the body. Every term or concept or thing refers ultimately to Brahman. The relation of the body to the Self is like the relation between substance and attribute or genus and species. As the attribute finally refers to its substance, so the terms connoting the body connotes the Self. The body of ‘Svetaketu’ refers to his self also and for the same reason, the self of ‘Svetaketu’ connotes ultimately Brahman who is its substrate. The term ‘Thou’ in the judgement ‘Thou art that’ refers to Brahman of which the finite Self is the body. The finite Self is inseparably related to the infinite Self and derives its substantiality from it. Therefore it is its essential attribute or differentia (niyamena prakāra) and aprthaksiddha viśeṣaṇa). Consequently Purusā is a prakāra of Purushottama.1 To know the mode is to know its true being in Brahman and is therefore called real Reality (satyasya satyam) and by knowing Him everything else is known.

The above elucidation secures logical adequacy and satisfies the rules of interpretation. The Advaitic idea of identity is opposed to the law of co-ordination. The identity in difference (bhedabheda vāda) attributes imperfection to Brahman. The doctrine of absolute difference contradicts the texts referring to unity.

In his Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya, commenting on the seventh verse of the seventh chapter, Rāmānuja draws the following implication from the application of substance-mode relation to Brahman and the world. Rāmānuja writes: “All

things thus are predicative to, or modes of, Parama puruṣa: hence Parama puruṣa alone exists (the substance) adjectivated by everything else. All terms are thus connotations of Him by the rules of ‘Sāmānādhikāranya’ or the rule which expresses inseparable relation between substance and attribute or the invariable co-existence of subject, and predicate’. He speaks in his Śrī Bhāṣya of ‘Sarvaśabda vācyatva’ and Paryavasāna Vritti (in ultimate analysis) which means that all terms convey a meaning which has its “proper consummation in Brahman only”. The relevant passage runs thus: “From all this it follows that the entire aggregate of things, intelligent and non-intelligent, has its Self in Brahman in so far as it constitutes Brahman’s body, and as thus the whole world different from Brahman derives its substantial being only from constituting Brahman’s body, any term denoting the world or something in it conveys a meaning which has its proper consummation in Brahman only: in other words all terms whatsoever denotes Brahman in so far as distinguished by the different things which we associate with those terms on the basis of ordinary use of speech and etymology .......This being so it appears that those as well as who hold the theory of the absolute unity of one non different substance as those who teach the doctrine of co-existing difference and non-difference (bhedābheda), and those who teach the absolute difference of several substances give up all these scriptural texts which teach Brahman is the universal self”.¹

¹. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1. (George Thibaut’s Translation of Śrī Bhāṣya, published in the Sacred Books of the World series, XLVIII.)
Intelligent and non-intelligent beings are thus modes of Brahman. Rāmānuja compares Brahman in relation to the selves and matter to a three coloured piece of cloth where the thread of each colour remains ever distinct. He writes: "Of some parti-coloured piece of cloth the material cause is thread, white, red, black etc. All the same, each definite spot of the cloth is connected with one colour only, white eg; and thus there is no confusion of colours even in the 'effected' condition of the cloth. Analogously the combination of insentient matter, sentient beings, and the Lord constitutes the material cause of the world, but this does not imply any confusion of the essential characteristics of enjoying souls, object of enjoyment and the universal Ruler even in the world's effected state. There is indeed a difference between the two cases, in so far as the threads are capable of existing apart from one another, and are only occasionally combined according to the volition of man while non-sentient matter and sentient beings in all their states form the body of highest Self and thus have a being only as the modes of that......But the two cases are analogous in so far as there persists a distinction and absence of all confusion on the part of the constituent elements of the aggregate. This being thus, it follows that the highest Brahman, although entering into the 'effected' condition remains unchanged, for its essential nature does not become different".¹

The Visistadvaita view that the Jiva is a mode

¹ Sri Bhāsya, i.1.1. (George Thibaut's Translation of Sri Bhāsya published in 1904 in the Sacred Books of the World Series, XLVIII.
of Brahman appears paradoxical since the Jiva is also considered as a separate entity distinct from Brahman having qualities of its own. It is tantamount to saying that the Jiva is both a monad having an existence of its own and a mode or inseparable attribute of Brahman. Critics of Visistadvaita have taken exception to the above view and raise the following objections: i) How can the same thing be both substance and attribute? ii) If the Jiva is a mode or inseparable attribute of Brahman, how can it be at the same time a distinct centre of existence? If the Jiva is a separate centre of experience, its relationship to Brahman would be external; and this would be inconsistent with its being a mode of Brahman. iii) If the substance is different from the qualities by which only it is known, it is unknowable as a thing-in-itself. If on the other hand, a substance is the same as its qualities, it cannot be called a monad as then there would be no substrate. iv) Again, in perceptions like 'I see the rose', and more especially in self-consciousness, the Jiva which according to Visistadvaitic view, is a separate centre of consciousness, is both the experiencing subject and the experienced object. How can the conscious subject which is 'cit' be also the object which is 'acit'? v) If the Jiva and its consciousness be one, how can it be maintained that its knowledge (Jnana) is capable of becoming infinite while its own nature is atomic? It is difficult to conceive how the changeless can change.

The Visistadvaitin replies to these objections as follows:

i) That a thing can both be a substance and an attribute to another substance is not inconceivable.
For instance, the lamp emits light. Light is here an attribute of the lamp and at the same time it is in itself a substance. ii) The experienced object is not always acit (insentient). When Devadatta perceives or infers the existence of his neighbour Somadatta, the latter, though perceived by the former, is himself a thinking or experiencing Jiva. iii) It is only the relationship of body and the Jiva which Visiṣṭādvaita postulates between the Jiva and Brahman, to bring out adequately the intimacy that exists between the two as in spiritual communion. This view has also the merit of conveying the truth that Paramātman as Self (Saririn) enters into Jivatman which is its body (Sarira) with a view to imparting substantiality and communicating its infinite love for the Jiva.

(iv). BRAHMAN AS WHOLE (AṃśI) AND
THE JIVA AS PART (AṃśA)
(AṃŚAṃŚISAMBandha)

Visiṣṭādvaita describes Brahman as whole and the Jiva is looked upon as part of the whole. Rāmānuja defines aṃśa as the particular region (deśa) of a whole and identifies it with the attribute. In one sense the attribute is essentially distinct from the substance: In another sense it is one with it. The two aspects may be reconciled by substituting the concept of unrelated part. Brahman is not an aggregate of unrelated reals or monad of monads, nor is it an absolute absorbing all finitude. He is the Self of all cessation imparting reality to the Jiva and through it to matter. As the Jiva is an essential quality of Brahman and cannot be realised apart from Him,

1 & 2 Sith Dārśya, ii.3.42.
the Jiva is called His aman or an element of the absolute. Creation is only a fragment (pada) of Brahman and the finite is but a speck or a spark of the infinite. The infinite is immanent in the finite but is not exhausted by it. The Gita says: “An eternal part of Myself becomes the Jiva in the world of life” (XV. 7). The Sutra (ii 3 45) gives an analogical illustration of this truth. The Jiva is related to Brahman as its aprthaksidda visesepa (inseparable relation) and may be compared to the light radiating from a luminous body. The light no doubt radiates from the flame (tejas) but it is different from it like the quality of a substance or body of a Self. In the same way Brahman differs essentially (vijatia) from the Jiva and at the same time it is inseparably bound to the latter as its Self. The true meaning of the Jiva going to the Self (Sutra. i 1.10) is the merging of the effect in its cause without losing its individuality. In deep sleep and dissolution (pralaya), the Jiva divested of name and form is reabsorbed in the ‘Sat’, but does not become identical with it. But it is in release (mukti) alone that it realises its modal life in the infinity of God and thus frees itself from the sense of separateness. The mode is not a geometrical point vanishing in space, nor is it an element in the pantheistic absolute. The Jiva is atomic like the point of a goad. Though monadic in substance it is infinite in intelligence. Just as the Sun having a separate spacial position illumines the whole universe, the Jiva abides in its substantive individuality. But in its attribute aspect (dharma bhuta Jnana) it pervades the whole of its existence. Ramanuja says,

1. Sri Bhasya, iii.2.28. 2. Ibid., ii.3.46. 3. Ibid., i.1.10. 4. Ibid. i.2.7 & ii.2 28.3.
“That the world and Brahman stand to each other in relation of part and whole, the former being like the light and the latter like a luminous body, or the former being like the power and the latter like that in which the power inheres the former being like the body and the latter like the soul, this Parasara and other smriti writers also declare...As the light of a fire which abides in one place only spreads all round thus the whole world is the power (s'akti) of the Highest Brahman”.¹

Thus Rāmānuja saves the Jīva from absolute exclusiveness on one hand and the dissolution in the absolute on the other. The principle of attributive consciousness saves him from the perils of monadism and pluralism and the idea of Self being atomic in nature makes the absolute a concrete universal.

ETHICAL RELATION BETWEEN BRAHMAN

AND THE JĪVA:

(i) BRAHMAN AS CONTROLLER (NIYANTĀ)
OF NATURE AND JĪVAS OR BRAHMAN
AS THE ‘INNER CONTROLLER OF ALL’
(SARVANiyANTĀ):

The logical idea of Brahman as the support (adhāra) of the cosmos leads to the ethical concept that Brahman is a transcendent ruler (niyanta), for fear of whom the whole cosmos functions. It is the

1. George Thibaut’s Translation of Śrī Bhāṣya published in the Sacred Books of the East series, XLVIII.
command of Brahman who maintains the order and uniformity of nature. Even matter in the subtle state depends on His will. In the same way the Jiva is sustained by His control. The extra-cosmic self enters the finite self and becomes ‘its inner Ruler immortal’. He wills the mechanical order and controls it by incarnating in it through the medium of the Jiva. The whole cosmos as animate and inanimate, and supported by His supreme will which is a part of His infinity of power and perfection, is inconceivable even to the śruti itself.

In his Śrī Bhasya, Rāmanuja writes: “Non-intelligent matter and intelligent beings holding the relative position of objects of enjoyment and enjoying subjects and appearing in multifarious forms—other scriptural texts declare to be permanently connected with the highest person in so far as they constitute His body: and thus are controlled by Him, the highest person thus constituting their Self”. He quotes a number of Upaniṣadic texts in support of the above view: (i) the Brhadāraṇyaka says that “He who dwells in the earth and whom the earth does not know, whose body the earth is, and who rules the earth within, he is thy self, the ruler within, the immortal (iii.7 and iii. 7.1). (ii) The Taittirīya says “entered within, the ruler of creatures, the self of all (iii.24). (iii) Dāhāravidyā in the Chāndogya prescribes that Brahman as antaryāmin should be meditated upon to attain salvation (viii.1.1.). The Supreme residing in the ether of the heart is neither conditioned, transformed nor tainted by evil (Chānd. Upaniṣad, viii. 15). Isvara is described as residing in the heart of humanity without losing His infinity. The question

1. Śrī Bhasya, ii.1.28.
arises: Can two selves co-exist without contradiction in the same body? Why not? Though the Jīva and Brahmān are different entities they do not contradict each other. They are not also entities which turn out to be unreal in the long run. The Jīva who is subject to Karma in the form of Samsāra can spiritually progress only when he tunes his will to the will of Īśvāra, his inner Self. Similarly, the Supreme being who is aparicchītta resides in the heart of the sentient beings to impart divinity and to direct them towards evolution.

Rāmānuja specially quotes from the S'vētās'vātara to prove the eternal distinction between cit and acit and Īśvāra to define their nature. Matter is the object of experience. Cit is the experiencing subject and Īśvāra is the Lord of all.¹

The Gitā speaks of Brahmān as the controller of the universe like the one mounted over a machine which is run by Him (Bhrāmayan sarva bhūtāni yantrārdhāni māyāyā). It again states: "With Me as Supervisor Nature brings forth the movable and the immovable" (ix.10). The whole world is contained in Brahmān and evolves from Him and He exists in it as its inner Self, inner Controller, immortal (antar-yāmin). Further the Gitā, ordains that the inner ruler or Paramātma is the subject of every moral judgement (xviii.14). The body or adhiṣṭāna sustained by the five prāṇas, the connative sense-organs or kāraṇam, the finite Self or the kartā the vital functions and finally the inner divinity are declared to be the five factors that are found in every action.

