

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SADHANA IN VISISTADVAITA



Vedanta Vidwan, Desika Darsana Choodamani
Satsampradaya Bhushanam, Vedanta Vidya Vageesha
Vedanta Bhushana

Dr. N.S. Anantha Rangacharya
Bangalore

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DEDICATION

This work

"The Philosophy of Sadhana in Visistadvaita"

is dedicated with all humility and profound
respect at the holy feet of

His Holiness Srimath Paramahansa
Parivrajakacharya

Srimadabhinava Ranganatha Brahmatantra
Parakala Maha desikan of Sri Parakal Mutt

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श्रीमत् परमहंस परिव्राजकाचार्याणां
श्री श्री रङ्गप्रियमहादेशिकानां अनुग्रह श्रीमुखम्

Narayana Smaranas by

His Holiness Sri Sri Rangapriya Mahadesikan

श्रीमते श्रीनिवास महादेशिकाय नमः

श्रीमते श्रीनिवास रङ्गमहायोगिने नमः

Sri Ranga Mahaprabhave Namah

*(Benediction by His Holiness Sri Sri Rangapriya
Mahadesikan)*

It is well-known that Vedanta is the finest flower of Indian thought. Other systems of Philosophy - they say - become silenced on hearing the roar of the Vedanta - Lion. This does not mean that Vedanta is not indebted to other systems of philosophy. In fact, the logic of the Nyaya Vaisheshika and the Mimamsa, and the philosophy and meditational methods of Sankhya Yoga, go a long way in the formation of the Vedanta system. It only means that in philosophical conclusions, the verdict is that of the Vedanta system.

Among the three important schools of Vedanta namely, the Advaita, Visisthadvaita and Dwaita, the Visisthadvaita expounded by Bhagavan Ramanuja - in the line of tradition set by Nathamuni and Yamuna Muni - and developed and defended with all the fire and strength of their souls by Masters like Parasara Bhatta, Sudarsana Suri and Vedanta Desika, has certain special features satisfying both the intellect and the spirit. These features have been

enumerated by Sri Vedanta Desika in the concluding part of his magnum opus namely "Tattva Mukta Kalapa" :-

दृष्टेऽपहृत्यभावात् अनुमितिषिष्ये लाघवस्यानुरोधात्
शास्त्रेणैवावसेये विहितिविरहिते नास्तिकत्वप्रहाणात् ।
नाथोपज्ञं प्रवृत्तं बहुभिरूपचितं यामुनेयप्रबन्धैः
त्रातं सम्यग्यतीन्द्रैः इदमखिलतमः कर्शनं दर्शनं नः ॥

(This Visithadvaita Darshana is competent to dispel all darkness - declares the revered Acharya).

While interpreting the scriptures, it gives equal importance to both the dualistic and non-dualistic texts and draws out satisfactory conclusions. It is based upon "Prasthanatraya" viz. the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutra and the Bhagavad Gita, and in addition draws inspiration from Bhagavat Sastra (Pancharatra Agama) and the most moving mystic utterances of the Alvars.

Vedanta Vidwan, Dr. N.S. Anantarangachar, who has spent the major part of his blessed lifetime for writing and teaching of the above system is presenting here two invaluable books related to it. The first is the English translation of Acharya Sri Ramanuja's Vedanta Deepa and the second, author's own original writing - a thesis which brought him doctorate. The writing is called "The Philosophy of Sadhana in Visistadvaita."

The Vedanta Deepa was written by Acharya Ramanuja as a short version of his masterly work "Sri Bhashya" intended to enable students to understand with appreciation and remember the main teachings of the Sri Bhashya text.

“इष्टं हिविदुषां लोके समासव्यासधारणम्”

Men of light and learning appreciate really the synthetic and analytical study of a system. Dr. Anantarangachar's translation is simple and lucid, and when he finds a Sanskrit word defying all attempts at correct translation, he rightly puts the Sanskrit word itself and describes its import in the footnote. The learned author's introduction and the section called "Author's Submission" and the summary of the "adhikaranas" towards the end of the book, are invaluable. He leaves no stone unturned to make the difficult text understood.

"The philosophy of Sadhana in Visistadwaita" has all the valuable features of a learned work, and is prefaced by the erudite scholar, Professor S.S. Raghavachar. As a preamble to the subject under consideration, he describes the triangle of Sadhaka, Sadhya and Sadhana and deals in detail about the means of salvation called Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga and "Prapatti Yoga" as the crowning point of all these. He shows that these yogas do not have water-tight compartments, as all of them lead to the same goal of salvation directly or indirectly and are left to the choices of aspirants of different tastes. "रुचीनां वैचित्र्यात् ऋजुकुटिलं नानापथजुषाम्" The famous means Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga merge in either Bhakti or Prapatti. Prapatti both as a necessary auxiliary to Bhakti Yoga, and also as an independent means, leads to salvation and hence the teaching that God does not give salvation to those who do not surrender to Him by means of Prapatti Yoga" "प्रपन्नादन्येषां न दिशति मुकुन्दो निजपदम्"

There is a misconception that a "Papanna" (one who has surrendered to God) has no "Sadhana" at all to practise. He lives as an easy going lotous - eater with faith in the "Saving Nature of God". That this is contrary to truth is

shown by describing his threefold duties - Purva Kritya (acquisition of "tattva - jnana" before hand), Tatkala Kritya (duties at the time of Prapatti) and Uttara Kritya (duties after udergoing initiation of Prapatti).

The meaning of Prapatti, its synonyms, and varieties and virtues necessary to become a "Prapanna" have been setforth in detail. All the objections against Prapatti as an independent means to salvation, have been effectively answered. It has been rightly declared that Prapatti as a direct or indirect means to salvation, has been accepted not only by other schools of Vedanta but also by non-Vedic religious systems. “नारायणकरुणामय शरणं करवाणि तावकौ चरणे” (Sri Shankaracharya) “बुद्धं, धम्मं, संघं, शरणंगच्छामि” (Sri Buddha)

The history of the doctrine of Prapatti before and after Ramanuja and the epistemology of the Visishtadvaita system provided in the thesis are valuable matters useful for both the learned and the layman.

That Dr. Anantarangachar has undertaken and finished the publication of the valuable matter in his ripe old age shows his faithfulness to the mission “रामानुजार्य दिव्याज्ञा वर्धतमभिवर्धताम्”

Narayana-Smaranas to the learned and devoted author and his family.

**Narayana Narayana Narayana
Sri Sri Rangapriya Sri Srih**

Chaitrasuddha
Chaturdasi
Budhavaasara
12-4-2006

Foreword to the First Edition
by Prof. S.S. Raghavachar

I am glad that Dr. N.S. Anantha Rangachar's learned work on the Philosophy of Sadhana according to Visistadvaita is being published by the University of Mysore. The scholarly treatise presents the distinctive metaphysical standpoint of Ramanuja's School of Vedanta and offers a fairly elaborate exposition of the philosophy of sadhana grounded on that standpoint. The learned author closely follows the authoritative formulation of the tenets of the system of Vedanta Desika. It is good that Research on Visistadvaita has passed beyond the stage of rough generalizations and is entering into intense consideration of the basic writings of the master-minds. Visistadvaita, like the other great schools of vedanta, is a highly critical and self-conscious system and proceeds on systematic lines of investigation. On the one hand, it works out a devoted interpretation of the authentic message of the upanisads, the Brahma-Sutras and the Gita and presents, on the other, the resulting doctrines in the plane of pure philosophy, employing all the resources of philosophic reason, with a complete dialectical self-vinidication in relation to competing philosophical systems. If Ramanuja represents the wholeness of vision characteristic of the movement, Vedanta Desika articulates the technical details with matchless insight and precision. It is good that we are introduced in the present treatise to the inner working of this philosophical movement.

In metaphysics, the position of Ramanuja is clear and distinct. For him the ultimate Reality is Brahman transcending and comprehending the finite reals. It is monism not depending on the controversial doctrine of

illusionism. Brahman, on this stand point, is the supreme one, appropriating the finite many, as its adjectival powers or modes. We have here the non-dualism of comprehension as opposed to that of cancellation. In the realm of creative and purposeful living, the doctrine propounds the two-fold programme of Bhakti and Prapatti. Even as Brahman does not cancel but fulfils the finite, Bhakti does not cancel the intellectual and moral values but conserves and perfects them in the supreme ardour and rapture of love. It marks the completion of Jnana and Karma and unifies them in the enlightened and dynamic ecstasy of adoration. Bhakti is the principle of integration within the finite soul and also the principle that integrates the finite soul with the supreme reality. Bhakti is the aspiration of the whole soul after the whole of the Divine Reality. There is nothing in this philosophic doctrine of Bhakti to make it just a concession to the soft-minded. It is a joyous ascent in love beyond the planes of mere knowledge and action. This heightened conception of Bhakti is a distinctive contribution of Rajanuja and his School of thought.

Dr. Anantha Rangachar does well in interpreting the full meaning of Prapatti. He rightly brings out the role of self-surrender even in Atheistic cults like Buddhims and its sway over the Vedantic Schools, whether Absolutistic or Theistic is well-known. But the speciality in the Visistadvaitic treatment lies in working out a complete explanation of prapatti and all its elements and aspects with technical thoroughness and in according to it the status of an all-sufficing pathway to Moksa. Vedanta Desika's great work, Rahasya Traya-Sara, is devoted to this theme and it constitutes the classic on the subject. Prapatti is the meeting-point of human effort and Divine grace and it is the point at which human effort exhausts and completes

itself, as it were, in transferring its burdens and responsibilities to Divine grace. This decisive act of "unburdening" furnishes the much-awaited occasion for the unimpeded actualization of grace. The redemptive power of God held in reserve in a state of potentiality as long as the finite will works in egoistic self-reliance, is released into fullness of operation in response to, and fulfillment of, self-surrender on the part of the devotee. What finally effectuates human emancipation is certainly Divine Grace and that it awaits man's self-surrender for that purpose shows that the Divine scheme is a fulfillment and not a violation of the autonomy of the finite spirit. We have here a profound reconciliation of effort and grace. It is good that we have in this treatise a scholarly and well-thought-out statement of the fundamentals of Sadhana as conceived by the great Acharyas of the Sri-Vaisnava tradition

S.S. Raghavachar

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Mysore

10-1-1968

Author's Submission

This work "The Philosophy of Sadhana in Visistadvaita" was first published by the University of Mysore in 1967. Copies of this book were not available since many years and many people have been making enquiries about this work. It is now reprinted to fulfill this purpose.

I have been blessed in this endeavour by His Holiness Sir Srimadbhinava Vageesha Brahmatantra Swatantra Mahadesikar with a liberal donation from the funds of Sri Venkata Narasimhachar Trust (The Trust created in the name of Poorvashramam father of the Swamiji). I offer my profound respects to his holiness for his gracious help. His Holiness Sri Sri Rangapriya Mahadesikar of Bangalore has very kindly blessed this publication with his benediction and I am ever grateful to his holiness. I offer my profound respects to his holiness.

Chi. A. Narasimhan and Sri G.N. Rama Prasad have assisted me in correcting the proofs. Sri Rama Printers have executed the work of printing very nicely. I pray to the Lord to bless them all with all good.

This work is dedicated with all humility and profound respects at the holy feet of His Holiness. Srimad Abhinava Ranganatha Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakala Mahadeshikar of Sri Parakala Mutt, Mysore by whose grace I was inspired to take up the study of Vedanta.

I hope and Trust that this work will be warmly received by all Sahrudayas.

Bangalore
24-4-2006

इति सज्जनविधेयः
N. S. Anantharangacharya

Abbreviations

रग. व.	Rigveda Samhita
य.आ.	Yajur Aranyaka
ईशा.	Isavasyopanishad
कठ.उ.	Kathopanishad
तै.उ.	Taittiriya Upanishad
मुं.उ.	Mundakopanishad
प्र.उ.	Prasnopanishad
छां.उ.	Chandogya Upanishad
बृ.उ.	Brihadaranyakopanishad
म.ना.उ.	Mahanarayana Upanishad
श्वे.उ.	Svetasvataropanishad
रा.	Valmiki Ramayana
भाग.	Bhagavatam
भ.गी. - B.G.	Bhagavadgita
वि.पु.	Vishnupurana
अ.सं.	Ahirbudhnya Samhita
सि.त्र. S.T.	Siddhitrayam
गी.सं.	Gitartha Samgraham
स्तो.	Stotraratnam
श्री.भा. - S.B.	Sribhashyam
वे.दी.	Vedanta Deepa
वे.सा.	Vedanta Sara
गी.भा. - G.B.	Ramanuja Gira Bhashyam
वे.सं	Vedartha Samgraha
श.ग.	Sharanagati Gadyam
वै.ग.	Vaikunta Gadyam

न्या.सि. - N.S.	Nyayasiddhanjanam
न्या.परि. - N.P.	Nyayaparishuddhi
त.मु.क. - T.M.K.	Tattva Mukta Kalapa
त.टी.	Tattva Teeka
ता.चं	Tatparya Chandrika
अ.सा. - A.S.	Adhikarana Saravali
ग.भा.	Gadya Bhashyam - Desika
दया.	Daya Shatakam
अ.श.	Achyuta Shatakam
व.पं.	Varadaraja Panchasat
स.सि.- S.S.	Sarvartha Siddhi
गी.सं.र.	Gitartha Samgraha Raksha
श्रु.प्र.	Sruta Prakasika
य.म.दी. - Y.M.D.	Yatindramata Deepika
दर्श	Darsanodaya
गौ.न्या.सू.	Gautama Nyayasutra
सां.का.	Samkhya Karika
र.त्र.सा. - R.T.S.	Rahasya Traya Sara
L.T.	Lakshmi Tantra
न्या.ति.	Nyasa Tilaka
शां.सू.	Shandilya Sutra
ना.सू.	Narada Sutra
मो.ध.	Moksha Dharma
पू.मी.सू.	Purva Mimamsa Sutram
न्या.वि.	Nyasa Vimsati
या.स्मृ.	Yajnyavalkya Smrithi
न्या.वि.व्या.	Nyasa Vimsathi Vyakhyana

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SĀDHANA
IN
VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA

INTRODUCTION

Sādhana is a means to an end which is etymologically explained as 'sādhyate Anena ithi Sāadhanam'. This essentially presupposes two factors viz., the Sādhaka and the Sādhya as it is related to both. Sādhana is in fact a bipolar process which unites the aspirant with the goal of his aspiration.

A prior knowledge of the nature of the Sādhaka as well as the Sādhya is essential for any type of Sādhana to be possible, for, this becomes meaningless without either an aspirant or an end. Though the word Sādhana has a very wide connotation and implies all kinds of means for attainment of all types of aspirations both worldly and spiritual, we restrict its connotation in these sections only to means for achieving spiritual perfection. The different systems of philosophy have prescribed different means for attainment of spiritual perfection and these vary sometimes from person to person according to their mental and spiritual attainments. The different schools of Vedānta have expounded the philosophy of Sādhana in their own characteristic way and prescribed either karma or knowledge, devotion or self-surrender as the case may be, as the means for perfection and it is the purpose of this thesis to deal with the philosophy of Sādhana in viśiṣṭādvaita with particular reference to Vedānta Desikā.

Sādhana related to Sādhaka and the Sādhya:

When we think of Sādhana we are confronted with a number of intricate and complicated problems. Who is to be an aspirant and why? What is his- innate nature? Where is the need for any Sādhana at all? What ill would befall

man if he would turn away from Sādhana? What would he hope to gain by this? If he has to gain his end what should he do? What kind of Sādhana should he choose? The above problems are significant as they probe into the being of our being and urge us to take to some Sādhana or other to gain our goal of life according to our dispositions and faith.

The entire humanity¹ is meant for Sādhana as the animal world bereft of rationality is beyond its purview. The theory of evolution both ancient and modern acclaims the human being as the finest product of creation endowed richly with an enormous power of thought and deed that could be directed towards the attainment of perfection. Man is not a mere compound of certain elements that appears by chance at certain times and disappears at certain other times without a permanent phase. Man has been the subject of study and speculation from very early times and sages with wisdom have arrived at the fundamental truth that he is an eternal principle different and distinct from matter. This revelation of the eternality of the self is the fulcrum on which the entire superstructure of Sādhana rests. So the psychology of the Jīva has to be studied and his relationship with the Universe has to be understood. Is the Jīva self explanatory? Is he himself the creator of the Universe? Or is there an all-powerful, all-knowing blissful creator other than the Jīva? If so how is the Jīva related to that all-creator? Is he one with him or different from him? What is the nature of matter and why is the Jīva connected with matter? And when can the Jīva sever his connection with matter and how?

Only when answers to these questions are understood, the Jīva comes to realize his status in the Universe as well

as the goal he has to attain. Nachiketus was in fact worried with only these three problems namely that of the Universal being, that of the aspirant and that of the means and he was instructed into this triple philosophy of the end, the way and the reality² by the God of Death. The philosophy of Sādhana therefore centres round the Sādhaka or the finite self related to the Sādhya or the Universal self. Savants of the past therefore urged all the aspirants to get a thorough knowledge of five factors which were implied in the above three before taking up to any Sādhana³. They are as follows:

1. The nature of Brahman who is to be attained.
2. The nature of the individual self who has to attain Brahman;
3. The means of attaining Brahman.
4. The fruit of attaining Brahman or the Summum Bonum.
5. The obstructions for the attainment of Brahman.

The ontological position of the Sādhaka in the school of Viśiṣṭādvaita

The individual self happens to be the Sādhaka and the ontological position of this soul must be first of all ascertained before contemplating anything about Sādhana.

The philosophy of Rāmanuja advocates the unity of Reality though the world of matter and finite selves are also admitted as a part of Reality. This concept of viśiṣṭādvaitam is outstanding and comprehensive. This does not strictly signify the notion of the qualified monism nor does this harmonise the claims of monism and dualism. On the other hand this philosophy strongly supports and

advocates monism only instead of a plurality of Reality. But the Absolute of Viśiṣṭādvaitam is characterised by its attributes of the sentient and the non-sentient unlike that of the undifferentiated Brahman of Advaita. Desikā affirms that the study of vedāntic reality as tatva relates to only one Absolute, the, Brahman characterised by its modal expressions of the chit and the achit.

‘अशेषचिदचित्प्रकारं ब्रह्मैकमेव तत्त्वम् । तत्र प्रकारप्रकारिणोः
प्रकाराणां च मिथोऽत्यन्तभेदेऽपि वैशिष्ट्यादिविवक्षया
एकत्वव्यपदेशः तदितरनिषेधश्च ।’ - न्या.सि p -187

These two entities namely the chit and the achit are real, mutually different and also different from the Supreme Reality. These two entities constitute the cosmos and though these are different from Brahman they have no separate existence as they form never-to-be separable attributes of that Transcendental Reality that manifests itself in them. No attribute can exist independent of the substratum. So they form one with their substratum though they are not identical with it. According to this relationship of Aprithakśiddha viśēṣhaṇa the Reality is one and indivisible though it is qualified by plurality.

The philosophers of the monistic schools of thought posit non-difference between the attribute and the substratum and explain away the world of differences in different ways. Bhartṛprapañcha propagates avasthāvāda and declares the universe as an avasthā or state of Brahman whereas Bhāskara follows the vikāravāda and holds the world as the result of Brahma Pariṇāma. Yādavaprakāśa on the other hand favours śaktivāda and affirms that the world is the result of the effect of divine power. All these theories

viz., the avasthāvāda, vikāravāda and śaktivāda are summarily rejected by Śankaracharya as 'fictitious constructions' and he, following the vivartavāda, concludes that only undifferentiated consciousness is the Absolute Reality whereas the world of differences is unreal being phenomenal. These vedāntic teachers have arrived at monism by means of Swarūpaikya. But Rāmānujachārya comes to the conclusion of one Supreme Reality on different grounds of viśiṣṭaikya⁴. 'Brahman is qualified by plurality but is not itself plural'⁵. The individual selves as well as matter, though really different from Brahman, the Supreme self, form one with it being its attributes. Rāmānuja explains the relationship of the world with Brahman in a realistic way following the parishkrita śaktivāda according to which the chit and the achit are admitted as the śakti of the Supreme or attributes inseparable and powerful of action.⁶

The physical universe subject to mutation as well as the finite selves that depend upon various conditions are not all-explanatory for they are not the creators of the world. Though the finite selves qualified by matter have substantive being they have no independent existence as they form the prakāras or attributes of the Supreme. The Supreme Being is the prakārin of all other entities and is always characterised by them. The Absolute of Viśiṣṭādvaita is not a sum-total of adjectives but a unity of Brahman in and through the multiplicity of the sentient and the non-sentient. The existence of only one Supreme Entity qualified by the chit and the achit is affirmed in this school unlike the undifferentiated Supreme of Advaita and so this system is rightly described by some as 'Realistic Monism'. This concept of Viśiṣṭādvaitam which admits the reality of

the individual souls as well as matter thoroughly dependent upon, and subservient to, the Supreme satisfies the tests of logical consistency as well as the emotional and spiritual yearnings of the seekers after truth.

The school of Advaita negates the world of differences as unreal explaining it as a result of nescience and confirms non-difference as the Reality. Bhāskara also postulates that only non-difference is the reality whereas the universe is explained as due to a real limiting adjunct. Though Yādeva Prakāsa explains the universe of differences as vyakti-lakṣhana it is his conclusion that the Reality is non-difference (Śakti-lakṣhana). All these schools of thought give primary importance to non-difference whereas the phenomenon of difference is explained away as secondary. But contrary to all these Rāmānuja affirms on one hand the difference in the characteristics of the three entities and on the other non-difference in the Reality-in-unity.

Thus the philosophy of Rāmānuja is established in the central thought that Brahman is the ground of all existence and that all other entities exist to glorify it. Rāmānuja insists on the validity of all the Upaniṣhads, without any distinction of primary or secondary texts, as in some schools, and strikes out a unique path of interpretation based on the authority of timeless tradition.

The theories of prakāra-prakāri bhava, sāmānādhikaranyā and satkārya vāda are enunciated by Rāmānuja who formulates a significant interpretation of the apparently divergent texts without harming anyone of them. All kinds of scriptural announcements declaring unity and plurality become compatible and meaningful according to this interpretation instead of becoming

contradictory. The Upanishadic statements that are analytical, explanatory and synthetic in nature strongly point out to the only one conclusion of the Unity of Reality according to this way of interpretation. The analytical statements pronounce that Brahman transcends the physical nature as well as individual souls. These declare Brahman as changeless, supreme and perfect. The explanatory pronouncements maintain that Brahman is the inner ruler of the Universe and that it is the immanent principle that holds and sustains the world of nature and finite selves together. The synthetic texts affirm that Brahman is the only Reality and all others exist to glorify it. All these different types of scriptural statements cannot be given primary and equal importance in any other mode of interpretation. Rāmānuja has struck a unique path of synthesis by means of which all scriptural statements become equally significant. The empirical world of matter and finite selves form real modes of the Supreme Reality being inseparably related to it as its attributes and signify the Universal monad. The sadvidyā which declares that the Supreme was one without a second before creation implies that even at that stage Brahman was characterised by the chit and the achit in the subtle form. Creation is nothing but manifestation of Brahman in the chit and the achit of the gross state. The world of matter and selves was existing one with Brahman even before creation of this world of names and forms. Then it was in a subtle form and was not possible of being analysed as there was no differentiation of names and forms. This differentiation of names and forms was assumed after creation when this world of matter and selves became distinguishable in name and form. The chit and the achit existed as a part of Reality

in the causal stage as they exist as part of Reality in the state of effect. In creation it is only matter and the self that undergo any change but never the cosmic principle, the Absolute Reality. These two entities namely the chit and the achit are adjectival in nature and characterise Brahman both in the primordial and the consequent stages. That is why Reality is declared as the one Absolute characterised by the chit and the achit. The truths of Viśiṣṭādvaita admitting the unity of Reality without discarding the empirical world are fully supported by the scriptures in their entirety.

It is against this background that we now speculate about the nature and efficacy of Sādhana. Sādhana is possible and even significant in this school as the reality of the Sādhaka and the Sādhya is well affirmed. The finite selves who are labouring under the real disadvantage and handicap of Avidyā karma are subject to a real state of degradation, from which they have to extricate themselves to attain their original status.

The finite self has lost its native state of consciousness due to the beginningless karma of its own by means of which it has bound itself down to saṁsāra. The state of bondage is a state of reality and involves unhappiness and misery of rebirth. To get rid of this miserable plight and to attain the state of liberation, when only the finite self can enjoy the illimitable joy of Divine experience, it has to follow some discipline. The goal he has to attain is also a perfect or a positive reality which he can achieve only by individual personal effort. The Sādhaka and the Sādhya are both positive realities and have factual value on account of which the philosophy of Sādhana has a deeper meaning and purpose in this school.

The nature of the individual self, the Sādhaka, is taken for consideration in the first section and the nature of Brahman, the Sādhya, is dealt with in the next section whereas the means of attaining Brahman, the Sādhanas, are detailed in the third section, as expounded by Vedānta Desikā, the foremost of the exponents of Rāmānuja.

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2. Vedanta Deepa 1-4-6. 'अस्मिन्प्रकरणे येयं प्रेते विचिकित्सा मनुष्ये (कठ 1-1-20) इत्यारभ्यासमाप्तेः परमपुरुष तदुपासनोपासकानां त्रयाणामेवैवं ज्ञेयत्वेनोपन्यासः प्रश्नश्च दृश्यते' ।
3. R. T. S. 4
4. ततश्च वैशिष्ट्यमेवैक्यम् । नसर्वस्वरूपैक्यमिति निर्णयः । Dar. P. 194
5. Phil. of Vis. P.N.S., P. 101
6. कार्यानुकूलमपृथक्सिद्धविशेषणं हि शक्तिः । Dar. P. 194

THE SĀDHAKA

As described above the Sādhaka, the finite self, is a real entity and never a fictitious construction. The correct term used to denote this knowing principle is Ātman meaning one who attains, completely rules over, supports and uses his body for his own satisfaction. The finite selves are infinite in number according to Rāmānuja, and they are different from matter on the one hand and the Supreme Being on the other. These individual selves are many, eternal, self-luminous, very minute and of a blissful nature. The finite selves are substantive consciousness and are qualified by attributive consciousness. They are different and distinct from the body, the sense organs, the mind, the vital airs and the attributive consciousness and are entirely supported, controlled and used by the Supreme, only for His satisfaction.

The great Yāmunāchārya in his Siddhithrayam has propounded the distinguishing attributes of the Ātman as follows :

देहेन्द्रियमनः प्राणधीभ्योऽन्योऽनन्यसाधनः ।

नित्यो व्यापी प्रतिक्षेत्रमात्माभिन्नः स्वतः सुखी ॥ सि.त्र. p.11

Let us now study the significance of this statement in greater detail.

The self is different from the body :

The Chārvāka materialists argue that there is no different entity as the 'self' other than the body. They argue that, as the body is the aggregate of the several parts chaitanya or consciousness might be attributed either to any one of them or to each and everyone of them¹. This

viewpoint is not tenable as 'Selfhood' cannot be attributed to any one or all of the Avayavas or parts of the physical organisms for many incompatibilities ensue from it. It cannot be admitted that there are a number of 'selves' motivating and guiding the body. In our experience we find that there is unity in our body and never disunity. This kind of unity of purpose and action is impossible if there were a number of souls in a single body.² Nor can we admit that any one of these avayavas or component parts of the physical body is the self, for the mere reason that on the loss of that particular part, the body would become soulless. Even if any part of the body is lost the recognition of the type of, 'He I am' continues and this would be impossible if the part happened to be the soul.

‘अवयवोपचयापचयविनाशादिकालेष्वपि स एवाहमिति

प्रत्यभिज्ञाविषयः कालभेदेऽप्यभिन्न इति भाव्यम् ।’ स.सि. P 71

Many of the avayavas of the body are being lost but yet the memory of the past continues which would be impossible had the parts themselves been the self.

‘अन्यथा पाण्याद्यवयवच्छेदे हि तदनुभूतस्मरणं न स्यात् ।’

स.सि. P 71

What had been experienced by this body before should as a rule never be possible to be remembered after the loss of any avayava in the case of the avayava being the self. But this also is against all experience. Moreover no avayava or part of the body can ever conceive of itself as 'I' and so the cognition of the self as 'I' would be impossible. Least can that avayava think of others as 'mine'. In addition to this if a particular part of the body is accepted as the self then it results in its non-cognition of pleasure or pain experienced in other parts. This also is against all

experience. So it is inevitable to admit that the self is different from the body. The self shines forth different from the body as experienced in our daily transactions like 'my hand', 'my head', 'my legs', etc., which implies difference between the 'I' and the 'mine'. So the self is different from the body and there is only one single self in each body.³

Nor can it be argued that the chaitanya exists in the avayavasamudāya or aggregate of the parts for all aggregates that have form are cognised by the external sense organs and form inert matter just like a jar.⁴ If the soul is admitted to be the complete aggregate of the avayavas or sampūrṇāvayava samudāya then it results in athiprasaṅga such as the necessity of chaitanya being absent from a body in which a finger or any minute part is lost. But this is far from human experience. Even the theory that consciousness is found in the avayavi or the whole quite different from its component parts is erroneous for strictly speaking there is not a distinct object like 'avayavi different from 'the avayavas. The Chārvākas or materialists admit that the cluster of thrasarēṇus themselves transform into various objects of the universe and never agree that an Avayavi or a whole exists apart from the avayavas or parts. Even granting the existence of an avayavi formed of the avayavas and different from them, that avayavi or whole cannot be composed of the qualities different from those found in the parts. Only the qualities found in the parts may be found in the whole. Chaitanya or consciousness can nevertheless be admitted even in the parts lest the same incompatibilities pointed out before creep in again. It may be further argued that there is no restriction that the qualities of the cause alone be found in the effect. The

Naiyāyikas speak of pitarapākaprakriyā. The black coloured mud is shaped into a jar and burnt in fire. When it is taken out of the fire it becomes red. This redness in the jar never existed in the clod of mud and likewise consciousness not found in the avayavas might be found in the avayavi due to the pariṇāma viśeṣha. But the above argument is fallacious. For the transformations due to pakaviśeṣa happen not only to the avayavi but also in the component parts. The parts of the jar attain that redness and result in the redness of the jar. Similarly consciousness ought to come there in the avayavas if it is to be found in the avayavi and so this argument falls flat. Consciousness cannot be produced by the aggregate of avayavas without its existence in the component parts and the contrary cannot be established by the analogy of the exhilarating power in wine due to the combination of the several ingredients for such power is bound to result even in the component parts just like that of form, taste, smell or touch. A piece of cloth woven by threads of different colours has not a form different from that of those threads. A mango fruit has not a taste different from that of sweetness or sourness found in its parts. Similarly the madaśakti of the wine has been produced only after it was produced in its parts, the ingredients. So the defects pointed out before cannot be escaped.⁵

Our day to day experience about the consciousness of the 'I' cannot be doubted. This 'I' is involved even in that doubting. The physical organism can neither collectively nor singly constitute the 'I', who is the knowing, doing and feeling self. It may be further argued thus: If the subjective state of the consciousness cannot be attained by the samudāya or collection of the avayavas it might be possible in a particular object (a product) resulting out of the five

elements and the same Bhūtāvayavaviśeṣa might be designated as the Ātman. This dhātuviśeṣa which is the parināma of the five elements might be admitted to be atomic in nature and residing in a particular part of the body. The capacity to move within the body at the maximum speed can also be admitted to this dhātuviśeṣa as the Nayyāyikas do Śighrasanchāritva to the mind. So there will be no incompatibility for experiencing the pleasure or pain of the different parts at the same time. If the Ātman is desired to assume proportions equal to that of the body the same kind of sthayitva can be attributed to this dhātuviśeṣa only. So why not an uncommon dhātuviśeṣa of the above description be the ātman?

The above argument has partially conceded to the objections raised, as an Ātman distinct and different from the body is anyhow admitted though 'jñānānandatmakatva' is denied to it. This view is in the aspect of acceptance of a distinct ātman transcending the body, orthodox whereas it is not so in the other aspect of affirming its 'Bhoutikadhātuviśeṣatmakatva'. Accepting the ātman to be different from the body is just enough to establish its eternity and other attributes of consciousness and blissfulness. Such an ātman who is super-physical is bound to be eternal and blissful for the mere reason that he, by nature, transcends the non-eternal physical body. So the self cannot be considered to be a mere dhātuviśeṣa or a product of the five elements in the body without accepting eternality and blissfulness, which in the ultimate analysis amounts to the concept of Ātman propounded by the scriptures.

Moreover the physical body and the self are quite distinct and impossible of identity. The statements like 'sthulōham kṛīṣoham' are made only on account of the association of the self with nature and the 'I' here is used for the body only in an indicative sense as even at the time of making this statement some inner principle other than the body is implied.

‘तत्राप्यन्तः शरीरं अहमाकारमेव किमपि वस्त्वहङ्कारो गोचरयति न पुनश्चाक्षुषदेहप्रत्ययः स्थौल्यबाल्यादियोगिदेहमात्रम् । अत एव ममेदं गृहमितिवत् ममेदं शरीरमिति भेदप्रतिभासो व्यवहारश्च। अतो देहव्यतिरेकिणश्चेतनस्य प्रत्यक्षसिद्धत्वात् त्सम्बन्धिनि लाक्षणिको देहेऽहंशब्दप्रयोगः’ । सि.त्र. P -15

The soul is the 'prātyak' principle which is self-luminous whereas the body is the 'parāk' or known entity. These two ought to be two different entities.

‘अत्र प्रतिविधिर्देहो नात्मा प्रत्यक्षबाधतः ।

नखल्वहमिदङ्कारावेकस्यैकत्र वस्तुनि ॥’ सि.त्र. P 13

Even according to the Sāṅkhya theory the 'self' is different from the body as pointed out in the following kārīkā by Yāmunācārya:

‘अपरार्थं स्वमात्मानं आत्मार्थेऽन्यच्च जानतः ।

सङ्घातत्वात्परार्थेऽस्मिन् देहे कथमिवात्मधीः ॥’ सि.त्र. P 16

Thus it becomes established that the self is a different and distinct entity from the body.⁶

The self is different from the sense organs :

There is another school of thought that identifies the self with the sense organs (external). Their argument is as follows: "Let the sense organs themselves be the self. We

admit that the body cannot be the self for consciousness is not found in the body during deep sleep which, on the other hand, ought to have been manifest at all times of its existence, if it were the soul. But this trouble does not arise with the sense organs. Consciousness exists during the waking state when all sense organs are active and it does manifest at the time of *suṣupti*, when the sense organs go to rest. Each and every sense organ functions in a particular way, causing knowledge and it would not be proper to postulate a different entity other than these sense organs as *ātman* to account for that knowledge."

This argument is unsound. The knowing principle or *jñāta* must be different from the several sense organs through which he gets knowledge of the external world. Those sense organs themselves, which are the channels of knowledge cannot be the knowers. The sense organs are many and it results in the establishment of many souls in each body which leads to mutual conflict. The whole body with its set of sense organs functions as a unit without any mutual conflict and this is possible only if all these are simultaneously subservient to one single soul who presides over the body. This *indriyātmavāda* is to be discarded as it leads to a situation of accepting a number of selves for each body. One of the sense organs cannot be the soul for there is no such rule designating one of them as such. There is another trouble. Every sense organ has a distinct function to do. The eye sees, the ear hears, the tongue tastes, and the hand touches. Each one of these cannot be the self. If the eye is the self it can only see but cannot hear, touch, smell or taste. But it is our common experience that the same self who sees also hears, touches, smells and tastes. This common experience shows that there is a single self in each body, distinct from the sense organs and who

happens to be the locus or substratum of all kinds of knowledge caused by the several sense organs.⁷ It is essential to admit that the self is distinct from all the sense organs for another reason, namely one remembers all things experienced by one through different sense organs and this is not possible in the case of any sense organ being the self. The cognition of the type 'I cognise all things through my sense organs' happens to all. The 'I' here is the knowing principle or subject and is the kartṛkāra. 'All things' is the object of cognition and happens to be the Karmakāra. The term 'through the sense organs' in the above sentence points out the instrument through which such cognition is possible. The karmakāra and the karanakāra are evidently different from the kartṛkāra and so the sense organs are bound to be different from the self or the subject.

Can the group of sense organs be called the self ? No. This is impossible for we do not experience a thing by all the five sense organs collectively. In that case the loss of one sense organ will have to result in death. If the sense organs constitute the self then the remembrance of the former experiences caused by such sense organs as have been lost subsequently cannot occur.⁸ The collectivity of indriyās cannot be designated as ātman for the concept of 'I' is impossible in such collection.⁹ Moreover everyone admits that the self experiences dreams in sleep; During sleep all the external sense organs as well as the body rest in inaction and are incapable of seeing a dream. The jāgrat śarīra or the waking body is not at all cognized as "I" in the sleep. If at all it is cognized it is cognized as 'idam' or this. So neither the body nor the external sense organs are capable of seeing a dream. So we have to arrive at the

inevitable conclusion that the self is distinct and different from the body as well as the sense organs. The statements 'sakalōham' and 'vikalōham' made to signify the perfect or imperfect conditions of the sense organs do not prove the 'selfhood' of the sense organs. This is either due to illusion or on account of the intention of mentioning one's association with perfect or imperfect sense organs.

यच्च स्वप्नदशायामुपरतबाह्येन्द्रियस्य च व्याघ्रादिरूपात्मदर्शनम्
तदपि बाह्येन्द्रियवर्गात् देहाच्च आत्मनो भेदं व्यनक्ति । अत
इन्द्रियेषु शरीरे च सकलेविकले च सकलोऽहं विकलोऽहं इत्यादि
बोधोभ्रमात् तद्वैशिष्ट्यविवक्षया वा' । न्या.सि. P 211

The self is different from the mind:

Next, the mentalist argues that the mind itself is the soul for all psychic experiences would end in confusion had it not been for the scientific unity of the mind. Each external sense organ having a special function cannot be held responsible for unity of experience and so cannot constitute the self. But the mind is not so. The mind is said to be the motivating principle of all sense organs and is also experienced as such. The mind is one and capable of experiencing all things through all the other sense organs and this unity is implied in all experience. All the sensations are associated with the mind which is capable of memory or recognition even after the loss of any sense organ as it is eternal. So it is the contention of the mentalist that the mind alone is the self.¹⁰

The above theory is incorrect as the mind is only an instrument of knowledge.¹¹ The mind is proved by either inference or by the scriptures and these that prove its existence also prove its nature of being an instrument or karana. The mind and the unfolding of its activities relate

to the dharmabhūtajñānam or attributive consciousness of the self or Jīva. So the mind cannot be the Jīva itself. The scripture 'manasā hyeva paśyati' proves that mind is only an instrument through which the Jīva gains knowledge. 'Psychology without a psyche or soul is inconceivable'.¹² The mind is admitted as a cognitive sense organ responsible for causing us knowledge of all kinds of objects external and internal. Knowledge of external objects is possible only through some sense organ or other like the eye or the ear which comes into contact with those objects. Similarly we experience pleasure and pain. This also must be due to some sense organ and as the external sense organs like the eye or the ear are incapable of causing such cognition of pleasure or pain we require an internal sense organ which is designated as the mind. This mind is only a karana or instrument of knowledge and never a kartā or a jñātā.¹³ He who cognises form and others through the external sense organs like the eye and the others and he who experiences pleasure and the like through the internal agency of the mind is the self and never the mind.¹⁴ Moreover the mind is not eternal as claimed by the mentalist. The scriptures decidedly establish the non-eternality of the mind as it is the evolute of satvic Ahamkāra. So the mind can never become the eternal self.

The Self is different from the prāṇas

The prāṇātmavādin argues that the soul is prāṇa or vital breath. We come to know the presence of the self in the body only in the presence of prāṇa and the self is not seen in a body bereft of prāṇa. This points to the conclusion that the prāṇa itself is the self. The prāṇas are vital for the existence of the body and this theory of its selfhood is quite

suitied to explain the facts of death, transmigration and journey to other worlds.¹⁵

The body, sense organs and the mind are appearing subordinated to the prāṇa for they function only in its presence and cease to function in its absence. So the prāṇātmavādin contends that the prāṇa alone is the self.

This theory also is against all experience and opposed to the scriptures. After all what are the prāṇas? They are only vāyuvisheshas or particular types of vāyu and so consciousness cannot be attributed to them. This vāyu is only a jadadravya, a material evolved out of the sparśatanmātra originating in turn from ākasā. Moreover there is another insurmountable difficulty in this theory. All the defects that were pointed out in the dehatmavāda¹⁶ hold good here also. Is consciousness to be attributed to each of the prāṇas? Or is it to be posited to their collection? Or is it to be related to an avayavi or whole that is quite different and distinct from the parts or avayavas in the form of the five prāṇas? Consciousness cannot be attributed to the prāṇas either singly or collectively or to the avayavi taken to be different from all the component parts.¹⁷

The prāṇas are many just like the parts of the body and attributing self-hood to them would lead to much mutual conflict and chaos. The assertion of the form 'mamaprāṇāḥ' is also with in the experience of every one just like that of 'my body' and this clearly points out to the differentiation of the self from the prāṇas.

A person waking up after deep sleep says 'सुखमहमस्वाप्सम्' 'I slept soundly' and remembers the joy of a deep sleep. This type of recognition implies his

wakefulness even during sleep. Otherwise his experience cannot be explained. The body as well as the sense organs cease to function during sleep but the vital breath continues to work without stopping, which can be noticed in respiration and other activities. But this prāṇa is inert¹⁸ and incapable of experiencing deep joy during sleep. The self on the other hand will be experiencing his native state of consciousness in deep sleep and so is capable of recognizing his experiences after sleep.

The Bṛihadāranyakopanishad¹⁹ narrates the experience of Bālāki with king Ajātaśatru who enlightened him on the nature of the self that it is different from the body, the sense organs, the mind and the prāṇas.

Ajātaśatru took Bālāki to a person sleeping thereby and shouted at him as बृहन्, पाण्डरवासः, सोम and राजन् but the person did not get up. All these four terms refer to the vital breath and the king showed by this that these were not the proper addresses to the self. The prāṇas had not slept but yet they could not hear this address for they had no consciousness. Bālāki proved by this that the prāṇa had no atmābhimāna. It was only when the king pushed and pressed with his hands that sleeping person that he got up. It may be now asked why did not the self 'always awake and aware' get up before pressure? Was he not always active? If shouting had no effect on the prāṇa what effect had it then on the self? This is a relevant objection. It shall be answered thus: The self, no doubt, never rests even in sleep. But he had withdrawn himself into the inner recess of the puritatnādi during sleep while he was united with the Supreme there as declared in 'सता सोम्य तदासंपन्नो भवति'. But when there was disturbance by means of pressure he

slowly came back to the external regions and was in a moment taken over by the physical adjuncts.

The self is not mere vijñāna :

The Buddhist psychologists deny the existence of the self and describe *Buddhi* as the self. This is an entity admitted by both the parties and the Buddhists argue that it is futile to posit another entity like the self besides this one, while this alone serves the purpose. So due to *lāghavyāya* this *Buddhi* alone might be called the self. This contention is untenable. *Buddhi* means knowledge or consciousness. This is of an adjectival nature as it happens to be an inseparable attribute of the self. The attributive consciousness is non-eternal as it is subject to generation and loss. An entity which is always an attribute cannot be substantive at all to be styled as self. We say often 'I have gained knowledge, I have lost knowledge' and this shows its non-eternality. So the non-eternal attributive consciousness can never become an ever-eternal self. The self is eternal, on the other hand, and is a substratum of consciousness. The recognition of the type 'He I am' proving the eternal continuity of the self is never an illusion, for it cannot at any future time be contradicted just like the silver in the nacre or the snake in the rope. Nor can this type of recognition be refuted on grounds of inferential arguments like 'whatever exists is momentary just as a sheet of cloud'. For all such arguments favouring *kṣanikavāda* are once for all defeated.²⁰ On the other hand accepting the illusory nature of recognition directly proves the eternality and non-transitoriness of the self. Reminiscent impressions of former experiences are essential for causing recognition or memory and it is evidently proved that there must be an eternal *ātman*

originally for experiences and subsequently for the reminiscent impressions, and for recognition to be possible at a later time. So each one of these points to the eternal continuity of the self. Cognitions of the type of memory or recognition are possible only when former experiences cause certain impressions in one and the same locus, the self.²¹ If the self is non-eternal as posited by Buddhists then there is absolutely no scope for observing any type of activity in anticipation of any result.

‘नापि धीः, ज्ञातृधर्मतया नश्वरतया च स्फुरणात् ‘स एवाहं’ इति प्रतिसन्धानानुपपत्तेः । न चेदं प्रतिसन्धानं भ्रान्तिः अबाधात् । क्षणभङ्गहेतूनां प्रागेव निरस्तत्वात् । भ्रान्तिरूपं वा आत्मप्रतिसन्धानं विषयप्रत्यभिज्ञानं स्मृतिमात्रं च संस्काराधारं स्थिरमात्मानमन्तरेण कथञ्चिदपि न घटते । ततश्च उपायानुष्ठानतत्फलानुभवादयोऽपि दुरूपपादाः । न्या.सि. P 28

It may be further argued that experiences, reminiscent impressions and remembrances need not necessarily be found in one and the same locus at all. These may be found even in different substrata or Adhikaraṇas. To give an example we may quote the instance of cotton seeds cured in a particular way yielding red coloured cotton. Here the Samskāra is in the seed whereas its resulting redness is found in the cotton. These are indeed in different substrata.²²

Moreover consciousness arises by way of cause and effect and is like a continuous flux or *ēkasanthāna*. This is a continual phenomenal happening and there is no static being like the self. The former consciousness or *purva vijñānā* of a single flux comprising of *anubhava vāsanā*, *sukṛita vāsanā* and *dushkṛita vāsanā* flows into the present

consciousness resulting in memory, pleasure and pain. Similarly the present flows into the future without any break. So the reminiscient impressions caused by experience in the former consciousness of a continuous flux might be the cause of causing memory in the latter consciousness and therefore there is no need to admit an eternal self other than this fleeting consciousness' :

This Buddhistic theory is not tenable. Firstly the example cited above is unfavourable to establish this theory for it establishes on the other hand the eternality of objects instead of the contrary. The curing of the cotton seeds pervades every part of it and such parts as were reacted upon by such curing continue till the time of yielding fruit and result in red cotton. So the Samskāra and its phala are caused in one and the same locus.

Secondly it is impossible to establish a single fleeting flux of consciousness (jñānāsantānaikya). The epithet 'of the same flux' or *ēkasanthāna* is cautiously used to avoid its being the cause or memory, pleasure or pain in a different *santhana*. But this does not solve all the troubles for it is impossible to establish either unity or plurality to the fleeting flux or *santhana* of the Buddhists. *Santhānaikya* can be explained only when *Sānvayavināśa* is admitted and not otherwise. Even though the *viśeṣana* or attributes are lost the *substratum* continues. So when we say that a particular thing is destroyed we mean only the destruction of the attributes and not of the *substratum* which still persists. Though the state of a seed is lost in the seed the *substratum* yet continues and is characterised by *ankurātva*, *vṛkṣhatva* and other such states in successive stages. Though there is no relationship between the former and the successive stages, the same material characterised by

former states is again qualified by later states by means of its being the same locus for all states and so the continuous unity of this substratum is unquestioned. This is signified as 'अवस्थाविशिष्टसन्तानैक्य'. But this sāmavayavināśa, accepting destruction to the viśeṣana part and future continuity to the part viśeṣhya is not possible in the school of Buddhists that posit Nirānvaya vināśa or non-residual destruction. They argue that the very nature of the material is totally destroyed in both the viśeṣana and the viśeṣhya aspects and consequently no substratum is allowed to continue. So the conception of Santānaikya is not at all tenable.²³

It may be further argued thus: The aggregate of consciousness or jñānasamudāya constitutes a series and such aggregate might be termed the object of the flux or santanapadārtha and the unity of such aggregate might be called santanaikya. This Buddhistic theory of varying and vanishing presentations is incorrect for this cannot establish a continuous flux. The philosophy of Buddhists propagating transitoriness to all objects cannot successfully establish either a unity of flux (santanāikya) or a plurality of it (santanaBhedā). So they have differentiated chittavijñāna from alayavijñāna.²⁴ The consciousness of the nature of 'I' is said to be ālayavijñāna and the consciousness capable of grasping different objects is said to be chittavijñāna. Alayavijñāna is the substantive entity to which chaitanya is an attribute. So have they shown the possibility of grasping the Dharmadharmī prateeti or the relationship of the substance and the quality. But all these arguments fail to convince²⁵ for they are based on false foundations of the conception of an everfleeting flux. Only an aggregate of a number of consciousness having factual priority and

posterity can become santānapadārtha. But Buddhistic philosophy makes the series of consciousness the self, without even attributing eternality to it. As such series of unconnected consciousness is never possible, that view point is stultified. There cannot be a deed without a doer. This philosophy of non-self leads to chaos and universal void for it cannot explain the existence of the cosmos.

The view point of Yogāchāra philosophers of the Buddhistic school, positing that consciousness which is itself the self, is grasped as though differentiated into jñānam, jñeyam and jñātā, though he is not so, is also refuted by the above arguments.²⁶ So the self is different from the body, the sense organs, the mind, the vital airs, and consciousness though it uses all these as its instruments.

The self is jñānasvarūpa and also jñānagunaka :

The above arguments refute the view point of the school of Advaita positing selfhood to pure consciousness or Anubhūti alone. Undifferentiated knowledge is said to be the reality by these thinkers.

‘तस्मात्परमार्थतो निरस्तसमस्तभेदविकल्पनिर्विशेष चिन्मात्रैक
रसकूटस्थनित्यसंविदेवभ्रान्त्या ज्ञातृज्ञेयज्ञानरूपविविध
विचित्रभेदा विवर्तते’ । श्री.भा. 1-1-1

anubhūti or undifferentiated consciousness is said to be eternal, self-luminous and unexplainable. So according to advaita Vedānta the entire world of differences is unreal and superimposed in Brahman or Ātman which is only undifferentiated knowledge without a second.

This school of thought is to be carefully examined. Can mere knowledge become the self? Knowledge is

possible only through the subject-object relationship.

‘अनुभूतिरितिस्वाश्रयं प्रति स्वसद्भावेनैव कस्यचिद्वस्तुनो
व्यवहारानुगुण्यापादनस्वभावो ज्ञानावगतिसंविदाद्यपरनामा
सकर्मकोऽनुभवितुरात्मनो धर्मविशेषो घटमहं जानामीममर्थं
अवगच्छामि पटमहं संवेदीति सर्वेषां आत्मसाक्षिकः प्रसिद्धः।’

श्री.भा. 1-1-1

Consciousness presupposes a knower or a self of which it is an attribute. It cannot be aware of itself. Knowledge is not identical with the knower but it cannot be separated from the knower. Knowledge is illumination of an object to a subject. It cannot be *Nirviśayaka* and *Nirāśraya*. Knowledge is a *dharma* and as a quality cannot exist by itself. It presupposes the existence of a *dharmin* or *substratum* of which it is a quality. Similarly a quality qualifies a substance. As these two namely the *dharmin* and the *dharma* though distinct pre-suppose each other, the denial of the one amounts to the denial of the other also.

The Buddhists posited transitoriness to consciousness which was styled by them as the self. But monists admit eternality to consciousness which they propagate as the self. While the theory of the Buddhists is subject to the incompatibility of *pratisandhāna*²⁷ (recognition of the form 'He I am') the theory of the monists is no less subject to the same defect as knowledge without content and without a locus is impossible to a subject. It is with in the experience of one and all that knowledge is the illumination of some object to a subject. The *jñātrtva* of the self is natural and never superimposed.²⁸ What is after all superimposition? It is attributing the characteristic of some other thing to a particular thing which does not really possess it. Attributing for example snakehood to a rope. Such kind of

super-imposition of knowership to the self is impossible for it is unique only to the self and not found in any other object. If the characteristic of knowing or jñātrtva was found elsewhere, it could be argued that it was superimposed here. So this jñātrtva is real to the self and never false. Knowledge of some thing is always caused to the substratum or locus.

स्वसत्तयैव स्वाश्रयं प्रति कस्यचिद्विषयस्य प्रकाशनं हि संवेदनम् ।

श्री.भा. 1-1-1

Knowledge is always about some thing. It cannot be devoid of all content. It must be always pertaining to a knowing subject. Self-luminosity of knowledge means illumination of the objects to the locus at the time of its existence.

‘स्वयंप्रकाशता तु स्वसत्तयैव स्वाश्रयाय प्रकाशमानता’ ।

श्री.भा. 1-1-1

As pointed out above, while refuting the stand point of the Buddhists, it may be affirmed even here that knowledge is subject to Utpatti or origination. The prior non-existence of knowledge is evident. Even objects of the past and future are being known and the fact of knowing presupposes its non-existence before.²⁹

It may be further argued that Jñātrtva, though not found anywhere in reality, is by illusion ascribed to the Antahkaraṇa and the same is so superimposed on the self. Then this argument leads to the fallacy of infinite regress. This cannot be explained in the light of the seed-sprout analogy. The same position may be held by them while explaining Avidyā for which anāditva (beginninglessness) is

posited to avoid the fallacy of infinite regress. Avidyā is stated to be without a beginning. If the fallacy of infinite regress is not a demerit, then it results in the abandonment of a real substratum for explaining the superimposed world.

