

# CONSCIOUSNESS IN VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA AND DVAITA

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*By*

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**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the Ph.D. Thesis entitled “*CONSCIOUSNESS IN VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA AND DVAITA*” is a bonafide record of individual research work done by Ms. R.SAVITHIRI, Junior Research Fellow - ICPR, in the Department of Philosophy, Pondicherry University, under my supervision and guidance. It is certified that the above work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree/ Diploma/ Associateship/ Fellowship or any other similar titles to the candidate. This independent research work of the candidate is an original contribution towards the discipline of philosophy.

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the Thesis entitled “*CONSCIOUSNESS IN VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA AND DVAITA*”, submitted by me for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is a record of original research work done by me under the supervision and guidance of **Dr.B.R.Shantha Kumari**, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Philosophy, Pondicherry University, Puducherry, and that the Thesis has not formed the basis for the Award of any Degree / Diploma / Associateship / Fellowship or any other similar titles to me.

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## INTRODUCTION

It is very difficult to describe and understand consciousness as a field of study because there is no one definition of consciousness. Consciousness is a very important concept in Western and Indian philosophy. Many intellectuals, philosophers, scientists belonging to various disciplines and religious practitioners have been investigating consciousness in their own unique ways.

During the last few centuries, science and philosophy, in the rigorous pursuit of truth, have crossed swords over the issue of consciousness. Scientists used to ignore the subject of consciousness because it was for them a subjective phenomenon; and, therefore, regarded it as outside the purview of scientific investigation. Similarly, until recently Western Philosophers treated it as something “untouchable”. On the other hand, in ancient India, philosophers, scholars and academics of different schools and various disciplines accorded it a place of honour. To them, consciousness (*cit/caitanya*) is a fact of experience and a lived reality. However, the conception of science and norms of understanding were different in ancient India.

Consciousness is still an enigmatic phenomenon and an unanswered question for many. Consciousness continues to be a mystery and baffles the human intellect. In spite of the recent scientific developments in several disciplines, consciousness eludes the enquirers. It has been recognized that each discipline has to approach the subject of consciousness in a spirit of humility, a willingness to learn and a readiness to listen or understand another’s point of view and thereafter modify, if necessary, one’s cherished views.

To unravel the mystery of consciousness, the ancient seers Indian approached the problem in three ways: (1) through life (*prāṇa*) (2) through mind (*manas*) and (3) through an analysis of consciousness itself as experienced in the waking, dream and deep sleep states of normal human beings. Vedānta declares that consciousness is the only Reality which manifests itself at different levels of reality, and that mind and matter are the evolutes of the same phenomenon.

I will mainly examine consciousness from the Indian philosophical perspectives of Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. Every system of Indian philosophy recognizes the unique and complex nature of consciousness. The following questions are significant with regard to consciousness:

- (1) Does consciousness have a form (*sākāra*) or is it form-less (*nirākāra*)?
- (2) Is consciousness self-revealing (*svaprakāśa*) or revealed by another (*paraprakāśa*)?
- (3) Is consciousness object-laden (*saviśaya*) or object-less (*nirviśaya*)?
- (4) Is consciousness a substance (*dravya*), a quality (*guṇa*), or an action (*karma*)?
- (5) Is consciousness self-validating (*svataḥ-prāmāṇya*) or is it validated by another (*parataḥ-pramāṇya*)?

Every question is highly significant and each school of Indian philosophy has made novel enormous and original contribution. Instead of reviewing the discussion in their multifarious details, I will pick out and dwell upon the concept of consciousness in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita, especially those which appear as philosophically significant for a better understanding and appreciation of the nature, functions and significance of consciousness.

## **NEED FOR THE STUDY**

Presently, consciousness is a problematic, defying analysis and understanding. As mentioned earlier, the concept of consciousness has been examined by both Indian and Western philosophy. There are diverse views in the schools of Indian philosophy; sometimes some of them are highly contradictory as seen in the views of Cārvāka, Buddhism, Jainism, Advaita, Dvaita, etc. I will focus on a comparative study of consciousness, according to Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita adopting a metaphysical, epistemological, ethical and spiritualistic approach for understanding consciousness. This comparative study will facilitate an in depth understanding of the detailed explanations put forward by Rāmānuja and Madhva regarding the nature and functions of consciousness in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita which are two very important systems of Vedānta, especially the schools of Vaiṣṇavism from the metaphysical, the

epistemological, and ethical perspectives. And both the schools, developed their own unique systems of philosophy to criticize and reject Advaita Vedānta based on their novel interpretation of the *Prasthāna-trayā*- texts - the *Brahma-sūtra*, the *Bhagavat-Gītā* and the *Upaniṣads*.

Vedānta schools mainly analyze the triangular realities of metaphysics: Brahman/God, souls (*jīvas*) and matter (*prakṛti/jagat*). Vedānta schools, use three models to discuss the relation between Brahman, the souls and the world. They are the: (1) identity (*abheda*) model which upholds that Brahman and soul are absolutely identical as advocated by the Advaita of Śaṅkara; (2) identity-in-difference (*bhedābheda*) model proffered by Rāmānuja in his monism-of-the-qualified: Viśiṣṭādvaita; and (3) difference (*bheda*) model of Madhva's Dvaita asserting that the three realities are totally different phenomenon.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*The Śrī Bhashya-Rāmānuja's* commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra* written by Rāmānujacarya & Translated by Thibaut George, mainly examines the nature of Reality (*Tattva*) in the first two chapters, and the means/path (*sādhanas*) to attain the supreme goal of life in the third Chapter. The last Chapter is concerned with the ideals to be achieved (George, 1904).

*The Fundamentals of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, A Study Based on Vedānta Deśika's Tattva-Mukta-Kalāpa* by S.M. Srinivasa Chari, mainly examines the epistemology, ontology, cosmology, and religious doctrines to present in a synthetic manner the fundamental doctrines of Sri Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta based on a study of the *Tattva-Mukta-Kalāpa*, the *magnum opus* of Śrī Vedānta Deśika, a highly distinguished successor of Rāmānuja (Srinivasa Chari, 1988).

*The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita* authored by P. N. Srinivasachari examines the attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) from an epistemological perspective and the two schools recommend self-surrender (*prapatti*) from an ethical perspective (Srinivasachari, 1978).

*A Hand book on the Philosophy of Rāmānuja: Yatīndramatadīpikā*, Translated by Swami Ādidevanānda, mainly discuss comprehensively, the epistemology, ontology, psychology, cosmology and theology of Viśiṣṭādvaita. It also: (1) propounds a credible doctrine of complete identity between God and the Absolute-Brahman; (2) it harmonizes God's transcendence (*paratva*) with His accessibility; and (3) it inculcates the highest type of devotion without underscoring intellectualism and the social duties in spiritual life (Ādidevānanda, 1949).

*The Seven Great Untenables (Sapta-vidhā Anupāpatti)* by John Grimes, mainly focuses on an introduction to the key-concept of Advāita Vedānta, i.e. *avidyā/māyā*, along with the criticisms levelled against this concept by Rāmānuja. The work is an analysis of Rāmānuja's *Sapta-vidhā Anupāpatti*, and the opponent's reply thereto (John Grimes, 1990).

*Philosophy of Śrī Madhvācārya* written by B.N.K.Sharma mainly examines the nature of consciousness (*śakṣin*), the concept Ātman and the *sādhana-vicāra* includes *karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga* and *aparokṣa-jñāna* (Sharma, 1991).

*An Outline of Madhva Philosophy* authored by K. Narain mainly discusses the metaphysical categories, soul nature of *avidyā*, and the means to liberation (*mokṣa*) and the nature of liberation according to Dvaita (Narain, 1986).

*The Epistemology of Dvaita Vedānta* authored by P. Nagaraja Rao examines how valid knowledge arises through consciousness, according to Dvaita (Nagaraja Rao, 1976).

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

I will discuss the following objectives:

- Examine the metaphysical categories.
- Examine the concept of consciousness.
- Analyze the concept of knowledge.
- Discuss consciousness from a metaphysical perspective.
- Discuss consciousness according to Viśiṣṭādvaita & Dvaita.
- Analyze estrangement (bondage) of consciousness in Viśiṣṭādvaita & Dvaita.

- Analyze enlargement (liberation) of consciousness in Viśiṣṭādvaita & Dvaita. For justifying the concept of liberation-for-all (*sarvamukti*).
- Examine the differences and similarities between Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita in the concept of consciousness from the metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical perspectives.

## **METHODOLOGY**

I have adopted the descriptive, historical, metaphysical, analytical and comparative methods for clarifying consciousness, for interpreting the concepts, and gaining novelty in research on consciousness, according to Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita.

## **SOURCES**

I will deal with Rāmānuja’s and Madhva’s views on consciousness, relying on secondary sources like books, journals and other electronic data related to Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. Excluding the Introduction and the Conclusion, the Thesis consists of five Chapters.

In this Thesis, Chapter I on “Consciousness in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita” discusses the life-work of Rāmānuja and Madhva. This Chapter uses the historical approach to portray the life-work of Rāmānuja and Madhva. Viśiṣṭādvaita was propounded by Sri Rāmānujācārya, and Dvaita by Sri Madhvācārya. Their life-sketch is very significant for an understanding and appreciation of their views because the philosophy of a thinker is the result of objective factors: (a) social-scenario, ethical values, historical circumstances, geographical location, prevailing economical criteria, etc.; and (b) a thinker’s subjective response to these above cited factors, personal values and solutions for the challenges handled by a thinker. Rāmānuja and Madhva studied Advaita Vedānta but they revolted against Advaita, and rejecting its views formulated their unique Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita world-views as intellectual, philosophical and spiritual response to Advaita. The two Vedānta schools - Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita, are based on the *Prasthanā-traya* and they advocate Vaisnavism, monotheism and realism. They also admit three sources of knowledge (*pramāṇas*) and liberation-after-death (*videha-mukti*).

Chapter II examines the metaphysical categories of Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. This chapter examines consciousness in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita from the standpoint of metaphysics. The Chapter also discusses the nature and number of conscious and non-conscious substances (*acetana-dravya*) admitted by both the schools. The nature, forms and functions of God; the number, nature, classification and destiny of the souls (*jīvas*) and the nature, evolution and the purpose of the world will also be analyzed.

Chapter III examines consciousness, according to Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. This chapter dwells on what is consciousness, etymological analysis of “consciousness”, nature and characteristics of consciousness, and Indian philosophy views on consciousness. Although the concept of consciousness is the same, its conceptualization/interpretation differs from one philosopher to another. This chapter also discusses knowledge, truth and novelty to facilitate a clear understanding of consciousness because Indian philosophers use the term “consciousness” to refer to knowledge as well as consciousness, thereby creating confusion and ambiguity. Western philosophers adopt a scientific approach to understand consciousness, whereas Indian philosophers adopt a scientific, an epistemic, a metaphysical, an ethical and a spiritualistic approach to understand consciousness.

Thus, I have seen that consciousness is interpreted in two totally different and unique ways by the two major schools of Vaiṣṇavism - Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. The Thesis also discusses the estrangement/bondage and enlargement/liberation of consciousness because consciousness is a key concept in epistemology, and its conceptualization in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita will influence and determine the metaphysics and ethics of these systems of philosophy.

Chapter IV analyzes the estrangement/bondage of consciousness, according to Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita from an ethical perspective. The word “estrangement” is used in a figurative sense and not its literal sense. This chapter examines how individual consciousness which is actually universal gets finitized and suffers bondage. Every embodied soul during bondage (*bandha*) caused by transmigration (*samsāra*) has two kinds of consciousness. Bondage, in Indian philosophy generally means a liability of the

soul to birth/embodiment/death and all other consequently related miseries. This chapter will also discuss how embodied consciousness (*jīva*) becomes finite due to ignorance (*avidyā*). The word “*avidyā*”, is used by Rāmānuja in two different senses - metaphysical and ethical.

According to Dvaita, the immediate cause of misery is the soul’s ignorance (*avidyā/ajñāna*) of its true nature (*svabhāva-ajñāna vāda*), i.e. the soul is ignorant about its relation to God. God is the only independent reality and the *jīva* is totally dependent on God for its existence, knowledge and activity, both in bondage (*samsāra*) and liberation (*mokṣa*). The Chapter also discusses the four forms of *avidyā* - *jīvācchādika*, *paramacchādika*, *saivala* and *māyā*, and explains how they conceal our nature as consciousness for preventing realization.

Chapter V analyzes the enlargement/liberation of consciousness, according to Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita from an ethical and spiritual perspective. It shows how individual consciousness can attain liberation to reassert its universal infinite nature. “Enlargement” of consciousness means liberation “Enlargement” is here used in a figurative sense and not in the literal sense. This chapter examines: briefly, the enlargement of consciousness, according to the schools of Indian philosophy and focusses elaborately on the enlargement of consciousness in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. The means to liberation suggested by both the schools for realizing our real nature and liberation are discussed from an ethical perspective.

The concluding Chapter examines the similarities and the dissimilarities between Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita in their views on consciousness from the standpoint of metaphysics, epistemology and ethics.

## CHAPTER I

### LIFE - WORK OF RĀMĀNUJA AND MADHVA

#### A. RĀMĀNUJA (1017 - 1137 A.D.)

##### 1. Rāmānuja’s Life

To Āsuri Keśava Dīkṣita and his wife Kānthimathī was born Śrī Rāmānuja, in 1017A.D, at Śrīperumbudur, near Chennai. He lived a very long life of 120 years. Keśava Dīkṣita (also known as “*Saruakratu*” which literally means “performer of sacrifices (*yajñas*)” because of his fondness of performing *yajñas*) was pious by nature. Rāmānuja grew up in religious family where many rituals were performed every day. The early lessons and the ritualistic *mantras*, etc., were taught by his father. Hearing them often Rāmānuja would have learnt them by heart. He would also have learnt the *Karma-khāṇḍa* of the *Vedas* early in life.

Rāmānuja was a highly intellectual child with a prodigious memory. He was a favourite pupil of his teachers. He loved the company of holy men, and anything religious appealed to him. He was free from caste consciousness as proved by his association with Kāncīpūrṇa (a non-Brahmin), residing in Kāncī. Kāncīpūrṇa was revered by all human beings irrespective of caste or creed. One day, Rāmānuja who was a boy then, met this holy man and was irresistibly drawn to him. The boy Rāmānuja was also liked by Kāncīpūrṇa because of the auspicious marks on his body and his child-like innocence. The young Rāmānuja invited Kāncīpūrṇa to dine in his house. Kāncīpūrṇa accepted Rāmānuja’s invitation and ate at Rāmānuja’s house. That night, Rāmānuja was overjoyed and after the meal, wanted to press Kāncīpūrṇa’s feet (as was the custom during ancient times for showing affection and reverence for elders). But Kāncīpūrṇa was shocked. He said that because Rāmānuja was a Brahmin by birth, he could not touch the feet of a lower caste, *Vaiśya*.<sup>1</sup> The caste system was originally observed by all the classes. In those days the system ensured the stability of the society. Rāmānuja was upset and pleaded with Kāncīpūrṇa saying that it was his bad luck that he could not serve a noble soul like Kāncīpūrṇa. He also asked Kāncīpūrṇa whether wearing the sacred thread alone makes



one a Brahmin. He who is devoted to God, he alone is a real Brāhmaṇa. That was how Tirupannāḷvār - a low-born became worthy of worship by the Brāhmaṇas.”<sup>2</sup>

When Rāmānuja was 16 years old, his parents got him married to Tanjamma/Rakṣakāmbāl. A month after the marriage, Āsuri Keśava Bhaṭṭa fell ill and died. After the death ceremonies were over, his family moved to Kāncī. During that time Yādavaprakāśa - a famous scholar and an authority on Advaita were residing at Kāncī. Yādavaprakāśa was very happy to get a talented Rāmānuja as his disciple. Rāmānuja practised all the disciplines expected of a disciple. He was attentive in his studies and personally served his Preceptor. Yādavaprakāśa also loved Rāmānuja very much, and gave him the foremost place among his disciples.

Yādavaprakāśa was a staunch Advaitin and practised rigid non-dualism, whereas Rāmānuja was totally drawn towards devotion and the worship of a personal-God, his chosen-deity (*Iṣṭa-Devatā/Saguṇa-Brahman*). One day while all the other disciples were away, Rāmānuja was massaging Yādava’s body with oil while another disciple was being instructed about the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* text, viz, *tasya yathā kapyasam punḍarīkameva makṣiṇi*, which describes the two eyes of the golden *Puruṣa*. According to Śāṅkara’s interpretation the passage means; “the two eyes of the golden *Puruṣa* (God) are like two lotuses which are red like the nates of a monkey.”<sup>3</sup> Rāmānuja was shocked and pained about the crudity of the interpretation, and shed tears. On being questioned by Yādavaprakāśa as to why he was upset, Rāmānuja said that such an interpretation was unbecoming of a scholar like Yādava. It was wrong to compare the Lord’s eyes full of beauty and grace with the posterior of a monkey. Rāmānuja then gave another interpretation of the text stating that the eyes of the *Puruṣa* within the golden solar orb were as beautiful like the radiating lotus-petals which dispersed the sun’s rays. Yādava was impressed by Rāmānuja’s ingenuity but disliked Rāmānuja’s disagreement. After this unpleasant incident Yādava started losing interest in Rāmānuja.

Later, on another occasion too, there was once again disagreement between Yādava and Rāmānuja about the interpretation of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* text viz., *satyam jñānam anantam brahma*. Following Advaita, Yādava interpreted the passage as “Brahman is

truth, intelligence and infinitude”. Rāmānuja objected to the word “is” because for him qualities cannot be Brahman. As expected, Rāmānuja’s departure from Śāṅkara’s interpretation angered Yādava - his teacher, and completely alienated Rāmānuja from him. The rift was irreparable. Yādavaprakāśa thereafter began viewing Rāmānuja as a strong challenge to his authority.

Yādavaprakāśa plotted with his loyal disciples to drown Rāmānuja on the way to Benares. But his cousin Govinda got to know about it and asked Rāmānuja to escape from the group. Rāmānuja escaped into the forest through divine help, in the form of a fowler couple, and reached Kāncī the next day. Rāmānuja was then in his last twenties.<sup>4</sup>

Returning from his pilgrimage, Yādava was surprised to see Rāmānuja alive. Although he outwardly expressed happiness and welcomed his disciple, Rāmānuja did not reveal the plot. He resumed his studies once again under Yādava. But differences between Yādava and Rāmānuja over interpreting the scriptural texts persisted. Once while explaining “*khalvidam brahma*” Rāmānuja’s interpretation so enraged Yādava, who ordered Rāmānuja to go to another Guru. After touching his Preceptor’s feet for the last time, Rāmānuja finally left Yādava.

A depressed Rāmānuja returned home. He had unintentionally offended his Preceptor. The next morning Kāncīpūrṇa visited him. Rāmānuja informed him about all the incidents and sought his guidance. Kāncīpūrṇa advised Rāmānuja to serve Lord Varadarāja for regaining mental-peace. He told Rāmānuja to bring a pot of water every day from the holy well for worshiping Lord Varadarāja. Rāmānuja began this ritual and continued his studies independently. He now gained greater clarity and understanding.

Yāmunācārya was the leader of the Vaiṣṇava community at Śrīraṅgam. Once, when Yāmunācārya went to Kāncī to worship Lord Varadarāja, he had seen Rāmānuja, who was studying then under Yādavaprakāśa. Yāmunācārya was impressed by the intelligence and serenity on Rāmānuja’s face. He thought that if he could draw Rāmānuja away from the Advaitin Yādavaprakāśa and admit him into his school, he could find a worthy successor. But this could not be accomplished then, when Yāmunācārya was in Kāncī.

Returning from Kāncī he shouldered his duties as the leader of Vaiṣṇavites with the Headquarters at Śrīraṅgam.

At Kāncī, Yāmuna had seen Rāmānuja, but was unable to contact him. When he knew that Rāmānuja was no longer with Yādavaprakāśa, he was very interested in inviting Rāmānuja and talking with him. Therefore, Yāmuna sent his disciple Mahāpūrṇa to Kāncī for bringing Rāmānuja. Mahāpūrṇa was singing a song before Lord Varadarāja, when Rāmānuja came to the temple with the pot of holy water. Rāmānuja was moved by the devotional song of Mahāpūrṇa who conveyed Yāmuna's message to Rāmānuja. On knowing that the song sung by Mahāpūrṇa was composed by Yāmunācārya, Rāmānuja willingly agreed to go to Śrīraṅgam.

But by the time Rāmānuja and Mahāpūrṇa reached Śrīraṅgam, Yāmunācārya had died. Rāmānuja was upset because he could not see and converse with Yāmuna. The disciples of Yāmuna requested Rāmānuja to become Yāmuna's successor and become the Head. Rāmānuja refused and returned to Kāncī. Six months after Yāmuna's death, Rāmānuja's mother, Kāntimathī also died. Rāmānuja's young wife, Rakṣakāmbal, became the mistress of the household. Rāmānuja spent most of his time in the company of Kāncīpūrṇa whom he tried to persuade to become his Guru. But Kāncīpūrṇa, out of devotion and humility, refused. However, he agreed to clear Rāmānuja's doubts on six issues by placing them before Lord Varadarāja. After praying to Lord Varadarāja, he gave the following instructions to Rāmānuja. It is believed that the Lord said that:

1. "Lord Viṣṇu is the absolute Brahman and the cause of *prakṛti* - the cause of the universe.
2. The difference between *jīva* and *Īśvara* is axiomatic.
3. Total-surrender at the lotus-feet of God is the only means to liberation.
4. Liberation of the Lord's devotees, even if they do not remember Him during the last moments of their life, is sure to take place.
5. As soon as the Lord's devotees die, they attain the supreme object; and
6. Rāmānuja should take refuge in the virtuous Mahātma Mahāpūrṇa. Go soon to Rāmānuja and tell him what I have told you."<sup>5</sup>

The next day, Mahāpūrṇa conveyed to Rāmānuja, Lord Varadarāja's six instructions. The sixth direction was personal - asking Rāmānuja to become a disciple of Mahāpūrṇa. According to this advice, Rāmānuja left for Śrīraṅgam to search for Mahāpūrṇa. On the way, at Madhurāntakam, he halted to worship the “Yeri-kātha Perumal” or Śrī Rama who saved the tank from floods. At the same time, Mahāpūrṇa came from Śrīraṅgam to Madhurāntakam, desiring to go to Kāncī after worshipping Lord Rama. When Rāmānuja and Mahāpūrṇa met at Madhurāntakam, they were both very happy. They later left for Kāncī. Rāmānuja learnt from Mahāpūrṇa for six months.

Rāmānuja's wife grew up in an orthodox Brahmin family which rigidly practised rituals, caste-consciousness, etc. But in Rāmānuja's house, the discipline was totally different. Although Vedic rituals for Brahmins were conducted, Rāmānuja was a revolutionary. He never bothered about caste. On seeing devotion, goodness and Godliness in anyone, he would touch their feet and invite them to his house as his honoured guest. But his wife could not tolerate caste-violation. Several incidents happened and Rāmānuja was very upset. One day she insulted Kāncīpūrṇa whom Rāmānuja respected and revered as his Guru. Thereafter, Rāmānuja could not tolerate her or live with her anymore. Rakṣakāmbāl was a woman and not a wife. During those days divorce was non-existent in Brahmin families. The only way through which he could get separated from his wife was to become a *sannyāsin* – the last stage (*āśrama*) of Vedic life. But Rāmānuja had no patience. Using a pretext, he sent his wife to her father's house with all her belongings, and immediately accepted *sannyāsa* in 1050, at Lord Varadarāja's temple. He was then only 33 years old and in the prime of his youth/adulthood.

As a *sannyāsin*, Rāmānuja reached Śrīraṅgam and was welcomed by the Vaiṣṇavites there who accepted him as their Head. After becoming a *sannyāsin*, at Kāncī, Rāmānuja had gathered a group of disciples. But the call of Śrīraṅgam, strengthened by his respect for Yāmuna drew him to Śrīraṅgam - his “*kṣetra*” for fulfilling his God's ordained mission.

After finalizing the organizational work in the Śrīraṅgam temple, Rāmānuja began touring - a custom practised by all *sannyāsins* for preaching religion. Rāmānuja travelled all over south India. Through teaching and preaching, his thoughts got crystallized; and his interpretations and conclusions got confirmed. After returning to Śrīraṅgam, he desired to write his *Brahma-Sūtra-bhāṣya*. But he felt that an in-depth study of the *Bodhāyāna-vṛtti* was necessary as a pre-requisite. A copy of this work was available only in Kashmir. Therefore, Rāmānuja with his ardent disciple Kureṣa together travelled to Kashmir - a centre for advanced scriptural studies for centuries. At the *Sarasvathī-Pīṭha*: a famous centre for advanced scriptural studies, Rāmānuja read the *Bodhāyāna-vṛtti*. Apart from the legendary accounts of how the copy was taken and retaken, and the phenomenal memory of Kureṣa, one fact is certain – that Rāmānuja studied the *Bodhāyāna-vṛtti* at Kashmir and grasped its essence, and that all his doubts regarding the interpretation of the Vedic texts got resolved at Kashmir.

Returning to Śrīraṅgam, he began writing his *Brahma-Sūtra-bhāṣya* called the “*Śrī Bhāṣya*”. He then wrote commentaries on the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. The *Vedāntadīpa*, the *Vedāntasāra*, *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, etc., are the other famous works of Rāmānuja.

During his time, the state was ruled by a staunch Śaivite-King: Kulothunga. This King began persecuting the non-Śaivites. Therefore, Rāmānuja left for Mysore State and settled at Melkote. He was warmly welcomed by the King there. Rāmānuja installed an idol of Lord Nārāyaṇa, and got a temple and a monastery (*maṭha*) built at Melkote. Rāmānuja then stayed for about twenty years in the Mysore State.

Rāmānuja was 101 years old, when he returned to Śrīraṅgam. The Saivite King there had died, and the region was safe. Rāmānuja spent the rest of his life at Śrīraṅgam. He consolidated several uncompleted works, and trained 74 disciples as Heads of various *Maṭhas* for popularizing Viśiṣṭādvaita. He formulated the *Pāñcarātra* worship. Śrī Vaiṣṇavism includes people of all castes and creeds, and emphasizes absolute surrender (*prapatti*) to Lord Nārāyaṇa. In 1137 A.D., when his earthly mission got completed, he was 120 years old. He died in Śrīraṅgam. To the devotees who had gathered at his death

bed, he gave the last message - a summary of his philosophy and the way to live life. A majority of books on Rāmānuja provide this message as an Appendix.

## 2. Rāmānuja's Works

There are 9 books of Rāmānuja known as the nine precious gems (*navaratnas*).

- (i) *Śrībhāṣya/ Brahma-Sūtra-bhāṣya* – this work is regarded as Rāmānuja's most famous work. It is a commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa.
- (ii) *Vaikuṅṭagadya* – this describes Vaikuṅṭa, the realm of Lord Viṣṇu in detail, and recommends meditating on it.
- (iii) *Śrīraṅgagadya* – this is a prayer of surrender to the lotus-feet of Lord Raṅganātha.
- (iv) *Śaraṅāgatigadya* - this is an imaginary dialogue between Rāmānuja and Śrī Lakṣmī.

The above mentioned works: the *Vaikuṅṭagadya*, the *Śrīraṅgagadya*, and *Śaraṅāgatigadya* are collectively known as the *Gadyatraya*/three prose hymns. They are considered as important works of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism.

- (v) *Vedārthasaṅgraha* - this discusses the theistic philosophy of Rāmānuja.
- (vi) *Vedāntasāra* – expounds the essence of Vedānta.
- (vii) *Vedāntadīpa* – this throws light on Vedānta.
- (viii) *Gītābhāṣya* – this is Rāmānuja's commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.
- (ix) *Nityagrantha* – this discusses the activities performed everyday by all the Śrīvaiṣṇavites.

Rāmānuja has written commentaries based on the following works: *Divyaprabandha* of Śrī Sathakopa (2) *Siddhi-traya* (3) *Āgamaprāmaṇya* (4) *Stotra-ratna* of Śrī Yāmunacārya; and (5) *Nyāya-tattva* and (6) *Yoga-rahasya* of Śrī Nāthamuni. *Yogarahasya* is not available now. Among the above listed works, the *Divyaprabandha* is written in Tamil, and the other works are in Sanskrit.

## B. MADHVA (1238 - 1317 A.D.)

### 1. Madhva's Life

Our knowledge of Śrī Madhvācārya's life is derived from a Sanskrit work called the *Madhvavijaya*, authored by Śrī Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita. This work is valuable not only as a historical text but also as a sacred poetical work by the followers of Madhva. In 1238A.D, Madhva was born to Madhyageha Bhaṭṭa (also known as Nārāyaṇa Naddantillaya) and Śrīmati Vedāvati in the village of Pajaka near Udupi, Karnataka, India. During the naming-ritual, they called their son "Vāsudeva", a name denoting great knowledge and deep devotion to the supreme Lord.

Vāsudeva displayed great mental abilities and mature religious orientation on several occasions. True to his name – Vāsudeva was full of devotion to the almighty Lord. He also had a rare capacity to grasp everything at once. One day, Vāsudeva was contemplating on God during the class. His Preceptor - Tottintillaya, scolded Vāsudeva for his negligence. Vāsudeva replied that, he did not like memorizing Vedic hymns, part by part: An angry teacher ordered Madhva to recite any hymn that he had now not been taught except then. Vāsudeva recited the whole hymn flawlessly, with perfect pronunciation.<sup>9</sup> Vāsudeva was also an expert in sports, wrestling, weight-lifting and swimming.

Vāsudeva was totally devoted Lord Śrī Viṣṇu and disinterested in all worldly phenomena. After completing his studies, Vāsudeva returned home and speculated on the difficulties good people experienced while striving for right knowledge of God. He identified that the cause for confusion in the minds of even learned scholars were the seeming contradictions in different parts of the scriptures. He therefore desired to disclose the real meaning hidden in the scriptures, and establish the incomparable supremacy and sovereignty of God. He was convinced that the only way through which he could achieve it was to become a *sannyāsin*. Therefore, at the tender age of eight, he told his parents about his resolve to become a *sannyāsin*.

Vāsudeva's parents were very upset and worried because if he became a *sannyāsin* there would be no one to take care of them during their old age. On seeing their sorrow,

Vāsudeva decided to wait until another son was born to his parents. Vāsudeva persuaded his father by citing the Vedic text which states that the moment a person abandons all worldly attachments and totally engages in contemplation of God, one should become a monk.<sup>10</sup> Being a great scholar himself, Vāsudeva’s father agreed. But, he refused to give permission, saying that even if he agreed; his mother would refuse. Vāsudeva insisted that his father should give his consent first, and that he would take his mother’s permission thereafter. When another son was born to his parents, Vāsudeva sought his mother’s permission. She refused. Vāsudeva threatened that he would run away from home if he was denied permission to become a monk. Finally, his mother had to agree.

Although Vāsudeva’s real guru was Vedavyāsa, he choose Acyutaprekṣa Tīrtha, a great ascetic, as his Guru for initiating him into asceticism (*sannyāsa*). But there were differences in opinion on the basic teachings between the disciple and his Guru especially when the *Iṣṭasiddhi* was being taught. Later on, during the *Bhāgavata* recitation, Pūrṇaprajña modified the meanings of the texts recited. On examining several texts, it was found that Pūrṇaprajña was right. A surprised Acyutaprekṣa asked him how he knew the whole *Bhāgavata* so thoroughly. The disciple replied that he had studied all that during his previous lives. Acknowledging his learning and divinity Pūrṇaprajña was now given a new name - “Ānanda Tīrtha”. Madhva, the name by which he is commonly known, is only a synonym of his real name. The word “Madhva” is derived from “*Madhu+A* (honey bringer)”, a title conferred to him by Acyutaprekṣa after Ānanda Tīrtha authored a theistic commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*. Since Madhva is also a name occurring in the *Balittha Sukta*<sup>12</sup> of the *Ṛg Veda* for the third *Avatāra* of Mukhyaprāṇa, he became famous as “Madhvācārya”. It is also believed that Acyutaprekṣa, impressed by and recognizing his untutored congenital learning and expository skills, anointed him as the Head of that *Maṭha*.

During his travel, Ānanda Tīrtha visited several temples, bathed in sacred rivers, and engaged in intellectual debates with scholars of other schools to refute their views. With very brief one-sentence answers, he defeated two Buddhists - Buddhisāgara and Vādisimha, who ran away overnight admitting defeat!



Similarly, Ānanda Tīrtha rejected Śaṅkara's views saying that the world is not illusory (*mithyā*) but real (*sat*), God (*Saguna-Brahman*) is the highest reality and different from the sentient and the non-sentient phenomena. Once, during his travel across South India (1256-1259 CE), he stayed at a place in Kerala. He addressed the gathering in the temple and expounded his philosophy. Here, he challenged a leading Advaita scholar – Kudipusturu, and defeated him in a debate. To establish his philosophy firmly, he desired to write commentaries on the scriptures.

He also travelled in Tamil Nadu and visited places of pilgrimage like Kanyākumāri, Rameśvaram, Śrī Muṣṇam, Śrīraṅgam and Kāñcīpuram. At Rameśvaram, Ānanda Tīrtha is said to have debated with a famous Advaita monk called Vidyāśaṅkara Tīrtha.<sup>6</sup> He also addressed groups of scholars and impressed them using logic, the *Vedas* and *Mīmāṃsā*. Wherever he went, he defeated scholars and propagated his philosophy. Finally, he returned to Udipi. Acyutaprekṣa conferred on Ananda Tīrtha the title “Madhvācārya”. Thereafter, Madhva is said to have authored the *Gītābhāṣya*, propounding dualism.

To safeguard the Vedic tradition, Madhva wanted to refute the prevalent commentaries on the *Brahma-sūtra*. Therefore, he desired to write a commentary for conveying the true meaning of the *Brahma-sūtra*, and the import (*tātparya*) of the *Vedas*. He desired to go to Badri for meeting Śrī Vedavyāsa and getting his blessings before starting the commentary. To ensure that his Guru Acyutaprekṣa did not object to his long journey, he wrote the *Bhagavad- Gītābhāṣya* to keep his Guru busy for granting him permission for undertaking the journey.

During (1263 - 1271 CE) Madhva travelled across North India together with several disciples towards Lower Badri. His favourite disciple, Satya Tīrtha, accompanied Madhva during this tour to the sacred Himalayan shrine of Badrināth. At Badrinath, Madhva left his disciples and went further to Uttarabadri and spent several months in solitude, study and meditation. Later on, he rejoined his disciples and dictated the *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* to Satya Tīrtha advocating dualism.<sup>7</sup> Madhva then prepared to meet Śrī Vedavyāsa believed as dwelling in Uttarabadri. Travel to Uttarabadri could take 48 days and the trip is difficult even today. Madhva vowed not to talk or eat until he met Śrī

Vedavyasa to get attuned to prayer and ward off distractions. He ordered all his disciples to go back, except Satya Tīrtha, and proceeded towards Uttarabadri. Śrī Satya Tīrtha was determined to accompany Madhva to Śrī Vedavyāsa's Aśrama. There, Madhva beheld Śrī Vedavyāsa sitting in the middle of a stage; and prayed to him. This meeting with Śrī Vedavyāsa fructified because Madhva is revered as a reincarnation of Śrī Vāyu - who is supreme among the souls (*jīvas*).

Śrī Vedavyāsa then taught the *Vedas* and the *Bhāgavata* to Madhva. Although Madhva as Vāyu, was already imparted scriptural knowledge by Lord Nārāyaṇa, he learnt them again from Śrī Vedavyāsa because: (1) it was a pleasure to learn from both his Lord and his Master, (2) he wanted to demonstrate that true knowledge has to be received from a Guru, and (3) he wanted to reveal to the world that his scriptural knowledge was flawless because it was conveyed to him by the Lord Himself.

The most remarkable event in Madhva's life during his stay at Udupi was the establishment of the Śrī Kṛṣṇa temple. This important event occurred during one of Madhva's regular solo meditative retreats at Malpe beach (which is three miles to the West of Udupi on the Arabian sea-coast). Once, Madhva witnessed a merchant vessel being mercilessly tossed in the storm by the turbulent sea. On seeing this, Madhva is said to have waved his upper garment, after which the storm is supposed to have subsided, and the merchant vessel reached the shore safely. A grateful captain is believed to have gifted Madhva a lump of yellow-clay: *gopicandana*, which the latter unknowingly asked for. A few yards from the beach, the yellow-clay lump broke open to reveal a beautiful idol of Lord Kṛṣṇa holding a churning-rod and ropes. An overjoyed Madhva carried this idol to Udupi and consecrated it close to the Ananteśvara shrine in 1278 CE.<sup>8</sup> During the next three years, Madhva systematized the form, method and details of worship for the newly consecrated Kṛṣṇa idol. He then deputed Narahari Tīrtha to Kaliṅga to bring the idols of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā lying in the King's treasury. Thereafter, he left on a 10 year pilgrimage to North India, making Badrinath his final destination.

During his second North India tour (1280-1290 CE). Madhva visited Badri, Hastināpura (near Delhi), Kurukṣetra, Vāraṇasi, Rṣīkeś, Isupata Kṣetra, and other holy

places in North India. During his sojourn in Badri, Madhva wrote a *bhāṣya* on the *Mahābhārata*. At Kāśī, he is said to have debated with several scholars belonging to various schools of philosophy. The group is then said to have reached Goa where Madhva converted some people. Even today, there are a large number of Konkani-speaking followers of Madhva. Thereafter, the party reached Udupi safely after 10 years.<sup>9</sup> The highlights of this tour are:

- Meeting Lord Badrinārāyaṇa at Badri and receiving eight *Sāligrāmas* called *Vyāsa-Muṣṭis* from him as presents made by Vyāsa to his favourite pupil - Madhva.
- Writing the *Śrīman Mahābhārata Tātparya Nirṇaya*, the great epitome of the *Mahābhārata*.
- Practicing austerities (*tapas*) for four months, under a tree on the bank of the Gaṅgā.
- Crossing the river Gaṅgā, defying physical and political limitations.
- Converting the mind of King Mahādeva of Maharashtra to do hard labour, together with the people whom he was forcing to do strenuous labour.
- Drawing the attention of his disciples to important incidents in the Mahābhārata war, showing the ammunitions and himself as Bhīma, during his tour of Kurukṣetra.
- Conversing with Ghyasuddin Balban (1266-1286 CE) and getting half of his province as a gift (*jāgir*).