1. Sri Bhāṣya, i.2.23.
Brahman or Isvara or inner divinity is thus the Ultimate subject of all actions.

The above enquiry enables us to realise the infinity of Isvara as contrasted with the infinitesimal nature of the Jiva. The kāraṇa sūtras define Brahman as the Being from whom proceed the origin, sustenance and re-absorption of the cosmos.¹

Rāmānuja resorts to the principle of Karma and places the entire responsibility of actions on the Jiva itself. The Brhadāraṇyaka sums up the law of Karma thus: "He who does good actions becomes good and he who does bad actions becomes bad" (iv.4.5). In this way conduct determines character and character persists in the cycle of births and deaths, as an almost eternal stream of disposition (anādikarma Phala vāsanā). Karma is thus the law of causality applied to moral experience. Not even a god can escape the clutches of Karma. Though the idea of Karma is rooted in causality and implicates the Jiva in endless Samsāra, the Jiva is not itself the effect of Karma. Owing to free causality, the Jiva can undo the past tendency if only it wills it.

Now comes the question of 'moral freedom' of Jiva. If Brahman or Isvara is the ultimate subject of all actions, can the Jiva be deemed to possess moral freedom? Rāmānuja says that the Jiva has the freedom to march towards spiritual perfection or to lapse into malignity by choosing either good or evil. This choice is left to the responsibility of the Jiva who experiences good or evil in an equal measure according to his choice. Isvara, the inner controller is silent but not an indifferent witness of the Jiva.

¹ Sri Bhāṣya, i.1.2.
Having equipped the Jiva with the necessary physical and psychological mechanism Isvara stands as the inner controller and enlightens the Jiva regarding his duties through the Sāstras. At this stage Isvara permits the Jiva to use his freedom. The Jiva is thus free to will either to obey or to transgress the commands of the Divine Ruler, and here lies the moral responsibility of the upward evolution of the Jiva. In the next stage Isvara permits the Jiva to exercise his freedom by means of permission (anumānārthata) and then assigns to him the fruits thereof, either pleasure or pain in according to his choice. So the initiative in every action is shared by the Jiva as well as Isvara. The ‘Lord’, says the Sūtrakāra, ‘makes the Soul act’, that is, He permits choice to Jivas and thereby justifies the meaning of commands and prohibitions. The Sūtrakāra explains this in the Sūtra, ii.3.41.

Ramānuja comments on this Sūtra (Śrī Bhāṣya, ii.3.41) as follows: It may be asked whether it is not an act of mercilessness (nirdayatva) on the part of Isvara to be indifferent at the first instance. But it is not so, for, the Jiva is a doer or Kartā who can choose his way in a conflict of desires. The Jiva is not fated to follow something irrespective of his free will. Then it would be mere determinism and there would be no possibility of any moral choice. The Jiva is endowed with full freedom either to choose good or evil according to which the inner impar-

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, ii.3.41. (George Thibaut’s translation of Śrī Bhāṣya published in 1904 in the Sacred Books of the East Series, XLVIII, p. 557).
2 Śrī Bhāṣya, ii 3.33.
tial judge appritions to him the consequences. The Jīva is said to gain his doership (kartr̥tvā) only from the supreme who is the all self and inner controller.\(^1\)

The Jīva gains his responsibility for action (kartr̥tvā) in general from the Divine as he gets from Him his physical and psychological organism and derives his responsibility for action and permission (anumānī prādāna). Though the Supreme grants permission, He is not tainted by the fruits of such deeds for they relate only to the doer. The Jīva has the power of exercising his free will and the supreme does not deprive him of it. Then it may be asked why the question of permission (anumantar̥tvā) is raised here, if the Jīva wills freely in accordance with its vāsanā only. The reply is that this question of God’s granting permission is not made up by any one but is ordained as such by the scriptures. Rāmānuja illustrates this meaning by the analogy of two men ‘A’ and ‘B’ jointly owning the property. ‘B’ wishes to transfer it to ‘C’, and though he has to obtain the permission of ‘A’, he ‘B’ alone has to execute it and therefore is responsible for the result. Likewise freedom may be predicated of the Puruṣa as well as of Purushottama. Isvara is absolutely good, because His will is not conditioned and tainted by Karma. This is similar to the instance of a King, who, after granting all facilities to the chief minister grants him freedom of action also, himself remaining indifferent for the time being. Now a question arises: Are not these two, namely moral freedom and dependence, incompatible? No such incompatibilities

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\(^1\) Sūtra Bhāya, ii.3.40., Bhagavad Gītā, XVIII, 61, Šrutapraķāśīka, ii.3.41, Kauśātaki Upanisad, iii.9.
are seen as in the above instance.¹

Vedānta Des'ika argues in his 'Rahasyatrayasāra' that if it is said that the Jīva has no responsibility for action (kartṛtya), it would be the same as that of the Sāmkhyas who attribute doership to nature, and as that of the Advaitins who attribute doership to ignorance. If it is admitted that the Jīva has independent doership, then it results in the refutation of an all supreme Self as an inner controller of all which amounts to an atheistic (nirīśvara) tenet. Doership is only the ability to know (jñātrtvā) and this is derived from the Divine. But this is also not correct. For then there cannot be any activity either for spiritual aspiration or for attaining it. So the Self has all the three namely Knowledge (Jñānam), desiring (Chikeersā) and striving (Pratyatnam).²

So it is an established conclusion of Viśisṭādva-ita that Brahman in its immanent aspect is the inner controller of all without being tainted by their imperfections.³

(ii) DEPENDENT AND DEPENDED-UPON

RELATION (SEṢA-SEṢI BHĀVA)

(BRAHMAN AS SARVASEṢI)

The Seṣa-seṣi bhāva (dependent and depended upon relation) determines the nature of the Supreme

2. Rahasyatrayasāra, p. 254.
Reality and affirms that Brahman is the final goal of all our efforts. Rāmānuja in his ‘Vedārtha Samgraha’ defines a ‘s'eṣa’ as one whose very essence or Svarūpa is to bring out the satisfaction of the Supreme. The world of matter exists in Brahman, belongs to it and exists only for its satisfaction. Likewise the Jīva also depends on Brahman for its function and is used by Brahman for fulfilling its own purposes. So both the orders of cit and acit are subservient to Him. Hence the concept of ‘s'eṣin’ represents the concept of paramountcy of God. This leads to the relationship described as s'eṣa-s'eṣi sambandha which may be rendered as ‘owner and owned relationship’. Īśvara is the owner (s'eṣi) and so far as the Jivas are concerned, this relationship represents the attitude of one’s giving himself up to Īśvara entirely. The Jīva is to be moulded and ordered at His will, subject to His laws and to have not only every action and every word, but even every thought too, subject to His will. It involves a continuous effort throughout one’s life to live in holy obedience to God. The S'eṣa-s'eṣi sambandha is the relation of absolute dependence upon God and placing one’s humble services (kaiṅkarya) entirely at His disposal.

Metaphysically speaking, the s'eṣa-s'eṣi sambandha may be described as āṃśāṃśi sambandha in so far as the Jīva can get rid of all of its limitations only when it is integrated with the Supreme Being from whom it has emanated as a spark from a flame (visphulinga) as the Upaniṣad puts it. This kind of relation is analogous to the āṃśāṃśi sambandha, which indicates that the whole cosmos and all the Jivas are parts of the whole which is God. The Īśāväṣya Upaniṣad says—“Īś āvāsyamidam Sarvam yat kiṅca jagatyām jagat”.
(iii) **SWĀMIN AND DĀSA:**

The concept of *s'esa-s'esī* bhāva is significant since this revolutionises the attitude of the Jīva. Though the world of matter and the Jīva are alike subservient to Brahman, the Jīva alone is self-conscious, endowed with reason and freedom of will. By these it can discriminate between the Self and the not-self, discard the not-Self, free himself from the clutches of nature and attain the status of pure self. One who has attained self-realization realises also that the Paramapuruṣa, the highest Self is the 'Sarva s'esin' who alone is to be adored and worshipped. For such a self who has attained this knowledge of the 'Sarvas'esī' every act will result in the service of the supreme whom alone he realises as His Master or Swāmin

Vedānta Deśīka in dealing with the categories of Reality in his 'Rahasyatrayasāra' (3. p 80) points out that the term 's'esī' is generally applicable for both cit and acit which exist for His purposes, whereas the term Master or Swāmin applies solely to cit. Likewise the term *s'esā* applies to both cit and acit but the term Dāsa or servant relates only to cit. Therefore Vedānta Deśīka avers that the relationship of *s'esā* and *s'esī* between the finite Self and the Supreme self, must culminate in the special relationship of Swāmin and Dāsa, the Master and the Servant. The freedom of the finite Self becomes glorified only when it is dedicated to the Supreme Self, who is the Sarvas'esī and the inner Ruler of all. The Jīva must attune itself to the will of its Master, the Paramātman, by destroying its egocentric nature (ahaṃkāra). The true meaning of Jīva is realised
only when it dedicates itself to the eternal service of Paramātman, the overlord of all, in self-donation (ātmārpaṇam). Vedānta Desīka is reminded of his meaning while expounding the meaning of Sarvasēṣi. The general goal of usefulness to the Lord becomes for Jivas the goal of service as they are His servants (Dāsas). As a consequence of being both the Sēṣi and swāmin the Lord attains a unique glory, the enjoyment of service. Thus in the ethical relation of Viśiṣṭādvaita the metaphysical truth of the absolute as the Supreme Self as Sarīram and the Jiva as His aprthaksiddha visēṣaṇa is restated in terms of nondualism of the creator of the world and conserver of values.

(iv) BODY–SOUL RELATION (SĀRĪRA–SĀRĪRĪ)

BHĀVA) : (BRAHMĀN AS SARVA SĀRĪRIN)

The exact definition of the Sarīra-Sarīri relation may be attempted from a knowledge of the ontology of Satkāryavāda of the grammatical rule of Sāmānā-dhi-karanya and of the epistemology of aprthaksiddha visēṣaṇa. The importance of the ghataka S'rutis is presupposed in the understanding of this relation.

As seen already, the fundamental concept of Viśiṣṭādvaita is the idea of Brahman as the soul (Sarīrin) or the inner self of all entities both cit and acit. Rāmānuja regards this view as the very heart of his system. The Upaniṣadic texts baffle us by their apparent variety and contradiction. The abheda texts seem to postulate the absolute oneness of the Jiva and Brahman. The bheda texts insist on their eternal distinctness and externality. In the former case the Jiva gets merged and dissolved in the Absolute. In
the latter it persists for ever as a separate entity, but Viśiṣṭādvaita regards Brahman as the Sārīra of all things and binds all plurality into union without straining the scriptural texts. The Antaryāmi Brāhmaṇa of Brahadāraṇyaka reveals in unmistakable terms the truth of body-soul relation (iii.7). These are the Ghaṭaṇa Sūtras (mediating texts) and afford Rāmānuja the true insight into the soul of the scriptures and enable him to reconcile the apparent contradictions by the law of organic and spiritual unity.1 The Sādvidyā of Chāndogya affirms that the universe is rooted, sustained and established in Brahman (vi 9,10). The inner unity between Brahman and the Jīva is expounded by various similes. Advaita negates the world to postulate Brahman. But Viśiṣṭādvaita affirms the reality of the world to affirm Brahman. The world of nature and Jīvas are real attributes to Brahman whose oneness and absoluteness are confirmed by these attributes. Brahman, the transcendent Realty is yet the immanent principle in all other entities, cit and acit. The entire cosmos thus depends upon Brahman for its existence and becomes an inseparable attribute to that Divine Being. As the supreme being is the inner self of all other entities, all terms denoting various objects denote Brahman itself in the ultimate analysis, as it is the inner self of all.2

The body-soul relationship (Sārīra-Sārīri bhāva) emphasises the scriptural synthesis of the universe and establishes the organic unity of the Divine. This concept does not in any way suggest a biological

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.13.
2. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.13. p. 181.
organism, since it is a spiritual analogy used to establish the interdependence of the universe and Brahmān. The Absolute co-exists with the finite centres of experience as well as the world of nature, being their ground and goal. Rāmānuja, in his Vedārtha Samgraha (p. 207), says that, Atman or Sarīra is the container (adhāra) and controller (niyantā) of another and uses it for its own satisfaction (sēśi). The Sarīra is called adheya, niyama and the sēsa, and is inseparable from the Sarīra and forms its aprīhaksiddha viśaya or inseparable relation.

Rāmānuja enters into a detailed analysis of what the body (sarīra) means when he speaks of sarīra-sarīrābhaṇa and adopts the following definition. "Any substance which a sentient soul is capable of completely controlling and supporting for its own purpose and which stands to the Soul in an entirely subordinate relation, is the body of that Soul. In this sense then, all sentient and non-sentient beings together constitute the body of the supreme person, for they are completely controlled and supported by Him for His own ends, and are absolutely subordinate to Him."