To sum up, the following conclusions are unavoidable.

1. The knower who is different from knowledge is called 'I' and he is the self.
2. This self has 'Jñātrtva' by his very nature.
3. If real 'Jñātrtva' is not ascribed to him that must be shown elsewhere.
4. If real Jñātrtva is nowhere accepted, then Jñātrtva posited by Bhrānti paramparā leads to infinite regress.
5. If Kāraṇanāvasthā is claimed to be no demerit, then it damages the theory of beginningless illusion and the theory of real substratum.

‘केवलज्ञप्तेः अहंप्रत्ययाविषयत्वात् स्थिरत्वाभ्युपगमेऽपि अनुभवितृसापेक्षत्वात् भ्रान्तिरूपस्यापि प्रतिसन्धानादेः ज्ञातृत्वस्यापि भ्रान्त्यन्तरसिद्धत्वेऽनवस्थानात् । न चासौ कारणानवस्थितिरिति न दोषः । दोषाधिष्ठानयोरपि तथाभूतयोरेव सर्वत्र संभवेन अविद्यानादिताधिष्ठानसत्यत्वयोरपि परित्यागप्रसङ्गात्’ ।

न्या.सि. p-212

The philosophers of the Advaita school try to explain the above problem of Jñātrtva bhrānti in different ways following the thought process of the Sāṅkhya school. The Antahkarāṇa is said to have Kartṛtva while chetanatva is in the self. Jñātrtva is possible only when these two are united. Owing to 'chichhayapatti' or the shadow of the chit or

knowledge on the Antahkarāṇa, chaitanya is said to be superimposed there, on the analogy of the reflection of the face in the mirror. The face appears to be in the mirror when it is reflected. Similarly, the illusion of knowing is ascribed to Antahkarāṇa. Or it may be due to chitsamparka or contact of chit as seen in the red-hot iron ball. or it may be due to Chidabhi-vyanjakatva. The palm when held across the rays of the sun appears to be locus of those rays. The above three analogies are directed to maintain the non-reality of Jñāṭṛtva.

But these are not appropriate.³⁰ In the first example, the face and the mirror are real visible objects having a real form to cause a reflection, whereas the self and the Antahkarāṇa are formless and far from being visible to cause any reflection. If the analogy is taken in the subordinate sense instead of the primary sense, then incompatible conclusions are unavoidable. If Chaitanya is superimposed in Antahkarāṇa, then Antahkarāṇa becomes real, resulting in the possibility of chaitanya, for the reason that the locus is real and the superimposed is false. It cannot be maintained that there is an independent chaitanya, besides that superimposed, in the Antahkarāṇa. If, on the other hand, it is argued that the Antahkarāṇa is superimposed in chaitanya, then the illusion of the form 'I am the locus of knowledge' is impossible in the Antahkarāṇa.

Let us now examine the second example of the red-hot iron ball. The contact of the real hot material is responsible for the illusion of heat in the iron ball. To follow this analogy is to accept the real Jñāṭṛtva of the chit, owing to the contact of which, there was an illusion of Jñāṭṛtva in the Antahkarāṇa.

As jñātṛtva is not admitted as a reality either in the chit or in Antahkaraṇa the superimposition of jñātṛtva in Antahkaraṇa is totally impossible.

The third example is given to prove that the Antahkaraṇa appears to manifest chaitanya or knowledge even like the palm, held across the rays of the sun, appears to be the locus of those rays. This also is not tenable. Inert objects like the jar are not self-luminous and so require a light and knowledge at the time of illumination. But knowledge or chaitanya is not so. It is self-effulgent and shines forth without the need of any outside illuminator. Knowledge can illuminate other objects but not vice versa. Consciousness is self-luminous and so its illumination by the inert internal organ, Antahkaraṇa, is not at all tenable.³¹

Even granting that chaitanya or consciousness is illumined by others and that Antahkaraṇa is the illuminator of others it cannot be proved that chaitanya and Antahkaraṇa have this relationship of mutual illumination. It is well established that all things other than chaitanya have to be established only through chaitanya and therefore this Antahkaraṇa, depending upon the chaitanya itself for its existence, can at no time illumine it. In case, it is admitted so, then the self will have to become an inert material.³²

The 'ahamartha' or the 'I' is the self for the following reasons:

1. It is experienced as the self-luminous pratyak principle 'I'.³³
2. Knowledge is perceived as a fact of this 'I' and experiences like 'I am a jñātā', 'I know' and others

prove that Ahamtva and jñātṛtva are in one and the same locus.

3. The yearning for liberation from the misery of saṃsāra is possible only if Ahamartha is to continue for all time to come.³⁴
4. The statements of the liberated, the Supreme as well as the spiritual aspirants found in scriptures go to confirm that Antahkaraṇa alone is the self.³⁵
5. A person getting up after sleep says 'एतावन्तं कालं सुप्तोऽहम्'. If antahkarana instead of the Ahamartha, was the self, this kind of reference would have been impossible. This goes to establish that the Ahamartha is itself the self.
6. The statement 'मां नाज्ञासिषम्' 'I did not know myself' does not negate the cognition of the substantive consciousness during the sleep but shows that the different characteristics of the body like Devatva, Manuṣyatva, Sthūlatva, Kṛīṣatva as well as external relations of time and space were not cognizable then, as there was even during sleep self-experience, without any break in the middle.
7. After sleep people generally continue the work left over by them in the middle. Memory of the events before sleep goes to prove that Ahamartha stands for all time.³⁶

The Self is Endowed with Doership:

The self is endowed with doership according to the will of the Supreme and the self is primarily responsible for his deeds, good or bad, the results of which he is bound

to experience. If he had no responsibility of doership, the entire volume of scriptures ordaining certain duties to him would be meaningless. The Sūtrakara points this out in the sūtras 'कर्ता शास्त्रार्थवत्त्वात्' (II-3-33) and 'परातु तच्छ्रुतेः' (II-3-40). The Supreme is free from all partiality, for he judges all according to their deeds, good or bad, and gives punishments or rewards, as the case may merit.

The doership of the self is subordinate to the supreme in the general sense. Though certain things like God, time and space are found in all actions, they do not form the entire causal collocation. These are causes general to all, but there are particular causes for particular effects. So the karma vāsanā of the self is the particular cause of different actions in him and so the God of vedāntic religion is free from partiality or cruelty. The Sūtrakāra again points this out in the Sūtras 'वैषम्यनैर्घृण्ये न सापेक्षत्वात् तथा हि दर्शयति' (II-1-34) and 'न कर्माविभागादिति चेन्न अनादित्वादुपपद्यते च उपलभ्यते च' (II-1-35) All these arguments affirm knowership and doership to the Ahamartha or the self, which is different and distinct from the body, sense organs, mind, vital breath and consciousness.

The Self has Self-luminosity :

The self is known by itself, as it is of the nature of consciousness. The self is not in need of any other consciousness, to know it. The consciousness by which it apprehends itself is substantive consciousness or Dharmi jñānam. The consciousness through which the self apprehends all things other than itself is attributive consciousness or dharmabhūtajñānam. Scriptural statements like 'अत्रायं पुरुषः स्वयंज्योतिर्भवति' ordain that he

is self-luminous. This self-luminosity means that he shines forth to himself and not to all at all times. Though we know of the self in others through our attributive consciousness, its luminosity is never hampered.³⁷ What is the nature of the apprehension of substantive consciousness? Is it qualified by the different characteristics of *Aṇutva*, *nityatva*, *śeṣatva* and others? No. The characteristics of the self such as its atomic nature, eternality or subservience are grasped through the attributive consciousness and so do not shine forth at all times. The *svārūpa bhūta jñānam* shines forth independently, whereas its qualifications shine forth through its attributive consciousness. The self shines forth qualified by the concept of *ekatva*, *pratyaktva* and *anukūlatva*.

No self ever doubts about its oneness, self-awareness as well as *anukūlatva*. There are two opinions even in this matter. Some savants admit that *ekatva*, *pratyaktva* and *Anukūlatva*, also shine forth just like the *Ātmasvarūpa* but some others are of opinion that these attributes are illuminated by the substantive consciousness alone and that they are not self-luminous.

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

stated to illumine all things other than the substantive consciousness.

The above objection does not damage the theory admitting the self-luminosity of the self together with its nature of oneness and self-awareness. These characteristics form inseparable attributes of the self and so the illumination of the self necessarily comprises of the illumination of these also. All objects other than the self are being illuminated by the Dharmabhūta jñānam. There is no harm in its not enlightening the never-to-be separable attributes of the self, as these form the very core of the foundational substantive consciousness. So it is the conclusion of savants that the self shines forth to itself qualified by *ekatva*, *pratyaktva* and *anukūlatva*.

‘अहमिति प्रत्यक्त्वैकत्वविशिष्टतया तु स्वप्रकाशता सर्वदा’ ।

न्या.सि. p-213

The term "always" implies that the self shines forth in these ways in all its states namely waking state, dream, sleep and others. At the time of samadhi the eighth stage of Yōga it is said that one experiences the self with all its distinguishing attributes.³⁸

The substantive consciousness is of a three fold nature. He is a 'Pramāta' as he independently cognizes himself qualified with *ekatva*, *pratyaktva* and others and apprehends the objects of the world through his attributive consciousness. His own substantive nature is also an object of apprehension and so he is also a *Pramēya*. In addition to this he is also a *Pramāṇa* as he is substantive consciousness.

The attributive consciousness is of a two-fold nature namely that of Pramāṇa and Pramēya. This is a source of knowledge as it is responsible for apprehending all objects like a table, a chair or a house. As past knowledge becomes an object of the present, a different one, even Prameyatva is aptly attributed to this. This attributive consciousness shines forth invariably to its substratum and so it is never a Pramātā.

All objects different from the above two have the characteristic of being only a pramēya. They are always to be apprehended through attributive consciousness, and being non-sentient, they are incapable of becoming aware of themselves.³⁹

The Self is of the Essential Nature of Knowledge :

The self is substantive consciousness. The scriptures define Brahman as 'Satyam, Jñānam, Anantham Brahma'⁴⁰ and on the analogy of this, the individual self is also said to be jñānāsvarūpa. An objection is raised here based on the Antōdāttatva of the word jñānam, questioning the connotation of this word to mean substantive consciousness. According to grammatical analysis the word is said to yield the meaning of jñānāśrayatva and not of jñānāsvarūpatva. The Bṛihadāranyakōpaniṣad confirms the same fact of the pervasion of consciousness, on the analogy of salt in a salt crystal.⁴¹

The statement of the scripture in Taittirīya upaniṣad namely 'vijñānam yajñam tanute' etc. only points out that ज्ञानं is prominent in the self. This is further confirmed by the Sūtrakarā also.⁴²

On the basis of these references the objection is raised that the self is only a substratum of consciousness and never consciousness. But this is untenable, as the scripture in *Praśnōpaniṣad* declares, in unmistakable terms, the self as consciousness, besides its being an *āśraya* or substratum of consciousness.

‘एष हि द्रष्टा स्पष्टा श्रोता घ्राता रसयिता मन्ता बोद्धा कर्ता
विज्ञानात्मा पुरुषः’ । ⁴³

The term 'Bōddhā' declares in general terms his *jñātṛtva* and gives in detail particular kinds of knowing, by the previous six terms, and later affirms its *jñānasvarūpatva* by the word *vijñānātmā*. Without an acceptance of this, self luminosity cannot be established. Desika quotes the inferences used by Śrī Viṣṇuchitta, to prove the self-awareness of the self as follows:

आत्मा स्वयंप्रकाशः

ज्ञानत्वात्

धर्मभूतज्ञानवत् । ⁴⁴

There is invariable concomitance between *jñānatva* and *svayam prakāśatva* as found in the case of the attributive consciousness. Self-luminosity of an object does not depend upon any thing other than the state of consciousness. But on the other hand, on the analogy of the *Dharmabhūta jñānam*, it can not be argued whether the substantive consciousness cannot illumine other things besides itself. The substantive consciousness and the *Dharmabhūta Jñānam* have no doubt the characteristic of *jñānatva* in general but from inherent experience we realize that the

self illumines itself whereas the attributive consciousness illumines other objects also besides itself, just like a light and its luminosity. Both the light and its luminosity are no doubt having the common characteristic of *tejastva* but they function differently. The light illumines itself whereas luminosity illumines itself as well as other objects.

स्वस्यैव भासको दीपः स्वात्मनोऽन्यस्य च प्रभा ।

एवं भेदोऽस्ति साम्येऽपि ज्ञानयोर्धर्मधर्मिणोः ॥ न्या.सि. p-213

Here an objection may be raised thus: 'It was now established that the self is consciousness in substance, and the term consciousness is equally applied to this as it is applied to attributive consciousness. We observe from our daily experience that knowledge is caused through the subject-object relationship, and this process is in keeping with the attributive consciousness, qualified always with the subject-object relationship. But the *svārūpabhūta jñānam* or *dharmi-jñānam* is bereft of such subject-object relationship. So how can the term *jñānam* or consciousness be applied to this?

We reply to the above objection as follows:

The subject-object relationship is necessitated only to explain the aspect of derivation. But this *कर्मकर्तृसंबन्धिज्ञानत्व* is not the chief purpose of connotation or *प्रवृत्तिनिमित्त* to the term consciousness. That which is directly and independently responsible for the *vyavahāra* of an object is consciousness or *jñānam*. For any activity connected with an object we must have first a knowledge of the object, then a desire for its usage and thirdly an effort for *vyavahāra*. The *Dharmabhūta jñānam* is directly responsible for apprehensions and further activities.

Similarly the self-conscious self is directly responsible for its fitness for activity or *vyavahārarhatā* and so the term consciousness is applicable, in its primary sense, to the self also.

‘ज्ञानस्य सम्बन्धिशब्दतया व्युत्पत्तिमात्रम् । प्रवृत्तिनिमित्तं तु कस्यचित् व्यवहारानुगुण्ये निरपेक्षहेतुत्वम् । तदेव स्वस्येति निरूपितं स्वयंप्रकाशत्वमिति न साध्याविशेषोऽपि विषयाश्रयवैशिष्ट्य निबन्धो धर्मभूतज्ञाने’ । न्या.सि. p-213

The attributive consciousness is invariably about an object to a subject. But the substantive consciousness is not so. It is unqualified by *विषयाश्रयवैशिष्ट्य*. But this self-conscious self is not the same as that of the system of *advaita*, for this is qualified by various real attributes such as *ज्ञानत्व*, *ज्ञानद्रव्यत्व*, *ज्ञानद्रव्याश्रयत्व*, *नित्यत्व*, *अणुत्व*, *नियाम्यत्व*, *आधेयत्व*, *शेषत्व*, *आनन्दत्व* and others. ⁴⁵

Eternality of the Self :

The self is eternal. It is non-destructible. It is not an adventitious feature but a fact of reality. The Gita affirms the eternity of the self by means of various arguments in the second chapter. If the eternity of the self is not admitted it leads to the incompatibility of *Akṛtābhyāgama* and *Kṛtapraṇāśa*. The scriptures affirm the continuity of the self, in many ways, and establish its eternity.⁴⁶ There is only change in the attributive consciousness but never in the inherent nature of the self. The self is immutable in its essential nature.

Rāmānuja holds the self to be atomic on the basis of the scriptures⁴⁷ and inference affirms the atomic nature of the self. This does not mean that it is a particle of matter

as he is different and distinct from it. This only affirms that the self is not all pervasive. If it were all pervasive there would be no meaning in saying that it would realize God. This self is neither infinite nor extended. Transmigration, passing out of the body or *utkrānti*⁴⁸ and reaching the other worlds would be impossible if it is conceived of as all- penetrating.

It is also impossible to admit that the self has the proportionality of the body it takes, for then, it will result in the severance of certain parts of its body when it takes a smaller body, transmigrating from a bigger one, which will be against all authorities ordaining him as Achhedyā and niravayava. But its pervasiveness is only through its Dharmabhūta jñānam or attributive consciousness.

This 'अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषः' ⁴⁹ is declared by the scriptures to reside inside the heart. The Sūtrakāra also declares that the supreme along with the finite self has entered into the internal cave of the heart.⁵⁰ So, to admit the self as all pervasive, is opposed to all scriptures. Moreover the self will have to be realised, then, at all places in this world. It may be argued that one has to admit contact with all space to the self at the same time, as the self is the locus of Adṛṣṭa necessary for the experience of pleasure or pain in all the worlds at the same time. But this is unnecessary for there is no Adṛṣṭa other than the pleasure or wrath of the Infinite Supreme.⁵¹

It may be further argued:

The self will have to be static in a particular point of space alone, if he is atomic. Experience of pleasure and pain to the body moving to different places, then, involve the movement of the self also along with the body. Would

it not be better to admit the all pervasive nature of the self instead of accepting the above cumbersome process? The above objection is replied thus: The movement of the self from place to place along with the body is not opposed to the scriptures. There is nothing cumbersome to admit the movement of the self imbedded in the body just like the movement of the sense organs imbedded in it.

‘इन्द्रियवत् शरीरप्रत्युप्तात्मगमनेनैव तत्रतत्र ज्ञानसुखाद्युपपत्तेः ।
आत्मगमनं तूपलम्भश्रुत्याद्यनुकूलम् विभुत्वकल्पनं तु न तथेति
लाघवमिच्छतां तदेव फलितम् । न्या.सि. p-214

But a difficulty arises here. All objects bereft of the quality of contact or sparsāgūṇa cannot form the locus of motion just like time. So an objection is raised that the self, being devoid of the quality of contact, is also bereft of motion, resulting in the incompatibility of its experiencing pleasure and pain in different places when the body is subject to motion. The above objection does not stand as the fact of being the locus of action is possible even without the quality of touch, as in the case of the mind. What is negated to the self here, is direct kriyāśrayatva or the fact of being a locus of direct motion, but not a mediate kriyāśrayatva. A person travelling in a railway train is a locus of movement through the railway train. Similarly though immediate motion is not attributed to the self it may be said to have motion through the movement of the body. As the body is a never-to-be separable attribute to the self the forward and backward movements of the body are attributed to its substratum the self. So the self happens to be indirectly the locus of movement and therefore there is no reason to contradict its atomic nature.

Then how are we to explain the term vyāpī⁵² used by

Yāmunācārya? What have we to say for the following statements?

‘नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुः अचलोऽयं सनातनः ।’

‘यथा क्षेत्रज्ञशक्तिस्सा वेष्टिता नृप सर्वगा ।’

The term *vyāpī* does not signify all-pervasiveness. It is explained by Rāmānuja as being capable of entering into the non-sentient by means of being very subtle.⁵³

The aphorism ‘उत्क्रान्तिगत्यागतीनाम्’ (II-3-20) speaks of the atomic nature of the self. The term *sarvagatah* must be taken to mean, according to this, that innumerable selves are found in all the worlds or, it may be taken to refer to the original state of attributive consciousness of the self which should shine in all its glory being free from stress and strain of *samsāra*.⁵⁴

The atomic self, though residing in a particular part of the body, like the heart, is capable of all activities through its attributive consciousness. The example of Saubhari who took to many bodies, only through his *Dhamabhūta jñānam*, also supports the theory of the atomic nature of the self. The same truth is expounded by the *Sūtrakara* in the *Sūtras* ‘गुणाद्वालोकवत्’ (II-3-26) and ‘प्रदीपवदा वेशस्तथाहिदर्शयति’ (IV-4-15). In the former of the two, quoted above, it is affirmed that the self pervades its entire body by means of its *guṇa* or *dharmabhūta jñānam* just as the gem, though remaining in a particular place, pervades many places by its brightness. The self also, though residing in the heart, pervades all the parts of the body through its attributive consciousness. The second *Sūtra* states that the self can pervade many bodies at the same

time, by means of its dharmabhūta jñānam just as a lamp pervades a vast area by its luminosity. The statement 'सचानन्त्यायकल्पते' establishes the same all-pervasiveness of the Dharmabhūta jñānam, after liberation from the bonds of karma.⁵⁵ 'सर्वगम्' 'लोकेसर्वमावृत्यतिष्ठति', 'अचरंचरमेवच' are all to be explained in the light of the above theory of the atomic nature of the self which is established by the scriptures and the Sūtras.

Plurality :

The system of viśiṣṭādvaita adopts a Plurality of the finite selves. The finite selves are many and different from one another. This is a fact of our experience. Every individual has his own and unique experience of pleasure, pain, recognition and memory, and has unique cognition and volition. Everyone has a unique set of psychophysical organism. One self differs from another in the power of its consciousness, during the state of samsāra in this world. So we have to arrive at the conclusion that there are as many souls in this world, as there are psycho-physical organisms. If there were only one self in all the bodies, then one's cognition would have to result in the cognition of all, one's experience of pleasure and pain would be inevitable for all others, one's death or birth would result in the birth or death of all others. But all these are not experienced at all, and so this confirms the plurality of the self.⁵⁶ The Sāmkhyas⁵⁷ as well as the exponents of the Nyāya philosophy,⁵⁸ have realised this and have accordingly recognised this plurality.

The plurality of the self is a fact of experience based on distinctions in cognition, volition and experience among individuals, and is never phenomenal. This is also supported

by scriptures. It is impossible to conceive or prove a non-phenomenal self which does not perform any function like knowing, willing or experiencing. The individual selves are real and many, and they continue as such for all time to come, even in the state of release or mukti. The individuality of the self is ever maintained.

Then what is the fate of the various statements preaching unity of the self? There are innumerable statements in the scriptures, ordaining the oneness of the self.

‘यदन्योऽस्ति परः कोऽपि मत्तः पार्थिवसत्तम ।

तदैषोहमयं चान्यो वक्तुमेवमपीष्यते ॥

तस्यात्मपरदेहेषु सतोप्येकमयं हि यत् ॥ वि.पु. 2-14-31

In these contexts unity of the attributes is intended.⁵⁹ The self, residing in many different bodies, is emphasised to be of the same nature, being invariably qualified by Añutva, śheṣatva, jñānasvarūpatva, pratyaktva and others. Ekavyavahāra or assertion of the oneness of the self in all these instances implies the close similarity of different selves, residing in many different bodies. These statements only signify that all the selves have, by nature, common characteristics and so belong to the same category. Such assertion of oneness is possible under five circumstances as detailed below:

1. When two people give up their mutual differences in opinion and unite, as seen in two political powers, there is avirodha and in this sense the statement 'they are one' is possible.
2. If two people have mutual agreement and have confidence in each other they possess antaran-

gatva. And there is provision here for the usage of the term aikya or unity.⁶⁰

3. If two things are of the same kind and or jati, then also this aikya is possible.⁶¹
4. When two people have the same experience, there is Bhogaikya and this also leads to the declaration of unity.⁶²
5. If two things are having an inseparable relationship at all times, in all places and in all states, then also there is provision for expression of unity.⁶³

This is abridged in a stanza by Deśika as follows :

अविरोधान्तरङ्गत्वजातिभोगाद्यभेदतः ।

एकोक्तिरपृथक्सिद्धेर्देशकालदशादिभिः ॥ न्या.सि p-215

The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita has admitted equality of all selves in their essential nature and during the state of liberation, there is equality even in the power of their attributive consciousness. Plurality with perfect equality is possible in the state of release. This conclusion is drawn on the basis of the scriptures that form an infallible authority.

All individual selves are in essence, of the nature of knowledge and joy and there is no intrinsic inequality in them. During the state of samsāra, the empirical selves are unequal, due to the contraction of their attributive consciousness brought about by the bonds of karma. It is only karma that is responsible for the empirical inequalities of the selves and those selves regain their natural and unbounded proportions in the state of liberation, when all selves attain the same degree of rapture or Ānanda.

‘साम्यं च सर्वजीवानां स्वरूपतः मुक्तावस्थायां गुणतोऽपि चेति श्रुतिस्मृत्यादिसिद्धम् । तत्र जीवभेदनिषेधवचनान्यपि प्रामाणिक स्वरूपभेदव्यतिरिक्त देहात्माभिमान निबन्धनदेवत्वादि भेदनिषेधपराणि ।’
न्या.सि.प - 215

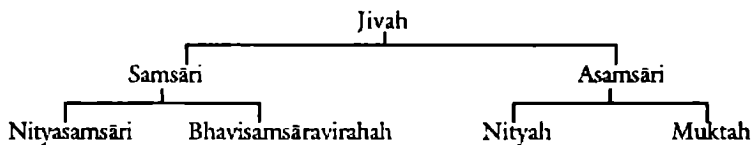
So all the selves are similar in svarūpa or essential nature, at all states of bondage or release, and both in svarūpa and svabhāva in the state of liberation.

The states of samsāra and release cannot be satisfactorily explained doing justice to the scriptures, without accepting the plurality and reality of the self.⁶⁴ The advaita of Śankara, considering the self as composed of illusion and reality,⁶⁵ The theory of Bhāskara, positing both unity and diversity, by means of a real limiting adjunct, as well as the school of Yādavaprakāśa, propagating svābhavika bhedaḥbhēda between Brahman and the three entities of Chit, Achit and Ēśvara, fail⁶⁶ to explain the fact of bondage and release. But Viśiṣṭādvāitic realism attacks this problem, in the light of the scriptures, and gives a comprehensible solution. The destruction of Karma (Avidya) is a positive factor resulting in the all-penetrating expansion of the attributive consciousness and in the gaining of the rapture of Divine Communion. The statements of non-difference between the liberated and Brahman are also not incompatible, as they signify the one cosmic principle, the universal monad, to which all others both sentient and non-sentient are inseparable modes. The finite selves are infinite in number, and are different from Brahman, the ultimate reality.

The self is by nature Ānandasvarūpa and also a substratum of joy. So it is called 'Svataḥ sukhi'.⁶⁷

Classification of Selves:

The selves are of two types. Souls bound by Karma and souls not bound by karma.



Nityasamsārins are those who are destined to be bound by karma for all time to come. It is maintained by some that some selves are destined to be eternally bound, on account of their excessive sins, owing to which they are cast in lower and lower strata. They quote the words of the lord in the Gīta to support this view,

‘तानहं द्विषतः क्रूरान् संसारेषु नराधमान् ।

क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभान् आसुरीष्वेव योनिषु॥’ भ.गी.16-19

as authorities for hurling down the excessively thamasic souls into eternal damnation. They also quote the words of Parāśara,

‘अव्युच्छिन्नास्ततस्त्वेते सर्गस्थित्यन्तसंयमाः ।’

affirming the eternity of the Lilāvibhūti, and confirm that some worst sinners would ever continue in this world in bondage, to account for the eternity of this world.

But there is another view-point, which explains that such obstinate haters of God would remain for a very long period in bondage on this earth and a time would surely come, when, even those forlorn souls would get a chance of salvation due to some kind of merit or others done by them knowingly or otherwise. These thinkers affirm that every soul is destined to attain its summum bonum, now

or at any remote time.⁶⁸ Moreover, everything in the world is ruled by the will of God, and there would be no incompatibility at all if this world of *Lilāvibhūti* became empty, on account of all the souls attaining salvation, by the will of God. Moreover, if the theory of *Nityasamsārins* is accepted, it might cause doubt in the minds of aspirants whether they themselves are destined to eternal bondage, in which case, there will be no room for any individual effort for an upward evolution. So, it is generally accepted that all souls are verily worthy of attaining salvation, and the realization of this depends upon their yearning for self realization.

The *asamsāri* selves are of two types, namely the eternal and the liberated. The eternal never had any contact with the world of karma, and they are established in the eternal service of the Lord for ever. The *Muktās* are the liberated souls and these attain the highest abode of the Lord, after casting off their mortal frames here, and enjoy eternal bliss in the company of the Supreme. Their attributive consciousness, which was contracted during the period of *samsāra*, attains its unbounded natural proportions for all time to come.

Though there is some distinction between the eternal and the liberated on account of their contact or otherwise with *samsāra*, it must be noted that there is no differentiation or inequality in the rapture of their divine experience. There is no graduation of joy there. Everyone is blessed with the same degree of joy, as explained in the text '*Paramam Sāmyam Upaithi*'.

To sum up the philosophers of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* school have some special doctrines about the finite self. They are:-

1. The finite self is different and distinct from the body, sense organs, mind, vital breath and consciousness.
2. The self is of the essential nature of consciousness and it is qualified by consciousness.
3. The self is a knower, a doer and an enjoyer.
4. The self is eternal and self-luminous.
5. Selves are many and they are all equal in their essential nature of knowledge.
6. The self has been endowed with freedom of action by the Lord.
7. The self is atomic in nature.
8. The selves are alike in both svarūpa and svabhāva in the state of Mukti.

The embodied self or the samsāri Jīva is engulfed in nature from beginningless time, and happens to be under the influence of matter. These individual selves, though they are in essence, of the nature of knowledge and bliss, are caught in the mesh of Prakṛti and so, are groping in the dark through the cycles of births and deaths infinitely. It is this soul, who is in need of Sādhana, for getting rid of this miserable samsāra, and for attaining the infinite joy of Divine communion. The Nityas are ever free from the taint of samsāra. The liberated had formerly the contact of karma and by virtue of their Sādhana, they endeared themselves to the Lord, by whose grace they once for all got rid of all this worldly misery and attained Divine communion. The fact of Sādhana is applicable therefore, only to the samsārīchetanas or the souls embodied in matter.⁶⁹

Savants of the past enumerated three categories of *Tatvas* to point out, directly, their nature and the necessity of discriminating them. They classified the entities into three categories namely the *Bhoktā*, *Bhogya* and the *Preritā*. This kind of categorisation is supported by the scriptures also and happens to be significant. Though other entities like time and qualities are implied in this, this is very useful, as it immensely helps the self to discriminate itself from matter. This *Prakṛti* or the world of nature is the *Bhogya* or the object of enjoyment and the individual self happens to be the *Bhoktā* or the enjoyer. The supreme Lord is the *preritā* of all. The self considers that matter is enjoyable and identifies itself with matter, and so gets into the perils of rebirths. The contact of the body with the self is the origin of many dangers and this *Prakṛti sambandha* is a result of the previous karma of the individual self. The self, who is by nature pure, identifies himself with matter and consequently recedes farther and farther from the Lord.

The world of matter is called *Triguṇam* and is composed of the three qualities namely *Satva*, *Rajas* and *Thamas*. The combination of these three qualities in different proportions is responsible for the different activities. The *Gīta* describes in detail the inevitable influence of these three primordial qualities on the mental make up of the individuals, according to which, they involve themselves within this world. The primordial matter is called *Moola Prakṛti*, and this transforms itself further into the form of the twenty three entities according to the will of the Divine to make up the Universe of matter. Of these twenty four entities, the *Moola Prakṛti*, *Mahat*, *Ahamkāra* and the five *tanmātras* are subtle and imperceptible, while

the eleven sense organs and the five elements are perceptible. The combination, of the five elements, gives the gross material of the Universe. So, the material of the Universe is made up of the stuff of these twenty four entities. This is denoted as Aparāprakṛti in the Gīta by Lord Kṛṣṇa. Besides these, there are the vital airs, or the prāṇas which are explained as only different types of vāyu⁷⁰ or air.

The finite self has a gross as well as a subtle body. This gross body only changes from birth to birth, and the subtle body never gets destroyed until the time of liberation. The indriyas and the prāṇas are taken along with it by the finite self when it transmigrates from body to body. ⁷¹ So the finite self is not capable of disowning the effects of his actions good or bad. Having transgressed the Divine law, he has incurred the wrath of the Supreme Being, and further, he acts according to his past Samskāras and is subject to the danger of receding farther and farther from God. All these dangers have ensued on account of the finite self's identification with matter, due to Avidyā, Karmavāsanā, Ruchi and Prakṛti sambandha. This is, in fact, the resultant of the displeasure of God due to his transgression of Divine laws. This is responsible for the contraction of the attributive consciousness, which is brought about by his contact with prakṛiti. He is born in this world in different categories either in the higher plane or the lower, according to the difference in the degree of his sin.

The contact of the self with the body and the sense organs is also a blessing in disguise, for it is only through this agency that the self can observe any discipline for his upward evolution. Creation is an act of Divine mercy for it affords an opportunity to the finite self to work out its

salvation. The self inevitably needs the body and the sense organs for its functioning, and with the body thus given by the Divine, it can achieve its salvation.

The finite self's association with the body is also a source of great peril, as it is a blessing. Matter is described as 'Mama māyā duratyayā' by the Lord himself, and its powers are very hard to overcome. It exerts its influence on the self in the opposite direction and retards the spiritual progress of the Jīva at every step.⁷² Matter screens from us the nature of the finite self and the universal self. It limits our knowledge and creates a sense of pleasure in itself which is really Abhogyā. It obstructs our attempts at self realisation and God realisation. It is an impediment on the path of our spiritual progress, insurmountable without Divine grace.

It is, therefore, very essential for the spiritual aspirant to know first of all his innate nature, as well as the nature of Prakṛti, to be safe from the dangers of its influence, and for developing an attitude of disgust in and rejection of it and also for renunciation.

The Jīva is a Prakāra of God:

Though the individual self is a distinct entity, it is not all independent. This finite self who is an eternal thinking subject, qualified by attributive consciousness, is (no doubt) a monad of matter, as he uses the world of matter for his own purposes in accordance with the will of God. The finite self and matter are inter-related as soul and body and this relationship of the body and soul applies in all, in an equal measure to the relationship that exists between the finite self and the Universal self. The scriptures ordain that the one Absolute Brahman without a second is the inner

self of the finite self also. 'The Supreme, with the individual as its mode, enters into the world of nature and unfolds its differentiation'. The scriptures say- All this is ensouled by one Supreme soul', and so it becomes established that the Jīva stands in an adjectival relation to the Supreme Being by virtue of his being the body of Brahman.

Rāmānuja interprets that the Jīva is a prakāra or a mode, or an adjective of the Supreme, and thus harmonises all extreme views doing justice to all scriptural pronouncements. The Chit and the Achit are modes of Brahman but are not themselves Brahman. Thus there is full scope for the personality of the finite selves as well as of the Highest Brahman. The finite selves who are different from matter are sustained and controlled from within by the Absolute, and are used for Its satisfaction only. As the finite self is a never-to-be-separable prakāra or attribute of Brahman, this cannot be known apart from its subject, the Supreme Being. The Sūtras describe the finite selves as the Amśa of the Paramātman in 'प्रकाशादिवत्तुनैवंपरः' (II-3-45) and 'पूर्ववद्वा' (III-2-26), and affirm this relationship of Amśamsāibhāva. Rāmānuja declares in his Bhāṣya that the scriptures describe this relationship through the body-soul relationship.

‘श्रुतयोऽपि यस्यात्मा शरीरं इत्यादिना आत्मशरीरभावेन
अंशांशित्वं वदन्तीत्युच्यते।’ श्री.भा -II-3-46

So, it amounts to saying that the Jīva is the body of Brahman. This body-soul relationship between the universe and Brahman is the most essential truth of this system. This is the pradhāna pratitantra or the distinguishing differentia of this school. Let us now

understand what Rāmānuja means by declaring that the universe of finite selves and matter is the body of Brahman.

There seems to be a lot of misconception regarding this relationship of the universe and Brahman. Some even consider this to be a blemish of Brahman, as they think, it would subject Brahman to pleasure and pain, unavoidable when connected with a body. Some others think that this relationship would subject Brahman to some imperfections also, as in the case of the finite self, who is embodied in matter, due to the consequences of his actions. But all these criticisms are unfounded, as this relationship of śarīra śarīribhāva is a spiritual principle used as an analogy to establish the utter dependence of the entire universe on Brahman. Rāmānuja describes this as follows:

‘अयमेवात्मशरीरभावः पृथक्सिद्ध्यनर्हाधाराधेयभावः
नियन्तृनियाम्यभावः शेषशेषिभावश्च सर्वात्मना आधारतया
नियन्तृतया शेषितया च आप्नोतीत्यात्मा सर्वात्मना आधेयतया
नियाम्यतया शेषतया च अपृथक्सिद्धं प्रकारभूतमिति आकारः
शरीरमिति चोच्यते । एवमेव हि जीवात्मनः स्वशरीरसंबन्धः
एवमेव परमात्मनः सर्वशरीरित्वेन सर्वशब्दवाच्यत्वम् ।’

वे.सं. p-192

There are three important characteristics of the soul that are discussed above and they are Ādhāratva, Niyantṛtva and Śeṣitva. The first namely Ādhāratva establishes that the soul is the ground of the body and the concept of Niyantṛtva emphasises that the soul is the controller or inner ruler of the body. The concept of Śeṣitva, in turn, describes that the soul uses the body for its own

purposes. So then, the body is invariably supported and controlled, and is used for its own purposes by the self. The body and the soul are thus related to each other and as Brahman is the inner self of all, He is the Sarvādhāra, Sarvaniyanta and Sarvaśeṣin. The world of finite selves and matter is inseparably related to Brahman as its body and so cannot be physically divided though could be metaphysically analysed. The concept of Brahman being the Sarvādhāra explains the ontological truth, that It is the being of our being and that It pervades all beings as their immanent principle and that It happens to be the inner sustainer of all.

The concept of Niyantṛtva of Brahman establishes that Brahman exceeds both the chit and the achit and that It is absolutely perfect. Brahman is the ruler of this world, and the finite self depends upon Its will for its functioning. The finite selves and matter happen to be the modes of Brahman and so depend upon It, even for their very existence. So they are Swarūpāśrita. They depend upon the Divine will for their functioning and so are also Samkalpāśrita. The concept of Sarvaśeṣitva⁷³ emphasises that the individual selves are entirely subservient to the Supreme, and that they exist therefore only for the satisfaction of the Supreme.

This body-soul relationship is the most convincing mode of explaining the philosophical, metaphysical and religious relationship of the world with Brahman, according to the scriptures. This relationship between the individual selves and the supreme establishes the utter dependence of the finite selves on Brahman, for their existence as well as functioning.

The samsāri chetana, though is, in fact, inseparably

related to the Supreme Lord as his Dāsa, śeṣa or śiṣya, fails to realise his true nature, on account of the beginning-less Māyā and so is devoid of the light of truth in his heart. Though qualified by his essential nature to enjoy the rapture of Divine Communion, he is again and again subjected to transmigration as he fails to realise the Highest Object of attainment. This forlorn pilgrim comes across a worthy preceptor at some time or other, who enlightens him on his essential nature as well as the reality of the Highest truth. The most beneficent āchārya takes pity on the soul and preaches him the philosophy of the truth, the goal and the way and leads him on most kindly to the goal of his life. The Sādhaka cannot by himself proceed on the path of Sādhana but badly needs a guide, and he surely gets such a guide at the proper time, only on account of Divine grace, showered on him for even the slightest good done by him knowingly or unknowingly. ⁷⁴

In the ultimate analysis it becomes, therefore, established that Divine mercy is at the root of all Sādhana and it is only on account of His unbounded grace that the finite self embodied in matter awakes and arises from the deep slumber of ignorance and yearns thereafter for Divine experience, for attaining which, he goes in search of a proper preceptor.

References :-

1. 'प्रत्येकंचेतनत्वे बहुरिहकलहो वीतरागो न जातः' । त. मु. क. 2-1
2. प्रत्येकं परमाणुषु चैतन्यानुपलब्धेः तदभ्युपगमे च एकशरीर एवानेकसहस्रचेतनापातात् अकारणगुणपूर्वकस्य कार्यद्रव्यवर्ति विशेषगुणस्य असंभवात् शरीरविशेषगुणश्चैतन्यम् । सि.त्र. p.-12
स च संस्कारकोशस्ते संघातात्मा प्रतिक्षणम् ।
प्रचयापचयाभ्यां स्यात् भिन्नः स्मर्तात्रकोभवेत् । स.सि. p.-71
3. 'यो मे हस्तादिवर्षेत्यवयवनिवहाद्भाति भिन्नस्स एकः ।' त.मु.क. 2-1
'स तावन्नदेहः प्रत्येकसमुदायचैतन्यादिविकल्पानुपपत्तेः ।
शरीरभेद इव अभिप्रायभेदप्रसङ्गात् । ममेति व्यतिरेकप्रत्ययात् सङ्घातत्वादि हेतुभिश्च ॥ न्या.सि. p.-211
4. 'सङ्घातत्वादिभिर्वा घट इव तदचित्स्यात् ।' त.मु.क. 2-1
5. अवयविनश्च दूषितत्वात् । सिद्धावपि तद्गुणस्य कारणगुणपूर्वक प्रसङ्गात् ।
पाकजगुणवत् परिणामविशेषाभ्युपगमेऽपिप्रत्यवयवं चैतन्यप्रसङ्गो दुष्परिहरः ।
अतएव 'तेभ्यः चैतन्यं किण्वादिभ्योमदशक्तिवत्' इति प्रलापोनिरस्तः ।
सङ्घातदशायां प्रत्यवयवं मदशक्तेः रसविशेषादिवत् ।' न्या.सि. p.-211
6. See. B.G. II-13 to 25. Bhāgavata 11-22 Siddhitrayam, p. 18
7. किं प्रत्येकं इन्द्रियाणि चेतनानि सम्भूयवा ? यदि प्रत्येकम् इन्द्रियान्तरदृष्टस्य
इन्द्रियान्तरेण प्रतिसन्धानं न स्यात् । अस्ति च तत् 'यमहमद्राक्षं तमहं
पश्यामीति' । सि.त्र. p.-19; See also न्या.सि. p.- 211
8. 'अत एव न सम्भूयापि चेतनत्वम् । न हि पञ्चभिरीन्द्रियैस्सम्भूयैकं
वस्त्वनुभूयतेऽनुसन्धीयतेवा । एकेन्द्रियविगमे च प्रायणप्रसङ्गश्च । इन्द्रियचैतन्ये
च तत्तदिन्द्रियापाये तत्तदिन्द्रियार्थस्मरणमपि न भवेत् ।' सि.त्र. p.-19
9. 'न च तत्समुदायः । समुदायोऽहमिति प्रत्ययाभावात् । अन्ततः समुदायिषु
पर्यवसानाच्च' । न्या.सि. p.- 211
10. Sidditrayam, P. 30 N.S.P. 212.

11. 'तदपि न करणत्वात् चक्षुरादिवत्।' सि.त्र. P. 20
12. Phil. of Vis. P.N.S., P. 278
13. तथा सुखादिसंवेदनान्यपि करणवन्ति क्रियात्वात् संवेदनत्वाद्वा
रूपादिज्ञानवदिति । तदेवं ज्ञानकरणतयावगतस्य मनसः कथमिव ज्ञाने कर्तृत्वम्?
सि.त्र. p.- 20
'कर्तुरात्मनः करणतयैव श्रुतेरनुमानतोवा तत्सिद्धिः।' न्या.स. p.-212
14. स एव हि चक्षुरादिभिरूपादीन् अन्तःकरणेन च सुखादींश्चेतयते । स एवात्मा ।
सि.त्र.p.- 20
15. 'अस्तु तर्हि प्राणा एवात्मा; तथासति तदन्वयिनि शरीरे सात्मकत्वप्रतीतिः;
तद्विरहिणि निरात्मकत्वप्रतीतिश्चोपपद्येताम् । देहादुत्क्रान्तिर्लोकान्तरगमनं
देहान्तरसञ्चारश्चोपपद्यन्तेतराम् गत्वरस्वाभाव्यात्प्राणस्य' सि.त्र. 24
16. 'निरस्तो देहचैतन्यप्रतिषेधप्रकारतः । प्राणात्मवादो न पृथक् प्रयोजयति
दूषणम्॥' सि.त्र. 25
17. See supra. Refutation of Dehatmavāda.
18. 'स च कण्ठमुखनासाभ्यन्तरे बहिश्च रेचितः त्वचास्पृश्यमानो घटादिरिव
स्फुटमनात्मतया चकास्ति' सि.त्र. 25
19. Br. U. 2-1-15
20. See T.M.K. I-25 to 31.
21. 'अत एव सन्तानाश्रयणेनापि प्रत्यभिज्ञोपपादनं साधीयः ।
विज्ञानक्षणव्यतिरिक्तस्य स्थायिनोनुसन्धायिनस्सन्तानस्याभ्युपगमे
स्वसिद्धान्तत्यागः परसिद्धान्ताभ्युपगमश्च । अनभ्युपगमेप्रत्यभिज्ञानुपपत्तिः ।
सि.त्र.p.-28
22. 'यस्मिन्नेव हि सन्ताने आहिता कर्मवासना ।
फलं तत्रैव बध्नाति कार्पासे रक्तता यथा ॥' न्या.सि. p.-212
23. 'तदप्यसत् । तत्र वासनाधारस्थिरावयवानुपपत्तेः । निरन्वयविनाशिषु जगति
सर्वक्षणेभुसन्तानैक्यभेदादयोऽपि दुर्वचाः।' न्या.सि.p.- 212
24. 'तत्स्यादालयविज्ञानं यद्भवेदहमास्पदम् ।
तत्स्याद्विचित्तविज्ञानं यन्नीलादिकमुल्लिखेत् ॥'

25. 'अत एवचित्तविज्ञानालयविज्ञानसन्तानभेदोऽपिनिरस्तः । ज्ञानमात्रात्मवादे च प्रागुक्तप्रतिसन्धानाद्यनुपपत्तिभिः सन्तानैक्यग्रहीतुरभावाच्च न सन्तानसिद्धिः ।'
न्या.सि. p.-212
26. N.S.P. 212
27. 'अनुभूतेरात्मत्वाभ्युपगमे तस्याः नित्यत्वेऽपि प्रतिसन्धानाभावः तदवस्थः । प्रतिसंधानं हि पूर्वापरकालस्थायिनमनुभवितामुपस्थापयति । नानुभूतिमात्रम् ।'
श्री.भा. 1-1-1
28. Sec. Sri. Bhashyam. 1-1-1
29. S.B. 1-1-1. pp. 31 to 35. Venkatasvara press ed.
30. S.B. 1-1-1.
31. S.B. 1-1-1.
32. 'शान्ताङ्गार इवादित्यमहङ्कारो जडात्मकः ।
स्वयंज्योतिषमात्मानं व्यनक्तीति न युक्तिमत् ॥ सि.त्र.प.- 40
व्यङ्क्तृव्यङ्ग्यत्वमन्योन्यं न च स्यात् प्रातिकूल्यतः ।
व्यङ्ग्यत्वेऽननुभूतित्वमात्मनि स्याद्यथा घटे ॥ न्या.सि.प.- 21
33. S.T. P 46
34. S.B. 1-1-1
35. S.T. P 47
36. Desikā abridges all these arguments as follows :
प्रत्यक्त्वादुपलम्भतो मम सुखं भावीति मोक्षेच्छया
मुक्तब्रह्म मुमुक्षुवेदवचसा सुप्तोऽहमित्युक्तिः ।
मां नाज्ञासिषमित्यपि स्ववपुराद्यज्ञानमात्राश्रयात्
स्वापप्राच्यनिजक्रियास्मरणतोऽप्यात्माऽहमर्थः स्थिरः ॥ न्या.सि. p.-212
37. 'स्वस्य चास्य स्वयंप्रकाशत्वम् ।
परस्य तु तज्ज्ञानविषयतयैव प्रकाशते ।' न्या.सि. p.-213
38. 'योगाभ्यासभुवा स्पष्टं प्रत्यक्षेण प्रकाशते ।' सि.त्र. p.-48
'योगदशायां तु यथावस्थितापूर्वाकारविशिष्टतया यौगिक
प्रत्यक्षेण साक्षात्क्रियते ।' न्या.सि. p.-213

39. 'प्रमाता च प्रमेयं च प्रमाणं च भवेत्पुमान् ।
प्रमा मेया च धीरेव मेया एव घटादयः । न्या.सि. p.-213
40. तै.उ. 2-1
41. 'स यथा सैन्धवघनोऽनन्तरोऽबाह्यः कृत्स्नो रसघन एव एवं
वा अरे अयमात्मानन्तरोऽबाह्यः कृत्स्नो रसघन एव ।' बृ.उ. 4-5-13
42. 'तद्गुणसारत्वात् तद्व्यपदेशः प्राज्ञवत् ।' श्री.भा. II-3-29
43. प्र.उ. 3-9
44. N.S. P 213
45. N.S. P 213
46. 'अजोभागः' Rg. V. X - 16-4; Nirukta XII-29,30,32,33; अथर्ववेद
XVIII-2-36; IX-5-1; Satapatha Brahmana XI-2-1-1; कठ.उ. 1-
2-18; भ.गी. II-17, 20, 21
47. 'एषोऽणुरात्मा चेतसावेदितव्यः', आराग्रमात्रोद्भवरोदृष्टः, 'वालाग्रशतभागस्य
शतधा कल्पितस्यच । भागो जीवस्सविज्ञेयः ----'
48. 'उत्क्रान्तिगत्यागतीनाम्' श्री.भा. II-3-20
49. कठ.उ. 2-1-12
50. 'गृहां प्रविष्टात्मानौ हि तदर्शनात्' श्री.भा. I-2-11
51. N.S. P 213
52. S.T. P 11
53. 'अतिसूक्ष्मतया सर्वाचेतनान्तः प्रवेशस्वभावः'
श्री.भा. 1-1-1; न्या.सि. p.-214
54. 'श्रुतिस्मृत्यादिषु सर्वगतत्वादिव्यपदेशास्तु समुदायापेक्षया धर्मभूतज्ञानद्वारा
सूक्ष्मानुप्रवेशक्षमतया वा तत्रतत्र यथोचितं निर्वाह्याः । न्या.सि.p.- 214
55. N.S. P 214
56. N.S. P 215
57. जननमरणकरणानां प्रतिनियमादयुगपत्प्रवृत्तेश्च ।
पुरुषबहुत्वं सिद्धं त्रैगुण्यविपर्ययाच्चैव ॥ सां.का.

58. 'नानात्मानो व्यवस्थातः' गौ.न्या.सू.
 59. 'जीवाद्वैतवचनानि तु प्रकारैक्यविषयाणि' । न्या.सि.प.-214
 60. 'राममुग्रीवयोरैक्यं देव्यैवं समजायत' ।
 61. 'अयमयं चैको व्रीहिः ।'
 62. 'ब्रह्मवेद ब्रह्मैव भवति' ।
 63. 'सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म' ।
 64. N.S. P 215
 65. See Intro. to V.S.-S.S.R. P 40
 66. N.S. P 215
 67. 'स्वतः सुखी चायमात्मा । उपाधिवशात् संसरति । न्या.सि. p.-215
 68. 'अद्य श्वो वा महाप्रलयेऽपि वा' दयाशतकम्. 79
 69. Even the Gods are bound souls and so can follow the discipline of Sādhanā. See Śrī Bhāṣyam 1-3-25
 70. T.M.K. 1-53; S.B. II-4-8, 11
 71. B.G. 15-8;
 72. 'भगवत्स्वरूपतिरोधानकर्त्री स्वविषयायाश्च भोग्यबुद्धेर्जननी' श.गद्यम्
 73. Ved. Samgraha, P 208
 74. 'ईश्वरस्य च सौहार्दं यदृच्छासुकृतं तथा ।
 विष्णोः कटाक्षमद्वेषमाभिमुख्यं च सात्त्विकैः ॥
 संभाषणं षडेतानि ह्याचार्यप्राप्तिहेतवः ॥ र.त्र.सा I-p.-76

THE SĀDHYA OR THE UPĀSYA

In the previous section we dealt with the innate nature of the Sādhaka and the difficulties he had to face on the path of Sādhana. We also enquired briefly into the nature of the 'Three Reals' namely the matter, the Finite Self and the Supreme Self.

It is indispensable for a Sādhaka to have a thorough understanding of the nature of the goal he aspires to achieve. He must know very precisely the full content of his ideal with all its implications so that his efforts may not be wasted or misdirected.

What Should be the Supreme End of Life:

Deśika declares this as follows:

असारं अल्पसारं च सारं सारतरं त्यजेत् ।

भजेत्सारतमं शास्त्रे ॥

र.त्र.सा. 2-p-77

'One should ignore what is of no value, what is only of a little value, what is valuable and also what is more valuable. He must choose only that which is the most valuable in the Sāstras just like the nectar in the ocean.'

Here Deśika expounds the futility of all hedonistic pleasures. All materialistic ideals are negative in value as they are full of defects.¹ They are rājasic and tāmasic and they drag down the self to malignity. So they are of no value and are to be discarded. The attainment of worldly goods as ordained in the karma kānda is of very slight value (Alpasāra) and likewise, the attainment, also of good things of svarga. All these values are not real though they are pleasing to some extent. As the Katopaniṣad says, there is an eternal conflict in this world between the pleasure

principle and the reality principle, Preyas and Śreyas, and he will be wise, who chooses the reality principle for the other.²

Though self-realization is a nobler and truer point of view, it alone should not be the sole aim of the sādhanaka. It is little more valuable, but is not all. It is of no value to one who desires the enjoyment of the Supreme Being. Self-realization can only be a part of God-realization. So, the Sādhaka will not consider such parts of the scriptures that treat of only the realization of one's own self and the means thereof as valuable, as it involves isolation from God.

To a sādhanaka, therefore, only the attainment of Brahman and the means thereof are the most valuable. This is the sārātama part of the scripture, for there can be no delight to the Jīva without God. The attainment of the illimitable rapture of Divine communion, and of eternal service unto Him, is therefore, to be the highest aspiration of man, as it is his essential nature or svarūpa, as a śeṣha of God, to subserve his śeṣhin, the Over-Lord of all.