Śrī Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍitācārya - son of Śrī Trivikrama Paṇḍitācārya - was a great poet and a junior contemporary of Madhva. He is author of the *Sumadhva Vijaya* - a biography describing the life and achievements of Madhva in an authentic manner. The *Sumadhva Vijaya* consisting of 16 Chapters is in the form of a poem, in various meters. But no contemporary of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja wrote their biographies. Moreover, there are several biographies giving contradictory details about Śaṅkarā. Madhva performed many miracles during his life time spanning seventy nine years, from the Vijaya-Daśami day of Vilambi Samvatsara to the Shukla Pakṣa Navami month of Māgha, Piṅgala Samvatsara.

Some months prior to his disappearance from the earthly realm, he stayed on the banks of Kanwa Tīrtha.

Towards the end of his life, Madhva wrote commentaries on the *Nyāya-Vivaraṇa*, the *Karma-Nirṇaya*, *Kṛṣṇāmrta–Mahārṇava* and others. He accomplished what he wanted to do. He has authored profound original works with far reaching influence on devotional theism. It seems that Madhva was only waiting for Narahari Tīrtha and the idols before completing his earthly mission. Before his disappearance from the earth, during his stay at Kanwa Tīrtha, Narahari Tīrtha returned from Orissa with the idols of Rāma and Sīta. When his mission was accomplished, he only had to hand over his responsibilities to Padmanābha Tīrtha.

In 1237, before his eightieth birthday, when Madhva was discoursing on his favourite *Aitareya Upaniṣad* before a huge gathering, there was a shower of flowers from above and Śrī Madhva vanished from vision. On this day, observed as Madhva–Navami, people pay homage to the great Ācārya. His followers still believe that Madhva is in the Upper Badri with Śrī Vyāsa.

## **2. Madhva’s Works**

Madhva has authored forty works. Among these, thirty seven are popularly known as the *Sarva Mūla Granthas*.

### **a) Commentaries**

#### **(1) On Vedic Hymns**

- (i) the *Ṛg Bhāṣya*, and
- (ii) the *Karmanirṇaya*.

#### **(2) On the Upaniṣads**

The ten works cited below are collectively known as the “*Upaniṣad prasthāna*”.

- (i) the *Aitareya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*,
- (ii) the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*,
- (iii) the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*,

- (iv) the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*,
- (v) the *Īsavāsyā Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*,
- (vi) the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*,
- (vii) the *Atharvaṇa* or *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*,
- (viii) the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*,
- (ix) the *Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*, and
- (x) the *Tālavakāra* or *Keṇa Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*,

### (3) On the *Purāṇas*

- (i) the *Bhagavadgītā bhāṣya*, and
- (ii) the *Bhagavadgītā tātparya niṛṇaya*.

The above two works are together known as “the *Gītā-Prasthāna*”.

- (iii) the *Bhāgavata tātparya niṛṇaya*, and
- (iv) the *Śrīman Mahābhārata tātparya niṛṇaya*.

### (4) On the *Vedānta-Sūtras*

The four works cited below are together known as the *Sūtra Prasthāna*,

- (i) the *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya*
- (ii) the *Brahmasūtra-anubhāṣya*
- (iii) the *Brahmasūtra-anuvyākhyāna*
- (iv) the *Brahmasūtra-nyāyavivarāṇa*

### b) Independent Writings

The following nine works mentioned below along with the *Karma-Nirṇaya* are together known as the *Daśa-Prakaraṇas* -

Among these, the first two works known as “*Lakṣaṇa-Granthas*” -

- (i) the *Pramāṇalakṣaṇa*
- (ii) the *Kaṭhalakṣaṇa*

The following three works known as *Khaṇḍana-Traya* -

- (iii) the *Upādhi-khaṇḍana*
- (iv) the *Māyāvāda-khaṇḍana*
- (v) the *Mithyātvānumāna-khaṇḍana*

The following 4 works collectively constitute the *Tattva Granthas* -

- (vi) the *Tattvasaṅkhyāna*,
- (vii) the *Tattvaviveka*,
- (viii) the *Tattvodyota*,
- (ix) the *Viṣṇutattva(vi)nirṇaya*,
- (x) the *Dvadaśa stotra*,
- (xi) the *Nakhastuti*,
- (xii) the *Sadācāra-smṛti*,
- (xiii) the *Jayanti Nirṇaya*,
- (xiv) the *Kṛṣṇāmṛta-mahārṇava*,
- (xv) the *Tantrasāra-saṅgraha*,
- (xvi) the *Yamakabhārata*, and
- (xvii) the *Yatiprāṇavakalpa*,

**c) Other Works include -**

- (i) the *Kaṇḍukastuti*,
- (ii) the *Tithi Nirṇaya*, and
- (iii) the *Nyāsa Paddatti*

Thus, Chapter I focussed elaborately on the life-work of Rāmānuja and Madhva. It shows clearly that both of them had extra-ordinary abilities, were proficient scholars, and great devotees of Lord Viṣṇu.

## CHAPTER II

### METAPHYSICAL CATEGORIES OF VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA & DVAITA

An understanding of the metaphysical categories of any school of thought is necessary for an appreciation of that particular school. Therefore, this chapter will focus on the metaphysical categories of Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. This will help us to understand how spiritual realization or the realization of our own embodied consciousness takes place. Metaphysics strives to distinguish the real from the unreal. This is known as “*tattva-vicāra*” which means “search for the ultimate Reality or the Absolute”. “*Tattva*” means a real entity which cannot be negated by any other means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). From the epistemological and metaphysical viewpoints, “*tattva*” refers to categories (*padārthas*). Though both Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita Vedānta recognize categories; yet, they differ among themselves with regard to the number of categories. The metaphysical categories of Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita are discussed below in detail.

#### A. METAPHYSICAL CATEGORIES OF VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA

Viśiṣṭādvaita classifies all metaphysical categories under two broad heads: substance (*dravya*) and non-substance (*adravya*). Substance is defined as that which has states or undergoes modifications. It is the substratum for modification. Modification is defined as an adventitious quality that is inseparably related with a substance.<sup>1</sup> For example clay is the substance for the pots, toys, vases, etc.

Viśiṣṭādvaita admits six substances, classified into two groups: (1) conscious substances (*cetana-dravya*) - (a) God (Brahman/*Īśvara*), (b) soul (*jīva*), (c) knowledge (*jñāna*), and (d) transcendental matter (*nityavibhūti*); and (2) non-conscious substances (*acetana-dravya*) - (a) cosmic matter (*prakṛti*), and (b) time (*kāla*). The conscious-substances are classified into self-revealing (*pratyak*) viz., God (Brahman) and soul (*jīva*) and other revealing (*parāk*) viz., knowledge (*jñāna*) and transcendental matter (*nitya-vibhūti*).

Non-substance (*adravya*) is a special term of Viśiṣṭādvaita. It is defined as “that which cannot be the substratum of anything else (*anupādāna*) but is necessarily dependent upon substance (*dravya*)” and “that which cannot admit conjunction with another quality”.<sup>2</sup> What is other than substance is known as non-substance. It is not merely the quality (*dharma*) of a substance. Non-substance should be integrally related to substance, and such quality of a substance cannot become the substratum for another quality. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, knowledge (*jñāna*) is a conscious substance because it is a quality of soul with which it is inseparably related and which serves as a substratum for its modifications. E.g. Colour is a non-substance because it inheres in a substance and it is not the substratum for another quality.

Viśiṣṭādvaita identifies ten fundamental non-substances (*adravya*): (a) the three *guṇas* (*sattva*, *rajas* & *tamas*) considered as attributes of cosmic matter (*prakṛti*); (b) sound (*śabda*), touch (*sparśa*), colour (*rūpa*), taste (*rasa*) and odour (*gandha*) considered as attributes of the five gross elements (*pañca-mahābhūtas*); and (c) conjunction (*saṁyoga*) and (d) potency (*śakti*).

My Thesis focuses mainly on consciousness. From the above classification of categories, I have selected conscious substances only. Rāmānuja admits four conscious substances: God (Brahman), soul (*jīva*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and transcendental matter (*nityavibhūti*). Let us first discuss the non-material/conscious substances.

## **1. Conscious Substances (*Cetana-Dravya*)**

### **a) God (*Īśvara/Lord Viṣṇu*)**

God (Viṣṇu) is the most important philosophical concept in Viśiṣṭādvaita. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, Lord Viṣṇu/Nārāyaṇa/Vāsudeva is the supreme God and the whole universe consisting of the sentient souls and non-sentient matter is pervaded by Him.

#### **i. Definition of God**

The *Upaniṣads* describe reality in general terms such as *Sat/Ātman/Brahman/Para-tattva/Param-jyotis*, etc. In the famous dialogue between *Varuṇa* and *Bhṛgu* in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, *Bhṛgu* says, “That from which all these beings are born, live, and



that unto which, when departing, they enter; desire to know that; that is Brahman.”<sup>3</sup> Based on the text, Bādarāyaṇa defines Brahman as that from which proceeds creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe. Some religious texts define God as the creator, preserver, destroyer and governor of the world, knowledge, ignorance, bondage and liberation. According to the *Brahma-Sūtra*, Brahman is the highest perfection and He also makes everything else perfect.

## ii. Nature of God

According to the Viśiṣṭādvaita, the ultimate Reality or God/Brahman discussed in the *Upaniṣads* is the personal God of religion.<sup>4</sup> It rejects the theory of two Brahman (Saguṇa-Brahman and Nirguṇa-Brahman) admitted by Advaita. There is only one Brahman: Saguṇa-Brahman/Īśvara/God as stated in the *Vedānta Sūtras*. Brahman is the creator of the cosmos. He is qualified by infinite auspicious attributes (*ananta-kalyāṇa-guṇa-viśiṣṭā*) and is free from all imperfections (*doṣas*). Etymologically “Brahman” means “that which grows and causes growth (*br̥hattvat*)”. If we take into consideration these two words, then the term “Brahman” is applicable primarily to the supreme Lord (*sarveśvara*).

The nature of the ultimate Reality is to be determined not merely on the basis of a few *Upaniṣadic* texts but by taking into consideration all the other relevant *Upaniṣadic* statements. The *Upaniṣadic* passages dealing with the creation of the universe refer to *Sat*/Ātman/Brahman as the First Cause of the universe. Hence, the *Upaniṣad* says, “*Sat* alone existed in the beginning.” It also remarks again: “Ātman alone existed in the beginning”. Yet in another place it says: “Brahman alone existed in the beginning”. Thus, three different terms: *Sat*, Ātman and Brahman are used for the ultimate Reality. Since several entities cannot be the cause of the universe, we have to admit that one entity alone is the sole cause. The question is: What is that entity? The word a “*Sat*” is too general and can mean anything that exists. “Ātman” is a little more specific than *Sat*; but, it is applicable to more than one entity; because it also means *prakṛti* and *jīva*. Another *Upaniṣadic* passage describing the creation of the universe mentions Lord Nārāyaṇa as the cause of the cosmos. Thus, it is stated: Nārāyaṇa alone existed in the beginning. The

word Nārāyaṇa is used in the texts in place of the terms *Sat*, Ātman, Brahman, mentioned in the other texts as the cause of the universe. According to the principles of interpretation specified by the Mīmāṃsakas, when terms are used in the same context the term having a general meaning should bear the meaning of the specific term. According to Pāṇini's grammar, the term "Nārāyaṇa" is treated as a specific proper name (*samjñāpada*) and is applicable to one specific Being only but not to any other entity like the general terms - Brahman, *Sat* and Ātman. Therefore, it is concluded that Brahman referred to in the *Upaniṣads* as the cause of the universe is the same as Lord Nārāyaṇa and that it should not be understood to mean that the God of a particular religious cult is being imposed on the *Upaniṣadic* concept of Brahman. What is meant by "Nārāyaṇa" is that the ultimate Reality of philosophy cannot be anything other than a personal Supreme Being who should have the function of the creation of the universe (*jagat-kāraṇatva*). The name given to such a Reality is immaterial insofar as it meets the requirements of the concept of Ultimate Reality. According to the etymology of the word, "Nārāyaṇa" means one who is the ground of the entire universe of *cit* and *acit* and who is immanent in all.

The nature of the ultimate Reality is defined in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* as "*satyam, jñānam* and *anantam*". According to Rāmānuja, the word "*sat*" means absolutely non-conditioned existence of Brahman.<sup>11</sup> Another meaning of this term is the eternal self-existent and self-contained substance which is not subject to any kind of modification. Brahman is *satyam* in the sense that it exists forever without undergoing any kind of change (*vikāra*). This characteristic of Brahman: (1) distinguishes it from non-sentient matter which undergoes constant change; and also (2) distinguishes Brahman from the individual souls which are associated with a physical body which changes continuously during transmigration (*saṃsāra*). According to Rāmānuja, the term "*jñānam*" means eternal knowledge which is not subject to contraction and expansion. When Brahman is described as "*jñānam*" it means that Brahman possesses infinite knowledge. The term "*jñānam*", applied to Brahman implies that knowledge is the very *svarūpa* of Brahman. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, Brahman is both *jñāna-svarūpa* and *jñāna-guṇaka*. This means that Brahman is infinite, is not subject to contraction and expansion (*asaṅkucita*) unlike the finite knowledge of the bound individual souls (*jīvas*). This feature

distinguishes Brahman from the liberated souls whose knowledge contracts and expands during bondage. The term “*ananta*” means that which is not limited by space, time and other factors. Brahman is infinite (*anantam*) because it is omnipresent, eternal and pervades all other objects in the universe. This feature of the infinite Brahman distinguishes it from the souls which are eternally free (*nityas*). The souls are monadic in size (*aṇuparimāṇa*). Not only the nature (*svarūpa*) of Brahman but also the attributes (*guṇas*) of Brahman are infinite and unsurpassable in excellence. These three characteristics which are unique to Brahman reveal its nature (*svarūpa-nirūpakadharmā*). In reply to a question, about what the *svarūpa* of Brahman is, the answer of Viśiṣṭādvaita is that it is characterized by *satyatva*, *jñānatva* and *anantatva*.

Materialists reject the concept of God because God cannot be perceived or inferred. Knowledge about the nature and attributes of God can be got only through scriptures (*śāstras*)

### iii. Attributes of God

According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, Brahman is *ananta-kalyāṇa guṇa-viśiṣṭa*, that is, one who is qualified by infinite auspicious attributes. While discussing the attributes, Viśiṣṭādvaita epistemology distinguishes between essential and secondary attributes. Essential attributes are those which are unique to a particular phenomenon as its distinguishing features (*asādhāraṇa-dharma*). The nature of an object distinguishes one object from another, and it can be determined only in terms of those attributes. For example, a cow is perceived as a cow and not as a horse because of its special feature - the dew-lap, which a horse lacks. This special feature is the essential attribute of a cow (*asādhāraṇa-dharma*). Rāmānuja uses the term *svabhāva* for *dharma* as different from *svarūpa* or *dharmī*. Nature (*svabhāva/dharma*) is that which is determined by its essential attributes. *Svarūpa/Dharmī* is that which serves as a secondary attribute. *Dharma* stands for the distinguishing feature of an object.

**(1) Essential Attributes:** According to the *Upaniṣads*, the nature of Brahman is *satyam*, *jñānam* and *anantam*. These three do not denote the nature of Brahman, as claimed by Advaita Vedānta. On the contrary, they refer to Brahman as possessing three distinct

attributes. On the basis of the *Upaniṣads*, Viśiṣṭādvaita admits bliss and purity as additional essential characteristics of Brahman. Brahman is blissful (*ānanda*), and pure and free from all imperfections (*amala*).

**(2) Six Principal Attributes:** According to Rāmānuja, Brahman has got countless attributes (*asaṅkhyeya*). But the following six are the principal attributes: knowledge (*jñāna*), power (*śakti*), strength (*bala*), Lordship (*aiśvarya*), energy (*vīrya*), and splendour (*tejas*). These principal attributes make God perfect.

- **Knowledge (*jñāna*):** This means omniscience or the capacity to simultaneously know everything (*sarvajñatva*). This is a very important attribute of God, admitted commonly by all the theistic systems. Viśiṣṭādvaita makes a distinction between *svarūpa-jñāna* and *dharmabhūta-jñāna*. Modifications occurring in the latter are not applicable to the former which remains unchanged (*nirvikāra*), just as changes in the body do not affect the indwelling/embodied soul.
- **Power (*śakti*):** means omnipotence (*sarvaśaktitva*). God, who is the creator of the universe, has the superpower to create, control and sustain the varied cosmos and all the phenomena therein.
- **Strength (*bala*):** denotes the quality through which *Īśvara* supports effortlessly all sentient and the non-sentient phenomenon in the cosmos.
- **Lordship (*aiśvarya*):** means the quality of controllership and unlimited freedom over the entire universe through which God becomes the supreme Lord (*sarveśvara*).
- **Energy (*vīrya*):** denotes the special quality through which God remains unaffected by modifications (*vikārahita*) in spite of He being the material cause of the universe, the locus and indweller in all phenomena.
- **Splendour (*tejas*):** is an attribute of God signifying self-sufficiency. It is defined as a power which does not require any external aid (*anyanyapekṣata*). i.e., power of God to create the cosmos merely by willing/thinking without the aid of other accessories. Among the six attributes of God listed above, the first two, *jñāna* and

*śakti* are considered as the most important. Any deity regarded as the Supreme must be omniscient (*sarvajña*) and omnipotent. The other four are the different aspects of these two.

God is eternal because He has no origination. Whatever has an origination is not eternal. And, He is immutable and immortal. According to the *Brahma-Sūtra*, God is endless and immense. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* says that He is the creator and destroyer of the world, nothing can exist without Him. According to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, Lord Viṣṇu is omniscient wise, blissful, and absolutely perfect.

#### **iv. God - Soul Inseparable Relation (*Apr̥thak-siddhi* )**

Viśiṣṭādvaita upholds that, a substance and its attribute are inseparable. For example, a blue-lotus: where the blueness is a quality of the lotus and it cannot be separated from that lotus. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita epistemology, an object and its quality are cognized together. Hence, a substance and its attribute are inseparable. “*Apr̥thak-siddhi*” is the technical term used to indicate this inseparable nature of a substance and its attribute. “*Apr̥thak*” means “not separate”, and “*siddhi*” means “*sthiti*/existence” and “*pratīti*/cognition”. Hence, “*apr̥thak-siddhi*” means that a substance and its attribute cannot exist as two independent phenomena like two material objects. And “*apr̥thak-pratīti*” means that a substance and its attribute cannot be cognized separately. Thus, attribute is dependent on substance for its existence (*satta*). Being inherent in a substance it forms an integral part of it.

Viśiṣṭādvaita admits three real categories: God (Viṣṇu), souls (*cit*) and matter (*acit*). Among these, matter and souls are totally dependent on God (Viṣṇu). They are substances in themselves but in relation to God they are His attributes. They constitute the body (*śarīra*) of God - their indwelling soul (*śarīrin*). Like the relationship between a substance and its attributes, there is an inseparable relation between the soul and the body. The *apr̥thak-siddhi* relation exists not only between a substance and its attribute but also between two substances (*dravyas*). For example, the physical body (*śarīra*) and the indwelling soul (*jīva*) are both *dravyas*, but they are inseparable. Similarly, the cosmos constituted of matter and souls are inseparable from God (*Īśvara*). The inseparable

organic relation existing between the body and its inner soul is known as *śarīra-ātma-sambandha*.

### iii. Forms and Functions of God

The descent/incarnations of God (*avatāras*) in different forms is a unique feature of Vaiṣṇavism. Hence, we shall, examine the different incarnations, their unique features and their theological significance. At the outset we have to note that the *avātara* has its origin in the *Vedas*. The term “*avatāra*” means “coming down” (*avatāraṇa*) and the manifestation of a deity in different forms. Viśiṣṭādvaita admits five form of God. They are: (1) supreme (*parā*), (2) emanation (*vyūha*), (3) incarnation (*vibhava*), (4) idol (*arcā*) and (5) inner controller (*antaryāmin*). Among these, Madhva rejects the idol (*arcā*) of worship.

**(1) The Supreme (*Parā*):** refers to the transcendental form of God eternally existing in the *Paramapada*, qualified by the auspicious infinite attributes - *aiśvarya*, *bala*, *vīrya*, *jñāna*, *śakti* and *tejas*. The *Āgamas* discuss God’s existence in the transcendental realm to facilitate the souls liberated from bondage (*Muktas*) and the eternally liberated souls (*Nityasūris*) to serve the Lord. According to the *Upaniṣad*, Brahman is infinite (*ananta*). He is impersonal and present everywhere. But this form of God has very little significance for meditation or for offering divine services by the liberated souls. Hence the need for God’s manifestation as a one’s personal Deity (*Iṣṭa-Devatā*). The terms *Parā Vāsudeva/Nārāyaṇa/Para Brahman*, etc. denote the supreme Being viewed as *Parā-avatāra*. In *Vaikuṅṭa* the Lord is seated on the serpent *Śeṣa* surrounded by His consort Goddess *Mahālakṣmī*, the eternal (*nitya*) and the liberated souls (*mukta-jīvas*). In *Vaikuṅṭa* - the abode of Bliss which transcends changes and time, Lord *Nārāyaṇa* manifests Himself.

**(2) Emanation (*Vyūha*):** *Vāsudeva*, *Sankarśaṇa*, *Pradyumna* and *Aniruddha* are the four different manifestation of the Supreme Being. Each *Vyūha* is associated with some specific functions and attributes such as creation, maintenance, dissolution of the cosmos and bestowal of spiritual knowledge.

According to the *Pāñcarātra*, the supreme Being possesses six major attributes - *jñāna*, *bala*, *aiśvarya*, *vīrya*, *śakti* and *tejas*. These six attributes are grouped into three pairs, and allotted to each *Vyūha* except the first. Hence, the first *Vyūha* - Vāsudeva is fully invested with all the six attributes. He, therefore, enjoys almost the same status as *Parā-Vāsudeva*, the highest Being. Because of this reason, some scriptures list only three *Vyūhas*.<sup>14</sup> Hence, the second *Vyūha* - *Sankarśana* is equipped with *jñāna* and *bala*; *Pradyumna* is allotted *vīrya* and *aiśvarya*, and *Aniruddha* with *śakti* and *tejas* in addition to specific cosmic and moral functions. For some Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas; the main functions are the same as *Para-Vāsudeva*, He is therefore not ascribed any moral function of creation. *Sankarśana* is delegated the function of dissolution of the cosmos and promulgation of scriptures, *Pradyumna* is in charge of the cosmos and maintenance of *dharma*.

**(3) Incarnation/Descent (*Vibhava/Avatāra*):** The term “*vibhava*” refers to the manifestation of the Lord through bodies like those of human beings/other creatures. Lord Viṣṇu’s incarnations are ten in number: *Matsya*, *Kūrma*, *Varāha*, *Nṛsimha*, *Vāmana*, *Paraśurāma*, *Rāma*, *Balarāma*, *Kṛṣṇa* and *Kalki*.

Among these, the Fish-form (*Matsya-avatāra*) was intended to restore the *Vedas* to Brahma by defeating the demons who had stolen them. To help the *Devas*, Lord Viṣṇu descended for the sake of the celestials (*Devas*) assuming the Tortoise-form (*Kūrma-avatāra*) and supported the Mandara mountain from below, during the churning of the Ocean of Milk (*Kṣīra-sāgara*) for getting nectar (*amṛta*) which confers immortality on its consumers. The Boar-form (*Varāha-avatāra*) was assumed to rescue His own consort, Bhūmi-Devi, and to save human beings during transmigration in the ocean of existence. Through the Man-Lion form (*Nṛsimha-avatāra*) Lord Viṣṇu manifested Himself by emerging out from a pillar to slay Hiranyakaśipu and save His child devotee Prahalāda who had surrendered to Him. Through the Dwarf-form (*Vāmana-avatāra*), Lord Viṣṇu protected the world by ridding its sins with the Gaṅgā water, flowing from His lotus-feet when He assumed the *Trivikrama* form. Through *Paraśurāma-avatāra*, Lord Viṣṇu annihilated the wicked *Kṣatriyas*. Through *Rāma-avatāra*, Lord Viṣṇu protected those who surrendered to Him and for safeguarding *Dharma*. Through *Balarāma-avatāra*,

Lord Viṣṇu annihilated Pralāmba. Through *Kṛṣṇa-avatāra*, Lord Viṣṇu taught humanity the means to liberation. The *Kalki-avatāra* is intended to establish *Dharma* by destroying the unrighteous, and for saving the world during *Kaliyuga*.

**(4) Idol (*Arcā*):** The word “*arcā*” denotes the sacred idol of worship (*pūja pratima*), usually made of silver, bronze, wood, stone or gold, and worshipped in villages, houses, hills, caves, temple, sacred places, etc. God “descends” into it with a non-material body; and is dependent on the devotee for bath, sitting, food, sleeping, etc.; He tolerates everything and is associated with knowledge and other attributes.

**(5) Indweller (*Antaryāmin*):** The term “*antaryāmin*” refers to Lord Nārāyaṇa residing in a subtle form within the human heart for the sake of meditation. As the *Antaryāmin*, the Lord is immanent in all the conscious and the non-conscious phenomenon of the cosmos as their indweller, controlling their activities from within (*niyamāyāti*), as described in the *Antaryāmi Brāhmaṇa* of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.

For Madhva, Lord Viṣṇu is not an abstract concept, but, a perfect soul known as *Īśvara*. God is known as *Saguṇa-Brahman/Īśvara* because He has a personality possessing attributes. According to Madhva, God has a special body constituted of existence, consciousness and bliss and is not subject to destruction and change.

#### **v. Refutation of Nirguṇa-Brahman**

According to Advaita, there is a Brahman higher than the personal God (*Saguṇa-Brahman/Īśvara*) admitted as the supreme Reality. Advaita admits a higher (*Parā*) and a lower (*Aparā*) Brahman. *Parā-Brahman* is the ultimate Reality/pure existence, knowledge and bliss (*sat-cit-ānanda*) devoid of all differences (*bhedas*) and attributes (*nirviśeṣa/nirguṇa*), and the Absolute of metaphysics. It is supra-relational, transcendental, Reality beyond all speech and thought. That is why it is described as *nirviśeṣa* or *nirguṇa*. *Parā-Brahman* conditioned by *māyā* is known as the personal God (*Aparā-Brahman/Īśvara*) is possesses attributes (*saviśeṣa/saguṇa*) and is the creator of the cosmos. Advaita accords a higher reality to *Parā-Brahman* as a lesser reality to *Aparā-Brahman*. But Viśiṣṭādvaita rejects this theory of two Brahman. Based on scriptures, Viśiṣṭādvaita declares that *Saguṇa-Brahman* having infinite auspicious attributes is the



ultimate Reality. Therefore, Viśiṣṭādvaita rejects the Advaita view saying that the view is based only on a few scriptural texts (*nirguṇa-śruti*): They are the *Upaniṣadic* texts which state that Brahman is devoid of qualities, whereas scriptural texts describing Brahman as having qualities are aplenty (*bāhūlya*). Thus, we see that while Advaita attaches great importance to the *nirguṇa-śruti* texts, Viśiṣṭādvaita rejects these and admits only the *saguṇa-śruti* texts.

## **b) Soul (*Jīva*)**

### **i. Definition of the Soul**

The soul (*jīva*) is an eternal spiritual phenomenon different from the supreme Brahman. Even in the state of liberation/it retains its individuality. The souls are essentially of the nature of knowledge (*jñāna-svarūpa*) and infinite in number. The soul is not only of nature of knowledge, but it is also the substratum of knowledge, highlighting the fact that the soul is the knowing subject (*jñātā*), the agent (*kartā*) of action and the enjoyer (*bhoktā*) of the fruits of action. According to Madhva, the soul is eternal, all-pervasive and monadic in size (*aṇu*). Rāmānuja, upholds that like God (Brahman), the soul too is of the nature of consciousness and that it possesses *dharmabhūta-jñāna* as its inseparable attribute. It is not only self-luminous, but it is also both a substance (*dravya*) and an attribute (*guṇa*).

The *cit* and *acit* exist as a part of Brahman in a subtle causal form even before the creation of the world of names and forms. The differentiation into names and forms came into existence after creation when *cit* and *acit* became distinguishable entities. The soul is explained by first stating what it is not, and then by criticising the negative definitions. The soul, according to Viśiṣṭādvaita, is different from the body, senses, mind, and the vital air.

### **ii. Distinction between Self (*Ātman*) and Soul (*Jīva*)**

Soul (*jīva*) is of the nature of consciousness and possesses *dharmabhūta-jñāna* as an inseparable attribute. At the metaphysical level, we must know about the soul because the soul and consciousness exist together. First, we have to clarify what the “Ātman” as

“soul” and “Self” means. Puligandla is disappointed and disheartened to find that: (1) Western and Indian scholars (who should know better) translate “Ātman” as “soul”; and (2) they also refer to the “Ātman as “self”, sometimes with the “s” capitalized.

According to Puligandla, the Ātman is formless; and hence, nameless. “Ātman” like “Brahman”, is not a name; but only a linguistic term to help understanding. The word “Ātman” means “all pervasive”, is pure, objectless consciousness, according to Advaita.

### iii. Nature of Soul

**(1) Eternal (Nitya):** According to Rāmānuja, the soul is eternal (*nitya*) in the sense that it is neither born nor does it die, as stated in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* and the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. The birth and death of an individual refers to the soul’s association and dissociation with the physical body. *Avidyā* is the cause of the *jīva*’s bondage. The soul passes through many births and deaths until it attains total liberation from *avidyā* and *karma* through the stipulated spiritual disciplines.

**(2) Subject of Knowledge (Jñātā):** The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, describes Brahman as “*satyam, jñānam, anantam Brahma*”. The soul is the subject of knowledge (*jñātā*). According to Rāmānuja, the individual soul is not merely of the nature of knowledge but it also possesses knowledge as its essential attribute.

**(3) Self-luminous (Svayam-prakāśa):** According to Viśiṣṭadvaita, the soul is self-luminous (*svayam-prakāśa*) which means that it reveals itself without the aid of knowledge. The other spiritual phenomena are: God (*Īśvara*), soul (*jīva*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and *śuddha-sattva*. Just as a lamp reveals the objects around it and also itself without requiring another light, so also the soul reveals both itself and the other objects.

**(4) Atomic Size (Aṇutva):** For Rāmānuja, the soul is atomic in size and dwells in the heart. It can experience sensations throughout its body. But in the state of bondage it has sometimes consciousness and sometimes ignorance. This is possible because the soul is atomic in size and has the quality of consciousness. If the *jīva* was ubiquitous, it would always have perception. But this is not the case. Therefore, it is atomic. The monadic nature of the *jīva* is its natural form. That is, it is not caused or conditioned by any

physical limitation. *Īśvara* is all-pervasive (*vibhu*) but He is described as infinitesimal in the inner recess of the heart. Here, the *aṇutva* of *ParamĀtman* is not His natural character but it is caused by physical limitation. No such limitation is mentioned in respect to the *jīvātman*. Therefore *aṇutva* of the *jīva* is its natural state.

**(5) Doer (*Kartā*) and Enjoyer (*Bhokta*):** Rāmānuja affirms that the soul is also the knower (*jñātā*) or the subject of knowledge. Since the *jīva* is the knower, it is also the agent (*kartā*) of action and the enjoyer (*bhoktā*) of pleasure and pain. This fact is substantiated not only by one's perceptual experience but also by scriptures. The scriptural passages which stipulate the performance of Vedic rites will become meaningless if the *jīvātman* is not recognized as the agent of action and the enjoyer of its result. Commenting on these *Sūtras*, Rāmānuja explains that when sacred texts (*śāstra*) enjoin the performance of *upāsana* for attaining *mokṣa* or the performance of a Vedic ritual for the attainment of Heaven (*Svarga*), they are intended only for intelligent agents of action who can enjoy the fruit. A command is intended to induce one to do a particular action. Hence, the Vedic injunctions will be meaningful only with regard to a conscious agent and not a non-conscious phenomenon (*acetana*).

**(6) Plurality:** Rāmānuja upholds that the souls are infinite in number. The finite souls are not only different from one another but also different from Brahman - the supreme Self (*PramĀtman*) because God is infinite. This view is based on the evidence of experience and scriptures. The souls are many because the knowledge, memory, desire, happiness, suffering, birth and death of each individual are different from one another. If the souls did not differ from one another, then each person would be aware of the feelings and thoughts of the others. But, this is not the case. Therefore, the souls are different from one another. This argument is used by Rāmānuja to reject the one soul theory (*ekātma-vāda*) of Advaita.

#### **iv. God - Soul Relation**

Vaiṣṇavism admits the triangular realities of metaphysics - Brahman, soul and matter. In Vedānta, there are three models to discuss the Brahman-soul relationship. They are the: (1) identity (*abheda*) model, according to which Brahman and soul are absolutely

identical as advocated by the Advaita of Śaṅkara; (2) identity and difference (*bhedābheda*) model, according to which Brahman and soul are identical with and different from each other as affirmed by the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja; and (3) difference (*bheda*) model, according to which Brahman and the souls are totally different from each other as advocated by the Dvaita of Madhva.

Here I have discussed the reality of the soul in Viśiṣṭādvaita. The term “*tattva*” means a real entity, which exists and which is not negated by any of the *pramāṇas*. In a technical sense, “*tattva*” also denotes category (*padārtha*), logical as well as metaphysical.

Rāmānuja recognizes three ultimate and real phenomena - God (Brahman), souls (*cit*) and matter (*acit*). For Rāmānuja, matter and soul constitute the body (*śarīra*) of God, and, God is the soul (*śarīrin*) of nature. Our souls are souls with regard to our bodies; but with regard to God, they constitute His body and He is their soul. The inseparable relation between the soul and the body is known as *apṛthak-siddhi*. Similarly, the soul (*cit*) and matter (*acit*) are inseparable from *Īśvara*. The phenomenal organic relation between the body and soul is known as *śarīra-śarīri-sambandha*.

#### **v. Classification of Soul**

Rāmānuja classifies souls under three major heads: (1) the bound (*samsārin*), (2) the freed/liberated (*mukta*), and (3) the eternal (*nitya*).

**(1) The Bound Souls (*Samsārin*)** - Bound souls are of four kinds. They are the: (a) womb-born (*piṇḍaja*), (b) egg-born (*aṇḍaja*), (c) sprout-born (*udbīja*) and (d) sweat-born (*svedaaja*).

(a) Womb-born (*Piṇḍaja*) - Devas and human beings belong to this category. Devas: The heavenly sages such as Nārada, the Brāhmaṇa sages Vaśiṣṭa, Bhṛgu, etc., and the nine Prajāpatis, Pulastya, Marīcī, Dakṣa, Kaśyapa, *et al.*, from these have originated the devas, the guardians of the quarters, the fourteen Indras, the fourteen Manus, the asuras, the Pitṛs, the Siddhas, the Gandharvas, the Kinnaras, the Kimpuruṣas, the Vidyādharas, *et al.*, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Ādityas, the Aśvins, and the Dānavas,

the Yakṣas, the Rākṣasas, the Piśācas, the Guhyakas, etc. These are regarded as the race of Devas.<sup>7</sup> Whereas Brahma, Rudra, etc., Sanaka and Sītā, Draupadi Dhṛṣṭadyumna, etc., Bhūtas Vetālas, etc. are not born of wombs.

- Human beings are varied because of difference in class (*varṇa*) such as *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra*, etc. Due to *avidyā*, *karma*, psychic tendency, hankering for pleasure, the bound souls are subject to the states of womb-life, birth, infancy, waking, sleep, old-age, death, heaven, hell, etc. Bound souls are of two kinds: the scripture-controlled and the scripture-free. The bound souls, who are dependent on their senses for knowledge are the scripture-controlled. The scripture-free includes animals and non-moving phenomena.
- There are two heads under the scripture-controlled: the pleasure-seekers (*bubhukṣus*), and the liberation-seekers (*mumukṣus*). Among these, the pleasure-seekers are those pursuing the three human values of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*. These are of two kinds: those wallowing in *artha* and *kāma*, and those abiding by *dharma*. Devotees of *artha* and *kāma* are the materialists who believe that the body is the Self. The upholders of *dharma* are those engaging in sacrifice, charity, austerity, pilgrimage, etc.
- Those who practise *dharma* are of two kinds: (i) devotees of other deities – these souls worship Brahma, Rudra, Agnī, Indra, *et al.*, and (ii) the devotees of Bhagavān – these souls include the distressed (*ārtha*) who desires to regain one's lost fortune, the enjoyment-seeker (*arthārthī*) who hankers after fortune yet to be attained, and the knowledge-seeker (*jijñāsu*).
- The *mumukṣus* belongs to two groups: the seekers of self-realization (*kaivalya*) and the desiring liberation (*mokṣa*) from *samsāra*. *Kaivalya* involves realizing the Self as different from *prakṛti* through *jñāna-yoga*. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, Self-realization does not involve God-realization.
- The votaries of *mokṣa* belong to two groups: *bhaktas* - the lovers of God and *prapannas* who have totally surrendered themselves to God. The *bhaktas* are those

who have studied the *Vedas* and its auxiliaries (*Vedāṅgas*) and the *Upaniṣads*, and who, through knowledge of rituals and Vedānta, have discerned the nature of God (Brahman) as different from *cit* and *acit*; as essentially of the nature of bliss, infinite and unsurpassable; as opposed to all evil and as embodying within Himself all the auspicious qualities, equipped this with knowledge, one who resorts to *bhakti* with its limbs, which are the means for attaining the Lord, and through that devotion (*bhakti*) develop a longing for the attainment of liberation.

(b) Egg-Born (*Aṇḍaja*): includes creatures like birds, snake, moths, worms, etc.