The world of cit and acit is looked upon as the body of Brahmān in the sense in which the body is defined as above. This raises many problems. For instance, how are we to reconcile the imperfections of the world which is the body of Brahmān with the perfection of Brahmān? How are we to understand the relationship of Sarīra-Sarīrābhava in a way

that does not lead us to compromise the perfection of God?

Rāmānuja poses the problem thus: "It appears that Brahman is essentially free from even a shadow of all imperfections which afflict all sentient and non-sentient beings, and has for its only characteristics absolutely supreme bliss and knowledge. How then is it possible that this Brahman should actually become manifold, by appearing in the form of a world, comprising various sentient and non-sentient beings—all of which are the abodes of all kinds of imperfections and afflictions?"\(^1\)

Rāmānuja's solution to this problem is given in the following passage: "Brahman essentially antagonistic to all evil, of uniform goodness, differing in nature from all beings other than itself, all-knowing, endowed with the power of immediately realizing all its purposes, in eternal possession of all it wishes for, supremely blessed—has for its body the entire universe, with all its sentient and non-sentient beings and constitutes the Self of the universe. Now, when this world which forms Brahman's body has been gradually reabsorbed into Brahman, each constituent element being refunded into its immediate cause, so that in the end there remains only the highly subtle elementary matter which scripture calls Darkness and when this so called Darkness itself by assuming a form so extremely subtle that it hardly deserves to be called something separate from Brahman of which it constitutes the body, has become one with Brahman; then Brahman invested with this ultra subtle body, forms the resolve, 'May

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1. Śri Bhāṣya, i.4.26.
I again possess a world body constituted by all sentient and non-sentient beings distinguished by names and forms just as in the previous aeon and modifies (parināmayati) itself by gradually evolving the world body in the inverse order in which reabsorption had taken place”.1

In the light of Sarīra-Sarīri bhāva Rāmānuja further explains a passage from the Taittiriya Upaniṣad which states: “He desired ‘May I be many, may I go forth’,” (Sacca Tyacbhavat). Rāmānuja interprets this passage thus Brahman has cit and acit as its body, as instruments of sport for it in subtle from. They may be called non-existing in subtle form as they are his body. God may be said to consist of them (tanmāyā). Then followed up with Prakriti and souls and leading down to the elements in the gross state, It modifies itself, has these elements as its body and then appears in the form of the world. Then the text says that the Self having entered it, became ‘Sat’ and ‘tat’, which means that the highest self in its causal state is the universal self and abides in its effected state also as the self of different substances undergoing changes and becoming ‘this’ and ‘that’.”2

The Antaryāmi Brāhmaṇas of Śvetāsvatara and the Brhadāraṇyaka define Brahman as the inner self of cit and acit, and further say that “He who dwells in the Self and within the self, whom the Self does not know, of whom the Self is the body who rules the Self within, He is thy Self, the Ruler within the

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.4.27. (George Thibaut’s translation of Śrī Bhāṣya Published in 1904 in the Sacred Books of the East Series, XLVIII.

2. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.4.27.
immortal". Rāmānuja maintains the view that the individual Self is the body or the vehicle of the Supreme Self in the manner in which the individual body is the vehicle of individual self immanent in it.

Now, a question arises again: If Brahman is the real self of the universe, why should this all-powerful cosmic principle ensoul itself in matter and Jivas? Does He not get tainted with the imperfections of the body? To this Rāmānuja replies that the universe does not become the body of the Absolute due to any external agency like Karma as in the case of the Jīva. The whole world is the body of Brahman and not a resultant of Karma or chance. But it is not so in the case of the Jīva. The Jīva is not inseparably related to matter as its self. The body of the Jīva changes from birth and is contingent. In the final stage its relation with matter is completely severed. But cit and acit are not related like this to Brahman. They are inseparably related to Him, and cannot at any time exist apart from Him. Brahman is characterised by these two entities in both the stages, i.e. the causal as well as the consequent. Moreover, in the composite being of Brahman each substance retains its distinctive nature. Rāmānuja gives the analogy of a piece of cloth woven with threads of different colours, where each thread retains its own colour. Rāmānuja proceeds to affirm that there is no confusion of different characteristic qualities namely, matter, the finite Self and the universal Self. Commenting on Śūtras (ii.1.14) and (i.1.13), Rāmānuja states that a Self does not experience pleasure or pain because it is associated with a body.

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1. 2 & 3. Ibid., ii.1.23.
This experience of pleasure and pain is on account of Karma. But the supreme Self is far removed from evil, though He has the entire universe as His body, as He has no trace of Karma whatsoever.\(^1\) The defects of the body do not touch the Self at all.\(^3\) Rāmānuja points out that the concept of Sarīra is all comprehensive and holds good for any kind of body. The Sarīra is that which is supported, sustained, controlled from within, and used for the satisfaction of the Sarīrin only.\(^2\)

The precise meaning of Sarīra-Sarīri bhāva is described in detail by Vedānta Desīka in classical terms of ādheyatva, vidheyatva and seṣatva. The division states the relation between the Self and the body in terms of the container and the contained, the controller and the controlled and the end and the means respectively. Vedānta Desīka defines the first as that which by its very nature imparts substantiality to another and sustains it. It is the self-differentiation of the Absolute. The finite Real derives its being from the infinite Real immanent (svarūpaśrita) in it. The second refers to ‘inner controller immortal’, who, by His mere will creates and dissolves the cosmos (saṅkalpaśrita). The third connotes the absolute self-subsistence of the one, and the utter dependence of the other. The body in relation to the Soul should satisfy the three conditions of modality, dependence and serviceability. Hence every term connoting the finite Self ultimately connotes

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   (ii) Sri Bhāṣya, ii.1.9, Vide also i.2.2.
the Supreme Self of which he is the body. The Jiva is the body of Brahman absolutely sustained and determined by Him and dependent on Him. Brahman is the absolute and unconditioned sustainer and controller and over-Lord (nirupādhika ādhāra, niyantā and sēshin).

Rāmānuja in his Vedārtha Saṃgraha concludes that this concept of Sarīra-Sārīrī bhāva reconciles all the conflicting Vedāntic doctrines. Thus Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desīka reconcile all the texts positing difference, unity and unity in difference, satisfying all the different Pramāṇas as well as intuitive experience. Thus Sāriraka Sāstra enquires into ‘the inner soul’, the Paraṃātman.

(iv) RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE:

REDEEMER—REDEEMED RELATION:

RAKŚAKA — RAKŚYABHĀVA

BRAHMAN AS REDEEMER (RAKŚAKA)

Philosophy reduces experience to a logical unity but religion aims at spiritual union. The primary function of religion is to lead the Jiva back to its home in God. Philosophy traces the ground of creation and religion seeks its goal. Philosophy has the

1. Vedārtha Saṃgraha (Translation) Brahma Vadin, Volume, XVI, p. 191
2. Vedārtha Saṃgraha, pp. 237 to 247 and Sacred Books of the East Series, XLVII, pp. 139 to 144
4. Śrī Dhāsya, i.1.13.
view of God as the Summum Genus, Religion has a vision of God as the Summum Bonum. The chief postulate of religion is the immediate knowability of God. The infinite majesty and goodness of God instills a feeling of human littleness and the divine unapproachability. At the same time religion has a living faith in the eternal affinity and communion with God. The sense of alienation that oppresses the Jiva finally yields place to divine love and grace.

The ethical religion of Visistadvaïta is rounded off by the Theory of Isvara as Redeemer (Raksaka). Isvara is described as the dispenser of justice (Karma phala Pradatä) in accordance with the moral worthiness of the doer. In addition to this, Isvara is also a Redeemer (Raksaka). According to Ramanuja, the idea of Isvara as redeemer who descends to the earth for the purpose of redemption is of great significance to religion. The faith in the redemptive character of the redeemer is considered to be an important element in the context of the surrender of the Self to God (Prajäpati). This kind of relationship between God and the Jiva is known as Raksya Rakṣaka Sambandha. The Lord is the Rakṣaka and the Jiva is Rakṣya. According to this concept God becomes the guardian or redeemer or the saviour of selves.

In the very first prayer poem, where Ramanuja commences his commentary on the Vedanta Sutras, he refers to God's determination to redeem Souls (Rakṣaika dikshe). Soul making or moulding of Souls is thus looked upon as the very purpose of the world process. The protection that God offers to the Jiva takes also the form of a promise of rescuing the Jiva from the sense of fear (abhaya pradāna).
Vaiṣṇava teachers refer to the words of Śrī Rāma in the Rāmāyaṇa where Rāma says that it is His sacred resolve to rescue all his beings from fear (abhayam sarvabhūtabhyo dadāmi etad vratam mama). God has pledged himself to save all selves including the erring ones.

As the Bhagavad Gītā says, “I am disposed equally towards all creatures, there is not any one specially hateful, any specially beloved, to Me” (IX.29). God is the protector of the whole world (bhuvanasya goptā). Here Rāmanuja introduces the idea of the Grace of God (anugraha or kripā) which plays an important role in the act of redemption of Souls. Rāmanuja writes in his Śrī Bhāṣya, “that what the Lord Himself aims at is ever to increase happiness to the highest degree, and to this end it is essential that he should reprove and reject the infinite and intolerable means of sins which accumulate in the course of beginning and endless aeons and thus check the tendency on the part of individual beings to transgress his laws” (ii.2.5). For this he says in the Gītā, “To them even devoted worshipping me in love, I give that means of wisdom by which they attain to me. In mercy only to them dwelling in their hearts do I destroy the darkness born of ignorance with the brilliant light of knowledge” (i.10.11).

Rāmanuja dwells lovingly on the two characteristics of God as the redeemer of Jīvas, namely, easy accessibility (saulabhya) and graciousness (saurūrya). God steps down from His abode to reach the Jīva struggling in samsāra and even becomes one like Him (Sajātīya) suffers with him, endures pain with him and leads him by the hand like a friend or comrade, or lover or guide. He thus leads the Jīva to
the realisation of its high estate which has been obscured by the influence of Karma.

Rāmānuja and Vedānta Deśīkā describe the mercy of God in the parable of the King’s son being restored to his father.¹ In this parable the trustworthy person is the Achārya or Guru or the mediator between God and man. The one who takes steps to recover his son is the Lord himself who incarnates himself as the redeemer age after age. The redeemer is so condescending to his devotee that he says in the Gītā, “I reckon that when to a loving devotee... I deliver my own Self entirely, ever that is no sufficient compensation for the love he has borne for me. I reckon, too, that even when I have given my own self to him. I have done little or nothing for him. That is how I think of my beloved lovers” (IX. 2). ‘Jñānitvātmaiva me matam’ ‘The Jñāni is to be known as my very Soul’.

Commenting on a certain passage in the Gītā (VII.18), Rāmānuja says, “As for the Jñāni I deem him as my own Self, that is, my very life depends on him. If it be asked how, the reason is that in the same manner that he cannot live without me—The highest goal—I cannot live without him”. There is a beautiful reciprocity indeed between the redeemer and the redeemed (Rakṣaka Rakṣya). There is no difference between the Jñāni and Brahma, the Self and the Absolute.

¹ Sri Bhāṣya, ii.1.4. (George Thibaut’s translation of Sri Bhāṣya published in 1904 in the Sacred Books of the East Series, XLVIII, p. 199). Rhāṣyaḥtrayāṣāra, Chapter I.
Vedānta Desīka in his ‘Dayā Satakam’ says that the Jivas have ignored to do what was commanded, and have committed what was prohibited by them, thus violating the Divine command. God punishes those who have transgressed the Divine law, solely with the aim of redemption. This punishment is meted out to the Jivas only to redeem them from sins, and to dissuade them from evil ways leading to degradation. So the punishment inflicted by the Lord leads to the good of the humanity ultimately, and is just an act of mercy.¹

In his Rahasyatrayasāra Vedānta Desīka says that the omnipotent Īśvara overpowered by mercy, yearns for the union with the Jiva, his ‘Īśa’, and so descends upon earth from His highest abode, to Brahmanjē the Jiva. The redeemer (Rākasā) is eager to recover the lost Self and so seeks the Jiva and tries to convince him to win him over to his side. Omnipotence on the part of God or Sin in the form of violation of command on the part of the Jiva happens to be the cause of bondage in samsāra. But the primary cause of redemption from samsāra happens to be the Lord’s natural compassion.²

Vedānta Desīka further says that God’s compassion (dayā) is eternal and infinite and solely responsible for the redemption of all sinners. Of the three principal qualities of God, namely, Jñāna, Sakti and Dayā (Knowledge, power and compassion) the first two are useful both for punishment and rewards. But the third, namely, Mercy distinctly plays its part only for redemption.³ This compassion is

1. Dayā Satakam, p. 16.
2. Rahasyatrayasāra, 23, p. 153 & Śrī Bhāṣya, ii.2.3.
3. Ibid., p. 154 & Ibid., ii.2.3.
described as an inclination to do good to others.¹ The Lord showers His compassion in innumerable ways. He is a supporter and a spiritual guide to one who struggles hard to get rid of the bonds of Sāṃśāra in order to attain Divine communion. He neglects none, but waits for some occasion or other to rush to every one’s help and tries to redeem each and every one from the shackles of Sāṃśāra. It is because of Divine mercy that we repent for our past sins and rush to expiate them. God becomes gracious towards us on account of some good act somehow performed by us, and being thus pleased, He ignores our countless sins of the past and grants us eternal bliss, freeing us from the wheels of Samsara. It is verily the Lord’s compassion which is the principal cause for this.² The Lord uses all His ingenuity in claiming us to his side, and even when we run away from Him, we cannot escape from Him since He resides within us. His mercy is an infinite and eternal as Himself and He never fails to pick us up from the dangerous waters where we are drowning, shipwrecked, desperate and forlorn.