The soul should get rid of all kinds of misconceptions and become conscious of the omnipotent God. It should formulate a correct sense of values, and hold before itself this lofty ideal of paripūrṇa Brahmānubhavam or a complete and comprehensive vision of the Supreme, and nityakainkarya or eternal service at the feet of the Supreme Being. The Sādhaka must hunger for this alone intensively.

The Sūtrakāra reveals the defects and dangers of ungodly ideals and enlightens us upon the significance of the Summum Bonum or the Supreme good, in the form of the attainment of Godhead.³

The Jīva is subjected to innumerable imperfections of great magnitude in all the states of his existence, and the Supreme Being, whom he has to attain, is a home of all auspicious perfections, without any taint of imperfection. This true knowledge of the guṇas, vibhūti and supremacy of the Lord on the one hand, and the knowledge of his own essential nature of being subservient to Him, on the other, become the cause of the origination and enrichment, in him, of Bhakti towards the Lord.

In the introductory stanza to his Sri Bhāṣyam Rāmānuja describes Brahman as one, who is the Supreme Being responsible for the creation, preservation, destruction and others of all the worlds, and who has resolved to protect the host of multiform beings that surrender unto Him. Rāmānuja points out in this stanza that the Ultimate of the Upaniṣads is the same as the God of religion, the glorified Lord of Śrī. The two entities viz., the order of finite selves and the physical order characterise Him, being His modal manifestations. These are real, in the sense, that they glorify Him, and not on account of their being all independent.

Rāmānuja's philosophy strongly affirms:

1. The Reality and knowability of Brahman,
2. The Reality of the World of matter and Finite selves only as adjectives of the Supreme Being.
3. The Reality of the empirical world,
4. The Reality of a transcendental region where the liberated commune with God, and
5. The Reality of sādhana as an actual means of an upward evolution of the individual.

Rāmānuja repudiates all the schools that deny Brahman or his glory or the reality of the empirical world, and establishes, in turn, the reality of the transcendental Brahman that supports, controls from within and uses for Its own purposes the cosmos, which is also real as well.

Brahman is Knowable :

God is to be intuited by us only according to the scriptural authorities that are held valid and infallible by all Vedāntins. It is contended by some, that the scriptures ordain Brahman as unknowable and impossible of instruction, on the authority of some texts like 'यतोवाचो निर्वर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसासह', 'यद्वाचानभ्युदितम्' and others. It is also argued, that Brahman is undifferentiated consciousness, which alone is real, and that the empirical world is only an appearance. So, it is contended that the fact of knowing Brahman can never be possible, as It can never become the object of knowledge.

Rāmānuja has carefully examined this argument and has repudiated it emphatically. The several incompatibilities, that are inescapable, in the event of accepting undifferentiated consciousness as Brahman, are shown clearly. He comes to the conclusion, on the authority of the same scriptures, that there is one Reality, the Brahman, which is characterised by the orders of the chit and the achit, that are equally real but inseparable from It.

Likewise the theory that Brahman is unknowable is also repudiated by the school of Rāmānuja. The scriptural statements exhort the aspirants to know Brahman. Brahman is named as 'तस्योदितिनाम' 'अथनामधेयं सत्यस्य सत्यम्' and others. सर्ववेदायत्रैकं भवन्ति, यो वेद निहितं गुहायां परमे व्योमन्, तद्विजिज्ञासस्व, येनाक्षरं पुरुषं वेद सत्यं प्रोवाच तां तत्त्वतो

ब्रह्मविद्या' and a host of similar texts declare that Brahman is knowable, and that It must be known for attaining salvation. This position appears like a paradox. Some scriptural statements say that Brahman cannot be attained by words or the mind, whereas some other statements ordain, that Brahman must be known. How are we to solve this problem? This school has admirably found out the key to solve this problem. It must be admitted that there is no contradiction whatsoever between these scriptural statements. They cannot be mutually contradictory, for then they serve no purpose. So it must be understood that the statements describing Brahman as unknowable mean that it is impossible to know the Absolute Brahman in its entirety as it is verily infinite. We cannot know the Reality in its totality. Our knowledge of the Supreme Being is necessarily bound to be partial and never complete. This is the import of the scriptures that describe Brahman as exceeding the province of our mind and intellect. If, on the other hand, it is maintained that the statements defining Brahman as knowable are to be taken in a figurative sense, then it inevitably contradicts the spirit of a host of scriptural texts. The unknowability of Brahman cannot be proved even by inference even as it cannot be by scripture.

'Brahman is unnameable and unknowable because of this' etc., should be the form of inference. Here Brahman is the Pakṣa and it is to be asked whether the Sādhya is found in the Pakṣa or not? If it is answered in the affirmative then how can a knowledge of the Sādhya opposed to the Pakṣa be possible? If it is answered in the negative then it is futile to continue the reason as the Sādhya will have no Āśraya. Likewise, many incompatibilities ensue even regarding the Sādhya. On the

other hand counter syllogisms also are possible.⁴ "The object of dispute is knowable and nameable because it is shining."

‘विगीतं वेद्यं वाच्यं च भासमानत्वात्’

It is impossible to attribute this quality of अवाच्यत्व and अवेद्यत्व to anything any where. When that is the case how can that be possible of that Supreme Reality which is verily Sarvasabdavāchya?⁵

So it is the established conclusion of this school that Brahman is knowable and that the scriptures ordain that Brahmanānda cannot be fully measured, through the statement सैषाऽनन्दस्य मीमांसा भवति’ otherwise statements like ‘वचसां वाच्यमुत्तमं’ ‘सर्वैश्च वेदैः अहमेव वेद्यः’ and others cannot be explained.

No Distinction Between Saguṇa and Nirguṇa Brahman:

Rāmānuja does not accept the theory of Śankara making a distinction between Saguṇa Brahman and Nirguṇa Brahman. It is the firm conviction of Rāmānuja that the Absolute Brahman of the Upaniṣads is itself the Īśvara of Religion who is again the Supreme Vāsudeva the inner self of all. The philosophy of Advaita makes such a distinction and explains certain sections of the Sūtras such as SadVidyā, Ubhayalinga, Kārya Brahman etc., in this light. The 'Sat' which is taken to be Advitiya' and 'Nirguṇa' 'indeterminate absoluteness' is said to become Īśvara, the determinate. This Saguṇa Brahman is said to be finite and a mere appearance. But Nirguṇa Brahman is said to be

pure undifferentiated consciousness. The God of religion, thus, is less real than the Absolute of philosophy according to the Advaitic school of thought.

This distinction between two Brahman is rejected by other Vedāntins firstly because it involves self-contradiction. It cannot be accepted that Brahman evolves into the universe of names and forms if at all it is to be rejected later as an illusory development. The process of 'Śṛṣṭi' then cannot at all be applicable to this school. Secondly it is subject to the fallacy of Śrutahani and Āśrutakalpana. The Bhēdā Bhedā schools of Bhāskara, Yadavaprakāśa and Nimbārka have refuted the Theory of Nirguṇa Brahman and this portion of their arguments is serviceable to Viśiṣṭādvaita though their own expositions are not in toto accepted by it. Brahman is not undifferentiated consciousness for the mere reason that consciousness is only an attribute which necessarily stands related to a substratum. If it is asked 'Why then Brahman is described as consciousness' it shall be replied thus: The essential characteristics of an object describe even the essential nature of the object through those characteristics. So the term jñānam denotes that Brahman is of the essential nature of knowledge. This conclusion is substantiated by various scriptures that describe Brahman as omniscient and as possessing by its very nature infinite knowledge, strength and valour.

‘स्वरूपनिरूपणधर्मशब्दा हि धर्ममुखेन स्वरूपमपि प्रतिपादयन्ति। तथा हि सूत्रकारः ‘तद्गुणसारत्वात् तद्व्यपदेशः प्राज्ञवत्’ यावदात्मभावित्वाच्च न दोषः इति । ... ज्ञानस्य धर्ममात्रत्वात् धर्ममात्रस्यैकस्य वस्तुत्वप्रतिपादानुपपत्तेश्च।

Statements like 'Nirguṇam', 'Niranjanam' are explained by Rāmānuja in a significant manner. They are meant for the denial in Brahman of all that is defiling. Brahman is essentially pure and is opposed to all that is evil and defiling. The statement like 'नेह नानास्तिकिञ्चन' does not deny plurality itself outright but it denies only 'अब्रह्मात्मक वस्तुनानात्व' or plurality of objects outside and not ensouled by Brahman. The statements 'नेति नेति' also do not discard everything else other than Brahman as 'Not this, Not this', but they only declare that Brahman is not only that much. These texts positively affirm that He is more than anything else that is conceivable. The unsurpassingly great qualities of Brahman are thus expounded by these statements.

The Sūtrakāra expounds the same in the Sūtra 'प्रकृतैतावत्त्वं प्रतिषेधति ततो ब्रवीति च भूयः'. Rāmānuja explains this as 'ब्रह्मणः एतावन्मत्रता प्रतिषिध्यते' वे.सं. P. 183.

निर्गुणवादश्च परस्य ब्रह्मणो हेयगुणासम्बन्धादुपपद्यते ।
ज्ञानस्वरूपं ब्रह्मेति सर्वज्ञस्य सर्वशक्तेर्निखिल
हेयप्रत्यनीककल्याणगुणाकरस्य ब्रह्मणस्वरूपं ज्ञानैकनिरूपणीयं
स्वप्रकाशतया ज्ञानस्वरूपं चेत्यभ्युपगमादुपपन्नतरः ॥

गी.भा. 13-2

This exposition by Rāmānuja of the term Nirguṇa establishes remarkably:

1. The difference and distinction between Brahman, and the finite selves;
2. The validity of all types of sacred texts without leaving anyone of them as is being done in other schools;

3. Divine purity though the Supreme is characterised by the chit and the achit as Its body.⁶

Rāmānuja explains the relation between the infinite and the finite by means of Sāmānādhikarānya which is only an inseparable relation between a substance and its attribute or a 'Dharmin' and a 'Dharma'. This truth of 'Prakāra-prakāri bhāva' is the secret key to understand the relationship between the universal spirit and the universe of matter and selves. Neither is there undue stress here on unity or 'abheda' resulting in the illusory theory of the world in entirety, nor on 'bheda' or total difference. But it is a synthetic truth of Unity in Reality

Brahman is the Ultimate of the Upaniṣads :

Brahman, the ultimate of the Upaniṣads is described by Rāmānuja as the most Supreme.

‘ब्रह्मशब्देन स्वभावतो निरस्तनिखिलदोषो अनवधिकाति शयासंख्येयकल्याणगुणगणः पुरुषोत्तमोऽभिधीयते । सर्वत्र बृहत्त्वगुणयोगेन हि ब्रह्मशब्दः । बृहत्त्वं च स्वरूपेण गुणैश्च यत्रानवधिकातिशयं सोऽस्य मुख्यार्थः - स च सर्वेश्वर एव । अतो ब्रह्मशब्दस्तत्रैव मुख्यवृत्तः । तस्मादन्यत्र तद्गुण लेशयोगादौपचारिकः अनेकार्थकल्पनायोगात् भगवच्छब्दवत् । श्री. भा. 1-1-1

Brahman is the Reality of all Realities. 'Satyasya satyam'.⁷ It transcends matter and the finite selves. It is pure and far from any imperfection or evil. It is perfection par excellence, self-complete, absolute knowledge and joy. It is infinite by nature and also by the infinite and boundless perfections of attributes.

Brahman of the Upaniṣads is the 'Sarvēśvara' or the Supreme God of religion. Deśika defines Brahman Supreme Lord of the Universe as follows:

‘सर्वेश्वरत्वम्, व्यापकत्वे सति चेतनत्वम्, सर्वशेषित्वम्,
सर्वकर्मसमाराध्यत्वम्, सर्वफलप्रदत्वम्, सर्वाधारत्वम्,
सर्वकार्योत्पादकत्वम्, स्वज्ञानस्वेतरसमस्तद्रव्यशरीरकत्वम्,
स्वतस्सत्यसङ्कल्पत्वादिकं चेश्वरलक्षणम्।’ न्या.सि p-225

The entity of 'Īśvara' is different from primordial matter as well as the finite selves. He who is the overlord of all objects other than Himself is God. Īśvara is the transcendental Divine Being who is one and Absolute. The Īśvara of religion means the same Reality as meant by the Brahman of philosophy. The Divine personality is the centre of knowledge and is all pervasive unlike the finite self which is atomic by nature. This 'Vyapakatva' is the distinguishing differentia of God. He is the one who utilises the world for his own purposes as the entire world of matter and finite-selves is subservient to Him. This 'Śeṣitva' also differentiates Īśvara from the finite self whose very nature is that of being subservient to the over Lord. The definition of 'Sarvēśvaratva' is impossible for any other entity. Rāmānuja describes the glory of the Supreme as

‘स्वाधीनत्रिविधचेतनाचेतन स्वरूपस्थिति प्रवृत्तिभेदम् । श.गद्यं

and affirms his 'Sarvēśvaratva'. The non-sentient matter is bereft of consciousness and so has no volition at all. Though the finite Self has cognition, conation, and volition, he is not the 'Niyanta' of either the physical world or other entities. His capabilities are very limited. God is 'Vibhu' or all-pervasive. He is in contact with all objects other than

Himself, and this is impossible of any other entity. The fourth definition says that He, who is worshipped by all actions of all is God. The Gīta says

‘अहं च सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च’ । भ.गी. 9-24

God is also defined as 'Sarvaphalaprada'. It is God's will or 'Sankalpa' that is verily responsible for the granting of fruits of all kinds of activities to all. Karma by itself is inert and is said to be incapable of yielding any result by itself. It is the All knowing God who is thus served through those activities or Karmas that grants us the corresponding results. The Gīta says 'Prabhurevacha' and affirms this. God is described as the 'Ādhara' or ground of all things other than Himself through the spiritual relationship of Aprithaksiddhi. This definition excludes Kāla or time as it is not an 'Ādhara' through Aprithaksiddha sambandha. He is defined as the first and the intelligent cause of all effects in this universe. Time or Kāla is excluded here also, as time is not responsible for all effects in Nitya vibhūti, being itself subservient to the Lord. No effect is possible without God and 'Nikhilakāraṇatva' is unique to Him alone and none else. Again God is defined as one who has all objects other than Himself and his attributive consciousness as his body. As one cannot be the body of one-self Īśvara is defined as the innerself of all things other than Himself. This attributive consciousness cannot be the body of that same self and so the attributive consciousness of God is also excluded in the above definition. Similarly 'Svataḥ Satyasankalpatvam' is also an apt definition of Īśvara. Though the finite self is to reveal 'Satya sankalpatva', after liberation, his state is totally subject to the will of God. It may also be defined that God is the Divine Being who is to

be contemplated upon by the aspirants for attainment of eternal bliss after release from the shackles of Samsāra. He who is to be attained by unceasing meditation is Īśvara. The 'Taittirīya' text defines Brahman as 'Satyam, Jñānam, Anantam' and enables us to realize the infinity of Īśvara. Rāmānuja explains this text as follows:

तत्र सत्यपदं निरुपाधिकसत्तायोगि ब्रह्माह । तेन विकारास्पदं
अचेतनं तत्संसृष्टश्च चेतनश्च व्यावृत्तः । नामान्तरभजनाहं
वस्थान्तरयोगे तयोर्निरुपाधिकसत्तायोगरहितत्वात् । ज्ञानपदं
नित्यासंकुचित ज्ञानैकाकारमाह । तेन कदाचित्संकुचितज्ञानत्वेन मुक्ता
व्यावृत्ताः । अनन्तपदं देशकालवस्तुपरिच्छेदरहितं स्वरूपमाह ।
सगुणत्वात्स्वरूपस्य । स्वरूपेण गुणैश्चानन्त्यम् । तेन पूर्वपदद्वयव्यावृत्त
कोटिद्वय विलक्षणस्सातिशयस्वरूपगुणा नित्या व्यावृत्ताः ।

श्री. भा. 1-1-2

This statement of the 'Taittirīya' affirms that Brahman is different from primordial matter and Finite selves. The term 'Satyam', the true-means that Brahman is 'the absolutely non-conditioned Being.' This excludes the entity of matter which is as a rule subject to continuous mutation and the bound Jiva who is associated with it. These two are not absolutely non-conditioned for they undergo many states of various different names. The term 'Jñānam' means 'the eternally free intelligence' and this term excludes the freed Jīvas on account of their once limited knowledge. Similarly the term "Anantam" implies that 'the Supreme Being is free from the limitations of time, space and condition.' This as a rule excludes the eternally free or Nityas who are like other selves smaller than the smallest atom. Brahman therefore is a concept which implies

Transcendental greatness and perfection. These three attributes are applicable to one and the same Brahman as they are not eliminative in character as alleged by some philosophers of Advaita, who describe that three different states of empirical and illusive experience of 'Anṛta', 'Jada' and 'Vichhinna' are controverted by these three terms. Advaitic philosophers propagate that these three terms have one and the only meaning and declare that pure consciousness is real and that it cannot be sublated. This theory of the Advaitins positing pure consciousness as Brahman is opposed by Rāmānuja. The above definition contains several attributes which are non-contradictory and so define the same Reality which is qualified by plurality. The reality is differentiated and distinguished from their objects. The plurality of these qualities does not imply a plurality of reality. The linguistic rule of Sāmānadhikaranya' which is defined as

भिन्नप्रवृत्तिनिमित्तानां शब्दानां एकस्मिन्नर्थे वृत्तिः

सामानाधिकरण्यम् ।

श्री. भा. 1-1-1

permits the co-existence of distinct qualities mutually non-contradictory in one and the same entity and in the light of this rule the above attributes of Brahman become meaningful as they enable us to know Brahman.

The Sūtrakāra has, in the second Sūtra, defined Brahman as 'Janmādyasya yatah'¹⁸ and has, combined the characteristics of being the cause, sustenance and destruction of the world in Brahman, even though any one of these characteristics would have sufficed to define Brahman. Sṛṣṭi Kāraṇatva, Sthitikāraṇatva and Layakāraṇatva are combined here in this synoptic definition just to clear away the doubt that three different supreme

Beings are existing for the above three different functions. Any one of these three functions is enough to define Brahman for none else other than the Supreme Being is invested with such extraordinary power. It is, also, the intention of the Sūtrakāra to show that one and the same Brahman is responsible for the origination, maintenance and destruction of this universe. In a later section the Sūtrakāra determines the nature of 'Īśvaratatva' by means of his being the sole cause of involution, in the Sūtra

‘अत्ता चराचरग्रहणात् ।

श्री. भा. 1-2-9

यत्तुजन्मादिसूत्रे जन्मादित्रितयसमाहारो लक्षणमुक्तम् तत्र एकैकस्य
लक्षणत्वे संभवत्यपि त्रयाणां त्रयः कर्तारः इति
कुमतिशङ्काव्यावर्तनाय तदितिमन्तव्यम् । न्या.सि. p-225

Ubhayalingatvam:

Brahman is devoid of evil and imperfection and this is what is pointed out by the Nirguṇa texts. By a denial of imperfection in Brahman His perfection is affirmed. He is not only free from any imperfection but is also a home of all perfections. Viśiṣṭādvaitic conception of God-head is the whole of Reality and an abode of infinite eternal and auspicious qualities like Truth, Goodness and Beauty. Brahman is not only the Real Reality or Satyam, Self-consciousness or 'Jñānam' and Infinite or 'Anantam', but also 'Amalam' or Supreme Good, Sundaram or beautiful and 'Ānandamayam' or blissful.⁹ This Ubhayalingatva of Brahman is affirmed by the Sūtrakāra in the Sūtra

‘न स्थानतोऽपि परस्योभयलिङ्गं सर्वत्रहि’ श्री. भा. 3-2-11

The above qualities namely 'satyam', 'jñānam', 'Anantam', 'Amalam' and 'Ānandam' are His determining

qualities or Svarūpanirupaka dharmas. The explanation of Advaitic philosophers given to the term 'Ubhayalinga' as relating to Saṁguṇa and Nirguṇa Brahman is not compatible with the context. The scriptures lay down that Brahman is free from any imperfection and that at the same time it is the abode of all auspicious qualities.¹⁰ It declares that Brahman is both 'Akhilaheyapratyanika' and 'Kalyāṇaikatānāsvārūpa' at one and the same time. This in fact is the concept of 'Ubhayalingatva' as explained by the savants of the Viśiṣṭādvaita school of philosophy. The Absolute is thus conceived as a perfect personality in this school. Deśika examines the 'Nirguṇavāda' in the light of the exposition of Rāmānuja and comes to the conclusion that it cannot stand as explained by Advaitic thinkers. There can be no Nirguṇa Brahman for such a concept violates the conclusions of the scriptures that define Brahman as स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानबलक्रिया च, यः सर्वज्ञः सर्ववित् and सत्यकामः सत्यसङ्कल्पः. How can we reconcile then the Saṁguṇa and the Nirguṇa texts? Both these types of texts cannot be equally held valid as they are contradictory. Nor can either or both of them be rejected for it results in the establishment of either Nirguṇatva or Saṁguṇatva consequently nullifying the other. As both these are self-established and valid we cannot also make an option of anyone of them and reject the other. It may be argued that according to the principle of 'Apacheda' the former text describing Saṁguṇatva gets cancelled by the latter Nirguṇa texts. But this also is not possible for the principle of 'Apacheda' cannot operate in an instance where mutual order 'परस्पर पौर्वापर्य' and mutual contradiction 'परस्परविरोध' are not definite (Niyata). It is the conclusion of Mīmāṃsakas that the principle of

'Śrutilingādhikaraṇa' must be applied to decide the force (in the case) of any one of the two mutually contradictory texts appearing in a definite order. According to this principle the Saguṇa texts become weightier and never the other. Moreover it is not at all necessary to bring in the principle of 'Apacheda' regarding Saguṇa and Nirguṇa texts for these texts deal with quite different matters and as such are not at all contradictory. The Saguṇa śāstra pertains to the infinite auspicious qualities and according to the उत्सर्गपवादन्याय, the गुणनिषेधशास्त्र pertains to the imperfections that are different from the noble qualities dealt with already.¹¹ Thus both types of statements become valid and complementary. The same principle is to be followed to explain away satisfactorily the incompatibility between Savikāratva and Nirvikāratva as well as Aśarīratva and Saśarīratva.

Nirvikāratva is to be found in Divine nature but Savikāratva is found in the Viśiṣṭavastu. Just as the vikāras of the body such as childhood, youth or old age can never stain the self, similarly, the vikāras or changes in primordial matter and the self, the attributes of the Absolute, do not touch the viśeṣya or the substratum.

The conflict between Saśarīratva and Aśarīratva is also likewise allayed. The Absolute is formless but is not incapable of assuming any Divine form. It likes for evolving the good of Humanity. He does not take any bodies resulting out of the previous Karma like the finite selves, and aśarīratva signifies that the Divine Being is the master of Karma and not subjected to it.¹²

It results from the above enquiry that Brahman, the

Absolute of philosophical enquiry is always qualified by 'Ubhayalingatva' on account of His being a home of all perfections without any taint of imperfection.

Brahman is Not Pure Consciousness but Qualified by it:

The Advaitic view of Brahman as 'Nirviśeṣa-Chinmātram' or pure consciousness is repudiated and rejected by Rāmānuja. The conclusion that is naturally arrived at on the basis of the above three predicates of satyam, jñānam and anantam is that Brahman is saguṇa and saviśeṣa. The qualityless Reality is neither real nor realisable. All sources of knowledge prove only a qualified Reality and there is no pramāṇa to establish pure consciousness as Brahman.

निर्विशेषवस्तुवादिभिः निर्विशेषवस्तुनीदं प्रमाणमिति वक्तुं न शक्यते। सविशेषवस्तुविषयत्वात् सर्वप्रमाणानाम् । श्री.भा. 1-1-1

Neither the perception of the nature 'I saw this' nor verbal authority can establish Nirviśeṣa Brahman. The Nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa which necessarily involves the apprehension of certain qualities of the object is also incapable of cognising an unqualified object. Nor can inference prove it. Consciousness necessarily has the quality of consciousness and self-luminosity. Consciousness is illumination of an object to a subject and never about nothing.

‘न च निर्विषया काचित् संविदस्ति अनुपलब्धेः । विषयप्रकाशनतयैवोपलब्धेरेव हि संविदस्त्वयंप्रकाशता समर्थिता’ ।

श्री.भा. 1-1-1

The relation between the subject and the object is

between distincts and the theory of sublation does not apply to these as it applies to only contradictories.¹³

If pure consciousness is self-proved it possesses the quality of consciousness and the quality of being self-proved and even so cannot be a qualityless entity.

ब्रह्मणो निर्विशेषत्वमिति धर्मोऽस्ति वा न वा ।

द्विधापि सविशेषत्वम् तद्योगतदयोगजम् । न्या.सि.प-227

If it is proved that Nirviśeṣatva is the quality of Brahman then it is not non-qualified. Similarly it remains qualified in the event of Brahman's being bereft of Nirviśeṣatva. So it is the conclusion of Viśiṣṭādvaita that Brahman is 'Chidrupa' or of the nature of consciousness and also that it has 'Chaitanya' or consciousness for its quality. It is not mere Nirviśeṣa chinmatra. Brahman is necessarily qualified by a host of perfections and has Dharma-bhūtajñānam, which is eternally all pervasive, unlike that of the finite self, that is subject to limitations during the state of saṁsāra. As explained above the plurality of qualities does not mean the plurality of the substratum for a number of non-contradictory attributes can define the same object by distinguishing it from others. The auspicious qualities of Brahman are classified into two categories as those that are definitive and those that are derived from the definition.¹⁴ The defining attributes are Satyatva, Jñānatva, Anantatva, Amalatva and Ānandatva and the Nirūpitasvarūpaviśeṣas are innumerable such as Divyamangala vigraharva, Rakṣakatva, Mokṣapradatva and others.

Brahman is eternally self realized, is the Sat without a second, self-existent and the self contained substance. It is self luminous and is the light of lights.¹⁵

Brahman as infinite consciousness connotes its eternally all pervasive character. As light is distinct from luminosity similarly the Divine Self or Divyātma of the Universal Being which is a pratyak, or self-aware principle is distinct from His attributive consciousness. Though the Absolute is the Transcendental Reality, it is at the same time the Immanent and includes everything else in the ultimate analysis.

Brahman is the First and the Intelligent Cause of the Universe:

The SadVidyā¹⁶ of the Chāndōgyōpaniṣad deals with Vedantic cosmology. In this section Uddālaka, the teacher asks his son Śvētakēthu whether he has learnt from his teacher about that Ādēsa by knowing about which everything else could be known. Here the term Ādēsa refers to the Absolute Reality which happens to be the material cause as well as the instrumental cause of this universe. The teacher initiates his son into this vedāntic truth of Abhinnanimittōpādānakāraṇatva of the supreme being, in this section. The Supreme Being is the ground of the Universe by knowing whom everything else is known. By knowing the cause we can know the effects as the same substance enters into different states and assumes different forms.

‘यथा सोम्यैकेन मृत्पिण्डेन सर्वं मृन्मयं विज्ञातं स्यात् वाचारम्भणं
विकारो नामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येवसत्यम् । छा.उ. 4-1-4

The instance of clay entering into many states of pots and pitchers as well as other instances of common experience illustrates the non-difference between the cause and its effects. Clay is the Upādānakāraṇa, the immanent

cause of all types of pots or pitchers of clay. The understanding of clay includes the understanding of all its effects as it is their material cause. Similarly the ultimate spirit is the material cause of all, as the understanding of this one is said to include the understanding of all. This concept of *Sarva vijñāna* from *Ekavijñāna* directly proves the reality of the 'all' as the act of understanding the 'all' implies their reality and inclusion in the 'one'. The non-difference between the cause and the effect is illustrated by the teacher *Uddālaka* through various illustrations. What is after all an effect? It is only an *Avasthāntarāpatti* or the assumption of a different state and configuration. There is difference in utility, form and name but the substance is the same. The effect is in the cause in a subtle state. What is in a subtle state in a cause assumes a gross state and becomes the effect. Nothing that is non-existent can assume existence. So the *sadVidyā's* affirmation that the knowledge of the one leads to the knowledge of all affirms that it is the one and the only cause of the universe. The unity of the causal relation is thus emphasised by the concept of the knowledge of the all by the knowledge of the one which propounds that *Brahman* is the material cause of the universe.

Uddālaka taught his son as follows:-

'Being alone, this was in the beginning, one only, without a second. It willed 'Let me become many'.

‘सदेव सोम्येदमग्र असीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम् ।

तदेक्षत बहुस्यां प्रजायेयेति ॥’

छा.उ. 6-2-1

The term *Idam* referring to this world of plurality is said to be non-existent at the time of creation but was only 'Sar'. 'Agrē' or 'In the beginning' means before the time of

creation. By one only manifested universe is not declared to be non-existent at the time of creation but it means that Brahman existed with the modes of the sentient and the non-sentient in a subtle state that they were treated to be practically non-existent. In the causal state there was no differentiation of names and forms. The term *Ekamēva* implies that the universe existed in the 'one reality' in an unmanifested state. The word *Ekam* does not prove the non-existence of the world of plurality, but it only implies The One qualified by the sentient and the non-sentient in the subtle state. It was Brahman in the state of *Ekatvavastha* which was *Nāmarūpavibhāgarha*. This state of oneness leads to the *Bahutvāvastha* which is *Nāmarūpavibhāgarha* and becomes its cause.

In empirical causation the material cause is different from the instrumental or intelligent operative cause. But it is not so with cosmic creation. The term 'without a second' (*Advitīya*) declares that there is no instrumental cause other than the one which is the material cause. This term 'without a second' affirms that one and the same Brahman, the all powerful, is both the material and the operative cause. It needs no other assistance for creation. The force of the term 'without a second' does not altogether negate a second thing. The scriptures have affirmed certain characterisations subordinate and subservient to the absolute entity,¹⁷ so the negation here refers only to such of the points other than those ordained.¹⁸ So it is to be concluded that the intention of the *Niṣedha* in this context refers only to that of any intelligent cause other than Brahman itself.

The term 'one' implies Brahman in whom the universe in the state of non-differentiation was fused and this is

proved by the next statement "बहुस्यां प्रजायेय". Similarly the terms 'तदैक्षत' 'तत्तेजोऽसृजत' establish the fact that Brahman is itself the material and the operative cause of this universe.

The use of the term *Agrē* in this context does not favour the implication of *Sajātīya vijātīya svagata bhedha śūnyatva* through the terms *Sadēva*, *Ekameva* and *Advitīyam* as this *Bhedhaśūnyatva* cannot be declared only at a particular time namely before creation. The usage of the word *Agrē* becomes futile as the world of plurality is supposed to be unreal in both the states of cause and effect. Nor can it be argued that *Agrē* has no significance for the description of creation is proceeding from the 'अविभक्तनामरूपत्वावस्था' which is definitely marked by this term *Agrē*. This statement in fact emphasises *Vijātīyabhedha* in the form of time, *Sajātīyabhedha* through the individual selves and also *Svagatabhedha* through the extraordinary qualities of Omniscience, Omnipotence and the like. Moreover the acceptance of the plurality of selves as well as the beginningless and wonderful stream of *Karma* is necessitated to justify the varied and unequal creation of the universe that is described further without which it is impossible to absolve Brahman from cruelty and partiality. Thus it becomes established by the above scripture that Brahman is both the material and the intelligent cause of the universe on account of its omnipotence.

Brahman is distinct from all other entities. It is unique. It possesses all natures and capacities being thus unique. It has wondrous manifold forms though one only. Because it is similar to others only in being an entity we should not regard this as a self contradiction.

‘तस्य एकस्य परस्य ब्रह्मणः सर्ववस्तुविसजातीयतया सर्वस्वभावत्वं सर्वशक्तियोगश्चेति, एकस्यैव विचित्रानन्तानारूपता च, पुनरपि अनन्तापरिमिताश्चर्ययोगेन एकरूपता च न विरुद्धा इति वस्तुमात्रसाम्यात् विरोधचिन्ता न युक्ता ।’

वे.सं P. 84 S.S. R'sedition

‘एवमेव सर्ववस्तुविसजातीये ब्रह्मणि सर्वसाम्यं नानुमातुं युक्तम् ।’

वे.सं P. 84

सर्वशक्तियुक्तत्वादेव ब्रह्मणः काश्चनश्रुतयः प्रथमम् उपादानकारणं प्रतिपाद्य निमित्तकारणमपि तदेवेति प्रतिपादयन्ति ।’

वे.सं P. 31

During the state of pralaya, Brahman exists with its modes of chit and achit in a very subtle state. Brahman with its modes of chit and achit in such a subtle state is in the causal state. Then there is no distinction of names and configurations. In the state of creation Brahman wills to become many and likewise becomes manifold with an infinite number of sentients and non-sentients. The sentient and non-sentient beings exist even in the gross state as modes of Brahman¹⁹. There is only change of state in the sentient and non-sentient whereas Brahman is free from any change. Brahman in the state of effect is characterized by its mode of the sentient and the non-sentient beings in the gross state. Brahman is in the effected state now and there is no difference between the cause and the effect. Therefore the effect namely the universe is the same as the cause namely Brahman. The Upaniṣadic statements such as

‘सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म’ छा.उ. 3-14-1, “आत्मैवेदं सर्वं

छा.उ. 7-2-5-2, 'नेहनानास्ति किञ्चन' कठ.उ. 2-4-11,
 'आत्मनि खल्वरे दृष्टे श्रुते मते विज्ञाते इदं सर्वं विदितम्'
 बृ.उ. 4-5-6

declare the same truth of the cosmological unity. The cause of the universe namely Brahman qualified by the sentient and the non-sentient in the subtle state is also the effect namely the cosmic order in the form of Brahman qualified by the sentient and the non-sentient in the gross state. The same truth of the cosmological unity is expounded in the Sūtras.

‘अत्रेदं तत्त्वम् । चिदचिद्वस्तुशरीरतया तत्प्रकारं ब्रह्मैव सर्वदा सर्वशब्दाभिधेयम् । तत्कदाचित् स्वस्मात् स्वशरीरतयापि पृथग्व्यपदेशानर्हसूक्ष्मदशापन्नचिदचिद्वस्तुशरीरं तत्कारणावस्थं ब्रह्म । कदाचिच्च विभक्तानामरूपव्यवहारार्हस्थूलदशापन्नचिदचिद्वस्तुशरीरं तच्च कार्यावस्थमिति कारणात् परस्माद्ब्रह्मणः कार्यरूपं जगदनन्यत् । श्री.भा. 2-1-15

It is on account of this cosmological unity that Sarvavijñānam or knowing the universe with its manifold differences is possible by knowing its cause, the Brahman. This truth culminates in the realisation that the cosmic ground namely Brahman is the same as the Antaryāmin or the innerself of the Jiva which is contained in the principal text 'Tat-Tvamasi'²⁰ Antaryāmi Brāhmana and other scriptural pronouncements point to this cosmological unity and establish that Brahman is the first cause and also the instrumental cause of the cosmos.

The problem of cosmology has been dealt with in different ways by exponents of different schools. According to the school of advaita, the universe is unreal, creation a

myth and portions of scriptures ordaining the process of creation are to be entirely sublated. Brahman alone is real and in the ultimate analysis there is no creation, no universe of differences, not any involution. It is all a fictitious creation due to nescience. The theory of Vīvarthavāda strictly prohibits any such creation. But these passages are meant to explain the phenomenal state or the Vyāvahārikasattā which turns out to be illusory in the final analysis, though admitted as such in the beginning. According to this terminology Brahman qualified with Avidyā is said to be the first cause. The principle of individuation or Avidyā is however said to be unexplainable and false. Bhāskara on the other hand, postulates that Brahman is the first cause of the universe and by the operation of a real upādhi or a limiting adjunct it becomes the many. Here the world is real, the transformation is real and the recovery of the lost unity also is real. The relation of Brahman with the world is one of identity and difference. There is pure identity in the state of liberation whereas there is real difference in the state of saṁsāra. According to this view Brahman undergoes transformation in its material element and likewise transmigrates through its spiritual element under the stress of a real limiting adjunct. Parīṇāmavāda attributing transformation and transmigration to Brahman itself is the keynote of this school. Yadvaprakāśā on the other hand, postulates causal reality to be one sea of universal Being underlying its triple aspects of chit, achit and Īśvara. Brahman is said to differentiate itself into the three entities namely finite selves, matter and Īśvara. This differentiation is not the result of Avidyā or Upādhi, but inherent to it. Further, Brahman and the finite selves are identical as well as different.

These different theories are critically examined and found fault with by Rāmānuja both in his *Vedārtha Sangraha* and the *Śree Bhāshya*. The school of Advaita postulating the *Vivarthavāda* aiming at false appearance does not get the support of the scriptures enquiring into the Vedāntic cosmology.²¹ The instances of causation given only prove transformation or change of state.²² There is not a single illustration of any false appearance in this context.²³ The *SadVidyā* implies the central principle of *Satkāryavāda* according to which nothing new comes into being nor anything is created out of nothing.²⁴ The cause is nothing other than a state of subtle unmanifested existence. While explaining the relationship of Brahman with the universe the *Upaniṣad* says

‘सन्मूलाः सोम्येमास्सर्वाः प्रजाः सदायतनाः सत्प्रतिष्ठाः’²⁵

and affirms that all the beings have their root in the Sat that they abide in the Sat and that they are established in the Sat. This clearly establishes that Brahman is the material cause as well as the instrumental cause of the Universe, for only then can all beings proceed from the 'Being'.²⁶ They abide in it for it is the final support and all are established in it for it is the inner controller of all. The sat without a second brings the world into its explicitness of names and forms and this is propounded by the scripture

‘अनेन जीवेनात्मनानुप्रविश्य नामरूपे व्याकरवाणि’

The supreme with the individual as its mode enters into the world of nature and unfolds its differentiations. The universe is rooted in Brahman and is sustained by it. It is the source and sustenance of all. Nothing can exist apart from it. An object gets the status of a *padārtha* only

when it is ensouled by the Supreme Being.²⁷ The statement 'Tat Satyam Sa Ātmā' formulates that the cosmos is maintained by the Supreme spirit who is the soul of all living and nonliving beings.

On a close examination of the text in question we come to know that causation is a real process in real time and that Brahman Itself is both the material and the spiritual cause of the Universe.²⁸

As a corollary to the above it becomes established that Brahman possesses the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience and immanence and omnipresence and Supreme inward control. The process of creation and maintenance of the cosmos glorify the spirit. So by knowing Brahman as the inner self of all beings, all beings become known as Brahman is the ultimate meaning of the Universe as ordained in the crisp statement 'Sa Ātmā'.

‘एवं जगद्ब्रह्मणोरनन्यत्वं प्रपञ्चितम् । तेन एकेनज्ञानेन सर्वस्य ज्ञातता उपपादिता भवति । सर्वस्य ब्रह्मकार्यताप्रतिपादनेन तदात्मकतयैव सत्यत्वं नान्यथेति ‘तत्सत्यम्’ इत्युक्तम् यथा दृष्टान्ते सर्वस्य मृद्विकारस्य मृदात्मनैव सत्यत्वम् । वे.सं. 179

The arguments for Vivarthavāda are thus refuted and overruled by Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy strictly in keeping with the propoundings of the Upaniṣadic statements.

Bhāskara's argumentation attacks the advaita on all fronts and shows that the theory of Vivartha is contradictory to all pramāṇas. But the BhēdāBhēda theory of Bhāskara is in no way better ²⁹ for the imperfections of the individual selves stain Brahman itself as the Absolute transforms itself into the relative by its pariṇāma śakti. This

Brahma pariṇāma-vāda strikes at the very root of the perfection of Brahman and so is irreconcilable with the teaching of the Upaniṣads. Incompatible conclusions are unavoidable even though it is argued that it is the śakti and not Brahman that undergoes transformation.³⁰

ब्रह्मणि अच्छेद्ये निरवयवे निर्विकारत्वनियमेन
अनन्तहेयोपाधिसंसर्गदोषः दुष्परिहार एव । ... निरवद्यता च
ब्रह्मणः शक्तिपरिणाम इति चेत् केयंशक्तिरित्युच्यते । किं
ब्रह्मपरिणामरूपा उत ब्रह्मणोऽनन्या कापीति ? उभयपक्षेऽपि
स्वरूपपरिणामो अवर्जनीय एव' । वे.सं.p- 188

The theory of Yādavaprakaśā is also inadmissible³¹ as it runs contrary to the Upaniṣads that teach Īśvara as the cause, ground and inner self of the Universe. Īśvara is nowhere stated to be a fragment of another Absolute. According to this theory Brahman the Absolute is itself subjected to all the evils and imperfections, as the Universe is affirmed to be one part of that Absolute. The Absolute cannot be pure and perfect in one part of its being and imperfect in the other. So the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita vehemently refutes the conception of BhēdāBhēda as wholly illogical.

According to the exponents of this school of philosophy Brahman or Īśvara is the Divine Absolute Reality who is the material cause and instrumental cause of this Universe. Brahman alone is the Sat without a second. It is always a repository of a host of auspicious qualities. This Reality has its modes, the chit and the achit in the subtle stage during the causal state and is eternally associated with its modes both in the subtle and the gross states. Transformation or change of state does not imply

any change in its transcendental essence but only in respect of its attributes the chit and the achit. The achit changes from the subtle to the gross state and the chit who is immutable in his essence is affected by contraction or expansion of his attributive consciousness due to the impact of Karma. Brahman which is pure, real and the sole cause of the universe is ever perfect and shines forth in its absolute divine essence. The transcendence of Brahman is stressed from the beginning and it is affirmed that this kind of Sarvakāraṇatva is possible of Brahman. It is uniquely distinct from every other entity.³² Thus the school of Viśiṣṭādvaita has founded its own theory of cosmology strictly according to the scriptural teachings and has remarkably explained the fact of the universe, fully bringing out the real sense of Brahman who is the inner self of all beings both sentient and non-sentient.³³

This conclusion once for all puts an end to the several theories of the exponents of the Yōga, Vaiśeṣika and Nyāya schools that admit only the Nimittakāraṇatva of Īśvara and attribute the status of material cause to nature alone. Though they admit the reality of the universe, the individual selves and Brahman, certain conclusions of these schools are quite contradictory to the purport of the Vedas and so they are to be totally discarded. One such conclusion is about His being only the instrumental cause of the universe.

Brahman is Immune from any Change or Imperfection :

Accepting the status of the material cause to Brahman does not at any time result in its Vikāritva as doubted by some, for Brahman with its modes of the chit and achit in the subtle stage happens to be the causal state whereas Nirvikāratva śruti applies to the substantive substance,

viśeṣya, which is in the aspect of the inner self. Thus the scriptural announcements relating to the Nirvikāratva and Upādānatva refer to quite different objects and therefore are non-contradictory. The change is only in the adjectival part whereas the substantive part is changeless for ever.³⁴

This can be understood on the analogy of the changes of the human body. The individual self who is Avikāri is associated with the gross body which undergoes subsequent changes from childhood to boyhood, manhood and old age and other such stages. A change of state is a vikāra and this occurs to the non-sentient in the form of Mahattva, Ahamkāratva, Indriyatva, Ākāśatva, Vāyutva and others. The vikāra of the self is in the form of the contraction or expansion of his Dharmabhūtajñānam or attributive consciousness. These changes are all caused by the inherent nature of these entities and are termed as vikārās. But it is not so with Īśvara. The immutable value of Brahman is expounded in the Sūtra (3-2-20). Though the Supreme self really dwells within every object it is not tainted with any imperfection relating to those objects as the very essential nature of the Supreme self is essentially antagonistic to all imperfections. Rāmānuja gives the analogy of ākāśa here to illustrate that existence itself within several objects, does not involve one in evil as ākāśa is not tainted with the imperfections or defects of various objects within which it actually exists. Likewise the very essential nature of Brahman is pure both in its transcendent and immanent aspects.³⁵

‘पृथिव्यादिष्ववस्थितस्यापि परमात्मनो दोषप्रत्यनीकाकारतया
दोषहेत्वभावान्न दोषसम्बन्धः।’

श्री.भा. 3-2-20

Īśvara is eternally associated with the sentient and the non-sentient in all states by virtue of his inherent nature. Never does he abide without these adjectival modes. (Svarūpa) Chidachidviśiṣṭatva stands for all time though 'स्थूलचिदचिद्विशिष्टत्व' is only for a particular time. Vikāra is defined as a Svarūpajanya dharma and as this is impossible of Chidachidviśiṣṭatva which is eternal, Īśvara is above all vikāras. So there is absolutely no incompatibility in His being the material cause of the universe.

Brahman Known Only by Śāstra:

It is objected by the exponents of the Nyāya school that Brahman cannot be the material cause of the universe as It happens to be the intelligent cause. Common experience shows that one and the same thing can never become both the material and the spiritual cause. But this objection is untenable. This objection cannot be raised before admitting the existence of God. Then how can we prove the existence of God? The consensus of vedāntic conclusions is that Īśvara can be known only by śāstra or scripture and never by inference. This has been directly proved in the Sūtras also.³⁶ As we have to depend upon the scripture for the proof of God, we have to fully admit Him as ordained by the scriptures. The scriptures invariably establish God both as the material cause and the intelligent cause of the universe. This scriptural assertion can never be controverted by inference at any time. It is suggested at this stage that the vedic texts describing Brahman as the material cause have to be taken in the indicatory sense instead of the primary sense as in the case of many such statements like 'आदित्यो यूषः', 'यजमानः प्रस्तरः' and others that are opposed to other pramāṇas. The śruti cannot teach

some thing which is totally opposed to our day to day experience. So it is said that it is better to establish God's Nimittakāraṇatva first by inference and then explain away his Upādānakāraṇatva in a secondary sense by inference.

The above contention is incorrect for the mere fact that Brahman is to be established only by scriptural authority according to the Sūtrakāra. Brahman is not capable of being made out by any other means of proof. All attempts to establish Īśvara by inference prove failures. We observe that all effects such as pots and pitchers necessarily have an intelligent cause, on the analogy of which we can infer the existence of a super intelligent cause for the universe. Here it must be asked as follows: Is an intelligent cause similar to that of a pot and pitcher inferred or Is a doer or Kartha endowed with the powers of Jñānam, Ichha, Prayatna but bereft of some attributes found in the familiar spiritual cause inferred? In the first choice the intelligent cause of the pots and pitchers is subject to many limitations of knowledge and power and in the embodied state is subject to the stress and strain of Karma. Inferring a similar intelligent cause, for the universe results in a similar defective person and never can an omnipotent and omniscient cause free from the strains of Karma and body be established by inference. If, on the other hand, the other alternative namely Īśvara endowed with only the powers of cognition, conation and volition is desired, instead of one endowed with the innumerable attributes of body etc., it tantamounts to the abandonment of even cognition and volition on the same analogy and results in the inference of an Īśvara endowed with only Prayatna or effort.

It may be argued further that the potter is in need of a body as his cognition and volition regarding the pot are

janya or produced and not Nitya or eternal whereas the ज्ञानं, इच्छा and प्रयत्न of Īśvara being eternal, an Īśvara without a body could be inferred. But it is not so. Knowledge and desire are eternal and for these a body is not necessary. Similarly prayatna also is eternal and for this also not only a body is not needed but also Jñānechha are not necessary and as such Īśvara will have to be bereft of knowledge and desire.³⁷ It may be pointed out further that though prayatna is eternal it always is relative and necessarily involves cognition and volition for determining the object of conation. The object of knowledge is the object of desire and the same becomes the object of prayatna. Prayatna is always related to the object and is co-ordinate with knowledge and desire. But this argument is not correct as a particular kind of prayatna is admitted for respiration in the bodily organism during the state of deep sleep or Suṣupti while either knowledge or desire is not existing. Prayatna has the fact of relation to an object in the state of Suṣupti without being related to knowledge and desire and similarly knowledge and desire are not necessary for the prayatna of Īśvara. Thus many a defect in the argument that Brahman is known by inference is pointed out by Rāmānuja in his Śrī Bhāṣya.

It need not be doubted that establishing Īśvara by inference promotes theism whereas non-acceptance of the argumentation of the Naiyāyikas leads to atheism. Certain definite purposes are served in refuting the argumentation of the Naiyāyikas trying to establish God by logic and dialectics. Firstly knowledge of the reality as it exists is made possible in a realistic way. An object that is cognisable through the nose cannot be cognised in any other way and it must be said so. If an object of smell is known as an

object of the ear it is totally an illusion which must be once for all opposed and warded away. Secondly for a person who is firmly convinced that God is proved by inference alone, if at any time a doubt as to the validity of that inference occurs he will result in a disbeliever of God and goes an atheist. But it is not so in the case of the scriptures. शास्त्रैकवेद्यत्व never gives room for such doubts and scepticism. Thirdly it is an admitted fact that the scriptures are valid as they enlighten us about the unknown and this 'अज्ञातार्थज्ञापकत्व', becomes established only if it is proved that God is known by scriptures alone instead of its substantiating the existence of God already proved by inference. Otherwise the scriptures become Anuvādas and do not carry the maximum weight.

If this theory of establishing God by inference is not discarded then it results in many incompatible conclusions. Though the earth and the great ocean and others are produced effects, there is no proof to show that they were produced by one at only one particular time. The produced things are quite distinct from one another and so it cannot be said to have been produced at one and the same time by only one agent. As we perceive difference in time, consequently we have to infer against one particular time and one particular agent.³⁸ Moreover, as the individual souls are incapable of creating the wonderful world, it is to be inferred that there is an agent different from these individual souls on the strength of the world being a produced effect. Just because of this it is not right to infer that there is only one agent for creating the universe. Not only this. Even an inference of the type that only individual souls who possess wonderful powers due to their special merit form the cause of producing particular and distinct

created effects is appropriate instead of assuming an unseen agent different from the individual souls.

Again the simultaneous creation and destruction of all things are not seen and so cannot be proved truth. Creation and destruction are seen to take place one after another and therefore if only one intelligent being is assumed to be the agent for the production of all things then there will be no invariable association of the effects with such a single producing agent, the cause. Then the Pakṣa or subject of discussion namely the intelligent being will have to possess such attributes that are known to be possessed by any other. And the example given namely of the pot is also defective to illustrate the thing to be proved because such a single person is not known to exist.³⁹ Logical inference fails to establish an agent distinct from the individual souls for the creation and destruction of the universe. The following are some of the counter syllogistic statements.

1. The body, the world and others have the individual souls as their producing agents. Because they possess the character of produced effects just like a pot does possess.
2. God is not the producing agent. Because he has no purpose just as the released souls.
3. God is not the producing agent. Because he has no body just like the released souls.
4. Time under dispute can never have been devoid of created worlds. Because it possesses the character of being time, just like the present time.⁴⁰

Does the Lord perform work with a body? or without a body? Is His body eternal or non-eternal? Is he full of activity? or is He devoid of all activity?

It is difficult to answer either way to all these questions on the grounds of inference and therefore the process of logically inferring the Lord in accordance with what we see gets stultified for the same reason.⁴¹

So it is the conclusion of Vedāntic philosophy that, the highest person who is the Lord of all is proved only by Sāstras. And these Sāstras declare that he is distinct from all the things cognised by all the other pramāṇas.. He is an ocean of unsurpassingly great and noble qualities. He is omniscient and He is hostile to all that is evil.⁴²

So the, śāstra is a means of proof which is authoritative and infallible and this is the only source of knowing Brahman and according to this we understand that Brahman is both the material and the spiritual cause of the universe.

Brahman is the Sarvādhāra or Ground of All :

While describing the relationship between the universe and the Universal spirit Rāmānuja expounds according to the spirit of the scriptures that the world forms His body, being entirely supported and controlled by Him and used by Him to serve his own purposes.⁴³

Brahman is the ādhāra and the universe is the Ādhēya. The Universe of finite selves and matter abides in the Absolute and depends upon it for its very existence and functioning. These subserve the end of only Brahman in the ultimate analysis. Brahman directly supports all existents just as it is the ground of its determining attributes or Svarūpanirūpaka dharmas such as Satyam, Jñānam and Ānandam as well as the nirupitasvarūpa viśeṣanas, or the defining details. Just as the individual self

sustains the body and uses it for his own purposes, similarly the supreme sustains the individual self by virtue of His being its inner soul and controller and uses it for His own satisfaction. The Absolute is the ground of all and sustains all other objects directly. It sustains such of the attributes as are qualifying certain substances indirectly through those substances.⁴⁴ Everything else in this Universe is the attribute of the Supreme and is related to Him inseparably. The existence also of all things depends upon His will alone. Thus the universe of finite selves and matter is svarūpāsrita, being rooted in Brahman and also is Sankalpāsrita being completely controlled by It alone.

The concept of Ādhārathvam is well brought out by the definition of Brahman as found in the Taitirīya text as Satyam, Jñānam and Ānandam. Satyam signifies that Brahman is the Absolutely unconditioned Reality and distinguishes it from the Chit and the Achit. The term Jñānam connotes the eternally all pervasive character of His consciousness in the universal and the particular aspect. Brahman is Ananta or infinite and this distinguishes it from nature and the finite selves. It is free from all limitations of space, time and causality.⁴⁵ The concept of Brahman being the Ādhara of the chit and the achit is the main thesis of Viśiṣṭādvaita and this affirms three important truths.