(c) Sprout-Born (*Udbīja*): are the non-moving phenomena like trees, creepers, bushes, grass, etc. The touch-me-not plant closes up when touched exhibiting consciousness which helps them suck up water, turn towards light, etc. Among the non-sentient phenomena consciousness is meagre.<sup>11</sup>

(d) Sweat-Born (*Svedaja*): includes creatures like bacteria, virus, etc.

**(2) Liberated (*Mukta*)** - According to Rāmānuja, liberated souls (*jīvas*) are those who perform all the daily and occasional duties as ends in themselves. They abstain from doing sins and are devotees of God. Rāmānuja admits that a released soul attains equality with Brahman. But “equality with Brahman” here refers to merely the enjoyment of bliss and not the performance of the cosmic functions done by the Lord. A liberated soul can assume different forms and travel all over the worlds.

**(3) Eternals (*Nityas*)** - The eternals are Ananta, Garuda, Viśvaksena, *et al.*, whose consciousness does not contract, and their actions are in accordance with the will of Lord Nārāyaṇa. Their special duties are determined by God’s will. They too can incarnate on their own will just like the incarnation of God.

## **vi. Bondage and Liberation**

Chapters IV & V will discuss the concepts of bondage and liberation elaborately.

### **c) Knowledge (*Jñāna*)**

Knowledge is an attribute of the soul (*jīva*). It is known as attributive knowledge (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*). Chapter III of this Thesis will discuss knowledge.

### **d) Transcendental Matter (*Nityavibhūti*)**

Transcendental matter is a spiritual substance. It is self-luminous (*svayam-prakāśa*), different from and beyond cosmic matter (*prakṛti*) and its three qualities (*guṇas*), and full of *sattva*. Its other names are *Paramapada*, *Tripādvibhūti*, *Ānandaloka*, etc. *Vaikuṅṭha* is the abode of Lord Viṣṇu, situated within transcendental matter. The bodies of God, the *Nityas* and the *Muktas* are constituted of transcendental matter. The five *Śaktis* - *Sarva*, *Nivṛtti*, *Viśva*, *Puruṣa* and *Parameṣṭin*; and the six attributes knowledge - (*jñāna*), power (*śakti*), strength (*bala*), lordship (*aiśvarya*), energy (*vīrya*), and splendour (*tejas*) are manifest in this eternal realm of *śuddhasattva*.

## **2. Non-Conscious Substance (*Acetana-Dravya*)**

In the above analysis, I have already discussed the two kinds of material substances. Now I will discuss: (a) cosmic matter (*prakṛti*) – one among the six metaphysical categories admitted by Viśiṣṭādvaita. It is a material substance different from God (Brahman) and the soul which are sentient/spiritual substances. Although eternal, it undergoes modifications, and is composed of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is an arena for the souls' (*jīvas*) activities.

### **a) Cosmic Matter (*Prakṛti*)**

Viśiṣṭādvaita discusses the evolution of cosmic matter under twenty three categories - *mahat*, *ahaṅkāra*, *manas*, five organs of knowledge (*jñānendriyas*), five organs of action (*karmendriyas*), five *tanmātras* and five elements (*bhūtas*). Except the five elements, all the other phenomena are supersensory. Therefore, they cannot be cognized through perception. Hence, Sāṅkhya through inference proves the existence of *mahat*, *ahaṅkāra*, *manas*, the five organs of knowledge (*jñānendriyas*), the organs of action (*karmendriyas*), and the five subtle elements (*tanmātras*). In Viśiṣṭādvaita, it is not possible to prove their existence by means of inference because “the validity of inference

depends upon the soundness of the *probans* adopted and the establishment of the logical concomitance (*vyāpti*) between the *prabans* and *prabandum*, as in the case of fire and smoke on the basis of observed facts.”<sup>5</sup>Next we will examine the evolution of the world. This will help us to understand how the world evolved and the souls (*jīvas*) were created, and the status and nature of the creator and governor of these phenomena.

### **i. Definition of Evolution**

Evolution denotes the process through which different kinds of living phenomena are supposed to have arisen and diversified from previous forms during the earth’s history. In biology, evolution denotes the physical/genetic change in a particular phenomenon inherited down by several generations. For some, evolution is a metaphysical equivalent of religion. To criticize evolution, critics feel that it is necessary to present it not as merely a scientific theory, but as a world-view that challenges the world-views of its opponents. For e.g.: "When we examine creation/evolution, we are discussing about beliefs: i.e. religion. The controversy is not religion vs science; but religion vs religion, and the sciences of different religions". During creation/evolution God created cosmos with all its phenomena in the same forms in which they now exist through His will at some point in time. The theory upholds that since creation, the world and all its contents have remained same as they were at the time of creation. There are two theories of creation: (a) absolute creation or creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*); and (b) conditional creation or creation from pre-existing matter. According to absolute creation, God through His Divine power created the world out of nothing. The world and all its phenomena were created through a word of God.

### **ii. Evolution of Cosmic Matter (*Prakṛti*)**

(1) **The Great (*Mahat*)**: This is the first evolute. It is the initial form of an organism existing in the phenomenal world including the intellect, the ego and the mind. The three *guṇas* – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* - characterize it. *Mahat* evolves from a preponderance of *sattva*. As an evolute of *prakṛti*, *mahat* is composed of matter. Its psychological/intellectual aspect is known as intellect (*buddhi*). *Mahat* - a unique faculty of human beings helps a person to distinguish the Self from the not-Self, the



subject/experiencer - object/experienced as different entities because of its inherent association with *sattva*. *Mahat* possesses attributes like reflectivity and luminosity. *Buddhi* is able to reflect the *Puruṣa* because of these qualities. *Ahaṅkāra* also evolves from *mahat*.

**(2) Ego (*Ahaṅkāra*):** The ego too is characterized by three *guṇas*. Based on the *guṇas*, it is classified as *sāttvikāhaṅkāra*, *rājasāhaṅkāra* and *tāmasāhaṅkāra*. From *sāttvikāhaṅkāra* in which *sattva* is predominant, the eleven sense organs including *manas* evolved. From *tāmasāhaṅkāra*, evolve the five subtle elements (*tanmātras*). *Rājasāhaṅkāra* merely is an accessory for *sāttvika* and *tāmasa-ahaṅkāra* to produce their evolutes. From *sāttvikāhaṅkāra/vaikārika*, aided by *rājasāhaṅkāra*, arise the eleven organs (*indriyas*). An *indriya* is a substance having *sāttvikāhaṅkāra* as its material cause. It is of two kinds: sense-organ and motor-organ. A sense-organ denotes the power to diffuse knowledge. There are six sense-organs: mind, ear, eyes, nose, tongue, and skin.

**(3) Mind (*Manas*):** The third evolute is the mind which is accountable for memory. It is located in the heart, and is denoted by terms like *buddhi*, *ahaṅkāra*, *cittā*, etc. It is the cause of bondage and release.

**(4) - (8) Organs of Knowledge (*Jñānendriyas*):** These are the sense-organs of knowledge. They have their own independent functions, e.g., the auditory sense-located in the orifice of the ear can apprehend only sound. The visual sense located in the eyes can apprehend colour only. The olfactory sense located at the tip of the nose can apprehend smell only. The gustatory sense of taste is located at the tip of the tongue. The tactile sense located all over the body as skin can perceive touch only. Touch cannot be sensed in the nails, teeth, hair, etc., due to lack of feelings in these phenomena.

**(9) – (13) Organs of Action (*Karmendriyas*):** These organs of action are also known as the motor-organs. These are the organs of speech, hands, feet, organs of excretion and generation. A motor-organ has a capacity for action. The function of the speech-organ (*vāc*) involves pronunciation of words, letters, sound, etc. The organ of speech is located in eight places - heart, throat, root of the tongue, palate, teeth, lips, nose and roof of palate. In animals speech is absent due to the absence of destiny. The organ for grasping:

does manual work, it is located in the hands (*pāṇi*) and fingers in human beings, and in the trunk for elephants. The organ for walking: facilitates movement. It is located in the legs (*pāda*) of human beings, in the breast of the snakes and in the wings of birds. The organ of excretion (*pāyu*) is located in the anus. It expels the processed food. And, the organ of generation (*upastha*) which is a means for procreation and experiencing sexual-pleasure is located at the procreation organ.

**(14) – (18) Five Subtle Elements (*Tanmātras*):** “*Mātra*” denotes an object of the *indriyas*. These are sound (*śabda*), touch (*sparsā*), colour (*rūpa*), taste (*rasa*) and smell (*gandha*). Like *manas*, the *tanmātras* are of two kinds: substantive and non-substantive. The substantive form of *tanmātras* is created by the *tāmasa* aspect of *ahaṅkāra*. The non-substantive *tanmātras* refer to the attribute of ether (*śabda*), air (*sparsā*), fire (*rūpa*), water (*rasa*), and earth (*gandha*).

**(19) – (23) Five Great Elements (*Pañca-Mahābhūtas*):** The five great elements, are ether (*ākāśa*), air (*vāyu*), light (*tejas*), water (*ap*) and earth (*pṛthvi*) produced through the *tanmātras* from the *tamas* aspect of *ahaṅkāra*.

#### **b) Time (*Kāla*)**

Time is a non-sentient and inert substance devoid of the three *guṇas* - *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. Time which is all pervasive and eternal can be distinguished into three periods as past, present and future. Other terms are “simultaneous”, “long”, “immediate”, etc. “*Nimiṣa*” means the twinkling of the eye as a measure of time. Fifteen *nimiṣas* make one moment (*kastha*), thirty *kasthas* constitute one *kāla*, thirty *kālas* constitute one *muhūrta*. “Day”, “fortnight”, “month”, “season”, “solstice”, “year”, etc., are all indicators of time. Time as an effect, which we experience in daily life, is transient and non-eternal. The months and years of human beings, the four *yugas* of the divine, the birth of Manus, etc., and the *nitya*, *naimittika* and *prākṛta* dissolutions are time. Time is an instrument in God’s cosmic functions. Time is independent in the play-manifestation (*līlā-vibhūti*), but it has no independent status in the eternal-manifestation (*nitya-vibhūti*). In this present chapter, we have to move on to discuss the metaphysical categories of Dvaita.

## B. METAPHYSICAL CATEGORIES OF DVAITA

While Madhva admits the real (*sat*) and the unreal (*asat*), Advaita postulates a third category: the neither real nor unreal (*sad-asad-vilakṣaṇa*). This third category of Advaita is rejected by Madhva, as illogical on the grounds that it violates the law of the excluded middle because there can be no middle ground between the real (*sat*) and the unreal (*asat*). For Madhva, the world is real. Unlike the Advaitin for whom the *Vedas* (*śruti*) alone are a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and the other *pramāṇas* are means of knowledge only for the sake of courtesy (*upacāra*), for Madhva all the sources of knowledge have equal validity. Therefore, knowledge got through perception (*pratyakṣa*) cannot be falsified by scriptural-knowledge (*śabda-jñāna*) because scriptural-knowledge itself is dependent on perception. Madhva specifies three criteria fulfilling which any phenomenon can be classified as real.

- An object is real if it can be known through a means of knowledge (*pramiti- viṣayatva*). The *pramāṇa* itself proves the reality of the world. All the *pramāṇas* function under the unerring principle of *sāksin*. Like the other schools of Vedānta and Mīmāṃsā, Dvaita upholds that all cognitions (*jñāna*) have self-validity (*svataḥ-prāmāṇya*) and that error is extrinsic (*parataḥ- aprāmāṇya-vāda*).
- Reality is correlated with time and space (*deśa-kāla-sambandhitva*). For Madhva, it is enough if an object exists in space and time even for a short period or occupies very little space. The object need not be eternal (*nitya*) or all-pervasive (*vibhu*) to be a real. Even illusory objects are real, e.g. rope-snake and dream-objects.
- An object is real if it has practical value (*artha-kriyā-kāritva*). The world is real because it has practical value. The silver seen in the nacre is illusory (*mithyā*) because although it is perceived and exists in space and time, it does not have any practical value; e.g. water seen in a mirage is real because it is perceived and exists in space and time. But it is illusory because it does not have practical value since it cannot be drunk to satiate the thirst of a person.

Based on his three criteria for reality, Madhva classifies all the existents under ten categories. Among these, the first nine categories are called positive categories (*bhāva-padārthās*), viz., substance (*dravya*), quality (*guṇa*), action (*karma*), class-character (*samavāya*), particularity (*viśeṣa*), qualified (*viśiṣṭa*), whole (*amśin*), power (*śakti*) and similarity (*sādrśya*). The tenth category non-existences (*abhāvas*) is a negative category (*abhāva-padārthā*). Among the ten categories, the first five and last are repetitions of the seven metaphysical categories of Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika. Madhva rejects inherence (*samavāya*) as an independent category, unlike Nyāya and adds four more categories to arrive at ten metaphysical categories.

According to Madhva, the first positive metaphysical category is a substance (*dravya*). For Madhva, substance is the locus of qualities and actions, a view admitted by many realistic systems in Indian philosophy. He posits twenty substances, classified under two major heads 1. Conscious substances (*cetana-dravya*) - are three; viz., a) GOD (Lord Viṣṇu), b) Laksmi and c) Soul (*jīva*) and 2. Non-conscious substances (*acetana-dravya*): these are seventeen in number, viz., a) space (*ākāśa*), b) cosmic-matter (*prakṛti*), c) – d) three qualities (*guṇatrayas*) - *sattva, rajas & tamas*; f) the great (*mahat*), g) ego (*ahaṅkāra*), h) intellect (*buddhi*), i) mind (*manas*), j) sense-organs (*indriyas*), k) object of the sense-organs (*tanmātras*), l) elements (*bhūtas*) m) the cosmic egg (*brahmāṇḍa*), n) Ignorance (*avidyā*), o) speech (*varṇa*), p) darkness (*timira*), q) mental-impression (*vāsanas*), r) time (*kāla*) and s) reflection (*pratibimba*).

- **Quality (*guṇa*):** This is of two kinds: the sentient - based on pleasure, pain, etc.; and the non-sentient - based on colour, action etc.
- **Action (*karma*):** (1) Moral Actions: These are of two kinds the prescribed and the prohibited. Moral actions belong exclusively to sentient phenomena. Actions motivated by desire (*kāmya-karmas*) come under prescribed actions (*vidhis*). Actions done to please God are known as *akāmya*. (2) Non-Moral Actions: This belongs to the sentient and the non-sentient phenomenon. Expansion, contraction, going up or going down, these are non-moral actions because they cannot be judged

as bad/good. (3) Supra-Moral Actions: Creation and dissolution, and the actions of the liberated souls are regarded as supra moral actions.

- **Universality (*sāmānya*):** This refers to the feature of a “whole class”. universality (*sāmānya*) is inherent: every member of the class, e.g. cowness exists in every cow.
- **Speciality (*viśeṣa*):** Every substance possesses qualities. Qualities can also exist by themselves. Hence, the relation between a substance and its quality is regarded as one of identity, e.g. a coin and its weight. Speciality is a peculiar capacity in a substance through which we discern a substance and its quality as different from one another. God who has an infinite number of attributes, has an infinite number of *viśeṣas*. *Viśeṣa* which is merely another name for substance denotes its wonderful capacity to show distinctions within itself.
- **Specified (*viśiṣṭa*):** A substance and its quality are distinguished by speciality (*viśeṣa*). In the specified (*viśiṣṭa*) these are taken together, e.g. a blue lotus is other than the lotus as such and blueness as such.
- **Whole (*aṁśa*):** is the whole made up of parts (*aṁśas*).
- **Power (*śakti*):** These are four in number: (1) *Deva-śakti* of God also known as unthinkable power (*acintya-śakti*) through which God manifests Himself at different places simultaneously to different devotees; (2) *Ādheya-śakti* is power introduced into an idol through the consecration ceremony; (3) *Sahaja-śakti* – is inherent/natural power of sentient or non-sentient phenomenon to produce effects from a cause; and (4) *Pada-śakti* – is word-power through which a word conveys meaning.
- **Similarity (*sādrśya*):** For Madhva similarity is a category. This is of two kinds: eternal and non-eternal. Similarity and its locus are eternal as seen in the similarity between the liberated souls and Brahman. Similarity and its locus are non-eternal, e.g., similarity between a cow and a *gavaya*.

The tenth is a negative category (*abhāva-padārtha*). This category includes the absence of anything which is not real. Among the positive categories the first category

substance (*dravya*) is the substratum on which the other eight are dependent. And among the twenty substances, Brahman alone is an independent substance.

➤ **Negative Category (*abhāva-padārtha*):** Non-existence (*abhāva*): Based on experience, Madhva accepts non-existence (*abhāva*) as a category. Perception of non-existence (*abhāva*) is possible; otherwise we cannot speak about non-existence. But perception of existence and non-existence are not the same. Madhva recognizes three kinds of non-existence (*abhāva*). (1) Prior Non-Existence (*Prāg-abhāva*) – non-existence of a phenomenon before its creation. It is beginningless (*anādi*) but has an end (*sa anta*), e.g. a pot made by a potter. Here the non-existence of the pot is beginningless before it was made but comes to an end when the pot is made. (2) Posterior Non-Existence: (*Pradhvamsābhāva*) –The non-existence of an object after its destruction has a beginning but no end. If we break the pot it has a beginning (*sa ādi*) but no end (*an anta*). (3) Total non-existence (*Atyantābhāva*) – This kind of non-existence has no beginning (*anādi*) and no end (*ananta*), e.g. we cannot extract oil from sand. Oil exists in an oil seed but not in sand.

## 1. Conscious Substances (*Cetana-Dravya*)

### a) God (Viṣṇu)

Dvaita is a theistic system because it accepts God. Madhva declares that Lord Viṣṇu is the first among the twenty substances. For Madhva, Viṣṇu, Lakṣmī and soul are sentient substances, (*cetana-dravyas*). While God alone is an independent substance, all the other phenomena are dependent on God. Theistic philosophy differs from absolutistic philosophy because theism admits God as the supreme reality. But God alone is not real. The soul and the world are also real, but they are different from, dependent on and subservient to God. God possesses a personality and has infinite attributes in an infinite degree. He is not only the creator of the world from material other than Himself, but also the controller of the world and the destinies of the souls. As their creator and controller, God becomes an object of worship and meditation. The Dvaita conception of God incorporates all these features.

## **i. Nature of God**

Madhva recognizes two kinds of realities: independent (*svatantra*) and dependent (*paratantra*). He admits that God is the only independent reality (*svatantra-tattva*) and that the world and souls are absolutely dependent on God for their creation, existence, knowledge and bliss. God is the supreme reality worthy of our love and adoration. As an independent reality, God is different from the dependent souls and matter. He is free from all the imperfections (*daśas*) whereas the souls and world are tainted by imperfections. According to Jayatīrtha, an independent is that which can exist, know and act on its own will without needing the help of another. In Sanskrit, it says “*svarūpa-pramiti-pravṛtti-lakṣaṇa-sattā-traividya para-anapekṣam svatantram*” God alone has an independent nature and not any other phenomenon. “Self-determination” (*svecchanusāritva*) is a word illustrating God’s independence. The soul and the world are eternal but this does not mean that they are independent. According to Dvaita, the supreme of God is not only transcendent, but also immanent. God enters into *prakṛti*, energizes it, and transforms it in various ways to enable it assume many forms and controls all such modifications.

## **ii. Attributes of God**

Madhva’s conception of God emphasizes two aspects of Divinity – the perfection of Being (*sarvagūṇapūrṇatvam*) and freedom from all limitations (*sarva doṣa- gandha-vidhūrātvam*). These two aspects comprehend and exhaust all that is great and good in the concept of God - the highest form of perfection conceivable by human intelligence. The ideas of transcendence and infinite bliss of God are also emphasized by Madhva in his philosophy. Perfection of the divine has to be viewed in terms of an unlimited pervasion in time, space and fullness of the attributes.

## **iii. Forms and Functions of God**

In his commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra*, Madhva identifies eight functions of God: creation, sustenance, regulation, dissolution, control and obscuration in relation to the world (*acit*); and enlightenment, bondage and liberation in relation to the souls (*jīvas*). Creation (*sṛṣṭī*), sustentation (*sthiti*) and dissolution (*samhāra*) are usually regarded as the functions of the Brahma, Viṣṇu and Siva respectively as described in the *Itihāsas* and the

*Purāṇas*. But, according to Madhva, the above three functions belong to Lord Nārāyaṇa. Moreover, God is only the efficient cause (*nimitta-kāraṇa*) of the world not the material cause (*upādāna-kāraṇa*) of creation as admitted by Viśiṣṭādvaita and Advaita.

The souls are not only dependent on God for their ignorance and bondage, but also for their knowledge and liberation. Through God's grace (*prasāda*) a soul is liberated from bondage (*bandha*). Madhva acknowledges that *māyā* is real, and considers it as a mysterious power of God. God creates, sustains, and dissolves the world and causes delusion/ignorance in the soul through *māyā*.

#### **vi. Refutation of Nirguṇa-Brahman**

Madhva criticizes Śaṅkara's concept of Nirguṇa-Brahman; first of all, on the basis of qualities. According to Madhva, Brahman is *saguṇa* because He is full of qualities (*guṇas*), He is also the one and only first independent substance. Many *Upaniṣadic* texts state that Brahman is endowed with qualities/attributes. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* declares that Brahman is great and self-effulgent whereas the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* states that Brahman is endowed with creative activity, pure desires, etc. However, the *Smṛtis* too mention about Saguṇa-Brahman. The Nirguṇa-Brahman of Advaita is stated only once in one text of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*. Madhva states that the term Nirguṇa-Brahman does not mean Brahman without qualities; it only means that Brahman is without blemishes (*doṣas*). Qualities such as “being one”, “hidden in all”, “all-pervading”, “the inner self of all”, “the controller of all actions” etc. are transcendent/divine qualities. “*Nirguṇa*” only means that Brahman is free from the empirical limitations which are effects of *prakṛti*.

According to Prof. Hirianna, the Dvaita criticism of *Nirguṇa-Brahman* is based on a misunderstanding of Advaita. The Advaitin admits that a substance cannot exist without attributes. But what is denied by the Advaitin are the attributes of Brahman because Brahman is spiritual and not a material substance to have attributes.

Secondly, Madhva rejects Nirguṇa-Brahman on the basis of knowability. Every case of knowledge exhibits a subject-object distinction. According to Advaita, Brahman is not an object of knowledge. If it is known as the subject in the soul (*jīva*); then, it



becomes *Saguṇa* as a knowable; therefore, Brahman is not *nirguṇa*. If *Nirguṇa*-Brahman is unknowable, then the Advaita view is similar to Buddhist agnosticism. But, according to Dvaita, Brahman is not beyond our thought. Since the *jīva*'s capacity for knowledge is limited, the *jīva* can only apprehend but not comprehend Brahman!

According to Advaita, although Brahman transcends the mind its existence cannot be doubted because Brahman can be experienced/ realized as one's Self.

## **b) Lakṣmī**

In the list of the ten metaphysical categories, Goddess "Lakṣmī" who is eternally related with Brahman as His consort is the second substance. She is dependent only on Brahman but independent of everything else.

## **c) Soul (*Jīva*)**

The soul (*jīva*) is the third substance among the metaphysical categories of Dvaita. It is the locus of intelligence/consciousness and associated with a physical body constituted of the five elements - earth, water, fire, air and ether. The *jīva*'s physical body is known as the *bhautika-sarīra*. According to Dvaita, the souls are not only centres of consciousness but are also the locus of ignorance (*avidyā*), delusion (*moha*), fear (*bhaya*), and pain (*duḥkha*), etc.

### **i. Definition of Soul**

According to Madhva, the soul is defined as endowed with the powers of knowership (*jñātr̥tva*), doership (*kart̥tva*) and enjoyership (*bhoktr̥tva*), possesses a form, and is constituted of bliss and consciousness. But, it is different from the physical body and is revealed as the "I" to the subject of knowledge by the witnessing-consciousness (*sākṣin*).

### **ii. Nature of Soul**

**(1) Eternal (*Nitya*):** Like Rāmānuja, Madhva too upholds that the souls are eternal, different from and dependent on God for their existence and bliss. For Madhva, differences (*bhedas*) are real and eternal. The soul is the knower (*jñātā*) of knowledge,

the doer (*kartā*) of action, and the enjoyer (*bhoktā*) of fruits of action. This view is rejected by Advaita because these functions are superimpositions (*adhyāsa*) made on the Self which is no other than Brahman. But, Dvaita declares that distinctions such as subject-object, agent-action, and enjoyer-enjoyed are all real!

**(2) Self-luminous (*Svayam-prakāśa*):** According to Madhva, the soul can know itself because we say “I know myself”. If the soul could not know itself, then the soul will be like a non-sentient object - e.g. clay, which cannot know itself. If the Self can know itself, then it is fallacious because one and the same Self cannot be both the subject and the object of knowledge. Through its peculiar power called *viśeṣa*, a soul can distinguish between itself as the subject and also as the object of knowledge.

**(3) Atomic Size (*Aṇutva*):** The soul (*jīva*) is atomic in size (*aṇu-parimāṇa*). The knowledge possessed by the soul is limited because of *avidyā* - the cause of its bondage.

**(4) Doer (*Kartā*) and Enjoyer (*Bhoktā*):** For Madhva, the soul is the knowing subject (*jñātā*), the doer (*kartā*) of action, and also the enjoyer (*bhoktā*) of the fruits of action.

**(5) God-Soul Relation:** According to Madhva, matter has existence (*sat*) but not consciousness (*cit*) and bliss (*ānanda*) as because material objects are non-sentient substances (*acetana-dravya*). But, God and soul possess *cit* and *ānanda* because they are conscious-substances (*cetana-dravyas*). While God’s *sat-cit-ānanda* are infinite and independent in nature, the souls’ *sat-cit-ānanda* are finite and God-dependent in nature. Therefore, the soul is similar to God only in kind and not in degree. It occupies subtle and gross bodies which are products of *prakṛti*.

**(6) Plurality of Souls:** According to Madhva, the soul’s (*jīvas*) are infinite in number.

**(7) Soul as Consciousness:** Madhva postulates five great differences (*panca mahā bhedas*): difference between God and soul, God and matter, souls and matter, among souls, and among material objects. Madhva criticizes that Cārvāka notion of consciousness. According to Cārvāka, Consciousness is a by-product of the combination of elements, a view criticised by Śrī Vādirājatīrtha.

**(8) Soul is Blissful:** Madhva, like the other Vedānta systems, recognizes that the soul is blissful.

“*Bhavatyevānandādi rūpo jīvah ..... Tadabhivyaktyartham ca mumukṣūnām prayatnopapatteriti bhāvaḥ. Na cāvaraṇam Anupāpattiḥ. Jñānabhāvātirikta tannimittāvidyābhyupagamāt.*”<sup>6</sup>

The bliss nature of soul is revealed to him through the Benediction of *Īśvara*. Quite similar to this is the Madhva conception that the conscious character of the soul is self-illuminating and that this too remains unmanifested to the *jīva* due to the obstruction caused by the veil of ignorance. According to Madhva, the above text clearly explains that the essential nature of *jīvāman* is consciousness and bliss.

#### **iv. Difference and Dependence**

A remarkable feature of Dvaita is its unique important concept of difference (*bheda*). There are five great differences posited by Dvaita (*pañca mahā-bhedas*): (1) difference between God and soul (2) difference between God and matter (3) difference between soul and matter (4) difference between souls, and (5) difference between material objects. The Post-Śāṅkara Advaitins criticize these differences and say that these are not ultimately real. But for Madhva these differences are not only real but also eternal, i.e. they exist not only in bondage but also remain after liberation.

According to Madhva, everything is dependent on God - the only independent reality (*svatantra-tattva*). The soul is different from God, but the difference is unlike that of matter. The soul has consciousness and bliss like God, but of a much lower degree. Dvaita considers the soul as a reflection (*pratibimba*) of God – the original (*bimba*). The soul’s ignorance and bondage, and also its knowledge and liberation are caused by God. According to Dvaita, the soul exists only to reveal the grandeur of God. Matter is non-sentient (*jaḍa*), and absolutely different from God. It has only existence and activity, and is entirely dependent on Brahman for these attributes. Matter is not a part of God but it is separate from Him.

## v. Classification of Soul

Madhva proffers a trifold classification (*svarūpa-traividhya*) of souls: (1) souls fit for liberation (*mukti-yogyā*) – this category includes the celestials, the sages and the spiritually advanced human beings because they are predominated by *sattva*; (2) souls unfit for liberation (*nitya-samsārin*) – these souls continuously undergo birth and death because they are predominated by *rajas* and also experience pleasure and pain; and (3) souls condemned to forever suffer in hell (*tamoyogyā*) because they are evil-natured due to preponderance of *tamas*.

## 2. Non-Conscious Substances (*Acetana-Dravya*)

### a) Space (*Ākāśa*)

Space is all-pervasive. During creation (*śṛṣṭi*) and dissolution (*pralaya*), space does not undergo any transformation. Therefore, it is an eternal (*nitya*). According to Madhva, space is perceived by the *sākṣin*. If space was absent, all the objects of the world have got jumbled together and there would not have been any relations like above, below, north, south, etc.<sup>7</sup>

### b) Cosmic Matter (*Prakṛti*)

Cosmic matter is directly or indirectly the cause of the cosmos. The desire of the Lord to create the world initiates a change - transformation resulting in the production of phenomena. The first evolutes are time (*kāla*) and the three *guṇas*. Subsequently, arise *mahat*, *ahaṅkāra*, etc. Thus, to time and the three *guṇas* its material-causality is direct (*sākṣāt*) whereas to *mahat*, etc., it is indirect (*paramaparayā*), i.e. it is the material-cause of all the non-sentient substances in the world.

### c) Three Qualities (*Guṇatraya*)

*Guṇatraya* denotes a collection of the three *guṇas* - *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. During creation, God (*ParamĀtman*) desiring to create the world, created *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* from *prakṛti* which in their turn produce *mahat*, *ahaṅkāra*, etc. Creation (*śṛṣṭi*) is the emergence of the three *guṇas* from *Prakṛti*. When these *guṇas* resolve into a

homogeneous state and *prakṛti* alone remains in a state of perfect equilibrium, it is known as dissolution (*praḷaya*).

**d) Great (*Mahat*)**

Great (*mahat*) arises directly from the three *guṇas* which are its material cause. The ratio between *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* during the creation of *mahat* is 10:1:1; and during dissolution *mahat* resolves into the three *guṇas*. The proportion of the resulting *guṇas* remains the same.

**f) Ego (*Ahaṅkara*)**

Ego arises from the *tamas* aspect of *mahat*. *Ahaṅkāra* consists of 10 units of *sattva*, 1 unit of *rajas* and 1/10 unit of *tamas*. *Vaikārika*, *Rājasa* and *Tāmasa* are the three kinds of *ahaṅkāra*.

**g) Intellect (*Buddhi*)**

Like *ahaṅkāra*, *buddhi* arises from *mahat*. Dvaita admits two kinds of *buddhi* – one is substance and the other is an attribute. The attributive nature of *buddhi* is called knowledge (*jñāna*). What arises from *ahaṅkāra* is the substantive form of *buddhi* and not *jñāna* i.e., the attributive form of *buddhi*.

**h) Mind (*Manas*)**

Mind too is also of two kinds - substantive (*tattvarūpa*) and non-substantive. The substance form of *manas* is product of the *Vaikārika* aspect of *ahaṅkāra*. The non-substantive -*manas*, is a kind of *indriya* which is eternal and also non-eternal. The *sākṣin* which is the real nature (*svarūpa*) of the *jīva* is an eternal aspect of the non-substantive *manas* or *indriya*. The non-eternal form of the non-substantive-*manas* is something external to the real nature of the *jīva*. The eternal and the non-eternal forms of *manas* are different. The eternal form constitutes the essence of the *jīva* and the non-eternal form is external to it.

Dvaita admits five kinds of the non-eternal *manas* - *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaṅkāra*, *citta* and *cetana*. The functions of *manas* include doubting, *buddhi* is the principle of

discernment, *ahaṅkāra* is the ego, *citta* is the cause of memory and *cetana* is a special aspect of consciousness that reveals itself in the power of work or an action.

The above description shows that in Dvaita the interpretation of *ahaṅkāra*, *buddhi*, and *manas* as substances is different. Instead of being related with a living phenomenon (*jīva*), they represent the successive states of evolution from *prakṛti*. The principles - *mana*, *buddhi*, *citta*, *ahaṅkāra* and *cetana* that constitute the psychic apparatus of a human being are only products/effects/evolutes of *manas*.

#### **i) Sense-Organ (*Indriya*)**

A sense-organ is defined as that which has the power to flow towards its object (*viṣaya*).<sup>8</sup> Madhva gives a trifold classification of the *indriyas*. They are: the substantive and the non-substantive; the cognitive and conative; and the eternal and non-eternal. The cognitive sense-organs are known as the *jñānendriyas*, and conative sense-organs are the *karmendriyas*. The cognitive and conative senses are substantive, non-eternal in nature and products of the “*taijasa*” aspect of *ahaṅkāra*. The *sākṣin* is the only eternal sense-organ. It is substantive in nature and the essence of the *jīva*. Other than the *sākṣin*, the *indriyas* of the Lord, Goddess Mahālakṣmī and the liberated souls are also eternal in nature.

#### **j) Object of Sense-organs (*Tanmātras*)**

“*Mātra*” means an “object of the *indriyas*”. They are *śabda*, *sparśa*, *rūpa*, *rasa* and *gandha*. Like *manas*, the *tanmātras* too are of two kinds - substantive and non-substantive. From the *tāmasa* aspect of *ahaṅkāra* evolve the substantive form of *tanmātras*. The non-substantive *tanmātras* are the attributes of ether, air, fire, water and earth which are *śabda*, *sparśa*, *rūpa*, *rasa* and *gandha* respectively.

#### **k) Elements (*Bhūtas*)**

Madhva accepts five elements (*bhūtas*), ether (*ākāśa*), air (*vāyu*), light (*tejas*), water (*ap*) and (*prthvī*) which are produced through the *tanmātras* from the *tamas* aspect of *ahaṅkāra*.

### **l) The Cosmic Egg (*Brahmāṇḍa*)**

The cosmic-egg is a related whole of individual units. Madhva regards the related whole as always different from and greater than the individual components.

### **m) Ignorance (*Avidyā*)**

Ignorance (*avidyā*) is created by Brahman at the time of creation from His own body. *Tamas* is the material cause of *avidyā*, which exists in the five elements. *Moha*, *Mahā-moha*, *Tamiśra*, *Andhatamiśra* and *Tanah* are the five stages of *avidyā*. There are four kinds of *avidyā*: (1) *Jīvacchādika*, (2) *Paramacchādika*, (3) *Saivala* and (4) *Māyā*. These four kinds of *avidyā* are discussed in detail in Chapter IV of this Thesis.

### **n) Speech Sound (*Varṇa*)**

For Madhva, speech sounds (*varṇas*) are substances. *Varṇa* is all-pervasive, beginningless and eternal. The *varṇas* are fifty-one in number. According to Nyāya, *varṇa* is a special attribute of *ākāśa*. But for Madhva, *varṇa* is a substance because it all-pervasive like *ākāśa*.<sup>9</sup> A substance has attributes. *Varṇa* is a substance because pervasiveness is its attribute.

### **o) Darkness (*Timira*)**

It is considered as a substance because it is experienced/seen as a moving blue-darkness, which is not an illusion but a fact because it is never contradicted in experience. In this experience, we perceive darkness as a quality (blueness) and an activity (movement) that subsists in it. Darkness is both - the substratum and a substance because it is a substratum of blueness and movement.

### **p) Mental Impressions (*Vāsanās*)**

Mental-impressions are the material-cause of dreams and dream-objects. For Madhva, dreams are real and are they created by the Lord as punishment/reward of *karmas*.

**q) Time (*Kāla*)**

*Kāla* is the idea of duration. According to Madhva, time is non-eternal. It has a beginning and an end, whereas for *Nyāya* time is eternal. According to Madhva, time is a product of *prakṛti* - its material cause. The famous verse of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*:

*Dravyam karma ca kālasca svabhavo jīva eva ca /  
Yadanugrahatas santi na santiyadupekṣaya //*

Which is often quoted by Madhva, describes clearly the eternal dependence of eternal principles like *jīva*, *time*, the intrinsic nature of substances, etc., on the eternal Will and pleasure of God.<sup>10</sup>

**r) Reflection (*Pratibimba*)**

It is defined as that which is similar to and inseparable from the “object reflected” (*bimba*). For Madhva, there are two kinds of reflection: eternal and non-eternal. All *jīvas* are eternal reflections of God, and the reflection of our face in a mirror and water are non-eternal reflections because the reflecting medium – *jīva* is eternal, whereas the mirror and water are non-eternal. Just as the rainbow (*indrācāpa*) is both a reflection of light in the atmospheric water-drops and also the reflecting medium for water, so also the *jīva* is both an eternal mediumless reflection (*nirupādhika-pratibimba*) of Brahman – the original (*bimba*) and a reflecting medium because it is a conscious substance.



## CHAPTER III

### CONSCIOUSNESS IN VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA AND DVAITA

Consciousness (*caitanya*) is a very important concept in Western as well as Indian philosophy. In Western philosophy, scientific approach is used to understand consciousness whereas Indian philosophy uses a spiritualistic approach. In the spiritualistic approach, for the Indian philosophers, the word "consciousness" implies the relationship between the mind and the world. There is no one definition for consciousness (*caitanya*). Many intellectuals, philosophers, scientists belonging to various disciplines and religious practitioners have been investigating consciousness (*caitanya*) in their own unique ways.

This Chapter will analyse Consciousness in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita using epistemology for understanding of consciousness the definition and nature of consciousness in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita, and other schools of Indian philosophy. Very often consciousness is confused with knowledge (*jñāna*) because Indian philosophers the term “consciousness” to refer to consciousness (*caitanya*) as well as knowledge. Before discussing the Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita views, we should have a clear understanding of consciousness (*caitanya*) and knowledge (*jñāna*).