The act of dissolution (pralaya) of the universe by the Almighty is also an act of mercy as God checks the wrong doers from their career of sin and crime and thus saves them from further entanglement. Similarly the act of creation is also a redemptive process, for the acit-like-souls are then provided with necessary physical and mental organism that enable them to lead a new moral life and to make the best use of another opportunity for evolving their upward progress.³

1. Rahasyatrayasāra, 23, p. 154 & Śrī Bhāṣya, ii.2.3.
2. Ibid., ii.2.3.
3. Dayās'atakam, p. 16 and 17.
To sum up, the Jiva, as the logical self, derives its substantiality from Brahman and is called aprthak-siddha visesa, upadeya or amsa. As the ethical self, the Jiva has moral freedom but dedicates itself to the service of God who is the se or swamin. It derives its form and function from Brahman, depends on His redemptive will and exists for His aesthetic satisfaction and is therefore His Sarira. Sri Bhasya concludes with the significant note on the ‘Sariraka mimamsa’; ‘Sarvam samaajasam’, everything is satisfactorily explained. This includes philosophical and spiritual satisfaction which suggests the synthetic insight afforded by Sarira-Sariri bhava.
CHAPTER VIII

VISISTADVAITA CONCEPT OF LIBERATION (MUKTI) AND THE STATE OF THE DESTINY OF THE JIVA IN EMANCIPATION (MUKTI)

Having explained the relationships of the Jiva with Brahman let us pass on to the Visistadvaitic exposition of the concept of liberation or the spiritual destiny of the Jiva and the state of the Jiva in emancipation (Mukti). According to Visistadvaita, liberation (Mukti) is not freedom in embodiment, but freedom from embodiment. It refers to the return of the liberated Jiva or mukta to his home in the Absolute. The finite has its roots in the infinite and in Mukti there is the coalescence of content without the abolition of existence. When the released Jiva sees God face to face, its logical outlook becomes a spiritual insight and freed from avidyā, it expands into omniscience. When the Jiva is Brahmanised, it is stripped of its self-hood and the sense of Separateness, removes the shackles of Karma. The finite remains but the fetters of the finitude are removed. Mukti is both becoming and being. In that state the victim of Samsāra becomes Victor. God is not a Samsārin, but is the absolute of philosophy and the God of religion by whose grace the Jiva is liberated from the bonds of finitude and ascends to the Absolute. Vaikunṭha is the world of Brahman transcending the logical categories of space, time and causality without sublated their values, and the freed selves live, move and have their being in Brahman as modes of the divine life and instruments of His will and bliss. This view of Visistadvaita avoids the perils of mayā and monadism. Pluralism
contradicts the monistic texts of the Upaniṣads and the logical demands of Unity. But Viśiṣṭādvaita theory has the merit of correcting the abstractions of monism and monadism. Relation may be a riddle of logic but it is the essence of mystic feeling and bliss. Whether ultimate destiny is coherence or non-difference, there is no doubt that the Jiva has its values of truth, goodness and beauty conserved in the Absolute. In the state of release the Jiva regains cosmic consciousness recovers freedom and loses himself in divine bliss.

In Kathopaniṣad (i.1.20, Yama, the God of Death teaches Nāciketas the nature of Mukti. In expounding his thought, Rāmānuja follows the Sūtrakāra and develops his philosophy in his Śrī Bhāṣya (i 11-12) by refuting rival theories of liberation (Mukti). The Kṣanikavijñāna vadin among Buddhists, regards the Jiva as a series of momentary mental states appearing as a persisting entity and explains Mukti as the cessation of the psycho-physical process. In nirvāna the Self perishes, the five skandhas, or aggregates are abolished, and pain passes away, and there is spiritless repose. Rāmānuja says that a mere mental state cannot seek Mukti and the fatal negative logic of nirvāna leads to void or Śūnya. The Jaina admits the existence of the Jiva and explains Mukti as the severance of the Ātman from the stain of Karma and the entry of the Self into endless perfection. Rāmānuja asks: if Mukti is an ascent and not an attainment, such an endless pursuit is without ethical meaning and spiritual value. The ethical concept of progress can have its meaning only in the realisation of Brahman. In the Śamkhā-Jnātāscharian, bondage is the conjunction of Purusa and Prakṛti, and Mukti is their disjunction. Kaivalya is the flight
of the alone to the alone. Rāmānuja refutes the Śāmkhyana theory of Mukti that it is more a negative state of getting rid of evil than the realisation of the positive bliss. The freed Self is a passive spectator that knows nothing and does nothing. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika affirms the existence of Iśvara, but its view of Mukti is negative, as it means only Cessation of pain and the abolition of the cognitive activity of the Jīva. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika feels that thinking leads to doubt and distress and is therefore inclined to do away with the whole process. Rāmānuja argues that the state of the abolished consciousness is like the stillness of the statue or slab of stone and the peace of death and says that consciousness without an object is as good as unconsciousness. The Vedāntic view of Mukti has the merit of recognising the value of Brahma Jīāna, though Vedāntins differ in their exposition. Bhāskara, the Bhedābhedavādin, defines Mukti as the attainment of ekābhāva or oneness with the Absolute in which the Jīva sheds its adjuncts (Upādhis) and becomes the unconditioned Brahman. The other Bhedābhedavādins correct the monistic tendency of Bhāskara and explain Mukti as the realisation of the identity of the Jīva with Brahman as well as its difference. To them Mukti is not the abolition of the Self, but its fulfilment as the element of the Absolute. The Sākta says Brahman is both pure consciousness and the sundered whole. The Dvaitavada of Madhvacārya, rejects all the monistic views of Mukti. But Rāmānuja holds that Dvaita’s contention that there are differences in the qualitative experiences of the bliss of Brahman is not acceptable.

The Advaitic view of Mukti in different forms demands attention due to its philosophic interest
merging of the river in the sea. The monistic texts favour identity when they affirm that Jiva is Brahman. The philosophical theist insists on the external but eternal relation between the Jiva and Brahman and defines Brahman as the Personal God entering into personal relations with the Jiva with a view to redeeming its career of sin, and also states that in Brahmaloka, the mukta has the freedom to serve Brahman in his own unique way. He also affirms the fellowship and equality of the Jiva with God. Ramānuja in his Śrī Bhāṣya reconciles all the Upaniṣadic texts by his concept of inseparability (avibhāga). The Jiva has Brahman as its inner self and the non-dualistic consciousness of the mukta is revealed in the experience “I am Brahman without any division or Vibhāga”. This does not mean absolute identity (Svarūpa aikya) but Viśiṣṭa aikya in which the Self is realised as an inseparable mode (aprthaksiddha-visēṣaṇa), and not an adjective housed in the Absolute. The Jiva abides for ever as an entity and is different from Brahman. Though there is difference in denotation, there is identity in connotation as every concept connoting the Prakāra (mode) also connotes the Prakārin or Brahman. This concept of inseparability abolishes the sense of exclusiveness between the Jiva and Brahman. Equality is attained when the Brahminised mukta sheds his body, shakes off punya-pāpa and acquires the purity of Brahman. The sense of dependence reveals that the Sarīra depends on the Sarīrin and serves as an instrument of His will. Avibhāga thus explains the existential difference between Brahman and the mukta and the experienced unity due to the joy of intimate communion (Sāyūjya). It is not the loss of personality. In the mystic sense,

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, iv.4.4.
the self-feeling is swallowed up by the unitive experience of the bliss of Brahman. This brings out the nature of Brahmarasa more than Sālokya (co-existence), Sārūpya (similarity) and intimacy (sāmīpya). The Viṣṇu-purāṇa (vi. vii. 30) says that the mukta attains ātmabhāva like magnetised iron and is not identical with Brahman, and the Gītā (xiv.2) also defines mukti as the attainment of equality of attributes with Brahman. The mukta views himself and the cosmos with the eyes of Brahman (Brahma cakṣus) when he experiences as a mode of Brahman and when his Jñāna mirrors forth the whole universe, he realises his oneness with Brahman.

Vedānta Deśika in his Sarvārtha Siddhi also mentions the above five kinds of liberation namely i) residence in the spiritual abode of God (Sālokya), ii) Proximity to Him (Sāmīpya), iii) Similarity of form to Him (Sārūpya), iv) equality of sovereignty with him (Sārṣṭī), and v) union with Him (Sāyujya) and regards Sāyujya as the highest and most inclusive of all. It is objected that in union (Sāyujya) with God the Jīva becomes identical with Him and so cannot have equal enjoyment with Him. To this objection Vedānta Deśika replies that in union (Sāyujya) a Jīva does not become identical with God but is united with Him without losing its integrity. Union does not mean identity. He also quotes the Śruti which says: “Two beautiful birds friendly to each other live in the same tree”. It means the Self and God exist in the same body like two friends. They remain distinct from each other, even when the Self is liberated. The enjoyment of the released Self and God are equal but not identical. If union means identity, the union of many gods with Gods is achieved either simultaneously or successively. Many gods
and the respect it commands in modern Indian Thought. Advaitins define Mukti as the negation of nescience (avidyā) and self-identity with the Absolute. Rāmānuja argues that if avidyā means duality, Mukti is the dissolution of the dualistic outlook and is not different from Bhāskara’s ekābhāva. If avidyā is the adjunct or upādhi as an illusion and not as phenomenal appearance Mukti means dissolutionment. By denying the false the true remains identical with itself. Then this view has to meet the charge leading to acosmism and subjectivism. Mukti is negatively stated as the removal of ajñāna through jñāna. If avidyā is non-existent, like the square circle, and Brahmajñāna is jñāna that is Brahman and not jñāna of Brahman, Brahman is ever-existent and the question of Mukti does not arise. Further, the Advaitic distinction of two Brahmans and two muktis tends to compromise the Absolute of monism by mobilising the immobile nirguṇa Brahman giving a theistic dress to suit the needs of the avidyā ridden theist, though this attempt seems to end in confusion. If the Advaitin gives up his intellectualism and agnosticism and follows the religious instinct, nirguṇa Brahman would not be the truth of saguṇa Brahman as reality behind appearance, but would be saguṇa Brahman itself. Mukti would then mean not the abolition of plurality but only the removal of the sense of plurality.

Rāmānuja understands by Mukti the integral experience of Brahman that has infinite Jñāna and ananda and other perfections. This is also the true nature of the Jīva realised by the destruction of avidyā-Karma. The Jīva is a Prakāra or Sarīra of Brahman and its Jñāna which is infinite, has, as its essential nature, the intuitive experience of the bliss
of Brahman. The Chāṇḍogya text (viii.iii.4) explains Mukti "as the self realisation' of the atman by self-transcendence" and the sūtras bring out its full implication (Śrī Bhāṣya (iv.iv.1)). The Self attains the being of its being when it has a soul sight of the boundless light of Brahman and thus attains its essential and eternal nature. Self-realisation is not the attainment or the emergence of something new, but is the self-manifestation due to the cessation of avidyā karma. In Mukti the Atman is free from sin, oldage, death, grief, hunger and thirst, and his desires are at once realised. Karma conditions Jñāna and creates the bodily Self which is subject to contingency, change and sorrow. But in Mukti the mortal becomes immortal and the self regains its eternity. Self-realisation is the intuitive knowledge of Atman and is not bare identity. Rāmānuja contends that if as the Advaitin says Jñāna consists in the abolition of Vrittis of the Self, then nothingness alone would remain and Mukti would cease to have any meaning.