1. The world of nature and selves is real.
2. These cannot exist separated from Brahman.
3. Every being sentient and non-sentient lives and moves in the Supreme Reality.⁴⁶

Brahman is the Sarva Niyanta or the Inner Controller of All:

It is the established view of the Viśiṣṭādvaitic school of Vedānta that Prakṛti with its evolutionary changes as well as the finite selves subjected to the moral law of Karma are realities and that they have Brahman as their ground and goal. The metaphysical idea of Brahman as Ādhara of all others leads to the next concept of Brahman being the Niyanta or the inner controller of all.

The Brihadāranyakōpaniṣad ⁴⁷ brings to light the truth that Brahman is the inner ruler of all subjects and objects of experience. Aruni Uddālaka questioned Yājñavalkya whether he knew that ruler who is the inner controller of all in the Universe.

‘तमन्तर्यामिणं य इमं च लोकं परं च लोकं सर्वाणि च भूतानि
योऽन्तरो यमयतीति ।’ बृ.उ. 3-7-1

Yājñavalkya then answered in the affirmative and after stating that Brahman is immanent in one and all as the inner controller, said

‘यः सर्वेषुभूतेषु तिष्ठन् सर्वेभ्यो भूतेभ्योऽन्तरो यं सर्वाणि भूतानि
न विदुः यस्य सर्वाणि भूतानि शरीरं यः सर्वाणि भूतान्यन्तरो
यमयति एष त आत्मा अन्तर्याम्यमृतः।’

He who is immanent in all beings as their eternal ruler and has all other beings sentient and non-sentient as His body and yet, whom all others do not know as their inner controller is Brahman. Brahman has thus the quality of sarvaniyantritva. The Subalōpaniṣad defines Brahman as the all-pervading Supreme self who is eternally pure and perfect. The Śvêtāsvatara declares that Brahman is capable

of knowing everything independent of the instruments of knowledge such as the eye or the ear.⁴⁸ The Sūtrakāra also clarifies that Nīyantrīva and Amaratva are the essential attributes of the Supreme self that differentiate Him from the finite selves.⁴⁹ This Sarvātman who is the ground of all is also the inner controller or Nīyantha. The Universal self is the Puruṣoṭhama who is the ruler of rulers. The whole Universe along with its planetary system moves for fear of this Supreme self.⁵⁰ This is the unique characteristic of the Supreme Being and this never belongs either to nature or to the finite centres of experience. The finite self is subject to the fruits of its Karma whereas the Lord is ever glorious.⁵¹

It is declared in the Sūtras⁵² that there is eternal difference between the three entities namely nature, finite self and the Universal self. Though these are different they do not exist differently. They have different values but yet are inseparable. Prakṛti is not the self, muchless the internal ruler. The order of nature is a reality but is adapted to the needs of the finite self. The finite self on the other hand though free and pure is in essence subject to its Karma and the never-ending Samsāra unless it attains spiritual realization. But the Supreme self is the eternal of eternals (Nityō Nityānām) and is their inner self and ruler. It is the Antaryāmin indwelling in the finite selves. This inner ruler is the same as the Absolute reality, the Sat.⁵³

The antaryāmin who is different and distinct from the orders of nature and finite selves is ever residing in the finite self as its inner controller. The Dahara Vidyā prescribes that Brahman as antaryāmin should be meditated upon.⁵⁴ The Supreme residing in the ether of

the heart is neither conditioned, transformed nor tainted by evil.⁵⁵ The Lord is described as residing in the heart of humanity without losing His infinity. Can two selves co-exist without contradiction in the same body? Why not? Though the finite self and Īśvara are real different entities they never contradict each other. They are not hypothetical entities to turn out unreal in the long run. The Jīva who is really subject to Karma in the form of Puṇya and Pāpa can progress spiritually only when he tunes his will to the will of God, his inner self. Similarly the Supreme being who is Aparichinna resides in the heart of the sentient beings to impart divinity and to direct them towards upward evolution.

The Gīta⁵⁶ ordains that the inner ruler or Paramātman is the subject of every moral judgment in the ultimate analysis. The Adhiṣṭāna or body sustained by the five prāṇas, the conative sense organs or Karaṇam, the finite self or the Kartha, the vital functions or Pṛthakcheṣṭa and finally the inner divinity or Daiva are declared to be the five factors that are found in every action. Īśvara or the inner Divinity is thus the ultimate subject of all actions.

Now comes the question of the moral freedom of the Jīva. If Īśvara is the ultimate subject of all actions, can the finite self be deemed to possess moral freedom? Though Īśvara is the final subject of all actions, the self has the freedom to march towards spiritual perfection or to lapse into malignity by way of choosing either the good or the evil. This choice is left to the responsibility of the Jīva and so he experiences good or evil in an equal measure according to his choice. Īśvara, the inner controller is a silent but not an indifferent witness of the Jīva⁵⁷. After

having equipped the Jīva with the necessary physical and psychological mechanism Īśvara stands as the inner controller and enlightens the Jīva upon his duties through the Sāstras. The finite self is permitted by Īśvara at this stage to use its freedom.. The Jīva is thus free to will either to obey or to transgress the commands of the Divine Ruler and herein is the moral possibility of the upward evolution of the self. At the next stage Īśvara permits him to exercise his freedom by means of Anumanthritva and then assigns to him the fruits thereof, either pleasure or pain according to his choice. The Sūtrakāra explains this in the Sūtra

‘कृतप्रयत्नापेक्षस्तु विहितप्रतिषिद्धावैयर्थ्यादिभ्यः।’

श्री.भा. 2-3-41

Rāmānuja comments on this Sūtra as follows : ⁵⁸

‘सर्वासु क्रियासु पुरुषेण कृतं प्रयत्नं उद्योगमपेक्ष्यान्तर्यामी परमात्मा तदनुमतिदानेन प्रवर्तयति । परमात्मानुमतिमन्तरेण अस्य प्रवृत्तिर्नोपपद्यते इत्यर्थः ।

Then it may be asked whether it is not an act of mercilessness to be indifferent at the first instance. But it is not an act of Nirdayarva for, the finite self is a doer or Kartha who can choose his way in a conflict of desires. ⁵⁹ The finite self is not fated to follow something irrespective of his free will. Then it would be mere determinism and there would be no possibility of any moral choice. The finite self is endowed with full freedom either to choose good or evil according to which he reaps the consequences apportioned to him by the inner Impartial Judge. The finite self is said to gain his Kartṛtva only from the Supreme, who is the all-self and inner controller.⁶⁰

The finite self gains his Kartṛtva in general from the Divine as he gets from Him his physical and psychological organism necessary for functioning and derives his Kartṛtva again in particular from Him alone as it is He who permits the self to exercise its freedom. करणकलेवर प्रदान and Anumatipradāna endow the self with Kartṛtva. Though the Supreme grants permission he is not tainted by the fruits of such deeds for they relate only to the doer who has engaged in them first. The finite self has the power of exercising his free will and the Supreme does not deprive him of it. Then it may be asked why this question of Anumantṛtva is raised here, if the finite self wills freely in accordance with its vāsanā only. The reply is this viz., this question of the God's granting permission is not made up by anyone but is ordained as such by the scriptures such as 'अन्तः प्रविष्टः शास्ता जनानां', 'एष एव साधुकर्मकारयति', 'अध्यक्षश्चानुमन्ता च' and others.

It cannot also be doubted that the rule of the indweller is limited by the fact of His being indifferent at the first instance for the text enjoining the inner rulership of the Divine means that much, so that the scriptures in the form of commands and prohibitions may not turn out futile. Moreover Īśvara's indifference at the first stage regarding the Ādya pravṛtti of the finite self does not, in any way hamper the illimitable freedom of Īśvara. On the other hand this glorifies Him. This is similar to the instance of a king, who, after granting all facilities to the chief minister grants him freedom of action also, himself remaining indifferent for the time being. Are not these two namely moral freedom and parādheenatva or dependence

incompatible? Never. Such incompatibilities are not seen as in the above instance of the chief minister.⁶¹

If it is said that the self has no Kartṛva at all, it will be the same as that of the Sāmkhyas that attribute doership to nature and as that of Advaitins that attribute doership to ignorance. If it is admitted that the self has independent doership then it results in the refutation of an All Supreme self, that is the inner controller of all, a Nirīśvara tenet. Doership is only Jñātṛva and this is derived from the Divine, say some. But this also is not correct. For then there cannot be any activity for either spiritual aspiration or for attaining it. So the self has all the three namely Jñānam, Chikeerṣa and Prayatnam.⁶²

The Śrutaprakāśika quotes the quintessence of all these findings in the following stanzas:

‘प्रयोजकोऽनुमन्ता च भवतीशस्तदा तदा ।

पूर्वप्रवृत्तेश्च फलं अनुमत्यादिकं भवेत् ।

दयादीनां गुणानां च सुलभं विषयान्तरम् ।

अमात्यस्य स्वतन्त्रत्वे राज्ञस्तन्नावहीयते ॥

एवमेव परस्यापि जीवस्वातन्त्र्यदायिनः ।

न स्वातन्त्र्यं पराधीनस्वरूपात्प्रच्युतं भवेत् ।

स्वातन्त्र्यदायिना पुंसां तत्प्रवृत्त्यनिवारणात् ।’ शु.प्र. 2-3-41

So it is the established conclusion of this school of Vedānta that Brahman in Its immanent aspect is the inner controller of all without being tainted by their imperfections.

Brahman is the Sarvaśeṣi :

It was pointed out before that the entire universe comprising of the chit and the achit has Brahman as the Being of their being and though these two entities namely the chit and the achit are different from the Supreme and are possible of only being analysed as such metaphysically, they could not be divided physically as they were inseparably related to Brahman. This fundamental principle of our inseparable relationship with Brahman is affirmed by the definition of Brahman as the Ādhara or ground and sustenance of all. The definition of Brahman as the Niyantha or ruler signifies that Brahman is absolutely perfect and that it exceeds the other two. The world of chit and achit depends upon Brahman but Brahman does not depend on these two.⁶³ It is on account of its will that the world functions. The world depends upon the will of Brahman for its functioning. The world is both Swarupāśrita and Samkalpāśrita. This concept of Brahman being the Niyanta or the ruler forms the second definition of Brahman. Now we come to the next idea of Brahman as the ŚEṢI of the entire universe. This Śeṣaśeṣi bhāva determines the nature of the Supreme reality and affirms that Brahman is the final goal of all our efforts. All sentient and non-sentient beings exist only for the fulfilment of God's purposes. They do not exist for their own sake. God's glory becomes manifested in using them for His own purposes. This is Śeṣitva of the Lord.

Śeṣaḥ parārthatvāt' defines that one which exists only for the satisfaction of another is a Śeṣa or a subservient. Rāmānuja defines a śeṣa as one whose very svarūpa or essence is to bring out the satisfaction of the Supreme.⁶⁴ The world of matter exists in Brahman, belongs to It, and

exists only for Its Satisfaction. Likewise the finite self. It depends on Brahman for its function and is used by Brahman for fulfilling Its own purposes. So both the orders of the chit and the achit are subservient to Him.

This concept of Śeṣa-śeṣibhava has great significance as this thoroughly revolutionises the attitude of the finite self. Though the world of matter and the finite self are alike subservient to Brahman the finite self alone is self-conscious and is endowed with reason and freedom of will. By these he can discriminate between the self and the non-self, discard the latter, free himself from the clutches of nature and attain the status of the pure self. One who has thus attained self-realization realizes also that the ParamaPuruṣa, the highest self, is the Sarvaśeṣin who alone is to be adored and worshipped by all one's acts. For such a self who has attained this knowledge of the Sarvaśeṣi every act will result in the service of the Supreme whom alone he realizes as his master or Swami.

Vedānta Deśika points out that the term Śeṣi is generally applicable to both sentient and non-sentients for whose purposes other things exist, whereas that the term 'Master' or Swami applies solely to the sentient. Likewise the term 'Śeṣa' applies to both the sentient and the non-sentient that exist for the sake of others but the term 'Dāsa' or servant relates only to the sentient.⁶⁵ Therefore he points out that the relationship of Śeṣa and the Śeṣi between the individual soul and the Supreme self must culminate in the special relationship of Swāmy and Dāsa, the master and the servant. The freedom of the individual self becomes glorified only when it is dedicated to the Supreme self, who is the Sarvaśeṣi and the inner ruler of all. The individual self must attune its will to the will of its master, the

Paramātman by destroying its Ahamkāra or egocentric nature. The True meaning of the individual self is realised only when it dedicates itself to the eternal service of the Paramātman the over-lord of all in self-donation.

‘आत्मदास्यं हरेः स्वाम्यं स्वभावं च सदा स्मर’

reminds Deśika when expounding this eternal truth of the Sarvaśeṣi. The general goal of usefulness to the Lord becomes for selves the goal of service as they happen to be his Dāsās. In consequence of being the Śeṣi and the Swamy, the Lord attains a unique glory; the enjoyment of service.

The significance of this relationship of Śeṣa and Śeṣi between the finite soul and the over-lord of the universe is two-fold.

1. The Śeṣa has to serve his master alone for the benefit of whom he exists.
2. It is the responsibility of the Śeṣin, the over-lord to protect what belongs to Him and therefore Īśvara alone is responsible for the protection of his servants.

Brahman is the Sarvaśarīrin:

The fundamental concept of Viśiṣṭādvaitic philosophy is the idea of Brahman as the Śarīrin or inner self of all other entities both sentient and non-sentient. This concept of Śarīra-Śarīribhāva is deduced from the impersonal and infallible scriptures which are the main sources of spiritual knowledge. These truths of revelation are verified by intuitive experience, and also justified rationally.

The scriptural texts, in certain parts, establish the plurality of entities⁶⁶ in the Universe, whereas in some

other parts, they ordain simple unity⁶⁷, discarding plurality. This apparent contradiction cannot be successfully reconciled either by the school of Monism or by the school of Dualism, that gives all prominence to either the Abhēda texts or the Bhēda texts, as the case may be. In either case, it becomes extremely difficult to interpret all scriptural passages satisfactorily. But the Viśiṣṭādvaitic philosopher knows Brahman as the Śarīra of all beings, and by this Sūtra, he binds all plurality into unity, without straining the scriptural texts.

The Sadvidyā affirms that the Universe is rooted in Brahman. The universe lives in Brahman and is established in it. The inner unity between Brahman and the Jīva is expounded by means of various similies.⁶⁸ The Antaryāmi Brāhmaṇa of the Brihadāranyaka Upaniṣad⁶⁹ reveals in unmistakable terms this truth of śarīra - śarīri relation. These texts are Ghatakaśrutis, that reconcile the extremes of pluralism and monism. Thus the truth of śarīra - śarīri bhāva is proved by spiritual intuition, embodied in the sacred texts, as pointed out above.⁷⁰

The school of Śankara negates the world to postulate Brahman. But Viśiṣṭādvaita affirms the reality of the world to affirm Brahman. The world of nature and the finite selves are real attributes to Brahman, whose oneness and absoluteness is confirmed by these. Brahman, the Transcendental Reality, is yet the immanent principle in all other entities, sentient and non-sentient. The entire cosmos, thus, depends upon Brahman, for its existence and happens to, be an inseparable attribute to that Divine Being. As the Supreme Being is the inner self of all other entities, all

terms, denoting various objects, denote Brahman Itself in the ultimate analysis, as It is the Inner self of all.⁷¹

The śarīra-śarīri bhāva emphasises the spiritual synthesis of the Universe, and establishes the organic unity of the Divine. The concept of Sarva śarīri does not in any way, suggest a biological organism, for this is a spiritual analogy, used to establish the inter-dependence of the Universe and Brahman. The Absolute co-exists with the finite centres of experience, as well as the world of nature, being their ground and goal.

Īśvara or Brahman is the real self of the Universe. Why should this all powerful cosmic principle ensoul itself in matter and the selves? Does He not get tainted with the imperfections of the body? To this we answer as follows:

The universe does not become the body of the Absolute due to any external agency like Karma, as in the case of the finite self. The world is inherently the body of Īśvara, and not a resultant of Karma or chance. But it is not so with the individual soul. The finite self is not inseparably related to matter as its soul. The body of the finite soul changes from birth to birth, and is contingent, and in the final stage its relation with matter is once for all severed. But the sentient and the non-sentient entities are not related like this to Brahman. They are inseparably related to Brahman, and they cannot, at any time, exist apart from it. Brahman is characterised by these two entities, that are with it, in both the stages, the causal, as well as the consequent. Moreover in the composite being of Brahman each substance retains its distinctive nature. The analogy of a piece of cloth woven with threads of different colours, where each thread retains its own colour,⁷² is given by Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja affirms⁷³ that

there is no confusion of different characteristic qualities of the three namely, matter, the finite self and the universal self.

‘अचिद्वस्तुनो जीवस्य च ब्रह्मणश्च परिणामित्वदुःखित्व
कल्याणगुणाकरत्वं स्वभावासङ्करः सर्वश्रुत्यविरोधश्च भवति’।

श्री.भा. 2-1-23

Commenting on (2-1-14)

‘भोक्त्रापत्तेरविभागश्चेत्स्याल्लोकवत्’

Rāmānuja states that a soul does not experience pleasure or pain, only because it is associated with a body. This experience of pleasure or pain is only on account of Karma. But the Supreme self is far removed from evil, though he has the entire universe as his body, as he has no trace of Karma whatsoever.

‘अपहतपाप्मनस्तु परमात्मनः स्थूलसूक्ष्मरूपकृत्स्नजग
च्छरीरत्वेऽपि कर्मसम्बन्धगन्धोनास्तीति न तरामपुरुषार्थ
गन्धप्रसङ्गः।’

श्री.भा. 2-1-14

The defects of the body do not touch the self at all.

‘एवं च सति परमात्मानं प्रति जीवस्य शरीरतयान्वयात् जीवगता
धर्माः परमात्मानं न स्पृशन्ति यथा शरीरगता बालत्वयुवत्व
स्थविरत्वादयो धर्मा जीवं न स्पृशन्ति।’

श्री.भा. 1-1-13

As pointed out before, the concept of śarīra, in this system of philosophy, is all comprehensive and holds good for any kind of śarīra. The śarīra or body is that which is supported, sustained, controlled from within, and used for the satisfaction of that Śarīrin only.⁷⁴ This concept is derived

from the sacred scriptures, and not from mere perception. Unlike the definition of the śarīra as 'चेष्टेन्द्रियाश्रयत्व', the definition of śarīra, in this school, denotes any substance that is entirely subordinate to a soul. In Nyāya Siddhānjana of Sri Vedānta Deśika, the concept of śarīra, according to Nayyāyikas, is fully explained, examined and criticised and the correct significance of this spiritual relationship is appropriately brought out.⁷⁵

Brahman is the Śarīrin or inner self of all other entities, the chit and the achit, and is the source and sustenance of the Universe. He is the Antaryāmin, who has entered into the finite, as its self. So each term that connotes the śarīra of Brahman connotes Brahman the Śarīrin. The finite self is subject to Imperfections of embodiment, due to his own Karma. Matter or Prakṛti is subject to Vikāra, but the Paramātmān is ever-pure and perfect. He is never stained with any imperfection of either matter or the finite self, even as the individual self who is not affected by the changes of his body. This principle of body-soul relationship deduced from the sacred texts, is the only convincing mode of reconciling the apparently contradictory texts. Rāmānuja concludes in his Vedārthasangraha, that this view reconciles all extremes of Vedāntic doctrines like those of ABhēda, Bhēda and Bhēda-Bhēda.

In this way of interpretation all kinds of texts positing difference, unity, and unity in difference become explained.

‘सर्वशरीरतया सर्वप्रकारं ब्रह्मैव अवस्थितमिति अभेदः समर्थितः ।

एकमेव ब्रह्म नानाभूतचिदचिद्वस्तु प्रकारं नानात्वेनावस्थितमिति

भेदाभेदौ । अचिद्वस्तुनश्च चिद्वस्तुनश्च ईश्वरस्य च
स्वरूपस्वभाववैलक्षण्यात् असङ्कराच्च भेदः समर्थितः । वे.सं.p- 90

This view satisfies all texts of the different Pramāṇas as well as intuitive experience. The śāṅkara Mīmāṃsa is in fact an enquiry into 'The Inner Soul', The Paramātmān.

स एव निरूपाधिकशारीर आत्मा । अत एवेदं परं ब्रह्माधिकृत्य
प्रवृत्तं शास्त्रं शारीरकमित्यभियुक्तैरभिधीयते' । श्री.भा. 1-1-13

Now we may sum up the main points relating to this body-soul relationship as follows:

1. In the composite being of Brahman, each substance namely the Chit, the Achit and the Īśvara retains its distinctive nature.
2. The imperfections of the body do not affect the self which ensouls it.
3. The Supreme self is the Lord of Karma and so It does not experience pleasure or pain, originating from the body.
4. Not only is possessing bodies no defect for God, but these bodies add to his Lordship.

Brahman is the Redeemer of All:

Īśvara is described as the 'Karma phala pradāta', or the dispenser of justice quite according to the moral worthiness of the doer. In addition to this He is also a redeemer or a Rakṣaka.

We have omitted to do what was commanded of us, and have committed what was prohibited of us, and thus we have violated the Divine command.

‘विहितस्यानुष्ठानान्निन्दितस्य निषेवणात् ।

अनिग्रहाच्चेन्द्रियाणां नरः पतनमुच्छति ॥

God punishes us who have thus transgressed the Divine Law, solely with the aim of redemption. This punishment is meted out to us only to redeem us from sin, and to dissuade us from evil ways leading to degradation. So the punishment inflicted by the Lord leads to the good of humanity, in the ultimate stage, and is just an act of mercy.⁷⁶

The Omnipotent Īśvara, over-powered by mercy, yearns for the union with the individual self, his Śeṣa, and so descends upon earth from His highest abode, to Brahmanize him. The Rakṣaka is very eager to recover the lost self, and so seeks the individual self, and tries to convince him to win him over to his side. Omnipotence on the part of God, as well as Sāparādhātva or sin in the form of violation of Divine command, on the part of the finite self, happen to be the cause of bondage in Samsāra. But the primary cause of redemption from Samsāra happens to be the Lord's natural compassion.⁷⁷

God's compassion or Dayā, is eternal and infinite, and is solely responsible for the redemption of all sinners. Of the three principal qualities of God viz., Jñāna, śakti and Dayā (knowledge, power and compassion), the first two are useful both for punishment and rewards. But the third, namely Mercy distinctly plays its part only for redemption.⁷⁸ This Compassion is described as an inclination to do good to others.⁷⁹

The Lord showers his compassion on us in innumerable ways. He is a supporter and a spiritual guide to one, who is struggling hard to get rid of the bonds of

Samsāra, for attaining Divine communion. For one, who is utterly destitute of any means other than Him, He stands in the place of all other spiritual means, and releases him from samsāra. He neglects nobody, but waits for some occasion or other, to rush to everyone's help, and tries hard to redeem each and every one from the shackles of samsāra. It is only because of Divine mercy that we repent for our past sins, and rush to expiate them suitably. God becomes gracious towards us on account of some good act some how performed by us, and being thus pleased, He ignores our countless sins of the past and grants us eternal bliss, freeing us from the wheel of samsāra. It is verily the Lord's compassion, which is the principal cause for even doing this.⁸⁰

The Lord uses all His ingenuity and cleverness in seeking out and claiming us to his side, and wherever we may run away from Him, we cannot escape from Him who resides within ourselves. His mercy is as infinite and eternal as Himself, and He never fails to pick us up from these dangerous waters where we are drowning, shipwrecked, desperate and forlorn.

The act of Pralaya, or the devouring of the Universe by that awe-inspiring Almighty, is also an act of mercy, as God checks the wrong doers from their career of sin and crime, and thus saves them from further entanglement. Similarly the act of creation is also a redemptive process, for the Achit-like souls are then provided with the necessary physical and mental organism that enables them to lead a new moral life and to make the best use of another opportunity for evolving their upward progress.⁸¹

Thus we find that God has two kinds of relationships towards man's activities:

1. He is the karmādhyakṣa who is an impartial judge. He gives freedom of choice to the individual souls to act and apportions to them the fruits of their respective actions, good or bad. .
2. He is an ocean of infinite mercy. He manifests Himself in the Universe to redeem men from the shackles of saṃsāra. He delights in saving His Śeṣas from misery. God's action in saving men is motivated not by any obligation to do so but by His Supreme compassion.

Rāmānuja has reconciled these two kinds of relationships of God to man in his Bhāṣya under Sūtra 11-2-3.

The Five Forms of the Supreme :

The All-powerful God, the Parabrahman assumes five forms out of His everflowing compassion, for the sake of redeeming humanity. They are: (1) Para, (2) Vyūha, (3) Vibhava, (4) Antaryāmin and (5) Archā.

Para is the self-realized Absolute of Paramapada and all the six divine qualities of Knowledge, Strength, Lordship, Valour, Energy and Splendour are to be thought of in this Supreme form.

The Vyūha form is the next and this is sometimes said to be three and sometimes four. As the qualities to be meditated upon are the same both in the pararūpa and ParaVāsudēva the first form of the Vyūha, this kind of triple classification has ensued.

The four Vyūhas with their respective qualities and activities are noted hereunder:

Paravāsudeva	All the six qualities are pre- dominant.	Enjoyed by the liberated
Sankarṣaṇa	Balam and Jñānam are pre-dominant	Promulgates the Śastras and causes pralaya.
Pradyumna	Aiśvarya and Virya are pre-dominant	Creates the Universe & makes Dharma prevail.
Aniruddha	Śakthi and Thejas are pre-dominant	Protects the world and teaches the truth

The Lord divides Himself out of compassion into these four forms to make meditation on Him possible for different kinds of people.⁸² The Lord will at no time be without the six qualities, though in the above Vyūhas certain qualities are more pre-dominant than the others.⁸³

Vibhava :

The several incarnations of the Lord on this empirical Universe are concrete expressions of Divine mercy. The mystery of the Lord's incarnations is well expounded in the fourth chapter of the Gīta.⁸⁴ The above context of the Gīta expounds the secret of Divine incarnation and establishes that Avatāra is the living expressions of the redemptive grace of the ever merciful Bhagavān. The following factors are known from the above context about Divine incarnations:

1. The incarnation is an actual truth.
2. The incarnation of the Divine is the embodiment of Divine nature in full measure.
3. The body of the incarnate is of the Śuddha or pure Sarva and never of Trigūṇa.

4. The cause of an incarnation is the will of the Divine.
5. The time of an incarnation is a time of moral crisis, when Dharma has to be safeguarded.
6. The purpose of an incarnation is to save the virtuous, to punish the wicked and to redeem the sinners from sin.⁸⁵

God descends upon earth and stays here for certain periods along with His devotees, trying all the time to raise them to Divinity. These are historic incarnations, and are meant for the maintenance of law and order in the world and for the propagation of the Vedas, as well as for giving an assurance of salvation to one and all. God is omnipresent as pointed out in the texts like-

‘अन्तर्बहिश्च तत्सर्वं व्याप्य नारायणः स्थितः’
 ‘इशावास्यमिदं सर्वं’

and so it should not be misunderstood that a vacancy is caused in Vaikunta or else where, when there is an incarnation. This truth of incarnation is a spiritual one and so cannot be interpreted in terms of space and time.⁸⁶

Lord Krishna assures us in the Gīta that He would come upon the earth to put an end to all disruptive activities, and to promote the cause of Dharma. His supernatural descent is fulfilled in granting communion to the ardent devotees that yearn for His presence.

Antaryāmi:

God dwells in the hearts of all, as their inner self and controller and this Divine immanence is an act of infinite compassion. The redeemer is not to be reached at some remote and distant place, but He is nearer to us than we are to our selves. He is readily present in everybody to be meditated upon, specially by those who are yōgins.

Archā:

The Absolute Parabrahman who alone assumes the form of the Vyūha and the Vibhava assumes also the form of images and this is the Archā incarnation. The Vibhavas like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa stay on the earth only for certain times, at particular epochs, and so cannot furnish solace for humanity, at some later time. The Archās on the other hand are permanent incarnations, unlike the Vibhavas, meant for the sake of devotees of all times. The Archā is the living presence of God. 'Archā worshipped in temples is a reservoir of the redemptive mercy of Īśvara who enters into a formless form of His own without being affected by the changes of Prakṛti and Puruṣa.'⁸⁷

The Archā has certain decided advantages over other forms to the devotees. They are:

1. The Archā has the rare possibility of attracting even the world-minded people towards Himself, by His infinite beauty and splendour.
2. The devotee can drink with his eyes the Divine beauty of the Lord to his heart's content, and meditate upon Him steadily.
3. The Archā is the concretion of Divine Grace and is the one refuge for the entire universe that worships Him, as He is perpetually accessible to one and all.
4. Worshipping the Archā is a source of immeasurable delight and solace to the devotees.

This worship is very easy to perform as pointed out in the Gīta. The devotee realizes the infinite perfection of the Lord in the Archā form. He forgets this miserable

world and enjoys divine communion even with his mortal frame. The life of the devotee on this earth is, in no way inferior to that in the other world, as it is moulded well and given the proper culture. Such a devoted life itself happens to be the end and aim of all sādhanas, as such staunch devotion is enough for early liberation. Deśika gives vent to these feelings in the following stanza:

‘त्वम् चेत्प्रसीदसि तवास्मि समीपतश्चेत्
त्वय्यस्ति भक्तिरनघा करिशैलनाथ ।

संसृज्यते यदि च दासजनस्त्वदीयः

संसार एष भगवन्नपवर्ग एव ॥

व.पं. 43

'If you are pleased with me, if I am always near to you, and if, O Lord of the elephant hill, I have pure devotion towards you, and if your devoted servants are to be contacted by me, this world would really be Mukti'.

The devotee yearns to see the ever-auspicious and bewitching beauty of the Archā incarnation and desires for nothing else.

‘निरन्तरं निर्विशतस्त्वदीयमस्पष्टचिन्तापदमाभिरूप्यम् ।

सत्यं शपे वारणशैलनाथ वैकुण्ठवासेऽपि न मेऽभिलाषः । व.पं. 49

All the above five forms of the Absolute are equally real and auspicious. There is neither contraction nor abridgement of Jñāna and other attributes in anyone of these Divine manifestations. The Divine form is called ‘शुभाश्रय’ as it is a home of Divine perfections, and as it is, also at the same time, accessible to all devotees.

Saḍguṇas or the Six Principal Qualities of Parabrahman:

The Parabrahman is a repository of innumerable

perfections, of which the six essential qualities are suggestive of his Paratva or Supreme Nature. These are 'ज्ञानम्, बलम्, ऐश्वर्यं, वीर्यं, शक्ति and तेजस्'. Likewise the qualities of Souśēlya, Vātsalya and others, characteristic of his Soulabhya, are also in Him, to make Him a redeemer, accessible to one and all. The motive of Dayā or merey dominates the infinite perfections of the Lord, and Deśika points out that they would lose their value without Dayā.

‘दोषा भवेयुरेते यदि नाम दये त्वया विना भूताः।’ दया.15

He is first and foremost, the God of compassion His mercy overflows over one and all, without any distinction. God is both a judge and a deliverer. As a judge, He may save only the righteous, but as a redeemer He goes in search of everyone, to save him from sin. He is eager to deliver us from sin and sorrow, and so thinks out new ways and means of approaching us. His universal mercy is characteristic of Him.⁸⁸ He is praised as the friend of all beings, the all-bountiful, rich in mercy, and easily approachable, though he is the mightiest of the mightiest. The qualities of mercy, generosity, softness of love, tenderness and affection, inner sweetness and the desire to help all, transform the mighty master into a universal redeemer. Deśika has expounded the tenderness of his forgiveness, in his Dayāśathakam marvellously in a hundred stanzas. Sri Rāmānuja in his Gīta Bhāṣyam and Gadyam portrays the Lord, the impartial judge of all, as a repository of infinite loving kindness, and as one who readily forgives our transgressions.

The auspicious qualities of the Lord are of two types. They are Svarūpagata guṇas-qualities of His essential nature and Vigraha guṇas-the qualities of the Divine form.

The former are again of two categories namely, the qualities that subdue the enemies of the devotees and the qualities that captivate the devotees. Śourya, Dhairya and Parākrama are of the first type, whereas, Vātsalya, Souśēlya and Sowlabhya are of the latter. Similarly the qualities of Soundarya, Youvana, Lāvanya and others are of the auspicious Divine form. All these various qualities can be included under the six main ones, mentioned above.

‘तवानन्तगुणस्यापि षडेव प्रथमे गुणाः ।

यैस्त्वयैव जगत्कुक्षावन्येऽप्यन्तर्निवेशिताः॥’

We may proceed to know in brief, something about these six main qualities of the Lord, along with His other beneficent perfections.

Jñānam:

This is said to be the fundamental quality of God. It is Ajaḍa or Svayamprakāśa as it illumines itself without the aid of any other external object. This is also known as 'Svātmasambōdhi', that is, it does not shine for the sake of itself but for the sake of its substratum, the self. This is eternal as it is inseparably connected with the Self. It is not a contingent factor or an āgantuka dharma. It is free from any kind of contraction at any time, and so is capable of grasping all objects at all times. The term 'Nityam' and 'Sarvāvagāhanam' signify that this-quality of Jñāna relating to the Universal self cognizes directly all objects at all times, without any temporal or spatial limitations unlike that of the bound self. Sri Nātha Muni describes this as ‘यो वेत्ति युगपत्सर्वं प्रत्यक्षेण सदा स्वतः’ and affirms that omniscience is the essential nature of Īśvara.⁸⁹

Balam:

Balam or valour is that quality by which the Lord supports everything both sentient and non-sentient in the Universe, even without the slightest effort or fatigue. This is defined as 'श्रमप्रसङ्गरहितं सर्वधारणसामर्थ्यम्' (गद्यभाष्यम्)। The scriptural statements like 'एषसेतुर्विधारण एष सर्वेश्वरः' (बृ.उ. 6-4-22), 'यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः' (भ.गी. 15-7), 'परमात्मा च सर्वेषामाधारः' (वि.पु. 6-4-40) and a host of others describe this attribute of the Almighty.⁹⁰

Aiśvāryam:

Aiśvāryam or Lordship signifies the quality of being the creator of the world by means of His all powerful freedom. Deśika defines this quality as

'अव्याहतेच्छं सर्वनियन्तृत्वम्' (गद्यभाष्यम्)

as signified in the concept of Sarveśvareśvara. God is the controller of all things other than Himself. The freedom of the Lord is unchecked and spontaneous. He alone is the intelligent cause of the Universe and has in His very nature 'सर्वपदार्थनियमनसामर्थ्यम्' and this auspicious quality of the Almighty is signified as over - Lordship.

Vīryam:

Vīryam or energy is also a prominent characteristic of the Lord. Deśika defines this as,

'विकारविरहो वीर्यं प्रकृतित्वेऽपि मे सदा'

(Gadyabhāṣyam) and explains it as 'सर्वोपादानत्वे सर्वधारणे सर्वनियमनेऽपि विकाररहितत्वम्' God is ever free from the taints

of change or vikāra though he happens to be the material cause of the Universe. So He is praised as 'अविकाराय शुद्धाय', and as one who is possessing Achyutatvam. In the world of our ordinary experiences we see that the material causes of different objects, like mud or gold, or any other substance undergo changes, as change itself is the prevailing law of matter. But the Lord is ever free from the imperfections of matter and of the finite selves, though these are inseparably related to Him as His body. He is eternally pure, Transcendent and changeless, in both the Primordial, and the consequent states of the Universe. He is the ground, the first and the intelligent cause, the inner controller and inner self of one and all, and yet is far from any imperfection, and this aspect of the Divine Transcendence is described as Vīrya or Energy.⁹¹

Śakti:

Śakti or strength is another super-attribute of the Lord, by means of which He happens to be the material cause of the Universe Deśika defines this as follows:

‘स्वेतरसर्वनिर्वाहिका’ ‘जगत्प्रकृतिभावो मे यस्सा शक्तिरितीर्यते’
इत्यादिषूक्ता सर्वोपादानत्वात्मिका । यद्वा यदन्यैरशक्यत्वा
दघटितमिव भाति तद्धटनसामर्थ्यरूपा ।’

ग.भा.

The Omnipotent Absolute is the material cause of the Universe. God is the first cause of the world, as He alone, characterised by the sentient and the non-sentient in the subtle form at the Pralaya stage, becomes manifold, and becomes characterised by them in the gross form. That which appears improbable and impossible for others is possible for Him, and this is described as Strength or Śakti.

Tejas

Tejas or splendour is defined by Deśika as 'अस्वाधीनसहकार्यनपेक्षत्वम्' and 'तेजस्त्वन्यानपेक्षता' (ग.भा.) This signifies that Īśvara does not depend upon any external factor for creation, destruction or protection of the Universe. The scheme of the universe is carried on by Him, solely by Himself; Scriptural texts like 'सन्मूलाः सोम्येमाः प्रजाः सदायतनाः सत्प्रतिष्ठाः' as well as 'सदेव सोम्येदमग्रआसीत् एकमेवाद्वितीयम्'. affirm that the Absolute Brahman is also the material cause of the world, and deny that there is still another operative cause, or any other cause different from that material cause.⁹² He is self-sufficient and capable of carrying out His will without the need of any other external factor or सहकारिकारणम्. So this quality of not depending upon any external agency other than Himself, and of combining in Himself all potentialities is called Tejas. This is even described as 'पराभिभवन सामर्थ्यं तेजः' as signified in the scriptures like

'न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकम्'

मु.उ. 2-2-10

He is so splendrous that all shining bodies in the Universe derive their lustre from Him alone, and no illuminory can illumine Him at any time.

Of the above six super attributes of God, the first namely knowledge or Jñānam is the most essential one, which contains in itself the other qualities. The Upaniṣads define Brahman, the Absolute Īśvara as

'सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म'

तै.उ

and affirm that Jñānam includes in itself a host of other

perfections. An expansion of the above six qualities yields all other auspicious attributes of the Lord, which are mostly beneficent to all of us, as they work out our redemption. It is in this sense that Valmiki describes the six essential qualities of Sri Rāma as

‘आनृशंस्यमनुक्रोशः श्रुतं शीलं दमः शमः ।

राघवं शोभयन्त्येते षड्गुणाः पुरुषर्षभम् ॥

instead of the six qualities enumerated above. These six qualities mentioned in Rāmāyaṇa are the manifestations of the one great quality, namely Mercy. Sri Rāmānuja makes a mention of these manifestations of the tenderness of His mercy in his Śaraṇāgati Gadyam as follows:

सौशील्य वात्सल्य मार्दवार्जवसौहार्दसाम्यकारुण्यमाधुर्यं
गाम्भीर्यौदार्य चातुर्यस्थैर्यधैर्यं शौर्यपराक्रमसत्यकाम सत्यसङ्कल्प
कृतित्व कृतज्ञताद्यसंख्येयकल्याणगुणगणीघमहार्णव’

The infinitely great Lord is characterised by Souśeelya as he has intimacy with the smallest, the finite self, as in the example of the friendship between Rāma and Guha. His Vātsalya or tenderness and affection overpowers his Supreme nature, and makes him forget the faults of the sinner that suppliantly approaches Him.⁹³ He has Mārdava or softness of love, which cannot bear separation from his Āṣrita, on account of which he unites with him as his inner self. The quality of being mild and reasonable, even with those who deserve punishment on account of their transgressions, is also described as softness.⁹⁴

He has Ārjava or the quality of being fully frank with his devotees, and so He never goes insincere with them.⁹⁵

The quality of Souhārda, or the heartfelt desire to help all beings and wishing their good, characterises the Lord, as he is the only one person who is designated as Suhr̥dam Sarvabhūtānām.⁹⁶ The quality of Sāmyam or being equal to all is characteristic of the Lord, owing to which he does not discriminate his devotees as high or low on counts of caste, quality or character, and this is expressed forcibly in the statement 'समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु'. The All-powerful God has in full measure the quality of Kāruṇya or sympathetic love to seek and save, with no motive of selfishness, the finite self from Sorrow and sin;⁹⁷ God has always that Mādhuryam or inner sweetness by means of which he captivates the hearts of even his arch enemies like Śiśupalā' and others. His bewitching beauty and love capture the hearts of the devotees, and impart them bliss from that very moment.⁹⁸ Gāmbhīrya is an attribute which is characteristic of the Lord, as it is impossible to measure quantitatively Divine mercy.⁹⁹ He is also an All-bountiful Lord or Udāra who grants his devotees, without expecting anything from them in return, whatever is prayed of Him, setting at naught the infinitesimal smallness of the recipients and the Supreme greatness of His gifts.¹⁰⁰ Even after having endowed them with bountiful gifts He is not satisfied with what he has given them, as he considers them very little. So He calls his devotees themselves as Udāras.

Chāturyam or skill in saving the postulant inspite of others' obstructions is noteworthy of the Lord. The Lord seeks the lost self and works in multitudinous ways to gain him back, and to unite with him. He reveals Himself to others in the form of the Śubhāśraya, and infuses in them devotion towards Himself as well as renunciation towards the world.

Sthairyam is the quality of remaining firm in his will to save the sinners, inspite of their sinfulness being pointed out by others.¹⁰¹ Nobody can change his determination of being the saviour and redeemer of the afflicted, that surrender unto Him. The following assurances of the Lord,

‘न मे मोघं वचो भवेत्’

‘Never shall my word fail’,

‘मित्रभावेन संप्राप्तं न त्यजेयं कथञ्चन’

"I can never abandon one who approaches me with a friendly gesture," fully substantiate this.

The quality of Dhairya, Śourya and Parākṛāma also are helpful in fighting and destroying the obstructions of the devotees. The twelve noble qualities of Souseeelya and others including Sthairya are useful in redeeming the afflicted from sin. God is unrivalled in working out His grace, and no obstruction of any kind can ever overcome Him. He is omnipotent, and so He ruthlessly puts down all disruptive activities that are meant to check and arrest His ruling motive of mercy.

He is Satyakāma and Satyasankalpa. These two qualities signify that the Lord is capable of granting our wishes.¹⁰² Śrī Deśika defines these as follows:

‘स्वेन स्वाश्रितैश्च भोग्या विभूतयः ते च सत्याः नित्याः इत्यर्थः।’

ग.भा.

He is verily granting eternal and supreme good to his devotees, and his will is infallible in carrying on the scheme of the world and granting beatitude to those who surrender unto Him.¹⁰³

The two qualities of Kṛtitva and Kṛtajñatā are mentioned in the end, and these two are more useful than the group of qualities described before.¹⁰⁴ God is the greatest benefactor of humanity and He strives His best to fulfil the duties of his devotees. He works only for the good of others, as he has nothing to achieve for himself. He is an अवाप्तसमस्तकाम and yet he functions only for the sake of the propagation of Dharma.¹⁰⁵ He has taken upon himself the duties of his devotees and toils for them.¹⁰⁶ He is called Kṛtajña in the sense, that he becomes aware of only what has been done but not of what one is going to do in future. Though He is omniscient His tenderness and affection make him remember only the good acts and never the sins of the devotees, as well as the benefits he has endowed upon them.¹⁰⁷

A question may be raised here. 'Though it is a fact that the Lord is associated with all these auspicious qualities and auspicious forms, it cannot be, that he is always endowed with these six divine qualities. During the Vibhava incarnations the contrary is proved and in the Vyūhas like Samkarṣaṇa and others only a couple of them play their part'. This objection is answered as follows :-

The Lord is at no time, not associated with these six principal qualities. The Vibhava incarnations are discussed above and it is on account of His compassion towards the virtuous that the Lord descends upon the earth by His own will and takes such forms, as He deems fit, with all His noble qualities. He does not exhibit them to all. Even in the Vyūha incarnations of Samkarṣaṇa and others the Lord is never bereft of the six main qualities. Two qualities become patent, and the other four remain latent, during

those times, only for the benefit of the devotees to meditate upon him.

निगूहनं चतुष्काणां द्वन्द्वानां च प्रकाशनम् ।

षड्गुणस्त तथाभूतसमाधिस्थोपयोगतः ॥'

स.सि - 167

Brahman is the Siddhōpāya or the Ever Existent Means of Salvation.

The Absolute of the Upanishads, the Parabrahman, who is the All-self and ultimate goal of Humanity, is also the Siddhōpāya¹⁰⁸ or the ever-existent means of salvation.¹⁰⁹ The omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent God is, at the same time, a universal redeemer. The first letter of the Alphabet that signifies the Lord in the Praṇava stands for His redemptive grace and natural Rakṣakatva.¹¹⁰ The verbal meaning of this varṇa is suggestive of His being the saviour of Humanity. God is a Universal redeemer, an ever existing means of salvation, and the natural flow of his grace is checked at certain times by our Karma in the form of transgressions of the Divine Law. God is all independent, and His will to save is supreme. Yet He waits for an occasion to rush to the rescue of the finite self, for He does not want to carry out His will autocratically, irrespective of the desire on the part of the aspirant. He desires to carry out the scheme of the world,¹¹¹ and so awaits from the finite selves, for a desire to be saved.¹¹² He has made it a point to stick to certain principles formulated by Himself in redeeming the bound selves from sin and sorrow, though He is free to act according to His will.

The Rakṣakatva of the Lord is primarily responsible for the redemption of Humanity, and this is ever existent. So the Lord is virtually the primary means of our attaining

Godhead. He is therefore designated as the Siddhōpāya or the ever existent means. God is Himself our endeavour as well as our goal.¹¹³ He is our goal as we have to attain Him for putting an end to all the ills of Samsāra. Divine communion alone is our end, and for this, -the primary means that we have to choose happens to be Himself.¹¹⁴ Other means of spiritual perfection, like devotion or self surrender, are only means or ways of clearing away the obstacles that withhold this spontaneous flow of Divine grace.

ब्राणे स्वामित्वमौचित्यं न्यासाद्याः सहकारिणः ।

प्रधानहेतुस्स्वातन्त्र्यविशिष्टा करुणा विभोः ॥

र.त्र.सा. p-194

It is essential, therefore, to know that the Lord, the All-self, is Himself the means whom we have to choose for attaining Him. This essential nature of God-head is to be realized by all aspirants.

Certain doubts regarding the essential nature of Godhead are raised in this connection:

Some people say that the Lord, who is omnipotent, saves us of his own accord, whenever he chooses, by showering His grace upon us, and that there is no need therefore for any endeavour on our part. He chooses one and ignores another on account of His swātantrya alone, and not due to any action or work on the part of man.

This doubt is unfounded. Though God is omnipotent He makes man observe some gesture or pretext, and saves him in consideration of that, so that He might be free from the faults of cruelty and partiality.¹¹⁵ Then it may be asked why God does not make a person adopt such a

gesture before, as it is only through His grace that even such an occasion is possible. The answer for this is as follows:-

God, the impartial dispenser of justice bestows on each finite self the respective consequences produced by each one's beginningless Karma and so an occasion did not arise before. We have to infer the cause from the result, and so we may deduce by Arthāpatti that the fruit of one's Karma had not ripened before one observed some pretext or other, to deserve the protection from God.¹¹⁶

If this is not admitted, it becomes difficult to answer why a person acquires an eagerness for Mokṣha only at a certain time and not before. The explanation that this is due to the varied nature of Karma is common to those who believe in God and to those who do not. But God's independence and omnipotence are responsible here for saving us when we choose Him. It becomes therefore established that God looks forward for an occasion observed on the part of the Jīva. The primary cause for making the Jīva redeemed from Samsāra, and for bestowing upon him eternal joy of divine communion, is God's natural compassion. The subsidiary cause is a gesture in the form of devotion or self surrender. This favourable gesture removes the displeasure of God, which was hitherto an obstacle for divine experience.¹¹⁷

So the aspirant should bear in mind that God is free from either cruelty or partiality, and that it is his duty to live a life of devotion with unshakable faith in His saving grace.

Then what is the role of the Siddhōpāya, as well as of the Sādhyōpāya?

Īśvara is the Siddhōpāya and He is of primary importance, Everything in this world has its being only in accordance with the will of the Lord.¹¹⁸ We have transgressed the laws of the Divine and have incurred His displeasure. His Nigrahēchhā has bound us down to Samsāra. To become worthy of His mercy we must seek refuge with Him, realizing fully our essential nature of being subservient to Him. Herein lies the need for the Sādhypāya.

Though God is eternally the Sarvaśeṣin He does not protect one who is subjected to Karma, without his observance of some kind of Sādhypāya like Bhakti or Prapatti. This is the essence of the Śāstras, and if we discard the Śāstras, we cannot arrive at even the spiritual relationship of the Śeṣa and the Śeṣi, as Īśvara Himself will not be established. If Īśvara is taken to protect everyone irrespective of the endeavour on the part of the Jīva, then it results in 'Sarva Mokṣa Prasanga' or the liberation of all souls from the bondage of Samsāra. If it is argued that the Lord saves some and punishes others according to His own will and omnipotence, then God will have to be partial to some and cruel to others. So the Sādhypāya is inevitable, for winning the Grace of God, just like the act of sucking the mother's milk on the part of the child. The Jīva has to observe some Sādhypāya but this does not minimise the importance of Īśvara" the Siddhōpāya.¹¹⁹

Brahman is Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, the Puruṣothama:

Rāmānuja holds that the specific name of the Supreme Being is Śrīman Nārāyaṇa. The scriptures describe the Supreme Being, both in general terms and particular terms.

The term 'Sat' is a very general term used for God, and this is specified elsewhere as 'Brahman' and 'Ātman'. Ātman applies to both the universal and the finite. To eliminate the finite, the scripture describes the Supreme as Paramātman, and this Supreme self, in turn, is identified with Śrīman Nārāyaṇa. The Taittiriya text affirms that Śrīman Nārāyaṇa is, thus, the specific name of the Absolute or the Supreme Principle. The import of the Vedas as regards the specific name of the Lord is thus to be ascertained following the principle of 'Chāḡa paṣu Nyāya'. Rāmānuja declares in his works, on the authority of the scriptures, that the Absolute Brahman is the All-self or Vāsudeva, who is identified with the dual self of Lakṣmi Nārāyaṇa.

God, the Lord of the Goddess Śrī, is the goal of humanity.¹²⁰ The concept of Godhead comprising of the dual self of Lakṣminārāyaṇa is not a new theory, but the self-expression of the inner redemptive necessity that follows from the divine nature of dayā.¹²¹ The savants of the past Vālmiki and Parāṣara, the mystics like Nammālvar and others as well as the great Āchāryas of the calibre of Yāmuna and Rāmānuja have intuited themselves to this Cosmic Reality, and have also realized Brahman as having a twofold spiritual form of its own, as the Lord and Śrī. These two are philosophically inseparable, and are said to have been thus expounded by Sōmaśi Āndān in his 'Sadartha Samkṣepa' as 'द्वौ च सदैकशेषी' and "उभयाधिष्ठानं चैकं शेषित्वम्". Their functions are of course distinguishable. The Lord rules by law, whereas Śrī rules by love. She is praised as "नित्यमज्ञातनिग्रहा", "आकारत्रयसम्पन्ना" The three

Ākāras of the holy mother being Upāyatva, Upēyatva and Puruṣakāratva.¹²²

The Goddess Śrī is inseparably united with the Lord at all stages, and Śrīyahpathi, the Lord with Lakṣmi, happens to be the endeavour, as well as the goal, of Humanity. Bhagavan is said to act as a saviour of humanity, only in the company of Goddess Lakṣmi, who is the very embodiment of compassion.¹²³

According to Deśika, Lakṣmi is included in the Siddhōpāya and is not an Upalakṣana, or an accidental feature to mark Nārāyaṇa. If Lakṣmi is taken only as an Upalakṣana then certain qualities, certain forms and certain activities that are required by Īśvara for being the Upāya and the Upeya, would also be at variance with Him. These also will have to be considered as accidental features. But this is not so. God is considered as the saviour of humanity by virtue of his omnipotence and compassion. Lakṣmi-viśiṣṭatva is as much an inseparable attribute of Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa as omnipotence or compassion is.¹²⁴

It is objected that Goddess Lakṣmi cannot be a part of Siddhōpāya, for the very reason, that the Śāstras prescribe no endeavour other than Bhagavan. This is answered thus: Lakṣmi happens to be the inseparable attribute of the Lord, and so there is absolutely no problem of an Upāyadvitva. It is admitted by one and all that the goal or object of attainment is Śrīyahpati, wherein Lakṣmi and Nārāyaṇa are together taken to form one. Similarly Lakṣmi and Nārāyaṇa form one entity in unity signifying the Siddhōpāya.¹²⁵

Nammālwar declares that Lakṣmi, abiding in the ever fragrant lotus, destroys the sins of the Jiva, that are obstructions for Bhāgavan to become our endeavour .¹²⁶

According to available pramāṇas which cannot be set aside by mere logic or reason, one has to accept the Lord with Śri as the Upāya, as well as, the object of attainment or Upeya.