#### A. CONSCIOUSNESS (CAITANYA)

##### 1. What is Consciousness

The concept of consciousness (*caitanya*) is been analyzed and explored in depth by every school of Indian philosophy. My Thesis will mainly focus on a comparative study of consciousness (*caitanya*) according to Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. According to the *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, Brahman is consciousness (*prajñānam brahma*).<sup>1</sup>

Advaita defines Brahman as “*Sat-Cit-Ānanda*”, where in “*Sat*” means “existence/reality/being”, “*Cit*” means “consciousness/knowledge”, and “*Ānanda*” means “Bliss”. According to Advaita, existence, consciousness and bliss are not attributes (*guṇas*) of Brahman but the very nature (*svarūpa*) of Brahman. According to

Yajnavalkya Brahman is consciousness (*cit*) and Brahman/Ātman, is the knowing subject within us.

According to Emmet Fox, life is consciousness. Consciousness is always conscious of something, and cannot function in a vacuum. Consciousness is generally defined as a “quality or state of awareness of an external object or something within oneself.”<sup>2</sup> It has been defined as: “Sentience, awareness, subjectivity, the ability to experience or to feel, wakefulness, having a sense of selfhood, and the executive control system of the mind.”<sup>3</sup>

According to David Papineau, sometimes consciousness is explained as the difference between being awake and being asleep. But this is not right. Dreams are sequences of conscious experiences and are usually less coherent than waking experiences. Consciousness is what we lose when we are in dreamless sleep or under the effect an anesthesia.

Consciousness is variously defined as subjective experience/awareness, the ability to experience “feel”, wakefulness, the understanding of the concept “self”, or the executive control system of mind. It is a comprehensive term that refers to a variety of mental phenomena. Although human beings know what every day experiences are, consciousness defies definition.

Schneider observes “Anything that we are aware of at a given moment forms part of our consciousness, making conscious experience at once the most familiar and most mysterious aspect of our lives.”<sup>4</sup>

## **2. Analysis of the Word “Consciousness”**

The word “conscious” is derived from Latin “*Consciūs*” meaning both “having joint or common knowledge with another, privy to, cognizant of” and conscious to oneself. A related word is “*conscientia*”, which primarily means moral conscience. In the literal sense, “*conscientia*” means knowledge-with, that is, shared knowledge. This etymological analysis is closely related to Viśiṣṭādvaita view of consciousness (*caitanya*).

Consciousness is a quality of the mind, generally constituted of important features such as subjectivity, self-awareness, sentience, sapience, and the ability to perceive the relationship between oneself and one's environment.

### 3. Nature of Consciousness

The understanding of Consciousness in the disciplines of philosophy and theology in ancient period was not satisfactory one. Every system of Indian philosophy recognizes the complex nature of consciousness. The main questions are raised with regard to consciousness are:

- Does consciousness have a form (*sā-kāra*) or is it formless (*nir-ākara*)?
- Is consciousness self-revealing (*sva-prakāśa*) or revealed by another (*para-prakāśa*)?
- Is consciousness object-laden (*sa-viśaya*) or object-less (*nir-viśaya*)?
- Is consciousness a substance (*dravya*), a quality (*guṇa*), or an action (*karma*)?
- Does consciousness have self-validity (*svataḥ-prāmāṇya*) or is it validated by another (*parataḥ-prāmāṇya*)?

Every question is complex and towards analysing of each of these are as every school of Indian philosophy has made much contribution. Instead of reviewing the discussion in their varied details, I will pick out and dwell on the concept of consciousness (*caitanya*) in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita Vedānta, those especially which appear as philosophically significant for a better understanding of consciousness (*caitanya*).

### 4. Characteristics of Consciousness

The following are the characteristics of consciousness (*caitanya*).

- ❖ Consciousness (*caitanya*) makes life meaningful. It is regarded as a phenomenon that abides with us right from birth to death at the embodied level.
- ❖ It has no parts and is a single indivisible whole.
- ❖ It cannot be transplanted like any other physical organ of the human body.

- ❖ Its function appears dimmed but not totally extinguished during sickness of the physical body.
- ❖ It makes us know and be aware of our individuality and in the external world.
- ❖ The loss of awareness and sleeplessness requires medical treatment.
- ❖ The unity of awareness and experience are brought about by consciousness (*caitanya*). The senses of perception (*pratyakṣa*), the mind (*manas*), the intellect (*buddhi*), and memory etc., are coordinated *via* consciousness.
- ❖ Consciousness does not grow old with age but the physical body does ages. Awareness is sometimes impaired by amnesia, senility and old age.
- ❖ We cannot lose our consciousness in the weightless state of zero gravity, and report to astronauts our experience in space. These experiences are similar to the out-of-body experiences suggested by the Para-psychologists and the sufferers who have undergone the death state.
- ❖ Without consciousness life is unimaginable. Existence and consciousness are interrelated. Consciousness is distinguishable and inalienable from life.
- ❖ States of consciousness are drowsiness, sleep, waking state. Existence without consciousness-death is unimaginable.
- ❖ One's will power is an aspect of consciousness (*caitanya*). The will to live, succeed, resist temptations, etc., arise from consciousness.
- ❖ Acquisition of knowledge is possible only through consciousness.

Some of these features of consciousness are adopted/rejected by some schools of philosophy. The acceptance/rejection of these features varies with their views about consciousness. To rectify a few misconceptions about consciousness, it is very important to understand what consciousness is/is not:

- Consciousness cannot be perceived by the senses just as physical objects perceived by the senses. The senses function due to the presence of consciousness.

- Consciousness is not a by-product of the brain or mind. The senses (*indriyas*), mind (*manas*), intellect (*jñāna*), memory (*smṛti*) and brain to operates because of the existence of consciousness.
- Consciousness and life are not identical. Life will become vegetative without recognition and awareness, e.g. Coma.
- Consciousness is not affected by old age.
- Consciousness (*caitanya*) is not affected by any physical handicaps or mental derangement.

## 5. Indian Philosophy Views on Consciousness

### a) Heterodox (*Nāstika*) Tradition

There are problems in characterizing consciousness (*caitanya*) because there is no clear definition of consciousness, and the definition changes due to changing frameworks. For instance, Cārvāka upholds that consciousness arises from a combination of elements *viz.*, earth (*ākāśa*), water (*jala*), fire (*tejas*) and air (*vāyu*). Indeed, even this school has a distinctive perspective about consciousness. After death, consciousness disappears due to changes in the material aggregates constituting the physical body.

Jains upholds that consciousness is the essence of the soul.<sup>5</sup> It is always present in the soul (*jīva*), but its nature and degree can vary. According to Buddhism, there is no particular consciousness.

### b) Orthodox (*Āstika*) Tradition

Nyāya - Vaiśeṣika and Sāṅkhya - Yoga proposes their own views about consciousness. According to Nyāya - Vaiśeṣika, consciousness (*caitanya*) is an attribute of the Self. Consciousness is only an adventitious or accidental attribute of the Self and not its essential and inseparable attribute. In the Self's disembodied condition, the Self will have no consciousness.<sup>6</sup>

According to Sāṅkhya - Yoga, consciousness is the soul's very essence and not a mere quality of the Self. Nor should we say that the Self is a blissful consciousness

(*ānanda svarūpa*). The self is the transcendent subject. The light of the self's consciousness ever remains the same, although the objects of knowledge may change and succeed one another. This Chapter will examine the Vedānta concept of consciousness in the epistemological perspective very elaborately.

## **B. KNOWLEDGE (*Jñāna*)**

Knowledge (*jñāna*) is awareness or understanding of someone /something - facts, information, descriptions or skills acquired through experience, education or discovery.

### **1. Definition of Knowledge**

In Sanskrit “*jñāna*” means “cognition”. The cognition can be true, false or doubtful. But the word “*pramā*” means only true-/valid-cognition or knowledge (*samyak-jñāna*) as different from a false one (*mithyā-jñāna*). Knowledge is synonym for “*pramā*”, generally defined as a cognition having two features - truth (*abādhitatva/yathārthatva*) and novelty (*anadhigatatva*).<sup>7</sup>

### **2. Truth (*abādhitatva*) and Novelty (*anadhigatatva*)**

As already stated, truth and novelty are the two characteristics of knowledge (*pramā*). There are four different views about truth.

- (1) Knowledge is true if it has practical value (*artha-kriyā-kāritva*). A true cognition is that which reveals an object that serves some purpose (*artha/prayojana*) or leads to the achievement of some end, or which favours a successful volition (*pravṛtti-anukūla*). This view resembles the pragmatic theory of the West. Buddhists and other philosophers also support it.
- (2) According to Nyāya, true cognition reveals an object as it is where it is (*yathārtha*). Therefore, true knowledge is defined as that which informs us about the existence of something in a place where it really exists, or which predicates of something a nature really possessed by it. This view resembles the correspondence theory of the Western realists.

- (3) Many philosophers regard truth as a coherence/harmony of experience (*samvāda/samvāditva*). True knowledge, according to this view is that which coheres with other experiences. This view is similar to the coherence theory of the West.
- (4) Advaita Vedānta, favours a fourth view according to which valid cognition/knowledge is that whose object/content (*viśaya*) is non-contradicted (*abādhita*).

Novelty (*apūrvatā*) is a second feature of knowledge (*pramā*). In addition to being true, knowledge should also reveal as its content something not known before (*anadhigata*). On this issue, there are differences among philosophers. Some (e.g. Mīmāṃsakas)<sup>8</sup> consider it as an essential part of the differentia of knowledge; others<sup>9</sup> think that it unnecessarily limits the scope of knowledge. The Vedāntins are indifferent towards this controversy and refuse to take sides.<sup>10</sup> The controversy is about whether memory (*smṛti*) is knowledge (*jñāna*) or not. If truth is a feature of knowledge; then memory, because it is not contradicted, will become knowledge. But, there is a peculiarity about memory that requires special consideration.

All schools of Indian philosophy agree that there are three factors involved in knowledge - the knowing subject (*jñātā*), the known object (*viśaya*) and the means of knowing (*pramāṇa*). A philosophy which admits that an object exists independently of our cognition is known as realism.

### C. CONSCIOUSNESS IN VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA

This topic deals with the theory of consciousness (*caitanya*) in Viśiṣṭādvaita epistemic perspective. Both Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita criticized Advaita philosophy while developing their own systems. According to Advaita, consciousness is identical with Brahman/Self/Ātman, whereas in Viśiṣṭādvaita consciousness known as attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) is an attribute of the Self. It is eternal and all pervasive in *Īśvara* and the *jīvas*. For Rāmānuja, consciousness is not only self-revealing but it is also both a substance (*dravya*) and an attribute (*guṇa*). According to Advaita,

consciousness is self-proved (*svataḥ-siddha*). It is not an object of another knowledge (*avedya*). It is eternal, has no beginning or end (*nitya*), immutable (*nirvikāra*), non-dual, undifferentiated (*nirviśeṣa*), and is the very Self (Ātman) of an individual. Viśiṣṭādvaita criticizes the above views regarding consciousness based on the Viśiṣṭādvaita theory of knowledge, viz., that consciousness involves subject-object duality. Therefore, it is not only the subject but also an attribute of it. Though it is self-luminous (*svayam-prakāśa*), it is not absolutely unknowable. It is not eternal as understood by the Advaitin, because it is a transitory function of the subject. It is not one but many, and is also subject to change in the form of contraction and expansion. Lastly, it can never be identical with the Self because consciousness is only its attribute.

### **1. Two kinds of Consciousness**

Already mentioned, according to Viśiṣṭādvaita, every soul in bondage (*samsāra*) has two kinds of consciousness: consciousness as an (a) essential-consciousness (*svarūpa-jñāna/dharmi-jñāna*), and (b) an attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*).

#### **a) Essential-Consciousness (*Svarūpa-Jñāna/Dharmi-Jñāna*)**

Essential-consciousness (*svarūpa-jñāna/dharmi-jñāna*) is spiritual in nature and the essence of the soul (*jīva*) itself. It is both self-luminous (*svayam-prakāśa*) and self-conscious. It is purely subjective, eternal, inseparable and absolutely unwavering. Because of its spiritual nature it needs another knowledge to reveal its material objects. Consciousness due to difference of the limiting adjunct takes the form of happiness, sorrow, desire, hate, endeavour etc. There is no evidence for assuming that consciousness is different from and is the cause for happiness, etc. In empirical usage “I desire”, “I hate” are understood as attributes of consciousness like “I remember” which too is a different form of consciousness. It has to be remembered that resolve, doubt, faith, want of faith, firmness, want of firmness, modesty, intelligence, fear, etc. are the mental states. It is only figuratively when we say that the mind is everything. And, there is no contradiction in this.



## **b) Attributive-Consciousness (*Dharmabhūta-Jñāna*)**

Attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) is neither spiritual nor material in nature. Rāmānuja criticises the concept of *māyā* through his sevenfold arguments (*sapta-vidhā-anupāpatti*). According to Śaṅkara, *māyā* is neither real nor unreal, it is indescribable (*anirvacanīya*). Here, Rāmānuja criticises the Advaita view through his *anirvacanīya-anupāpatti*. A phenomenon is either real or non-real. There is no third alternative. Postulating a third alternative contradicts logic – the law of contradiction and the law of the excluded middle. But Rāmānuja is not justified in criticizing the Advaita view of *māyā* as neither real nor non-real because he too is guilty of committing the same mistake by admitting that attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) is neither spiritual nor material in nature. Attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) is not the essence but only an attribute of the Self. It is the subject, it is a self-luminous (*svayam-prakāśa*), conscious substance. It is of the nature of substance-attribute like light and its luminosity, while it is all-pervasive and always eternal and all pervasive in respect of Īśvara and the eternals. It reveals the objects.

According to Rāmānuja, in ordinary people, attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) exists in a contracted state during bondage and its capacity to know is limited. But through purity of mind and God's grace, attributive-consciousness expands to enable a seeker realize the transcendental truths through devotion (*bhakti*) and self-surrender (*prapatti*).

## **2. Nature of Consciousness**

According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) is a quality of the Self and different from its essential-consciousness (*svarūpa-jñāna/dharmi-jñāna*). Its essential-consciousness (*svarūpa-jñāna/dharmi-jñāna*) is a substance endowed with a quality, and is incapable of contraction and expansion. It is self-manifest, and incapable of manifesting any entity other than itself.

But attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) is capable of contraction and expansion, reveals objects other than itself, does not manifest itself to itself, but manifests itself to the Self, and is pervasive.<sup>11</sup>

**a) Consciousness is a Substance (*Dravya*)**

According to Advaita, “Consciousness is self-luminous (*svayam-prakāśa*), because it is consciousness; if consciousness were the object of another cognition, it would not be consciousness, e.g. a pot”. But, according to Viśiṣṭādvaita, attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) is substance-attribute in nature. By possessing states like contraction and expansion, it becomes also a substance. Attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) is a substance, because it possesses attributes like diffusion, etc., like a luminous substance.<sup>12</sup>

There is no doubt how consciousness (*caitanya*), an attribute of the individual self, could become a substance. For example, light and its luminosity, there is no contradiction in the substance-attribute nature of the object like.

**b) Consciousness is an Attribute (*Guṇa*)**

For Viśiṣṭādvaita, attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) is an attribute of the soul (*jīva*) because it is inseparably related with the Self and reveals objects to it. It is also known as *buddhi*, *samvit*, *dīh*, *prajña*, *mati*, *anubhūti*, *semusi*, *medha*, *dhīšana* and *manisa*. Attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) is an attribute, because “that which is dependent on another phenomenon is an, attribute e.g. the attributes of a substance.”<sup>13</sup>

Nyāya too regards consciousness as an attribute of the soul (*jīva*). But there is a difference between the two schools. For Nyāya, consciousness is only an accidental attribute of the soul, whereas for Viśiṣṭādvaita it is the soul’s essential and inseparable attribute (*aprthak-siddha*).

**c) Consciousness is Self-luminous (*Svayam-prakāśa*)**

The function of consciousness is to illumine an object. When consciousness illumines an object, it is not necessary for it to be illumined by another knowledge. While

manifesting an object (*viṣaya-prakāśaṇa*), consciousness does not need another knowledge to reveal itself. This view is admitted by many schools of philosophy. According to Advaita, self-revealing (*svayam-prakāśa*) the essential nature of consciousness reveals every other object and also itself, it cannot be revealed by any other entity. If it were manifested by anything else, it would no longer be consciousness.<sup>14</sup> Thus it is stated in the form of syllogistic argument: “Consciousness is self-luminous (*svayam-prakāśa*), because if “I-consciousness”; were the object of another knowledge, it would not be consciousness, as in the case of a pot.”<sup>15</sup> According to Citsukhācārya, “Self-luminosity is the capacity of being called immediate in empirical usage, while remaining simultaneously a non-object of knowledge.”<sup>16</sup>

Viśiṣṭādvaita criticizes the Advaita view as follows. Viśiṣṭādvaita to prove the self-luminosity of consciousness argues that “our experience reveals that the consciousness of one person can become the object of the cognition of another” person. If consciousness is not an object of knowledge, it will become non-existent like a sky-flower. The sky-flower is not an object of knowledge and also not consciousness. Similarly a pot also is not knowledge because it is the object of knowledge although it is opposed to knowledge (*ajñāna avirodhitvat*). Viśiṣṭādvaita therefore concludes that “not being an object of knowledge (*anānu-bhavyatva*) is not a determinant of consciousness, as upheld by Advaita.”<sup>17</sup> Thus, Rāmānuja summarizes his position in his *Sri-bhāṣya* “The view that a phenomenon which is an object of consciousness cannot be consciousness is untenable.”<sup>18</sup>

#### **d) Consciousness is Eternal (*Nitya*)**

According to Advaita, consciousness is eternal (*nitya*) because it is prior non-existence and neither produced nor destroyed. Like Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita too upholds that consciousness is eternal. But, Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita differ on some aspects related to the eternality of consciousness e.g. that the prior non-existence of knowledge can be proved by another consciousness. For instance in deep sleep (*suṣupti*) we have no experience of consciousness at that time but only after we wake up. This establishes the

non-existence of consciousness during deep sleep. We cannot say that non-recollection is due to the absence of latent impressions (*saṃskāras*).

For Viśiṣṭādvaita, destruction and origination are possible although consciousness is eternal. Origination and destruction are states of consciousness, and consciousness (*caitanya*) is eternal. For e.g., water flows out through the hole of a leather bag. Similarly consciousness flows out through the sense organs towards the object and apprehends it to produce knowledge. Contraction and expansion of consciousness (*caitanya*) are similar to coiling up of a snake.<sup>19</sup> Rāmānuja says in his *Śrī-bhāṣya*: that due to the expansion and contraction of knowledge through the sense organs, we say that there is origination and destruction of consciousness.<sup>20</sup>

#### **e) Consciousness is Transmutable (*Avikāra*)**

According to Advaita, consciousness is eternal (*nitya*) and immutable (*nirvikāra*). Consciousness is immutable because it is not produced; for, whatever is produced that alone is mutable; e.g. a pot.<sup>21</sup>

Viśiṣṭādvaita upholds that cognition occurs continuously like a stream; but, consciousness is one. There are different states of consciousness: waking (*jāgrat*), dream (*svapna*), deep sleep (*suśupti*) and absorption (*samādhi/caturtha*). Terms like *anubhūti*, *smṛti*, *buddhi*, etc., are synonyms for knowledge (*jñāna*). But these cannot be rejected as false states of consciousness. The critic argues that whatever undergoes changes is not eternal. Such being the case, how can the changing (*vikāra*) consciousness be eternal? Viśiṣṭādvaita cites an example, fire can burn anything. But it loses its burning power when obstructed by a gem. Similarly due to the presence/absence of *tamas* which obscures consciousness, sleep and *mokṣa* are produced. This is similar to virility and other powers which are not manifest in boyhood, but because manifest in youth.

#### **f) Consciousness is Manifold (*Nānā*)**

There is no plurality in unproduced consciousness. Objects admit plurality because they are produced. According to Advaita, is “Consciousness is not many (*na nānā*) because it has no origin. Whatever is many, has origin is, e.g. a pot.”<sup>22</sup> For Viśiṣṭādvaita,

from the above view we cannot say that consciousness is different from everything. According to Advaita, consciousness as the knowing subject is different from the revealed object (*jñāna-arthayoḥ bhedaḥ*). If there is no difference between the two, it will mean that they are identical. But this view is philosophically unjustified.<sup>23</sup> And the view that consciousness is non-different from another consciousness, raises the question whether another consciousness exists or not. If it exists, it is not tenable to argue that consciousness is identical with/non-different from another consciousness. If it does not exist, the proposition itself collapses.<sup>24</sup>

According to Advaita, the plurality of consciousness seen in daily life is illusory/not real (*mithyā*) because it is limited by different objects and also the finite selves (*jīvas*). This is like the single moon appearing as many when reflected on the waves of a pond/river/ocean.<sup>25</sup> For Rāmānuja, difference in knowledge is proved by differences in the objects cognized through knowledge just as difference in the act of cutting is proved by difference in the objects cut.<sup>26</sup>

#### **g) All-Pervasive (*Vibhu*)**

In liberation (*mukti*), consciousness is infinite and all-pervasive (*vibhu*). For Viśiṣṭādvaita, consciousness by its intrinsic nature is limitless. But due to *avidyā-karma* its power is limited. When liberated from bondage, the soul, re-attains its infinite nature. The soul (*jīva*) then becomes omniscient (*sarvajña*). Attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) is a key-concept of Viśiṣṭādvaita, accounting for cosmic consciousness, self-realization and Brahman-realization.

#### **h) Consciousness and Self**

For the Viśiṣṭādvaitin, consciousness (*caitanya*) as knowledge (*jñāna*) is an attribute of the soul (*jīva*). Hence, it is described as attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*), as different from the knowing subject (*jīva*) - an eternal spiritual phenomenon, also of the nature of consciousness (*jñāna-svarūpa*). Knowledge illumines an object (*artha-prakāśaḥ*). According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, every bound soul (*jīva*) has two kinds of consciousness (*caitanya*): (1) essential-consciousness (*svarūpa-jñāna*), and (2) attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*). The soul is the substratum (*dharmīn*)

and knowledge is its attribute (*dharma*). The soul and knowledge are distinct, but they are inseparable (*apṛthak-siddha*). The souls are subjective (*pratyak*), and self-conscious by nature. The soul perceives phenomena revealed to it by attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*). Attributive-consciousness like a lamp can only reveal objects but it cannot know itself. In Viśiṣṭādvaita epistemology, attributive-consciousness is a very significant concept. Citing from the *Nyāyatattva* of Nāthamuni, Vedānta Deśika emphasizes that knowledge has features like subtleness (*saukṣmyam*), swiftness (*atyatavegita*), lightness (*nirbharata*) and luminosity while functioning (*svasatta-kālabha vyāptih*). Knowledge/consciousness is a function, according to Buddhism and Mīmāṃsā. Consciousness is identical with the Self, according to Advaita. But consciousness is an attribute of the soul, according to Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika. But the Viśiṣṭādvaita view about consciousness is unique because it is both a substance (*dravya*) and an attribute (*guṇa*).

I will discuss the crucial modes of consciousness like: perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), verbal testimony (*śabda*), recollection (*smṛti*), doubt (*saṁśaya*) and error (*khyāti*).

### 3. Modes of Consciousness

Viśiṣṭādvaita view perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*) and verbal testimony (*śabda*) as modes of consciousness.

#### a) Perception (*Pratyakṣa*)

According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, perception (*pratyakṣa*) is the first among the three modes of consciousness (*caitanya*). Indian philosophy recognizes six means of knowledge (*pramāṇas*). Perception (*pratyakṣa*) is the foremost means of knowledge (*jyeṣṭha-pramāṇa*). It is direct and immediate free from reasoning. All schools of Indian philosophy admit perception (*pratyakṣa*) as a means of knowledge.

#### i. Etymologically Analysis of Perception

“*Pratyakṣa*” etymologically involves two aspects “*prati*” (to/before/near) and “*akṣa*” (sense-organ) or “*prati*” and “*akṣī*” (eye). Hence, in common usage it means “present to/before the eyes/sense-organ,” therefore perception is direct, immediate. It is

the opposite of the word “*parokṣa*”, mainly used as an adjective to mean “away from the eye/sense,” “indirect”, “mediate,” etc.

In philosophy, *pratyakṣa* is used to denote immediacy. *Pratyakṣa* is used as a noun and also as an adjective. As a noun, it refers to immediate knowledge. As an adjective, it is used for: (1) knowledge (*jñāna*), (2) the object of knowledge (*viśaya*), and also (3) the means of knowing (*pramāṇa*). The first sense involves instances of immediate knowledge (*pratyakṣa-jñānam*) - this knowledge is immediate/direct (*idam jñānam pratyakṣam*). In the second and third senses, we have terms/proposition such as “This pot is immediately perceived (*ayam ghaṭaḥ pratyakṣah*).” This is direct evidence - a direct way of knowing (*idam pratyakṣam pramāṇam*).

## ii. Definition of Perception

Regarding the exact definition of perception, there are different views among the different schools of philosophy. These different views can be classified into three groups. First of all, for Buddhism perception is unerring knowledge of a unique particular (*svalakṣaṇa*). For the others, perception is knowledge resulting from the contact between the sense-organ and its object. Lastly, for the Prabhākaras and the Vedāntins, and some Naiyāyikas, perception is immediate knowledge.

Indian philosophy defines perception in two ways. The first, definition discusses how perceptual cognition is caused. The second definition is in terms of the nature of cognition. Perception is defined as “*indriyārtha-sannikarṣa-janyam-jñānam pratyakṣam*” i.e. perception is knowledge arising from sense-object contact. The words “valid-cognition/knowledge” distinguishes it from erroneous-cognition resulting from defective sense-organs.

The early Naiyāyikas define perception (*pratyakṣa*) in terms of sense-object contact. For them, perception is valid-cognition arising from the contact between the sense-organ and its object (*indriyārtha-sannikarṣa*). This definition results from the etymological meaning of “*pratyakṣa*”, which refers to the function of the sense-organ, in relation to its specific object. This definition is admitted by many schools of philosophy - Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga and Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā.

But, the above definition is rejected by the Prabhākara Mīmāṃsakas, the Advaitins, the Viśiṣṭādvaitins and the later-Naiyāyikas for three reasons. They are:

- the definition is too wide (*ativyāpti*) because it will include inference (*anumāna*) which is also dependent on sense-object contact.
- the definition is inadequate (*avyāpti*) because it overlooks yogic-perception (*yogaja-pratyakṣa*) which does not require any sense-object contact. Moreover, God's perception (*Īśvara-pratyakṣa*) too is overlooked because God does not require sense-object contact for getting knowledge.
- Defining perception in terms of sense-object contact involves the fallacy of question begging. We cognize and understand perception even before and without knowing the functions of the sense-organ in perception.

Moreover, in cognitions like illusions, dreams, etc. there is cognition of object without sense-object contact. Although the phenomenal objects are falsified later, they were perceived in experience just like objects of perceptual cognition. These cognitions are inexplicable in terms of sense-stimulation.

Recollection too later on confirms that sense-stimulation is not the essence of perception. What characterizes perception is an immediacy of awareness (*sāksātkāratvam*). Even modern Naiyāyikas define perception with reference to this immediacy.<sup>27</sup> This definition is applicable to all instances of perception-human or divine. Although the fact that perception is usually determined by sense-object contact is true and must be accepted, sense-object contact is not an essential feature of all perceptions.

### **iii. Nature of Perception**

According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, knowledge is defined as that which reveals an object (*artha-prakāśah*). The function of knowledge is to reveal an object to a perceiving subject or the conscious Self. Perception is thus related to the knowing subject and a known object outside it. Since the object exists independent of knowledge it is regarded as real. That which is existent alone can be perceived by the senses. In perception



consciousness flows out from soul (*jīva*) through the mind and the senses contacts the object and reveals it to the perceiver.

#### **iv. Process of Perception**

The Viśiṣṭādvaita concept of consciousness is similar to the other realistic schools of Indian philosophy. Initially, the individual Self contacts the mind which then contacts the sense-organ, and the sense-organ in turn contacts the object and apprehends it to yield knowledge. The process of perception can be depicted by a simple figure:-

Self → mind → sense-organ → object → knowledge

In the process of perception, the sense-organs function by contacting the object of perception. Therefore, when the visual-sense is in contact with an object, e.g. a pot, ocular knowledge arises in the form “This is pot”. Similar is the case with the tactile and the other forms of perception.

Attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) is the knowledge which enables us to perceive all objects. Through attributive consciousness, the Self/Ātman directly perceives the objects. According to Advaita, in perception the internal sense-organ (*antaḥ-karaṇa*) goes out to apprehend the object; but according to Rāmānuja, the light of the Ātman/Self as attributive-consciousness flows towards the object through the mind and the senses. Rāmānuja discusses the process of perception as beginning from the Ātman, reaching the *manas*, emerging through the senses, and contacting the external object to reveal it ultimately. The function of the mind and the senses is only to ascertain the qualities of the objects and co-relate them with past experience, i.e. while the Ātman plays a primary role in perception, the mind and the senses have only a secondary role in it.

#### **v. Condition for Valid Cognition**

The following are the conditions for valid cognition:

- the perceiver’s sense-organs (*indriyas*) and the objects of perception must be free from defects (*dośas*).
- there must be sufficient light for valid cognition.

- there must not be any obstacle between the object of cognition and knowing subject.
- the object of cognition should not be too small/big.
- the object of cognition must not be too close/far from the knower.

#### vi. Classification of Perception

Like Nyāya, Advaita admits two stages of perception: (1) indeterminate perception (*nirvikalpaka-pratyakṣa*) and (2) determinate perception (*savikalpaka-pratyakṣa*).

**(1) Indeterminate Perception (*Nirvikalpaka-Pratyakṣa*):** Indeterminate-perception (*nirvikalpaka-pratyakṣa*) means perception of an object for the first time. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, *nirvikalpaka-pratyakṣa* involves mere sensation of an object totally devoid of all relations. It is an initial cognition logically inferred from a fundamental postulate of the system. All complex phenomena are explained as a combination of many simples constituting them. However, these simples cannot be directly perceived. For Mīmāṃsā, the knowledge which a person initially gains in perception is vague and indefinite. But unlike the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view, this knowledge is not a mere theoretical supposition. It is a part of the perceptual process and serves a purpose in that we can act on it.

In Viśiṣṭādvaita, perceptual experience involving judgments is called *nirvikalpaka-pratyakṣa* when an object is experienced for the first time (*prathama-piṇḍāgrahaṇa*) followed by subsequent apprehension (*dvitīyādi-piṇḍāgrahaṇa*). According to Buddhism, indeterminate perception is the only kind of perception. Every object, perceived, is a unique particular and any name, universal, etc., which are added onto this perception is only a construction of the mind. According to Advaita, indeterminate perception is knowledge which is devoid of all relations: substance-attribute, whole-part, time, space relation, etc. Hence, *nirvikalpaka-pratyakṣa* need not necessarily be the first initial cognition, but any perception which is relationless. For the Advaitin, *nirvikalpaka-pratyakṣa* proposes are identity judgements, e.g. “This is that Devadatta.”

**(2) Determinate Perception (*Savikalpaka-Pratyakṣa*):** The next is the determinate stage of perception, the mind works on the sensory input received in the *nirvikalpaka-pratyakṣa* stage, synthesizes and correlates the data, and makes judgments about the object. The Buddhists consider all *savikalpaka*-knowledge as not wholly true and as mere mental constructs (*vikalpas*). What is valid is only the *svalakṣaṇa*, the unrelated particular cognized in *nirvikalpaka-pratyakṣa*. The following argument is put forward to support the Buddhist view: All *vikalpa-jñāna* is erroneous, because it is determinate in nature (*vikalpatvāt*), whatever is determinate is erroneous, e.g. the determinate-cognition of shell-silver.”

### **b) Inference (*Anumāna*)**

Excluding Cārvāka, all the other schools of Indian philosophy admit inference (*anumāna*) as a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). For Viśiṣṭādvaita, inference (*anumāna*) is a mode of consciousness and a means of knowledge. Inferential cognition is valid knowledge of a particular “pervader” (*Vyāpaka/sādhya*), attained from the perception of the pervadedness of the “pervaded” (*Vyāpya*). E.g. inferential cognition of fire is valid knowledge of the particular pervader (fire) got from observing smoke which is inseparably related with fire. For instance: “Wherever there is smoke there is fire.” Inferential knowledge is mediate and indirect. It arises from the perception of the middle term (*liṅga/hetudharma*) which is inseparably related with the major term (*sādhya*). “*Anumāna*” is derived from knowledge (*mana*) which arises *after* (*anu*) another knowledge.

#### **i. Conditions for Inference**

Two conditions have to be fulfilled for inference to take place. A person should have: (1) *pakṣadharmata-jñāna*: Perception of the middle term (smoke) along with the minor term (hill); and (2) *Vyāpti-jñāna* - knowledge of the inseparable relation between the middle term (*hetu/liṅga/dharma*) and the major term (*vyāpaka/sādhya*), i.e. All cases of smoke are cases of fire.

Like Aristotelian syllogism Indian inference contains three terms: the major, the minor and the middle term known as the *sādhya*, *pakṣa* and *liṅga/hetudharma*

respectively. We know that smoke is inseparably related with fire (*vyāpti*). Hence, when we see smoke on a hill, we inferentially conclude that there must be fire on that hill. The hill is the minor term (*pakṣa*) fire is the major term (*sādhya*); smoke is the middle term (*liṅga/hetudharma*). By perceiving smoke on the hill supported by the knowledge that all cases of smoke are cases of fire, we infer the presence of fire on the hill.

## ii. Kinds of Inference

Inference is of two kinds: (1) *svārtha anumāna* or inference for oneself, and (2) *parārtha anumāna* or inference for another who can follow the reasoning.

(1) *Svārtha* – in this kind of inference, a person tries to know the truth for oneself. For e.g. knowing that wherever there is smoke there is fire, a person on seeing smoke rising from a hill concludes that there must be fire on the hill.

(2) *Parārtha* – in this inference, a syllogism, is presented in language to convince the others. The syllogism can have five members steps (*pañca-avayava tarka*) called *pratijñā, hetu, udaharana, upanaya* and *nigamana*.

- *Pratijñā* or Hypothesis: the proposition predicates the subject, e.g. “This hill has fire”
- *Hetu* or Reason states the probans: e.g. “Because it has smoke.”
- *Udaharana* or Similar instance states an example after pointing out the pervasion (*udāharana=vyāpti+example*). This is of two kinds due to difference as the affirmative (*avayava*) and the negative (*vyatireka*), e.g. “whatever has smoke has fire, e.g. a hearth”, is an affirmative example. Whatever has no fire has no smoke, e.g. a lake”, is a negative example.
- *Upanaya* or application of the universal concomitance to the present case. This is also two fold, because of the difference as the affirmative and the negative. Examples, “This hill has smoke” are the application of an affirmative type. And “This hill does not have smoke” is the application of a negative type.

- *Nigamana* or conclusion: It states the presence of the *probandum* (*sādhya* or fire) in the subject through the *probans* (*sādhanā* or smoke). This too is of two kinds: “Therefore this hill has fire” is an affirmative kind of conclusion, “Therefore this hill is not devoid of fire” is a negative kind of conclusion.

Among the five propositions, two appear as redundant superfluous. We may either omit the first two or the last two members/steps which are essentially the same. While the first and the fifth steps coincide the second and the fourth steps too coincide. If we reject the last two steps, the first three propositions correspond with the conclusion, the minor premise and the major premise respectively. Similarly; if we reject the first two steps, last three propositions correspond to the major premise, the minor premise and the conclusion of the Aristotelian syllogism.

Nyāya advocates the five-membered syllogism (*pañca-avayava tarka*). The Mīmāṃsakas and Aristotle use three propositions and three terms: the major (*sādhya*), the minor (*pakṣa*) and the middle (*hetu*) terms. We have already discussed that the *vyāpya/sādhanā/linga* all refer to the middle term:

- (1) *Pakṣadharmatā*: This must exist in the minor term; e.g. smoke must be present on the hill.
- (2) *Sapakṣasattva*: This feature must exist in all positive instances where the major term is present; e.g. smoke must exist in the kitchen where fire also is present.
- (3) *Vipakṣasattva*: This must be non-existent in all negative instances where the major term is not present; e.g., smoke is non-existent in a lake where fire also is not present.
- (4) *Abādhita*: This should be compatible with the minor term.; e.g., it should not establish the coolness of fire.
- (5) *Aviruddha*: This should be qualified by the absence of counter acting reasons that result in a contradictory conclusion; e.g.n “Sound is eternal because it is caused.” The fact of being “caused” should not be employed to establish the “eternality of sound.”<sup>28</sup>

### iii. Kinds of *Vyāpti*

*Vyāpti* is of two kinds. They are:

- (1) *Sama-vyāpti* - equal extension: e.g.: “X is a friend of Y”.
- (2) *Asama-vyāpti* - unequal extension: e.g.: “X is a son of Y.

Two other kinds of *vyāpti* are:

- (1) *Anvaya-vyāpti*: which states the *vyāpti* in positive terms  
In “Where there is smoke there is fire, “kitchen” is the cited example.
- (2) *Vyatireka-vyāpti*: states *vyāpti* in negative terms.  
In “where there is no smoke there is no fire; e.g. a pond.”<sup>29</sup>

There are two kinds of inference (*anumāna*): *svārtha* and *parārtha*, which we have already discussed. Another classification of inference as *kevalānvayi*, *kevalavyatireki* and *anvayavyatireki* is made on the basis of the nature of *vyāpti* and the difference in methods for establishing it. The methods of induction through which the universal causal relationship is established can be *anvaya*, *vyatireka* or both. In *kevalānvayi* inference, the middle term is always positively associated with the major term. The terms agree only in presence and there is no negative instance. E.g.:

All knowable objects are nameable;  
The pot is a knowable object;  
.’. The pot is nameable.

In *kevalavyatireki* inference, the middle term is a characteristics always negatively associated with the major term. The terms agree only in absence, and there is no positive case of their agreement in presence. In

“That which is not different - from - the other - elements has no smell;  
The earth has smell;  
.`. The earth is different - from -the other- elements.