Now a problem may arise: Is Mukti the experience or absolute distinction between the Jiva and Brahman or of their identity? The Upanisads express divergent views which seem to defy the Sūtra method of synthesis (Samanvaya). The Bheda texts like Kaṭha speak of the distinction between Jiva and Brahman and the absolute dependence of the Jiva on Brahman (i.iii.1). The Tatttirīya (Anand, i) and the Muṇḍaka (iii 1.3) dwell on the fellowship and equality of attributes when the seer intuits the shining self and attains all desires along with Brahman. The Chāṇḍogya text (vi.xiii) and the Muṇḍaka text (iii.ii.8) express the truth of the absorption by the analogy of the dissolution of salt in water and the
cannot simultaneously be identified with God. Nor can they be identified with Him successively, since when one God is identified with Him, no God remains with whom the other gods may be identified. Therefore Vedānta Deśīka contends that Sāyujya means equality of enjoyment with God which means oneness of the two entities.¹

JīVANMUKTI AND VĪDEHĀMUKTI:

Vīśīṣṭādvaita advocates that when a devout meditation succeeds in winning the grace of God resulting in a direct experience of Divinity, the devotee is liberated from the shackles of the body and becomes similar to God (Brahma prakāra). The liberated Self is not actually lost in identity with God but he enjoys a bliss of communion with Him. This goal is reached only after death and so Rāmānuja does not recognise Jīvanmukti as true liberation. Moreover, according to him, there is no erroneous identity (adhyāsikatādātmya) between body and self. There is only aprīthakṣādhi relation between the two really distinct objects. Body and Self are really distinct but are treated as identical in language because of inseparable association. Since the body-soul relation is real and not erroneous, it cannot disappear in the living state.

According to Sāmkara, the body sense is false, and can be removed by knowledge (Jñāna) even when one is alive. Hence Sāmkara believes in the possibility of Jīvanmukti after acquiring knowledge

¹ Sarvārtha Siddhi, p. 237 (Beilāres, 1900) (A commentary on Tattvamuktā Kalāpa) Sarvārtha Siddhi, p. 236-37.
of the identity of the Self with Brahman. Rāmānuja offers the following criticism of Śaṅkara's view of embodied release. Rāmānuja argues that to speak of embodied release is as absurd as to speak of one's mother as barren, because to be embodied is bondage and to be disembodied is release. He proceeds to show that so long as the Self remains embodied, its relation with the body is real and so it can never have the feeling of bodilessness without which release is impossible. Śaṅkara contends that though the false conceit of being embodied is contradicted by the knowledge of the Self being identical with Brahman, it persists for sometime like the illusion of the double moon. Rāmānuja argues that this contention is false and says that it is absurd to hold that the body feeling has been negated but still it occurs like the deceptive perception of the double moon by a man even when he has realised that the moon is one. Avidya and Karma are the causes for objects as well as the body which encases a particular Self. If avidya and Karma are destroyed by the knowledge that is capable of annulling (Bādhaka Jñāna) then all objects including the body must be simultaneously effaced, and so there cannot be anything as liberation in life (Jīvamukti). Rāmānuja says that Mukti always means Videhamukti. Scriptural texts like 'tattvamasi' give as indirect knowledge of the state of liberation but cannot destroy avidya.1 This being so, Vākyārtha Jñāna cannot produce liberation in this life and in this world. Had scriptural knowledge resulted in liberation, then, wise men would no more suffer in this world. Further the Chāndogya says: "A Soul desirous of release and

1. Srī Bhāṣya, i.1.4.
endowed with immediate knowledge of itself and God, has to wait till the body dies.” (vi 14.2). This text denies embodied release. Apastamba also says: “Discard the duties prescribed by the Vedas, desire for worldly and heavenly happiness and seek for the Self”. Thus Ramānuja refutes the conception of Jivanmukti and contends that knowledge alone cannot effect release. Bondage can be terminated by the knowledge of God and the Self through meditation.¹

Vedānta Desika in his ‘Sarvārthasaiddhi’ also refutes Jivanmukti. Liberation according to him is the Self’s complete separation from its body, vital forces and sense-organs which are its limiting adjuncts. which differentiate it from God. So the Self cannot attain release in an embodied state. Some texts of Sūruti and Smriti speak of released selves in embodied life. Vedānta Desika states that such expressions are used in a figurative sense. Further he also urges that knowledge of the one moon does not annul the illusion of the double moon, since it does not remove a disease of the eyes which is the cause of illusion. So even when the illusion of the double moon is annulled for the time being by the true knowledge of one moon, the influence of the illusion continues. But this analogy does not hold good of the illusion of difference due to nescience contradicted by the intuition of Brahman. The intuitive knowledge that “all besides Brahman is false” is the contradicting knowledge. It contradicts the principal powerful nescience (mulaividya) and destroys its part also (tulaividya).² Even the taint of nescience also should be destroyed by the knowledge of Brah-

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.4.
2. Sarvārthasaiddhi, p. 248. (Benares 1900).
man. It continues because love, hate etc., continue and the body continues because of them which are due to nescience. Thus Vedānta Deśika establishes that embodied release is not possible.¹

THE STAGE OF STHITAPRAJÑĀ:

Rāmānuja in his commentary on the Gitā says that man who has acquired pure wisdom regarding his real nature is not liberated. He then becomes possessed of equanimity (sthitaprajñā). This stage is the highest that an individual can attain in this life following the path of knowledge.² Although he is an embodied Self, yet through purification of his intellect and will, is able to withdraw his senses from worldly objects. His mind is not perturbed by the sorrows and sufferings of life, and is free from desires and passions, aversion and hatred. His mind is always fixed on God, who becomes the only object of love and attachment. This stage cannot be called a stage of real liberation. This is a stage in which the Jīva feels confident about his liberation at the end of his life’s journey. Even the Gitā has not described this stage as Jīvanmukti.

In fact, if it is held that avidyā-Karma is the root cause of bondage, and liberation is attained only when the Karma is destroyed, then logically we cannot accept Jīvanmukti. In the Jīvanmukti stage the Jīva is not free from the influences of Pra- rābdha Karma (Karma that has begun to bear fruit). Only Saṅcita Karma (Past action that has not yet

¹. Ṭattva Mūkta Kalāpa, Sarvārthasiddhi, p. 247-49. (Benares 1900)
². Rāmānuja on Gitā Bhāṣya, 2.55.
commenced to fructify) and Kriyamāṇa Karma (actions that one is doing in the present life) are destroyed through knowledge. Since Prārabdha Karma remains operative even in the stage of Jīvanmukti, there cannot be absolute freedom from all Karmic influences which is the essential characteristic of the state of liberation. The feeling of pleasure and pain is present even in the mind of a wise man, although this feeling will not have any effect to disturb the stability of his mind.

OBJECTIONS:

Defending the Advaita position Sri Anantakrishna Sastri in his ‘Advaita Siddhi’ states that Rāmānuja is not justified in not accepting Jīvanmukti since it is recognised in other systems also. i) He argues that in the state of Jīvanmukti the Jīva becomes free only from the veiling power of avidyā. The projecting power of avidyā still remains operative, as Prārabdha Karma is not fully exhausted. Since the veiling power of avidyā terminates with the dawn of true knowledge, the Jīva cannot be said to be in bondage. As he is free from ‘bodily feeling’ he is bodiless from his own point of view. But from the point of view of others, he is embodied. In this stage there is no feeling of identity between the body and the Self. Their united use is only for practical convenience. ii) Secondly, Sastri points out that it is not a defect to hold that in Jīvanmukti the Jīva is liberated only from the influences of Saṅcita Karma and Kriyamāṇa

1. Advaita Siddhi by Anantakrishna Sastri, Chapter in Śabda Pramāṇa, p. 95.
Karma where as the influences of the Prarabdha Karma still act on him. He says that in Sri Bhāṣya also Rāmānuja admits that amrita means freedom from the past and future sins (āghas) and not from the present ones. Hence in the philosophy of Rāmānuja also the sense of Mukti is narrowed to a certain extent. Both Advaita and Viśistadvaita therefore stand on par so far as the use of the word Mukti in a limited sense is concerned. Lastly, Sastri says that the description of 'Vaikuṇṭha' where free selves serve God by assuming various forms seems to be an olympian assurance, without any firm footing on reality. A scientific mind will not accept such a description of the abode of God with immortal bliss and happiness.

**OBJECTIONS MET:**

Sri Sastri's arguments used in defence of Advaitic position are not convincing. If in the state of Mukti, avidyā is still present with its power of projection, then how can we say that knowledge that is capable of annulling (Bādhaka Jñāna) is capable of destroying avidyā? And if avidyā is not totally destroyed, there cannot be liberation in the true sense of the term. Liberation means total destruction of all worldly experiences. Moreover, if true knowledge of Brahman is incapable of destroying the influences of Prarabdha Karma, and if worldly feeling due to operative forces of such actions still persists, then the assertion that liberation is attained as soon as one acquires 'Bādhaka Jñāna' cannot be held valid.

1. Anantakrishna Sastri, Advaita Siddhi, Chapter on Sābdha Pramāṇa, p. 95–96.
According to Rāmānuja, Vākyārthajñāna arouses only a living faith and hope for liberation in the mind of the Jīva. But liberation in the true sense cannot be attained only after death. It is Sāyujya or divine communion which is the proper form of liberation. This stage can be reached only gradually and the stage of sthitaprajñā is the highest stage that a Jīva can achieve in this world.

Further, according to Rāmānuja, it is not proper to say that immortality (amṛtatva) can be attained in this life by destroying the past and the future sins (aghas). He has simply said that a wise man by virtue of his true knowledge becomes free from the influences of past and future sins. But freedom from past and future sins does not lead to the total destruction of bondage. A wise man can enjoy real immortality only when his body is dissolved. Śrī Bhāṣya simply implies that a wise man while living can have a taste of immortality or communion with God only at the time of worship (upāsanā). It does not suggest attainment of immortality and destruction of bondage. Hence according to Rāmānuja, destruction of past and future sins is expected to occur only in the stage of Sthitaprajñā. He does not describe it as a form of liberation. This stage is only a door to immortality. So Viśiṣṭādvaita has not narrowed the sense of liberation. But Advaita in admitting this door stage as a form of liberation (Jīva-nmukti) uses the term ‘Mokṣa’ in a narrow sense.

Regarding the description of ‘Vaikunṭha’ and the presence of eternal and free selves as servants of

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, iv.1.13. (Conclusion).
2. Ibid., iv.2.10.
God, it may be stated that these are the effects of Vaiṣṇava tantras on the one hand, and of the mystic religion of the Alvārs on the other. It is Rāmānuja who brought into unity the two streams of Advaita and Bhakti, and thus blended them into the philosophic-religion of Viṣiṣṭādvaita. Further the liberated Self is a lover of God and so it is natural for a liberated self to have a desire to assume the forms of things so as to be of greatest service to God. Since the desires of the selves are fulfilled, logically there is no absurdity in believing that the liberated selves can transform their bodies made of Suddhasattva into inanimate things and so on.¹

The description of Vaikuṇṭha has to be understood in the right perspective rather than treated as a literal and factual description of an actual place. The Alvārs had an experiential knowledge of union with God in Vaikuṇṭha. To describe their felt experience of bliss which is in its very nature indescribable, they naturally depended upon their imagination and drew upon analogies and parallels in this worldly life, to suggest the nature of their experience. Whatever appeared to them as precious, valuable, beautiful and unparalleled in this world, they associated it with Vaikuṇṭha. Therefore the significance of the description of Vaikuṇṭha can be understood if it is regarded as symbolic. If such an approach is not adopted, then one may have to set aside as irrational the marvelous strotas of Śaṅkara, such as Soundaryalahari. In a religious Philosophy such as Viṣiṣṭādvaita there is a legitimate place for such descriptive accounts, since it depends on first-hand experiential knowledge of ultimate truths.

¹ Sri Bhaṣya, iv.4.12.
Further, the ascent to the Absolute is described in the Paramapada sopāna, following the Vaikuṇṭha Gadya and the Kausātaki Upaniṣad as the entry into the home of the Absolute. The Kausātaki Upaniṣad while expounding the Pāryāṇka Vidyā (Chapters 1.2 to 5) portrays in the language of sense-symbolism and artistic imagery, the ineffable ecstasy of attaining Vaikuṇṭha which is alogical, amoral and suprapersonal. The Upaniṣad frequently refers to the transcendental nature of experience when it insists on the initiation of Brahmajñāna of those who are specialists in spirituality.