The śruti does not speak of Lakṣmi separately, as Lakṣmi and Bhagavān are inseparably united. So it must be understood that Lakṣmi is also implied wherever Bhagavān is referred to. ¹²⁷

"It is the established conclusion of Deśika that the meaning of the word Nārāyaṇa must be taken to connote Bhāgavan with His attribute (Śri), since they form a single Śeṣi, since they are ever of the same mind, since they are intimately attached to each other, and since they are inseparably connected with each other in their essential nature and forms. ¹²⁸

The Siddhōpāya svarūpa is condensed by Deśika as follows:

‘भरस्वीकाररहितं रक्षासङ्कल्पवर्जितम् ।
गुणादिकमिहेष्टं हि शरण्यस्य विशेषणम् ॥
ऐकरस्यजुषोऽशेषिदम्पत्योस्सर्वकर्मसु ।
विशेषणविशेष्यत्वम् श्रुतं कस्मान्नरोचते ॥
प्रतर्दनादिविद्यासु वेद्येऽपि परमात्मनि ।
अचेतनवदिच्छामश्चेतनं च विशेषणम् ॥
इत्थं प्रपत्तिविद्यायां तत्तन्मन्त्रानुसारतः ।
विभुः पत्न्या गुणाद्यैश्च विशिष्टो विषयोऽत्र नः’ ।

'Puruṣottama' is another concept used both as a name for God and as a metaphysical definition. Paramapurūṣa also means the same. The Puruṣa Sūkta speaks of the Supreme Person. In the Bhāgavadgīta this term is used to designate the Supreme Being who is superior to both matter and finite spirits. Rāmānuja expounds the Supremacy of the Supreme Person over finite souls, both bound and liberated, and over matter, in his commentary on the 15th Chapter of the Gīta.¹²⁹ The Lord is distinct from all else, since he is utterly preeminent, by virtue of His being the antithesis of everything defiling, and also since he is of an entirely auspicious nature.¹³⁰

Brahman is Bhuvana Sundara :

Brahman is posited as the Aesthetic Absolute by the school of Viśiṣṭādvaita. Reality is essentially beautiful, and ugliness is not a beauty at any time. The concept of God as Bhuvana Sundara signifies that God is Beauty and Beauty is God. The Brahman of the Upaniṣads becomes the beautiful God of aesthetic religion. Brahman transcends matter and the finite selves, and happens to be endowed with the super mundane beauty. God is the Param Jyotiḥ, and illumines all other illuminaries. The text:

‘न ते रूपं न चाकारः नायुधानि नचास्पदम् ।

तथापि पुरुषाकारः भक्तानां त्वं प्रकाशसे ॥’

जितन्ता

affirms that Śrīmannārāyaṇa, the Sat, who is the ground and sustenance of the whole Universe, assumes such of the forms as are capable of pleasing the hearts of the devotees. His beauty is described by the scriptures as super-mundane and self resplendent.¹³¹ ‘तद्देवा ज्योतिषां ज्योतिः’ says the Mundaka. The Sūtrakāra identifies in the sūtra the Light¹³²

which shines above the heavens with the Highest person in the Supreme world of Eternal Joy. The Taitirīya text describes Brahman as Ānanda, and affirms that the beauty of Brahman leads to Eternal bliss. Brahman is Bhuman, the blissful.¹³³ The All powerful God reveals to His devotees His transcendental beauty only out of compassion for them, so that it might be possible for them to meditate upon Him steadily. Thus the Absolute of the Upaniṣads reveals ita Svarūpa, Rūpa and Guṇa to the yearning devotees out of sheer compassion. The Divine form is Subhasraya, or both auspicious and capable of being meditated upon.

The super-form of the Lord is eternal, as established by the scriptural authorities that are substantiated by the savants of the past. The Pouṣkarmasamhita, Srisatvata and the Rahasyāmnaya declare that the Absolute Parabrahman has an eternal Divine body.¹³⁴ Rāmānuja refers to the Transcendental form of the Supreme self in almost all his works. In the Śrī Bhāṣya while commenting on the term 'Bhārūpah' under Sūtra 1-2-2, he describes that the Lord is characterised by a non-material, unique and infinitely auspicious celestial form, by virtue of which He is shining forth with great effulgence.

‘भारूपः भास्वरूपः - अप्राकृतस्वासाधारणनिरतिशयकल्याण
दिव्यरूपत्वेन निरतिशयदीप्तियुक्त इत्यर्थः ।’ श्री.भा. 1-2-2

While commencing on Sūtra 1-1-21, Rāmānuja declares that the Lord has a natural but transcendental form also, just as He is a repository of all auspicious qualities.

‘परस्यैव ब्रह्मणो निखिलहेयप्रत्यनीकानन्तज्ञानानन्दैकस्वरूपतया
सकलेतरविलक्षणस्य स्वाभाविकानवधिकातिशया

संख्येयकल्याणगुणगणाश्च सन्ति । तद्वदेव
स्वाभिमतानुरूपैकरूपाचिन्त्यदिव्याद्भुत नित्यनिरवद्य
निरतिशयौज्वल्य सौन्दर्यसौगन्ध्यसौकुमार्यलावण्य
यौवनाद्यनन्तगुणगणनिधिदिव्यरूपमपि स्वाभाविकमस्ति ।'

श्री.भा. 1-1-21

Rāmānuja gives a glorious description of the Divyarūpa of the Lord in his Vedartha Samgraha. A number of scriptural authorities as well as the opinions of the Vākyākāras and the Bhāṣyakāras are given, to support this conclusion. ¹³⁵ On the authority of the holy texts like 'Satyam, Jñānam, Anantam' and others Brahman is recognized to transcend everything else, by virtue of Its being opposed to all evil, and being the abode of all auspicious qualities. The substantive nature of the Supreme Self as distinguished from everything else is established on the authority of the Vedic Texts. Similarly we should recognize, argues Rāmānuja, His Divine form, His eternal ministers and His Transcendental abode also, on the authority of holy scriptures themselves. ¹³⁶ The Śaraṇāgathigadya and the Vaikuntagadya also contain the affirmation and description of the Divine form of the Lord.

This has been substantiated by the innumerable utterings of the great mystics that have intuited themselves to that super-form and have realized It. They affirm that there is not on this earth any eternal form either of the sentient or the non-sentient; except that of the one Vāsudeva who is verily designated as the Puruṣa.

‘नित्यं हि नास्ति जगति भूतं स्थावरजङ्गमम् ।

ऋते तमेकं पुरुषं वासुदेवं सनातनम् ॥’

स.सि- p-166

So the argument of some, that the Lord is both Sāmsā and Niramśa, and that He assumes different forms by means of His Sāmsātvā and He is Niramśa when He is not associated with them, is once for all disproved as it is not corroborated with proper authorities. The statement 'इच्छागृहीताभिमतोरुदेहः' is cited by some to question the eternal nature of the Divine form on the ground, that the Lord is described here to assume a form only when he desires and not always. It is to be clarified here that the above statement pertains to the Lord's Divine form of Incarnation and does not question the fact of His eternal form. Deśika affirms this as follows:

‘अवतारविग्रहेषु तावदिच्छागृहीतत्वमविरुद्धम् ।
नित्येऽप्यनिच्छायां अनित्यत्वप्रसङ्गमभिसन्धाय नित्येच्छाधीन
स्थितित्वविवक्षया इच्छागृहीतत्ववाचोयुक्तिर्युक्तेति’ । स.सि. p-166

"Even if the Lord has a super-form as explained above", remark some, "He has not the several ornaments and weapons, as He is generally described". It is argued, that there is no need at all of these weapons and ornaments either to the Lord who is Avāptasamastakāma, or to the staunch Devotee who is an Atyanta Niṣkāma. So the ornaments and others may be thought of, by those who are associated with the sentiments of Vīra and Śṛṅgāra.¹³⁷ Vedānta Deśika declares that this objection is based on a partial understanding of some of the scriptural statements like 'न ते रूपं चाकारः', 'निर्दोषो निरनिष्टः' etc. These objectors are to be asked, in turn, why at all they admit a divine form to the Supreme Being. It is admitted that the Universal Self has a Divine form for the convenience of the devotees, to meditate upon Him. Likewise one has to admit that the Supreme Self is also characterised by the

Divine ornaments and weapons. This fact is proved by the same authorities that establish 'Vigrahavatva' of the Lord. It must be understood that the Lord carries these weapons for the sake of His devotees. ¹³⁸

Moreover, it is explained by Savants of the past, that the twenty-four 'reals' comprising of the 23 Tatvas of Prakṛti along with the finite self are characterising the Lord, as His weapons and ornaments. The self is the invaluable Kaustubha, Prakṛti is the Śrivatsa; Mahat is His Club; Jñānam and Ajñānam are His sword and its sheath. The Tāmasāhankāra is, His bow and the Sātvik Ahankāra is His conch. The Mind is his Chakra. The ten senses are the arrows. The Tanmātras and the Five elements form His Vanamāla. Garuda is the Veda. Lord Krishna is endowed with all these. ¹³⁹

Thus the weapons and ornaments of the Lord are described in a grand metaphorical way by Deśika, in accordance with the truths of the 'Astrabhūṣaṇādhyāya', as representing the entities of the Chit and the Achit, that are related to Him inseparably.

Brahman is the Lord of Both the Realms:

The Lord is described in the Śāstras, as the Lord of both the realms namely the Līlāvibhūti and the Nityavibhūti. The Līlāvibhūti is the World of matter wherein the infinite number of selves are enmeshed. This is Trigūṇa or Prakṛti, and this is said to be composed of the three guṇas viz., Satva, rajas and tamas. This is said to be infinite in expanse on all sides, except on the one, where it is limited by the Suddha Satva or the Transcendental region. The Nityavibhūti or the transcendental region is

the eternal abode of the Supreme Being, wherein the eternal and the liberated enjoy, in their original pure status, an eternal rapture, of Divine Vision and communion. Śuddhasatvam, is in its essential nature the abode of Satvam, that is unmixed with Rajas and Tamas. It is pure Satvam. It is eternal and forms the specific and permanent forms of the Lord and the eternal. It also undergoes modifications just like the world of matter to suit the desires of the Sarvaśeṣi.

Śuddhasatva, Trigunam and Kāla are the three non-sentient entities.¹⁴⁰ The scriptural texts prove the existence of this pure satva and the same is affirmed by the smṛtis.¹⁴¹ This Transcendental region is described as the highest abode of Viṣṇu, which is always seen by the enlightened seers.¹⁴² It is said to be beyond Rajas and beyond Tamas.¹⁴³ It is verily called the Highest heavens 'परम व्योम' (महा.ना.३.). Rāmānuja examines this question of the Transcendental realm in his Vedārta Samgraha, and affirms the existence of this Supreme abode of the Lord according to the authority of the infallible scriptures.¹⁴⁴ Paramapada is a term which is used in the Vedas in more than one sense. This word designates the Highest abode in some contexts, whereas in some others it designates the essential nature of the individual self freed from matter, and in some other contexts it denotes even the essential nature of Bhagavān.

Now a doubt arises as how all these can be the Supreme ideals. This is answered by Rāmānuja as follows:-

The Lord is the Supreme object of attainment and so He is the Paramapada. The other two namely the pure state

of the individual self as well as the transcendental abode are included in the attainment of Godhead. So they are also called Paramapadam.¹⁴⁵

This Paramapadam is described as an imperishable realm, (अक्षरे परमे व्योमन्), and so this does not refer to any object of a perishable nature. The ancient Sādhya Devas, the first borns and the seers of intelligence are described as singing the glories of this highest abode.

About this Śuddhasatva, there are two important opinions among the followers of this school of thought. Some consider this as inert or jada, as it is incapable of showing itself. It is contended that it will have to be admitted, as endowed with the six qualities also, if it is admitted to be svayamprakāśā. So they argue that the description of the pure satva as svayamprakāśā is only to be taken in a subordinate sense. Another viewpoint affirms, on the other hand, that the Nityavibhūti is svayamprakāśā, as ordained in the Sāstras. But it may be objected, that the Nityavibhūti does not shine of its own accord to the bound selves. 'The Nityas and the Muktas are capable of visualising everything by means of their all pervasive attributive knowledge. How could, then, this Nityavibhūti be considered as svayamprakāśā?' The above objection can be met very easily. 'There is no harm caused' - argues Deśika, 'to the Svayamprakāśatva of the Nityavibhūti, though it is cognised by the Nityas and the Muktas through their attributive consciousness which is all-pervasive, just as the' eternal Svayamprakāśatva of the Selves is not discarded, even during the time of their being grasped through the attributive consciousness.¹⁴⁶

‘यथा आत्मनां नित्यस्वप्रकाशानां धर्मभूतधीगृह्यमाणदशायामपि स्वप्रकाशत्वं नापैति, तथा सर्वज्ञैः तत्तद्धिया साक्षात्क्रियमाणस्यापि शुद्धसत्त्वस्य स्वप्रकाशकत्वं अविरोद्धमिति’।

स.सि. p-165; त.मु.क. 3-63

The Nityavibhūti is luminous by itself, even though it is apprehended by the attributive knowledge of God as well as the Nityas, just as the Divine Svarūpa is self-luminous though it is an object of apprehension of the attributive knowledge of Īśvara.¹⁴⁷

The self-luminous attributive knowledge illumines an object to its substratum or the soul. Likewise the Śuddhasatvam may be luminous to one who has attained liberation. Again just as the luminosity of the attributive knowledge is obstructed, at a time, when it is not illuminating any object to the self by past karma of some kind or other, the luminosity of Śuddhasatva also gets obstructed in the state of bondage. When a thing is ascertained by scripture it is useless to argue on grounds of logic.¹⁴⁸

If it is argued, that the self-luminosity of the Śuddhasatva is to be taken in a figurative sense, it will then give room for the argument that knowledge and others are also figuratively said of the self. It may be further objected as follows:- A self-luminous object does not have shape, taste or smell. The soul and the attributive knowledge are such self-luminous objects. Then how can the Śuddhasatva have qualities like form, taste and classifications like earth and water?" To this the answer is as follows :- All self-luminous things are not of the same kind. Each of them will have its own peculiar differences. The substantive

knowledge has subjectivity. The attributive knowledge is objective. It illumines the objects to the self. Yet both of them are self-luminous. Both- have their own characteristics and likewise Śuddhasatvam also is self-luminous, as ordained in the scriptures. This entity of Śuddhasatvam is classified as non-sentient because it has no Jñātrtva.¹⁴⁹

The Śuddhasatva is beyond Trigunam, and forms the stuff out of which the bodies of God, the Eternals and the Liberated are formed. It also assumes such forms as those of towers, mantapas and others, according to the will of the Supreme. This forms the body of God during his several incarnations. It is a pure region beyond the world of physical nature, where there is no obstruction for the apprehension of God. The existence of this Vaikuṇṭa or Paramapada is established by innumerable scriptural statements. Salvation is described as the vision of God achieved in this Transcendental Region. Does such a transcendental Region exist for all time ? Rāmānuja, as well as his distinguished followers, hold that this transcendental region is an eternal one, though it also transforms itself into different pure elements according to the will of God.

Attainment of Brahman is Salvation:

The ultimate goal of Humanity is the attainment of an unbroken vision of God, Śrīmannārāyaṇa.¹⁸⁰ In His Rahasyatrayasāram Vedānta Deśika describes this as follows:

वितमसिपदे लक्ष्मीकान्तं विचित्रविभूतिकम्
सचिवगमितस्सम्पद्याविर्भवत्सहजाकृतिः ।
स्फुटतदपृथक्सिद्धिस्सिध्यद्गुणाष्टकतत्फलो
भजति परमं साम्यं भोगे निवृत्तिकथोज्झितम् ॥ (R.T.S. - 22 Chap.)

When this is analysed, we find out that it contains the following factors.

1. The self is led to the Lord in the Aprākṛta' region by the several guides after his death.
2. His essential nature will manifest itself in its full measure.
3. He Realizes in full measure his inseparable relation with the Lord.
4. He will acquire the eight attributes-known as Guṇāṣṭaka namely अपहतपाप्मत्व, विजरत्व, विमृत्युत्व, विशोकत्व, विजिघित्सुत्व, अपिपासत्व, सत्यकामत्व, सत्यसङ्कल्पत्व.
5. He will attain perfect resemblance to the Lord regarding the enjoyment of bliss.
6. He will be blessed with the illimitable, eternal joy of Divine communion and
7. There will be no question of returning again to the world of Samsāra.

Mere entrance into some such region is not Mukti. Mukti is essentially illimitable rapture of Divine communion. 'This is an ideal to be realized in space also as in time.'¹⁵¹

The Jīva attains his original pure status through the grace of God, when alone all the eight attributes are acquired in full measure. Mukti of this nature is possible only when the self has once for all severed its connection with the material world. It is possible only after death. Rāmānuja denies Jeevanmukti, for the soul cannot be deemed to have attained full mukti, even when the body

persists, owing to certain residual karma. As long as the body continues, and as long as the self is bound by it, there cannot be liberation. Jeevanmukti is, therefore, criticized by the school of Viśiṣṭādvaita, as there has not been a total destruction of Karma, as evidenced by the continuance of the body, even after enlightenment. The ideal of the Advaitin is, therefore, not acceptable to this school. The Sūtrakara affirms this state of liberation in his Sūtras संपद्याविर्भावः स्वेन शब्दात् (श्री.भा. 4-4-1) and 'मुक्तः प्रतिज्ञानात्' (श्री.भा. 4-4-2). Rāmānuja comments on the Sūtras as follows:

अयं प्रत्यगात्मा अर्चिरादिना परंज्योतिरूपसम्पद्य यं
दशाविशेषमापद्यते स स्वरूपाविर्भावः । नापूर्वाकारोत्पत्तिरूपः ।
कुतः ? (स्वेनशब्दात्) स्वेन रूपेणेति विशेषणोपादानादित्यर्थः ।'
श्री.भा. 4-4-1

'कर्मसम्बन्धतत्कृतदेहादिविनिर्मुक्तः स्वाभाविकरूपेण
अवस्थितोऽत्र स्वेनरूपेणाभिनिष्पद्यत इत्युच्यते ।'
श्री.भा. 4-4-2

The school of Viśiṣṭādvaita maintains that liberation in its fullness is only possible, after the soul is liberated from the body, and that then only the Jīva reaches the transcendental realm, and is endowed with a full and perfect enjoyment of Brahman.

What is really meant here by 'Brahmānubhava'? It means that the liberated self will enjoy the rapture of Divine communion in all times; and in all situations, without missing anyone of His countless forms or attributes or glories ¹⁵²

The Śrutis speak of perfect similarity between the Jīva and the Lord, because there is perfect similarity between the enjoyment of the Mukta and the enjoyment of the Lord. The attainment of God is a remedy for the disease of Samsāra. It is of the nature of unsurpassed joy. It is an end in itself and it lasts for ever.¹⁵³

The Upaniṣads reveal the futility and impermanence of all material values, and after eliminating one after another every thing other than the Supreme Being, they ordain that Brahman alone is happiness, and It alone is to be known and attained.

प्राप्यभूतस्य ब्रह्मणस्सुखरूपताज्ञातव्येति 'सुखं त्वेव विजिज्ञासितव्यं' (छां.उ. 7-22) इत्युपदिश्य निरतिशयविपुलमेवसुखं परमपुरुषार्थरूपं भवतीति तस्यैव ब्रह्मणस्सुखरूपस्य निरतिशयविपुलता ज्ञातव्येति 'भूमात्वेव विजिज्ञासितव्यः' (छां.उ. 7-23) इत्युपदिश्य निरतिशयविपुलसुखरूपस्य ब्रह्मणो लक्षणमिदं उच्यते - 'यत्रनान्यत्पश्यति सभूमा' (छां.उ. 7-24-1) इति।' (श्री.भा. 1-3-7)

Here Rāmānuja declares in the Bhūmādhikaraṇa that Brahman alone is the Highest goal that is to be attained by one and all without any exception. All other aims are delusions. This only is the eternal and universal and boundless good. Attainment of any other thing is bound to involve the Jīva in misery, sorrow and dissatisfaction. The only thing which is of the nature of Supreme joy is God, and we find joy only in God. So God alone is the Highest good that is to be attained by the Jīva. Rāmānuja declares in emphatic terms this fact in the Bhūmādhikaraṇa as follows:

‘अनवधिकातिशयसुखरूपे ब्रह्मण्यनुभूयमाने ततोऽन्यत् किमपि न पश्यत्यनुभविता ब्रह्मस्वरूपतद्विभूत्यन्तर्गतत्वाच्च कृत्स्नस्य वस्तुजातस्य । अतः ऐश्वर्यापरपर्यायविभूतिगुणविशिष्टं निरतिशय सुखरूपं ब्रह्मानुभवन् तद्व्यतिरिक्तस्य वस्तुनो अभावादेव किमप्यन्यत्र पश्यति । अनुभाव्यस्य सर्वस्य सुखरूपत्वादेव दुःखं च न पश्यति, तदेव हि सुखं यदनुभूयमानं पुरुषानुकूलं भवति ।’

श्री.भा. 1-3-7

Brahman is all inclusive and is of the nature of infinite joy. So one who is blessed with the experience of Brahman sees nothing else, since everything is contained in the essential nature or the glory of Brahman. There is virtually no value other than Brahman, and so the blessed soul experiences Brahman alone and nothing else. He enjoys Brahman. Brahman is joy, and so there is not even the trace of sorrow or misery there. So the nature of the highest good is only 'Brahmānubhava'.

The Gīta classifies devotees into four types as the Ārta 'Arthārthi', 'Gijñāsu' and the 'Jñāni'. While commenting upon the eighth chapter of the Gīta, Rāmānuja, following Yamuna, admits that both the 'Kevalin' and the 'Jñāni', go beyond the realm of Samsāra and never more return to it. Both of them are said to be freed from the contact of matter and to attain perfection. The Kevalin is said to enjoy 'Kaivalya' whereas the 'Jñāni' is blessed with Divine communion. An objection is raised in this context regarding the ultimate object to be attained by humanity. Why not Kaivalya or self realization itself be our goal, if it is capable of securing us release from matter, ensuring at the same time non-return to the world of Trigūṇa ?

This is an important question on which the followers of Viśiṣṭādvaita are divided. One section of this school holds that in Kaivalya, the self is endowed with self-experience in full measure, and that it remains somewhere for ever without either Divine experience or contact with Prakṛti. It is argued that the Kevalin secures his freedom from Prakṛti, and that he will have no more transmigration. So the state of a Kevalin, according to the above school, is destined to be the most miserable one, as it is devoid of any chance of an upward evolution, being once for all cut off from both the worlds-the material and the transcendental. This concept of Kaivalya is not admitted by the other section of the same school. Vedānta Deśika abhors the idea of Kaivalya as described above. It is the decided opinion of Deśika that the term Kaivalya used in the eighth chapter of the Gīta, means not mere self-realisation but meditation upon the Supreme through self-realization. Rāmānuja remarks in his Gītābhāṣya that Kaivalya referred to here is not the attainment of mere self-experience but it is necessarily the reflection upon the finite self having Brahman as its inner self, and being blessed with the sole delight of subservience to Brahman.

‘न च प्रजापतिवाक्यादौ श्रुतपरविद्याङ्गभूतात्मप्राप्तिविषयेयम् ।
 स एनान् ब्रह्मगमयतीति ब्रह्मप्राप्तिवचनात्
 अचिद्वियुक्तमात्मवस्तु ब्रह्मात्मकतया ब्रह्मशेषतैकरसं
 इत्यनुसन्धेयम् ।’

गी.भा. 8-23

Meditation upon God is mainly of two types (a) Thinking primarily of Brahman who has for His body their own selves or (b) Thinking primarily of their own selves as having Brahman as their inner self. Both these types of

meditation are inherently related to God, though there is difference in emphasis. The one who primarily meditates upon God attains Him not long, where as one who meditates upon his own self as having Brahman as its inner self, also attains Him alone, but only through self-realization. Both the modes of meditation are inevitably related to the Supreme Being and never isolated from God, as is supposed in the state of mere self-realization. Deśika affirms that the Jijñāsu of the Gīta is none other than the aspirant who meditates upon his own self as having Brahman for its inner self, and only on account of this, that he is blessed with Archirādi, Apurnarāvritti and Prakṛti viyuktatvam, just as the follower of the Panchāgnividyā. It does not stand to reason, argues Deśika, 'to posit that one is deprived of Divine experience inspite of Apunāravrtti, Archirādi and Prakṛti sambandha vināśa.' If it means mere self-realization, then it must be admitted that there is some karma or other remaining to obstruct the attainment of Godhead, and hence, that state devoid of Divine experience cannot be deemed to be the state of liberation. Deśika is emphatic on this point that mere self-realization is not salvation at all. That is not a permanent state free from the taints of matter and transmigration. So the state of Kaivalya of the Gīta, according to Deśika, is none other than the state of mukti or liberation which consequently results in the full and infinite experience of God-head. Then where is the place for mere self-realization in Viśiṣṭādvaita? According to this school of thought, the state of Ātmāvalokana or self-experience that is obtained by Karmayōga either directly or through JñānaYōga is the state of mere Kaivalya. This self-realization also happens to be a part of God-realization, as the aspirant then realizes in full

measure the adjectival nature of the finite self, from whence forward, he becomes Godward and proceeds steadily on the path of Devotion for attaining Him.

As self-realization is subordinate to God-realization, the highest aspiration of the vision of the Supreme must be the one end and aim of humanity. The self cannot practise even Karmayōga or JñānaYōga or be blessed with self-experience without devotion to God. In short, the goal of self-realization is never the Highest-good, as it is only finite. Therefore the goal alone, of a complete and comprehensive vision of the supreme, should be cherished as the ultimate object of our life, as all other attainments non-adjectival to God are not at all real attainments.¹⁵⁴

State of Mukti-Characterized by Service to God:

It is necessary for us to have a clear knowledge of the state of liberation, which we hope to attain from the state of samsāra in which we are at present enmeshed. The state of liberation is at once opposed to that of samsāra. It is a state of life, light and delight. It is infinite joy, and unmixed with even the slightest sorrow. It, by virtue of its being a positive state of eternal joy untainted with even the slightest blemish, is the perfect ideal which overcomes in every way the multifarious limitations and defects of this worldly life.

Then the individual self will be endowed with a thorough knowledge of its nature, as well as of its inseparable relation to the Supreme. The scriptures describe that the finite selves attain Ānanda, equal in measure to the delight of God.¹⁵⁵ The self attains its original pure status, and its eight prominent characteristics become explicit in their fullness. The soul enjoys the eternal rapture of Divine communion, and this illimitable

delight overflows in the form of loving service to God. Kainkaryā is the natural mode of expressing the joy of Divine Communion. Rāmānuja prays in his gadya for a complete and comprehensive vision of the Supreme, which leads in turn, to the loving service of the Lord in all states, at all places and at all times to the extreme joy of God, as well as the individual self.

‘तथाविधभगवदनुभवजनितानवधिकातिशयप्रीतिकारिताशेष
शेषतैकरतिरूपनित्यकिङ्करो भवानि’ ।

श.गद्यम्. see श्री. भा. 4-4-7; र.त्र.सा. p-147

Rāmānuja discusses in his Vedārtha Samgraha this concept of Kainkaryā, and explains clearly that service to God is by itself the very svarūpa of the finite self. Service to those other than God is the cause of misery, as it originates from sin, whereas service to God is a positive gain and the highest good, as the self is inherently related to God as His attribute and Śeṣa. The attainment and observance of subservience to the Lord is verily the state of freedom to the finite self.

‘पारतन्त्र्यं परे पुंसि प्राप्य निर्गतबन्धनः ।

स्वातन्त्र्यमतुलं प्राप्य तेनैव सह मोदते ॥’

It is generally discussed that the state of liberation is of four categories namely 'Sālokyam', 'Sāmīpyam', 'Sārūpyam' and 'Sāyujyam'. All these do not virtually signify the state of liberation. It is Sāyujya and Sāyujya alone which signifies the state of liberation.

‘मोक्षं सालोक्यसारूप्यं प्रार्थये न कदाचन ।

इच्छाम्यहं महाबाहो सायुज्यं तव सुव्रत ॥

‘लोकेषु विष्णोर्निवसन्ति केचित्
 समीपमृच्छन्ति च केचिदन्ये ।
 अन्ये तु रूपं सदृशं भजन्ते
 सायुज्यमन्ये स तु मोक्ष उक्तः ॥’

It is affirmed that the attainment of the Divine Realm, or of the nearhood of God, or of the attainment of a form similar to that of God is not verily the ideal of liberation. But it is *Sāyujya* or *Samānaguṇakatva*.¹⁵⁶ Attainment of the eight characteristics such as *Apahatapāpmatva* and others, in an equal measure to that of God, is the ideal of liberation. Then why are the other three states designated as liberation? Deśika suggests that they are called *Mokṣa* just because they relate to the attainment of various wonderful sub-realms of God, such as *Svetadvipa* and others.

‘तदपि श्रीविष्णुलोकादिविचित्रावान्तरपदप्राप्त्यपेक्षया इति न
 दोषः’ ।
 न्या.सि. p-221

Sāyujyam is the ideal which is all inclusive. It includes in itself all the other three concepts of *Sālokya*, *Sāmīpya* and *Sārūpya*.¹⁵⁷ Then it may be asked why the word *Sārṣṭitā* is used along with *Sāyujyam* in one of the Vedic texts, if they mean only communion in enjoyment. The answer is this: *Sāyujyam* means the relationship between two who are united in communion. The *Mukta* is called a ‘*Sayuk*’ as Brahman and the *Mukta* commune with each other in the enjoyment of that bliss. So *Sāyujyam* between the liberated and Brahman means that there is no difference in the objects of enjoyment for both. But *Sārṣṭitā* means that there is no difference even in the degree of their enjoyment. So both the words are significant.

‘सायुज्यमुभयोरत्र भोक्तव्यस्याविशिष्टता ।

साष्टिता तत्र भोगस्य तारतम्यविहीनता ॥’ र.त्र.सा. 22 p-148

The liberated self shares equally in the enjoyment of only bliss with God, but can at no time be an equal or superior to God, in other respects. The Sūtrakara affirms in the Sūtra 'Bhogamāstrasāmyalingāchha'¹⁵⁸ that the similarity between the Jīva and Īśvara is only in respect of enjoyment of bliss. But in other respects the Jīvas are ever subordinate and inferior to Him. The Sūtra जगद्व्यापारवर्जम्¹⁵⁹ proclaims that the Supreme Being alone is the master-architect of the Universe, and all others including the eternal and the liberated are incapable of these unique activities of creation, sustenance or destruction of the Universe. Yet, the liberated have no fear of return to Samsāra, as they have completely exhausted or destroyed their karma by means of Divine propitiation, and also as the All powerful God has himself benevolently assured them that He would not hurl them down to Samsāra again, as they are very dear to Him.¹⁶⁰ The liberated selves maintain their individuality for all time to come, enjoying the eternal rapture of Divine communion.

The above kind of liberation is never possible during the state of embodiment. According to Deśika, a Godly life devoted to the service of God alone, with no interest in mundane affairs, is equal to that of a liberated life. The realization of the immanence of Brahman in all entities, both sentient and non-sentient, leading to a devout service of the Lord through service to His body, the entire humanity, happens to be the characteristic feature of a true devotee of God. A true devotee cherishes no personal desires or hatreds, cultivates no interest in mundane affairs,

but sets his heart upon the Transcendental Divine form of the Lord, yearning for His eternal vision. He is firm in his devotion to God, and at the same time, benevolent to the Universe in which he visualises the Supreme. Deśika states in his Achyuta Śatakam-

विषयरसे स्वपन्तो विकारजननैरपि न खलु विक्रियमाणाः ।
जीवन्मुक्तसदृशा अच्युत दृश्यन्ते पावकास्तव भक्ताः ॥”

अ.श. 47

Devotion to the Lord is an 'unbroken meditation upon God, which is to be practised continuously by the aspirant in the state of embodiment. But liberation is possible only when the self is freed from matter, only when the self attains the Supreme Jyothis, and only when the eight principal qualities become fully explicit, and only when there is a clear and comprehensive vision of God. So Rāmānuja discards the ideal of Jīvanmukti as admitted by the school of Advaita.

Mukta and the Mundane World:

The Mukta who attains spiritual perfection, gains God and experiences eternal joy. What would be his reaction towards this mundane world? The summum bonum is verily the highest attainment which exceeds this life, here and now. It is a natural completion of the life on this earth. But the liberated self does not abhor at this mundane world as he realizes this, as the glory of his master, the Lord. As all his karmavāsanā has been totally destroyed he will no more find it unpleasant. He now feels that all objects in this world are by nature good, but that they appeared to him as conductives or non-conductives, only on account of the existence of his karma. So the liberated self experiences the greatness of God who is the creator of this

Universe. He may even come upon this earth for Divine purposes at the behest of the Lord, but he will never become entangled in it. Deśika gives the comparison of the reactions of the prisoner and the jailor, about the prison, to illustrate the reactions of the bound self and the liberated, regarding the world of matter. The prisoner abhors at the jail and feels the misery of it whereas the jailor employed there does not feel the restrictions and handicaps of the prison. On the other hand, he takes pleasure in going round the prison. Likewise, the liberated who is brought back to embodiment in this world for divine purposes will not feel the stress or strain of it.

We have so far discussed about the essential nature of the Sādhya or the ultimate object of our attainment. We have noted that the Supreme Brahman who is the Paramaprāpya is characterised by not only Paratva or Supremacy but also Saulabhya or accessibility. We have also studied that the Supreme self, the highest object of our attainment happens to be our Upāśya or means of attaining Him, and also that He is waiting for an occasion to rush to our rescue. This true knowledge of the Highest Reality exhorts the Sādhaka to follow the prescribed Sādhana, being pleased with which the Lord grants His communion to that blessed Sādhaka. Now we will take up for discussion the problem of Sādhana in the next section.

References :-

1. See Rahasya Traya Sāra 7-p. 102
2. 'तयोः श्रेयसादानस्य साधु भवति' । (क.उ. 1-2-1)
3. 'उपासनारम्भाभ्यर्हितोपायश्च प्राप्यवस्तुव्यतिरिक्तवैतृष्ण्यं प्राप्यतृष्णा चेति तत्सिद्ध्यर्थं जीवस्य लोकांतरेषु संचरतो जाग्रतस्त्वपतस्सुषुप्तस्य मूर्छतश्च दोषाः परस्य च ब्रह्मणः तद्रहितकल्याणगुणाकरत्वं च प्रथमद्वितीययोः पादयोः प्रतिपाद्यते ।' (श्री.भा. 3-1-1)
4. ब्रह्म अवाच्यमवेद्यं वा एवंचादिति प्रयोक्तव्यम् । तत्र ब्रह्मपदं साध्याधारं ब्रूते न वा ? आद्ये कथं तद्विरुद्धसाध्यधीः ? द्वितीये तु निरर्थकता निराश्रयसाध्योक्तिश्च ।' (स.सि. -p-119)
5. दुस्साधं क्वचिदप्येवमवाच्यत्वादि कस्यचित् । किंपुनस्सर्ववचसां प्रतिष्ठा यत्र तत्र तु॥' (स.सि. p.119)
6. See Sri Bhashyam, 1-1-21, 3-2-33, 1-2-8, 3-3-20, 3-2-12
7. Br. U. II-3-6
8. Sri Bhashya, 1-1-2
9. 'नित्यं विज्ञानम्', 'आनन्दं ब्रह्म' तै. उ.
10. 'य आत्मा अपहतपाप्मा विजरो विमृत्युर्विशोको विजिघत्सोऽपिपासः सत्यकामः सत्यसङ्कल्पः' । (छा.उ. 8-7-1)
11. N.S. P. 226
12. N.S. P. 226
13. Sri Bhashya 1-1-1
14. Svarupanirupaka dharmaś and nirupita svarupavisheshanas.
15. मुं. उ. - 2-2-9
16. छा.उ. 6-2-1
17. The Viseshanas are Paratantra to Brahma Tattva.
18. विहितव्यतिरिक्तविषये निषेधः ।

19. Sri Bhasyam 1-4-27
20. 'जगत्कारणभूतस्यैव ब्रह्मणः जीवान्तर्यामितया जीवात्मत्वमविरुद्धमिति प्रतिपादितम् । (वे.सं. p.23 S.S.R.'s Edition)
21. T.M.K. 3-33
22. See Intro to Ved. Samgraha, Sri S.S.R., p. 58
23. Tatparaya Deepika P. 57. Madras Edition
24. Phil of Vis P.N.S. P. 251
25. छा.उ. 6-8-6
26. See also 'सोऽकामयत बहुस्यां प्रजायेयेति', 'ब्रह्मणं ब्रह्म सवृक्ष आसीत्', 'तदात्मानं स्वयमकुरत्', 'कर्तारमीशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम्'.
27. ब्रह्मात्मकजीवानुप्रवेशादेव कृत्स्नस्याचिद्वस्तुनः पदार्थत्वम् एवंभूतस्यैव अचिद्वस्तुनो नामरूपभाक्त्वमिति च दर्शयति ।'
28. See Intro to V.S., S.S.R., P. 58
29. T.M.K. 3-31, 32;
30. See Intro to V.S., S.S.R. P. 85
31. T.M.K. 3-30
32. 'सामान्यतो दृष्टेन विरोधमाशङ्क्य ब्रह्मणस्सर्वविलक्षणत्वेन परिहार उक्तः' ।
(वे.सं. P-32, S.S.R.'s Edition)
33. See S.B. I-4-23; T.M.K. 3-25, 26
34. 'स्वभावाभेदस्तदसङ्कारश्च तत्र चात्र च तुल्यः । एवं च सति परस्य ब्रह्मणः कार्यानुप्रवेशोऽपि स्वरूपान्यथाभावाभावादविकृतत्वमपि उपपन्नतरम् ।
(गी.भा. 13-2) See also N.S.P. 230; T.M.K. 3-25
35. See V.S. P. 73. S.S.R.'s Edition
36. S.B. 1-1-13
37. 'क्षित्यादिकं सकर्तृकं कार्यत्वात् घटवदिति चेन्न । यथादृष्टोपसंहारे बाधात् ।

- अन्यथा ज्ञानेच्छयोरपि त्यागप्रसङ्गात् । नित्यज्ञानस्य शरीरादिनेव नित्यप्रयत्नस्यापि ज्ञानादिना निरपेक्षत्ववचनोपपत्तेः ।' (न्या.सि P-230)
38. 'महीमहार्णवादीनां कार्यत्वेन एकदैवैकेन निर्मिता इत्यत्र प्रमाणाभावात् । न चैकस्य घटस्यैव सर्वेषामेकं कार्यत्वं येनैकदैव एकः कर्ता स्यात् । पृथग्भूतेषु कार्येषु कालभेदकर्तृभेददर्शनेन कर्तृकालैक्यनियमादर्शनात् ।' (श्री.भा. 1-1-3)
39. 'न च युगपत् सर्वोत्पत्तिस्सर्वोच्छित्तिश्च प्रमाणपदवींअधिरोहतः अदर्शनात्, क्रमेणैवोत्पत्तिविनाशदर्शनाच्च कार्यत्वेन सर्वोत्पत्तिविनाशयोः कल्प्यमानयोः दर्शनानुगुण्येन कल्पनायां विरोधाभावाच्च । अतो बुद्धिमदेककर्तृकत्वे साध्ये कार्यत्वस्यानैकान्त्यं पक्षस्याप्रसिद्धविशेषणत्वम् । साध्यविकलता च दृष्टान्तस्थः सर्वनिर्माण चतुरस्यैकस्याप्रसिद्धेः ।' (श्री.भा. 1-1-3)
40. Sri Bhashyam 1-1-3
41. 'अतो दर्शनानुगुण्येनेश्वरानुमानं दर्शनानुगुण्यपराहतमिति शास्त्रैकप्रमाणकः परब्रह्मभूतः सर्वेश्वरः पुरुषोत्तमः ।' (श्री.भा. 1-1-3)
42. 'शास्त्रं तु सकलेतरप्रमाणपरिदृष्टसमस्तवस्तुविसजातीयं सार्वज्ञ्यसत्यसङ्कल्पत्वादिमिश्रानवधिकातिशयापरिमितोदारगुणसागरं निखिलहेयप्रत्यनीकस्वरूपं प्रतिपादयतीति न प्रमाणान्तरावसितवस्तु साधर्म्यप्रयुक्तदोषगन्धप्रसङ्गः ।' (श्री.भा. 1-1-3)
43. V.S.P. 4. S.S.R's Edition; R.T.S. 3. P. 78
44. R.T.S. 3. P. 78
45. Sri Bhashyam, 1-1-2; N.S.P. 229
46. R.T.S. 3. pp. 78-79
47. Br. U. III-7
48. श्वे.उ. 3-19
49. 'अन्तर्याम्यधि दैवाधिलोकाधिषु तद्धर्मव्यपदेशात् ।' (श्री.भा. 1-2-19)
50. बृ.उ. 3-8-9
51. बृ.उ. 3-1-1, 2

52. श्री.भा. 1-2-23
53. छां.उ. 6-9-4
54. छां.उ. 8-1-1
55. छां.उ. 8-1-5
56. B.G. 18-14
57. 'उदासीनवदासीनः' (B.G. 9-9)
58. श्री.भा. 2-3-41
59. 'कर्ता शास्त्रार्थवत्त्वात्' (श्री.भा. 2-3-33)
60. B.G. 18-61; S.B. 2-3-40; कौषी.उ. 3-9 'इहापि सर्वजीवानां सामान्येन चिच्छक्तिप्रवृत्तिशक्त्योः करणकलेवररूपपरिकरलाभस्य च परमात्माधीनत्वात् कर्तृत्वमात्रं परायत्तम् । विशेषकर्तृत्वं च परानुमतिसापेक्षत्वात् परायत्तम् । अंशे स्वातन्त्र्याज्जीवस्य विधिनिषेधविषयत्वम् । स्वातन्त्र्यं च स्वेच्छानुगुणप्रवृत्तिसामर्थ्ये सति अनिवार्यत्वम् । इतरसापेक्षत्वेऽपि विधिनिषेधविषयत्वम् फलभाक्त्वम् च रथाकर्षणादिषु दृष्टम् । इतरसापेक्षत्वे च प्रथमप्रवृत्तस्यैव फलान्वये च दृष्टान्ते दर्शितः । अनुमन्तुः परस्य नियन्त्रित्वात् धर्मग्राहकबाधाच्च न फलान्वयः किं तु जीवस्यैव।' (श्रु.प्र. 2-3-41)
61. See Śrūta Prakasika (2-3-41)
62. R.T.S. P. 254
63. B.G. VII-7; IX - 4-5
64. 'परगतातिशयाधानेच्छया उपादेयत्वमेव यस्य स्वरूपं स शेषः परः शेषी'।
(वे.सं)
65. R.T.S. 3.P. 80
66. भेद श्रुतयः suchas द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया and others
67. अभेद श्रुतयः suchas तत् त्वम् असि and others
68. छां.उ. 6-9, 10

69. बृ.उ. 3-7

70. 'सत्यसङ्कल्पमिश्रानवधिकातिशयासंख्येयकल्याणगुणगणं समस्तकारणभूतं परं ब्रह्म बहुस्यामिति संकल्प्य तेजोबन्धप्रमुखं कृत्स्नं जगत्सृष्ट्वा तस्मिन् देवादिविचित्रसंस्थानसंस्थिते जगति चेतनं जीववर्गं स्वकर्मानुगुणेषु शरीरेष्वात्मतया प्रवेश्य स्वयं च स्वेच्छयैव जीवान्तरात्मतया अनुप्रविश्य एवंभूतेषु स्वपर्यन्तेषु देवाद्याकारेषु नामरूपेव्याकरोत् ।' ... एवं च सर्वं चेतनं प्रति ब्रह्मण आत्मत्वेन सर्वं सचेतनं जगत्तस्य शरीरं भवति ।

(श्री. भा. 1-1-13)

71. श्री.भा. 1-1-13

72. S.B. I-1-1

73. S.B. II-1-23

74. 'अयमेव आत्मशरीरभावः - पृथक्सिद्धनर्हाधाराधेयभावः नियन्तृनियाम्यभावः शेषशेषिभावश्च ... सर्वात्मनाआधारतया नियन्तृतया शेषितया च आप्नोतीति आत्मा आधेयतया नियाम्यतया शेषतया च अपृथक्सिद्धं प्रकारभूतं इत्याकारः शरीरम् इत्युच्यते । एवमेव हि जीवात्मनः स्वशरीरसम्बन्धः' । (वे.सं p - 76, S.S.R.'s Edition)

अतो यस्य चेतनस्य यद्व्यं सर्वात्मना स्वार्थं नियन्तुं धारयितुं च शक्यम् तच्छेषतैकस्वरूपं च तत्तस्य शरीरमिति शरीरलक्षणं आस्थेयम् ।

(श्री.भा. 2-1-9; See also 1-2-2)

75. N.S. Pages 209-210

76. दिशत्येवं देवो जनितसुगतिं दण्डनगतिम् । (दया - 64)

77. R.T.S. 23, P, 153

78. R.T.S. 23, P, 154

79. R.T.S. 23, P, 154

80. R.T.S. 23, P, 154

81. दया.श. 16, 17

82. R.T.S. 5-P. 92
83. T.M.K. III-69
84. B.G. 4-6, 7, 8
85. Rahasya Traya Sara, 29, P. 247
86. Phil of Vis., pp. 156-158
87. Phil. of Vis., P.N.S., p. 160
88. 'रिपूणामपि वत्सलः' रामायणम्
89. 'अजडं स्वात्मसम्बोधि नित्यं सर्वावगाहनम् ।
ज्ञानं नाम गुणं प्राहुः प्रथमं गुणचिन्तकाः ॥' अ.सं.
90. श्रमहानिस्तु या तस्य सततं कुर्वतो जगत् ।
बलं नाम गुणस्तस्य कथितो गुणचिन्तकैः ॥' अ.सं.
91. 'तस्योपादानभावेऽपि विकारविरहो हि यः ।
वीर्यं नाम गुणस्तोयमच्युतत्वापराह्वयम् ॥' अ.सं.
92. 'स्वव्यतिरिक्तनिमित्तकारणं अद्वितीयपदेन प्रतिषिद्धम् ।' वे.सं. p - 178
93. 'स्वरक्षणीयताभिमतेषु दोषतिरस्कारिणी प्रीतिः' । ग.भा.
94. 'आश्रितविरहाक्षमतयानुप्रवेशत्वम्, सापराधेषु शासनोन्मुखस्यापि सामप्रधानत्वं वा ।' (ग.भा.)
95. 'मनो वाक्कायव्यापाराणां मिथस्संवादित्वम्' (ग.भा.)
96. 'सामान्यतो विशेषतश्च हितैषित्वम्' (ग.भा.)
97. 'अनुद्दिष्टस्वप्रयोजनान्तर परदुःखनिराकरणेच्छा' (ग.भा.)
98. 'क्षीरवदुपायभावेऽपि स्वादुत्वम्' ।(ग.भा.)
99. 'भक्तानुग्रहवदान्यत्वादेरामूलतो दुरवगाहत्वम्' (ग.भा.)
100. 'प्रात्रलाघवं देयगौरवं चानादृत्य दायविभागन्यायेन प्रत्युपकारादिनिरपेक्षं वितरणरसिकत्वं प्रभूतं दत्वाप्यतृप्तत्वं च ।' (ग.भा.)

101. 'शरणागतसंग्रहे दोषप्रदर्शकैरन्तरङ्गैरप्यकम्पनीयत्वम्' । (ग.भा.)
102. 'इष्टप्रापणाद्यौ' गुणावाह' (ग.भा.)
103. 'जगद्व्यापारमोक्षप्रदानादिषु च अमोघसङ्कल्पत्वम् ।' (ग.भा.)
104. 'कृतमिहोपकारः । तद्वत्त्वम् कृतित्वम् । उपकर्तृत्वमित्यर्थः ।' (ग.भा.)
105. See Gita 3-22
106. 'आश्रितकर्तव्यस्य स्वयं कर्तृत्वम्' (सुदर्शनसूरि. ग.भा.)
107. 'कृतमेव जानाति न तु करिष्यमाणां शमकृतमिति ।
स्वल्पमप्याश्रितैर्यत्साधुकृतम् तदेव जानाति आश्रितकृतं दोषं स्वकृतं श्रेयश्च न
स्मरतीति कृतज्ञः' । (सुदर्शनसूरि. ग.भा.)
108. 'समस्त पुरुषार्थानां साधकस्य दयानिधेः ।
श्रीमतः पूर्वसिद्धत्वात्सिद्धोपायमिमं विदुः । र.त्र.सा. 23 p. 159
109. R.T.S. 23
110. R.T.S. 27. P. 194
111. 'संसारतन्त्रवाहित्वात् रक्षापेक्षां प्रतीक्षते' ।
112. 'अप्रार्थितो न गोपायेत्'
113. 'स्वप्राप्तेः स्वयमेवसाधनतया जोषुष्यमाणः श्रुतौ' । र.त्र.सा
114. 'यमेवैषवृणुते तेनलभ्यः'; 'अमृतस्यैष सेतुः';
'तमक्रतुं पश्यति वीतशोकः धातुः प्रसादान्महिमानमीशम् ।'
115. R.T.S. 23. P. 152
116. R.T.S. 23, P. 152
117. R.T.S.R. 23. P. 153
118. वैकुण्ठस्तव. 36
119. R.T.S. 23. P. 156
120. 'हीश्चते लक्ष्मीश्च पत्न्यौ' पु.सू. ; 'सुमज्जानये' (रि.वे) Rig.V.

121. See Phil. of Vis., P.N.S. p. 165
122. There are two divergent schools of interpretation among the followers of Ramanuja in explaining the relation between the Lord and Sri. Vedanta Desika defines the cosmic Reality as Lord and Sri in dual self which is one in two and two in one. He affirms that this co-operative identity is absolutely necessary for the aspirant. Sri is infinite and is therefore capable of securing the triumph of Kripa over Karma. Thus according to Desika, in Sriyahpati, we find a harmonious blending of the holiness of law and the forgiveness of love. Sri Pillai Lokacharya, on the other hand, argues that there cannot be two all-pervasive infinities. The idea of dual divinity negates the concept of a single Godhead, and so Pillai Lokacharya expounds that Goddess Laksmi is finite, but ever free. She is said to be a living link between the Jiva and the Isvara. She softens the anger of God on the one hand and converts the sinner on the other.
123. 'लक्ष्म्या सह हृषीकेशः देव्या कारुण्यरूपया ।
रक्षकः सर्वसिद्धान्ते वेदान्तेषु च गीयते ॥' लक्ष्मीतन्त्र 28-14
Quoted in र.त्र.सा.
124. R.T.S. 23. P. 157
125. R.T.S. 23. P. 157
126. Thiru 4-5-11.
127. R.T.S. 23. P. 159
128. R.T.S. 23. P. 159
129. G.B. 15-17 to 19
130. R.G.B. 15th Chapter, Introduction
131. मुं.उ. 2-2-9, 10
132. 'ज्योतिश्चरणाभिधानात्' श्री.भा. 1-1-25; छां.उ. 3-13-7
133. श्री.भा. 1-3-7; 8

134. 'नित्यसिद्धे तदाकारे तत्परत्वे च पौष्कर'; 'नित्यं नित्याकृतिधरम्';
'नित्याऽलिङ्गा स्वभावसंसिद्धिः'

135. V.S.P. 174. S.S.R.'s Edition

136. V.S.P. 176. S.S.R.'s Edition

137. S.S.P. 166

138. 'अथयोगविशेषसक्तानां चित्तालम्बनसिद्ध्यर्थं ईश्वरस्य दिव्यगात्रपरिग्रह इति
तथैवास्त्रभूषणादिपरिग्रहोऽपि इति तुल्यप्रमाणसिद्धत्वादेष्टव्यम् ।

(स.सि.प. 166)

139. R.T.S. 5 P. 90;

140. R.T.S. 5 P. 89;

141. T.M.K. 3-61

142. 'तद्विष्णोः परमं पदं सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः' (यजु.वे. 6-5)

143. 'क्षयन्तमस्य रजसः पराके' यजु 2-2-12; 'तमसः परस्तात्' महा.ना.उ.

144. V.S.P. 164. S.S.R.'s Edition

145. 'कथं त्रयाणां परमप्राप्यत्वमिति चेत् भगवत्स्वरूपं परमप्राप्यत्वादेव परमपदम्;
इतरयोरपि भगवत्प्राप्तिर्भगवत्त्वादेव परमपदम्' । वे.सं. P.-165,

S.S.R.'s Edition

146. R.T.S. 5. P. 89

147. R.T.S. 5 P. 89;

148. 'धियः स्वयंप्रकाशत्वं मुक्तौ स्वाभाविकं यथा ।

बद्धे कदाचित्संरुद्धः तथात्रापि नियम्यते ॥'

र.त्र.स. 5-P.-9

149. R.T.S. 5 P. 90;

150. 'आविर्भूतस्वरूपा निरवधिकसुखब्रह्मभुक्तिस्तु मुक्तिः ।' त.मु.क. 2-64

151. Introduction to Ved. Sam. S.S.R. p. 133

152. R.T.S. 22. P. 146

153. 'निरस्तातिशयाह्लादसुखभावैकलक्षणा ।
भेषजं भगवत्प्राप्तिरेकान्तात्यन्तिकी मता ॥' वि.पु. 6-5-59
154. See for a detailed discussion of Kaivalya - in Nyaya Siddhanjanam, pp. 221 to 224.
155. T.M.K. 2-65, 66
156. T.M.K. 2-67; S.S.
157. T.M.K. 2-67
158. S.B. 4-4-21
159. S.B. 4-4-17.
160. 'अनावृत्तिशब्दात्' श्री.भा. 4-4-22; त.मु.क. 2-66, 68

SĀDHANA

The Upaniṣads declare that one prepares oneself for a Vedāntic life through the practice of Vairāgya in all un-Godly ideals. This kind of Virakti in all things other than Paramātmān, the Supreme object of one's attainment, is to be developed, only from a psychological insight into the imperfections of the soul, and the true knowledge of the eternal perfections and vibhūti of the Supreme Lord, his Śeṣin. The true knowledge of the Supreme Reality leading one to Virakti is the first prerequisite for becoming a spiritual aspirant—a Mumukṣu. Jñānam and Virakti then lead one to Bhakti.