In *anvaya-vyatireki* inference, the middle term is both positively and negatively associated with the major term. There is double agreement between the middle and the

major terms - i.e. there is agreement in presence in the positive cases and also agreement in absence in the negative cases; e.g.

All cases of smoke are cases of fire

This hill is a case of smoke

∴ This hill is a case of fire; and

No case of absence of smoke is a case of fire

This hill is a case of smoke

∴ This hill is not a case of absence of fire

i.e., This hill has fire.

#### iv. Fallacies of Reasoning (*Hetvābhāsa*)

In Indian logic “*hetvābhāsa*” means a fallacy. In the fallacy, the middle term appears as a reason although it is not a valid reason. In Indian philosophy, all fallacies involve material fallacies. There are the five features of a valid middle term. When these are violated, they result in fallacies. Indian logic recognizes five kinds of fallacies. The fallacies are:

**(1) Unestablished middle term (*Asiddha/Sādhyasama*):** This is a fallacy of unestablished middle. The middle term must exist in the minor term (*pakṣadharmat*). If not, it is unestablished. This fallacy is of three kinds-

**(a) Unestablished with regard to its locus (*Āśrayāsiddha*):** The *pakṣa* is the substratum of the *hetu*. If the *pakṣa* is not real; then, the *hetu* cannot exist in it; e.g., “The sky-lotus is fragrant because it is a lotus like any other lotus growing in a lake.”

**(b) Unestablished with to regard itself (*Svarūpāsiddha*):** Here the *pakṣa* is real. But the *hetu* because of its very nature cannot be in the *pakṣa*; e.g., “Sound is a quality, because it is visible.” Here visibility cannot be attributed to sound - an audible.

**(c) Unestablished with regard to its pervasion (*Vyāpyatvāsiddha*):** Here the *vyāpti* is conditional (*sopādhika*). It is wrong to say, e.g., “all cases of fire are cases of

smoke.” Because there is smoke only when fire is associated with wet fuel. A piece of red-hot iron and clear fire do not have smoke. Here, “association with wet fuel” is a necessary condition for this kind of *vyāpti*. Since it is conditioned, the *hetu* becomes fallacious e.g.: “The hill has smoke because it has fire.”

**(2) Inconsistent middle (*Savyabhicāra* or *Anaikāntika*):** This fallacy due to the irregular middle is of three kinds:

**(a) Common fallacy (*Sādhārana*):** In this fallacy the *hetu* is too wide (*ativyāpti*). It exists in the positive (*sapakṣa*) and the negative (*vipakṣa*) cases there by violating the rule which states that a middle term should not exist in the negative cases (*vipakṣasattva*); e.g., “The hill has fire because it is a knowable.” Here knowability is present in the fiery and also the non-fiery phenomenon.

**(b) Uncommon fallacy (*Asādhārana*):** In this fallacy, *hetu* is very narrow (*avyāpti*). It exists only in the minor term and not in the *sapakṣa* or the *vipakṣa*. It contradicts the rule which states that the *hetu* exist in the *sapakṣa* e.g., “Sound is eternal, because it is audible.” Here audibility belongs to sound only and is not present in any other case.

**(c) *Anupasamhāri*:** This is the fallacy of the non-exclusive middle term, i.e. the *hetu* is not-exclusive. The *pakṣa* includes everything leaving nothing as *sapakṣa* or *vipakṣa*; e.g., “All things are not-eternal, because they are knowable.”

**(3) Equal and opposite reason (*Satpratipakṣa/Prakaraṇasama*):** In this fallacy, the middle term is contradicted by another middle term. The *hetu* is equally-balanced by another opposing *hetu* both having equal force; e.g., “Sound is eternal, because it is audible” and “Sound is non- eternal, because it is produced.” Here the *hetu* - “audible” is counter-balanced by another *hetu* - “produced” and both the reasons have equal force.

**(4) *Bādhita*:** This is the fallacy of the non-inferentially contradicted middle. Here the *hetu* is falsified by a *pramāṇa* and not by *anumāna*. It cannot establish the *sādhya* which is falsified by another stronger means of knowledge; e.g., “Fire is cold, because it is a



substance.” Here the middle term “substance” is falsified because the *sādhya* “coldness” attributed to fire is directly contradicted by *pratyakṣa pramāṇa*.

**(5) *Viruddha*:** This is the fallacy of the contradictory middle. The *hetu*, instead of being pervaded by the existences of the *sādhya*, is pervaded by the non-existence of the *sādhya*. Therefore, instead of establishing the existence of the *sādhya* in the *pakṣa*, it proves its absence there in; e.g., “Sound is eternal, because it is produced.” Here “produced”, instead of establishing the eternality of sound, establishes only its non-eternality. In this fallacy, the *hetu* itself falsifies the original proposition and establishes its opposite.

There are two other forms of knowledge classified separately by Indian philosophers, but included under “inference” by Rāmānuja. They are comparison (*upamāna*) and deductive reasoning (*arthāpatti*). For Nyāya *upamāna* is an independent source of knowledge (*pramāṇas*) because it is a source of new knowledge. In “A tiger is a big cat” implies a resemblance between the cat and a tiger. A Naiyāyika considers the knowledge of a tiger as knowing a new creature resembling a cat. But for Viśiṣṭādvaita the process is an inference. A person is told that a tiger is like a big cat. The person remembers this comparison, and on actually seeing a tiger, remembers the description and infers that it is a tiger.

Postulation (*arthāpatti*) involves deductive reasoning. Devadatta does not eat during the day. But it is seen that he growing fatter and fatter, which is impossible without eating. Since Devadatta does not eat during the day, we can conclude that he is eating in the night. According to Mīmāṃsā and Advaita Vedānta *arthāpatti* is an independent source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). But Viśiṣṭādvaita regards it as a form of inference. The fact that a person is becoming fat indicates eating. Since the person is not seen eating during the day, the inference is that the person must be eating in the night.

### **c) Verbal Testimony (*Śabda*)**

#### **i. Meaning and Definition of Verbal Testimony**

For Viśiṣṭādvaita, verbal testimony (*śabda*) is an important means of knowledge and also the third mode of consciousness. Excluding the Lokayata, Buddhism, and Vaiśeṣika, all the other systems of Indian philosophy consider that utterances of

competent speakers (*āpta-vākya*) are a significant means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Verbal testimony is the statement of a trustworthy person (*āpta-vākya*) and it involves deciphering its meaning. A sentence is defined as a group of words, and a word is that which has a potentiality to convey knowledge.

## ii. Two kinds of Verbal Testimony

(1) **Empirical (*Laukika*):** Rāmānuja, unlike the other Vedantins, admits in addition to revealed scripture (*Veda*) various *Smṛtis*, *Purāṇas* and *Pāñcarātra Āgamas* as equally authoritative and valid source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). The *Smṛtis* and *Purāṇas* are based on the *Vedas*. They are not valid by themselves because they are not spoken by God. *Smṛti* is a written source, different from *Sruti*, because *Smṛti* cannot claim have a divine origins. “*Smṛtis*” literally means, “to remember”. For the Hindus, *Smṛti* is a second source of authority for knowing *dharma*. But Rāmānuja attaches great importance to *Smṛti*. As a means of valid knowledge. “*Pauruseya*” means “what is originated from a person”. This, definition will include, drama (*nataka*), poetry (*kāvya*), rhetoric (*alankara*), etc.

- ***Smṛti*:** For Rāmānuja, *Smṛti* includes works of trustworthy persons (*āptas*) which explain conduct, usage, explanations, etc. that are not opposed to “*Sruti*”- the *Vedas*. *Smṛti* too is a means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). According to Rāmānuja, Hiranyagarbha is the original author of the *Yogaśāstra* and *Patañjali* and the others are only its later exponents.

Within *smṛti*, the *Manusmṛti* holds a prominent place. The views of Manu are similar to those conveyed by the *Vedas*. Because of this, it is believed that all that is conveyed by Manu is like medicine for the sick meaning that it is beneficial for human beings. Its teachings are regarded as free from delusion and deceit. They are expounded not on the basis of the *pramāṇas* of ordinary human beings, but owe their origin to the *Vedas*. The authoritativeness of the epics (*Itihāsas* - the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*), and the legends (*Purānas*) possessing the nature of being supplementary to the *Vedas*, is self- established.

- **Epic (*Itihāsas*):** The *Mahābhārata* is a very famous epic poem consisting of eighteen Chapters, attributed to Vyāsa its author. It describes the history of Bharata's descendants with innumerable episodes, which are small epics by themselves. The *Rāmāyaṇa* composed by sage Vālmiki is a popular holy epic for the Hindus. It contains around 24,000 verses in seven cantos and discusses the ideal life of Śrī Rāma - its hero. The *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* may appear as contradictory in some places. But, they must be considered as non-contradictory where portions discuss truth like the Vedānta texts.
- **Legends (*Purāṇas*):** These are classified into three groups: *sāttvika*, *rājasa* and *tāmasa*. The *Matsya Purāṇa*, which is in accordance with the views of the *Vedas*, has discussed the relative importance of the various *Purāṇas*. For Viśiṣṭādvaita, *Tāmasa- purāṇas* discuss the greatness of Siva and Agnī; *Rājasa* about Brahma; and *Sāttvika* glorify the greatness of Lord Viṣṇu. Among these, the views conveyed by the *Sāttvika-Purāṇas* are regarded as having greater authority. Whenever contradictions arise between these *Purāṇas*, the teachings of the *Sāttvika-Purāṇas* are accorded greater authority.
- ***Pāñcarātra Āgama*:** This occupies a unique place in Viśiṣṭādvaita, because it is regarded as the teachings of God (*Īśvara*) out of compassion for humanity. Hence, it is free from defects (*dośas*) attributed to human beings. There is also no scope for doubt (*samśayas*) about its teachings. The *Pāñcarātra Āgama's* validity is questioned because it discusses of the origin of the soul (*jīva*), a view which is opposed to the views of the *Veda*. The *Pāñcarātra* says that the soul (*jīva*) called as *San̄karśaṇa* originated from Vāsudeva – the Supreme Brahman. But, according to the *Vedas*, the soul (*jīva*) is eternal and free from death/birth. Where contradictions arise between these two texts, they have to be harmonized in the same way as between the affirmative and the negative text occurring in the *Vedas*.

**(2) Non-Empirical (*Vaidika*):** Also known as revealed scripture, this kind of verbal testimony is considered as perfect and infallible because the *Vedas* are spoken by God. Known as *Sruti* or *Āgamas*, revealed scripture is admitted by the Vedāntins as the most

authoritative sources of knowledge because *Sruti* alone can claim the position of Brahman. Rāmānuja places the *Pāñcarātra Āgama* on a par with the *Vedas*. He also upholds that the earlier and the later sections of the *Vedas* convey a single teaching.

### iii. Four Conditions for Verbal Testimony

A sentence is defined as a group of words, and a word as that which has a potentiality to convey its meaning. There are four conditions which have to be fulfilled for a meaningful combination of words. Among these, the first two conditions are formal/linguistic conditions, and remaining two are material/understanding conditions. Let us discuss the four conditions.

**(1) Expectancy (*Ākāṅkṣa*):** Expectancy denotes whenever a word is spoken/written a psychological expectation is aroused in the hearer/reader who anticipates more information. If the expectation is satisfied, the words spoken/written become meaningful. If not, the words remain enigmatic.

**(2) Competency (*Yogyatā*):** Competency refers to the capacity of the words for conveying meaning. Every word has a power (*śakti*) to convey meaning. If appropriate and compatible words are used, the sentence becomes meaningful otherwise it will become meaningless. e.g. “Make wet with fire” is meaningless because the word-powers of “wet” and “fire” contradict and nullify each other instead complementing each other for conveying meaning. Therefore, the sentence as a whole becomes meaningless.

**(3) Proximity (*Sannidhi/Āsatti*):** Every spoken/written word exists in space and time. Hence, there must be a sufficient spatio-temporal gap between the words for effective communication of meaning. If the space/time gap between the words is too small/big it may not be possible to understand what is being conveyed.

**(4) Import/Universe of Discourse/Intentionality (*Tātparya*):** This condition demands that the meaning of a sentence should take into consideration the speaker’s intention. e.g., when a person sensing imminent danger tells a friend “Leave this place immediately”, we should not misunderstand the sentence and think that the speaker is rude. Similarly a person having meals asks the waiter to bring “*saindhava*” which in Sanskrit means both

“salt” and “horse”. A resourceful waiter contextually should provide salt as intended by the dinner and not bring a horse.

#### iv. Six Criteria for Identifying the Import (*Sad tātparya liṅga*)

To decipher the import (*tātparya*) of the Vedas the Mīmāṃsakas formulated a system of rules, together known as the *sad tātparya liṅga*. They were designed to facilitate the interpretation of texts. Interpretation, in the sense relevant to hermeneutics, seeks to disclose, unravel the import, and clear puzzles, banish obscurities, clarify confusions, and harmonize apparent contradictions in the texts. But the main aim of the Mīmāṃsakas is to provide more information about the stipulated process for rituals and also enlighten a follower about the “transcendentally signified” (*apūrva*) in the relevant texts. The rules are very complex and elaborate. The six criteria include:

- (1) *Upakramopasaṁhāra* - is harmony between the introduction and the conclusion of a text.
- (2) *Abhyāsa* - means repetition of the import.
- (3) *Apūrvata* - denotes novelty of the subject matter.
- (4) *Phala* - is the result.
- (5) *Arthavāda* is corroboration of the import through eulogical/subsidiary sentences. And
- (6) *Upapatti* is logical justification for the import.

“*Pauruseya*” means what has originated from a human being. This refers to poetry (*kāvya*), drama (*nāṭaka*), rhetoric (*alaṅkāra*), etc. Finally, we will now discuss two meanings which are common to the Vedic and secular statements. They are: the (1) primary meaning, and (2) secondary meaning.

**(1) Primary Meaning:** It is also known as the *mukyārtha/vācyārtha*. This is got when we apply the six conditions (*sad tātparya liṅga*) then we get the *mukyārtha/vācyārtha* also identify through the *sad tātparya liṅga*.

**(2) Secondary Meaning:** It is known as *lakṣaṇā/lakṣyārtha*. The Vedāntins identify three kinds of secondary meaning.

Exclusive implication (*Jahal-lakṣaṇā*) e.g., “The village on the Gaṅgā” means that the village is situated on the “bank” of the Gaṅgā - because the primary meaning that the village exist on a following river is contradicted by *pramāṇa*, and is called *pramāṇabādha*; then the primary meaning is completely dropped, and a secondary meaning closely associated with the primary meaning is instead adopted.

Non-exclusive implication (*Ajahal lakṣaṇa*) e.g., “The school is working today.” Here the primary meaning is retained, but it is supplemented by secondary meaning of school refers to staff, student, etc.

Exclusive-Non-exclusive implication (*Jahal-Ajahal lakṣaṇa*) e.g., “This is that Devadatta”, emphasises the identity of Devadatta and not difference. This kind of implication is also called as *bhāgatyāga lakṣaṇa* because a part of primary meaning is dropped and part of that is retained identity (*vyaktimātra*) of Devadatta.

#### **d) Error (*Khyāti*)**

A theory of error is known as *khyāti-vāda*. In Indian philosophy, the term “*khyāti*” denotes “knowledge”. Error occurs whenever knowledge fails. In Indian philosophy, there are five major theories of error advocated by different school as follows:

*ātmakhyātir-asatkhyātiḥ akhyātiḥ khyātiranyathā /  
Tathā nirvacanakhyātiḥ ityetat khyāti pañcakam//*<sup>30</sup>

*ātma-khyāti*, *asat-khyāti*, *akhyāti*, *anyathā-khyāti*, and *anirvacanīya-khyāti*. There are also two additions to these major theories of error - *Sat-khyāti* of Viśiṣṭādvaita and *abhinava-anyatha-khyāti* of Dvaita.

*Sat-khyāti*: This is derived from *akhyāti* – this theory is also called *yathārtha-khyāti*. Like Prabhākara Mīmāṃsā, Sāṅkhya, and Viśiṣṭādvaita upholds that there can be no knowledge without an object. Even erroneous knowledge too has an object. For Rāmānuja, there is an infinitesimal part of real silver in the shell; and it is this silver that is cognized in error.

The *Upaniṣads* and the *Purāṇas* teach that every object in the world is a product of the five elements - earth, water, fire, air, and ether. This theory is known as

quintuplication (*pañcīkaraṇa*). Based on this theory, Rāmānuja argues that due to a common origin, every object in the world will contain some elements of the other objects in different proportions. Therefore, in shell there are portions of silver. Shell misperceived as silver when our awareness is focused on the infinitesimal silver present in the shell excluding the predominant shell element in it.

The perception of silver in the shell is true because it is perception of what is actually existent in the object. But, it is false because it overlooks the preponderant shell element in the object. The erroneous nature of perception exposed when we find that the silver perceived is very insignificant that it has no commercial value.

#### **4. Consciousness and States of Experience (*Avasthā*)**

There are three states of experience (*avasthā-traya-vicāra*): waking (*jāgrat-avasthā*), dream (*svapna-avasthā*), and deep sleep (*suṣupti-avasthā*).

##### **a) Waking State (*Jāgrat-Avasthā*)**

The mind, senses, and body are active in the waking state and the external physical world is the field of knowledge. Senses and mind afford knowledge of what is without (*parāḥ*) and within (*pratyag*) through a series of mental-modes (*antaḥkaraṇa-vṛttis*). This accounts for the intentionality or duality (Dvaita) of consciousness (*caitanya*). The Self known as *Viśva* in the waking state experiences in gross physical objects of the world. The pleasure enjoyed too is gross, because it is related to the external. The nature of the experience is determined by a person's past bad/good actions. The body, senses, and objects perceived in the waking state are illusory, because they are sublated in dream. Hence, they have to be rejected as not-Self.

##### **b) Dream State (*Svapna-Avasthā*)**

The mind is active in the dream state. The Self known as *taijasa*, sports in the internal subtle psychical realm of fantasy. Propelled by desire, the Self cognizes and experiences dream objects projected by the mind from the sub-conscious latent-impressions (*saṃskāras*). Dream objects are not eternal, because they disappear on waking, and are not cognized in sleep. Just as dream objects are realised as illusory on

waking, likewise the physical world loses its apparent reality when a person sleeping in ignorance awakens to the supreme truth.

**c) Deep Sleep State (*Suṣupti-Avasthā*)**

In sleep, the body, and the senses do not function, and the mind relapses from the efficient state (*kārya-avasthā*) to the causal condition (*kāraṇa-avasthā*) and becomes dormant. Hence nothing, external or internal, is perceived. On waking up, a person recollects having slept well without knowing anything. Therefore, there must have been something other than the mind to cognize the absence of everything. This entity is no other than the Self, known as Prajna in this state. The Self as pure consciousness (*caitanya*) is a witness to the absence of objects, and to it the awareness of nothing or ignorance is presented. That there is a loss of consciousness in sleep, means absence only of objective consciousness and not pure consciousness, because pure consciousness or the Self has no beginning (*anādi*) or end (*anānta*). In sleep, the Self does not see, and yet it sees. The vision remains, but there is no perception of objects. The vision does not cease, because it is eternal.<sup>31</sup> An examination of sleep disclose that the Self is self-luminous (*sva-prakāśa*), unattached (*asaṅga*), and blissful in nature (*ānanda-svarūpa*).

An analysis of the three states of experience shows that like pictures on a screen, the three states appear and disappear on the canvas of consciousness. Just as a string running through the different flowers unites them into a garland, so also the Self as pure consciousness pervades all experience to give rise to the empirical life of the individual. Although it is one only, it is addressed by different names-*Viśva*, *Taijasa*, *Prajña*- in the different states to differentiate one state from another, and also indicate the adjuncts with which the Self is associated in the different states of experience.<sup>32</sup> Like a fish which swims between the banks of a river, unaffected by the happenings on and in the river banks, so also the Self is not affected by the travails of transmigration, and the activities of the body, senses and mind complex with which it is associated during its empirical journey. It is so, because there can be no real relation (*sambandha*) between the Self which is real and the body, senses, and mind which are illusory. Activity (*karma*), attachment (*moha*), grief (*duḥkha*), happiness (*sukha*), etc. are the attributes (*guṇa*) of the



limiting factors (*upādhis*) - the body, the mind, and the senses. Their correlation becomes evident when we see that they are present together in the waking and dream states, and absent together in sleep. Like an eagle which retires to its nest to overcome the fatigue of its wanderings, so also the Self temporarily relapses to its true nature (*svarūpa-sthiti*) in sleep to overcome the fatigue caused by its association with the sense and the mind in the waking and dream states of experience. Sleep discloses the self-luminous (*svayam-prakāśa*), actionless (*niskriyā*), non-dual (*advitiya*), and blissful nature of the Self. The transient joy experienced in sleep provides a foretaste of the bliss that is to be permanently “enjoyed” in liberation, and it also serves as an incentive to strive for liberation.

#### **D. CONSCIOUSNESS IN DVAITA**

Like Viśiṣṭādvaita, the Dvaita concept of Consciousness is also examined epistemologically. There are the three factors involved in knowledge the knower (subject), the known (object) and process of knowing (cognition). Dvaita epistemology is realistic. It admits that objects exist independently of knowledge. Before, discussing consciousness let us examine the concept of sense-organ (*indriya*), so that it can help to understand consciousness (*caitanya*) better. For Madhva, consciousness is the seventh sense-organ (*indriya*).

##### **1. Consciousness (*Sākṣin*)**

Sāṅkhya and Advaita, consider consciousness is as the nature of the Self/Ātman. But for Dvaita, consciousness is an essential attribute of the Self. Consciousness is known as *sākṣin* in Dvaita. Therefore, for Dvaita consciousness (*sākṣin*) is not the Self, but what belongs to the Self as its faculty for knowing. As an essential attribute, consciousness (*sākṣin*) belongs to the individual soul (*jīva*).

##### **2. Classification of Sense-Organ**

An understanding of the sense-organ will help us appreciate the nature of consciousness (*sākṣin*). A sense-organ (*indriya*) is defined as that which<sup>33</sup> has the power of flowing

towards its object (*viṣaya*). Dvaita gives a three-fold classification of sense-organs (*indriyas*), viz., (1) the substantive and the non-substantive, (2) the cognitive (*jñānendriya*) and the conative (*karmendriya*), and (3) the eternal and the non-eternal. The five cognitive sense-organs (*jñānendriyas*): the organs of hearing (*śrotra*), touch (*tvak*), sight (*cakṣus*), taste (*rasana*), & smell (*ghraṇa*) and the five conative sense-organs (*karmendriyas*): organs of speech (*vāk*), grasping (*pāni*), movement (*pāda*), excretion (*pāyu*) & generation (*upastha*). According to Madhva, are the same as in other systems of Indian philosophy. These senses are “material” and non-eternal in nature, and they arise from the “*taijas*” aspect of *ahaṅkāra*. The only eternal-sense is the witness-consciousness (*sākṣin*)<sup>34</sup> which constitutes the essence of the soul (*jīva*). Apart from witness-consciousness (*sākṣin*), the sense-organs (*indriyas*) of the Lord, Goddess Lakṣmī and the liberated souls are eternal in nature. There are three different views about the sense-organs (*indriyas*).

(1) Visible Sense: For Buddhism, a sense-organ (*indriyas*) is an orifice (*golaka*) viz., the eyes, the ears, the nose, etc., as visible to us. But Mīmāṃsakas however reject this view. Because there can be an orifice without the functioning of the corresponding sense-organ.

(2) Invisible Sense: Mīmāṃsā upholds that a sense-organ (*indriya*) is not the perceptible physical organ, but a peculiar capacity (*śakti*) of the organ.

(3) Neither Visible nor Invisible Sense: Many philosophers, however, affirm<sup>35</sup> that an *indriya* is neither the organ itself nor its capacity, but that it is a totally different substance (*dravya*) having its locus in the visible sense-organ. If visible orifices or their capacities were senses (*indriyas*), serpents that have no such physical organs as ears could not hear. Besides, trees which do not have these sense-organs could not perceive. So an *indriya* is not identified with either a physical (*golakas*) sense-organ or a capacity (*sakti*) of the sense-organ. It is a very subtle material substance composed of the same substance, the quality of which is apprehended by it. For e.g., the eye, receives impressions of colour (*rūpa*), a quality of light, because it is itself made up of the same substance as light. Similarly the nose which perceives smell a quality of earth (*pṛthvi*), is itself composed of earth.

### 3. Proofs for Sense-Organs

The existence of sense-organs (*indriya*) is proved by inference (*anumāna*). Every action presupposes an instrumental cause (*karana*); therefore the act of perceiving also requires (*karana*) called the sense organ (*indriya*). The knowing Self perceives objects through the instrumentality of the sense-organs (*indriyas*). The sense-organs (*indriyas*) play a significant role in the means of knowledge (*pramāṇas*).

According to Dvaita, the term “*pramāṇa*” refers to: (1) the forms of valid knowledge (*kevala-pramāṇas*) and (2) the means of valid knowledge (*anu-pramāṇas*). But the other schools of Indian philosophy use the word *pramāṇa* to refer to only for the means of getting valid knowledge. According to Dvaita, the forms of valid knowledge (*kevala-pramāṇas*) reveal the objects directly are therefore known as primary among the *pramāṇas* and since the means of valid knowledge (*anu-pramāṇas*) reveal objects indirectly and they are known as secondary *pramāṇas*.

### 4. Nature of Consciousness

#### a) Purest Sense-Organ

According to Madhva, cognitive senses are of two kinds: (1) the intuitive faculty (*sākṣin*), and (2) the ordinary five cognitive senses are already mentioned the above and mind (*manas*). The *sākṣin* is considered as purest form of sense organ (*indriya*) is identical with the cognitive-agent and possesses absolute validity<sup>36</sup> of knowledge because there is no obstacle preventing the valid knowledge whereas the other sense-organs have problems. Madhva upholds that the mind (*manas*) is one among the seven organs of knowledge (*jñānendriya*) and also as a faculty of memory. The defects present in the mind (*manas*) are instrumental producing erroneous knowledge example passions and attachments,<sup>37</sup> and defects in the senses are diseases for example jaundice, etc. the *sākṣin* is not vulnerable to defects and therefore always produces valid knowledge.

#### b) Consciousness (*Sākṣin*) is an Attribute of the Self

According to Advaitin, consciousness is not an attribute of self but is its real nature. But according to Dvaita, consciousness is inseparable attribute of an essential attribute of

the Self (*jīva*) and is inseparable from the nature of the self (*jīva*). Without consciousness the self (*jīva*) would not be the self.

**c) Consciousness is Eternal**

The trifold classification of sense-organs (*indriyas*) clearly shows that the ordinary sense-organs arise from gross material which is perishable/non-eternal, whereas witness-consciousness (*sākṣin*) is the only eternal-sense which forms the essence of the soul (*jīva*) and is substantive in nature. Apart from the witness-consciousness (*sākṣin*), the sense-organs (*indriyas*) of the Lord, Lakṣmī and the liberated souls are eternal in nature.

**d) Indirectly Perceives the Objects**

The *sākṣin* cognizes objects indirectly through all the other senses. Therefore, perception by the *sākṣin* is indirect. Here, we have a problematic: if the *sākṣin* cognizes the objects indirectly through the other sense-organs; then, how can it be the purest form of sense-organ? Because, if the other sense-organs are defective; then that will affect the *sākṣin* and the validity of knowledge, since according to Madhva perception is “the contact of the defectless sense-organ with a defectless object”.

**e) Directly Perceives Objects**

*Sākṣin* directly perceives those objects which cannot be apprehended by the other senses. Objects directly cognized by the *sākṣin* are:

- i. The five external senses,
- ii. The internal organ (*antaḥ-karaṇa/manas*),
- iii. The attributes of the mind (*manas*), e.g. pleasure (*sukha*) and pain (*duḥkha*),
- iv. Ignorance (*avidyā*),
- v. Time (*kāla*),
- vi. Unmanifested ether (*avyākṛtākāśa*), and
- vii. The Self (Ātman).

## f) Consciousness and Self Relation

Another special feature of Dvaita is the view that the Self is known as an object by its own sentience, namely the *sākṣin*. According to Advaita, Self-knowledge, i.e. knowledge of oneself by oneself, is a contradiction in terms because one and the same entity cannot be both the subject and the object in the same act of cognition. But, according to Dvaita, self-knowledge, like any other knowledge, is meaningful, and it is explained in Dvaita as perception of the Self by the *sākṣin*. The *sākṣin* is not a phenomenon apart from the Self. The *sākṣin* is the Self's own permanent quality of consciousness. Yet, a distinction is made between the two by the presence of *viśesa* in the Self. *Viśesa* is that peculiar power of a substance through which a quality is distinguished as different from the substance with which it is associated. Consciousness (*sākṣin*) has two functions: (1) production of knowledge and (2) revealing the presence and validity of knowledge

For understanding the nature of consciousness (*sākṣin*) in Dvaita, it is necessary for us to understand the epistemology of Dvaita. The following is a quick account of the role of consciousness (*sākṣin*) in Dvaita epistemology.

### 5. Consciousness in Forms of Knowledge (*Kevala-Pramāṇas*)

The forms of valid knowledge (*kevala-pramāṇa*) reveal the nature of their objects with help of consciousness (*sākṣin*). According to Madhva, there are four forms of valid knowledge (*kevala-pramāṇas*) viz., a) *Īśvarajñāna*. b) *Lakṣmījñāna*, c) *Yogijñāna* and d) *Ayogijñāna*. These are again classified under two heads as: witness-consciousness (*sākṣi-jñāna*) & modal-consciousness (*vṛtti-jñāna*). a) *Īśvarajñāna* & b) *Lakṣmījñāna* come under nature of witness-consciousness (*sākṣi-jñāna*) and c) *Yogijñāna* & d) *Ayogijñāna* come under the nature of both witness-consciousness (*sākṣi-jñāna*) & modal consciousness (*vṛtti-jñāna*).

#### a) *Īśvarajñāna*

God's knowledge about Himself and all the objects and activities is *svārūpa-jñāna* i.e., immediate, intuitive, clear, luminous, particular veridical/actual, all comprehensive,

eternal and impartial. It is a part of His nature. God comprehends everything; nothing can evade His intuitive knowledge (*divyadr̥ṣṭī*), and nothing is unknown to Him.

**b) *Lakṣmījñāna***

*Lakṣmījñāna* is also *svarūpa-jñāna*. Lakṣmī has no abilities like those of God. But, Her knowledge is dependent on God and inferior to that of God. But it is sophisticated when comprehend with the capacities possessed by the dependent souls, lower than Herself in the hierarchy.

**c) *Yogijñāna***

Those who regularly practice yoga i.e. austerities penance (*tapas*), repeat God's name (*namā/japa*), meditation (*dhyāna*), the deep concentration (*samādhi*) etc., are yogis. Through yogic practice they acquire extra-ordinary powers and are able to have witness-consciousness (*sākṣī-jñāna*) and *modal-consciousness* (*vṛtti-jñāna*) of past, present and future objects and events. All of them do not deserve to be equal in gaining such knowledge; some gain more and better than other yogis. The witness-consciousness is eternal, has no beginning or end and continues depending on their yoga practice. Even in *mokṣa*, they have witness-consciousness. Whereas their modal-consciousness, although bigingless, continues till the attainment of *mokṣa*. After liberation, they are without the mind (*antaḥ-karaṇa*). Therefore, hence they have no modal-consciousness. Hence, modal-consciousness is not eternal. According to Dvaita, there are three kinds of *Yogijñāna* are: *Ṛjuyogijñāna*, *Tātvikayogijñāna* & *Atātvikayogijñāna*.

*Ṛjuyogijñāna*: These yogis are eligible to become the four faced Brahmā - the creator of the world: They have witness-consciousness and modal-consciousness, but their knowledge about God is incomplete. They can know the all phenomenon by merely willing/thinking/reflection. Their knowledge of God and the objects is limited and less luminous than *Laksmījñāna*, but it is superior to the knowledge of the souls subordinate to them. Although their knowledge is eternal and constant, through the practice of Yoga, it can be made more clear, vivid, specific and extensive until liberation is attained and thereafter.

*Tātvikayogijñāna*: The presiding deities of the reals (*tattvas*) viz., the presiding deity of: water (*Varuna*), fire (*Agni*) and other phenomenas are *Tātvikayogis*. They have modal-consciousness but their knowledge is more limited than that of *Rjuyogis* with regard to range and quality, and many phenomena lie beyond their scope of knowledge.

*Atātvikayogijñāna* is knowledge of those who are not the presiding deities. Their nature is beginningless, but their knowledge has a beginning; and is very limited. They cognize witness-consciousness only after they reach a higher spiritual stage through their practice.

#### **d) *Ayogijñāna***

*Ayogijñāna* is knowledge of the people other than the *yogis*. They include the best people who are eligible for liberation (*uttama muktivyogyas*) and the others lower in the spiritual hierarchy (*madhyama & adhama*). Knowledge of the *uttamas* is more wider and vivid than that of the others. These views of Madhva embedded in theological expressions have much psychological and epistemological significance. It is an empirically evident psychological fact that all are not intelligent and that some people are more knowledgeable than the others. .

### **6. Consciousness in Means of Knowledge (*Anu-Pramāṇa*)**

Like Viśiṣṭādvaita, Dvaita too admits three means of knowledge: a) perception (*pratyakṣa*) b) inference (*anumāna*) and c) verbal testimony (*śabda*). But, Dvaita calls these as three means of knowledge (*anu-pramāṇas*). External knowledge (*vṛtti-jñāna*) is that which arises from an *anu-pramāṇa*. Among these three means of knowledge, the *sākṣin* plays a major role in perception (*pratyakṣa*).

#### **a) Perception (*pratyakṣa*)**

Like Viśiṣṭādvaita, Dvaitin too accepts the Nyāya view of perception (*pratyakṣa*). Dvaita defines perception (*pratyakṣa*) as “the defectless sense-organ” and “the contact of the defectless sense-organ with a defectless object.”<sup>38</sup>

## i. Two Kinds of Consciousness

Madhva classifies perception (*pratyakṣa*) under seven heads based on the seven sense-organs (*indriyas*) recognized by him. The seven sense-organs (*indriyas*) of perception (*pratyakṣa*) are divided into two groups: (1) Witness-Consciousness (*Sākṣi-jñāna*) and (2) Modal-Consciousness (*Vṛtti-jñāna*).

**(1) Witness-Consciousness (*Sākṣi-Jñāna*):** Witness-consciousness (*sākṣi-jñāna*) is spiritual in nature. It is the essence of the soul. Its knowledge is unmediated by the senses, immediate, intuitive, indubitable, and absolutely certain. Therefore, it is free from all defects and absolutely valid. Witness consciousness (*sākṣi-jñāna*) cognizes the existence of the Ātman, its attributes, ignorance, the mind and its modification like pleasure and pain, time and space, etc.,<sup>39</sup> Witness-consciousness (*sākṣi-jñāna*) is the certifier and the terminus of all valid cognitions.

**(2) Modal-Consciousness (*Vṛtti-Jñāna*):** Dvaita admits six physical sense-organs (*indriyas*) the organs of: smell, taste, sight, hearing, touch and the mind (*manas*). All the five sense-organs are cognize their respective objects. The mind (*manas*) apprehends all the objects of the organs of knowledge (*jñāne-indriyas*) through the instrumentality of the five organs of knowledge (*indriyas*). Its independent function is in recollection (*smṛti*). Modal-consciousness (*vṛtti-jñāna*) is material in nature. It is mediated by the five senses and the mind. So knowledge received through modal consciousness (*vṛtti-jñāna*) is subject to defects. Hence modal consciousness (*vṛtti-jñāna*) can never be witness-consciousness (*sākṣi-jñāna*). All doubts are products of modal consciousness (*vṛtti-jñāna*).

## ii. Kinds of Perception

Defects in the sense-organs and the physical-objects prevent us from knowing the objects by distorting our knowledge of them. Because of these reasons like Viśiṣṭādvaita, Dvaita too admits certain conditions for perception (*pratyakṣa*).

Perception is of four kinds: *Īśvara-pratyakṣa*, *Lakṣmī-pratyakṣa*, *Yogi-pratyakṣa* and *Ayogi-pratyakṣa*. The first two kinds of perception (*pratyakṣa*) involve the senses



that are of the very nature of Īśvara and Lakṣmī respectively (*svarūpendriyatmaka*). In the *Yogi-pratyakṣa* and *Ayogi-pratyakṣa* the instruments of perception are partly the senses which are of their very nature (*svarūpendriyas*) and partly the sense-organs. The objects of these different kinds of perception are the same as those of the respective cognitions.<sup>40</sup>

The external sense-organs are of three kinds: divine (*daiva*), and demonic (*asura*) and intermediate (*madhyama*). The cognition by demonic senses are usually invalid, and the intermediate type is partly valid and partly invalid.<sup>41</sup>

Among the *ayogins*, the *svarūpendriya* of the *Muktiyogyas* also perceive correctly the objects and their adjunctive attributes. The *svarūpendriyas* of the *Nitya-samsārins* and the *Tamoyogyas* perceive merely the form only of an object. Their cognition of the adjunctive attributes is sometimes wholly erroneous and sometimes partially valid and partially invalid.

## **7. Consciousness and States of Experience (*Avasthās*)**

The waking (*jāgrat-avastha*), dream (*svapna-avastha*), and deep sleep (*suṣupti-avastha*) states of consciousness were discussed elaborately in Viśiṣṭādvaita. For Dvaita, modal-consciousness (*vṛtti-jñāna*) operates only during the waking and dream states, and it is absent during the deep sleep and liberation, but witness-consciousness (*sākṣi-jñāna*) functions in all four states of experience.

## CHAPTER IV

### ESTRANGEMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

This chapter examines the “Estrangement of Consciousness” in an ethical perspective. The term “estrangement” is not used in the literal sense of the term, but only figuratively to refer to “bondage”. This Chapter will discuss the bondage of the embodied-consciousness (*jīva*). In Indian philosophy, the state of bondage is called “*saṃsāra*” and understood as a beginningless process of the life of finite beings that are born, die, and are reborn, determined and governed by the law of *karma*.