It could be said that the Bodhāyana vṛitti of Brahma Sūtra contains a criticism of absolute Advaita on the lines of Bhakti. Rāmānuja was specially inspired by Bodhāyana vṛitti in his interpretation of the Brahma-Sūtra on the basis of Bhakti. Bodhāyana vṛitti had also been briefly reproduced by ācāryas like Śrāmaṇa, Tāmka etc. Śaṅkara paid special attention to the Vedās and the Upaniṣads and neglected the Agamas and Purāṇas. But Rāmānuja paid due respect to all of them and found for their appropriate places in the Bhaktidarsana of Viśiṣṭādvaita.

MEANS OR THE PATH OF LIBERATION:
(MUKTI):

In almost all the systems of Indian Philosophy, the cycle of birth and death is called bondage, and its cessation is described as liberation (Mukti). According to Rāmānuja, a man cannot attain liberation by having recourse to Vedic rituals only as these rites may lead an individual to heavenly
pleasures. These heavenly pleasures will not be able to liberate him permanently from the shackles of Samsāra. When the effects of the ritualistic performances (Vedic Karma) are exhausted he has to return to Samsāra. Hence liberation, in its true sense, must mean, complete stoppage of this process of births and deaths.

The Upaniṣads have suggested knowledge (Vedāna), meditation (dhyāna) and divine service (Upāsanā) as the means of liberation. Various upaniṣadic texts like ‘Tattiriya-A (i 1), Śvetāsvatāra (1.8) Brhadāraṇyaka (4.5.6), Mundaka (3.1 8), Chāndogya (4.2 2) are used by Rāmānuja in support of the view.

Viśistādīva’sita recognises four ways to attain Mukti. They are knowledge (jnāna), action (Karma), devotion (Bhakti), and the self surrender (Prapatti). These are not exclusive of one another. One leads on to the other. Jñāna leads to Bhakti. Bhakti leads to Karma. To use the words of Rāmānuja, Jñāna must assume the form of Bhakti (Bhaktirūpāna Jñāna) and the fusion of these two must finally result in Kainkarya or Consecrated Karma. The relation between them is not one of succession but of simultaneity. The whole process is consummated by Prapatti or Sarpaṇagati which is the way of absolute unqualified self-surrender to God.

Jñāna according to Rāmānuja is “Knowing the ātma to be that which is distinct from the body, uncontaminated with qualities pertaining to bodies, and to be that which is eternal; keeping the mind imperishable under the varying conditions of pleasure and pain and loss and destitute of any wish for reward”.

1. Rāmānuja on Gita Bhāya, 11.38.
Rāmānuja identifies Jñāna with Dhyāna or Upāsanā. He says “The individual Self is, in such meditation, to be conceived but under that form which it has to attain, the character of such meditation, therefore, is that it is a meditation on the highest Self as having for its body the individual Self distinguished by freedom from evil”. He also quotes from Brhadāraṇyaka in support of his view which says: “Having known it, let him practice meditation” (iv.4.21) Meditation according to Rāmānuja means steady remembrance, uninterrupted like the flow of oil. This is also in agreement with the scriptural passage which declares that “by steady remembrance all the ties are loosened” (Chāndogya vii.26.2). Such remembrance is of the same form as intuition. The passage quoted has the same purport in the Mundaka which says that “The fetter of the heart is broken, all doubts are solved and all the works of man perish when He has been seen who is high and low” (ii.2.8). This being so we may conclude that the passage, “the Self is to be seen”, teaches that, meditation has the character of ‘seeing’ or ‘intuition’. Remembrance acquires the character of immediate presentation and is the means of final release. Kathopaniṣad makes it clear “That Self cannot be gained by him by the study of the Veda (reflection) nor by much hearing. Whom the Self chooses, by him it may be gained, to him the Self reveals its being” (ii.23). Now a ‘chosen one’ means a most beloved person, the relation being that he by whom that Self is held most dear to the Self. God Himself endea-vours that this most beloved person should gain the Self In the Gītā the Lord declares “to those who

1. Śrī Bhasya, iii.3.52.
are constantly devoted and worship with love; I give that knowledge by which they teach me" (x.16), and "To him who has knowledge I am dear above all things, and he is dear to me" (vii.17). Hence he who possesses remembrance marked with immediate presentation (Sakratakara) is chosen by the highest Self and by him the highest Self is gained. Steady remembrance of this kind is called devotion (Bhakti), for this term has the same meaning as meditation (Upasana).

According to Ramanuja, Karma or ritualistic duties are means to an end to attain the blissful vision of God. In the Vedanta Sutra, he writes "of such steady remembrance sacrifice and so on are the means" (iii.4.25). Sacrifices and similar works being performed every day will purify the mind and due to this knowledge there arises increasing brightness in the mind (v.s iii.4.35). Hence in order to obtain knowledge, evil works have to be got rid of and this is effected by the performance of acts of religious duty not aiming at some immediate result, such as heavenly world and so on. The text says "by works of religious duty he discards all evil". Knowledge which is the means of reaching Brahman requires the works prescribed for the different Asramas.

Seven Sadhanas leading to Bhakti are enumerated by Ramanuja as follows:

VIVEKA: Viveka means purification of body by taking such food which has not been spoiled by Jati and Asraya. In other words, in order to keep one's body pure one should take only Satvic food.

VIMOKA: Freedom from passion and anger as these two are great obstacles in the path of Bhakti.
ABHYĀSA: Continuous remembrance of the presence of God as the indwelling principle with a pure body and a purified mind.

KṚIYĀ: The devotee has got to perform fivefold duties according to his ability.

KALYĀṇA: refers to virtuous conduct. It consists of Satya or truth; ātṛjaba or purity of thought, word and action; dayā or kindness; dāna or benevolence; and ahimsā or non-violence.

ANAVAŚĀDA: freedom from all sorts of despair, dejection etc.

ANUDDHARSHA: is the absence of too much of excitation on account of pleasure, and too much of depression on account of pain.

Rāmānuja means to say that knowledge is realised only through performance of the duly prescribed works on the part of a person fulfilling all the enumerated conditions.¹ Karma done in the spirit of consecrated service to God is known as Kaiṅkarya. There is no happiness superior to the service to God (Kaiṅkarya rati). In his commentary on the related verses in the Gitā Rāmānuja writes as follows: "Do the work that is before thee, and all other s'rtuti and smriti enjoined works, such as the daily (nitya) and occasional (nāmittika) duties apportioned to the several castes (varṇas), and orders (ās'ramas) that while discharging them I may be in thy memory daily. This is the most expedient method by which thou canst succeed in keeping thy manas and buddhi set on me, and thus remembering me at the last.

¹. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.¹.
moment". (viii. 7; ix.27; ix.34; ix.14).

Steady remembrance of God is called devotion or Bhakti by Rāmānuja. He says steady remembrance of this kind is designated by the word devotion (Bhakti), for this term has the same meaning as meditation (upāsanā). For this reason scripture and Smriti makes the following declarations:

i) "A man knowing him passes death" (Svetēśvata-ra, iii.8). ii) "Knowing thus he here becomes immortal" (Taittiriya, iii.12.7). iii) "Neither by Vedās nor by gifts nor by austerities, by sacrifice can I be so seen as thou hast seen me. But by devotion exclusive I may in this form be known and seen in truth and also be entered into" (Gītā, xi.53. 54). iv) "That highest person may be obtained by exclusive devotion" (Gītā, viii. 22) and (Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1.).

While discussing the two kinds of knowledge namely the one which comes from the study of the Śāstras and the other which springs from concentrated meditation, Rāmānuja says that the higher kind of knowledge which is called upāsanā has the character of devout meditation (bhakti) and consists in direct intuition of Brahman.1 In the light of these statements, Rāmānuja says that works performed for gaining worldly results are fruitless. But the meditation through which Brahman is attained is of the nature of devotion (bhakti),2 and 'this' he says: "is something different from the mere cognition of the true nature of Brahman".3

Rāmānuja synthesises Jñāna, Karma and Bhakti and their relative value in spiritual endeavour with

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.2.23., 2. Ibid., i.4.8., 3. Ibid., i.4.22
the help of his concept of meditation or upāsanā which according to him is the same as devout meditation (bhakti).\(^1\) The Jñāna spoken of here is the Jñāna which has been transformed into Bhakti or love (Bhakti rūpāpanna Jñāna). ‘Jñāna Mokṣah’ in this sense would mean ‘Bhakti rūpāpanna jñānan mokṣah’. That is, when we speak of release due to knowledge we mean release due to knowledge ripened into love.

In the philosophy of Rāmānuja, Karma is the sum total of all duties. It becomes Karmayoga when these duties are performed as acts of worship of God. To Rāmānuja, Bhakti or God–Love is intense and is preceded by a true knowledge of God and His glory. The Supreme object of Bhakti is “to know and see and gain the Lord in His real nature”. The superiority of the mode of Bhakti according to Rāmānuja consists in the superiority of the object of that love namely God Himself. Divine communion which is the blessed experience of the Self in God–fellowship is easily attained by Bhakti. In the Gītā the Lord says, “Doing work for Me, having Me as his aim, being My votary, weaned from attachments and from hatred to any one, he cometh unto Me”.

Even though Rāmānuja recognises that Karmayoga and Jñānayoga are equally capable of conducting one to Self-realisation, he points out that the path of Jñānayoga is difficult while Karmayoga would be easier. Bhakti is easier still which is the path of affection (sneha) transmuted into love of God.

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1. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.1.1.
Over and above the ways of Jñāna, Karma and Bhakti, Rāmānuja envisages a very simple way of reaching God, namely the way of unqualified and absolute self-surrender known as Prapatti. It is also called Sāraṇāgati. Prapatti literally means seeking the protection of God after realising that He is the only saviour. In Śrī Bhāṣya, Rāmānuja states that different forms of Vidyās are the alternative means to God realisation. Prapatti or Nyāsa vidyā being one of the forms of Vidyā is therefore a means to liberation.¹ In the Yatindramatadīpikā, Śrīnivāsa Dāsa states that Prapatti which is synonymous with Nyāsa-vidyā consists of the following five limbs:

ANUKŪLYASYASAṁKALPAH i.e. will of the Jīva should be attuned in such a manner that it will always be in harmony with the Divine will.

PRATIKŪLASYA VARJANAM i.e. renunciation of everything that will incur disfavour of God.

RAKṢIṢYATĪTI VISVĀSA i.e. firm faith in God as the saviour of all.

GOPTRITVAVARANAMTATHĀ i.e. acceptance of God as the only hope of liberation.

KĀRPAṆYAM—feeling of humility and utter inability to follow the difficult path of Bhaktiyoga.

ĀTMANIKAṆEPĀ—Complete self-surrender to God and dedication of everything to Him.

According to Yatindramatadīpikā, Nyāsa, Sāraṇāgati etc., are synonymous and these terms also

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, iii.3.57.
stand for a particular form of knowledge. In the ‘Gadyatraya’, Rāmānuja says that the state of Prapatti also involves a consciousness of one’s sins and is therefore associated with the feeling that the devotee is a worthless and helpless servant of God and eager to attain liberation through His grace alone. The devotee here feels like a dry leaf at the mercy of the wind. He has no purpose or will of his own and simply carries out God’s purpose in this world. This is the attitude of the Bhagavad Sāraṇāgata and such a devotee is delivered from all sins and sorrows by God Himself. 1 A sense of assurance of help by God fills the Jīva and Rāmānuja states that in the eighteenth chapter of the Gītā ‘Sarvadharman Parityajya’ as the final message of reassurance given by the Lord to man (Caramā sūkha). In that sūkha we find the word saraṇa occurring. It also points out the way of self-surrender (Saraṇāgati), which supersedes all other difficult ways to God (Sarvadharman parityajya) by which the individual undergoes struggle and tries to save himself, where as the responsibility of saving is transferred to the saviour himself. This chapter of the Gītā has been called by Rāmānuja as Mokṣopadesa yoga. The words ‘Sannyāsa’ and ‘Tyāga’ in this chapter are taken to mean Saraṇāgati or Prapatti. ‘Tameva Saraṇam Gaccha’. With all thy soul, seek Him as thy refuge says one of the verses in this chapter. ‘Sarvabhayena Bhārata’. This strikes the key note of Saraṇāgati.

From the above discussion it is clear that while Bhaktiyoga is a synthetic process that combines both Jñānayoga and Karmayoga, Prapatti or Saraṇāgati

1. Rāmānuja’s commentary on Sūkha 27, Bhagavad Gītā, Chapter 9.
is a simple and direct approach to God through self-surrender, love and humility.