A Mumukṣu is a blessed soul who has taken a genuine turn in his life from Viṣayarāga to Bhagavadrāga. Vedānta Deśika describes that such an aspirant

1. Would give up all carnal pleasures of the outside world;
2. Would consider even the bliss of Kaivalya-Ātmānubhava as a limited delight;
3. And would acquire an intense eagerness for Divine communion.

We will deal in this section, with the several means or Sādhana that are to be adopted by such a spiritual aspirant for attaining that Highest object of his aspiration.

Background of Sādhana in Viśiṣṭādvaita:

Before entering into an exposition of Rāmānuja's philosophy of Sādhana, it is essential for us to study some of the important findings of Rāmānuja that formulate his philosophy of Sādhana.

1. The Relationship Between the Karma Kānda and the Jñāna Kānda:

It is Rāmānuja's conviction that both the parts of the Veda viz., the Karma Kānda and the Jñāna Kānda form one integral whole having a definite order. They are never treated as contradictory. But they are taken as complementary. The śārīraka śāstra is one integral whole containing these two parts namely the Purva bhāga and the Uttara bhāga. They are united as the former and the latter part, having a logical sequence. Each part is assigned its proper place in this school and so is not interpreted as contradictory as in other schools of thought.

The śārīraka śāstra begins with the first Sūtra of the Karma Mimamsa, 'Athātho Dharma Jijñāsa', and ends with the last Sūtra of Brahma Mīmāṃsa 'Anāvṛttiśabdāt Anāvṛttiśabdāt'. The opinion of the Vṛttikāra is quoted by Rāmānuja in support of his view. The "Vṛttikāra declares that both the parts form one integral unity-

‘संहितमेतच्छारीरकं जैमिनीयेन षोडशलक्षणेनेति
शास्त्रैकत्वसिद्धिरिति । अतः प्रतिपिपादयिषितार्थभेदेन
षट्कभेदवदध्यायभेदवच्च पूर्वोत्तरमीमांसयोः भेदः ।’

(श्री.भा. 1-1-1)

When one realizes that the results of the several Karmas are little and transient, and that the fruit of Jñāna is eternal and infinite, one transforms oneself into a spiritual aspirant. This is the transition from the Pūrvamīmāṃsa to the Vedānta. The spiritual seeker, from then on yearns for Apavarga instead of for Svarga. Rāmānuja expounds the very first of the Vedānta Sūtras in this light.

‘पूर्ववृत्तात्, कर्मज्ञानादनन्तरं तत एव हेतोः ब्रह्म ज्ञातव्यमित्युक्तं भवति ।
श्री. भा. 1-1-1

This is one important point that must be remembered.

2. The World of Experience is Real :

The reality of the world of experience is admitted at all levels, according to the proofs of experience and scriptures that are verified by means of intuition. The scriptural texts that affirm and negate the Universe are reconciled satisfactorily only in this school. The significance of the negation of the Universe is that the objects of this Universe have no value without Brahman, as all things have their being only in Brahman. The Absolute Vāsudēva is the Śarīrin of all objects other than Himself, both sentient and non-sentient and so all of them signify Brahman only. The point of negation relates to objects bereft of Brahman.' This wisdom of Vedānta is the essence of Vedic Knowledge, and 'therefore there is absolutely no contradiction whatsoever in any part of the scriptures.

3. No Distinction Between Lower and Higher Brahman:

The Bādarāyaṇa Sūtras expound the nature of Brahman and the means of attaining It. Rāmānuja has interpreted the entire body of the Sūtras in such a convincing way that there is hardly any contradiction between the Sūtras and Upaniṣads. The school of Advaita makes a distinction between the lower and the higher Brahman, and contends that the portions dealing with meditation on Brahman form the Lower Knowledge or Aparā Vidyā. The various Upāsanas, the goal, and results thereof, the passage of the self from here to Brahman are

all explained, as having an exoteric significance relating to Kārya Brahman. It is declared that Brahman is realized here and now, when one has attained the knowledge of the oneness of Brahman, through the great texts. This is stated to have esoteric importance. But Viśiṣṭādvaita never makes such an untenable distinction between Kāraṇa Brahman and Kārya Brahman. It recognizes the absolute Brahman of the Upaniṣads as one and the same, as the God of religion, strictly in accordance with the spirit of the infallible scriptures.

4. The Sādhaka is Different and Distinct from Brahman:

Though the soul is inseparably related to Brahman as His body, he is metaphysically different and distinct from the Supreme Being. The Sādhaka is as real as the Sādhya. The Siddhi also is equally real. This school has arrived at this fundamental truth of the difference and distinction of the souls from Brahman, on the authority of the eternal scriptures, and the realization of this truth gives a deeper meaning to the fact of Sādhana. The goal of attainment is never identity between the soul and God, as posited by some other schools, for maintaining which they conceived of unjustly sublating certain sections of the Vedas by certain other parts. The goal of attainment here, on the other hand, is an eternal and infinite Bliss of Communion with God.

Synthesis Between Karma and Jñāna: .

The school of Viśiṣṭādvaita has steered clear of many a fallacy, as it has assigned the correct and due position to each and every thing, instead of over doing one against the other. The Īśāvāsyā Text, namely

‘विद्यां चाविद्यां च यस्तद्वेद उभयं सह’

has been differently interpreted by different thinkers. Avidyā stands for Karma and Vidyā stands for Jñānam. The interpretation of Rāmānuja for this is remarkable. If others take it for either Samuchhaya or Vikalpa, Rāmānuja interprets "Ubhayam Saha" in the sense of an 'Anga' and an 'Angi'. They have to be known as the part and the whole. Karma is a part of Jñānam and so it is subordinated to Jñānam. There is no problem of discarding Karma, therefore, for Jñānam. When this relationship of Karma and Jñānam deepens into our mind we will realize the importance and position of each.

It is against this background that we have to study the philosophy of Sādhana in Viśiṣṭādvaita. The school of Viśiṣṭādvaita had many an eminent teacher in the past and has a weighty and rich tradition. The Ālvars who were mystic seers have discovered the path of realization by intuition, and the great Āchāryās have realized those truths by following them with unshakable devotion. Rāmānuja has gloriously expounded the philosophy of Sādhana, in his immortal works, guided by those ancient seers and his own intuition. This philosophy of Sādhana therefore, is not an invention of Rāmānuja. It is only a reconstruction and propagation of the age-old truths.

Mere Verbal Understanding is Not a Means to Salvation According to Rāmānuja:

It is contended by the teachers of the Advaitic school of thought that knowledge of the oneness of the soul, as couched in the great sayings, such as 'That Thou Art', is

the means of liberation. Karma, they argue, is only helpful for developing an eagerness for knowing Brahman. 'Śama', 'Dama' and others are accepted only as internal means for the attainment of the knowledge of the 'Secondless Brahman'. According to them: 'Śravaṇa', 'Manana' and 'Nididhyāsaṇa' are meant for the realization, verification and confirmation of the knowledge that there is nothing other than Brahman. As the world of differences is ascribed to nescience by these thinkers, it is their conviction that knowledge of the oneness of Brahman alone can be the destroyer of Avidyā, the root cause of the unreal Samsāra.

Rāmānuja carefully examines the above view point and comes to the conclusion that knowledge of Brahman surely leads to liberation through the destruction of Avidyā. 'But', he says, 'it is essential to realize the kind of knowledge prescribed by the scriptures'. According to Rāmānuja the means of liberation is not verbal knowledge but knowledge of the nature of Upāsana based on verbal knowledge.

यदुक्तं अविद्यानिवृत्तिरेव हि मोक्षः स च ब्रह्मज्ञानादेव भवतीति
तदभ्युपगम्यते । अविद्यानिवृत्तये वेदान्तवाक्यैः विधित्सितं ज्ञानं
किंरूपमिति विवेचनीयम् । किं वाक्यात् वाक्यार्थज्ञानमात्रम् ?
उत तन्मूलमुपासनात्मकं ज्ञानमिति ? श्री.भा. 1-1-1

Mere verbal knowledge can never be the means of liberation. The scriptures positively ordain that one should attain the knowledge of Brahman and attain Him through Upāsana. If it were mere verbal knowledge there would have been no need for this imperative.

‘न तावद्वाक्यजन्यज्ञानम् । तस्य विधानमन्तरेणापि वाक्यादेव
सिद्धेः ।’ श्री.भा. 1-1-1

The various Vedic imperatives, such as 'प्रज्ञां कुर्वीत' and others, become futile if mere verbal knowledge is taken to be the means of liberation. The meaning of a verbal statement is grasped by one even without an injunction to know it. When one is duly instructed into the entire Vedic lore one cannot escape going into the sense of such statements.² So the Vedic imperatives signify that the means of liberation are something different from mere verbal knowledge. Nor can it be argued that the point of injunction relates to the

‘अलौकिकं श्रेयस्साधनत्वम्’

of this 'Pramāṇa Jñānam', for it is agreed that the knowledge capable of removing bondage is known, just as the knowledge that removes the illusion of silver in the nacre. So the Vidhivakyas become invalidated in that case.

‘न च प्रमाणज्ञानस्य श्रेयस्साधनत्वमलौकिकमिति तद्रूपेण तस्य विधेयत्वम् । शुक्तिरूप्यादिभ्रमनिवर्तनं ज्ञानस्यैव बन्धनिवर्तकं ज्ञानस्य दृष्टार्थत्वाभ्युपगमात् । अतो विधिवैयर्थ्यम्।’

श्री.भा 1-1-1

This results not only in the futility and unjust abandonment of Vedic imperatives but also in the contradiction of other innumerable texts such as

‘यावन्नविमोक्ष्ये अथ संपत्स्ये’

and others that directly prescribe the practice of Upāsana, and that throughout one's life.

Moreover, it cannot be argued that the destruction of Avidyā is obtained only by that much of verbal knowledge.

‘तावन्मात्रेण अविद्यानिवृत्त्यनुपलब्धेश्च’

श्री.भा 1-1-1

The great Āpastamba declares that mere 'Vākyaārtha Jñānam' can never be the means of liberation, as it is opposed to innumerable scriptures.

‘यथा बुद्धे क्षेमप्रापणं तच्छास्त्रैः विप्रतिषिद्धम्’

It cannot be argued further that the Vedantic sentence does not give rise to the knowledge which is destructive of ignorance when 'Bhedavāsanā' persists, and that even if such 'Avidyānivarthaka jñānam' comes into existence, there is nothing wrong, if Bheda Jñāna does not cease for all, at once, on the analogy of the perception of the double moon even though the oneness of the moon is known. Knowledge must come into existence when the necessary causal collocation is available. For it is also seen that knowledge, that stultifies wrong innate impressions, results from the teachings of Trustworthy Teachers and logical inferences, even when there are such wrong innate impressions. So it cannot be argued that knowledge is not obtained from the Vedantic texts when Bhedavāsanā is unremoved.

‘न च वाच्यं भेदवासनायां अनिरस्तायां वाक्यं अविद्यानिवर्तकं ज्ञानं न जनयति । जातेऽपि सर्वस्य सहसैव भेदज्ञानानिवृत्तिः न दोषाय चन्द्रैकत्वे ज्ञातेऽपि द्विचन्द्रज्ञानानिवृत्तिवत् । अनिवृत्तमपि छिन्नमूलत्वेन न बन्धाय भवतीति । सत्यां सामगूयां ज्ञानानुत्पत्त्यनुपपत्तेः । सत्यामपि विपरीतवासनायां आप्तोपदेश लिङ्गादिभिर्बाधकज्ञानोत्पत्तिदर्शनात्।’

श्री.भा. 1-1-1

Nor can it be argued that Bhedavāsanā continues to exist inspite of Vakyārtha jñānam, due to the existence of a small vestige of the beginningless Vāsanā. For this Vāsanā that is responsible for the perception of distinctions is of

an unreal nature and so is removed the very moment true knowledge is obtained. If that Vāsanā which is unreal stands unremoved inspite of the origination of knowledge then there can be nothing else to remove it -

‘ज्ञानोत्पत्तावपि मिथ्यारूपायास्तस्याः अनिवृत्तौ
निवर्तकान्तराभावात् कदाचिदपि नास्या वासनायाः निवृत्तिः।’

श्री.भा. 1-1-1

There are only two choices here. It must be said that either the Vāsanās were not removed inspite of the origination of the knowledge, or that the perception of differences continues due to no reason whatsoever, even after the removal of that innate impression. The former is not possible as already shown. The latter also is not possible at any time, for there cannot be a Kārya without a Kāraṇa. So Bheda Jñānam, inspite of verbal understanding, cannot be obtained without a proper cause. If the effect can be there without the cause, if Bheda darśana is possible without any cause whatsoever, then liberation might be possible without knowledge, verbal knowledge might be possible without 'Śravaṇa' or 'Manana', and the illusion of the world of differences would also be possible without nescience or Avidyā. But what about the perception of two moons inspite of the definite knowledge to the contrary? That is due to the existence of the real defect in the eye, which is impossible of destruction by knowledge. The illusion of the rope-snake, shell-Silver and others are all due to certain really existing causes such as darkness and other misguiding things. They are not affected by knowledge. But the effects of such false perceptions vanish when true knowledge is obtained. Therefore it does not stand to reason to argue that the non-disappearance of all

differences even in the case of enlightenment is not a defect.

Rāmānuja argues that the origination of knowledge can never be possible in those who maintain that genesis of knowledge results from the removal of Bhedavāsānā. The innate impression of distinctions is accumulated from beginningless time in a large measure, and the mental conception opposed to it is weak and incapable of destroying it. So that knowledge alone, which is other than Vāk्यārthajñānam, and which is designated as Dhyāna or Upāsana is enjoined by Vedāntic passages for attaining liberation.

Vāk्यārtha Jñānam is the Starting Point of All Spiritual Processes But Never the Means of Liberation.

If the Mimāmsakāra insists on the primacy of Karma and concludes that action alone is the main import of all Vedic injunctions, and that knowledge is only accessory to it, the Vedāntin of the Advaitic school holds the Jñāna kanda supreme, and argues that Jñānam alone is the means of liberation. His conclusion is that Karma is the result of Avidyā, whereas Jñānam destroys Avidyā or Karma. Even in such a Jñānam of the nature of direct realization there are enough difficulties.³ They are to be asked what they mean when they declare that Vāk्यārtha Jñānam is the means of liberation. Is it mere verbal knowledge of the scriptural statements like 'That Thou Art', or verbal knowledge culminating in Anubhava or experience? In the former case, mere verbal knowledge of the texts cannot be the cause of Mukti for reasons cited above. Nobody can maintain that the mere understanding of the Abheda śrutis leads to liberation. Anyone and everyone that reads and

knows the meaning cannot be deemed to have been liberated.

If it is argued that this verbal knowledge is to be realized in experience, it is as good as accepting the standpoint of the opponent affirming the necessity of unceasing meditation. In that case, the object of meditation will have to be ascertained only according to the spirit of the scriptures. And this shall have to be the ever Blissful Brahman, Vāsudēva, the inner Soul of All.

It is in the ordinary experience of all people that those who have gained verbal knowledge have been unable to escape from the misery of this world. So it is unreasonable to hold that the scriptures prescribe verbal knowledge as the means of Mukti.

The 'Dhyānaniyōga Vadin differs from the Advaitin in his philosophy of Sādhanas though he agrees with him in content. It is the contention of this school that knowledge is not immediate but a process of knowing. The Vedic imperative enjoining meditation is a positive process which progresses gradually from stage to stage.

तत्र ब्रह्मध्याननियोगेन तत्तत्साक्षात्कारफलेन
निरस्तसमस्ताविद्याकृतविविधभेदाद्वितीयज्ञानैकरसब्रह्मभावरूप
मोक्षः प्राप्यते।' श्री.भा. 1-1-4

The law of Karma is declared to be inferior to the Vedic texts prescribing meditation on Brahman. The sense of plurality is gradually given up and self-identity of Brahman is gained in the end.

The Nisprapanchikaraṇaniyōgavādin has tried to bring together the ethics of the Mimāṃśaka and the philosophy

of the Vedāntin. It is his contention that Mukti is the knowledge of Brahman which is to be attained by destroying the world order for which he feels the necessity of the Niyōga.

‘निष्प्रपञ्चमद्वितीयं ज्ञानैकरसं ब्रह्म अनाद्यविद्यया सप्रश्नतया
प्रतीयमानं निष्प्रपञ्चं कुर्यादिति।’ श्री.भा. 1-1-4

The Bhedābhedāvādin has tried to bring about a reconciliation between the two schools that propound either Karma or Jñānam as the means to Mokṣa. The theory of Bhāskara is the theory of Karma-Jñāna-Samuchhaya. Both Karma and Jñānam are held by them to be valid. Jñānam happens to be the unceasing meditation on the aspect of Abhedā and Karma is to be realized as Niṣkāma Karma.

Rāmānuja strongly repudiates the above view points on the authority of the very texts quoted by them and comes to the conclusion that only knowledge of the nature of Upāsana is the means to Mukti.⁴

Rāmānuja's Concept of Sādhana:

The means of liberation are stated to be twofold in this school namely the Siddhōpāya and the Sādhyōpāya, God is verily the means ever existent, for He is the sole source and sustenance of the Universe, and nothing can be realized without His grace. He is the Antaryāmin, the Immanent principle, ever existent in all objects. He is Supreme and omnipotent and on his mercy depends the entire Universe. Divine grace is essential for any kind of achievement and one cannot think of attaining anything by any means independent of Him. So God is the Ultimate

means of liberation in this school. There may be an objection to this on the following lines : 'If everything depends on God alone, what is the use of our observing different means for salvation? Why should one take to Karma or Bhakti or Jñānam if these singly or collectively are not capable of securing us release from Samsāra. This is a relevant point and it is answered as follows: 'God is undoubtedly the Siddhōpāya or self-existent means, but He does not thrust His gifts on us irrespective of our desire. He is free from partiality and cruelty and so he waits for an opportunity to rush to the rescue of the Jiva. He waits for the expression or an eagerness to be saved on the part of the aspirant for showering His Grace, and so it is essential that an aspirant should so act as to win Divine Grace. Thus there is scope for human personality and positive choice. It is inevitable that the aspirants should take to some means or other such as Bhakti or Prapatti to endear Himself to the Lord and thus to deserve His grace. These means are accessories or 'Sahakarins' for attaining salvation through God. It is thus the omnipotent Īśvara that liberates us from the shackles of samsāra being pleased with the observance of the Sādhyōayā, or the means that are to be adopted by us.⁵

Rāmānuja has discussed in his works the nature of Sādhana, and has examined the views of others carefully. He comes to the conclusion that meditation itself is prescribed as the means to Mukti. A number of scriptural texts are quoted by him in support of his theory of Sādhana, and it is not possible to discard all these altogether. He examines the two important texts namely

‘अनुविद्य विजानाति’, ‘विज्ञाय प्रज्ञां कुर्वीत’ बृ.उ. 4-4-21

The terms 'Anuvidyā' and 'Vijñāya' in the above texts are used to signify Vākyaārtha Jñānam and it does not end there. The scriptures ordain meditation further, by the words विजानाति, 'प्रज्ञां कुर्वीत'. It is an admitted fact that textual understanding helps meditation.

‘अनुविद्यविजानाति विज्ञाय प्रज्ञां कुर्वीतेत्येवमादिभिः
वाक्यार्थज्ञानस्य ध्यानोपकारकत्वात् अनुविद्य विज्ञायेत्यनूद्य प्रज्ञां
कुर्वीत विजानातीति ध्यानं विधीयते ।’ श्री.भा. 1-1-1

The principal text that enjoins meditation upon God is found in the Brhadaranyakopanisad. It forms the crowning precept of Yājñavalkya to Maitreyī. It runs as follows:

‘आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यश्च्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः ।’

बृ.उ. 4-5-6

This is definitely an injunction as evidenced by the context and so cannot be construed otherwise. There are four terms here namely 'The soul must be seen, heard, reflected upon and meditated upon'. Are all these imperatives? Or one of them? Hearing or Śravaṇa is not an imperative, for a person who has learnt the Vedas with a view to attain desirable objects betakes himself of his own accord to the 'hearing' of the Vedas for a definite and clear understanding. The point of imperative is not even with Manana, because it is only meant for consolidation of what has been heard. So the vedic imperative in this statement is only on Dhyāna or meditation. The Sūtrakara also affirms this in his Sūtra .

‘आवृत्तिरसकृदुपदेशात् ।’

श्री.भा 4-1-1

Rāmānuja therefore concludes that it is Vedana or Upāsana which is prescribed as the means of salvation.

‘तदिदम् अपवर्गोपायतया विधित्सतं वेदनं
उपासनमित्यवगम्यते’ । श्री.भा. 1-1-1

The śruti prescribes Vedana in one place and Upāsana in another place. How can it be said that only Dhyāna is enjoined as the means of liberation?

From a close examination of the scriptures, we find that they begin with the word Upāsana and conclude with the word Vedana. From this it is clear that there is identity in meaning between Upāsana and Vedana. The 18th section of the IIIrd chapter in Chāndōgya Upaniṣad for example begins with ‘Mano Brahmetyupāsita⁶ and concludes with the words ‘भाति च तपति च कीर्त्या यशसा ब्रह्मवर्चसेन य एवं वेद’ छा.उ. 3-18-6. There are many such instances where the term Vedana is used in a sense similar to that of Upāsana.⁷

The Vakyakara has declared in ‘वेदनमुपासनं स्यात्तद्विषये श्रवणम्’ श्री.भा.1-1-1 the identity between Vedana and Upāsana. Vedana is prescribed as the ‘means of liberation in the Upaniṣads, and this is declared to be the same as Upāsana by the Vākyakāra in the statements:

‘सिद्धंतूपासनशब्दात्, उपासनं स्यात् ध्रुवानुस्मृतिः
दर्शनान्निर्वचनाच्च ।’ श्री.भा. 1-1-1

Rāmānuja, declares that Dhyāna or meditation is of the form of ‘तैलधारावदविच्छिन्नस्मृतिसन्तानरूपम्’. It is the practice of a continuous remembrance of God without any

break in the middle, just like the uninterrupted flow of oil. This remembrance when it becomes intense and perfect results in a vivid perception of the Supreme Being. So it is to be practised continuously throughout one's life, until one is blessed with that eternal vision. Rāmānuja expounds this in the following words:

‘सा च स्मृतिः दर्शनसमानाकारा । ‘भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिः छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः । क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे । (मु.उ. 2-2-8). आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः इत्यनेन विदिध्यासनस्य दर्शनसमानाकारता विधीयते।’ श्री.भा. 1-1-1

Though the term 'Draṣṭavyaha' can generally be taken in the sense of mere knowledge, as the words Śravaṇa, Manana and others are used along with it in the scriptures, such as 'Draṣṭavyaha', 'Srotavyo Mantavyo Nididhyāsitavyaha',

‘आत्मनि खल्वरे दृष्टे श्रुते मते विज्ञाते इदं सर्वं विदितम्।’

and soon, this word signifies Sakṣātkara or realization which is the goal of all spiritual endeavours.

‘दर्शनशब्दस्य ज्ञानसामान्यपरत्वसम्भवेऽपि द्रष्टव्यः ... इति श्रवणादीनां पृथगुक्तत्वात् द्रष्टव्य इति पदम् साक्षात्काररूपत्वपरम्।’ श्री.प. p-46

The point of imperative is definitely on 'Draṣṭavyaha', and the mode of Darśana is ascertained by the word 'Nididhyāsitavyaha'. Both these form a single imperative as Deśika describes it as a 'Viśiṣṭavidhi' in his Tattvatika (p. 62). It is, therefore, Darśana which is the main point of imperative, and others are aids to it.⁸

Śravaṇa and Manana are Anuvādas or restatements, whereas Darśana and Nididhyāsana form a single qualified imperative. Both these form one 'Vidhi' in unity. The word 'विज्ञाते' in 'आत्मनिखल्वरे दृष्टे श्रुते मते विज्ञाते इदं सर्वं विदितम्' is correctly referred to Nididhyāsana, owing to its juxtaposition with the other terms corresponding to the terms found in the imperative "Draṣṭavyaḥ Srotavyaḥ" etc. This 'Darśana Samānākāratā' or the characteristic of the form of a vivid and intense perception of the awareness of the Supreme, ordained in the above text is a fact common to all kinds of Upāsanas. The Upaniṣads declare that, by knowing the sole cause all else could be known, and that the object of steady meditation in all modes of Upāsanas happens to be this Universal Cause. 'Who is to be meditated upon?' asks the Upaniṣad and answers that question as 'Kāraṇam Tu Dhyeyaha' - 'The Universal Cause is to be the Goal of all meditation'. So all types of Upāsanas relating to that Absolute cause must necessarily be of the form of a vivid perception of the awareness of the Supreme Being.

Can the remembrance of the Lord result itself ultimately in a vivid and clear perception of the object of meditation? The answer is definitely in the affirmative. The reason for this is evidently Bhāvanā Prakarṣa.

‘भवति च स्मृतेः भावनाप्रकर्षात् दर्शनरूपता’ श्री.भा. 1-1-1

Dhruvānusmṛiti or firm meditation is that knowledge of the Form of Meditation, which is to be repeated without any break in the middle. This meditation culminates 'Darśana Samānākāratā'. Rāmānuja declares that it is this

remembrance of the nature of a vivid perception of Brahman that is the means of liberation.

‘दर्शनरूपता च प्रत्यक्षतापत्तिः । एवं प्रत्यक्षतापन्नं
अपवर्गसाधनाभूतां स्मृतिं विशिनष्टि।’ श्री.भा. 1-1-1

The taittirīya text declares that one who knows Brahman attains the Highest. Here the term Vedana connotes Dhyāna which deepens into Upāsana. Of what nature should this Upāsana be to be rewarded with a vivid perception of the Supreme Self ? The śruti asserts that Brahman is not realized by Manana or profound learning. He is realized by one whom God chooses.

‘नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यः न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन । यमेवैष
वृणुते तेन लभ्यः तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम्’ ॥

कठ.उ. 1-2-22

Pravachana in the above mantra signifies only Manana as that is possible only through Manana. "Medhā" connotes here Nididhyāsanam. The fact that 'Śravaṇa and others are not the means of liberation is known. Then what are the means of liberation? The means of liberation are not mere Śravaṇa, Manana or Nididhyasana. The Upaniṣads declare that he, whom God chooses, sees Him! whom does God choose? He chooses evidently him whom He loves. God loves him who loves Him. So one should love God intensely to be chosen by Him in turn. He, for whom God is Niratiśayapriya does surely become the Priyatama of God. Lord Krishna has Himself revealed in the Gīta this secret that the Jñānin is His dearest.⁹ It is very clear from this that the Upāsaka and the Upāsya love each other.¹⁰

‘अतः साक्षात्काररूपा स्मृतिः स्मर्यमाणात्यर्थप्रियत्वेन स्वयमप्यत्यर्थप्रिया यस्य स एव परेणात्मनावरणीयो भवतीति तेनैव लभ्यते पर आत्मा इत्युक्तं भवति। एवं रूपा ध्रुवानुस्मृतिरेव भक्तिशब्देनाभिधीयते’। श्री.भा. 1-1-1

The Lord chooses him, for whom the ceaseless remembrance itself of the Lord becomes dear, on account of his intense love for the object of its meditation. The intense love of God, and an irrepressible yearning for the Vision of God are the Two significant facts of Upāsana. The intensity of love for the Lord leads the aspirant to that yearning for Divine vision.

The Upaniṣads declare three important factors of the means of liberation. They are-

1. The fact of the Upāsaka's intense love towards God.
2. The fact of being chosen by God.
3. The fact of practising firm devotion.

‘वरणीयस्य भगवति निरतिशयप्रीतिमत्त्ववचनम्; वरणीयत्ववचनम्; ध्रुवानुस्मृतिवचनम्।’ शु.प्र. p- 50

This factor of intense love towards God ought to characterise devotion of the form of incessant memory of the Lord. This devotion is of the nature of intense joy, as it relates to the Blissful.

‘स्मर्यमाणस्य भगवद्विषयस्य निरूपाधिकनिरवधिकानुकूलत्वेन तद्विषयानुस्मृतिरपि हि निरतिशयानुकूला भवति । यद्वा ध्रुवानुस्मृतिः स्वयमत्यन्तानुकूलत्वात् अयुक्तावस्थायामपि प्रीतिरूपज्ञानेन प्रतिसन्धीयते इति प्रिया।’ शु.प्र. - 50

There is absolutely no difference between the two terms Bhakti and firm meditation of the form of love. They both signify the same.¹¹ So Bhakti is having the same sense as firm meditation.¹² The scriptures, primary and secondary, uphold with one voice devotion only, of the above nature, as the means of liberation.¹³

The several Karmas ordained in the scriptures help the achievement of this firm meditation, characterised by "Āparōkṣya" (immediate" perception of the Lord) and "Pṛitirūpatva" (the form of love). The Sūtrakara has expounded this fact of the several Karmas being the means of devotion in the Sūtra,

‘सर्वापेक्षा च यज्ञादिश्रुतेरश्ववत्’।

श्री.भा. 3-4-26

These Karmas are Jñāna Sādhana, and the knowledge here referred to is not verbal knowledge, but knowledge of the continuous meditation upon the Supreme Being.

‘अतो यज्ञादीनां ज्ञातसाधनत्वं अवगम्यते । ज्ञानं च वाक्यार्थज्ञानादर्थान्तरभूतं व्यानोपासनादिशब्दवाच्यं विशदतमप्रत्यक्षतापन्नस्मृतिरूपं निरतिशयप्रियं अहरहरभ्यासाधेयातिशयं आप्रयाणांदनुवर्तमानं मोक्षसाधनमित्युक्तं अस्माभिः पूर्वमेव।’

श्री.भा. 3-4-26

This conclusion is based on the authority of the Brihadāranyaka text. -

‘तमेतं वेदानुवचनेन ब्राह्मणा विविदिषन्ति यज्ञेन दानेन तपसाऽनाशकेन।’

बृ.उ. 4-4-22

The purport of the above statement is that one desires to attain knowledge through these means of sacrifice, dāna and others. These are not only 'Ichhā Sādhana', as

contended by some, but actually 'Jñāna sādhanas', as evidenced in the statement 'Asinā-Jighāṃsati', wherein the sword is verily a 'Hanana Sādhana' and not merely an 'Ichhā Sādhana'. The scriptures, therefore, ordain that all the Āsrāma Karmas are to be observed throughout one's life for developing and completing the means of spiritual perfection.¹⁴

So the cause of liberation is the remembrance, of the auspicious form of the Absolute Brahman, which has acquired a clearness and distinctness of a direct perception. The ever increasing and unbroken meditation upon the Lord is practised for culminating in such a direct experience. All previous reflections are meant for the acquisition by practice, of that clear and distinct perception of the Blissful form of Paramātman. It cannot be contended that there is scope for increase, diminution or variations in the result achieved from meditation, between person and person, according to the conditions of time and intensity. The philosophy of Karma admits of such variations in results, as the duration and intensity of pleasures of Svarga vary according to the observance of different Karmas. Such variations do not creep in the case of Brahmōpāsanas, for all the varieties of Upāsanas described in the Upaniṣads culminate in that "Darśana Samānakāratāpannam Jñānam" which is one and indivisible. A long process of spiritual culture is essential for the attainment of this liberating knowledge.

The general process in the scheme of Sādhanas can be now stated as follows: The aspirant has to gain the true knowledge of the nature of the Soul and the Universal Self (God-Brahman) from the Sāstras and the holy Āchāryas.

The disciple must have absolute faith in the saving grace of the Preceptor. When one is thus intuited into Divine wisdom, one develops into a Brahmōpāsaka. From then on he embarks on his pilgrimage to reach the ever-auspicious Lord, striving all the while to overcome the insurmountable obstacles on his way. The mind of every human being is formed of the three Guṇas, the Sātvic, the Tāmasic and the Rājasic. He has to put in his individual effort for subduing the Tāmasic and the Rājasic forces for a successful spiritual life. So Karmayōga has been prescribed to divest the mind of all Rājasic and Tāmasic tendencies, and to conquer the Temptation of the senses. When Karmayōga perfects, it culminates in Ātmāvalokana or 'Self-experience', either directly or through Jñānayōga. Jñānayōga is the stage when the Soul contemplates over the native state of the Pure self. The achievement of Ātmāvalokana is a significant stage, from whence the aspirant cultivates devotion towards the Paramātman, Vāsudeva, the inner Soul of all, since he realizes his own essential nature of Śeṣatva to the Lord. This is Bhaktiyōga. It is a steady and ever increasing remembrance of the Lord, which is practised with intense love for the Lord. Knowledge of God is identified with love of God, and the aspirant develops such intense love towards God, that he arrives at a stage, when he cannot bear himself without realizing Him. The devotee sees God through the heart. When this meditation becomes intense and perfect, it results in a vivid perception of the Supreme Being. The devotee has to surrender himself totally to the Lord for getting over the obstacles to his Bhaktiyōga, since surrender unto the Lord is essential for the commencement, progress and completion of Bhaktiyōga. This, in short, is the scheme of Bhaktiyōga.

The school of Viśiṣṭādvaita emphasizes the fact that self-surrender is absolutely necessary for a successful course of BhaktiYōga. The scriptures have ordained this as a means of salvation also. On the authority of the scriptures, self-surrender also is admitted by this school as a direct and valid means to Mukti. Bhakti and prapatti are both valid means to Mukti, but they are meant for different classes of aspirants. Those who are incapable of adopting BhaktiYōga may observe Prapatti and attain their Highest Goal of life.

Rāmānuja's concept of Sādhana is remarkable for its spirit of synthesis. He has given due importance to Karma, Jñāna and Bhakti and has assigned the right place for each one of these. He does not discard one for the other. According to him, Karmayōga leads to self-knowledge which, in turn, leads to knowledge of God. Karma and Jñāna are significant and necessary limbs of Bhakti.

Rāmānuja expounds a synthesis also between Divine Grace and Human effort. Divine Grace is ultimately responsible for the emancipation of man but the human personality has also a role in winning it. Though the Lord is omniscient and omnipotent, He does not bind down one to Samsāra and set free another according to His sweet will and pleasure. He functions according to the desires and aspirations of man whom He has endowed with doership and freedom of choice. This benevolent Redeemer eagerly waits for the expression of a desire on the part of man to be saved. Thus human effort to the minimum extent, of at least longing for Divine Grace, is absolutely necessary. The School of Viśiṣṭādvaita therefore, affirms the need for the adoption of the Sādhyaōpayā for winning the Grace of God who happens to be the Siddhōpayā.

Rāmānuja has likewise worked out a synthesis between knowledge and Upāsana. Upāsana or Bhakti is a form of knowledge and never different from it. Bhakti is incessant love towards God and, therefore the distinction between knowledge and love is also discarded. It is therefore described as a kind of knowledge which is of the nature of illimitable towards God (Nirathīśaya Priya), which has got for its object nothing other than God (Ananya prayojana), and which is averse to all kinds of attainments other than Him (Svethara vaitrishnyavaha). The knowledge meant here is the knowledge of the nature of meditation or "Upāsanaātmakam Jñānam", which transforms itself into the love of God.

Rāmānuja has also maintained the distinctive nature of Bhakti and prapatti. He maintains that both these are valid means to Mukti. He has expounded the significance of the two fold aspects of Prapatti. Prapatti completes Bhaktiyōga and so functions as an anga to it. It functions also as an independent means to Mukti and in this aspect is a substitute to Bhaktiyōga. Both these aspects of prapatti are maintained by Rāmānuja. There is neither the denial of prapatti as an independent means, nor there is the repudiation of Bhaktiyōga for exalting prapatti.

References :-

1. R.T.S. 7-p. 102
2. S.P. p.41
3. Phil. of Vis., P.N.S., p. 354.
Intro. to V.S., S.S.R., p. 151
4. Sri Bha., 1-1-1; 1-1-4
5. 'त्राणे स्वामित्वमौचित्यं न्यासाद्याः सहकारिणः' ।
'उपायः स्वप्राप्तेरुपनिषदधीतस्स भगवान् ।
प्रसृत्यै तस्योक्ते प्रपदननिदिध्यासनसृती ॥' R.T.S. 9-p. 105
6. छा.उ. 3-18-1
7. S.B. 1-1-1. See T.M.K. 2-29, 30
8. 'श्रोतव्यः श्रुतिवाक्येभ्यः मन्तव्यश्चोपपत्तिभिः ।
मत्वा च सततं ध्येयः एते दर्शनहेतवः ॥
9. B.G. 7-17; 10-10
10. 'अनेन परस्परविषयप्रीतिः उपास्योपासकयोः दर्शिता' । (श्रु.प्र. - 94)
11. 'एवंरूपा साक्षात्कारत्वप्रीतिरूपत्वपर्यन्ता ध्रुवानुस्मृतिरेव
भक्तिशब्दवाच्येत्यर्थः।' (श्रु.प्र. - 50)
12. 'स्नेहपूर्वमनुद्धानं भक्तिरित्यभिधीयते ।
भज इत्येष धातुर्वै सेवायां परिकीर्तितः ॥
तस्सात्सेवा बुधैः प्रोक्ता भक्तिशब्देन भूयसी।' श्रु.प्र. - 50
13. श्वे.उ. 3-8; पुरुषसूक्तम् 17; B.G. 11-53, 54; 8-22
14. 'यद्यपि विविदिषन्तीति यज्ञादयो विविदिषोत्पत्तौ विनियुज्यन्ते तथापि तस्यैव
वेदनस्य ध्यानरूपस्य ... ब्रह्मप्राप्तिसाधनत्वात् तदुत्पत्तये सर्वाण्याश्रमकर्माणि
यावज्जीवमनुष्ठेयानि' । (श्री.भा. 1-1-1)

KĀRMA YŌGA

We have so far outlined the general scheme of Sādhana in Viśiṣṭādvaita. Let us now consider each one of these aspects, in greater detail.

Karmayōga is the first step in the scheme of Upāsana. The word 'Yōga' means an Upāya or means. Karmayōga is that means, in which karma is predominant, as an Upāya. Karmayōga has its own aspects of Jñāna and Bhakti, as these three namely Karma, Jñāna and Bhakti are invariably mixed with one another. These are never eliminative of others. Though all the three are united together, it assumes the nature of Karma, Jñāna or Bhakti, according to the factor predominant in it. Yāmunāchārya declares this Truth as

‘त्रयाणामपि योगानां त्रिभिरन्योन्यसङ्गमः’

गी.सं 24

Karmayōga is Different From Mere Karma:

Karma results in bondage, whereas Karmayōga aids our release from bondage. Karma is the foundation of our moral life, and happens to be the factor, that explains our present status and determines our future. Karmayōga is, on the other hand, a discipline furnished to Karma. Karma is beginningless and varied. It is the result of beginningless ignorance. It is purposive and involves the idea of Kāma or desire for an end. Every Karma leaves Its own impression in the mind body, which is known as Vāsanā. This Vāsanā becomes strong and effective and the soul is impelled under its influence to seek the pleasures of the senses. It is due to this Karma-vāsanā that the soul desires for the pleasures of the senses. But Karmayōga is free from the dangers of

Karma. It is free from Kāma or desire for an end. It is a moral determination of the highest ideal to be achieved in conduct. The purpose here is one and only one, namely the achievement of liberation. As there is no attachment towards the results that are obtained, Karmayōga furnishes the mind with the proper discipline.¹

The spiritual aspirant performs all duties, enjoined on him, just as others, but without the slightest desire in the several fruits of those actions, be they primary or secondary. He concentrates his attention on the single aim of achieving liberation. So all the actions performed by him are transformed into means for liberation, as he detaches himself completely from all kinds of desires for the attainment of other ends. One who engages oneself in Kāmya Karma is swept away by one's Karma vāsanā, and gets entangled in Samsāra, as he has no single determination, and also as he is after extrinsic objects.

‘उक्तबुद्धियोगयुक्तं कर्म निखिलं सांसारिकदुःखं विनिवर्त्य
परमपुरुषार्थलक्षणं च मोक्षं प्रापयति । इतरदपरिमितदुःखरूपं
संसारमिति’ ।

गी.भा. 2-49

Those, who abandon all kinds of desires in the fruits of their action, attain verily the status of infinite happiness, being far from the trammels of births and deaths.

‘बुद्धियोगयुक्ताः कर्मजं फलं त्यक्त्वा कर्म कुर्वन्तः तस्मात्
जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः अनामयं पदं गच्छन्ति।’

गी.भा. 2-51

What is discarded here is not action as such, but only attachment towards it. The discipline of Karmayōga is renunciation in action, and not renunciation of action. The two extremes of activism and asceticism are carefully avoided here. The Nivrittīmārga insisted upon the

renunciation of all actions, whereas the pravrittimārga insisted upon following the path of action. The Gīta has propounded a course of action inclusive of both, and harmful to neither. It defined what had to be renounced. The Gīta ordained that Karma had to be done, but the desire in the fruit thereof had to be renounced. This philosophy of disinterested action is the unique contribution of the Gīta towards the philosophy of Sādhana. Pleasure and pain never taint a person, who abandons all attachment towards the objects of the world, and who does his duty for the sake of duty, and not for the sake of any fruit thereof.

The Vedas nevertheless contain portions prescribing Kāmya Karmas, but they are not to be taken as imperatives. They, are meant for those, who are desirous of those pleasures. The pleasures of this world, as well as those of svarga, are transient and extrinsic. As the vedas have a universal appeal, and as they have to satisfy the needs of all types of people, such portions are found in them. The Gīta emphatically denounces those that are after such pleasures, which ultimately result in sorrow.²

Definition and Meaning of Karmayōga:

Lord Kriṣṇa expounds the significance of Yōga in the Gīta, as a state of mental equilibrium, maintained alike through successes and failures.

‘सिद्ध्यसिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते’ । भ.गी. 2-48

One is enjoined to do one's duty, without attaching oneself to the results. Neither should he be elated with joy when he gains something, nor should he be depressed with sorrow for suffering some loss. Profit or loss, pleasure or

pain, success or failure are all extrinsic, and do not, in any way, enhance or diminish the essential nature of the soul. They are all passing phases that come across the self, during the state of his association with matter. The Karmayōgin treats all the pairs of opposites alike, and bears with them without any attachment. It is this kind of 'Samatva' which is called Yōga in the Gīta. Rāmānuja explains this as

‘योगः सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समत्वरूपं चित्तसमाधानम्’। गी.भा. 2-48

Yōga is also described as "Yōgaha Karmasu Kausalam,"³ It is stated herein, that it is "Buddhi Yōga", endowed with which one gets rid of both Sukṛta and Duṣkṛta, amassed from beginningless time. So one is urged to gain this Buddhi Yōga, It is affirmed that it is very hard to gain this kind of moral determination.⁴ It is clear from the above, that Yōga is Samatva, and that it is very hard to gain the same.

Thus Niṣkāma Karma is the performance of an action, without any interest in its results. Every living being is ruled by the law of Karma, and is impelled to act whether with or without a purpose. Man, being a rational being, is endowed with the power of discrimination, and so can choose in a conflict of desires. He can distinguish the soul from the body and can also follow such a path of action by means of which he can free himself from the bonds of Samsāra. Interested action results in entanglement whereas disinterested action does not in any way touch the soul as he remains unattached to those results. This 'Vyavasāyātmikā Buddhi' frees Karma from all desires other than desire for release, The Karmayōgin is not distracted by sensual desire but he concentrates upon one

steadfast aim of doing duty for the sake of duty. His goal is aloft and as he has completely overcome the animal inclinations of Rāga and Dveṣa, all his actions, though they appear like those done by Viṣayarāgins, do not relate to him and so serve as successful means of liberation. He is not bound down by the fruits of his actions as he has no interest in them. He is stripped of his doer consciousness as he is not influenced by the conceit of 'I am the doer'. This abandonment of doer-consciousness is the most essential requisite of Karmayōga.

The Gīta ordains the abandonment of selfishness as an essential prerequisite for self-realization. This selfishness is threefold as related to the doer, the deed and the result. The shedding of this triple selfishness is essential for Karma Yōga. The three significant terms namely 'सन्यस्य, निराशीः, निर्ममः' in the stanza,

‘मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि सन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।

निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युद्ध्यस्व विगतज्वरः’ । भा.गी. 3-30

stand for the above mentioned abandonment of selfishness.⁵ 'Sanyasya' stands for the abandonment of doer-consciousness. When one has attained this stage, he realizes that the fruit is not also his. When he realizes that he is not the doer, he will never think of the fruit as his. This, in turn, leads to the realization that he is not connected with, or related to, that deed, or that it is not his deed. The above three are classically designated in turn as,

1. Kartṛtva Tyāga
2. Phala Tyāga and
3. Svakiyatāsaṅga Tyāga.

An aspirant taking up Karma Yōga, thus, learns self-renunciation, and by this process proceeds on to self-realization. This ideal of action without the desire for the fruit thereof has no parallel in the history of ethics anywhere in the world. This idea of self-renunciation is the safest and the surest means of self-realization.

The embodied self generally identifies itself with the body and labours under the egocentric mentality or Ahamkāra. It is on account of this wrong identification that the self entangles itself more and more in Samsāra. He is imprisoned by the chain of Karma and is doomed to suffer the consequences of his actions for all time to come. He considers himself as the doer doing his deed, for satisfying certain of his wants, and so is subject to frustration, misery, sorrow and degradation. He is carried away by the ends of utility namely Lābha and Alābha, and he is influenced totally by Rāga and Dveṣa. Desire is the ruling motive of all his actions. This mode of action ultimately results in pain and sorrow, as all extrinsic things generally result. How are we to get over this vicious influence? The Gīta ordains Karma Yōga as the one and the only means of withdrawing the sensitive self from the seductions of sensibility. The wheel of Karma encircles every embodied self in this world, and it is absolutely impossible for anyone here to escape from that wheel of Karma. Everyone in the state of "Samsāra" is subject to the domination of the Guṇas of Prakṛti and he is bound to act under the influence of these Three Guṇas of Prakṛti. It can be seen, thus, that no body can actually dissociate himself from Karma. How then can the Jīva free himself from the guṇa-ridden Karma? It is here that Karma Yōga finds its place:

1. The Jīva is different and distinct from matter and in his essential nature he is free from Karma.
2. It is only on account of the conjunction of the Soul with Matter or Prakṛti that Ahamkāra has resulted.
3. Karma is due to the action and reaction of the three Guṇas of Prakṛti.

When one knows this psychological truth, he seeks to give up Ahamkāra. It is not very easy for one to shed away one's egocentric mentality, developed from beginningless time, on account of Avidyā Karma. The mind refuses to get subdued, and time and again yields to the seductions of the sense organs. The influence of the sense organs is so very powerful that the mind is going to be swept away by them. So there is need for individual evolutionary effort on the part of the Jīva who should remain firm and unyielding to those temptations. To achieve this fixity, he must have before him a moral determination, and this is got from Karmayōga. By constant practice of Karma Yōga implying the negation of the Three fold Ahamkāra relating to the doer, the deed and ownership of the deed, the Jīva gradually dissociates himself from the dangers of Karma. Thus, Karmayōga provides the proper culture to the mind, by means of which, the Jīva progresses on to realize his nature and identity.

According to Rāmānuja the Gīta declares that Karma Yōga presupposes three important factors:

1. The knowledge of the Ātman.
2. Abandonment of desire in the fruits of those actions.
3. Conviction that Karma is a devout service to the Lord.

The first condition affirms the eternality and immutability of the Ātman who is different and distinct from matter. It also affirms that, though the Ātman, in his essence, is not associated with doership, he is subjected to it in the state of embodiment, due to his conjunction with matter.

The second condition emphasizes that one should develop rational insight, and through that rid oneself of the consequences of his actions, being absolutely disinterested in the fruits thereof. It is by means of this that one becomes steadfast in knowledge.

The third condition presupposes the existence of the Absolute Paramātmā, in whom unshakable faith is to be placed, to save oneself from the influence of the causality of Karma. All the several types of Karma, that would otherwise detract the Jīva by binding him down to Samsāra, are here transformed into the form of devout service to the Lord, and so they enable the Jīva to liberate himself from the clutches of matter, as all of them are meant for winning Divine favour.

The happy combination of the above three factors results in the attainment of moral autonomy, as it is a combination of insight and spiritual endeavour. Such is the ideal of Karma Yōga which declares that the deeds are not to be renounced, but only desire in the fruits thereof. Karma Yōga is thus a synthesis of both theory and practice. It comprises of Jñāna and Bhakti along with Karma. The true knowledge of the 'Three Reals' is the basis on which the aspirant embarks on the path of Karma Yōga. There is here a significant role for Bhakti, for nothing is possible of achievement without staunch devotion to God. It is verily on account of Divine grace that one can conquer one's

sensibility, and can attain peace of mind. Likewise the constant practice of Karma Yōga becomes possible, only when one realizes that, as a devout service to God. He has to dedicate all his actions, along with the fruits thereof, to God, and has to think within himself that God is causing him to do all those actions. This kind of utter dependance on God and absolute negation of selfishness is essential in Karma Yōga. This affirms that aspects of Jñānam and Bhakti are invariably found in Karma Yōga. 'Such is the grandeur of Karma Yōga that though the aspirant is activistic, he will be morally free enjoying self-mastery.'

Advantages of Karma Yōga Over Jñāna Yōga:

JñānaYōga and Karmayōga are two paths meant for two different types aspirants. Both these lead to the same goal namely Ātmāvalōkana.

‘अस्मिन् लोके विचित्राधिकारसम्पूर्णे द्विविधा निष्ठा ज्ञानकर्मविषया यथाधिकारं असङ्कीर्णैव मयोक्ता’ । गी.भा. 3-3

In this world there are people of different abilities and temperaments, and so all of them cannot begin with Jñānayōga itself, the very moment they acquire an eagerness for attaining spiritual perfection. Lord Kṛṣṇa points out that Jñānayōga is meant for Sāmkhyas where as Karmayōga is for Yōgins.⁶

Those who are capable of meditating upon the pure self alone are defined as Sāmkhyas; and all those other than the above are said to be Karmayōgadhikārins.

‘आत्मैकविषयया बुद्ध्या युक्ताः साङ्ख्याः ।

अतदर्हाः कर्मयोगाधिकारिणो योगिनः ।’

गी.भा. 3-3

Those whose intelligence is not clouded by doubts and confusion are fit for JñānaYōga but those who are disturbed by the objects of the senses are fit for only Karmayōga. Thus there is a definite understanding regarding the worthiness or otherwise of an aspirant for practising Jñānayōga.

‘शक्ताशक्तविषयतया ज्ञानकर्मयोगव्यवस्था’ । ता.चं 3-3

An objection may be raised as follows:-

Why should anyone observe Karmayōga? Is it not due to his eagerness to liberate himself from Samsāra? Then why should he not engage in Jñānayōga itself which can directly result in self-realization, instead of in Karmayōga, which is after all an indirect means of self-realisation?

This is replied thus:

Jñānayōga is impossible without Karmayōga. No aspirant can ever hope to attain the state of Jñānayōga merely by giving up all activity. Mere abandonment of Karmas cannot lead him to Jñāna Nishthā. It is only through Karmayōga that one has to attain Jñānayōga.

‘सर्वस्य लौकिकस्य पुरुषस्य मोक्षेच्छायां संजातायां सहसैव ज्ञानयोगो दुष्कर इत्याह’ । गी.भा. 3-4

Jñānayōga cannot be attained without the commencement of Karmayōga.

‘कर्मयोगानारम्भे ज्ञानयोगासिद्धिः स्यादिति वाक्यार्थः । उत्तरत्र तु यत्कर्मयोगत्यागादेव ज्ञानयोगासिद्धिरिति अभिप्रेतम् तदयुक्तम् । सा हि तेनैव जन्येति तात्पर्यम्’ । ता.च. 3-4

One has to attain Jñānayōga only through the path of Karmayōga. In the absence of disinterested action, there cannot be Divine grace capable of relieving us from bondage. Without His Prīti, the mass of sins collected by us cannot be destroyed. The presence of Sin is responsible again, for the continuance of mental impurity of the form of Rajas and Tamas. So long as the mind is obscured by impurities of Rajas and Tamas, Rāga and Dvēṣa are guaranteed. When the mind is subjected to the hazards of Rāga and Dvēṣa, peace in the world of sense cannot be obtained. When the mind is after the external objects of the world, it cannot become steady regarding the self. It is through Niṣkāma Karma alone, that all these dangers can be avoided. So it is very essential that Karmayōga is to be performed in the proper way, for the attainment of the joy of self-knowledge.