In Indian philosophy the concept of “bondage” is recognized and discussed by the different schools of Indian philosophy. According to Jainism, a living conscious substance is known as the suffering individual (*jīva*). The soul acts due to its worldly passions and emotions which are responsible for its suffering. Jainism regards suffering as bondage. Bondage is of two kinds: (a) Internal bondage (subjective) - this is the soul’s bondage due to bad disposition (*bhāva-bandha*), and (b) Material bondage - this is the soul’s bondage due to its actual association with matter (*dravya-bandha*).

According to Nyāya - Vaiśeṣika, the soul’s wrong knowledge is (*mithyā-jñāna*), that it is the body, the mind and senses is the cause of bondage. Because of this wrong knowledge the soul engages in action (*pravṛttis*) initiated by passions and impulses (*doṣa*) to experience pain (*duḥkha*) and pleasure (*sukha*) and consider it as real. As long as the soul is associated with a body, wrong knowledge cannot be terminated.

According to Sāṅkhya – Yoga, suffering is regarded as bondage. Non-discrimination (*aviveka*) between the Self and the not-Self caused by ignorance (*ajñāna*) is the cause of suffering. Due to ignorance, the embodied Self (*jīva*) wrongly identifies itself with the body, senses and mind and thereby experiences the miseries of transmigration (*saṃsāra*).

Advaita is the foremost among the Vedānta schools. Before discussing the estrangement of consciousness in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita, let us examine the

estrangement of consciousness in Advaita. According to Advaita, *māyā* and *avidyā* are essentially *prakṛti*, but they differ in their constitution. When *sattva-guṇa* is predominant in *prakṛti* it is known as *māyā*. But when *tamas* is predominant, in *prakṛti* is known as *avidyā*. *Māyā* and *avidyā* function in diametrically opposed ways.

Purity – *akaluṣīkṛtatā*- signifies the predominance of *sattva-guṇa* in *prakṛti*, because of which it is not tainted/overpowered (*anabhibhūa*) by the other two *guṇas*. *Prakṛti* can never be free from any of the three *guṇas*, because they will be existing in varying degrees. *Sattvagūṇa* is luminous (*prakāśātmaka*) in the sense that it yields knowledge and confers *ānanda*. *Prakṛti* is always endowed with *cidābhāsa* or *cidānandamāyābrahmapratibimba* verse. *Māyā* which is an aspect of *prakṛti* should also naturally enjoy the same *cidābhāsa*.

In contrast to the above, *prakṛti* which has *aviśuddhi-naviśeṣeṇaśuddhi*-no particular purity or which has impurity is called *avidyā*. The impurity is due to the presence of *rajas* and *tamas* in different degrees together with *sattva*.

Due to purity and impurity of *sattva*, one and the same *prakṛti* is known as *māyā* and *avidyā* respectively. The main aim of the *māyā-avidyā* distinction is to reveal the resultant *Īśvara* and *jīva*. But the final aim of the distinction is to describe the modus operandi of *avidyā* which subjects the *jīva* to suffer transmigration/existence (*samsāra*).

According to Advaita, ignorance (*avidyā*) is the root cause of bondage and suffering. The Self is eternal, pure consciousness. Due to ignorance (*avidyā*), the Self wrongly identifies itself with the physical body and its components - *manas*, *ahaṅkāra* and *mahat*, which are evolutes of *prakṛti*. When the Self terminates its wrong identification and the material body, sense, mind complex it attains liberation.

## A. ESTRANGEMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA

The soul (*jīva*) is a conscious substance and its classification was already discussed in detail in Chapter II. Rāmānuja classifies souls under three heads: (1) the bound (*samsārin*), (2) the liberated (*mukta*), and (3) the eternal (*nitya*).

(1) Human beings and other creatures are the bound souls (*samsārins*). These souls are in bondage because they forget their own eternal nature, self-luminosity and dependence on God because of *avidyā*. (2) Liberated (*muktas*) souls do not sin against God and they are the devotees of God. A released soul attains equality with Brahman. But equality with Brahman here refers to merely the enjoyment of bliss and not the performance of the cosmic functions of God. (3) Eternals (*nityas*) are Ananta, Garuḍa, Viśvaksena, *et al*, whose consciousness does not contract and their actions are in harmony with the will of God. Their special duties are determined by God’s will. They too can incarnate according to their own will just like the incarnation of God. Viśiṣṭādvaita upholds that *avidyā* is the cause of bondage of the embodied souls.

### 1. Bondage (*Bandha*)

According to Rāmānuja, ignorance (*avidyā*) and action (*karma*) are the cause of bondage. Bondage is due to ignorance of one’s true nature. Because of which a person mistakes the not-self (body) as the Self. The origin of the soul’s association with ignorance (*avidyā*) is inexplicable. Hence, it is considered as beginningless (*anādi*). This is similar to the seed-sprout analogy, we cannot explain which came first – the seed or the sprout.

### 2. Ignorance (*Avidyā*)

Ignorance (*avidyā*) is an important concept in Rāmānuja’s seven fold -criticism (*sapta-vidhā-anupāpatti*) of *māyā* - the key concept of Advaita. The entire practical teachings of Advaita presuppose the concept of ignorance (*avidyā*). The bondage of an individual is determined by ignorance (*avidyā*) -the root cause; and knowledge is the means of its termination. According to Advaita, ignorance (*avidyā*) has six aspects:

- i. It is beginningless (*anādi*)
- ii. It can be negated through right knowledge (*jñāna-nivartya*)
- iii. It is a positive phenomenon (*bhāva-rūpa*)
- iv. Its ontological status is that it is neither real nor unreal (*anirvacanīya*)
- v. It has two powers – the power to conceal (*āvarṇa-śakti*) and the power to project (*vikṣepa-śakti*)
- vi. Its locus (*āśraya*) is either Brahman or the *jīva*.<sup>1</sup>

According to Rāmānuja, the Advaita theory of *avidyā*, instead of solving problems, only explains away problems. Hence, the reason why Rāmānuja targeted the concept of *avidyā - māyā*. Rāmānuja begins his commentaries on the *Brahma-Sūtra* called the *Śrī-bhāṣya* with the *Mahāpūrvapakṣa* stating the Advaita position on ignorance (*avidyā*), and then proceeds systematically to refute it.

According to Rāmānuja, ignorance (*avidyā*) has two different meanings: (a) a metaphysical meaning, and (b) an ethical meaning. All schools of Indian philosophy discuss ignorance (*avidyā*) in their own unique way. For Sāṅkhya, “*avidyā*” means “*aviveka*”- it is used in the intellectual sense to denote that there is lack of discrimination between the Self and the not-Self. Nyāya also proffers an intellectual interpretation of *avidyā/ajñāna*. In Advaita, *māyā-avidyā* is the objective matrix of the world. It is considered as positive (*bhavarūpa*) in nature, indescribable (*anirvacanīya*) and illusory (*mithyā*) from the transcendental standpoint. The Advaita theory of ignorance (*avidyā*) has been thoroughly refuted by Rāmānuja.

### **3. Metaphysical Meaning of “Ignorance”**

For Rāmānuja, cosmic matter (*prakṛti*) itself has been called ignorance (*avidyā*). The non-conscious phenomena (*acit*) are the impediments, according to the Viśiṣṭādvaita, that prevent the soul from realizing its essential conscious nature. Since cosmic matter (*prakṛti*), which is non-conscious, is naturally opposed to knowledge (*vidyā*). It is the material cause of the world and is possessor of the three qualities (*triguṇatimika*) like the ignorance (*avidyā*) of Śaṅkara, but Rāmānuja’s standpoint is different in accepting the status of the ignorance (*avidyā*) of Śaṅkara. In Advaita, ignorance (*avidyā*) is illusory and not eternal. Brahman-knowledge (*svarūpa-jñāna*) discloses the illusory nature of the world and also implies the falsity of *māyā/avidyā*.<sup>2</sup> But, for Rāmānuja, cosmic matter (*prakṛti*) is called *avidyā*. It is metaphysically real, beginningless and endless, and the cause of all objects of the world.

Rāmānuja argues that, the world is real and true, because it can be perceived and can also be touched. Therefore, it is wrong to say that the world is not real and illusory.

Rāmānuja’s criticism of *māyā* is known as the Seven Untenabilities (*Sapta-vidhā-Anupāpatti*). They are the:

- a) Untenability of the Locus of *Avidyā* (*Āśraya-anupāpatti*)
- b) Untenability of Obscuration (*Tirodhāna-anupāpatti*)
- c) Untenability of *Avidyā*’s Nature (*Svarūpa-anupāpatti*)
- d) Untenability of Inexplicability (*Anirvacanīya-anupāpatti*)
- e) Ignorance cannot be Positive (*Pramāṇa-anupāpatti*)
- f) Untenability of Removability (*Nivartaka-anupāpatti*) and
- g) Ignorance is not Removed by Brahman-Knowledge (*Nivrittīyanupāpatti*)

### **The Seven Untenabilities (*Sapta-vidhā-Anupāpatti*)**

#### **a) Untenability of the Locus of *Avidyā* (*Āśraya-Anupāpatti*)**

According to Śaṅkara, ignorance (*avidyā*) is dependent upon Brahman (*parameśvarāśraya*). Ignorance (*avidyā*) prevents the Self from knowing its identity with Brahman. There are two schools of Advaita: (1) the Bhāmatī School and (2) the Vivaraṇa School. Both these schools of Advaita admits that Brahman is attributeless (*nirguṇa*), undifferentiated (*nirviśeṣa*), one and non-dual; and that the cosmos of multiplicity appears due to *avidyā*.<sup>3</sup> Rāmānuja’s question is, “where is *avidyā* located? What is its locus and content?” If Brahman is really *nirguṇa* and *nirviśeṣa*; then *avidyā* cannot be located in it. But the Advaitins and the critics of Advaita differs over on this issue. According to the Bhāmatī School *avidyā* is located in the *jīva*. Rāmānuja rejects this view with one sentence saying that, *avidyā* cannot be located in the *jīva* because *jīva* itself comes into existence only after Brahman is limited in the *jīva* by *avidyā*. Rāmānuja’s objection states that, the fallacy of reciprocal dependence (*anyonyāśraya*) is involved if one accepts the soul (*jīva*) as the locus of *avidyā* because it presupposes the existence of the soul (*jīva*); and simultaneously, the soul (*jīva*) is the result of *avidyā*!

According to the Vivaraṇa School, Brahman is the locus of *avidyā*. Rāmānuja rejects this view, and also argues that Brahman is the locus of *avidyā* because Brahman – like the sun, is of the nature of self-luminous knowledge. Hence, it is opposed to *avidyā* which is ignorance by nature e.g. light and darkness are opposed to each other; therefore

darkness cannot be located in the sun – Brahman. Moreover, the Advaitins themselves admit that *avidyā*/darkness cannot be the located in Brahman- Sun.

The Advaitin rejects Rāmānuja’s criticism. They argue that there are two kinds of knowledge: (1) Brahman knowledge (*svarūpa-jñāna*) and (2) mental cognitions (*vṛtti-jñāna*). *Avidyā* is the power (*śakti*) of Brahman. It is the cause of valid and erroneous cognitions, which are but modes (*vṛtti*) of the mind. Thus, mental-modes (*vṛtti-jñāna*) and *avidyā* are all revealed by Brahman-knowledge (*svarūpa-jñāna*). But Brahman-knowledge is self-luminous and not revealed by anything else. Brahman-knowledge (*svarūpa-jñāna*) is not opposed to *avidyā*. Brahman is of the nature of knowledge and reveals everything, including *avidyā*. There is no conflict between the revealers of Brahman-knowledge (*svarūpa-jñāna*) and the revealed mental-mode (*vṛtti-jñāna*). Rāmānuja also rejects the Advaita view, that knowledge is knowledge, how can Advaitin claim that one type of knowledge is opposed to *avidyā*, while another is not? So, he says that either Brahman or the *jīva* is not the locus of *avidyā*.

#### **b) Untenability of Obscuration (*Tirodhāna-Anupāpatti*)**

Advaita upholds that, Brahman is pure, non-dual, non-relational, and non-differentiated, self-luminous consciousness. Due to the obscuring and projecting powers of *avidyā*, it appears as - *Īśvara* and the *jīva*.<sup>4</sup> Rāmānuja’s second major objection is concerned with *avidyā*’s concealing nature of Brahman.

Rāmānuja asks, what does “concealment” mean? (1) is it preventing the origination of light/knowledge/consciousness? or (2) is it the destruction of the existing light/knowledge/consciousness? Since light (knowledge) and darkness (ignore) are opposed to each other. How can darkness-conceal light-Brahman? If Brahman is self-revealing, it is impossible for *avidyā* to conceal Brahman.

#### **c) Untenability of *Avidyā*’s Nature (*Svarūpa-Anupāpatti*)**

Initially Rāmānuja questions the ontological status of *avidyā*: is it real or unreal (*svarūpa-anupāpatti*)? According to Advaita, *avidyā* is neither real nor unreal (*sat-asat vilakṣaṇa*). Rāmānuja contends that *avidyā* must be either real or unreal since there is no

third position. If *avidyā* is real, it will result in a dualism, a position totally unacceptable to Advaita because then there will be two reals – Brahman and *avidyā*. But if *avidyā* is real; then, it cannot be destroyed because, what is real cannot be sublated according to Advaita. Consequently, then liberation will become impossible and the scriptures will become meaningless (*anartha*). If *avidyā* is unreal, then how can it project the world-illusion on Brahman? To say that *avidyā* is both real and unreal will result in a self-contradiction, and saying that it is neither positive nor negative is the abandonment of all logic.

**d) Untenability of Inexplicability (*Anirvacanīya-Anupāpatti*)**

Rāmānuja continuously attacks the Advaita theory of indescribability (*anirvacanīyata*). *Māyā* can be understood from three different viewpoints. To the ordinary individual the world of *māyā* is real (*vastavi*) to a knower of Brahman, the world is unreal (*tuccha*), and for the logicians *māyā* is neither real nor unreal (*anirvacanīya*). According to Rāmānuja, for Advaitins (*avidyā*) is indescribable (*anirvacanīya*). If we say that an object of cognition has neither positive nor negative characteristics features, then all the phenomena will become the objects of all cognitions.

**e) Ignorance cannot be Positive (*Pramāṇa-Anupāpatti*)**

Rāmānuja asks the Advaitin, the means of knowledge (*pramāṇas*) for cognizing *avidyā*. *Avidyā* cannot be cognized through perception because it reveals either an entity or a non-entity. *Avidyā* cannot be inferred because inference requires a valid mark as middle term which *avidyā* lacks. Moreover scriptures declare *māyā* as a real and wonderful power of God for creating the varied world.

**f) Untenability of Removability (*Nivartaka-Anupāpatti*)**

Rāmānuja's contends that Brahman-knowledge cannot eliminate *avidyā*. Advaita upholds that: (1) *avidyā* is beginningless (*anādi*) but that it has an end. All worldly phenomena are related as cause and effect. If *avidyā* is the cause of the world, according to Advaita, what is the cause of *avidyā*? If *avidyā* had a cause, then that cause will have another for that cause, and so on *ad infinitum*. It is only by presupposing time that one



can speak about a beginning for ignorance. Hence, it is wrong to even raise such a question. (2) However, *avidyā* has an end. *Avidyā* is not beginningless like Brahman, because then it cannot be negated. But *avidyā* has an end because it vanishes when Brahman-knowledge is attained. (3) *Avidyā* is not eternal because it is destroyed by right knowledge. (4) The nature of this right knowledge which eliminates *avidyā* is one, non-dual, impartite and undifferentiated. Rāmānuja rejects Brahman-knowledge as claimed by Advaita as impossible. Knowledge always involves determination and distinctions. Hence, knowledge of an attributeless Brahman is impossible. Therefore a complete knowledge of truth is impossible. Hence such an impossible knowledge of an attributeless Brahman cannot be the professed by Advaita, for eliminating of ignorance (*avidyā*).

**g) Ignorance is not Removed by Brahman Knowledge (*Nivṛittyānupāpatti*)**

Rāmānuja’s final objection against *avidyā* contends that ignorance cannot be negated at all. According to Rāmānuja bondage is real, and knowledge of Brahman-Ātman identity cannot eliminate it. *Avidyā* can be destroyed only by God’s grace. For Rāmānuja, bondage (*samsāra*) is real. It is the outcome of ignorance. Bondage can be destroyed only through Knowledge, i.e. through Knowledge that Brahman is the inner ruler different from the souls (*cit*) and matter (*acit*). Such Knowledge alone can confer release. This Knowledge can be obtained only by God’s grace through the performance of one’s daily duties as prescribed in scripture, the idea of attaining any result but with the idea of propitiating the Lord.

Advaita upholds that *Nivartaka-jñāna* destroys ignorance (*avidyā*), just as fire dies down by itself after burning the forest, i.e. it is self-consuming. Rāmānuja rejects this view saying that it is not sound, because when fire burns a forest; the ashes remain even after the fire dies down. Similarly, if we say that ignorance (*avidyā*) can be eliminated, we must admit that it will continue to exist thereafter in another form of its own. Total liberation, therefore, is absolutely impossible. Although the world is illusory for Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita reject the Advaita view and Dvaita declare that the world is real.

#### 4. Ethical Meaning of “Ignorance”

The *karma* theory is a basic concept of Indian philosophy. There are four kinds of action (*karma*): (1) daily action (*nitya-karma*), (2) occasional action (*naimittika-karma*) (3) actions done with desire (*kāmya-karma*), (3) occasional action (*naimittika-karma*), and (4) prohibited actions (*niśiddha-karma*). Among these, the performance of the first three kinds of action generates merits (*puṇya*) and the performance of the prohibited action generates demerit sin (*pāpa*). The performance/non-performance of these four kinds of action is the cause of three kinds of destiny (*karma*) – accumulated action (*sañcita-karma*); present action (*prārabdha-karma*) and future action (*āgāmi-karma*). Human beings should therefore be very careful while engaging in action because every action has its consequence – merits (*puṇya*) or demerits (*pāpa*). The result (*phala*) is by our actions. The soul’s bondage is beginningless (*anādi*). Rāmānuja uses the term ignorance (*avidyā*) in the context of *varṇa-āśrama-karmas*<sup>5</sup> within the ethical realm.

Ignorance (*avidyā*) is a positive entity having a power to obscure attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*); and thereby creating the false sense of agency in the soul (*jīva*). The attitude of a person towards the world, therefore, gets distorted because the individual imagines and considers oneself as the Lord of the world. The individual also believes that the main purpose of the world is merely to satisfy the desires of a person and provide pleasure. Ignorance, as *karma*, thus becomes the cause of a person’s experience (*bhoga*) and not the cause of the experienced (*bhogyā*) which is matter (*prakṛti*). Due to insufficient expansion of the attributive-consciousness, a person adopts a wrong attitude towards the world and instead of recognizing God as the supreme sovereign of everything; the individual considers oneself as the governor of the world. In the context of action (*karma*), therefore, ignorance (*avidyā*) functions as a principle of obscurator/concealment. In this sense, ignorance can be viewed as a third power in addition to *kṣetrajñā-śakti* and *prakṛti-śakti*.<sup>6</sup> All this analysis of the meaning of *avidyā*, reveals that in Viśiṣṭādvaita, *avidyā* does not have any rigid and fixed meaning. Anything that generates in the soul a strong desire for the empirical objects and the sensory pleasures of life can be called *avidyā*.

Viśiṣṭādvaita recognizes that since creation and dissolution cannot take place unless assisted by *karma*, it is only proper and simpler to identify *avidyā* with *karma*, and consider action (*karma*) as the cause of differences in the experience of the individuals.

## **B. ESTRANGEMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN DVAITA**

The significance of ignorance (*avidyā*) as a principle causing the fall of a human being is admitted by all schools of Indian philosophy. But the schools differ among themselves on the nature (*svarūpa*) and the locus (*aśraya*) of ignorance (*avidyā*). In schools that admit difference (*bheda*) and a plurality of souls (*jīvas*), the soul is viewed as the locus of *avidyā*. But systems that reduce the material-phenomena to a single principle, uphold that ignorance is located in the ultimate Reality.

The soul's (*jīvas*) nature and classification, according to Madhva, were already discussed in Chapter II. Like Rāmānuja, Madhva classifies the souls under three major heads: the bound (*samsārin*), the liberated (*mukta*), and the eternal (*nitya*). But, he differs from Rāmānuja in that he divides the bound souls again into three groups based on the natures as: (a) those fit for *mokṣa* (*mukti-yogyā*); (b) those eternally involved in transmigration (*nityasamsārins*); and (c) those condemned to suffer eternally in hell (*tamoyogyas*). This classification of the soul is based on their natures of eternality and permanentness.

### **1. Intrinsic Nature of Ignorance(*Svabhāvajñāna-Vāda*)**

The Dvaita theory of bondage known as *svabhāvajñāna-vāda* considers that ignorance is intrinsic and that it is due to the soul's ignorance of its true nature as a being entirely dependent on the one independent reality - God (Brahman). "*Svabhāva*" means "intrinsic nature" and "*ajñāna*" means "ignorance", i.e. ignorance about the intrinsic nature. Ignorance (*avidyā*) can characterize the finite soul (*jīva*) not to God who is perfect in all respects. The soul's bondage occurs due to God's will. The soul (*jīva*) has many attributes (*viśeṣas*). It therefore is not *nirviśeṣa* and *nirguṇa*, real and self-luminous. The soul wrongly considers itself as independent, although it is totally dependent on God for its existence and experience.

The immediate cause of the soul's bondage is ignorance (*avidyā*) about its relationship with God - The only independent reality - God is Brahman, on whom the soul is absolutely dependent upon for its existence, knowledge, and activity. But consequently the soul forgets that its knowership (*jñāṛtva*), agency (*karṛtva*) and enjoyership (*bhokṛtva*) are derived from God and imagines that they are self-derived and that it is self-sufficient.

According to Madhva, soul's real nature is to possess unmixed bliss (*ānanda*). After attaining liberation the bliss is fully manifested to the Self. All bound souls: *muktiyogyas*, *tamoyogyas* and *nityasaṁsārins* have to be born in the world, i.e., they have to get associated with their corresponding maternal limitations - their bodies, *karmas*, *vāsanās* etc., and become finite and bound, for attaining their respective moral and spiritual goals. When the soul experiences misery (*duḥkha*), it is said to be in bondage (*bandha*). The sorrows experienced by the soul constitute its bondage. Bondage is real, but it is extrinsic and not intrinsic in the nature of the soul (*jīva*).

## 2. Ignorance (*Avidyā*)

According to Dvaita, action (*karma*), ignorance (*ajñāna*) and latent psychic impression (*vāsanās*) are components of the subtle body (*liṅga-śarīra*) of embodied soul (*jīva*), these transmigrate with the disembodied soul till its liberation.etc. And are responsible for soul's bondage, but they are only the penultimate dependent factors. They are non-sentient (*jaḍa*), therefore they cannot operate by themselves without any initiative. The Self is conscious and is superior to them, but the limiting factors are initiated into operation by God who determines their functions in creating the soul's bondage according to its nature, which is obscured from it.

## 3. Forms of Ignorance

The *Padārthasaṅgraha* describes four kinds of ignorance (*avidyā*) – a. *Jīvacchādika*, b. *Paramacchādika* c. *Saivala* and d. *Māyā*,

- a) ***Jīvacchādika***: This is ignorance which veils the real nature of the soul as consciousness and bliss.

- b) **Paramacchādika**: this is ignorance whose object is to obscure the nature of *ParamĀtman*. Consequently, the individual soul is incapable of knowing the real *svarūpa* of *Īśvara*. *Jīvacchādika* and *Paramacchādika* are finally destroyed by *ParamĀtman* when God out of compassion for the devotees desires their liberation. Hence, for attaining liberation the destruction of *Jīvacchādika* and *Paramacchādika* is very important.
- c) **Saivala**: *Māyā/avidyā* which is the cause of the world bondage is called *saivala*. Its nature is somewhat cosmic when compared with *Jīvacchādika* and *Paramacchādika*. The nature of *saivala* can be illustrated by an example. When we see a pond, we find that its surface is covered by a green sheath or algae. This sheath is broken when we insert our hands into the water. But when we take out our hands, the sheath covers up water-surface once again. Similarly, by hearing and concentrating on the teachings of scripture, the effects of *Saivala* can be overcome but a slight negligence of the soul can strengthen and empower *Saivala*. The Dvaitins, therefore uphold that only God can liberate the *jīva* from the bondage caused by *Saivala*.
- d) **Māyā**: This is the fourth and the last form of *avidyā*, which has a capacity to function as the material cause of illusory creations. A famous mythological example - kind of *avidyā* is the false creation of an army of elephants, horses, etc., by Shiva on the battle-field during his fight with Pradyumna.<sup>7</sup>

These four forms of ignorance are cause for the soul's bondage. They have two functions: they conceal the nature of the soul as a dependent and also the nature of God (*ParamĀtman*), as the only independent. But how does the Self, which actually is self-luminous, become ignorant? According to Dvaita, God Himself is the cause of soul's ignorance and bondage. Since the power to conceal self-revealing nature of the Self is under God's control, He deceives the soul through His mysterious power - *māyā* to cause ignorance. Hence, God is the ultimate cause of the soul's bondage. This does not imply that God pushed the soul ignorance at some time. What is intended by describing God as the cause of the soul's ignorance (*avidyā*) is that the soul's association with ignorance is

determined by God's pleasure and will. In this way, ignorance and its effect (bondage) are beginningless.

The above explanation may depict God as cruel. But, God is full of grace (*prasāda*). While His *māyā* initiates bondage, His grace bestows liberation (*mokṣa*). What is required is that the soul should qualify itself for God's grace (*prasāda*) during bondage (*samsāra*). The material world is created by God not only to liberate the souls but also to enable them to exhaust their *karmas*. Ignorance about the soul's dependence on God is the cause of bondage. It can be remediated only by knowledge (*jñāna*) of its dependence on God. By practicing *karma* and *bhakti*, the soul can purify itself and receive knowledge. Knowledge qualifies the soul for receiving God's grace (*prasāda*), can which alone confer liberation. Hence, God is the ultimate cause of the soul's bondage and liberation. God's will in the matter cannot be questioned.

#### **4. Criticism of Advaitin's Bondage and Ignorance**

Madhva criticises Śaṅkara's view on bondage and ignorance (*avidyā*). For Madhva, "bondage" and "liberation" refers to the soul (*jīva*) and soul as an entity different from Brahman. And its bondage (*samsāra*) and liberation (*mokṣa*) are real. But for Advaita, bondage (*samsāra*) is not real because if it were real then it cannot be destroyed, and liberation will become impossible. According to Madhva, what is real need not be eternal. Even a transient phenomenon having limited existence can be real. Therefore, for Madhva there is no contradiction in upholding that bondage is real and that it has an end.

Dvaitin questions the Advaita view on the locus of *avidyā*? It cannot be located in the soul because the soul (*jīva*) is an effect of *avidyā*. It cannot be located in Brahman because it is pure consciousness. To dismiss the questions as irrelevant, because *avidyā* is illusory is to evade the question. But in the Dvaita theory of ignorance there is no problem in viewing the soul (*jīva*) as the locus of *avidyā*. Because for Madhva, the soul is both: a. limiting adjunct (*upādhi*) and is also a reflection (*pratibimba*) of Brahman as soul and soul itself as a limiting adjunct (*upādhi*).

Hence in Dvaita, bondage (*samsāra*), liberation (*mokṣa*), ignorance (*avidyā*) and knowledge (*jñāna*) of the souls are all real and dependent on God. It is God, who binds and liberates the souls as the *Bandhaka* and the *Mokṣaka*.<sup>8</sup>

The concept of evil is related with bondage and God. All schools of Indian philosophy admit birth and death which characterize bondage and that they are terminated in liberation. Bondage refers to soul's association with the body and its involvement in transmigratory existence (*samsāra*) full of suffering and evil. God has infinite auspicious attributes. But bondage raises serious challenge to theism. Love and omnipotence are two among the infinite attributes of God. According to theism, God loves His creatures and His creation and is omnipotent. The atheists deny this because they do not believe that God is full of love, for he is not the destroyer of evil existing in the world and functioning as the cause of the soul's miseries. God is not omnipotent because He cannot destroy every evil. For example, we see every one suffering because of other human beings, diseases and or natural calamities on the earth. Therefore, it is clear that God does not love his creatures and that He is not omnipotent.

The above objection of the atheists is a severe criticism of theism. Theism cannot accept the view that God is unconcerned about His creatures and their suffering and a world full of evils.

The objection of the atheists will not affect the Advaita view because for Advaita, evil and bondage are illusory. According to Advaita the Brahman is blissful and there may be can no evil.

According to Madhva, bondage/evil is real. *Sādhanās* help to overcome this evil. If there was no evil, the praxis for attaining liberation will become meaningless and unnecessary. If the practise of *sādhanā* is meaningful and relevant, then the evil/bondage and *mokṣa* both have to be admitted as real existent.

## **5. Criticism of Theory of the World-Creation**

We have already seen that for Advaita, *avidyā/māyā* is the cause of the soul's bondage therefore it deludes the soul into believing that the illusory world is real. But Dvaita

attributes the soul's bondage as arising from a forgetfulness of its intrinsic nature (*svabhāvajñāna-vāda*) as dependent on God. Dvaita therefore, totally differs from Advaita in considering the world as real and not an illusion. There are two theories of creation of the world: (a) *Brahma-Vivarta-Vāda* and (b) *Brahma-Parinama-Vāda*.

**a) *Brahma-Vivarta-Vāda***

Advaita accepts *Brahma-vivarta-vāda* as its theory of creation of the world. According to Advaita, Brahman is the only reality, one only without a second. The soul and the world are not the effects of a real transformation (*pariṇāma*) of Brahman; but only mere appearances (*vivarta*) of Brahman. There is transformation (*pariṇāma*) when milk changes into curd and appearance (*vivarta*), when the rope is misperceived as a snake. In the case of transformation, the cause and its effect are real. But in appearance (*vivarta*), nothing really comes into existence as the effect. In the rope-snake example, the rope is real and it is wrongly perceived as a snake. Here the rope is real; but its effect –“snake” is illusory, whereby no effect is produced. Similarly, Brahman is not transformed to the world or the souls. This world is only an appearance like the snake in a rope. Therefore, Advaitin rejects the reality of the world. Advaita dismiss the world is illusory.

**i. Criticism of *Brahma-Vivarta-Vāda***

Dvaita rejects the Advaita theory of the illusoriness of the world saying that the world's illusoriness cannot be proven through inference. Advaita Syllogism

Major Premise: Whatever is perceived is illusory e.g. rope-snake

Minor Premise: The World is perceived.

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Conclusion : Therefore the world is illusory.

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According to Dvaita, Śaṅkara is unable to prove the illusory nature of the world because; his inference (*drśyatvānumāna*) is fallacious. Madhva in his *Mithyātvanumānakhaṇḍana*, discusses five kinds of fallacies.

**(1) Contradictory Reason (*Viruddha*):** E.g. “Sound is eternal because it is created. “Created” is a contradictory reason. Similarly, in Śaṅkara's “perception of the world” is



cited as reason to disprove the world's reality. This reason, according to Madhva involves the fallacy of *viruddhahetu*.

(2) **Anaikantika**: Madhva refutes Advaita's inference through *anaikantika*. According to Nyāya, in the syllogism - "The hill is fiery because it is a knowable". "Knowable" similarly is present in the fiery and the non fiery phenomena of the Advaita inference:-

Whatever is perceived is illusory, e.g. rope-snake

The world is perceived

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Therefore, the world is illusory.

According to Advaita, perceivability is cited as a reason for proving the illusoriness of the world. But the argument is fallacious; because perceptibility is present in both the eternal and also the illusory phenomena. Madhva argues that the Ātman is an object of perceptual knowledge (*pratyakṣa*) and also verbal testimony (*śabda*). But, Śāṅkara does not reject the Ātman as illusory because it is perceived, contends Madhva.

What Śāṅkara means when he say that Ātman is perceived is that ĀTMAN is self-revealing. Therefore, it is not illumined/revealed by any other phenomenon. Jaya-Tīrtha replies that it is useless to imagine that there is knowledge of ĀTMAN which is not associated with or determined by any other knowledge. Self-knowledge which constitutes a part of this unitary experience is also objective because it has the Self as its object.

(3) **Unproved Middle (Sopādhika)**: The function of "cognizability" as a *hetu* is conditioned by the presence of an adjunct (*upādhi*). Therefore, the *hetu* involves the fallacy of *sopādhikatva* recognized by the Dvaitins as a kind of *vyāpyatvāsiddhi*. Madhva criticizes the Advaitin attempt to establish *vyāpti* between falsity and cognizability by arguing that this *vyāpti* is fully invalid because it involves the presence of *pramāṇaviruddhatva* as *upādhi*.

(4) **Anadhyavasāya**: Madhva in his *Mithyātvānumāna-khaṇḍana*, shows that Śāṅkara's inference involves the fallacy of *anadhyavasāya*. According to Advaita, everything is

illusory. Therefore, inference too is illusory. This logic itself will falsify Śaṅkara's argument and prevent the production of the knowledge of the world's illusoriness.

**(5) *Kālātyāyāpadiṣṭa*:** “*Bādhita*” refers to the sublated/disproved middle. It is the non-inferentially contradicted middle. Here the middle term is contradicted by another *pramāṇa* and not by inference. It cannot establish the *sādhya* which is falsified by another stronger means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*); e.g., “Fire is cold, because it is a substance.” Here the middle term “substance” is contradicted because its major term “coldness” is directly contradicted by perception (*pratyakṣa*).

Scripture cannot establish the illusoriness of the world. Advaita classifies scriptural texts under two classes: (i) texts discussing the creation of the world as real – these speak only from the common-sense point of view. Therefore, they have only relative validity, and (ii) text discussing Brahman as the one and only reality without a second. Advaita considers these texts as having absolute validity. According to Advaita, scripture teach the illusory nature of the world. But Dvaita rejects the Advaita classification of scriptural texts as those having relative and absolute validity. Dvaita declares that the *Upaniṣads* convey only one teaching, as that all Vedic texts have uniform validity. This view of Dvaita does not vitiate the validity of sense-experience.

According to Advaita, the illusoriness of the world is in contradictability (*abādhitatva*). The universe is experienced as diversity; therefore, it is not real. It is also sublated through Brahman- realization. But Dvaita argues that while the world is a known fact, Brahman is yet to be known. Hence, it is wrong to judge a known fact by something which is not yet known.

Advaita declares that the world is illusory because it is similar to a dream/ illusion. But Madhva rejects this view. Madhva argue that the objects cognized in dream are real because they are actually perceived, and also exist in the space-time network. Mental-impressions (*vāsanā*) are the cause of dream-object created by God for the dreamer's mind to experience pain/pleasure according to their *karma*. The illusory nature of dream-objects gets exposed when we realize that they do not have any practical value (*artha kriyā kāritva*). The dream objects are not unreal because they are objects of knowledge.

Madhva emphasizes that the world compared to a dream cannot be dismissed as unreal. It cannot be called a magical show of God, because while a magician does not witness his own magic show, God always witnesses the world. Moreover the world is not an illusion like shell to silver because illusion presupposes a real prototype. Therefore, if the world is an illusion does it presuppose another real world as its prototype?

According to Advaita, the world is real because we cannot explain how it is related to the consciousness which perceives it. Known relation like conjunction (*samyoga*) and inherence (*samavāya*) are unable to explain the relationship between the perceiving consciousness (*dṛk*) and the perceived object (*drśya*) the world. But Dvaita argues that a failure to explain due to limitations of thought and language cannot be a justification for denying the reality of one of the relata.

#### **b) *Brahma-Pariṇāma-Vāda***

Except Advaita all the schools of Vedānta are recognize the reality of the world. But Madhva differs from them because while the others accept *Brahma- pariṇāma-vāda*, Madhva rejects it. According to Madhva, matter is the material cause (*upādāna-kāraṇa*) and Brahman - the efficient cause (*nimitta-kāraṇa*) of the world. But according to Rāmānuja, Brahman is the efficient and also material cause (*abhinna-nimitta-upādāna-kāraṇa*) of the real world. The world evolves from out of Brahman (*Brahma- pariṇāma-vāda*) like the web created by a spider.

#### **i. Criticism of *Brahma- Pariṇāma-Vāda***

Madhva rejects this theory of *Brahma-pariṇāma-vāda*: He queries, what initiates Brahman to evolve into the world? If the inducement is by an entity other than Brahman, then Brahman will become dependent on this phenomena and this will affect the absolute sovereign nature of Brahman. If a part of Brahman undergoes transformation to the world; then, the teaching of the Vedas that Brahman is part-less will become falsified. And, if the whole of Brahman become the world; then who will liberate the soul's bondage? In addition to these logical questions, Madhva emphasises the defects of this theory based on the teachings of the Upaniṣads. The Vedas describe Brahman as changeless (*nivikāra*), imperishable (*akṣara*), pure (*śuddha*), etc. This clearly shows that

there can be no modifications/transformation in Brahman. This being the case, Madhva queries “how can Brahman change into the world?” moreover Brahman is sentient (*cit*) and the world is non- sentient (*acit*). Therefore it is unreasonable that Brahman get transformed into the world.

### c) Madhva’s Theory of Creation

The Dvaita theory of creation is known as “*parādhīna-viśeṣāpti*”. It means “the acquisition of (new) aspects that are dependent on the other (God). Madhva rejects attributing causality to Brahman. Brahman is merely the efficient cause of the world (*kevalanimitta-kāraṇa*) and *prakṛti*, is the material cause (*upādāna-kāraṇa*), Brahman and *prakṛti* are totally different phenomena.<sup>10</sup> Among the schools of Vedānta, the Dvaita theory of creation is unique. Because it admits difference between efficient and the material causes of the world.