Vedānta Desīka in his "Sarvārtha Siddhi" (pp. 220-221) states that sacrifices, good conduct, sense-restraint, non-injury, meditation on God are the various kinds of atonements for all sins. But the principle atonement is the vision of God. Meditation on God should be practiced to remove the obstacles coming in the way of saving knowledge. When all merits and demerits are destroyed knowledge of the Self is expanded, and God is experienced. So the intuition of God manifests the transcendental purity of the Self. Vedānta Desīka urges that even virtues are destroyed by the saving knowledge.

Vedānta Desīka in his Nyāya Siddhārjanam defines devotion as reverential love of God, the adorable being. When devotion reaches its perfection, it is called supreme devotion. According to him there are two kinds of devotion: i) devotion as a means and ii) devotion as an end. Both are means to the attainment of God. The former is the constant recollection of Him, which destroys the merits and demerits which have not yet begun to bear fruits. The latter is the absolute self-surrender of oneself to God and taking refuge in Him. It too destroys the merits and demerits which have begun to bear fruits. The latter is superior to and more powerful than the former. In the former the daily obligatory duties, occasional duties and prudential should be performed without desires for their fruits. In the latter the prudential duties should be discarded, but the daily obligatory duties should be adhered to. Prohibited actions and sins should not be committed in both. The actions which produce merits are
favourable for the knowledge of Brahman. But they are also called sins, since they produce pleasures also and so are repugnant to Mukti. Previous deeds that have begun to produce their moral results (Prārabdha Karma) are worn out by the experience of their fruits, joys and sorrows. But those who trust in God’s power, maintenance and protection attain liberation after the death of the present bodies when their Prārabdha Karmas are destroyed.¹ It should be noted that Vedanta Deśīka lays greater emphasis on Prapatti than Rāmānuja, who stresses devotion as means to God-realisation.

In Tattva Mukta Kalāpa, Vedāntā Deśīka urges that those who are devoid of meditation take refuge in God, are released from bondage, and attain Him. Moral acts, absolute self-surrender to God, service to Him, study of the scriptures are the means of attaining liberation. He says that women and Śūdras are eligible for emancipation through absolute self-surrender to God.² Further Vedanta Deśīka identifies devotion as an end or fruit with Prapatti.

The ambiguity in Rāmānuja’s teaching on Prapatti becomes a subject of controversy between the two schools which claim to follow him—the Vadagalai or northern school and the Teṅgalai or Southern school The Vadagalai school holds³ that Prapatti is only one among several ways leading to God and that an element of human effort is always involved

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¹ Nyāya Siddhāntājanam, p. 71-74 (Benares 1901).
² Tattva Mukta Kalāpa-Sarvārtha Siddhi, p. 202-203 (Benares 1900)
in it. The Teṅgalai school holds that Prapatti is the only way of salvation and that no effort is needed on the part of the Self, for God Himself completes the work of salvation. The characteristic difference between the two schools is indicated by their nick names. The Vaḍagalai is called the 'monkey school' (Markaṭa Nyāya) as it teaches that the soul must co-operate with God in liberation, as the young monkey clings to its mother which carries it to safety. The Teṅgalai is called the 'cat school' (Mārjāla Nyāya) because it teaches that soul needs to do nothing for liberation except passive submission to God, as the Kitten remains passive while its mother carries it about in its mouth.

It may be said that the general trend of Rāmānuja's teaching is in favour of the Vaḍagalai. As he was anxious to emphasise the need to conform the scriptural injunctions and insistent on the individuality of the Jīva, he did not favour the Teṅgalai view which seems to deprive the Jīva of its individuality. We may conclude that according to him the grace of God in leading the Jīva to release operates in such a manner as neither to detract God's moral consistency and perfection nor to deprive the Jīva of its individuality.

THE STATE OF THE DESTINY OF THE JĪVA

IN MUKTI:

i) CHARACTER OF THE RELEASED JĪVA

AND WHAT IT REVEALS REGARDING THE NATURE OF BRAHMAN:

When the Jīva is liberated through devotion and
divine grace, he loses his natural body and appears in his own divine form. The liberated soul on the eve of the departure from the world passes through Agniloka, Vayuloka, Varunaloka, Adityaloka, Indraloka, Brajapatiloka, Brahmaaloka and then reaches the eternal abode of Vaikuntha. This being so, we may consider what kind of character the Self possesses in the state of emancipation. According to Ramanuja, the released Jiva, laying aside the limitations arising from Karma, manifests itself in its own essential nature. His authority for this view is the passage from the Chhandogya which says, “Thus does that serene being, having risen from the body and having approached highest light manifest itself in its own form” (viii.12.3). In this context Ramanuja in his Sri Bhasya writes “The subject matter of the whole section shows that by the Self manifesting itself in its own form there is meant the self as possessing the attributes of freedom from all evil and sin. For the teaching of Prajapati begins as follows: “the Self which is free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst, whose desires and thoughts spontaneously realise themselves…” The manifestation of the true nature of the Self when reaching the highest light therefore means the manifestation of that Self which has freedom from sin and so on for its essential attributes—that nature being in the Samsvara state obscured through nescience…Intelligence, therefore, bliss and other essential qualities of the Self which were obscured and contracted by Karma expand and thus manifest themselves when the bondage due to Karma

1. Sri Bhasya, iv.3.3.
passes away and the Self approaches the highest light.¹

Further, we are told that the released Self obtains whatever it wishes and even meets its relatives by its mere will.² It enters as many bodies as it pleases, not impelled by Karma, but entirely by its own will.³ It enjoys all the different worlds in which Brahman’s power is manifested.⁴ It finds itself on an equality with all other freed souls for all distinctions of rank, caste and the like are entirely due to the body.⁵ And more than all this it enjoys that beatific vision of God for which it longed while in Samsāra and by which it sees all things in Him and Him in all things. “When the meditating devotee realises the intuition of this Brahman, which consists of absolute bliss, he does not see anything apart from it, since the whole aggregate of things is contained within the essence and outward manifestation (vibhūti) of Brahman.”⁶ Such intuition of the highest Self belongs, we are told, to the natural state of the Self, and follows in release, when nescience is destroyed.⁷ So Rāmānuja states that “the highest Brahman

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, vi.4.3 Thibaut’s translation on Śrī Bhāṣya, Sacred Books of the East Series, XLVIII, p. 757-58, (1904).
2. Śrī Bhāṣya, iv. 4. 8. 3. Ibid., iv.4.15.
4. Ibid., iv. 4. 18.
5. Śrī Bhāṣya, i.4.22., p.395; i.Θ.1., p.101, Thibaut’s translation of Śrī Bhāṣya, Sacred Books of the East Series, XLVIII, (1904).
6. Ibid., i.3.7., p. 305 and 306.
which is free from all change and of an absolutely perfect and blessed nature—this, together with the manifestations of its glory, is what forms the object of consciousness for the released soul.”¹

Freedom from evil of every kind, the attainment of all its desires, and uncontracted intelligence expressing itself in blissful devotional contemplation of God constitute the characteristics of the released Self. According to Rāmānuja, the special condition into which the Self passes and approaches the highest light is a manifestation of its own true nature and not an origination of new character.² It appears that these qualities belong to the essential nature of the Jīva and consequently the evil qualities which it possesses during Samsāra are alien to it. “As the lustre of the gem is not created by the act of polishing, so the essential intelligence of the Self is not created by putting off of imperfections”³ That the Jīva should have these characteristics for its essential nature and that release should consist in the full manifestation of these perfections serve to show that in release the Jīva becomes most truly itself. Release is for Self-realisation, not self-annihilation. It means the achievement of the individuality of the Jīva. At the same time the Jīva reveals the nature of Brahman, namely perfection and love. The perfect nature of Brahman is revealed in the fact that perfections belong to the essential nature of the Jīva, which as His mode is entirely dependent on Him. It also re-

2. Ibid., iv.4.1, p. 756,
3. Ibid., iv.4.3. p. 758.
veals itself that it is a life of complete devotion to Himself that He has set as the ultimate goal for finite beings.

ii) THE RELATION OF BRAHMAN TO THE

RELEASED JIVA:

Though the Jiva achieves individuality in release and remains as a distinct Self, its individuality according to Rāmānuja cannot annul the supremacy of Brahman and reduce Brahman to one among a number of independent selves. He holds that the released Self becomes like Brahman in nature. But he maintains, that the Jiva always remains only as a mode of Brahman and never an independent substance as Brahman. The Jiva having reached Brahman and freed itself of nescience sees itself in its true nature. And this true nature consists here in that the Self has for its inner Self the highest Self while it constitutes the body of that Self and hence a mode (Prakāra) of it. This is proved by texts which exhibit the Jiva and Brahman in co-ordination—Thou art That’ etc. The consciousness of the released Self expresses itself like “I am Brahman, without any division”. The texts which speak of the Jiva becoming equal to, or having equal attributes with, Brahman, mean that the nature of the Jiva which is a mere mode of Brahman is equal to that of Brahman, that is to say, after throwing off the shackles of the body the Jiva becomes equal to Brahman in purity. Further the exalted qualities of the Jiva

1. Śrī Bhāṣya, iv.4.4. Thibaut’s translation of Śrī Bhāṣya, Sacred Books of the East Series, XLVIII, p 759. (1904)
namely freedom from evil and sin and so on, which manifest, themselves in the state of release no doubt belong to the Jiva's essential nature, but the Jiva fundamentally depends on God and is permanent in so far as God Himself on whom it depends is permanent. Thus Rāmānuja makes it clear that though the Jiva in release becomes like Brahman in character it is entirely dependent on Him.

The above discussion highlights two important points in which the released Self differs from Brahman. It is atomic and hence strictly finite while Brahman is the inner self of all and hence universal and all-pervading. Moreover, the Self is devoid of creative and ruling power over the worlds. This exclusively belongs to Brahman. Rāmānuja says, such is the teaching of the Sūtra (iv.4.17) which says “with the exception of world energy etc.”, and he writes, “The doubt here presents itself whether the power of the released Self is a universal power such as belongs to the supreme person, extending to the creation, sustentation, and so on, of the worlds; or is limited to the intuition of the Supreme person...” To this the Sūtra replies, ‘with the exception of the world energy’, the released Self possesses the power of intuitively beholding the pure Brahman but does not possess the power of ruling and guiding the different forms of motion and rest that belongs to animate and inanimate nature. Now the question arises as to how this is known? The answer is, ‘from

1. Ārāhi Bhāṣya, iv.4.20. Thibaut’s translation of Ārāhi Bhāṣya, Sacred Books of the East Series, XLVIII, p. 769. (1904)

the subject matter. For it is with special reference to Brahman only that the text mentions ruling and controlling power over the entire universe. Rāmānuja quotes the Taittirīya in this regard which says “That from whence these beings are born, that through which they live when born, that into which they enter at death, endeavour to know that, that is Brahman” (iii.1.1). If such universal ruling and controlling power belongs to the released Self as well, it would not be used as the text actually uses it— for defining Brahman; for all definition rests on special individual attributes”. 1 Brahman has the powers peculiar to Himself i.e. infinitude and omnipotence, and the released Self though sharing in the perfections of His nature is atomic and completely dependent on Brahman.

This being so, a question arises: If the powers of the released Self entirely depend on Brahman, will the released Self return into Samsāra? Rāmānuja assures that it will never happen, for not only does the scripture tell us so, but also the perfect and all-loving Brahman will not allow the devotee whom He has redeemed and whom He dearly-loves ever again to suffer the miseries of Samsāra. “Nor indeed need we fear that the Supreme Lord when once having taken to Himself the devotee whom He greatly loves, will turn him back to Samsāra”. 2 Rāmānuja further declares that the Self also having once attained release never wishes to return to Samsāra and so such a possibility therefore is altogether excluded.

2. Ibid., iv.4.22, p. 770-71.
We may conclude that Brahman grants perfections of His nature, knowledge, bliss and freedom from evil to the redeemed Self. Consequently in release the Jiva becomes most truly itself. Yet there is no conflict between the individuality of the finite Self and the universality and supremacy of Brahman, for the Jiva forms the body or mode of Brahman. God loves the Jiva dearly and so never sends it back to Samsara. And the Jiva enjoys the blissful vision of God and wishes for nothing else and dwells eternally in loving contemplation of Him. Thus in all His relationship to the Jiva whether prior to world creation, in Samsara, or in the state of release, Brahman appears as a perfect being filled with love for the Jiva. Brahman holds the Jiva in existence prior to world creation. Aiming for its happiness He sends it into Samsara with a body suitable to its deserts. He also seeks in His Grace to lead it from sin, suffering, and nescience to a life of perfection. Finally He grants it release to enjoy blissful and loving contemplation of Him.