‘अनभिसंहितफलैः कर्मभिरनाराधितगोविन्दैः अविनष्टा
नादिकालप्रवृत्तानन्तपापसञ्चयैः अव्याकुलेन्द्रियतापूर्विका
आत्मनिष्ठा दुस्सम्पाद्या’ ।

गी.भा. 3-4

Karmayōga and Jñānayōga are meant for the same purpose of Ātmāvalōkana. They do not obtain different results, though they are meant for different types of aspirants. Karmayōga can get us self-realization either directly or through Jñānayōga. Jñānayōga however results in the same Ātmāvalōkana,⁷ So there is no 'PhalaBhedā' here. Some argue that Karmayōga has Jñānayōga for its result, and that JñānaYōga has Ātmāvalōkana for its fruit. This argument is refuted by Lord Kriṣṇa who affirms that, by following either of these paths, one could get the same result.

‘उभयोरात्मावलोकनैकफलयोः एकफलत्वेन एकमप्यास्थितः
तदेव फलं लभते।’

गी.भा. 5-4

What is attained by the Jñānayōgin is verily attained by the Karmayōgin also. So he alone is wise who considers that both Karmayōga and JñānaYōga lead to the same goal of Ātmāvalōkana.

‘सांख्यैः ज्ञाननिष्ठैः यदात्मावलोकनरूपं फलं प्राप्यते तदेव
कर्मयोगनिष्ठैरपि प्राप्यते । एवमेकफलत्वेनैकं वैकल्पिकं सांख्यं योगं
च यः पश्यति स पश्यति । स एव पण्डित इत्यर्थः। गी.भा. 5-5

Though both these have the same goal, Karmayōga is declared to be more efficient than the other.⁸ Why is Karmayōga considered to be better than Jñānayōga? Jñānayōga can be practised only by those who are competent for it. But Karmayōga can be practised by those who are not only incompetent to observe Jñānayōga, but also by those, who are fully competent to observe JñānaYōga. All aspirants, whether they are capable or incapable of observing JñānaYōga, can follow Karmayōga, whereas Jñānayōga is meant for the very few competent aspirants.

The Gītachārya exhorts both capable of Karmayōga and Jñānayōga to follow Karmayōga alone, as even the Jñānayōgin is impelled to action by the conjunction of matter.

कर्मयोगयोग्येन ज्ञानयोगयोग्येन च कर्मयोगस्य सुशक्तत्वात्
अप्रमादत्वात् अन्तर्गतात्मज्ञानतया निरपेक्षत्वात् इतरस्य
दुश्शक्तत्वात् सप्रमादत्वात् शरीरधारणार्थतया कर्मापेक्षत्वात्
कर्मयोग एव कर्तव्यः’ ।

गी.भा. 3-33

Karmayōga is easy to perform, and is not beset with dangers, and is also comprising of the true knowledge of the self. But Jñānayōga is difficult to practise, is beset with dangers, and requires the performance of Karma also for maintaining the body.

Karmayōga is not new to the aspirant, for one cannot remain inactive even for a moment. It is his fundamental nature to do some action or other. Even during sleep, he is doing the action of sleeping. Except in the state of Pralaya, the self is invariably associated with action, and so it is easier for him to engage himself in activity. What he has to do here is only to abandon his doer-consciousness and also interest in the fruit thereof. But Jñānayōga is not an Abhyastaviṣaya. It is something which is not familiar to him. It is not easy for one to be firm in one's meditation upon the pure state of the soul, without first of all attempting to destroy all distracting elements in the form of Viṣaya Vāsanā. Rāga and Dvēṣa are the two arch enemies of mankind, and these are capable of detracting the Jñānayōgin from his inclination of Ātmāvalōkana.⁹ One who starts with Jñānayōga is liable to fall a prey to these two counter forces, namely Rāga and Dvēṣa.¹⁰

Karmayōga is called one's own dharma or Svadharma, and this, though imperfect, is said to be better than Jñānayōga, though perfect, as it (Jñānayōga) is impossible to be attained by one who is in the embodied state, being associated with matter. Even death, while observing Karmayōga in one birth, is considered to be better, for it is sure to lead to the commencement of a steady practice of Karmayōga in the next birth. But Jñānayōga is not so. It is beset with fear, as it is impossible of attainment by one, in

the state of embodiment. Any amount of Jñānayōga practised goes to waste, in the event of any impediment in the middle.

‘स्वधर्मभूते कर्मयोगे वर्तमानस्यैकस्मिन् जन्मन्यप्राप्तफलतया निधनमपि श्रेयः । अनन्तरायहततया अनन्तरजन्मन्यपि अव्याकुल कर्मयोगारम्भसम्भवात् । प्रकृतिसंसृष्टस्य स्वेनैवोपादातु-मशक्यतया परधर्मभूतो ज्ञानयोगः प्रमादगर्भतया भयावहः ।

गी.भा. 3-35

Kāma and Krōdha are the two veritable enemies that steal away the fortitude of the aspirant that commences with Jñānayōga.¹¹ This desire or Kāma is exerting its inescapable influence on the Jīva, by taking it over completely, and it is having its stronghold on the soul, through the external sense organs, the mind and the intellect. It turns the soul away from self-experience, and directs it towards sensibility. The sense organs, the mind and the intellect are all antagonistic to self-knowledge. They function in a way quite opposed to the attainment of self-knowledge. Even when all these are at rest, if there is the slightest trace of Kāma, originating from Rajas, that by itself takes possession of all these sense organs, the mind and the intellect, and stands as a stumbling block to self-knowledge. Kāma or desire which is thus very powerful in detracting even the intellect, along with the mind and the external sense organs, is to be known as the biggest obstruction to Jñānayōga, and that Kāma is to be conquered by keeping one's mind steadfast in Karmayōga. Karmayōga aims at the total destruction of desire or Kāma, and it can be achieved by constant practice.

‘एवं बुद्धेरपि परं कामं ज्ञानयोगविरोधिनं वैरिणं बुद्धा आत्मानं -
मनः, आत्मना - बुद्ध्या कर्मयोगे अवस्थाप्य एनं कामरूपं दुरासदं
शत्रुं जहि नाशय इत्यर्थः।’ गी.भा. 3-43

This desire cannot be otherwise destroyed.¹² It is only through Karmayōga that one can conquer Kāma, and therefore Karmayōga is in fact superior to Jñānayōga.

As the very secret of Karmayōga is the complete annihilation of desire, or the attainment of disinterestedness in action, it is the means par excellent for self-realization.

There is another advantage also in Karmayōga, in addition to its Sukṛtatva. An aspirant achieves his goal of Ātmāvalōkana through Karmayōga, in a very short time, whereas a Jñānayōgin is obliged to wait for a very long time. The Karmayōgin is required to contemplate upon the true nature of the soul, and by means of this practice of Ātmāvalōkana, he realizes his self in a very short period.¹³ As it is very difficult for one to practise Jñānayōga, it takes a very long time to ripen and result in self experience. Not only has the Jñānayōgin to build up his Jñānayōga on Karmayōga, but also he has to face insurmountable obstacles that he can achieve his goal of self realization with the greatest difficulty, after striving for a long period.

‘योगयुक्तः - कर्मयोगयुक्तः स्वयमेव मुनिः आत्ममननशीलः सुखेन कर्मयोगं साधयित्वा न चिरेण अल्पेनैवकालेन ब्रह्माधिगच्छति - आत्मानं प्राप्नोति । ज्ञानयोगयुक्तस्तु महता दुःखेन ज्ञानयोगं साधयति, दुःखसाध्यत्वात् दुःखप्राप्यत्वात् आत्मानं चिरेण प्राप्नोतीत्यर्थः।’ गी.भा. 5-6

The Karmayōgin is satisfied with the Ātmānubhava that is predominant in his Karmayōga. So he desires for nothing else, nor does he hate anything. Therefore, he treats the pairs of opposites alike. He will be firm in the knowledge of the spiritual self. He liberates himself from bondage easily, as he observes Karmayōga which is easy to practise.¹⁴

The Gīta expounds that the Karmayōgin attains self-realization very soon for the following reasons:-

1. The Yōgayukta is a viśuddhātma. Being cleansed of all impurities, his mind becomes pure, as he engages himself only in noble actions which he considers as devout service to the Lord. These actions will not be for the ends of pleasure or pain. These Niṣkāmakarmas are good in themselves, and have the highest value, as they are dedicated to the Supreme Being. So his mind will be ever pure.
2. He is a Vijitātmā-As he engages his mind in disinterested activities, he will have conquered his mind easily. He will attain perfect control over his mind gradually.
3. He will be a Jitēndriya-As he has control over his mind, he will be blessed with conquest over his external sense organs. A Karmayōgin who is not allured by the seductions of sensibility is a real Yōgin, and he has conquered the world itself.
5. He will be a Sarvabhutātmabhūtātmā. As the practice of Karmayōga invariably comprises of the Anusandhāna of the real nature of the self, the Karmayōgin will have the firm conviction that his soul

as well as the souls in others, are all alike, on account of their essential nature of knowledge, and that it is Karma of these innumerable Jīvas that is responsible for the assumption of different and varied bodies in this world¹⁵.

Thus Karmayōga is declared to have decided advantages over JñānaYōga.

Karmayōga in Practice (Karma Kāryata):

All the multitudes of Jīvas in this world are subject to the rule of Karma. None in this world is free from Karma. Even in the state of Naiṣkarmya, there is the influence of the interplay of the three guṇas of matter. The law of Karma sustains the whole Universe, and everyone in this order has to do one's duties, in the interest of the world. Even the Gods have got to, do their duty, just as human beings. Yajña is the fundamental basis of all activities in the world, and forms the nucleus of a circle of activities. Food sustains the living body, and rain happens to be the sustainer of food, and Parjanya is got from Karma, and Karma is observed by the body which is Prakṛtipariṇāma, and that body becomes capable of action only when it is supported by the Self.¹⁶ It is an inescapable circle, as they are supporting one another. There is mutual interdependence and it moves in a circle. From food, the living body, from rain that food, from Yajña that rain, from Karma that Yajña and that Karma from the living body-Thus they rotate for ever. So he, who does not follow this scheme of action, is bound to lapse into sin and sensibility. He becomes a sensualist, and drifts farther and farther from spiritual upliftment. The imperative of Karma is a divine command which should not be violated. Only

the liberated, who are blessed with the delight of the self, have no duties to perform, as they will be eternally having self-experience. Indeed they have nothing to gain by the means of self-experience. As they will have gained Ātma darśana already, they lose nothing by not following these means. But all others are ruled by the law of Karma. Even the Jñāni has to maintain his body by activity. Even the Supreme Being is ever active, though not bound by Karma, so that others might not renounce action.¹⁷ The Lord has nothing to gain, nor there is anything that He has not gained. He is the supreme Lord of the Universe. But yet, He also engages Himself in Karma, being a moral ruler of the Universe. So, the cosmic order is ruled by the law of Karma. The soul can never escape from the wheel of Karma, as long as it is in this world of Samsāra. The Gita therefore commands him to do his duty.¹⁸

'Do your duty which is inescapable. Karma is verily superior to Jñāna Niṣṭa, as it includes in itself the true knowledge of the self. Even the maintenance of the body which is a necessity does not become possible if one follows Jñāna Niṣṭa giving up all activities¹⁹. If one engages in activity, will he not be chained down to Samsāra by Karma Vāsanā?

The answer for this question is as follows: All Karmas that are done for the sake of one's own self, with the feeling of selfishness, result in bondage, whereas Karmas performed with a spirit of detachment for good purposes, sanctioned by the scriptures, never bind the soul to Samsāra. The pursuit of Karma for fulfilling Divine commands is certainly beneficial. It is not meant for promoting one's own material welfare. Though one engages in earning wealth etc., in this world, if it is meant

for promoting the welfare of others and for Divine service, one will not be bound by Karma Vāsanā. If, on the other hand, one is self-interested while doing a deed, he cannot escape from its consequences.

‘यज्ञादिशास्त्रीयकर्मशेषभूतात् द्रव्यार्जनादेः कर्मणोऽन्यत्र
आत्मीयप्रयोजनशेषभूते कर्मणि क्रियमाणे अयं लोकः कर्मबन्धनो
भवति । अतस्त्वं यज्ञाद्यर्थं द्रव्यार्जनादिकं कर्म समाचर । तत्र
आत्मप्रयोजनसाधनतया यः सङ्गः तस्मात्सङ्गात् मुक्तः
तत्समाचर।’

गी.भा. 3-9

The abandonment of attachment in Karma is expounded in the text quoted above. 'Will any body engage' it may be asked, 'in an useless task'? Though the ideals of Prayōjana and Sādhana are discarded as such in such disinterested action, it has self-utility without qualifications, as it has its own intrinsic value in the form of devout service to the Supreme Being. So there is no room for the doubt of the above nature. Disinterested action is therefore the duty of every spiritual aspirant.²⁰

Karmayōga is declared to be more profitable and beneficial, even to those who are competent for Jñānayōga. The classical example of the best of Jnanins, namely Janaka, is given for this in the Gīta. Even such spiritual aspirants like Janaka, who were competent to practise Jñānayōga, took up Karmayōga and attained through it, their goal of self-realisation.

Even if one is capable of practising Jñānayōga, he is therefore advised to choose Karmayōga for the most important reason of giving the proper lead to others in this world. The people of this world generally follow the path

of celebrated personalities, and therefore the responsibility resting on such people is very great. For the sake of "Lōkasaṅgraha", such great men like Janaka, though capable of the hard rigors of Jñānayōga, practised Karmayōga alone, the easier of the two, so that they might not mislead the common men. The common generality of human beings are Karmasangins, and therefore even very competent and great men must engage themselves in the performance of disinterested duty, just as mere Karmayōgādhikārins, for the sake of Lōkasaṅgraha.²¹

We have so far discussed the nature of the Karmayōgādhikārins. Let us now take up another important factor namely the mode of abnegating doer-consciousness. It was said before that abnegation of doer-consciousness or Akartṛtvānusandhāna is an essential factor of Karmayōga. But how to achieve this is the question. The Bhagavadgita tackles this question as follows : ²²

Prakṛti is composed of the three guṇas namely Satva, Rajas and Tamas. Activity is due to the interaction of these guṇas. The Soul that has not gained the true knowledge of himself considers himself the doer of the deeds that are brought forth by the interaction of the guṇas of Prakṛiti. But one who has obtained self- knowledge knows that the guṇas are interacting in different activities. So having known the different variations of the guṇas, he attributes to those guṇas the several actions. He gives up his "Kartṛtvābhimāna". He will be fully aware of the fact that this Kartṛtva is obtained on account of his conjunction with prakṛti. The Gīta ordains that even an enlightened person should perform Karmayōga with "Akartṛtvānusandhāna", for

the sake of giving the proper lead to the common people of the world.

What is the purpose served by this kind of mental reflection that the doership rests with the Guṇas and not with the self? Does not the Gīta itself ordain, in the next breath, that all deeds are to be dedicated to Īśvara, the Supreme Being? This is an important question and it is answered thus :-

The main purpose that is served by this kind of Kartṛtvānusandhāna in the Guṇas is that the self gains the true knowledge of the self, by which it discriminates the self from the matter. It is for the attainment of at least this Dehātmanvivēka that the Gīta teaches us to attribute Kartṛtva to the Guṇas. And as a next step, it ordains the dedication of all deeds at the feet of the Lord.

'If Kartṛtva is to be attributed to the three guṇas of Prakṛti', it is objected, 'how then, would this standpoint differ from the view point of the Sāṅkhyas'? Do not the Sāṅkhyas posit doership to matter alone instead of the soul? This objection does not stand against this school of thought which surely affirms the Kartṛtva of the soul, according to the Sūtras.²³ The soul has natural doership which nevertheless continues, even in the state of liberation. It is not this natural doership that is referred to, in this context. The Kartṛtva referred to here, is that which is obtained in the state of embodiment, due to the contact with prakṛti. This doership is of the type of Puṇya or Pāpa. This does not continue for all time. Therefore, the Gīta ordains that the Karmayōgin must realize this doership, during the state of embodiment, as that which is obtained due to the contact

of Trigūṇa. He must reflect all the while, that this Kartṛtva is not natural to him, but only as something which has come upon him in the middle. So it stands for all purposes that the Jīva has natural doership which follows him at all stages, even during the state of Mukti. Then why should this difference be stressed? This is only to bring home to the minds of the aspirants that Puṇya-Pāpa Kartṛtva is never a natural part of their doership, and that there is scope for them to exceed the limitations of this kind of doership that binds them down to the state of embodiment, by making them enjoy the consequences thereof. This kind of Puṇya-Pāpa Kartṛtva is unique during the state of saṃsāra, and therefore it is to be surpassed. So it is not the conclusion of this school that matter itself has Kartṛtva qualified with Jñāna, Chikirṣā and Prayatna, as of the Sāṃkhya school. It is certainly the Jīva that has all these endowed with Kartṛtva. But he is advised to realize that his Karirtva, at this present time of bondage, is not natural to him but only on account of the contact with matter. This discriminatory knowledge enables him to develop detachment to the fruits of those actions, as they do not relate to his true nature.

‘गुणेषु कर्तृत्वानुसन्धानं चेदम् - आत्मनो न स्वरूपप्रयुक्तमिदं कर्तृत्वं अपि तु गुणसम्पर्ककृतमिति प्राप्ताप्राप्तविवेकेन गुणकृतम् इत्यानुसन्धानम्’ ।
तां.च. 3-29

What are we to conclude, then, from all this discussion? Should the aspirant follow the path of action? Or should he keep quiet thinking that doership belongs to the Guṇas of Prakṛti? The answer is definite. The aspirant must do his duty for the sake of duty. He is never advised to give up his duty. Akartṛtva is not to be followed in action. It must be followed only in thought. The fact of Akartṛtva

should play its part only in Anusandhāna and not in Akaraṇa. He must engage himself in his duties, for the sake of duty, but should all the while think that they are all on account of the contact of Trigūṇa, and so not a part of his true nature. Every one, under the stress and strain of Samsāra, is bound to be ruled by the law of Karma, and if one thinks at any time that it is his Karma, and that he is doing it for attainment of certain of his desires, he is bound to suffer the consequences of those deeds, according to his mental dispositions. So, the only way to escape from the influence of Karma is not to give it up, which is an impossibility, but only to give up interest in the fruits thereof. The abandonment of desire in the fruits of actions performed by us becomes possible, only when we realize while doing our duties that those are not our actions', and that 'we are not the doers'. It is only when this doer-consciousness is given up that we renounce desire in its fruits. How are we to give up this doer consciousness is the problem. It is a fact of experience that the doer himself does the actions throughout. Can he think that he is not the doer, doing the deed all the while? The answer to this problem is found in this principle of Akartṛtvānusandhāna. He himself must do the deed all the while, but conclude that Karma is due to the action and reaction of the guṇas of Prakṛti, and not on account of the 'Svarūpa' of the Ātman. Thus, it is this Anusandhana that his Kartṛtva is Guṇakṛta and not Svarūpa Prayukta, that can enable the aspirant give up the false notion of the form 'I am the doer'. Actions not followed by this' Akartṛtvānusandhāna result in bondage, whereas those followed by this, release us from bondage. So it is this Akartṛtvānusandhana or abandonment of doer consciousness which is the most essential factor in

Karmayōga.²⁴ So an aspirant who is enlightened on the true nature of his self, must follow Karmayōga, and consider that the several Indriyas are functioning in their objects, and that he is not doing any thing while seeing, hearing, touching, going, talking or doing any other thing. He must consider that doership of that kind in those actions is due to his contact with the Indriyas and Prāṇas, owing to his Karma, and not due to his Svarūpa which is of the essence of knowledge.

‘ज्ञानैकस्वभावस्य मम कर्ममूलेन्द्रियप्राणसम्बन्धकृतमीदृशं कर्तृत्वं
न स्वरूपप्रयुक्तमिति मन्येतेत्यर्थः ।’ गी.भा. 8-9

'Will not the contact of matter,' it is asked, 'pull him down inspite of his Akartṛtvānusandhāna, as he himself is a doer in all reality'? The answer for this question is in the negative. Though he is associated with matter, he will not be tainted with the sin of the form of Dehātmābhimāna, as he engages himself in action renouncing desire in the fruits thereof. His self-renunciation saves him from the contact of sin, just as the lotus leaf does not stick to water, though it is in it.

‘सः प्रकृतिसंसृष्टतया वर्तमानोऽपि प्रकृत्यात्माभिमानरूपेण
बन्धहेतुना पापेन न लिप्यते ।’ गी.भा. 5-10

The only way to destroy the bonds of Avidyā Karma is to perform actions with no desire in the fruits of pleasure or profit thereof, but only for the sake of self-purification.²⁵ Thus Karma is to be accounted to Prakṛti which has taken the form of the body and the different Indriyas, and is to be performed disinterestedly for liberating oneself from the wheel of Karma.

‘अतः फलसङ्गरहितः इन्द्रियाकारेण परिणतायां प्रकृतौ कर्माणि सन्यस्य आत्मनो बन्धमोचनायैव कर्माणि कुर्वीतेत्युक्तं भवति।’

गी.भा. 5-12, 13

The Gīta impresses on the minds of the aspirants again and again that doership of the several actions, during the state of embodiment is on account of its contact with Prakṛti, and not on account, of the essential nature of the Jīva. It is Prakṛti Vāsanā which impells the Jīva to engage himself in interested action, on account of the past reminiscent impressions and not on account of the essential nature of the self. One's submerging oneself, with such an interest, in the desires for fruit is a true sign that the true nature of the self has not been understood.

‘देवतिर्यङ्मनुष्यस्थावरात्मना प्रकृतिसंसर्गेण वर्तमानस्य लोकस्य देवाद्यसाधारणं कर्तृत्वं तत्तदसाधारणानि कर्माणि तत्तत्कर्मजन्यदेवादिफलसंयोगं चायं प्रभुः अकर्मवश्यः स्वभाविकस्वरूपेणावस्थितः आत्मा न सृजति-नोत्पादयति । कस्तर्हि ? स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते-स्वभावः प्रकृतिवासना; अनादिकालप्रवृत्तपूर्वपूर्वकर्मजनितदेवाद्याकारप्रकृतिसंसर्गकृत तत्तदभिमानं जनितवासनाकृतमीदृशं कर्तृत्वादिकं सर्वं न स्वरूपप्रयुक्तं इत्यर्थः।’

गी.भा. 5-14

Thus the Gīta exhorts the aspirants to abandon not the deed but the doer consciousness, and this Akartṛtvānusandhāna' is the most essential factor in Karmayōga.

The Gīta does not stop with the declaration that the contact of the guṇas is responsible for the performance of several actions during the time of Samsāra, and that ,the

Kartṛtva of the bound self is guṇakṛta. It goes deeper still and traces that Kartṛtva to Īśvara, the Supreme Lord of the Universe, who is verily the innerself of all objects, sentient and non-sentient, and by whose grace alone the soul derives its doership. The Sūtras also expound this truth of the Soul's deriving doership from the Lord.²⁶ So it is in the fitness of things that this doership caused by the interaction of the guṇas (Guṇakṛtam Kartṛtvam) must be dedicated to the Supreme Being, who sustains, controls from within and uses for His own purposes the order of finite selves, that forms his body. The Gīta declares that it is the Lord who causes all beings to act and that He is seated in the hearts of all beings as their inner soul. The realization of this fact, that it is the Lord who causes all beings do several actions, is the highest knowledge and when one is endowed with this True knowledge he dedicates all his actions to the Supreme Lord Vāsudēva. He does not give up action, for it is the law of the Lord that he should do his duty. As he is fully aware of the fact that the Absolute Paramātmān is Himself causing the Souls belonging to Him alone, to do His own deeds, through His own instruments, for His own pleasure, he performs those actions without the slightest attachment in them, with the firm conviction that the Lord pleased with those actions releases him from bondage. This is verily the most important aspect of Karmayōga.

‘इदानीं आत्मनां परमपुरुषशरीरतया तन्नियाम्यत्वस्वरूपनिरूपणेन
भगवति पुरुषोत्तमे सर्वात्मभूते गुणकृतं च कर्तृत्वं आरोप्य
कर्मकर्तव्यता उच्यते ।

गी.भा. 3-30

The mode of performing Karmayōga has been summarised by the great Yāmunāchārya as follows:-

1. Karmayōga must be performed with complete disinterestedness in the fruits of the several Karmas.
2. This must be observed even by those capable of observing harder ways for setting the World the right lead.
3. This must be practised with the reflection of Kartṛtva, in the action and interaction of the guṇas.
4. It must be done tracing ultimately that Kartṛtva to Īśvara.²⁷

Karmayōga's Jñānakāratāprakāra:

Karmayōga is declared to be superior to Jñānayōga as it contains in itself the true knowledge of the soul. That is why Karmayōga is said to include in itself the aspect of Jñānayōga also. Mere Jñānayōga is an impossibility as it cannot be devoid of Karma at any time. The Gīta expounds this greatness of Karmayōga and declares that Karmayōga itself assumes the form of JñānaYōga owing to the aspect of knowledge it contains in it.

‘अन्तर्गतज्ञानतयास्यैव ज्ञानयोगाकारतां प्रदर्श्य’। गी.भा. 4-1

It is affirmed in unmistakable terms that the aspect of Jñāna is the most essential element in Karmayōga.

We shall now try to understand how the aspect of Jñānam plays a significant role in Karmayōga. The philosophy of Karmayōga is not grasped very easily. One has to understand correctly what is Karma, what is Vikarma and what is Ākarma. The Gītachārya urges the aspirants to understand the essentials of Karma that can

liberate them from bondage, as well as the significance of Vikarma or varied Karmas of the form of Nitya, Naimittika and Kāmya Karmas, in addition to the aspect of Akarma or Jñānam. So does the Lord declare that the process of Karma is hard to assimilate.

‘यस्मान्मोक्षसाधनभूते कर्मस्वरूपे बोद्धव्यमस्ति विकर्मणि च नित्यनैमित्तिककाम्यकर्मरूपेण तत्साधनभूतद्रव्यार्जनाद्याकारेण विविधतामापन्नं विकर्म । अकर्मणि ज्ञाने च बोद्धव्यमस्ति, गहना दुर्विज्ञाना मुमुक्षोः कर्मणोगतिः’ । गी.भा. 4-17

Lord Krishna affirms emphatically that only he, who finds Jñānam in Karma and Karma in Jñāna, is the wisest of men. He is fit for liberation, and it is he who performs all that is expected of him by the scriptures.²⁸

Rāmānuja's comment on the stanza B. G. IV-18 is significant.

‘अकर्मशब्देनात्र कर्मैतरत्प्रस्तुतमात्मज्ञानं उच्यते । कर्मणि क्रियमाणे एवात्मज्ञानं यः पश्येत् अकर्मणि चात्मज्ञाने वर्तमान एव यः कर्म पश्येत् । किमुक्तं भवति ? क्रियमाणमेव कर्म आत्मयाथात्म्यानुसन्धानेन ज्ञानाकारं यः पश्येत् तच्चज्ञानं कर्मयोगान्तर्गततया कर्माकारं यः पश्येदित्युक्तं भवति’ । गी.भा. 4-18

It is evident from this that Karma and Jñānam are invariably combined with each other. Mere Jñānam that is qualified by the total absence of Karma is an impossibility for this school of thought. So Akarma does not signify here Jñānam unmixed with Karma, in this context of Karmayōgōpadēśa.

‘अकर्मशब्दस्य अत्र परोक्तकर्माभावस्वतन्त्रज्ञाननिष्ठाविषयतां

अपास्य तदन्यव्युत्पत्त्या आसत्त्या च सिद्धमाह अकर्मैति।'

ता.च. 4-18

The word Akarma signifies Ātmajñāna for Rāmānuja, and so, according to him, Karmayōga assumes Jñānakārātā as it comprises of the aspect of Ātmajñāna. According to this school, Jñānam is not incompatible with Karma for the Śāstrās do ordain Karma qualified by Jñānam, as the means of Ātmāvalōkana.

‘ज्ञानविशिष्टस्य कर्मणः उपायतया विहितत्वेन परस्परमन्वि तत्वमिति न भिन्नशास्त्रार्थत्वमिति भावः’। ता.च. 4-18

So, it should not be doubted that it is not desirable to think of some other thing, while doing something else. If two things are quite distinct and different and remain unconnected, then it may be wrong to think of one thing while doing the other. But such a doubt does not arise here in the case of Karma and Jñānam. These two are not "Ananvita". They are united and they always go together. That is why there cannot be Karma without Jñānam and Jñānam without Karma. They are ordained together, and so do not contradict each other. This does not mean that there is Samuchhaya or an equal combination of Jñānam and Karma. It is the conclusion of the scriptures that Karma contains within itself an aspect of Jñānam, and that Jñānam contains within itself an aspect of Karma.

‘क्रियमाणे हि कर्मणि कर्तृभूतात्मयाथात्म्यानुसन्धानेन तदुभयं सम्पन्नं भवति’ । गी.भा. 4-18

Rāmānuja declares that Karma is always Jñāna-Viśista. This is how this kind of Jñānakārātā becomes

compatible with Karma that is actually being performed. We do the several actions, and to consider them as knowledge is opposed to experience. It is not possible to maintain either through śāstra or inference something which is opposed to our direct experience. So how can Karma be considered as of the form of knowledge?

The Gīta answers this question as follows :²⁹

If a person engages himself in various activities including the earning of his livelihood and others, as well as the performance of Nitya, Naimittika and Kāmya Karmas, but without any desire in the fruits thereof, and also without the false notion of the self in the body, then all his past Karmas will be burnt by the fire of True knowledge of the soul, that is existent in that Karma. So Karma does include in itself the aspect of Jñānam. It is of the form of knowledge itself. A person who delights only in his self and who sheds the sense of support in matter (अस्थिरप्रकृतावाश्रयबुद्धिरहितः) which is transient does nothing, though he is engaged seriously in action. He is verily making Jñānābhyāsa under the pretext of Karma 'कर्मपदेशेन ज्ञानाभ्यासमेव करोतीत्यर्थः।' गी.भा. 4-20. Such a Yōgin is described by the Gīta as a "Nirāśih", "Yatachittātāmā" and a "Tyakta Sarva Parigraha". He has renounced all his desires in the fruits of the actions performed by him, and so he is a "Nirāśih". His mind is fixed upon the meditation of the soul, and is free from thoughts of other objects. Finding delight only in the soul, he is free from attachment in all material objects.

‘निर्गतफलाभिसन्धिः, यतचित्तमनाः, आत्मैकप्रयोजनतया प्रकृतिप्राकृतवस्तुनि ममत्तरहितः।’ गी.भा. 4-21

Such a person does not bind himself down to Samsāra, though he performs actions through out his life here.³⁰ The Gita calls his Karma "Kevalam śārīram Karma", for it is done not for the attainment of any object of desire. That Karma relates only to the body which is incapable of being given up.' Again it is only "śārīram Karma", for it is bereft of any desires in the fruits thereof. Desires are the functions of the mind and the intellect. Only the body functions, whereas he renounces all desires. Such a Yōgin attains his self by Karmayōga itself without the practice of Jñānayōga. That Karmayōgin who is

‘यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टः, द्वन्द्वातीतः, विमत्सरः समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च’।

liberates himself from Samsāra even without Jñānayōga.

Thus Karmayōga is Jñānākārā for,

1. it comprises of the Anusandhāna of the true knowledge of the essential nature of the self unconnected with matter.

‘प्रकृतिवियुक्तात्मरूपानुसन्धानयुक्ततया’ गी.भा. 4-24

2. it includes in itself the Anusandhāna of the fact of Paramātmān being the innerself of all objects, conscient and inscient.

‘परब्रह्मभूतपरमपुरुषात्मकत्वानुसन्धानयुक्ततया’। गी.भा. 4-24

The Gita expounds this secret of the Anusandhāna of Vāsudēva, being the innerself of all, in the following stanza:

‘ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविः ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥”

भा.गी. 4-24

All kinds of activities along with their accessories are of the form of knowledge, as they are to be performed with the mental reflection that they are all Brahmatmaka. The word Brahma here refers to the Absolute Being Vāsudēva. Every thing in this world is Brahmāmaya, and so one has to relate all things such as the instruments of Karma, the offerings, the offered, the offerer, the act of offering to Brahman, the Absolute Reality. The doers, as well as the deeds, are all Brahmamaya.

सर्वं कर्म ब्रह्मात्मकतया ब्रह्ममयमिति यः समाधत्ते स ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिः; तेन ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ब्रह्मैव गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मात्मकतया ब्रह्ममयमात्मस्वरूपं गन्तव्यम् । मुमुक्षुणा क्रियमाणं कर्म परब्रह्मात्मकमेवेति अनुसन्धानयुक्ततया ज्ञानाकारं साक्षादात्मावलोकनसाधनं न ज्ञाननिष्ठाव्यवधानेनेत्यर्थः।'

गी.भा. 4-24

So the Karmayōgin who follows this Anusandhāna of Parabrahmātmakatva attains self-experience directly without the need of JñānaYōga, as this itself is Jñānākāra. So far, Karma was described to be of the form of Jñānam, as it contains in itself Ātmajñānam. In such a Karma the prominence is for Jñānam alone. The Gitacharya declares, according to Rāmānuja, that Karmayōga of this kind containing the Anusandhana of the knowledge of the self results ultimately in Jñānam, alone, owing to constant practice.³¹

‘उभयाकारे कर्मणि द्रव्यमयादंशात् ज्ञानमयोऽंशः श्रेयान् । सर्वस्य कर्मणस्तदितरस्य चाखिलस्योपादेयस्य ज्ञाने परिसमाप्तिः । तदेवं सर्वैः साधनैः प्राप्यभूतं ज्ञानं कर्मान्तर्गतत्वेनाभ्यस्यते । तदेवाभ्यस्यमानं क्रमेण प्राप्यदशां प्रतिपद्यते ।’ गी.भा. 4-33

Karmayōga includes in itself "Ātmayāthātmyā nusandhāna" and this aspect of Jñānam, is the most important part in it. It is on account of this mental reflection of the true knowledge of the soul that Karmayōga is declared to be of the form of knowledge. ,Self-experience is to be attained by all aspirants before commencing Bhaktiyōga. This realization of the soul is a prerequisite for developing devotion towards God. The Dahara Vākya expressly affirms that the realization of the self is a part and parcel of Parāvidyā 'यस्तमात्मानमनुविद्य विजानाति' । Pratyagātmadarśanam is the limb of Upāsana, ,and for attaining that necessary prerequisite, one is advised to start one's spiritual career with Karmayōga. Karmayōga results in Ātmāvalōkana, either directly, or through Jñānayōga. It is affirmed here that Karmayōga leads gradually to the attainment of that knowledge. Rāmānuja therefore declares that Jñānam which is gradually practised results in realization. Deśika has in his Tātparyachandrikā explained this "Sādhya Sādhana Bhāva" of Ātmajñāna as follows:-

‘साध्यसाधनभावोऽवस्थाभेदमात्रनिबन्धन इत्यभिप्रेतम् । एतेन
कर्मणः स्वान्तर्भूतज्ञाने परिसमाप्तिः । साक्षात्कार
लक्षणसाध्यदशाविवक्षयेत्युक्तं भवति ।’ ता.चं. 4-33

The means themselves transform into the end. The anusandhana of the true nature of the Ātman ultimately results in the direct experience of the soul. This is the climax of Karmayōga as it leads the aspirant directly to self-experience, On account of the constant reflection upon the true knowledge of the Pratyagātman. What, in the beginning, happened to be the pre-requisite of Karmayōga

becomes the object of attainment, in the end. Karmayōga includes in it "Ātmayāthātmya Jñānam", and this true knowledge of the Ātman is a part of it, and on account of incessant Anusandhāna of this Ātmajñānam, it reveals itself at last wholly to the aspirant. Ātmajñānam, which was a factor of Sādhana becomes the Sādhya, and the aspirant gets ultimately a vivid and direct experience of his self. So Karmayōga is said to result ultimately in the experience of the self.

What will be the nature of an aspirant who has realized this true knowledge of the self? Three important facts are revealed here by the Gīta.³²

1. An aspirant who has realized the true knowledge of the self does not any more mistake the body for the soul. Dehātmaḥimāna and Mamatā will be given up by him.
2. He realizes that the innumerable souls are all alike, on account of their essential nature of knowledge, when they are freed from the contact of matter. His soul, as well as the souls in other bodies, will be known to be equals, on account of the same nature of knowledge.

‘यतस्तवान्येषां च भूतानां प्रकृतिवियुक्तानां ज्ञानैकाकारतया साम्यम् ।’
गी.भा. 4-35

3. He will also see that the pure soul is equal in nature to that of Paramātman.

‘अतः प्रकृतिविनिर्मुक्तं सर्वमात्मवस्तु परस्परं समं सर्वेश्वरेण च समम् ।’
गी.भा. 4-35

This true knowledge of the soul is verily capable of destroying all obstacles to realization. With the help of this boat of knowledge one safely crosses the vast ocean of sins. If it is asked how this one knowledge of the soul can put an end to our infinite sins of beginningless time, it is answered that this fire of the form of the true knowledge of the soul burns to ashes the vast multitudes of sins amassed from beginningless time, just as a blazing fire burns down to ashes huge heaps of fire wood. The first example of crossing the ocean with a boat does not, anyhow, bar its re-entry to it. But this example of the fire burning wood to ashes, once for all, puts an end to all such doubts, regarding its functioning again. The destruction of all sins relating to the soul by knowledge is possible, because there is nothing in the world which is as purifying as Ātmajñāna. One realizes this self-experience by means of performing Karmayōga which is Jñānākara.

‘ज्ञानाकारकर्मयोगेन संसिद्धः तथाविधं ज्ञानं कालेन स्वात्मनि स्वयमेव लभते’ ।

गी.भा. 4-38

The Gīta declares that an aspirant who has attained this true knowledge of the soul realizes his self directly without any delay of the form of Jñānayōga, or another birth.³³ Having got the true knowledge through initiation, and being earnest in enriching that knowledge, and devoting oneself to it entirely, without any distraction of the mind, and having thus conquered his sensibility, one will realize the knowledge of the soul as described above, and then attains his self.

‘एवं उपदेशाज्ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा चोपदिष्टज्ञानवृद्धौ श्रद्धावान् तत्परः तत्रैव नियमितमनाः तदितरविषयात् संयतेन्द्रियः अचिरेण कालेन उक्तलक्षणदशापन्नं ज्ञानं लभते तथाविधं ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां

शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति परं निर्वाणमाप्नोति ।' गी.भा. 4-39

निर्वाणमृच्छति निर्वाणमयं ब्रह्मगच्छति । सुखैकतानं आत्मानं
अवाप्नोतीत्यर्थः ।' गी.भा. 2-72

The word "Śānti" here does not refer to śama which is only a limb of an Upāya. Here this refers to the end as the Upāya will have fructified by this time.³⁴

What kind of Self-Realization is ordained here?

Having so far discussed about the significance of Karmayōga and its Jñānakāratā, we will now try to understand the nature of this self-realization as interpreted by Rāmānuja. What is the nature of the self-realization that is prescribed here? The Gīta ordains that the Karmayōgin attains Jñānavipāka of the form of Samadarśana.³⁵ What does this mean? We find in this world innumerable souls associated with different and varied bodies. They all appear very different from one another. Some are born in the highest class. Some are endowed with scholarship and humility. Some are born as cows, elephants, dogs and some others as "Śvapachās". Thus there is difference in form, as we see between a cow and an elephant. There is difference also in profession, in caste, and mental and spiritual attainments. So the multitudes of souls appear, as though they are quite dissimilar to one another. But savants who know the true knowledge of the soul look upon them all alike, and realize that the Ātman is of the same nature in all those varied and different bodies. They will know that their Viśamākāra is due to the ever-changing Prakṛti and not due to the soul.

‘विद्याविनयसम्पन्ने ब्राह्मणे गोहस्तिश्वपचादिषु

Sthitaprajñatā:

Karmayōga is thus declared to aid the aspirant to reach the state of steadfastness in self-knowledge which is definitely the road for self-realization. Rāmānuja affirms this as follows:

‘शास्त्रजन्यात्मज्ञानपूर्वककर्मयोगः स्थितप्रज्ञताख्यज्ञाननिष्ठां
आपादयति । ज्ञाननिष्ठारूपास्थितप्रज्ञता तु योगाख्यमात्मा
वलोकनं साधयति।’

गी.भा. 2-53

When the Karmayōgin is well disciplined he becomes a Sthitaprajñā. There are four successive stages in the evolution of this highest state of spiritual insight. They are:

1. Yatamāna Samjñā
2. Vyatirēka Samjñā
3. Ekēndriya Samjñā
4. Vaśīkāra Samjñā

This exposition of the four stages of Yōga as related to the Gīta is the unique contribution of Viśiṣṭādvaita to the philosophical thought of the world. This marks the gradual progress of the Karmayōgin in attaining self-experience.

In the first stage of Yatamāna Samjñā, the aspirant makes his individual effort to arrest the tendency of the mind from yielding to the sense organs, and directs it inward, just like the tortoise draws within itself its limbs. Conquest over sensibility is a part and parcel of Ātmamanana. This must be done through the firm determination of the mind. Thus we find in this stage a

conscious effort on the part of the aspirant, for checking the indulgence of the sense organs in their objects, and for establishing the mind in the Ātman.

The next stage is called "Vyatirēka Samjñā". This is a higher stage than the Yatamāna Samjñā. The mind has become calm at this stage and the aspirant neither rejoices nor laments over the successes or failures he has met. This is a stage when the aspirant makes an all-out effort to ripen out the yet unripe Kaṣāya.

An aspirant of this stage does not, of his own accord, indulge in things pleasing to him. Even in such pleasures or sorrows he comes across, on account of his fate, he will be free from elation or depression. That means he checks the particular tendencies of the mind with the desire of subduing Rāga and Dvēṣa that are yet continuing unabated.

In the next stage of "Ekēndriya Samjñā" the mind becomes self-centred and steady. This is a higher stage than that of the previous one. His mind does not become overpowered by sorrow, even by the causes of sorrow, like the separation of the dear and the association of the contrary. He does not desire for pleasures. He is a person who is divested of Rāga, Bhaya and Krōdha. He is a 'Muni' or, one who is engaged in unceasing meditation upon the Ātman. He is said to be firm in the Ātman. Having subdued the external sense organs, and also having divested the mind of Rāga and Dvēṣa, through the process of Oudāsīnya and Anabhinandana, this yōgi tries to wipe off the indelible impress or Vāsanā left by the effect of previous -Karma through the process of self-experience. Even in this stage, there continues a remnant of Vāsanā and so this stage is superseded by the next stage.

The highest stage of this process is called the *Vaśikāra Samjñā*. This is the culmination of this *Yōga*. The *Ātman* knows him, and is satisfied with himself. The *Karmavāsanā* is totally destroyed at this stage. This is the highest stage of steadfastness that could be reached. Being completely soul-minded, the aspirant totally discards all other desires, immersing himself in that rapture of self-knowledge. He will be thrilled with that joy of self-knowledge and will be firmly fixed up in the soul:

Rāmānuja has thus, made a glorious contribution to the philosophy of *Sādhana* by expounding these passages of the *Gīta*³⁷ in the above way, by showing the four stages that are going gradually higher and higher to culminate in self-knowledge. *Vedānta Deśika* analyses these stages in remarkable brevity as follows:

(१) 'प्रचुरेऽपि रागे तन्निरोधसम्भवः'

An all out effort to check *Rāga* which is predominant.

(२) 'असङ्गलेशेन भुज्यमानेष्वपि नातिस्नेहः'

Attainment of calmness of the mind, through giving up too much interest in even those that are being experienced.

(३) 'दृश्यमानेष्वपि निस्सङ्गता'

The stage of complete detachment even in those impending pleasures and sorrows.

(४) 'कामानां तथात्वेन अदर्शनम्'

Total disappearance of all desires.

Here is a constructive scheme of *Sādhana* which is capable of guiding an aspirant, desirous of attaining self-

knowledge through Karmayōga. These are positive teachings that can be practised and achieved gradually. The Gīta does not command one to attain the highest stage of steadfastness all of a sudden, without taking into consideration the very powerful counteracting tendencies of the mind. It sounds a note of caution that the very first thing that is necessary for Self-experienced is the conquest over sensibility. The ideals of Self-reverence and Self-knowledge must be held aloft, and an all out effort must be made sincerely to subdue the mind and the senses. Mere non-experience of the objects of the senses does not help us, if the mind is not cleansed of Rāga or desire.³⁸ This Rāga or desire is apt to distract the self from its highest ideals, and to subject it to the miseries of transmigration, if it is not completely destroyed. This Rāga can be shed completely, only when one has attained the joy of self experience. Viṣayarāga does not drop off without Ātmaśānti, and until Viṣayarāga is not destroyed the powerful sense organs over power the mind to their own ways. Lord Krishna has, therefore, urged the aspirants to fix their minds upon Him for conquest over sensibility.³⁹ The mind being thus purified becomes, then only, free from Viṣayarāga and gains control over the senses. Having thus conquered sensibility it becomes fit for self-experience. The stage of a Sthitaprajna can be attained, it is affirmed, therefore, only through Divine Grace.⁴⁰

Place of Karmayōga in the Scheme of Sādhana:

Adhikārins: It should not be concluded from a cursory glance of the foregoing sections that anyone and every one would be easily performing Karmayōga and that Karmayōga is very easy to practise. The Adhikārins for Karmayōga are

very rare. Most of us are ruled by our animal instincts and sensibility.

We are after acquisition of wealth, fame and pleasure here and elsewhere. We are slaves to our senses and seek pleasure always. We follow different activities solely for the fruits we would derive from them.⁴¹ So, it is really very difficult for one to follow the ideal of Karmayōga which ordains one to do one's duty disinterestedly. Interested action yields many advantages here, but at the same time binds us down to Samsāra, by means of Kāma and Krōdha in them. Developing disinterestedness in the fruits of our actions, and doing those duties for the sake of duty, is a very hard thing that could be attained by constant practice and Divine Grace. The common generality of people engage themselves in interested action for they derive the results thereof very soon. They are led away by the materialistic ends, on account of their beginningless Karma. The obstruction for the commencement of Karmayōga is verily the want of Śama, Dama and the predominance of Rajas, Tamas and others. The noble qualities of Śama and Dama are in turn, obtained by one, only on account of one's individual effort for upward evolution. The philosophy of Karma does not appear fatalistic. It reveals to us that our future is going to be determined, according to our present and our present is only shaped so, according to our past. So this fills one with hope, and not with disappointment, for it is never too late for one to mend oneself. It is only necessary that one should realize this truth. There is scope for the unfolding of our personality by our individual effort. So the Gīta urges us to shed our ignorance and to do our duty for the sake of duty.

Karmayōga is to be Done Along With Nityakarma:

Niṣkāma Karma is a divine command and we are required to obey it. There are different kinds of Karmayōga meant for people of different temperaments and stations in life. The Gīta gives the classical examples of Karmayōga as Dravya Yajna, Tapo Yajna, Yōga Yajña, Svadhyāya Yajña, Jñāna Yajña and others.⁴² All these are Karmas that are selected by a Karmayōgin.

These several kinds of Karmayōga are to be practised along with the Nityanaimittika Karmas. While commenting on the word Kāmajān in Stanza 32 of Chapter IV of the Gīta, Rāmānuja clearly expresses this as follows:

‘अहरहरनुष्ठीयमाननित्यनैमित्तिककर्मानुष्ठानजान् विद्धि’ ।

गी.भा.4-32

Though there are different kinds of Karmayōga, they have to be observed without a break, till the time of realization, along with the Nitya and Naimittika Karmas which are generally meant for all. Violation of the duties coming under the category of Nitya and Naimittika Karmas results in repudiation of Divine will. Deśika states in very clear terms that Nityanaimittika Karmas are obligatory, and that these are to be performed by one and all. Along with these Karmas, one has to practise Karmayōga choosing only one of the various types of duties described in the Gīta, according to one's temperament and station in life.

‘एवं कर्मयोगावान्तरभेदानुपदिश्य तत्तद्भेदेऽपि साधारणानां
नित्यनैमित्तिकानां अवश्यानुष्ठेयत्वं तत्परित्यागे प्रत्यवायश्च
अभिहितः ।’

ता.चं 2-32

One's duties are divided into three kinds viz., Nitya Karmas, Naimittika Karmas and Kāmya Karmas. The first two types form "Ājñā Karma" or mandatory duties. These have an absolute claim upon our obedience. The Anujñā Karma or duties that are sanctioned permission may or may not be performed, for attaining some desire. So Kāmya Karmas are not imperative. These Kāmya Karmas may be performed by one for fulfilling certain desires, in which case, the aspirant will be bound down to Samsāra. A wise man, who has understood the secret of Karmayōga may perform even those Kāmya Karmas, without having any interest in the fruits thereof, but only as devout service to the Lord.⁴³ One should perform these duties not with the purpose of attaining some fruit, but only to serve the Lord thereby. So it is an established fact that the aspirant who chooses Karmayōga is obliged to practise it, along with the performance of his Nitya and Naimittika Karmas.

One is obliged to perform the duties of one's station in life to maintain the solidarity of the society, and also for shedding one's egoism. How does the performance of Karma help a man to progress on the road to realization? Every human being is subject to the effect of the Three Guṇas namely Rajas, Tamas and Satva. One has to make a conscious effort to annihilate the sin resulting from Tamas, and thereby to purify and elevate his Satva. For this purpose the performance of the duties of one's station in life is inevitable. The observance of Nityanaimittika karmas, and the abstaining from prohibited actions, surely lead one to attain the noble qualities of tranquility and mastery over the internal and external sense organs. The attainment of Śama and Dama will be directly contributing towards the concentration of mind. Thus the observance of

Nityanaimittika Karmas is 'Sannipatyōpakārī'. This fact has been' experienced in the scriptural texts, like 'Vidyām Chāvidyām cha'. According to Rāmānuja this text expounds that Karma is a part of Vidyā, and that he who knows Karma, as an Anga of Vidyā is going to attain salvation. Karma becomes necessary for the origination of Upāsana, as it is a part and parcel of it. No Samuchaya between Vidyā and Avidyā is admitted in this school on account of the word 'Saha' in the above Text. Both these are taken together to form one means. Vidyā is therefore to be supported by Avidyā or Karma; as its Anga. Here the word Mṛtyu, refers to' our beginningless Karma that is an obstruction for the attainment of Brahman, the goal of our life.

‘मृत्युशब्दः उपेयप्राप्तिविरोधिकर्मवाची’ । श्रु.प्र. p - 35

‘अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा इति सत्कर्मणा विद्योत्पत्तिविरोधिकर्मतरणं विवक्षितम् - ‘धर्मेण पापमपनुदति’ ‘कषायपक्तिः कर्माणि’ इत्याद्यनेकवाक्यानुरोधात्।’ स.सि.प - 90

The Sūtra ‘सर्वपेक्षा च यज्ञादिश्रुतेरश्वत्’ । (श्री.भा. 3-4-26) affirms the relation between Karma and Upāsana, as that which exists between an Anga and Angi. The dire necessity of the observance of Nityanaimittika Karmas is confirmed in this Sūtra for the commencement of Upāsana. The Text in this context happens to be -

‘तमेतं वेदानुवचनेन ब्राह्मणा विविदिषन्ति यज्ञेन दानेन तपसाऽनाशकेन’ बृ.उ. 6-4-22

The meaning of this is that aspirants desire to attain Vedana, through sacrifice and others. These sacrifices and others are the means of attainment of knowledge, and this

Jñānam is of the form of the vivid and direct remembrance of the Lord. This kind of Dhyāna is obtained, only through the grace of the Lord won by the observance of the Nityanaimittika Karmas observed day in and day out, in a spirit of divine worship.

‘एवं रूपं च ध्यानमहरहरनुष्ठीयमानैर्नित्यनैमित्तिककर्मभिः
परमपुरुषाराधनरूपैः परमपुरुषप्रसादद्वारेण जायते इति यज्ञादिना
विविदिषन्तीति शास्त्रेण प्रतिपाद्यते’ । श्री.भा. 3-4-26

The Gīta also declares that one should not give up the duties of one's station in life.⁴⁴ The scriptural texts-

‘धर्मेण पापमपनुदति’ ‘कषायपक्तिः कर्माणि’

and others directly point to this fact of the Nityanaimittika Karmas being observed regularly, for cleansing oneself of the taint of Prāchēna Karma.

Lord Krishna has described the three kinds of Tyāga in the Gīta and has declared that Sātvika Tyāga alone is his choice.⁴⁵

The Varnāśrama Dharmas relate to a number of deities such as Agni, Indra and others that are different from the supreme Being. So it is objected by some that the performance of Varnāśramadharmās would lead one to the defect of worshipping a deity other than one to whom he should be solely devoted. This objection is ruled out, for it is the firm conviction of the aspirant that one and the same Vāsudēva who is the innermost self of all Gods is gratified by the worship of various deities, by virtue of His being the Sarvātman. All these worships are meant for the devout service of that same Antarātman who is in all, and so their Aikāntya is undisturbed.⁴⁶

So the performance of Nityanaimittika Karmas does immense good to us, as it enriches and aids our Upāsana. This is an Upāsanaṅga and the performance of these Karmas inculcates in us nobler qualities of life such as restraint over external, as well as internal sense organs, and thus richly contributes to our divine life.