According to Madhva, a person is limited by the psycho-social settings in which the doer (*kartā*) is placed, one’s nature and God’s will (*prerāṇa*) and one’s inspiration. The individual is free to act and choose between the bad/good (*preyas/śreyas*). A person acts motivated by a desire but without a right, for having certain fruits good/bad. God does not force or prevent an individual from doing actions. The soul is free to act according to its desire. God grants the fruits of actions, He is not responsible for the desires of the agent (*kartā*). Therefore, the doer of actions alone is responsible for what one does and what one gets.

An individual engages in action desiring the fruits of one’s actions. God is complete (*pūrṇa*) and perfect (*nityatrīpta*), therefore He does not desire fruits for Himself. A person is fully responsible for one’s actions and their consequences. Bondage is the outcome of the one’s past wrong actions and the accumulated and future actions of individuals only. God is the initiator (*preraka*) of action. He enables a person to act by providing the necessary conditions, instructions about what is right/good, and leaves it to the individual to choose wrong/bad and right/good.

To escape responsibility and accountability, some people argue that since nothing happens without God’s desire and God is the all-doer (*sarvakartā*), and we are not

responsible for anything; God is responsible for everything. We are helpless, like puppets in His hands. To justify their inaction and laziness, people argue that the fruits of our actions are not in our hands. They are God's gift, He grants them according to His will. Therefore there is no need for us to do anything.

The above view is a total misunderstanding of theism. Madhva criticizes the above view and says that kind of an irresponsible attitude will lead to hell. The causal factors of action are God's will and the soul's choice of action (*karma*). Therefore the souls (*jīvas*) are responsible for evil and the outcome of their actions. Here one may question why the kind loving God does not prevent/destroy evil. And since He is omnipotent He must be able to destroy it.

The reply is God destroys evil. Indian mythology describes the annihilation of the *Asuras* by God. God, out of kindness and love for His creatures, has incarnated in the human or other forms lived in the world, without being tainted by evil and has liberated the deserving souls (*jīvas*), from miseries and bondage. God has not destroyed all evil; he has allowed the proper quantity of evil to exit.

This shows that God has a right and capacity to destroy all evil if He desires to do so. But He does not do it, not because God is cruel or impotent to eliminate evil but because, according to Madhva, the existence of evil is necessary for the spiritual progress of the souls (*jīvas*).

Action is a metaphysical category in Dvaita. According to Madhva, wrong actions (*karma*) cause bondage. Action is different from substance and quality, and exists in a substance. Substance and action are different because quality is a permanent aspect of substance, whereas the correlation with *karma* is only temporary. In Dvaita, the interpretation of *karma* is not the same as Vaiśeṣika concept of movement/locomotion. Because it is a moral principle which correlates every action with its corresponding result bad/good. *Karma* is defined as the uncommon-cause (*asādhāraṇa-kāraṇa*) of sinful/meritorious actions. Without *karma* neither sinful (*pāpa*) nor meritorious deed (*puṇya*) are possible.

According to scriptures, the bound souls (*jīvas*) are the doers (*kartās*) of action and the experiencers (*bhoktās*) of the fruits of action, and the subject for whom the injunctions and prohibitions of scriptures are intended. The souls are not totally free, they have only limited power and freedom for doing actions and enjoying the results of action. The souls are absolutely dependent on God for their activities. Their activities are restricted by the body-mind-sense complex through which they act, according to God's will (*prerana*). Because nothing happens without God's will (*prerana*). But the *jīva* is not a puppet in the hands of God, because the soul has freedom to choose the wrong/right, the bad/good etc., though it is restricted by God's will and its own nature, etc. Our actions are determined by our character and intrinsic nature.

## CHAPTER V

### ENLARGEMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

This Chapter examines the “Enlargement of Consciousness” from an ethical perspective. It will show how individual consciousness can attain liberation to reassert its universal infinite nature. The word “enlargement” is used in a figurative sense and not in its literal sense. The word “enlargement” is used to mean release/emancipation/liberation (*mokṣa*). In theology, especially eschatology, it is regarded as freedom from the cycle of birth and death (*saṃsāra*). All schools of Indian philosophy emphasise that bondage is the process of birth and death and that liberation is total termination of bondage. In epistemology, liberation is considered as self-realization and psychologically it denotes self-knowledge.

#### A. LIBERATION (*MOKṢA*)

In Indian philosophy, liberation/release (*mokṣa*) also known as *vimokṣa*, *vimukti* and *mukti*, suggests freedom/liberation. In the theological sense, it connotes freedom from transmigration (*saṃsāra*) - the cycle of rebirth. In the epistemic and psychological sense, liberation (*mokṣa*) connotes freedom, self-fulfilment and self-apprehension.<sup>1</sup>

Liberation (*mokṣa*) is achieved through action (*karma*) and sacred rituals, according to Mīmāṃsā. It is unharness from action (*karma*), each within the sense of action and within the sense of the fruits of one’s actions.

According to Advaita, liberation is possible only through knowledge (*jñāna*). Liberation is the eternal nature of the Self (Ātman) which gets manifested when ignorance (*avidyā*) is destroyed.

For Jainism, liberation (*kaivalya*) is the highest state of isolation wherein the individual soul is freed from all karmic particles. Jainism prescribes the practise of three gems (*tri-ratna*): right faith (*samyag-darśana*), right knowledge (*samyag-jñāna*), and right conduct (*samyak-cāritra*). These aid(e) liberation by comprehending the five great vows (*pañca-mahā-vratas*) of Jainism.

According to Buddhism, liberation (*nirvāṇa*) involves elimination of all desires and transcending the wheel of birth (*bhava-chakra*) and death through the eightfold path.

According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, liberation (*apavarga*) is absolute freedom from pain and pleasure, attained through destruction of wrong knowledge (*mithyā-jñāna*) that “I am the body, the mind and the senses”. There is no experience of pleasure and pain in liberation.

Liberation is variously described in the scriptures as – perfect state of the soul freedom from fear (*abhayam*), decay, change (*ajaram*), and death (*amrtyupadam*), etc. According to some later Naiyāyikas, liberation is the soul’s final deliverance from pain and the attainment of eternal bliss.

According to Sāṅkhya – Yoga, liberation (*kaivalya*) is detachment from all matter and attained when an individual is to distinguish between the Self (*puruṣa*) and the not-self (*prakṛti*). According to them, this state is free from pleasure and pain, and eternal peace prevails.

## **1. Nature of Liberation**

### **a) Liberation is a *Puruṣārtha***

Liberation (*mokṣa*) is regarded as an important concept in Indian philosophy. Four values (*puruṣārthas*) are identified in Indian philosophy: virtue (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*), pleasure (*kāma*) and liberation (*mokṣa*). Among these, the first three are regarded as three categories (*trivarga*) of human endeavour. *Dharma* and *mokṣa* are higher and supreme values (*uttama- puruṣārthas*) where as *artha* and *kāma* are lower values (*adhama- puruṣārthas*) of these values. *Artha*, *dharma* and *kāma* are instrumental values (*sādhana-puruṣārthas*) whereas *mokṣa* alone has intrinsic value (*sādhya/parama puruṣārtha*). In the empirical world, wealth and pleasure help in the enjoyment of pleasure but the human body is not permanent. We have to take care of our body because, it is the instrument, through which we have to attain and experience the highest bliss of *mokṣa*.



## b) Origin of the Word “*Mokṣa*”

The term “*mokṣa*” comes from the foundation “*mu(n)c*”, which suggests “free/let go/release/liberate. The “*Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads*, the word *mucyate* seems to suggest “to be released”.

## 2. Definition of Liberation

In Hinduism, the concept of *mokṣa* is diverse among the varied schools. “*Mokṣa*” means freedom/liberation from *saṃsāra* and rebirth. “That through ethical actions we have to accomplish liberation within this world is the view of some schools of Indian philosophy. In epistemology, during *mokṣa*, the transformation of the mind helps us to see the Truth/ultimate Reality behind the veil of ignorance. Some schools of Hinduism emphasize that, liberation is not only the absence of suffering or release from the bondage of *saṃsāra*, but it is also a state of Brahman experience (*brahmānubhava*)

## 3. Means to Liberation (*Sādhanas*)

### a) Action (*Karma*)

The word “*karma*” comes from the Sanskrit word “*kri*” which means “to do”. Actions are known as *karma*. The word “*karma*” also technically denotes the effects of actions (*karmaphala*). In metaphysics, it signifies the effects, of our past actions as their cause. Many Vedāntins equate “*Karma*” with *kāmya-karma* i.e., performing rituals and one’s *Varṇāśrama dharmas* as prescribed in the scriptures, for attaining rewards in this world or in the next. But *kāmya-karma* vitiates spiritual progress, because this kind of selfish *karma* is not at all conducive for the attainment of *mokṣa*, because it strengthens bondage. Hence, a spiritual aspirant should abandon all *karma*, because *mokṣa* and *karma* are opposed to one another, and *mokṣa* can be attained only when a person is free from *karma*. Knowledge (*jñāna*) is needed for attaining *mokṣa*, and not *karma*. Hence, the terms *Nivṛttimārga*, *Karma-sannyāsa* was interpreted as “abandonment of all *karma*” The liberated souls are believed as exempted from the performance of *karmas*.

## **b) Knowledge (*Jñāna*)**

Knowledge (*jñāna*) means comprehensive spiritual knowledge. It includes knowledge about the (a) nature and greatness of the supreme Reality (b) nature of the Self and (c) relation between God and the Self. Since God has infinite attributes, no finite mind can fully know God's nature and majesty. Moreover, there are differences in the degree of clarity, depth and extension of knowledge about God according to the status of the *jīva* in the hierarchy. Therefore, a *jīva* possessing a higher status in the hierarchy has a clearer, deeper and profound knowledge about God than the *jīvas* subordinate to it. The term "*jīva*", denotes not only human selves but also the deities based on their intrinsic natures (*tāratamya*) in the hierarchy of the Selves. The knowledge of the *tattvās* in addition to knowledge of God and the selves such *prakṛti* and its evolutes the purpose of creation and destruction, etc., is required for spiritual progress. A person seeking liberation after *mokṣa* is expected to have the necessary moral and intellectual qualifications – *indriya-nigraha*, *vairāgya*, virtues etc., to qualify for receiving such knowledge, instruction from a Preceptor. Hence, a seeker should become the disciple of a competent realised guru for acquiring knowledge. It is possible to acquire such knowledge through self-study. But the study under a Guru is better than self-study, because the Guru's blessings play an important role in the seeker's spiritual progress.

## **c) Devotion (*Bhakti*)**

Devotion (*bhakti*) is a combination of knowledge, love, respect, admiration, gratitude, etc., for God. A comprehensive definition of devotion (*bhakti*) has been given by Śrī Jayatīrtha. There are two kinds of devotion (*bhakti*): (i) *aparā-bhakti* and (ii) *parā-bhakti*. (i) *Aparā-Bhakti* is for the beginners in Yoga. The beginner decorates an idol with flowers, rings a bell makes food-offerings (*naivedya*), waves the lamp; and practices rituals. For this devotee the Lord, who is immanent in that idol, can be worshiped only through that form (ii) *Parā-bhakti*: is the highest form of devotion (*bhakti*) where a devotee does not worship or ring bells, put religious marks (*Tilaka*) on one's forehead or visit temples. Such a person is not bound by the rules of scripture.

#### 4. Kinds of Liberation

There are 4 kinds of liberation (*mukti*): (a) sudden liberation (*sadyo-mukti*), (b) gradual liberation (*kṛama-mukti*), (c) liberation-in-life (*jīvan-mukti*) and (d) liberation after-death (*videha-mukti*).

##### a) Sudden Liberation (*Sadyo-mukti*)

The term “*sadyah*” means instantaneously/at the very moment/ immediate/at once. After attaining right knowledge of Brahman-Ātman a seeker immediately attains *sadyo-mukti*. After attaining immediate liberation, embodiment still continues. For the seeker, in *sadyo-mukti* there is no delay like *deva-yāna* or *pitṛ-yāna* and reaching *brahmaloka* in liberation.

The realized soul continues its embodiment until its *karma*-in-action (*prāradhakarma*) is exhausted through experience. A *sadyo-mukta* can also be called as the liberated-in-life (*jīvan-mukta*).

##### b) Gradual Liberation (*Kṛama-Mukti*)

According to the *Upaniṣads*, gradual liberation (*kṛama-mukti*) is progressive liberation of the soul. Ānanda K. Coomaraswamy uphold that gradual liberation (*kṛama-mukti*) is “gradual”. In gradual/delayed liberation, a state of partial deliverance is obtained after death, comparable to the Heaven of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and total liberation is delayed until dissolution (*pralaya*) of the world-cycle (*kalpa*). Hence, *kṛama-mukti* is different from *jīvan-mukti* a state of total and immediate liberation attained in this life. After physical death a *jīvan mukta* becomes a *videha-mukta* (liberation-after-disembodiment).

##### c) Liberation-in-Life (*Jīvan-mukti*)

Liberation-in-life (*jīvan-mukti*) means liberation-while-still-alive/embodied in the body. A *jīvan-mukta* may realize either *Saguṇa* or *Nirguṇa* Brahman. If it is through realization of *Saguṇa*-Brahman the realized soul will proceed to *Brahmaloka* after death. A soul suffering a spiritual fall from meditation (*samādhi*) and will suffer the effects of actions (*karma*) as *karma*-in action (*prārabdha-karma*).

#### **d) Liberation-after-Death (*Videha-Mukti*)**

One who practices devotional meditation (*upāsana*) of God/*Saguṇa*- Brahman, becomes a *jīvan-mukta*. After death of our material body, the soul goes through *deva-yajña* to *brahmaloka*. This is known as liberation-after-death (*videha-mukti*) and is viewed as a stage of *karma-mukti*. Both Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita recognize *videha-mukti*.

### **B. ENLARGEMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA**

This Chapter will discuss elaborately the religious practices of Rāmānuja's ethics (*sādhana*s) for attaining liberation. The *Upaniṣads* have suggested knowledge, meditation (*dhyāna*), and divine service (*upāsana*) as means to salvation. Rāmānuja stipulates devotion (*bhakti*) and surrender (*prapatti*) for devotee as ethical means to liberation.

#### **1. Means to Liberation (*Sādhana*s)**

There are two kinds of means to liberation (*mokṣa*): (1) devotion (*bhakti*) and (2) self surrender (*prapatti*). Rituals (*karma*) and knowledge (*jñāna*) come under the path of devotion (*bhakti*). Due to the soul's *karmas*, the soul gets associated with a particular body-senses-mind complex and life. This is real/true for securing release from *saṃsāra*, the soul has to negate its karmic obstacles, and purify itself through elimination of *karma* correlated with it. This is accomplished harmoniously by combining action with knowledge (*jñāna-karma-samuccaya*). Self surrender (*prapatti*) requires only blemishless pure love and total surrender to God.

#### **a) Devotion (*Bhakti*)**

##### **i. Definition of Devotion**

The term "*bhakti*" comes from the root "*bhaj*", which means "meditation (*bhaj sevayam*)".<sup>1</sup> *Bhajan*, *worship*, *bhakti*, *anurāga*, *prema* and *prīti* are synonyms. *Bhakti* involves love for love's sake, devoid of fear. The devotee desires God and God alone, and no selfish expectations are entertained. Therefore, it is called "*parama prema rūpa*". The

devotee feels, believes, conceives and imagines that one's Iṣṭa-Devatā (chosen deity) is an ocean of Love and compassion (*premasāgara*).

According to Rāmānuja, devotion (*bhakti*) is not merely emotional love and respect devoid of knowledge: it is a special kind of knowledge that fills and binds the devotee's heart with a deep feeling of attachment for the supreme Deity. The *Śrībhāṣya* states that *bhakti* is a form of loving meditation on the nature of God.<sup>2</sup> Rāmānuja states that *dhyana* which is identical with *bhakti* is also synonymous with *upasana* and *vedana*.<sup>3</sup> *Upāsāna* means concentrating the mind on God, described in the Upaniṣads, no other thought should disturb the mind during *Upāsana/dhyana*.<sup>4</sup>

## ii. Means to Devotion (*Sādhanā-saptakas*)

Rāmānujas, sevenfold moral and spiritual discipline (*sādhana-saptaka*) are discrimination (*viveka*), mental detachment (*vimoka*), practice (*abhyāsa*), action (*kriyā*), virtues (*kalyāṇa*), cheerfulness (*anavasāda*) and non-exultation (*anuddharṣa*) leading to devotion (*bhakti*) as means to liberation.

- (1) **Discrimination (*Viveka*):** This means purification of the body through the intake only of *sattvika*-food or pure-food which has not become impure due to spices, dwelling house, or adventitious causes.
- (2) **Mental Detachment (*Vimoka*):** This involves detachment for empirical phenomenon or overcoming passions like anger, sexuality, jealousy, etc., because these restrict devotion (*bhakti*).
- (3) **Practice (*Abhyāsa*):** It is constant remembrance of God's presence and the practise of all disciplines like worship, *japa*, singing the Lord's glories, pilgrimage to sacred places etc. These remind the devotee of the Indweller (*Antaryami/Śesi*) in oneself and the whole cosmos.
- (4) **Action (*Kriyā*):** The devotee (*mumukṣu*) should fulfil the fivefold duties (*pañca-mahā-yajñas*). These are: (a) responsibility to words the divinities/deities (*deva-yajña*) through performance of fire-sacrifice like *agnihotra*; (b) duty towards the sages (*ṛṣī-yajña*). The seers, have propounded the *Vedas*, *Pūranas*, and other

sacred literature for human beings. Because the devotee has to study/read these works to qualify for liberation; (c) duty towards ancestors (*pitṛ-yajña*): involves performance of rites for the departed souls and one's ancestors, (d) duty towards human beings (*nara-yajña*) involves hosting guests making contributions for education, amelioration for the suffering, etc.; and e) Duty towards sub-human creatures and nature: Animals and plants (*bhūta-yajña*) play a major role in human welfare. They are God's creation. Their destruction and over-exploitation should be avoided and human beings should live in harmony with nature and one's environment.

- (5) **Virtues (*Kalyāṇa*):** Refers to the practice of virtues like honesty (*satya*), straightforwardness (*ārjava*), compassion (*dayā*), charity (*dāna*) and love for all beings (*ahimsā*).
- (6) **Cheerfulness (*Anavasāda*):** This means freedom from despair, pessimism, etc. for safeguarding cheerfulness and self-confidence.
- (7) **Non-exultation (*Anuddharṣa*):** this involves a capacity to resist excitement and exultation, and maintain mental equipoise under, all circumstances.

Rāmānuja emphasizes that persistent and sincere practise of these ethical disciplines, together with detachment, discrimination, and performance of one's duties, practise of attention (*dhyana*) and constant contemplation on God (*upasana*), will purify the mind of an aspirant and produce competence for realizing God as one's inner self.

### iii. Different Forms of Devotion

Devotion is of two kinds: (1) *parābhakti* and (2) *paramabhakti*. In *parābhakti*, a devotee gains a vision of God which acquires the clarity and the immediacy of perception. This results in the experience of the Divine as one's inner Self. In this stage, faith in God is strengthened by love, awe, and reverence for God. *Parama-bhakti* is identical with what is known Viśiṣṭādvaita as *prapatti*-the highest and best form of devotion. Through *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nidhidhyāsana* one attains knowledge about God (*Īśvarajñāna*) that:

- (1) God is the only supreme sovereign of all the Existents.
- (2) God can be known only through scriptures.
- (3) God is a loving and compassionate being.
- (4) God is the only object worthy of attainment.
- (5) Everything exists in and through the grace of God. and
- (6) God alone can grant liberation.

Rāmānuja suggests nine forms of devotion (*bhakti*) in his philosophy following the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* and the *Viṣṇu Pūrana*. They are: (1) Listening about God's glories and deeds (*Śravaṇa*), (2) Singing His glories (*Kīrtana*), (3) Remembering His name and presence (*Smarana*), (4) Serving His feet (*Pādasevana*), (5) Worshiping God (*Arcana*), (6) Prostrating to Lord (*Vandana*), (7) Serving God (*Dāsyā*), (8) Cultivating friendship (*Sakhya*) with God, and (9) Totally surrendering oneself to God (*Ātmanivedana*).<sup>5</sup>

#### iv. Five Sacraments of Vaiṣṇavism

In Srivaiṣṇavism, receiving five special sacraments from one's spiritual Preceptor is absolutely necessary for attaining liberation. The five sacraments are:

- (1) ***Taptamudra***: this is the most important one among the five sacraments. It involves branding the symbols of two most important accoutrements of Viṣṇu, i.e. the disc (*cakra*) and the conch (*sankha*) on the right and the left arms respectively of the disciple by the Preceptor. The disc (*cakra*) symbolizes spiritual energy while the *śankha* symbolizes auspiciousness. The Preceptor or his representative initially performs the fire sacrifice invoking the disc of the Viṣṇu (*sudarśana homa*); and then the disciple is branded with the two heated seals. In Sri Vaisna, this ritual is done just once during the disciple's lifetime.
- (2) ***Urdhvapundra***: this sacrament involves the putting on oneself the sectarian mark of Vaiṣṇavism on the twelve parts of the body above the navel by the male followers. The act involves first of all taking a lump of white clay, dissolving it with a little water and applying the wet clay in the form of two vertical lines with a gap in between on one's forehead, the four sides of the neck, on the chest, on three parts of the stomach above the navel, on the left and right arms, and on the

back reciting the twelve names of Lord Viṣṇu: *Acyuta, Ananta, Govinda, Keśava, Nārāyaṇa, Mādhava, Madhusūdana, Trivikrama, Hṛṣikeśa, Padmanābha, Dāmodara* and *Vāsudeva*. In the gap between the two white vertical lines, either red or yellow turmeric powder also made wet is put on twelve times reciting the twelve names of Goddess Śrī. The followers are required to do this immediately after one's bath and before one's prayer and offerings to God everyday for the rest of one's life as a pious Srivaiṣṇavite.

- (3) **Nāma**: is the sacrament whereby the Preceptor initiates a disciple by giving the latter a name of Lord Viṣṇu and asks the disciple to recite the thousand names of Lord Viṣṇu (Viṣṇu-sahasra-nama) everyday.
- (4) **Mantra**: in this sacrament, the Preceptor initiates the disciple by uttering either the eight syllabled formula (Om Namo Nārāyaṇāya) or the twelve syllabled formula (Om Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya) into the disciple's right ear. The disciple is also gifted a rosary made of tulasi/lotus seeds for keeping count of one's prayers or recitation of the sacred formula given. The disciple is expected to recite the mantra every day.
- (5) **Yāga**: is a sacrament where by the Preceptor initiates the disciple by giving detailed instructions about how to worship the idol/image of God including the sacred śālagrāma stone in the proper manner, thrice every day. This comprehends the sixteen services (*śodasōpacāra*) offered to the idol-washing of hands (*arghya*), washing of feet (*pādya*), rinsing of the mouth (*ācamya*), bathing with milk, honey curds, sugar, melted butter/ghee, and scented hot water (*abhiseka*), decoration with flowers, clothes and jewels (*alāṅkāra*), showering flowers (*arcana*), ritually offering pure food (*naivedya*), waving the lamps (*ārati*), etc.,<sup>6</sup>

#### v. Fruits of Devotion

According to Rāmānuja, *bhakti* softens the heart and cleanses one from jealousy, hatred, lust, anger, egoism, pride and arrogance. It confers joy, divine ecstasy, bliss, peace and knowledge. All cares, worries and anxieties, fears, mental torments and



tribulations get banished. The devotee is freed from the transmigratory cycle of rebirth and attains the eternal abode of everlasting peace, knowledge and bliss.

## **b) Self-surrender (*Prapatti*)**

Self surrender (*prapatti*) has been inherited as a technical term from the immediate successors of Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja rarely used the term in his work; and, when he did, he used *prapatti* as a synonym for *bhakti*, or denoting "refuge" leading to the perfection of devotion.<sup>7</sup>

### **i. Meaning of *Prapatti***

The term "*prapatti*" literally means "taking divine refuge in God". This can be accomplished in stages by surrendering one's will to the Divine will and abandoning all that is against God's will. Firm faith involves trusting that the Lord is the savior of all, accepting that God's grace is always with one, admitting that self effort is a futile exercise, and surrendering totally at God's feet.

The Viśiṣṭādvaita meaning of *prapatti* is summarized in a Karika of Vedānta Desika as follows:

*Svāmin svaśeṣaṃ svavaśaṃ svabharatvena nirbharam/  
Svadattasvadhīyā svārtham svasmin nyasyasi māṃ svayam//*<sup>8</sup>

The word "*svatha*" denotes "*phala-samarpana*" signifying that the *śeṣa* exists for the satisfaction of the *śeṣin* and that the only aim of *Ātma-samarpaṇa* is the realization of His will as the only will. The words "*svabharatvena nirbharam*" signify "*bhara-samarpaṇa*" or the idea that *Ātmarakasana* is the concern of the *śaraṇya* and not of the *śaraṇāgata*. The word *svaśeṣa* connotes the fact of self-oblation as the primary motive for *prapatti*. The couplet thus express the Viśiṣṭādvaita view that the Ātman has self-consciousness (*jñāṭṛtva*), freedom (*karṭṛtva*) and feeling (*jñāṭṛtva*) but the soul as the *śarīra* of *ParamĀtman* has its triple function of knowing, willing and feeling fulfilled physically in the life of the *śarīrin*.<sup>9</sup>

The *Yātindramatadīpikā*, states that self-surrender (*parpatti*) which is synonymous with *Nyāsa-vidyā* consists of the following five steps:

- (1) the will of the soul (*jīva*) should be attuned in such a manner that it will always be in harmony with the Divine will (*āmukūlyasa saṅkalpaḥ*).
- (2) Renunciation of everything that will incur the disfavor of God (*pratikūlasya varjīanam*).
- (3) Firm faith in God as the saviour of all (*rakṣisyatiti viśvāsa*).
- (4) Acceptance of God as the only hope for liberation (*goptritvavaraṇāmtathā*)
- (5) (a) Feeling of humility and utter inability to follow the difficult path of *bhakti-yoga* (*kārpanyam*). (b) Complete self-surrender to God and dedication of everything to Him (*Ātmanikṣepa*).<sup>10</sup>

## ii. Schools of Self-surrender

In Viśiṣṭādvaita, there are two kinds of total self surrender: (1) Monkey School (*Markaṭanyāya*): This school is also known as the Tengalai school (Southern). The term *markaṭanyāya* known as the monkey and its baby analogy, and (2) Cat School (*Mārjarānyāya*): This is also known as the Vaḍagaḷai School (northern). *Mārjarānyāya* is known as cat – kitten analogy.

**(1) Monkey School (*Markaṭanyāya*):** The (*Markaṭanyāya*) maintains that some effort is necessary on the part of the individual soul to invoke divine grace and the latter view holds that the entire initiative lies with God and the individual effort does not counts.

**(2) Cat School (*Mārjarānyāya*):** According to Rāmānuja, this view is also known as the spontaneous grace of God (*nirhetuka kṛpa*). Rāmānuja in his *Śrībhāṣya* seems to favour the former view although though in his commentary on the *Ġitā* and the *Gadya Traya* wherever the idea of absolute unqualified self-surrender to God *prapatti* is stressed, he seems to support the latter view.

## iv. Devotion (*Bhakti*) Vs Self-surrender (*Prapatti*)

Devotion to God has often been praised as the easiest and the most effective path. A supporter of *prapatti* proffers several reasons to show that *prapatti* is easier than even

*bhakti*; and, therefore preferable. Devotion (*bhakti*) can be practised by even animals, e.g. Sugrīva-the monkey, Jatāyu-the eagle and Gajendra-the elephant. Even in the path of devotion, the devotee has to lead a strict life and observe several rules. Its practice can be quite difficult. But it is not so in the case of self-surrender (*prapatti*). It is done only once and that eliminates the need for any further efforts.

## **2. Liberation-after-Death (*Videha-Mukti*)**

A devotee who succeeds in receiving the grace (*prasāda*) of God gains a direct experience of God, and is liberated from the fetters of the body. The liberated devotee becomes similar to God (*Brahmaprakāra*). The liberated soul does not become identical with God, but only enjoys bliss eternally in communion with God. This goal can be attained according to Rāmānuja, only after death therefore Rāmānuja has not recognize *jīvanmukti* as true liberation (*mokṣa*). Moreover, for Rāmānuja, there is no wrong identification (*adhyasikatadatmya*) of the body with the soul. Only an inseparable relation (*aprthak-siddhi*) exists between the body and the soul which are actually two really different phenomena. Although different, the body and the soul are treated as identical in language because of their inseparable association. When we say “I am fair”, knowledge of the body which is inseparably associated with the embodied soul is real. The body-soul relation is real and not erroneous; it does not disappear when one is alive. According to Śāṅkara, wrong identification (*adhyāsa*) with the body-sense in complex is illusory (*mithyā*). Therefore, it can be eliminated by knowledge even when one is alive. Hence, Śāṅkara advocates the possibility of *jīvanmukti* after attaining real knowledge. But for Rāmānuja, as long as the soul remains embodied, its relation with the body is real therefore, so it can never have the feeling of bodilessness without which liberation from worldly miseries is impossible. It is absurd to say that although the body-feeling is negated, the body still continues like the illusory perception of the double-moon by a person who knows even that there is only one moon. *Avidyā* and *karma* are the causes of objects and also the body that imprisons a soul. If *avidyā* and *karma* are destroyed by the sublating-knowledge (*badhakajñāna*); then, all phenomenon including the body must be simultaneously negated, and there is no such thing called liberation- in- life (*jīvanmukti*).

For Rāmānuja, “*Mukti*” always denotes “*videhamukti*”. Scriptural texts like “*tattvam-asi*”, when understood fully, yield only mediate knowledge about liberation but cannot destroy *avidyā*.<sup>11</sup> This being the case, *vākyārtha-jñāna* can never produce a direct realization of the bliss of liberation in this life and in this world itself. If scriptural knowledge could result in real liberation, then scholars proficient in scriptures would not be suffering the sorrows of worldly-life. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* states that for attaining liberation, one has to wait until one’s body is destroyed.<sup>12</sup> This statement of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* has clearly disfavoured the idea of *jīvanmukti*.

In fact, it is never impossible for a living person to attain knowledge which is completely free from differences. When the mind is purified by *dhyāna* and yoga, a person can have a direct realization of the qualified Brahman Saṅga-Brahman/God which results in one’s liberation.

### **3. Stages of Realized Soul (*Sthitaprajña*)**

A person who has acquired knowledge about one’s real nature is not liberated. The individual, only gains then, equanimity (*sthitaprajña*). This is the highest stage that a person can attain in one’s life by practising the path of knowledge (*arga*).<sup>13</sup> Although an embodied soul, yet through purification of one’s mind and will, a person can withdraw one’s senses completely from the worldly phenomenon and be unaffected by the sorrows and miseries of life. Such a person, is free from desires and passions, aversion and hatred, and always contemplates on God - who then becomes the only object of one’s love and attachment. This stage is not one of real liberation. It is merely a stage in which the individual soul is confident about its liberation at the end of life’s journey. The *Ītā* too does not describe this stage as liberation in life (*jīvanmukti*).

In fact, if it is true that *avidyā-karma* is the main cause of bondage, and that liberation is attained when *karma* is destroyed; then, logically we cannot accept *jīvanmukti*; because in *jīvanmukti* the soul is still under the influence of *karma* in-action (*prarabdha-karma*). Only *sañcita - karma* and *āgāmi-karma* are destroyed by knowledge. Since *prārabdha - karma* functions during *jīvanmukti* stage there cannot be a total freedom from all karmic influence - real characteristic feature of the liberated. Pleasure

and pain exist even in the mind of a realized person, although from the practical point of view this feeling does not disturb the mental equipoise of the realized person. Moreover, Rāmānuja does not admit that knowledge of the meaning of the major texts (*mahāvākyas*) of the *Vedas* has a capacity to confer a direct realisation of truth which is as direct as perception.

#### 4. Nature of a Liberated Soul (*Mukta*)

When a bound soul is liberated through devotion (*bhakti*) and God's grace, the soul abandons its empirical body<sup>14</sup> and appears in its own divine form. The liberated soul, before departing from the world, traverses through *Agniloka*, *Vāyuloka*, *Varuṇaloka*, *Ādityaloka*, *Indraloka*, *Prajāpatiloka*, *Brahmaloka*, etc., and finally reaches the eternal abode of *Vaikuṇṭha*.<sup>15</sup> It is during the state of real emancipation, that a liberated soul becomes completely free from the influences of all meritorious and wicked actions and becomes similar to Brahman, as pure consciousness.<sup>16</sup>

The word “*sveṇa*” here means that as soon as liberation is attained, the soul immediately regains its true nature and becomes disunited from its physical body with which it identified itself in the state of bondage. On realizing its true nature as pure consciousness, the soul acquires its other qualities like *sarvajñatva*, *satyasankalpatva* etc. Which were obscured by ignorance during empirical-life.<sup>17</sup> The liberated soul attains everything merely by willing.<sup>18</sup> Liberation, therefore, does not mean the manifestation of any new quality. The soul when freed from the limitations caused by ignorance regains its natural luminosity and shines in its divine glory.<sup>19</sup>

Again, due to the presence of the quality of *satyasankalpatva* in a liberated soul, it can get embodied /disembodied according to its will.<sup>20</sup> The liberated soul can also assume the forms of various accessories (*upakaraṇas*) used for serving God.

As stated already, in liberation a liberated soul, by reattaining its nature as pure consciousness becomes only similar to but not identical with God because it is different from God. While God is the creator of the cosmos, the soul at no time possesses a capacity to create the world. That a liberated soul is similar to God only means that in liberation a soul gets invested with qualities like *sarvajñatva*, *satyasankalpatva*, etc.

present in God and that it also gains a capacity to enjoy eternally the bliss that results from Brahman-realization.<sup>21</sup> Hence, the soul, whether eternally free or liberated is always ontologically different from God.

According to Advaita, the liberated soul unites and finally merges in Brahman. But, according to Rāmānuja, the soul merely becomes similar to God in some aspects. While the soul possesses the undesirable weakness to come under the influence of *avidyā* this weakness is totally non-existent in God. On the contrary, God is absolutely free from all bad qualities and evil. He is always the infinite repository of virtues (*ananta kalyāṇa-guṇa nidhi*). The soul is only a worshipper of God - its ruler and controller; therefore the soul can never become identical with God.

### C. ENLARGEMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN DVAITA

According to Dvaita, liberation (*mokṣa*) is attained through God's grace (*prasāda*) resulting in ultimate liberation. The individual soul practises knowledge, dispassion, action, devotion, and lovingly meditates on God, considering itself as His reflection. In liberation, the individual soul although similarly to God remains distinct from and dependent on God. Its personality is restricted to one among the four levels of graded release posited by Dvaita.

#### 1. Means to Liberation (*Sādhana*s)

Dvaita admits four means to attain liberation (*mokṣa*): (a) Lord's grace (*Īśvara-prasāda*) (b) knowledge (*jñāna*) (c) devotion (*bhakti*), and (d) immediate experience of God (*aparokṣa-jñāna*).

##### a) Grace (*Prasāda*)

We have already discussed that Indian philosophy generally admits that knowledge (*jñāna*) and *karma* are as the means to liberation. But a choice between them has been a significant topic for debate among the philosophers of different traditions. According to Madhva, the ultimate means to liberation is God's grace (*Īśvara-prasāda*). He declares that neither knowledge (*jñāna*) nor *karma* is the final means to liberation. For him,

bondage is real because Brahman is real and is its ultimate cause. Therefore, bondage cannot be negated by mere knowledge. An illusory appearance can be terminated by knowledge, but what is real and factual cannot be eliminated by it. God's mysterious power called *māyā* is the cause for the soul's ignorance about its real relation with God. When through devotion (*bhakti*) and knowledge (*jñāna*) of God a devotee invokes God's grace, the soul gets liberated from the hold of *vaiṣṇavi-māyā*.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, God alone through grace can confer liberation and destroy bondage.

God's grace is of three kinds depending on the three kinds of devotees: (1) The lowest (*adhama*) among them which is acquired<sup>23</sup> through action (*karma*) confers on its agent *svarga* and not *mokṣa*. (2) The middling (*madhyama*) is invoked by hearing (*sravaṇa*) about the real nature of God. This bestows on to the devotee what is known as the earth (*janaloka*). (3) The supreme (*uttama*) kind of grace gained through knowledge of God's true nature liberates the soul from bondage and transmigration. Therefore, only the God's grace is ultimately instrumental in the attainment of liberation.

#### **b) Knowledge (*Jñāna*)**

Chapter IV examined the soul's ignorance (*avidyā*) about its real nature (*svabhāvajñānavāda*) and Brahman as the one independent reality on whom it is totally dependent upon as the immediate cause of bondage. Hence, for attaining liberation, the soul must attain knowledge (*jñāna*) of the real nature of God. For Madhva knowledge occupies an important place among the various means to liberation (*mokṣa*).

According to Dvaita, even the nascence of knowledge as a qualification for liberation depends on God's grace (*prasāda*). Knowledge means, not mediate knowledge (*parokṣa-jñāna*) gained from books or other people, but a direct vision of the Lord (*sākṣātkāra*). It is immediate knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*). This vision of the Lord can be gained by the soul, only when God chooses to reveal Himself. Therefore, knowledge itself is God's gift, a product of His grace (*prasāda*). The steps leading to knowledge are:

**(1) Immediate Knowledge (*Aparokṣa-Jñāna*):** The soul has to become eligible to receive God's gift-immediate knowledge therefore it has to undergo spiritual discipline for receiving immediate knowledge. Jayatīrtha liberation is possible only through God's

grace (*Īśvara-prasāda*), and grace which can be attained only by those possessing a right knowledge of God.<sup>24</sup>

**(2) Devotion (*Bhakti*):** This is regarded as the most important among the means to receive God's grace. We shall now consider the different constituents and stages in this course of discipline. True devotion (*bhakti*) is one-pointed devotion to God. The devotee should seek nothing at any time except God's grace. This is possible only when the devotee is firmly convinced that God is the only independent reality and that the soul's true relation to God, is similar to the reflection (*pratibimba*) - reflected (*bimba*) relation. The need for such an intellectual foundation for devotion leads us on to another discipline involving three steps – guided study of texts (*śravaṇa*), rational reflection (*manana*) and contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) which together constitute *jñāna-yoga* leading to immediate knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*) of Brahman.