Vedanta Desika in his 'Sarvartha Siddhi' writes that the Jiva which performs the prescribed duties with a desire for heavenly happiness goes to heaven and is born again after its merits are exhausted. But the Jiva which has attained similarity in nature to God is not born again but its nescience and Karma have been destroyed. Though the released Self is dependent on God, its volitions are not restricted. It is objected that liberation being the service of the Self to God, it is painful that it involves the knowledge of the relation of a servant to master. To this objection, Vedanta Desika replies that liberation is not characterised by pain because merits and demerits, the causes of pleasure and pain are des-
troyed in this state. He quotes the S'rti which says "God is enjoyable bliss and a Self acquires it from Him and becomes blissful". So release is characterised by bliss. It is further objected that a Jiva desirous of release is attached to bliss and that a Jiva devoid of attachment to pleasure is eligible for release, since a Jiva which acts on account of attachment to pleasure is bound. Vedanta Des'ika asks Whether all attachment is a cause of bondage or whether a particular attachment is a cause of Bondage. The first alternative is not true as attachment to the termination of bondage also would be a cause of bondage. In the second alternative, if attachment to bliss is a cause of bondage, then it also cannot be true. It is not a cause of pain since it is not due to a demerit. It is objected further that a released Self being omniscient cognises the miseries of others and so suffers pain because its knowledge is not contracted by Karma. To this objection, Vedanta Des'ika replies that a released Self apprehends all things including the miseries of others as they are the manifestations of God's glory and cognises the miseries of others as punishments inflicted by God. A released Self feels bliss intrinsic to its essential nature and this feeling constitutes enjoyment. Vedanta Des'ika affirms that Jiva's intuitive experience of the unconditioned Brahman is characterised by Supreme bliss unalloyed with pain. (Sarvârtha Siddhi, p 233-34 Benares (1900)
CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

As the previous chapters have shown, Viśiṣṭādvaita marks a departure from Advaita and accepts with important qualifications some of the Key Advaitic concepts such as Brahman and the Jiva. For its support Viśiṣṭādvaita relies as Advaita does on the Vedās, the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavad Gītā, but it also draws upon the Agamas, Purāṇas, and the devotional hymns of the Alvārs which embody their first hand and felt experience of the divine. Viśiṣṭādvaita distinguishes itself by establishing the intimate and inseparable relationship between the Jiva and Brahman, on the analogy of Sarīra-Sarīri bhāva. The synthetic system of Sarīra-Sarīri bhāva is the one universal philosophy that satisfactorily explains every aspect of spiritual existence and experience. It lays particular emphasis on the fact that the Jiva retains its distinctness and individuality even in the state of Mukti.

Attempt may be made to consider the relevance of these key concepts of Brahman and the Jiva of Viśiṣṭādvaita at the present day (to the modern world). Viśiṣṭādvaita, which marks a significant departure from Advaita, is at once a philosophy and religion. The prevalence of empirical, positivistic, humanistic, existentialistic and analytic movements in contemporary philosophy has been responsible for a revolutionary conception of philosophy. Indian philosophy primarily seeks a method to put an end to all sorrows and anxieties of life. Man belongs to both the worlds, of space and time and of spiritual
values at the same time and thus he remains a paradox to himself. He always seeks the Divine, some eternal principle that can contribute to the complete fulfilment of his nature. It is in this context Viśiṣṭādvaita is bound to have a continued relevance for us.

The theoretical foundations of the theism of Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desīka are established by an analysis of the theories of knowledge of theistic idealism. Viśiṣṭādvaita theory of knowledge indicates an intimate relation between the subject and the object. "The Upaniṣads emphasise that the Jiva is a microcosm in the macrocosm and point out the immanence of cosmic principles in the personality of man so that the nature of man cannot be judged in abstraction from the universe. Aitareya Upaniṣad (11.4.5) describes that the cosmic elements and powers enter the personality of man and supply him with faculties and instruments of knowledge. Viśiṣṭādvaita defends the doctrine of direct Realism as it has a direct bearing upon Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desīka's thesis of the immediate intuition of the object of knowledge and knowledge of anything along with its attributes. These Āchāryas point out that knowledge always refers to an object together with its attributes. There is no point in knowing anything if the process of knowledge leads to the apprehension of sense-data or the qualities alone. There is no perception of characterless object or substance. There is no objectless knowledge nor is there any evidence of knowledge without subject.

In their theory of knowledge both Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desīka maintain that subject and object are related to each other by 'aprthaksiddhi', which means that subject and object are distinguishable
though inseparable. They are distinguishable in thought but in actual existence, they cannot be separated. Knowledge always refers to something endowed with attributes or characteristic features. Hence there seem to be no warrant for the Advaitic doctrine of perception of Pure-Being.

It is to be seen what conclusions concerning the nature of the Jīva follow from the analytical account of the nature of knowledge as propounded by Rāmānuja and Vedānta Deśika: First, knowledge or for that matter consciousness of which knowledge is a function is known to us only as the property of the Jīva of which it is an inseparable attribute. The recognition of consciousness itself as the reality is not something attested by experience. As Radhakrishnan says “If we are loyal to the facts of experience we shall have to admit that a pure self, emptied of all contents, is a fiction of imagination”.1 Das Gupta also says “that Saṃkara has not been able to prove the reality of Pure consciousness”.2 So consciousness without reference to any principle which may be acknowledged by its owner leads to phenomenalism. Secondly, it follows from a careful understanding of the different aspects of the nature and constitution of knowledge that the Jīva which recognises the sensory and intellectual elements in knowledge is not a static, passive or indifferent principle but one that is involved actively in knowledge. Hence although room may be left for the essential cha-

2. Das Gupta—History of Indian Philosophy, Volume 1, p. 435.
racter of the Jiva abstracted from its function exercised by it in knowledge or cognitive activity, there can be no watertight distinction between its transcendental and empirical dimensions. Thirdly, it is impossible to understand the nature of the Jiva except by thinking of it as a self-contained centre of both knowledge and will which implies that it is pointless to think of the Jiva as spiritual if personality is not a genuine determination of its character.

The purpose of Vedānta according to Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desīka is the Jiva's attainment of Communion (Sāyujya) with Brahman and not the restoration of the identity consciousness. The supreme ideal of the Jiva according to them is fellowship with Brahman and His service and likeness with Him in being and knowledge, and not absorption and extinction of the Jiva in the being of Brahman. The Purport of Vedānta is the establishment of the identity of Atman with Brahman as both are the designations of one and the same reality and have reference to empirical and transcendental functioning and essence of the same ontological principle. Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desīka do not divide the contemplative interests of philosophy from the religious ideal of the enrichment of the personality of the individual. That is why the aim of philosophy according to them is its synthesis with religion. Consequently, the Jiva cannot be the Ultimate Reality. Therefore these Āchāryas tell us that the meaning of the Jiva cannot be found in the Jiva itself. The Jiva is ontologically different from Brahman or God. Its reality cannot be assimilated to that of the Absolute or God or else there will be no meaning in the ideal of fellowship with the Divine. The subject-object relationship is fundamental to the religious con-
sciousness as well, because in all forms of consciousness this form of duality becomes inevitable. There is no question of the obliteration of this duality in the ultimate form of consciousness which is communion and fellowship with God.

The Jiva has a personality. It is not pure consciousness, but is expressive consciousness. Saṃkara relegates the concept of personality to the empirical level on the ground that it has no validity in the transcendental reference. But for Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desṭ'ka love and delight, fellowship and service demand the reality of personality as an ontological category and hence for them personality is the determination of the character of both the finite Self and the Supreme-Person or God. God has personality and is therefore called ‘Purushottama’, which means that God transcends both the world of time, change, history and also the conscious Jiva. The identity of Brahman is not abstract which excludes the reality of both the world and the Jiva, but rather embraces both these orders of being as His essential predicates. The recognition of the reality of the world and the Jiva does not amount to the limitation of Brahman, because it is clear that the conception of the Infinite reached through the negation of the finite order and of the Jiva forces us to the notion of the false Infinite, because Brahman in that case would not be the presupposition and foundation of the finite order, but its very negation.

Personality is a matter of crucial importance to religion. The issue on which Advaita and the theism of Viśiṣṭādvaita are divided from each other is whether the idea of personality as the characteristic
of Brahman can be philosophically justified. Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desṭika emphasise in their philosophical and theological writings that knowledge must be acknowledged to have for its object something having a definite character. Our awareness of an object may be vague. All the same, the impulse to know something is prompted by its character. The burden of their teachings is that the Ultimate Reality cannot be abstract. One fails to reconcile oneself to a point of view which treats Ultimate Reality as mere impersonal intelligence, but insists all the same that the Ultimate Reality can be the home of all values and can satisfy all the sides of our being. It is like running with the hare and hunting with the hounds.

It is obvious that the mind cannot be conceived except in terms of its expression in the world of values. Values are intelligible only with reference to the mind and we cannot think of a supreme-Mind except as the home, a source and centre of all values. The relation of value to existence and Reality is well known philosophical problem and the solution of it is that the divorce of value from existence and the existence from value cannot be logically sustained.

It is impossible to think of God merely as thought or intelligence. God as mere intelligence, thought or reason supplies us with no ground for adoration, worship and surrender. It is will in which the character of personality is found and if God has character He cannot be the Centre of mere intelligence but must also possess will to determine His character. A being without will cannot be called either bad or good. But if God is the highest value,
He must have will. Upaniṣads say that the bliss of God overflows into the world and that before creating the world He brooded upon Himself and on His creative energy. God has not only thought the world, but also willed it. It is as impossible to think of thought without will as it is absurd to conceive of will without thought. Thought and will as forms of consciousness cannot be understood in abstraction from each other. Hence the Supreme-Mind is the explanation and the ultimate source of the universe in both intelligence and will.

In this way Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desīka point out that there is no discord between the religious standpoint and the principles of philosophical synthesis as both are complementary ways of looking at one and the same reality and of understanding human experience in all its dimensions. In this connection it may be said that the demand of religious consciousness and of total fulfilment of the human personality can be met only by the conception of the Ultimate Reality which is personal, because all values are personal in the sense that they constitute the characteristic of self-consciousness. We cannot conceive of the Highest in the order of being as less than what is true of man. The relation of man to God cannot be understood in the manner of scientific knowledge which aims at the explorations of the hidden mysteries of the objective world, which leaves the scientist completely unaffected. If religion is not mere impersonal exploration but insists on such a relation between God and man as links one person with another, then God cannot be taken to be a mere bald fact, but as possessing all values in an infinite measure. Therefore, the religious perspective has as much a legitimate claim to the homage.
of mankind as the philosophical.

It is evident that our attempt to trace the world back to God as its ultimate source gives prominence not only to His intelligence manifested in the things and events of the universe, but also to our appreciation of values which they express. Values are no less effective means of the knowledge of things than the abstract categories of science and mathematics. However, our knowledge of God is bound to be limited and therefore incomplete, even though the world in which we live bears eloquent witness to His immanence.

Vaiśeṣika Advaita asserts that Brahman is not mere thought but the highest Self. He has for His essential attributes thought, bliss and freedom from evil. He is characterised by perfection, and above all by love. The world and all that is there are real and depend on Him. He is their cause in the sense that He holds them within Himself in subtle form prior to world-creation, and by His will sends them into gross existence. They form His body. Though they are animated, sustained and controlled by Him for His own ends, their change and imperfections do not affect His essential nature in any way. They are His attributes or modes in the sense that, though distinct from Him, they can have no existence apart from Him. Of the constituent elements of the world, matter exists entirely for the sake of the Jivas, Brahman not sharing in its evil nature, but employing it to meet out to them pleasure and pain according to their deeds so that He may lead them to Himself. The Jivas are true individuals whom He loves and who share the perfections of His nature. In His grace He seeks to lead them to a life of
perception and complete devotion to Himself. When they have once attained it, He will never allow them to be separated from Him again.

This in brief is the conception which Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desīka systematically uphold. Their thought centres round the idea of Brahman as a personal Being filled with perfection and love. This is the view which in essence found early expression in portions of the Gītā. The Ālvārs in religious ecstasy sang of God as one who is as boundless in mercy and who loves the Jīva. Such love of the Jīva demands a personality for the Supreme Being on the one hand, and the reality of the Jīva on the other. Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desīka tell us that Brahman is a Personal-Being with all perfections, and the world is created by Him out of love for the Jīvas, so that He may wean them away from evil and redeem them for a life of complete devotion to Himself. The contribution of these Āchāryas lies in grasping this great truth which is valuable as providing religion with an intelligible conception of Brahman in relation to the universe and more especially in relation to the Jīva, as Personal-God characterised above all by love.
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