- **Śravaṇa:** this is guided study, hearing of the scripture, under a competent Preceptor (*Guru*) for knowing the true import (*tātparyā*) of scripture which will dispel ignorance about Brahman.
- **Manana:** this is rational reflection on what has been studied. It involves interpreting the scriptural texts, according to the accepted canons and logical examination of their meaning. This eliminates doubts (*samsaya*) and misconceptions (*viparyaya*) and enables a seeker to gain a firm conviction about the correct meaning of scriptural texts. The process of *manana* also has to be undergone under the guidance of a teacher (*Guru*) who occupies a place of high reverence in the scheme of disciplines. Without the teacher, neither *śravaṇa* nor *manana* can be fruitful.
- **Nididhyāsana:** (also called *dhyāna* and *upāsana*). This is steady and continuous meditation on the attributes of *Īśvara*. Study (*śravaṇa*) and rational reflection (*manana*) prepare the ground for contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) by eliminating obstacles. *Śravaṇa* negates ignorance about *Īśvara* and *manana* removes doubts and misconceptions about God. They thus enable a seeker to fix one's mind exclusively on God. Hence, *śravaṇa* and *manana*, which are together called



inquiry (*vicāra*), are regarded as steps (*aṅga*) to *nididhyāsana*. *Śravaṇa* and *manana* give only mediate knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*) of God. This is indirect knowledge received from the teacher, the texts, and reasoning. *Nididhyāsana* is intended to convert mediate knowledge into immediate knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*), i.e. direct vision (*sakṣātkāra*), of God. What is learnt from other sources must become a matter of one's own experience. This is the significance of *nididhyāsana* in the Dvaita means to liberation.

Meditation is a difficult process, involving fixing a highly unsteady mind on a chosen object. Therefore it requires a gradual training in the art of concentration. In the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣads*, several kinds of meditation are suggested for the beginners which involve fixing the mind on different symbols (*prātika*) of Brahman - the sun, space, mind, food etc. Madhva uses these exercises and recommends initially meditation on Brahman as present in these phenomena. Finally, the aspirant has to meditate on Brahman as the original/prototype (*bimba*), and the *jīva* as its reflection (*pratibimba*). This kind of meditation is known as *bimbopāsana*. Since the soul's bondage is due to the soul's forgetfulness of its true nature and relation with God as totally God dependent- which is represented by the form of the object reflected and its reflection (*bimba-pratibimba-bhāva*). Hence, release requires the *jīva* realizing its status as a reflection (*pratibimba*) of the Lord - the reflected/prototype/original (*bimba*). *Bimbopāsana* is intended for this realization.

The whole praxis of *jñāna-yoga* is involving of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nidhidhyāsana* proceeds simultaneously with devotion, enriching the latter and itself getting enriched by it. *Bhakti-yoga* without *jñāna-yoga* is blind emotionalism and *jñāna-yoga* without *bhakti-yoga* is dry intellectualism. The Love for God has be strengthened by constant study (*svādhyāya*), thinking (*smaraṇa*), and meditation (*dhyāna*) considering God as the one independent reality. Insufficient knowledge doubts and misconceptions about God vitiate one's devotion to God. Such obstacles on the path of devotion can be eliminated only by *śravaṇa*, *manana*, study of scriptures, contemplation, and meditation on God as the only independent reality.

Moreover, *nididhyasana* too contributes to progress in devotion of mind on God. The path of *jñāna*, consisting of study, reflection, and meditation, has to be motivated and strengthened by love for God. Otherwise it cannot lead to God-experience. In the final stages of *nididhyāsana*, when an aspirant contemplates on the Lord as one's own *bimba* in *bimbopāsana*, the paths of *bhakti* and *jñāna* get harmonized and become a single process. This process involves deep and selfless devotion for God recognizing, that God is no other than the reality which is reflected as one's self.

**(3) Dispassion (*Vairāgya*):** The initial impediment to spiritual progress is passion (*rāga*) for worldly pleasures, which arises from one's false sense of independence (*abhimāna*). Hence, the first step on the path to liberation (*mokṣa*) is the cultivation of detachment/dispassion (*vairāgya*). Detachment arises when one thinks about the sordid aspects of life. In fact this is the significance of the existence of evil in the world- it helps to attenuate the soul's attachment to the world and creates a desire for liberation. Scripture also strengthens dispassion by highlighting the limitations of empirical phenomena and the miseries of transmigration.

**(4) The Knowledge of the Greatness of God (*Mahatmya-Jñāna*):** Dispassion is the negative requirement seeking liberation, for turning the mind away from the world. On the positive side, they mind should turn towards God, because He is the cause and content of salvation. For this, one should attain knowledge about the greatness of God (*māhātmya-jñāna*) by studying scripture, especially the *smṛtis*, listening about His glories, etc.

### c) Devotion (*Bhakti*)

As one reads about and listens to expositions about the greatness of God devotion (*bhakti*) towards Him grows in the devotee's heart. True devotion is free from selfish desires, and worldly motives. Instead of worshipping God as a means for fulfilling one's earthly desires, one must be able to worship Him as an end in Himself, i.e. for the sake of realizing him. Madhva defines *bhakti* as follows -

*Māhātmya-jñāna-pūrvas tu sudṛḍhaḥ sarvato 'dhikah  
Snehah bhaktir iti proktaḥ tayā muktir na cā'nyathā*

The meaning of the above verse is firm, ceaseless and unshakable love for God, which surpasses every other form of affection and attachment, and which is based on and inspired by a full knowledge of His transcendent majesty, is called *bhakti*; by that alone does one attain liberation - by no other means.

True devotion is not that which manifests itself in occasionally or when there are no obstacles preventing it but it is constant to God. According to Jayatīrtha, devotion is an unceasing torrent of love preceded by a conviction of the presence (in God) of innumerable unending and faultless excellences in God.

The qualities of true devotion are purity of motive (*śuddha-bhāva*) and one-pointedness (*ekānta-bhāva*). For cultivating these qualities, devotion must be free from worldly motives and, accompanied by knowledge of one's true relation with God. If devotion has to be successful the practice of: (1) morality and (2) intellectual disciplines are required. Dvaitin also accepts five sacraments:

- (1) **Taptamudra:** This sacrament is observed very rigorously by the followers of Madhva than the followers of Rāmānuja. This sacrament is administered to devotees annually by the pontiff of the tradition. Moreover, for the devotees the all the five symbolic seals (*mudras*) of Lord Viṣṇu, the: branded conch (*sankha*), disc (*cakra*), mace (*gada*), lotus (*padma*), and Nārāyaṇa – an eight lettered name of Lord Viṣṇu.
- (2) **Urdhvapuṇḍra:** This sacrament of Madhva uses only yellow clay (*gopicandana*) instead of the white clay used by the followers of Rāmānuja. They also do not use the red/yellow turmeric powder used by *Śrīvaiṣṇavites* to represent Sri.
- (3) **Nāma, (4) Mantra and (5) Yāga** are the same as in the Śrī-Vaisnava tradition. The followers of Madhva are in some ways very strict and rigid in their practice of Vaiṣṇvism than the followers of Rāmānuja, especially in the observance of the sacraments.

The author of the *Padārthasaṅgraha* enumerates the following twenty qualifications as prerequisites for a person aspiring for liberation from the miseries of transmigration. They include:

- (1) Renunciation of the desire for enjoyment both in this and the other world (*ihāmutra phalabhoga virāgaḥ*).
- (2) Acquiring the six virtues such as mind control etc., (*śamadamādiṣaṭ saṃpatti*).
- (3) Studying the sastras (*adhyayana*).
- (4) Surrender to *ParamĀtman* (*śaraṇāgati*).
- (5) Living in the house of the Guru (*gurukulavāsa*).
- (6) Listening the scriptures through the Preceptor (*śravaṇa*).
- (7) Acquiring full conviction about the subject heard from the Preceptor through reasoning (*manana*).
- (8) Devotion towards *Paramātman* (*Paramātmabhakti*).
- (9) Sympathy for virtuous subordinates (*svādhameṣusatsudayā*).
- (10) Affection for the equals as one loves oneself (*svasameṣusvātmavat sneha*).
- (11) Devotion towards the superiors (*uttameṣubhakti*).
- (12) Desireless performance of actions prescribed in the scriptures (*nivṛttakarmānuṣṭhāna*).
- (13) Renouncing actions prohibited by scriptures (*niśiddha-saṃtyāgaḥ*).
- (14) Complete surrender to God (*sarvasamarpaṇa*).
- (15) Knowledge of the gradation amongst the *jīvas* themselves, between the *jīvas* and *Īśvara*, and gradation in liberation (*tāratamyaparijñānam*).
- (16) Knowledge of the difference between *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* (*prakṛti-puruṣaviveka jñānam*).
- (17) Depreciation of the incapable (*ayoganindā*).
- (18) Knowledge of the five kinds of difference (*pañcabheda*).
- (19) Devotion (*upāsana*).
- (20) Devotion towards the Preceptor (*gurubhakti*).<sup>25</sup>

#### **i. Disinterested Action (*Niskāma-Karma*)**

The object of this discipline is to lay the moral foundation for devotion (*bhakti*). Moral discipline demands as its basic condition that one abandons all bad actions and practise only virtues. But even good actions have to be performed without any desire for gaining mundane pleasure. Every good action done is associated with a worldly reward

such as fame and name, prosperity and power, etc., which often take more than one life for yielding their result. Therefore, if a good action is performed with a desire of experiencing these rewards, one has to be reborn to enjoy these rewards. The enjoyment of rewards strengthens the desire for them, and the further pursuit of these rewards again takes a person through a series of births. Therefore, when actions are performed with desire for their empirical rewards, they perpetuate bondage, and rebirth.

The solution for this problem does not mean abandoning good actions. Good actions are obligatory, and their non-performance will (result in sin), which in turn will result in suffering. Therefore, the remedy lies in performing the good actions without desire for worldly rewards, and purely for pleasing God and serving Him. While good actions cannot be renounced, the desire which motivates their performance must be replaced by a desire to serve God. Good actions performed with dedication to God are called as *niṣkāma-karma* in Dvaita.

Such a mental reorientation on the path of action requires an intellectual conviction that one's status as the agent and enjoyer of the action are God's gift, and not self-acquired. Thus (*karma*) action has to be enlightened and ennobled by knowledge (*jñāna*), i.e. mediate knowledge got through study and reflection). *Niṣkāma-karma* is therefore, enlightened action (*jñāna-pūrvam karma*).

When performed as service to God, *karma* ceases to bind the soul and instead becomes a means to liberation. Hence, *niṣkāma-karma* is also known as (*karma-yoga*). *Karma-yoga* purifies the mind and conduces to liberation and mental-purity (*antaḥkaraṇa-citta-suddhi*) which is an important condition for practising *bhakti* and for attaining a vision of God (*aparokṣa-jñāna*). Thus, *karma-yoga* indirectly facilitates liberation.

Unlike Rāmānuja, Madhva rejects the possibility of combining action with knowledge (*jñāna-karma-samuccaya*) because, according to Madhva, while *jñāna* directly leads to God's grace (*prasāda*) – the cause of release, *karma* leads to that grace only indirectly. “*Jñāna*” here means mediate knowledge/vision of God (*aparokṣa-jñāna*). When this is attained, God confers grace on the soul which grants its liberation.

Therefore, *jñāna* is directly related to grace - the cause of *mokṣa*. But *karma* only plays an indirect role because when *karma* is performed as service to God, it produces mental-purity which is required for practising service to God (*bhakti*), which in turn leads to *jñāna* and *jñāna* to grace. Therefore, *karma* cannot be combined with *jñāna*, because, it is instrumental in the attainment of *jñāna*.

**d) Immediate Knowledge (*Aparokṣa-Jñāna*)**

The practise of *bimbopāsana* consummates in the mystic experience of God in the very form in which He was contemplated upon as the *bimba*. This direct vision of God as the *bimba* is known as *bimba-aparokṣa/aparokṣa-jñāna*. But it must be remembered is that what is granted by this vision of God is an act of His grace. It is not an achievement of the *jīva* or a product of its efforts. All the *sādhana*s together merely enable the soul to qualify for God's grace. That *aparokṣa jñāna* depends on God's grace becomes evident when we remember that Brahman/God, has no physical form because He is unmanifest (*avyakta*). Therefore, God cannot be perceived by the devotee unless He chooses to reveal Himself to the devotee. Pleased by the soul's intense devotion, God condescends to grant a vision of Himself to the finite soul.

*Aparokṣa-jñāna* is not itself liberation. It is a foretaste of *mokṣa*, and is its penultimate step. *Aparokṣa-jñāna* cannot destroy ignorance because God's grace alone can terminate the soul's ignorance which He has cast over the soul through his *māyā*. Although *aparokṣa-jñāna* is itself an act of grace, it is not the final supreme act of grace that liberates the soul. When finally grace is attained, the soul which is on the threshold of release gets liberated/released.

According to Dvaita, liberation is possible only after-death (*videhamukti*). Therefore, the one who has attained a vision of God (*aparokṣa-jñānin*) has to wait until the physical body drops off due to exhaustion of *karma*. This does not mean that there is no progress from the attainment of realization till the time of physical death. After attaining *aparokṣa-jñāna*, the *karma*-in-action (*prārabdha-karma*) from the soul begins to get eliminated one by one. And the actions whose results have not started to manifest themselves (*sañcita-karma*) get destroyed by *aparokṣa-jñāna*. Those results which are

presently experienced as *karma*-in-action (*prārabdha-karma*) have to be exhausted through experience and physical body functions until then. But the realized soul can be relieved of a portion of even these *karmas* by God's grace. This phase is called *karma-nāśa*. When the physical body (*sthūla-deha*) drops off, the *aparokṣa jñāni* rises in one's subtle body (*liṅga-deha*) to the world of the Gods. This stage is known as *utkrānti*. There the realised soul waits until the dissolution of the whole cosmos. During dissolution, even the subtle body gets destroyed. This stage is known as *laya*. This is release proper, and what happens thereafter is the enjoyment (*bhoga*) of bliss eternally.

Dvaita does not admit liberation-in -life (*jīvan mukti*). The *aparokṣa jñānin* is called a "*jīvan-mukta*" only figuratively by Vyāsarāya, in the sense that the realized soul is on the verge of being released. The *aparokṣa jñānin* continues to perform the actions that are prescribed, and their performance increases the bliss of liberation that is yet to be experienced.

## 2. Nature of a Liberated Soul (*Mukta*)

I have already discussed that the concept of *mokṣa* is different in the schools of Indian philosophy because of their unique interpretation of the nature, function, relation, etc. of the soul. According to Dvaita, the soul absolutely dependent on Brahman/God is eternal, exists apart from and is similar to God. Bliss is an essential attribute of the soul whose real nature is a knower (*jñātā*), doer (*kartā*) and enjoyer (*bhoktā*). Differences, gradations and hierarchy among the souls are permanent.

In liberation, the soul retains its individuality. According to Advaita, due to *māyā*, the soul (*jīva*) appears different from Brahman. But after attaining the Self-realization, the *jīva* becomes identical with Brahman. Here, positively speaking "*mokṣa*" means attaining the right knowledge of the soul as identical with Brahman (*jīva-brahma aikya-jñāna*). Negatively speaking, it involves negation of the wrong notion of its illusory individuality. Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita criticize Advaita saying that even in liberation the *jīva* retains its individuality. Viśiṣṭādvaita upholds that in liberation, the *jīva* attains Brahman but it does not become identical with Brahman. Similarly Madhva criticizes the Advaita sayings that *mokṣa* is a state of bliss as admitted by Advaita, but Madhva

disagrees thereafter by emphasizing that liberation involves the *jīva* as the enjoyer of bliss.

In Dvaita the liberated souls have two features: (1) the soul is the enjoyer (*bhokta*) and (2) it is also the agent (*kartā*) of actions. After attaining liberation, the soul experiences pure bliss not associate with empirical objects. The soul has intrinsic happiness. The joy experienced is trans-empirical and it does not require the existence of a physical body. The nature of bliss is indescribable.

In liberation, the *jīvas* are similar to but different from Brahman, and the bliss of the *jīva* is pure like the bliss of Brahman. Brahman/God possesses powers to govern the whole cosmos and His cosmic activity indicates the magnitude of His joy. But, since the released souls do not possess the cosmic powers of the Lord, as pointed out in the *Brahma-Sūtra* (IV, 4, 17), they can experience only limited joy.

In liberation, the released soul serves God and engages in actions which are free from selfish desires. The actions of the liberated souls arise from pure love and gratitude towards God. The actions are spontaneous and do not involve rewards for performance and punishment for non-performance.

If liberated souls possess two features - enjoyment and activity; then, these features require a body for having those experiences. Madhva replies that, there are no limitations for enjoyment in liberation because the limitations exist only at the empirical level. For Madhva, since enjoyment and activities are the very nature of the Self they cannot become absent in liberation, as stated in some scriptural texts. The Self retains its intrinsic nature. Liberation cannot eliminate from the soul anything which intrinsically belongs to the soul.

According to Dvaita, in liberation, the devotion (*bhakti*) displayed by liberated souls is an end in itself. Also, there is nothing more to be gained further. In liberation, devotion is practised for its own sake. It is the essence of the bliss enjoyed by the liberated soul. Madhva upholds that even in the state of liberation the *jīvas* differ among themselves in the enjoyment of bliss. For example the effort put forward by different



souls like Brahma of the Gods (*deva*), of sages (*rishi*), and the human beings (*nara*) are not the same.

### 3. Gradation in Liberation (*Tāratamya*)

The four levels of liberation admitted in Vaiṣṇavism, are based on the *Bhagavata* and the *Pāñcarātra* schools, viz., (a) *Sālokya* (b) *Sāmīpya* (c) *Sārūpya* and (d) *Sayujya*. These levels of liberation are known as gradation in liberation (*tāratamya*). They are:

- (a) *Sālokya* – reaching the abode of Lord Viṣṇu (*Vaikunṭha*)
- (b) *Samīpya* – greater knowledge of God to confers proximity to God.
- (c) *Sārūpya* – by possessing greater knowledge, some liberated souls gets united with God. And
- (d) *Sāyujya* – some liberated souls attain the very form of God. *Sāyujya* is not total identity with Brahman as in Advaita. *Sālokya* to *Sāyujya* represents an increase in the degree of bliss enjoyed by the liberated released souls. Liberation is defined as total freedom from bondage or transmigration (*samsāra*).

There are two aspects of liberation (*mokṣa*): (a) Positive and (b) Negative. (a) The positive aspect of liberation: the souls clearly and permanently realize their intrinsic nature, their total dependence on God, show profound gratitude to God for His grace bestowed on them and there is enjoyment of pure bliss according to the soul's eligibility. This kind of liberation makes *mokṣa* worthy of attainment. (b) The negative aspect of liberation: the souls are liberated from bondage. Liberation is attained only when the soul's association with the material phenomena – the body, *karma*, etc., gets destroyed. Liberation means absence of bondage.

## CONCLUSION

Today's world is a materialistic world. People are groping for happiness through the enjoyment of worldly objects due to ignorance of one's real nature as consciousness and infinite bliss. Diverse *sādhana*s for realizing our nature as consciousness are prescribed in the scriptural texts which remain unpractised.

*Yasyāmataṁ tasya mataṁ matam yasya na veda saḥ  
Avijñātāṁ vijānatām vijñātām Avijānatām.*

The meaning of the verse is “one who thinks that he knows (that entity) does not know! One who thinks that (that entity) cannot be known in its entirety actually knows (that entity)! ... says the *Kenopaniṣad*. This famous quotation from the *Upaniṣad* tells us that if someone says one knows fully about consciousness, then that person doesn't know anything about consciousness. On the other hand, if one says, I do not know much about consciousness because it is a unique and awesome phenomenon transcending human understanding probably that person knows something. Discussions about consciousness are a very difficult task because it is a very difficult and elusive subject. While the *Kenopaniṣad* refers particularly to the supreme consciousness, the difficulty persists when we consider individual consciousness. The problem with consciousness is that we are so close to it, yet at the same time, so far away from it.

In the previous five chapters, an attempt was made to give an exposition of consciousness according to Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita in a systematic manner under five broad headings: (1) Life-Work of Rāmānuja and Madhva; (2) Metaphysical Categories of Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita; (3) Consciousness in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita; (4) Estrangement of Consciousness; and lastly (5) Enlargement of Consciousness.

In the concluding Chapter, I will bring together the major issues in consciousness according to Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita, the similarities and dissimilarities between these two schools from the metaphysical, epistemological and ethical perspectives.

In Chapter I, I have been discussed briefly the life-work of both Rāmānuja and Madhva. Rāmānuja was revered as an incarnation (*avatāra*) of Ādi-Śeṣa and Lakṣmaṇa; and therefore, named “Rāma-Anuja”. He established many temples and converted many people to Vaiṣṇavism. Rāmānuja’s philosophy known as monism-of-the-qualified (Viśiṣṭādvaita) upholds that the Absolute Reality – Brahman - is qualified by attributes (*viśeṣaṇas*) – the sentient soul (*cit*) and the non-sentient/material world (*acit*) - which are inseparably related (*aprthak-siddhi*) with Brahman. Rāmānuja rejects the Advaita view that the world is illusory (*mithyā*) through seven important arguments known as the “seven great untenables” (*sapta-vidhā-anupāpatti*).

Madhva was also venerated as an incarnation (*avatāra*) of Vāyu. The term “Dvaita” denotes that there are two realities: difference (*bheda*) and dependence (*adhīnatvā*). He postulated the fivefold great difference (*pañca- mahābhedas*) between God, soul and world as follows: (1) difference between God and soul; (2) difference between God and matter; (3) difference between soul and matter; (4) difference between soul and soul; and lastly (5) difference between one material object and another. According to Madhva, God/Brahman alone is independent (*svatantra*), and the souls and matter are totally dependent (*paratantra*) on God, both in bondage (*bandha*) and in liberation (*mokṣa*). Madhva declares that God’s grace (*prasāda*) alone can liberate the soul.

In Chapter II, I have examined the metaphysical categories of Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita, and consciousness from a metaphysical perspective. Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita admit metaphysical categories but they differ among themselves in the number of the metaphysical categories admitting them. This chapter discussed how evolution takes place. Similarities between Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita include accepting that the body is constituted of five gross elements (*pañca-mahābhūtas*) - earth, water, fire, air and ether; five subtle elements (*tanmātras*): smell, taste, sight, sound and touch; five organs of knowledge (*jñānendriyas*): nose, tongue, eyes, ears and skin; and finally five organs of action (*karmendriyas*): hands, feet, organs of speech, evacuation and generation; mind (*manas*) intellect (*buddhi*), memory (*citta*) and ego (*ahaṅkāra*). These together constitute the metaphysical categories. The soul (*jīva*) is interpreted as a conscious substance, associated with the physical body in the embodied state. I have examined only conscious

substances. Viśiṣṭādvaita admits four conscious substances: God (Brahman), soul (*jīva*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and transcendental matter (*nityavibhūti*). According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, God, soul and world are inseparably related (*apṛthak-siddhi*).

Dvaita admits only three conscious substances (*cetana-dravyas*) - Brahman, Lakṣmī and the *jīvas* – and declares that these are totally different from one another.

As mentioned above the soul (*jīva*) is a conscious substance according to Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. For Viśiṣṭādvaita, the soul is by nature eternal (*nitya*), subject (*jñātā*) of knowledge, self-luminous (*svaprakāśa*), atomic in size (*anu*), knower (*jñātā*), doer (*kartā*), enjoyer (*bhoktā*), and infinite in number. Viśiṣṭādvaita classifies the souls which are different from each other under three heads: (1) the bound (*samsārin*), (2) the liberated (*mukta*), and (3) the eternal (*nitya*).

Dvaita too proffers a trifold classification of souls based on an intrinsic difference in their nature (*svarūpa-traividhya*): (1) *mukti-yogya*, (2) *nitya-samsārin*, and (3) *tamoyogya*. According to Dvaita, God is responsible for the soul's ignorance (the cause of its bondage) and also its enlightenment (a means to its liberation) because God's grace alone can liberate the soul from bondage.

Chapter III examined consciousness from the Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita epistemological perspectives. This chapter discussed what is consciousness, made an etymological analysis of “consciousness”, examined nature and features of consciousness, and the Indian philosophic view about consciousness. Consciousness does not have a fixed meaning because it differs from one philosopher to another. This chapter also discussed knowledge, truth and novelty to facilitate a clear understanding of consciousness because Indian philosophers use the term “consciousness” to refer to knowledge and also consciousness, thereby creating confusion and ambiguity. While Western philosophers adopt a scientific approach to understand consciousness, Indian philosophers adopt a scientific, an epistemic, a metaphysical, an ethical and a spiritualistic approach to understand consciousness.

According to Advaita, consciousness is the Supreme Reality – Brahman. It is the eternally existing pure contentless knowledge (*nirviśayaka-jñāna*) which is neither

produced nor destroyed. It reveals itself and also other objects; but, it cannot be likewise revealed by any other phenomena (*sva-itarā avabhāsakatvam*). The trifold distinction between the knower-known-knowledge existing at the empirical level (*vyāvahārika*) of consciousness, is only apparent and illusory (*mithyā*) because it is not real. It is a psychosis of the internal-sense organ (*antaḥ-karāṇa-vṛtti*) and is regarded as knowledge because of it being a determinant of consciousness.

Viśiṣṭādvaita criticizes and rejects the Advaita theory of consciousness. Viśiṣṭādvaita and the other realists emphasize that knowledge implies: (1) a subject (*jñāta*) to which it belongs, and (2) an object (*jñeya*) to which it refers. Knowledge-as-such is always viewed as a function of the subject. It always and necessarily belongs to the Self, which is a permanent spiritual phenomenon. For Viśiṣṭādvaita, consciousness is not identical with reality.

Viśiṣṭādvaita upholds that every embodied soul in the state of bondage is endowed with two kinds of consciousness: (1) essential-consciousness (*svarūpa-jñāna/dharmijñāna*), and (b) attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*). Essential-consciousness constitutes the essence of the soul. It is the eternal, inseparable, self-luminous, self-conscious, spiritual, and pure subjective consciousness abiding in all the states of experience - waking (*jāgrat*), dreaming (*svapna*), deep-sleep (*susupti*) and liberation (*caturtha*).

Attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) is an external non-material (*ajāda*) adjunct of the soul which reveals the object of essential-consciousness. Since it is neither spiritual nor material in nature, it is able to mediate between the spiritual knowing soul and the material known object. Attributive-consciousness is self-luminous but not self-conscious. It can reveal objects like a lamp, but it cannot know itself. But essential-consciousness can know itself and also reveal other objects. Attributive-consciousness functions only during the waking (*jāgrat*) and dream (*svapna*) states, but it is absent during deep sleep (*susupti*) and liberation. It contracts and expands depending on the nature, magnitude and distance of the object from the perceiving subject. It has no function of its own other than serving the soul with which it is temporarily related.

Attributive-consciousness has its own attributes like diffusion, contraction, etc. This Chapter also examined the modes of attributive-consciousness such as perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), verbal testimony (*śabda*) and finally the nature and states of experience.

Dvaita analyzes consciousness in a unique and different manner. Madhva too posits two kinds of consciousness: (1) witness-consciousness (*sākṣi-jñāna*), and (2) modal consciousness (*vṛtti-jñāna*). Witness-consciousness is the seventh sense-organ (*indriya*) possessed by a human being. It is spiritual in nature, and the essence of the soul. Functioning in all the four states of experience (waking, dream, deep sleep and liberation), through intuition the witness-consciousness perceives all objects, unmediated by the senses. Hence, its knowledge is free from all defects and is absolutely valid. The experience of pain/pleasure; the existence of mind, time, etc., are directly perceived by the witness-consciousness, as the certifier and terminus of all valid cognitions. A problem then arises for Madhva: (1) Is consciousness a physical organ like the *karma-indriyas* and the *jñāna-indriyas*? And, (2) Since the physical body (*deha/śarīra*) and its organs of knowledge (*jñāna-indriyas*) and action (*karma-indriyas*) are perishable; then, is consciousness - an *indriya* - also a perishable? According to Dvaita, consciousness (*sākṣin*) is not perishable.

Modal-consciousness (*vṛtti-jñāna*) mediated by the five senses and the mind, is material in nature. Hence, knowledge obtained through modal-consciousness is subject to defects (*doṣas*) and error. Therefore, modal-consciousness (*vṛtti-jñāna*) can never be witness-consciousness (*sākṣi-jñāna*). All doubts are products of modal-consciousness. Moreover modal-consciousness functions only during the waking and dream states; and is absent in deep sleep and liberation, whereas witness-consciousness functions in all the states of experience.

Thus, we see that consciousness is interpreted in two totally different and unique ways by the two major schools of Vaiṣṇavism - Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. The Thesis also discussed the estrangement/bondage and enlargement/liberation of consciousness because consciousness is a key concept in epistemology, and its conceptualization in Viśiṣṭādvaita

and Dvaita will influence and determine the metaphysics and the ethics of these systems of philosophy.

In Chapter IV I have analyzed the estrangement/bondage of consciousness according to Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. This chapter examined consciousness from an ethical perspective. The word “estrangement” is used in a figurative sense and not its literal sense. This chapter examines how individual consciousness which is actually universal gets finitized and suffers bondage. Every embodied transmigrating soul during bondage (*bandha*) possesses two kinds of consciousness. Bondage, in Indian philosophy generally means the liability of the soul to birth/embodiment/death and all other consequently related miseries.

The word “*avidyā*” has been used by Viśiṣṭādvaita in two different senses: metaphysical and ethical. The metaphysical meaning of “*avidyā*” in Viśiṣṭādvaita is *prakṛti* itself. It is called “*avidyā*” because matter (*acit*) is the principle which prevents the soul from realizing its essential conscious nature. Viśiṣṭādvaita uses the word “*avidyā*” in the ethical sense of *varṇa-āśrama karmas* causing the expansion and contraction of the soul’s attributive-consciousness (*dharma-bhūta-jñāna*). *Avidyā*, in this sense too, is a positive entity possessing the power of obscuring the soul’s attributive consciousness; and creating thereby a false sense of agency in the *jīva*. The attitude of the individual soul towards the world (to be the lord of the world) and the main purpose of the world is merely to satisfy the senses and enjoy various objects and comforts. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, *avidyā* and *karma* are the causes of bondage, and the soul’s bondage is due to absolute ignorance (*avidyā*) of its true nature.

Viśiṣṭādvaita criticizes the Advaita concept of *māyā* through seven arguments (*sapta-vidhā-anupāpatti*). According to Advaita, *māyā* is neither real nor unreal, it is indescribable (*anirvacanīya*). Viśiṣṭādvaita criticizes the Advaita view saying that maintaining a third alternative violates the well-established rules of logic – the law of contradiction and the law of the excluded middle. But Viśiṣṭādvaita is not justified in criticizing the Advaita because it too is guilty of committing the same mistake - admitting

that attributive-consciousness (*dharmabhūta-jñāna*) is neither spiritual nor material in nature.

For Dvaita, *māyā* is a mysterious power of God, and it is real. Through *māyā*, God creates, sustains and dissolves the world; and causes delusion/ ignorance in the souls. According to Dvaita, the immediate cause of misery is the soul's ignorance (*avidyā/ajñāna*) of its true nature (*svabhāva-ajñāna vāda*), i.e. the soul is ignorant about its relation to God. God is the only independent reality; the *jīva* is dependent on God for its existence, knowledge and activity. According to Dvaita, there are four forms of *avidyā*: *jīvācchādika*, *paramācchādika*, *saivala* and *māyā*. *Jīvācchādika* prevents the soul from knowing its own true nature as consciousness and bliss, and a reflection (*pratibimba*) of God. *Paramācchādika*, another form of *avidyā*, prevents the soul from knowing the real nature of God as the only independent, supreme Sovereign, and the Lord of all Existents. *Saivala* - the third form of ignorance, vitiates the soul's capacity to discriminate and know what is wrong/right. *Māyā* – the fourth form of ignorance, makes the soul subject to illusions/delusions such as black/white magic. Dvaita declares that all the four forms of ignorance can be terminated only through God's grace.

According to Dvaita, the souls are intrinsically different from one another, in the state of bondage as well as liberation. This intrinsic difference accounts for the performance of actions (bad/good) leading to the accumulation of *karma* by each *jīva*; responsible as the cause for the variations in sufferings and enjoyments, the life-patterns and emotional-attitudes in empirical life (*samsāra*).

Chapter V analyzed the enlargement/liberation of consciousness. This chapter also examined consciousness from the ethical perspective. It shows how individual consciousness attains liberation to reassert its universal infinite nature. "Enlargement" is here used in a figurative sense and not the literal sense. This chapter examined the enlargement of consciousness; briefly, according to Indian philosophy, and focused mainly on enlargement of consciousness in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. "Enlargement of consciousness" means the liberation of consciousness. The means to liberation (*sādhanas*): action (*karma*), devotion (*bhakti*), meditation (*dhyāna*) and knowledge



(*jñāna*); kinds of liberation (*mukti*); nature of a liberated soul (*mukta*); nine kinds of devotion (*nava-vidhā bhakti*); the sevenfold limbs of devotion (*sādhana-saptaka*) and self-surrender (*prapatti*) were discussed. The nine kinds of devotion include listening to stories about God (*śravaṇa*), singing His glories (*kīrtana*), remembering His name and presence (*smaraṇa*), servicing His feet (*pāda-sevana*), worshipping God (*arcana*), prostrating to God (*vandana*), serving God (*dāsyā*), cultivating friendship (*sakhya*), and total self-surrender (*ātma-nivedana*). The sevenfold limbs of devotion are: discrimination (*viveka*), dispassion (*vimoka*), practise (*abhyāsa*), rituals (*kriyā*), virtuous actions (*kalyāṇa*), cheerfulness (*anavasāda*) and non-exultation (*anuddharṣa*). According to Rāmānuja, although all the *sāadhanās* enable embodied consciousness – the souls (*jīvas*) - to attain liberation; self-surrender (*prapatti*) is the foremost/principal and most effective means. Viśiṣṭādvaita upholds that in liberation, the soul as individual consciousness – *jīva* - becomes united but not identical with Brahman.

Viśiṣṭādvaita admits a plurality of souls, but unlike Madhva denies qualitative difference among the souls in the state of liberation. Qualitative difference exists only in bondage when the *jīva* identifies itself with the psycho-physical limitations of the body-sense-mind complex. In liberation, all the *jīvas* are uniform centers of unlimited consciousness and bliss. In Advaita, the individuality/self-identity of the *jīva* (*jīvatva/jīva-bhāva/jīva-hood/jīvaness*) itself disappears in release when the *jīva* realizes its identity with Brahman.

Enlargement of consciousness in Dvaita analyzed the nature of liberation (*mokṣa*) and the four kinds of liberation - *sālokya*, *samīpya*, *sārūpya* and *sāyujya*. *Sālokya* means reaching/entering the abode of Lord Viṣṇu (Vaikuṅṭha). *Samīpya* is greater knowledge of God to attain proximity with Him. *Sārūpya* signifies that by virtue of the greater knowledge, some souls get united with Him. *Sāyujya* means acquiring the very form of the Lord. *Sāyujya* is not complete identity with Brahman as in Advaita. *Sālokya* to *Sāyujya* indicates an increase in the degree of bliss enjoyed by the released soul. According to Madhva, knowledge itself does not eliminate ignorance and confer liberation. Hence, knowledge is only a qualification for liberation not its cause. God's

grace is necessary for liberation. Through God's grace the soul gets purified, realizes the cause of its bondage, experiences a direct vision of the Lord and attains liberation.

Madhva's means to liberation involves four steps as requisites. They are: Step 1: (a) *Vairāgya*: Dispassion: Desire for the objects of the world is the cause of the soul's bondage. Hence, detachment towards worldly phenomena has to be cultivated. Dispassion is a negative requirement for the pursuit of liberation. (b) Knowledge about God's greatness (*māhātmya-jñāna*): Acquiring knowledge about God's greatness by studying scriptures is a positive requirement for attaining liberation. (c) Devotion (*bhakti*): Devotion has to well up in the heart. True devotion is free from selfish-desires and worldly interests. Step 2: (a) Desireless-action (*niṣkāma-karma*). (b) Path of knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*): Path of knowledge involving guided study of scriptures (*śravaṇa*), rational reflection (*manana*) and contemplation (*nididhyāsana*). Step 3: Devotion (*bhakti*): When devotion merges into *nididhyāsana*, there is the immediate experience of God (*aparokṣa-jñāna*). And lastly Step 4: God's grace (*prasāda*): God's grace lifts the veil cast by his *Māyā*.

Dvaita does not admit the ideal of salvation for all souls (*sarva-mukti*), as admitted by many schools of Indian philosophy. Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita, in common, declare that even in the state of liberation, the liberated souls are different from and dependent on Brahman. But, Dvaita differs from Viśiṣṭādvaita by asserting that even in the state of liberation, inequalities exist in the liberated souls. An important question here is, how can the eternal bliss be unequal? Moreover, every individual desires the eternal bliss and that it should be equally enjoyed.

Unlike the other systems of Vaiṣṇavism, Madhva puts forward the doctrine of gradation (*svarūpa-tāratamya*) in the soul's capacity for attaining liberation. According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, ignorance (*avidyā*) and worldly action (*karma*) are the cause of bondage; whereas for Dvaita, the immediate cause of the soul's misery is its ignorance (*avidyā/ajñāna*) about its true nature (*svabhāva-ajñāna-vāda*). According to Viśiṣṭādvaita, salvation is open to all (*sarvamukti*). But Dvaita rejects liberation for all and goes on further to posit gradation even in the state of liberation, and the bliss enjoyed

(*ānanda-tāratamya*) therein. Another major difference is that while Viśiṣṭādvaita emphasizes self-surrender (*prapatti*), Dvaita highlights the importance of God's grace (*prasāda*) for attaining liberation.

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