Even a Little of Karmayōga Has its Own Merit:

The greatness of Karmayōga lies in the fact that it is definitely conducive to the good of the aspirant. It is never harmful to him. Though one has commenced Karmayōga and left it in the middle, it will surely have its influence. There is no question of its becoming futile. Nor does it result in any danger, if thus, left in the middle. Though there is a break, Karmayōga does not become ineffective. Even a little of it will surely save the aspirant from great dangers. The aspirant who has followed the path of Karmayōga will have surely made a positive and fruitful attempt in elevating himself. Though he gives it up in the middle, due to various causes for which he is not responsible, this will not vanish, like other Sādhana that fail to serve their purposes, in the event of a break in the middle.⁴⁷ So Karmayōga has this decided advantage of serving its purpose even when it is observed with breaks in the middle, and of being a perfectly harmless means of self-experience.

Karmayōga is, it must be understood, only a means of another means and is not all. Vēdana or Upāsana is prescribed as the means for the Realization of Brahman and this means of Upāsana has Karmayōga and JñānaYōga as its sub-means. So mere knowledge of the soul is not

capable of redeeming us from Samsāra. This type of disinterested action results ultimately in the realization of self-experience either directly or through Jñānayōga. Karmayōga thus provides the proper foundation for Bhaktiyōga. It is therefore a means of Bhaktiyōga. Karmayōga can directly result in self-experience, as it includes in itself the knowledge of the soul. Likewise it may lead an aspirant to Jñānayōga also, through which the same goal of self-experience is reached. Self-renouncement is the special feature of Karmayōga and this selfrenouncement leads next to self-realization in Jñānayōga.

We may now sum up the important characteristics of Karmayōga as propounded by this school.

1. Karmayōga is a means to Ātmāvalōkana, which is inevitable for Bhaktiyōga, the means of God-realization.
2. Karmayōga includes in itself the true knowledge of the soul, and on account of this it is superior to JñānaYōga.
3. Without Karmayōga it is impossible to attain Jñānayōga.
4. Karmayōga is easy to perform, and it results in Ātmāvalōkana earlier than in Jñānayōga.
5. Karmayōga is Jñānakāra.
6. Karmayōga signifies the performance of actions along with the three kinds of renouncement viz., Sangatyaga, Kartṛtva tyāga and Phalatyaga.

7. Karmayōga results in Sthitaprajñatā.
8. One can choose the particular type of action such as Yajña, Dāna, Tapas or others, according to one's temperaments and station in life, and perform it disinterestedly along with the duties of one's station in life.
9. Karmayōgādhikarins are rare.
10. Karmayōga is harmless and is sure of serving its purpose, though practised with a break in the middle.

1. B.G. 2-41
2. B.G. II-42, 43, 44
3. B.G. II-50
4. 'कर्मसु क्रियमाणेषु अयं बुद्धियोगः कौशलम् - अति सामर्थ्यम् अतिसामर्थ्यसाध्यमित्यर्थः।' (गी.भा. 2-50)
5. See ता.चं 3-30
6. B.G. 3-3
7. B.G. V-4.
8. B.G. V-2; III-8
9. B.G. III-34
10. B.G. III-35
11. B.G. III-37
12. दुरासदं - अननुष्ठितकर्मयोगैः अनिरस्तपापैः अगृहीतसदृढसत्त्वकवचैः दोषदर्शनेऽपि अपाकर्तुमशक्यमित्यर्थः।' (ता.चं. 3-43)
13. B.G. V-6
14. B.G. V-3
15. 'अयं भावः - सत्यं देवादिवैषम्यं प्रामाणिकमेव । तत्तु न स्वरूपप्रयुक्तम् । तस्य कर्मोपाधिकप्रकृतिपरिणामेन भेदनिबन्धनत्वात् । शुद्धाकारविवक्षया तु समानत्वं इहोच्यते इति।' (ता.चं. 5-7)
16. B.G. III-14, 15
17. B.G. III-22, 23
18. B.G. III-8
19. 'नियतं व्याप्तं प्रकृतिसंसृष्टेन हि व्याप्तं कर्म, प्रकृतिसंसृष्टत्वमनादिवासनया । नियतत्वेन सुशक्तत्वात् असम्भावितप्रमादत्वाच्च कर्मैव कुरु।' (गी.भा. 3-8)
20. B.G. III - 19
21. B.G. III - 25, 26
22. B.G. III-27, 28

23. कर्ता शास्त्रार्थवत्वात् । श्री.भा. 2-3-33
24. B.G. V-8, 9
25. G.B. V - 11
26. 'परातु तच्छ्रुतेः' श्री.भा. 2-3-41
27. G.B. 3-30
28. B.G. IV - 18
29. B.G. IV - 19
30. B.G. 4-21
31. B.G. 4-33
32. B.G. IV - 35
33. B.G. 4-39
34. See ता.चं 4-39
35. B.G. V-18
36. 'तत्र स्वयंप्रियेषु प्रवृत्तिरहितो दैवागताप्रियसंश्लेषविश्लेषयोश्च अभिनन्दनादिरहित इत्युक्ते पक्षे तरेषां रागादीनां पाकाभिलाषेण मनोव्यापारविशेषनिवारणमुक्तं स्यात्' । (तां.च. 2-57)
37. B.G. II - 55 to 58
38. B.G. II - 59
39. B.G. II - 61
40. See Tatparya Chandrika, II - 59
41. B.G. IV - 12
42. B.G. IV, 25-30
43. T.M.K. II - 38, 39, 40
44. B.G. XVIII - 5, 46
45. B.G. XVIII - 6, 7, 9
46. T.M.K. II - 35
47. B.G. II-40

JÑĀNAYŌGA

The word jñānam is used in various senses to convey different objects in philosophical discussions. Firstly it stands for the knowledge that one gains of the objects of the world through the various sense organs. The sense organs contact their several objects and knowledge is generated when the mind and the soul are tuned with them. Knowledge of this nature relating to the external objects of the world is gained through perception, inference or verbal testimony. Jñānam is again used to signify the knowledge of the Ātman who is different and distinct from matter. The Ātman is essentially of the nature of knowledge, and it is also qualified by its attributive consciousness. The above two types of knowledge can be related to the Ātman as its substantive consciousness and its attributive consciousness. The word Jñānam is significant in another sense. According to this, it directly relates to the Absolute Reality which is without a 'second, and which is qualified by its mode of the Chit and Achit. This is the sense Par excellent, as that alone is Super-knowledge and all other things quite the contrary. All other knowledge is expected to lead to this knowledge, the ever auspicious Brahman.

Before going to Jñānayōga we must know first of all what is meant by Jñānayōga in this system. Unlike in the system of Advaita that posits undifferentiated consciousness as the Absolute Reality, this school affirms the existence of the ever auspicious Parabrahman who is free from any imperfection whatever. It is the conviction of this school that the Absolute Reality is qualified by plurality, though it is not plural by itself. The reality of the souls and the order of matter is as equally affirmed, as the Reality of the absolute Brahman. As the concept of Sādhana

here, is strictly in accordance with the ontological position of this system of philosophy, there is difference between the school of Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita in the significance assigned to Jñānayōga. According to the monistic school of thought, Jñānam means knowledge of the oneness of the self, and Jñānayōga happens to be the path for the realization of this truth. As there is no finite self existing apart from the Universal self, the question of self-realization apart from the realization of the Supreme does not arise. Self-realization itself is Brahmanization. So the path of Karmayōga and Bhaktiyōga have been prescribed by teachers of monism for purposes of Chittaśuddhi and Chittaikāgrya i.e., purification and concentration of the mind. So Jñānayōga for the Advaitin signifies Ātmaikyajñānam, divested of all Karmas.

But Viśiṣṭādvaita strongly repudiates the above view point, and maintains that the meaning of the scriptures is different from what has been claimed to be. Innumerable scriptural texts affirm the reality of the souls and the order of matter, but only subordinated to Brahman. Brahman is described as the "All-self" or the Vāsudēva who happens to be the innerself of all Jīvas and so proper attention is to be paid to the philosophy of the Ātman, also. The Scriptures declare in one voice that the Ātman is an external entity who is related to Brahman as his "Mode". According to the School of Viśiṣṭādvaita the realization of the Ātman, therefore, is a prerequisite for realization of God, as both of them are real and different, though related to one another inseparably as the mode and the monad. Karmayōga, in this school provides a discipline to all our activities, and enables us to progress on the path of self-realization, either directly or through Jñānayōga, for reaching ultimately the goal of God-realization.

In the previous section while dealing with Karmayōga, we affirmed that Karmayōga included in itself an aspect of Jñānam or knowledge of the Ātman. We also quoted Yamuna who declared that Karma, Jñānam and Bhakti always went together. Just as Karmayōga without Jñānam is an impossibility, Jñānayōga without Karma is also an impossibility. So Jñānayōga in this system does not mean pure knowledge of the soul bereft of all activities. Such a thing is described as an impossibility in the Gīta. This is an essential point which we must keep in mind, while talking of Jñānayōga in Viśiṣṭādvaita.

Jñānayōga implies reflection upon the Ātman, and anyone who aspires for self-realization may follow it only after practising the discipline of Karmayōga. The Gīta declares that nobody who is in contact with matter can ever escape the domination of Karma. This is within the experience of one and all. Therefore Rāmānuja expounds that Jñānayōga cannot be practised followed by a total cessation of all activities. Jñānayōga in this school must be taken to mean therefore, that way of Sādhana, wherein the fact of intense meditation over the soul features dominantly. An aspirant who follows this path engages himself in meditation over his pure Ātman without any break in the interval. Thus Jñānayōga is only Karmaviśiṣṭā and never Karmābhāva-viśiṣṭā, according to the teachers of this system.

Rāmānuja discusses in his Gītabhashya the nature and relationship between Karmayōga and Jñānayōga. He admits both these are means of Ātmāvalōkana. According to him, in Jñānayōga reflection upon the self features prominent, though it is necessarily qualified by Karma. Rāmānuja comes to this conclusion on the basis of the Gīta itself and it is the finding of Rāmānuja that the Gīta categorically

denies the possibility of Jñānayōga followed by a total cessation of all activities.

While commenting on stanza No.53 of the second Canto of the Gita, Rāmānuja expounds the nature and relationship of these two yōgas as follows:

शास्त्रजन्यात्मज्ञानपूर्वक कर्मयोगः स्थितप्रज्ञताख्य
ज्ञाननिष्ठामापादयति । ज्ञाननिष्ठारूपा स्थितप्रज्ञता तु योगाख्यं
आत्मावलोकनं साधयति । गी.भा. 2-53

Karmayōga is to be practised along with the true knowledge of the soul as obtained from the śāstras, and this would lead to Jñānaniṣṭa of the form of Sthita Prajñatā. This Jñānaniṣṭā would lead to Yōga or Ātmāvalōkana.

Deśika affirms that the term Jñānaniṣṭā stands for Jñānayōga.¹ The term yōga has the general meaning of an Upāya but Rāmānuja has interpreted it here as Ātmāvalōkana. This interpretation is fully supported by Deśika in his Tātparya Chandrikā.

Four objections are raised against this and answered by Deśika as follows

1. Yōga is generally said to be the means. How can the same Yōga be said to be the goal here? The answer for this question is as follows: Yōga that is prescribed as the means refers to Karmayōga, and Yōga which is ordained as the goal, is verily Ātmāvalōkana. So the means and the end are not the same.
2. Karmayōga is to be practised along with the true knowledge of the spiritual self or Ātmajñāna for

attaining Ātmajñāna itself. Does this not lead to the fallacy of Ātmāśraya? How is this avoided? The answer is this: The true knowledge of the self, that is prescribed in Karmayōga as a pre-requisite, is that which is obtained from the Sāstras. With this knowledge, Karmayōga is to be practised later. This is obtained in experience, and realised actually as such, in course of time. So there is no fallacy of Ātmāśraya at all. Ātmajñāna and Ātmāvalōkana are not one and the same. Ātmajñāna obtained from the Sāstras is actually meditated upon unceasingly to result ultimately in self experience. .

3. A Sthitaprajna is required to listen to, and to meditate upon the self. How can this state of steadfastness be practised at all?

Ātmajñāna relates to the knowledge of the self that is determined in the light of the teachings of the scriptures, and Jñānaniṣṭa relates to Jñānayōga by which one attains that steadfastness by constant practice.

4. After all what is that Yōga which is said to be different from that state of steadfastness? How can it be different from Niśchala Prajñāsthiti?

This question is answered thus: Yōga or Ātmāvalōkana is sākṣātkāra, and the state of steadfastness consists of the constant remembrance of the true nature of the self, and this is the factor causing that realization.²

Again, while commenting upon the third stanza of the Third Chapter of the Gīta, Rāmānuja declares as follows:

‘विषयव्याकुलबुद्धियुक्तानां कर्मयोगेऽधिकारः अव्याकुलबुद्धीनां तु ज्ञानयोगेऽधिकारः उक्त इति न किञ्चिदिह विरुद्धं नापि व्यामिश्रमभिहितम्’ । गी.भा. 3-3

Deśika, commenting upon the same text, expounds 'as follows:

‘तेन ज्ञानयोगकर्मयोगयोरधिकारिभेदसम्भवः परस्परविरुद्धानामपि धर्माणां प्रतिनियताधिकारिविषयत्वव्यवस्थापक वर्णाश्रमदेशकाल कामनानिमित्तादिदृष्टान्तश्च सूचितः । ...मोक्षाभिलाषे जातेऽपि जन्मान्तरशतसुचरितमृदितकषायाणां केषाञ्चिदेव तदानीमेव ज्ञानयोगेऽधिकारः तथा दर्शनात् । ततः शक्ताशक्तविषयतया ज्ञानकर्मयोगयोर्व्यवस्थेति भावः ।’ ता.चं 3-3

While introducing the VIth Chapter of the Gīta, Rāmānuja declares as follows:

‘उक्तः कर्मयोगः सपरिकरः । इदानीं ज्ञानयोगकर्मयोग साध्यात्मावलोकनरूपयोगाभ्यासविधिरुच्यते ।’ गी.भा. 7-1

From the above, it becomes established that this school of thought does not totally discard the possibility of JñānaYōga. This school admits the validity of JñānaYōga as a means for Ātmāvalōkana, but only affirms that it is meant for very competent aspirants who are endowed with an undisturbable bent of mind. Rāmānuja declares in unequivocal terms that JñānaYōga is a self-sufficient means for Ātmāvalōkana.

‘ज्ञानयोगकर्मयोगयोः आत्मप्राप्तिसाधनभावे अन्योन्यनैरपेक्ष्यमाह .. उभयोरात्मावलोकनैकफलयोः एकफलत्वेन एकमप्यास्थितः तदेव फलं लभते ।’ गी.भा. 5-4

‘एवं एकफलत्वेनैकं वैकल्पिकं साङ्ख्यं योगं च यः पश्यति स
पश्यति स एव पण्डित इत्यर्थः ।’ गी.भा. 5-5

Thus we find that Jñānayōga is held a valid means for Ātmāvalōkana. As explained before, it is not possible for all to practise this. Only he, that has cleansed his mind of all impurities through Karmayōga, can become fit for following Jñānayōga. It is extremely difficult for one to concentrate upon one's self successfully. The Gīta explains that the path of JñānaYōga is beset with dangers of very great magnitude, as one is always liable to fall into the 'snares of Kāma and Krōdha. Conquest over one's sensibility is inevitable for steadfastness and this cannot be achieved without Karmayōga. Moreover, it is a longer process, as one has to achieve it with greater effort.³

Jñānayōga is a difficult path which is to be built up upon the discipline of Karmayōga. The Gīta does not encourage anyone to follow the path of Jñānayōga, though it admits its validity as a means of self-realization. It exhorts even such of the aspirants who are fit for Jñānayōga to follow Karmayōga itself, to set the world the proper lead.

‘आत्मनि कृत्स्नवित्तया ज्ञानयोगशक्तोऽपि पूर्वोक्तनीत्या कर्मयोग
एव ज्ञानयोगनिरपेक्ष आत्मावलोकन साधनमिति बुद्ध्या युक्तः
कर्मैवाचरन् सर्वकर्मस्वकृत्स्नविदां प्रीतिं जनयेत् । गी.भा. 3-26

Likewise Viśiṣṭādvaita does not altogether dismiss the possibility of Jñānayōga, though it advises all aspirants to follow the path of Karmayōga itself. Rāmānuja has commented upon the first six chapters of the Gīta bringing about the full significance of Karmayōga. The Gīta expounds the ethics of

Karmayōga in the first Ṣatka and Rāmānuja, following Yāmuna, has commented upon it in its true spirit. The second chapter of the Gīta deals with the nature of the Ātman, and enlightens one upon the path of self realization. The other chapters deal with the same subject matter in detail. The third chapter teaches the spirit with which one should perform Niṣkāma Karma. The Fourth Chapter expounds that Karmayōga is of the form of knowledge and gives some of the different types of activities to be performed disinterestedly. The fifth chapter teaches how Karmayōga is easy to perform and how it yields its result soon. It also teaches how one has to realize one's individual self. The sixth chapter deals with Yōga or Ātmāvalōkana, the culmination of Karmayōga and Jñānayōga. Thus we find that no chapter of the Gīta is entirely devoted to the exposition of Jñānayōga as such, according to the analysis of Viśiṣṭadvāitic philosophers. These teachers have discovered that the Gīta lays special emphasis on Karmayōga, and that it develops the ethics of Karmayōga alone throughout the first six chapters, referring casually here and there to Jñānayōga. A mention of Jñānayōga is made not for enjoining it on all, but only to warn one against the difficulties one is bound to face, when one chooses it for the other. The Gīta, being very considerate to humanity, has with unbounded mercy expounded the path which is safer and easier of the two, and has exhorted all to follow it alone for self-realization.

Though the Gīta does not devote, according to Viśiṣṭadvāitic thinkers, much attention upon Jñānayōga, it does not disallow it. It only affirms that Jñānayōga is a more difficult path than Karmayōga and, that it would

require a longer time to perfect it, as it has to be inevitably based on Karmayōga alone. The school of Viśiṣṭādvaita has accordingly accepted the path of Jñānayōga in principle, and has expounded the path of self-realization as related to it.

As explained above, the concept of Jñānayōga in Viśiṣṭādvaita is quite different from that of any other school. Jñānayōga is not mere knowledge abstracted and devoid of Karma, but only knowledge of the soul combined with Karma. Karmābhāvaviśiṣṭa Jñānayōga, as expounded in Advaita, is not admitted in this school, as the Gīta itself declares it as an impossibility.

It is therefore the established conclusion of this school that Karmayōga and Jñānayōga are both intertwined. Karmayōga includes the knowledge of the soul, and Jñānayōga includes the performance of disinterested activities, without which one cannot subsist here for realizing one's soul. What is implied in Jñānayōga is the speculative knowledge about the Ātman. Jñānayōga is more helpful to self-intuition than Karmayōga. This is rationalistic and requires greater concentration for practice.

Karmayōga was said to be as effective as Jñānayōga, because all the activities of the Karmayōgin would be illumined by the metaphysical knowledge of the Ātman and the aspirant would be rationalising his Karma. The Karmayōgin would reach the same realization of his soul with little endeavour, as he would be doing his duties with the spiritual knowledge of the self.

The school of Viśiṣṭādvaita gives due importance to the philosophy of the soul, and prescribes the realization of

the Pratyagātman as a part of the Realization of Brahman. The soul must be distinguished from matter, on account of its essential nature of knowledge. They are infinite in number, alike in nature, and never identical. It is this eternal and real Pratyagātman that seeks to know itself and the Supreme Being, its inner soul. Ātmaadarśana is therefore essential for Parāmatmaadarśana.

The Gīta has prescribed two ways for achieving Pratyagātmaadarśanam viz., Karmayōga and Jñānayōga. The Gīta is definitely in favour of Karmayōga and, though it admits the possibility of the other path, it does not exhort the aspirants to follow it. Karmayōga as well as Jñānayōga leads to the same realization of the Ātman. Jñānayōga cannot be attained without Karmayōga, but Karmayōga can lead to Ātmāvalōkana without the medium of Jñānayōga, as it includes in itself the aspect of the knowledge of the spiritual self.

Jñānayōga is described as steadfastness in one's own self by one who has conquered his lower nature.⁴

‘ज्ञानयोगो जितस्वान्तैः परिशुद्धात्मनि स्थितः’ गी. सं 23

says Yāmunaāchārya about JñānaYōga. The Jnani reflects unceasingly over the essential nature of his pure Pratyagātman who is different and distinct from the body. Jñānayōga signifies this kind of self-intuition which is ultimately realized in experience. The stage when the aspirant speculates upon his own self, as a real possibility, endeavouring all the time to bar the thought of any other thing, happens to be the mode of Jñānayōga. The aspirant will strive hard to realize the Ātman by living constantly in

it. The Āruruṣṣu, or the Aspirant who strives to ascend to spirituality is required to practise Karmayōga, till he realizes the Ātman. When he is established in self-experience all his activities are swallowed up. He will have to do no particular activity for purposes of self-realization. He will have attained his goal of Ātmāvalōkana, and he need not do anything more for that purpose. This does not mean that the aspirant should abandon all his duties thenceforward. He is bound to perform the duties of his station in life, so long as he remains in this world. The Nityanaimittika Karmas are to be performed without fail, in a spirit of service to the Lord, but there will be no need for any endeavour on his part for self-realization. This means that he has to practise Karmayōga till he attains self realization.

Rāmānuja declares that a very rigorous and spiritual discipline is essential for Ātmāvalōkana and, that this would be possible either through Karmayōga or Jñānayōga.⁵

An aspirant who is cleansed of all impurities of the mind, and who is endowed with the spiritual knowledge of equanimity, is fit for Ātmāvalōkana. A Sthitaprajña who is established in the Ātman is a Jñānayōgin and he proceeds on the path of Yōgābhyāsa to self realization.

‘पश्चात्तु तत्फलतया ‘प्रजहाति यदा कामान्’ इत्यादिना ज्ञानयोगो वक्ष्यते ।’
ता.चं 2-39

The Gīta describes that three things are very essential for commencing Yōgabhyāsa.⁶

1. A profound practice in Samatva of Samabuddhitva or spiritual equanimity.

2. Renouncement of worldly desires or Vairāgya.
3. Dvandvāhītātva or the virtue of rising above the pairs of opposites viz., success and failure pleasure and pain, cold and heat, fame or infamy etc. One should attribute the pairs of opposites to Abhimāna, and should overcome them by dissociating the self from the body. When Karmayōga is practised the vāsanās get gradually subdued, and a state of tranquility is obtained. An aspirant endowed with spiritual equanimity becomes fit for commencing practice of Yōga for self-realization. Two things are necessary for this and they are self-renouncement and practice of introversion.

For practising this discipline of Yōga, for attaining self-realization the Gīta ordains:⁷

1. That the yōgin should select a suitable place and equip himself with the necessary external aids. .
2. That he should have concentration of the mind; and
3. That he should fix his mind upon the Supreme Being.

These upakaraṇas or aids for Yōga have been prescribed by the Gīta in unequivocal terms to enable the aspirant after self-realization to withdraw his consciousness from all external objects and to turn it inward. The Yōgin selects a pure and private spot for meditation. He will not long for anything other than his Ātman. He will never think of anything as belonging to him other than his soul. He sits in a meditative posture comfortable for meditation and intuitively himself with his Ātman. His mind which is turned inward will be bubbling with delight. The mind of the

Yōgin should take resort in the auspicious form of the Supreme Being who is the ground, source, and goal of all beings. Nothing in this world can be possible without the grace of God, and so even for attaining one's self one has to meditate upon God. While dealing with Karmayōga, it was explained that it was impossible for anyone to practise Karmayōga without dedicating those actions to that Universal Being. Similarly, even Jñānayōga is verily the gift of God. So the Gīta exhorts the aspirant of the path of knowledge to pray to God for fulfilling his aspirations. The mind cannot become pure and firm, unless it is associated with God.

Rāmānuja declares this in his Gītābhāṣya:

‘एवं मयि परस्मिन् ब्रह्मणि पुरुषोत्तमे मनसः शुभाश्रये सदा आत्मानं मनो युञ्जन् नियतमानसः मत्स्पर्शपवित्रीकृतमानसतया निश्चलमानसः मत्संस्थां मयि संस्थितां शान्तिमधिगच्छति’ ।

गी.भा. 6-15

The mind should unite with the Lord, and it should think of nothing other than that Supreme Being.

‘मच्चित्तं शब्दो भगवति चित्तस्यानुप्रवेशपरः । मत्परशब्दस्तु तदेकचित्तत्वपरः’ ।

ता.चं. 6-14

This Parāmatmachintana or meditation upon the Lord is also an Upakarana for the attainment of Ātmāvalōkana.

‘उचितदेशप्रभृति परमात्मचिन्तनपर्यन्तं ह्यत्र योगोपकरणमेव’ ।

ता.चं. 6-16

All the above three are means for attainment of Yōga or Ātmāvalōkana.

Discipline of the mind and the body results in self-purification, and then the aspirant delights in Yōga and desires for nothing else other than his own soul. He will be blessed with that supreme happiness which can be attained only by turning his mind to his soul. He will remain undisturbed in his own self, and having gained this self-experience, considers all other gains little. Being established in the self, he will not be disturbed even by the causes of extreme sorrow.⁸ The mode of attaining steadfastness in the Ātman is described by the Gīta.⁹ It ordains that the Yogi who is endeavouring for self-experience should first of all discard all traces of desire from his mind. Desires are of two kinds namely Sparśajās and Samkalpajās. Those that are born of Samkālpa such as Putrapautra and Kṣetra and others are possible of being totally discarded. But the desires that are due to contact with matter such as heat, cold and others are unavoidable, and in these one should give up the sense of pleasure or anxiety, and thus should completely extricate one self from the snares of Kāma. Complete mastery over one's sense organs is very essential for Yōga. One should, therefore, withdraw one's mind from all external activities, direct it towards the Ātman, and firmly fix it up in the Ātman. Abandonment of selfishness in its totality and a complete control over one's mind are very essential for concentrating the mind over the ever pure Ātman.

During the time of Yōgabhyāsa the aspirant is thus required to intuit himself with his self, and when the mind is completely subdued and established in the self, he will be blessed with the delight of self-experience. The Gīta calls the Yōgin fit for self-experience as Praśānta Mānasam,

Śānta Rajasam, Akalmaṣam and Brahmabhūtam. He is endowed with inner quiet, as the mind is divested of all distractions and is firmly established in the soul. On account of this steadfastness, he is rid of all impurities of the past. He is now not a prey to the influences of Rajas and Tamas, and so is said to shine in his own essential nature. Such a Yōgin will be blessed with the immense joy of self-experience.

‘प्रशान्तमनसं आत्मनि निश्चलमनसम् आत्मन्यस्तमनसम् तत एव हेतोः दग्धाशेषकल्मषम् तत एव शान्तरजसं विनष्टरजोगुणं तत एव ब्रह्मभूतं स्वस्वरूपेणावस्थितं एनं योगिनं आत्मानुभवरूपमुत्तमं सुखमुपैति’।
गी.भा. 6-27

The yōgin, who has experienced the illimitable delight of the Ātman, through the means of Yōga, enjoys the inner quiet of his Ātman in all its richness and intensity.¹⁰ The Gīta declares that the aspirant of the path of Karmayōga or Jñānayōga follows this process of Yōgabhyāsa and attains the immense delight of self-realization at all times, whether in or out of meditation. Rāmānuja comments on this as

‘ब्रह्मानुभवरूपं सुखं अत्यन्तमपरिमितं सुखेन-अनायासेन सदा अश्नुते।’
गी.भा. 6-28

Deśika affirms that this delight that one gets out of the influence of Yōgabhyāsa is of the form of self-experience, and so it is illimitable, ineffaceable and easily attainable.

‘एवं योगप्रभावादाविर्भवतः सुखस्य आत्मानुभवरूपत्वं साक्षात्कारात् पश्चान्निरतिशयत्वं अनिवर्तनीयत्वं अनायाससाध्यत्वं

चोच्यते।'

ता.चं. 6-28

The Yōgarūḍha who has succeeded in his Yōgabhyāsa experiences the spiritual unity of all Jīvas. This experience will be in four stages according to the Gītāchārya. This is the Yōga vipākadaśā. These four stages are arranged according to their succession and the fourth is verily the highest.

In the first stage the Yōgin who has intuited the Ātman sees the same self in all Jīvas. He realizes the similarity of all Jīvas on account of the similarity of their spiritual intelligence. He realizes that the separatist consciousness is due to the bodily feeling that is caused by their Prachēna Karma, and that the Jīvas in their pure state separated from the contact of matter are similar to his Jīva, and that his Jīva is similar to the other innumerable Jīvas, owing to their essential nature of knowledge. When he realizes the nature of one Jīva he will realize the nature of all Jīvas.

‘सर्वभूतसमानाकारं स्वात्मानं स्वात्मसमानाकाराणि च सर्वभूतानि पश्यतीत्यर्थः । एकस्मिन्नात्मनि दृष्टे सर्वस्यात्मवस्तुनः तत्साम्यात् सर्वमात्मवस्तु दृष्टं भवतीत्यर्थः ।’

गी.भा. 6-29

What is signified in this stage is the realization of the spiritual unity of all Jīvas or 'Jeevānām Parasparasāmyam', as the Gītāchārya has stressed upon this Sāmya elsewhere also.¹¹ The Samadarśana that is described here is not realisation of that Jīva as one, but the realization that the innumerable selves housed in different bodies are essentially of the same nature. This realization is possible

only when the soul has Ātma-dṛṣṭi and reasonableness. Such a Yōgin will see the same kind of Pure Ātman in a dog, in a cow, in a man or in a God. He realizes that the soul is of the same nature of intelligence in all bodies, and that those different forms are all due to the impact of Karma. This is the first step.

In a higher stage, the aspirant gets a glimpse of the Paramātmān and realizes that, if variations of Puṇya and Pāpa, responsible for varied births in this world in different strata such as Gods, animals, men etc., are discarded and destroyed, the Jīvas are similar to Paramātmān.

‘एवं देवमनुष्यादिप्रकृतिपरिणामविशेषरूपभेदनिरसनेन
ज्ञानद्रव्यतया एकरूपत्वानुसन्धानमुक्तम् । अथ तस्यैव देवादि
भेदहेतुभूतपुण्यपापतारतम्यविधूननेन परमात्मना
परमसाम्यानुसन्धानमुच्यते’ । ता.चं. 6-30

When all Jīvas have attained their original status after shedding away all Puṇyas and Pāpas they will be very similar in nature to Paramātmān, and the Yōgi at this stage reflects upon the similarity between the Pure selves and Paramātmān. He realizes the nature of the one, from the realization of the nature of the other. He realizes that the Supreme Self who is of the essential nature of knowledge is similar to the essential nature of the Jīvas that have been freed from the bindings of Puṇya and Pāpa. Here, the Yōgi reflects upon the similarity in essence, between the Jīvas and the Paramātmān. The Mundaka also¹² ordains that the Jīva attains similarity with the Paramātmān after he gets rid of his Puṇya-Pāpa.

‘सर्वस्यात्मवस्तुनो विधूतपुण्यपापस्य स्वरूपेणावस्थितस्य मत्साम्यं पश्यन् यः सर्वत्रात्मवस्तुनि मां पश्यति सर्वमात्मवस्तु च मयि पश्यति । अन्योन्यसाम्यादन्यतरदर्शनेन अन्यतरदपीदृशमिति पश्यति ।’
गी.भा. 6-30

This Yogi will be meditating upon his Ātman and so according to this context, how can it be said that he will be realizing all other souls or the Paramātman here? This is to be answered as follows. The Aspirant here, is no doubt engaged in Svātmānusandhāna and when he experiences his own essential nature he will naturally realize that all others are also of the same nature. So Deśika states:

‘एकव्यक्तिदर्शनेन व्यक्त्यन्तरमपीति अर्थः ।’ ता.चं 6-30

This leads to the next higher stage where the aspirant realizes spiritual unity, owing to the realization of the immanence of the Paramātman in all other entities. In the previous stage similarity of the Jīvas to Īśvara was expounded, on the ground of Akarmavaśyatva. The Jīvas that have completely shed their Puṇya and Pāpa were said to be similar to Īśvara who stood above the rule of Karma, he himself being the Karmādhyakṣa. But in this third stage the reflection of the similarity between the Jīvas and Īśvara is based upon the fact of their being endowed with unlimited knowledge. So the Yogi, who has reflected, thus, upon the nature of his self in Samādhi, will naturally reflect likewise even when he rises up from absorption. This is explained in the following stanza:

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥

भा.गी. 6-31

'That Yōgin who worships me as the pervading identity in all the Jivas, discarding all varied differences of matter, shall see all Jivas as well as himself similar to me'. Īśvara is the one immanent principle in all entities both Chit and Achit. Though He pervades all entities of different natures He is one and indivisible. All beings are in Him, as He is the source and sustenance of the entire Universe. He is in all beings as their inner souls, and all beings derive their existence and value from Him. He is one and the same, and He is not tainted with the imperfections of those entities. Likewise the Jivas also are similar to one another, though their attributive consciousness varies from body to body, owing to the conjunction of matter caused by their respective Karmas. When they attain their pure status there shall be no difference or variation in their attributive knowledge. So the similarity between Īśvara and the Jivas here is in respect of their 'असङ्कुचितज्ञानैकाकारता' The point of comparison between the Jiva and Īśvara here is not regarding their pervasion in all entities. Īśvara is Vibhu and He pervades all entities but the Jiva is atomic in nature, and the scriptures, as well as the Sūtras, reveal this essential nature of the Jivātman.¹³

So the reflection of similarity between the Jivas and Īśvara is not possible regarding the aspect of 'Sarvabhūtasthitatva'. The point of comparison therefore is regarding their essential nature of infinite consciousness.

‘अकर्मवश्यत्वाकारेणेश्वरसाम्यदर्शनं पूर्वत्रोक्तम् । सर्वभूत
स्थितमित्यनेन तु कर्मरूपाविद्यावेष्टनविधुस्त्वात् असङ्कुचित
ज्ञानाकारतया साम्यानुसन्धानम् । तत्संस्कारप्रभावेण च

व्युत्थानकालेऽपि स्वरूपतः तथाविधानुसन्धानानुवृत्तिश्चेत्ये-
तदुच्यते।’

ता.चं 6-31

When the differences between one Jīva and another Jīva caused by the variations of their attributive consciousness are discarded,¹⁴ one realises that all the Jīvas, instead of being identical, are similar to one another on account of their essential nature of undiminished knowledge. This aspect of similarity between Jīva and Jīva is extended further to Īśvara who as, in fact, of the essential nature of Asankuchita Jñāna for ever. Thus in the Third stage similarity between the Jīvas and Īśvara based on their nature of undiminished knowledge is reflected upon.

This experience of spiritual unity signifies also the fact that the order of Jīvas can never exist apart from Īśvara as they are inherently related to Him as His body. This common relationship of the Jīvas to Īśvara also happens to be the basis for reflection of similarity. Unity of the selves can be expounded even on this fact of their being the never-to-be-separable attributes of Īśvara. So they form one with God.

सर्वात्मनां ब्रह्मापृथक्सिद्धत्वविवक्षयाऽप्येकत्वोक्तिश्च घटते।

ता.चं 6-31

In the next higher stage the spiritual insight of Ātmajñāna is completely acquired. This is the Jīvātma yōgakāṣṭhā, or the highest stage of Yogic experience. The aspirant realizes that the innumerable souls, as well as his soul, are similar to one another, on account of their essential nature of undiminished knowledge, and therefore looks alike all joys and sorrows as essentially unrelated to

his self, owing to the realization that the self is different and distinct from matter. He will realize that the soul is essentially of the nature of knowledge and bliss. He will also reflect that the variations in happiness, as well as sorrow, are only due to the variations in Karma and Jñāna, and so, he tries to achieve non-relationship between the self and these joys and sorrows. It is only on account of Mamatva or 'The idea of I and mine' that one is overpowered by joys and sorrows. This aspirant, therefore, does not regard the joys and sorrows that come upon him as his, but grows indifferent towards them as though they were unrelated to him. People generally feel sorry when they lose something but not so, when somebody else has lost something. Similarly they feel elated when they gain something, but do not feel so when a third person has made a gain. Why is it so? It is because he considers that he is not related to those gains or losses of another. This is called 'Asambandha' and this principle is ordained here, to be applied even to himself. So when a person suffers a loss such as the death of a son or, when a person gains something like that of a son he must reflect that it is not connected to him, just as the gain or loss of the third person, and therefore he must remain indifferent and undisturbed. This is the highest stage of Yōga wherein the aspirant reflects on the essential state of the self, and discards all pleasures or sorrows as unrelated to his pure self.

‘स्वात्मनि चान्येषु च वर्तमानं पुत्रजन्मादिरूपं सुखं तन्मरणादिरूपं
च दुःखं असम्बन्धसाम्यात् समं यः पश्यति, परपुत्रजन्ममरणादिसमं
स्वपुत्रजन्ममरणादिकं यः पश्यतीत्यर्थः ।’ गी.भा. 6-32

This is verily the Nirvikāra kāṣṭhā wherein the Yōgin overcomes egoism completely and realizes the spiritual kinship of all the Jivas.

When we examine carefully the significance of the above four stages of Yōga we come to realize that they affirm similarity firstly, between one self and another and secondly, between the infinite Jīvas and Paramātman. The multitude of Jīvas are being known so far very dissimilar to one another, on account of the various bodies they have taken, and also on account of variations in their attributive consciousness. These variations are to be attributed to the impact of Karma, and perfect similarity must be realized between Jīva and Jīva, as all of them are of the essential nature of knowledge. Thus the spiritual unity of the Jīvas is affirmed. This similarity between Jīvas and Jīvas is affirmed, in turn, between Jīvas and the Paramātman. The Supreme self is ever free from the impact of Karma, but the individual selves are bound down to Samsara, owing to their Karmas. So they seem to be dissimilar. But when once the finite self has succeeded in liberating itself from the domination of Karma it shines ever pure, and attains a status similar to that of Īśvara, by virtue of its purity. The Jīva is pure in its essential nature, but is only tainted with the imperfections of its Karma, shedding which, it attains its original status.

Thus, Lord Krishna has expounded the nature of self-experience which is essentially of the nature of Samadarśana every where. This kind of Yōga or Ātmāvalōkana is possible for those aspirants who have subdued the external activities of their minds and have turned them inward. The mind is wavering, and it is essential that it must be directed towards the self and made to take delight in the auspicious qualities of the self such as eternality, knowledge, delight, freedom from the bonds of Karma and purity.

‘नित्यत्वज्ञानत्वानन्दत्व अकर्मवश्यत्वामलत्वादयः अत्र गुणाः ।

ता.चं 6-36

The mind should be arrested from going after the external pleasures of the world that are full of defects and it should be trained gradually to reflect upon the soul endowed with the auspicious attributes of eternality, knowledge and delight.

Ātmāvalōkana:

The aspirant, following the path of Jñānayōga, reflects upon the essential nature of his self constantly and attains self-realization. The Gīta declares that this self-realization will be of the form of Samadarśana. According to the school of Viśiṣṭādvaita the aspirant realizes his Ātman as different and distinct from matter or Prakṛti. He contemplates upon the Paśiśuddhātman or the pure state of his Ātman, and realizes his Ātman as qualified by Nityatva, Amalatva, Ānandatva and Prakṛtivyuktatva. The quest after his Ātman is not his ultimate goal, for he cannot get the bliss of communion with God by this alone. He seeks after his Ātman, as a means to his realizing the Supreme Being. The philosophy of the Ātmam which leads to Ātmāvalōkana, therefore, happens to be the pre-requisite for God-realization.

When the aspirant has realized his immutable and self-effulgent Ātman, he also realizes that he depends upon the Cosmic Ruler, the Paramātman. Though the aspirant starts his Jñānayōga contemplating upon the pure Ātman as dissociated from Prakṛti, he is bound to realize his Ātman in its true nature during the stage of self-realization.

Śeṣatva, or dependence upon the Absolute Being, is one of the essential natures of the Ātman, and this shines in all its glory when one has realized one's soul. So the aspirant who is blessed with Ātmāvalōkana naturally turns his attention towards God who is verily his ground, innerself and controller. The Kēvala then transforms himself into a Jñāni who hungers for divine communion.

The school of Viśiṣṭādvaita thus insists upon self-realization as a means to God realization. It must be also known here that this state of self-realization does not automatically drag one to the path of God-realization, even against one's aspirations. Progress on the path of Sādhana is always, in accordance with the aspirations and individual efforts of the aspirant, and never autocratic or automatic. Human individual effort, strengthened by Divine grace, becomes the means for spiritual progress. The Human personality is never harmed at any stage, by being compelled to certain courses, even against its desire. There must be a conscious effort on the part of the aspirant for working out his salvation, and Divine law comes to his assistance, only in the event of his having any eagerness for spiritual perfection. This does not violate Divine mercy, for this condition is a necessity for understanding and appreciating Divine mercy. So much so, the aspirant who chooses Karmayōga chooses God to perfect it. Without Divine mercy it would be impossible for the aspirant to achieve his Goal, of his own accord. The Karmayōgin performs all activities in a spirit of service to God and dedicates them all unto Him. God, pleased with those actions, makes the aspirant strong in his Sādhana, and leads him safely on the path to his Goal, which is Himself. Even the Jñānayogi has to meditate upon God, as a means for

perfection of his Yōga. Steadfastness is achieved by him only by Divine grace. Conquest over sensibility, as well as concentration of the mind over the Ātman in Yōgic introversion, is possible only by means of Divine grace. The ever merciful Paramātmā never goes against the aspirations of the aspirants, but always stands by, assists, enriches and perfects whatever is prayed of Him, just because he does not want to violate the individuality of the human personality. So, if an aspirant is only satisfied with the joy of Kaivalya or Self-realization, God does not come in his way. The Kēvalin intuitively his Ātman, completely discarding the ideas of 'I' or 'Mine', and gains back his eternal and essential nature.. He is self-centred and not God-centred. He also seeks God not for God realization, but only as a means for self-realization. This state is said to be the state of Kaivalya, and we have stated elsewhere the difference of opinion among teachers of Viśiṣṭādvaita about the value and destiny of Kaivalya.

It is declared that desire for mere self-realization is also an obstruction for God-realization, as one will have not been totally rid of all sins there. To speak of complete destruction of Karmas in the same breath, along with the statement that the Kēvalin is not blessed with the direct and vivid awareness of God, is untenable, argues Deśika, who decides that the state of Kaivalya can at some time or other lead to the realization of the Supreme Being. This can only cause delay in God-realization but never deprive one of it eternally.

The state of self-realization attained by means of Karmayōga and Jñānayōga is the state of Kaivalya, and when the aspirant duly turns his attention towards God after

realizing his soul he follows the path of Bhaktiyōga. The knowledge of the Ātman leads to the knowledge of Brahman, the Infinite. The Sādhaka realizes that the delight of Ātmajñāna is little when compared with the Bliss of Brahman. So he decides to march on the path of devotion towards God.

Realization of the Ātman is a significant landmark in spiritual progress. It is obtained by a long and rigorous discipline. The aspirant is first of all taught to imbibe the morals of Niṣkāma Karma, and to perform all his activities without any desire in the fruits thereof. Thus from following Kāmya Karmas that bind down one to Samsāra for ever, he rises up to perform disinterested actions with the True Knowledge of the Ātman. This Ātmajñāna which is included in the means of Karma-Yōga gradually develops and becomes the goal of disinterested actions. The Sādhaka attains the true knowledge of the soul. Jñānayōga signifies the incessant contemplation of the Sādhaka on the True nature of his self. The Jñānayōgin who attains steadfastness devotes himself to Yogic introversion, by withdrawing his mind from outside activities, and realizes ultimately the essential and eternal nature of his soul. Then the Ātmajñānani who has attained his Ātmajñāna realizes that his spiritual 'attainment is only a part of God-realization. This Sādhaka cherishes thenceforward for the attainment of Godhead. The moment the Sādhaka realizes that he is subservient to the Supreme Being, he is urged from within to become Godward. The Sādhaka who was Ātmakāma so long is now dissatisfied with what he has achieved, and is now transformed into a Bhagavatkāma. His single aim 'thenceforward would be to seek and realize that ever

auspicious Supreme Being. The important characteristics of JñānaYōga may be summed up as follows:

1. Jñānayōga is to be based on Karmayōga.
2. Jñānayōga signifies the unceasing meditation upon the essential nature of one's Ātman.
3. Jñānayōga is inevitably interpenetrating with performance of disinterested activities.
4. Jñānayōga must be followed up with Yogic introversions.
5. The Yōgin who intuits his Ātman realizes the similarity between one Jīva and another as well as between the Jīvas and the Paramātman.
6. The aspirant who is satisfied only with the delight of self-experience is called a Kēvalin.
7. Mere self-experience is not the summum bonum for, it is little when compared with Divine Experience.
8. The aspirant realizes in full measure his essential nature of being subservient to God, and so proceeds Godward thenceforward, to attain communion with God.

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5. G.B. VI - 1
6. B.G. VI-7, 8, 9, 18 to 23
7. B.G. VI - 10 to 14
8. B.G. VI - 18 to 23
9. B.G. VI - 24, 25, 26
10. B.G. VI - 28
11. B. G. VI - 23; V - 19; V - 18
12. M.U. III - 1-3
13. SV. U. 5-9; B.S. 4-4-15.
14. 'कर्मोपाधिकप्रकृतिविशेषसंसर्गकृतज्ञानतारतम्यरूपभेदपरित्यागेनेत्यर्थः'

ता.चं 6-31

BHAKTIYŌGA

In the previous section, we discussed about the means of liberation as admitted by the school of Viśiṣṭādvaita and also expounded the significance of Karmayōga and Jñānayōga as related to it. It was also explained that Karmayōga and Jñānayōga were necessary for self-realization-Ātma darśana, on which alone Bhaktiyōga is to be based. Bhaktiyōga, Dhyana or Upāsana is the only pathway to spiritual perfection.

‘परमात्मोपासनमेव तत्क्रतुन्यायात् तत्प्राप्त्युपायः । जीवज्ञानं कर्मानुष्ठानं च तन्निर्वर्तकत्वेन परम्परया उपाय इति भावः ।’

ता.चं 7-1

When the aspirant realizes through the discipline of Karmayōga and Jñānayōga his true nature as well as that of the Supreme Vāsudēva, he also becomes aware of the inescapable relationship between himself and that Paramātmān. Then he, understands that he is a mode of that Absolute Brahman and that his true Puruṣārtha is the attainment of Divine communion. The aspirant realizes that he owes all his possessions along with his existence to that Ocean of Mercy, who has been ever benevolent to him, even though unacknowledged by him. When the Sādhaka thinks of his smallness and the infinite mercy showered on him by the Great Lord, he thankfully loves him. He yearns from then onwards, to be blessed with a vision of that ever Benevolent Lord. He feels repentant for his past actions that separated him from the Supreme Being. He earnestly tries to move nearer and nearer towards Him to minimise the distance that separates him from his Master. This process of the aspirant's retracing his steps towards God,

his original home, is Sādhana. The aspirant makes a real search for the Lord, and this search is Bhaktiyōga. Bhaktiyōga begins in love, progresses in love and culminates in Love.

The History of the Bhaktimārga:

Bhakti is significant even in the oldest phase of the Vedic Religion. God has been merciful as to reveal His true nature and the means of attaining Him to His chosen devotees, who endeared themselves unto Him through their excessive and unsurpassed love for Him. The way of winning the Goal of God-realization is the way of Love. Love is so powerful that it unites in the long run the lover and the loved. The vedic hymns are pregnant with feelings of intense love and reverence for Brahman. They teach the path of love as the surest path of gaining perfection. 'We are desirous of you, O Indra, and we make friends with you says¹ the Rigveda.

God is praised as everything to man. 'He is verily the father, mother, brother and everything else to him.'² We do not know our path, and we are not capable of marching on our path of Sādhana to our Goal. So we choose Him, the all-knowing, to lead us safely to the attainment of our highest aspiration. He is metaphorically described as a well-oared Divine-ship, boarding on which, each and everyone can safely cross the vast ocean of Samsāra.³ Another hymn very pointedly declares that God is inseparably related to man 'Thou art ours, we are thine.'⁴ The spirit of intense love for God pervades the entire mass of vedic literature. The one aspiration of the Seers was the realization of that Highest Truth which is the first and the final cause of the universe. Immense faith in God and His guidance, and reverential love for Him are the chief motivating forces of

the ancient Seers and they have accordingly chosen Him and prayed to Him for gaining all their aspirations, worldly and other-worldly.

The true knowledge of the way of propitiating the Supreme Lord was known to the vedic Seers who bitterly cried out to Him for mercy. They lovingly prayed to Him not to punish them for all their sins (Rg. V. VIII-45-34), but to forgive them and grant them such gifts that were for their supreme good (Rg. V., v-82-5). They resolved within their hearts of hearts to follow and obey with implicit obedience the Divine Order of Rita and to mould their lives according to it.⁵

The Religion of the Rigveda contains definite phases of the three-fold way of self-purification, meditation and unitive life, that forms the core of all spiritual discipline. Passages like 'Make our minds auspicious'⁶ and others stress that the aspirant has to purify himself by following the ways of God. All these relate to the discipline of Karmayōga and Jñānayōga that lead to the realization of the essential nature of the Ātman. Passages like 'We are desirous of you'⁷ and a host of others relate to staunch meditation-the path of Bhaktiyōga. Even in such love, the intensity of love, the longing for Divine Experience is suggested by passages like 'When shall I commune with you in your abode' ?⁸. It is also affirmed that God is not realized by mere Karma or Yajña⁹. The stage of Parabhakti can be seen in the above passages. The different ways of Bhakti are also suggested therein.¹⁰ The rapture of Divine experience, the culmination of all Sādhana, is also pointed out in the hymns.¹¹ It is also declared that loving service of God or Nityakainkārya is the sole purpose and Goal of our life.¹² Thus, we find that the Rigveda Samhita is richly resounding the definite

consciousness of love and reverence to the deity as the only way of an upward evolution.

After the Samhitas, the Upaniṣads have gloriously enjoined meditation upon the Supreme Brahman as the only way of attaining the summum bonum. Even the Karmamārga of the Brāhmaṇas serves its real purpose only when it is followed by men as various ways of serving Brahman. Bhakti is thus acclaimed from the earliest times, as the intense and sublime attachment of the aspirant towards God, and as the sure means to Mukti. The Ithihāsas and Purāṇas expound gloriously this philosophy of Bhakti.

The Ālwārs have wonderfully shown the way of salvation in their Divine songs. They were mystics who were drunk deep with love of God. Their songs are the out-pourings of their hearts and every word of those songs is touched with feeling and devotion. The unsurpassable glory and, at the same time, the ever flowing merciful nature of the Almighty are expressed in the immortal utterings of these Divine love-lorn saints. The different expressions of Bhakti, as well as the several stages of it, can be well known from the Prabandhams sung by these great saints.

The great teachers of the past have all recognized the supreme importance of Bhakti as the means to Mukti, and have prayed for fervent devotion towards God. The great Yāmunāchārya prays to God for granting him Bhakti with which he can attain Him.¹³

Yāmuna declares in his Stotraratna that even such a devotional trend is verily the gift of God for obtaining which one has to surrender oneself unto Him. In his

Gītarthasangraha he declares that Bhakti alone is the means to Mukti.

‘स्वधर्मज्ञानवैराग्यसाध्यभक्त्यैकगोचरः।’

गी.सं. 1

In his Siddhitraya he affirms again that one can realize the Supreme through exclusive and intense devotion aided by Karma and Jñāna.¹⁴ Bhāgavān Rāmānuja, the worthy successor of that great Yāmunāchārya, has eloquently given expression to the feelings of deep devotion in his masterly works that are really passionate out-pourings of his heart. Every work of the great Āchārya is characterised with such loftiness of devotion that every reader that has come across those great works is struck by its faith, conviction and freshness.

The expositions of the Āchārya relating to Bhaktiyōga are faithful to the main teachings that came down to him through a succession of ancient teachers, and are unique authorities in the history of the philosophical thought of India devoted to the school of Bhakti. Rāmānuja's influence upon others was so great and effective that all cults of Bhakti both in the North and the South drew inspiration from the words of this great master. The school of Bhakti unfolded itself in all its richness even in post-Rāmānuja period and has held a position of great importance up to this day.

In the History of Viśiṣṭadvāitīc philosophy Vedānta Deśika is one of the great followers of Rāmānuja who correctly understood him as a great master of synthesis and interpreted him thus. Deśika explained, interpreted, defended and consolidated the teachings of his great master. The works of Vedānta Deśika bear ample testimony

to this fact. Deśika has very ably explained Rāmānuja in his gloss on the *Gītabhāṣya* of Rāmānuja and has developed, defined, clarified and explained the spirit of that great *Bhāṣya*.

The contribution of Deśika towards the exposition of *Bhaktiyōga* is not less important than his contribution to the philosophy of *Prapatti*. The spirit of synthesis found in Rāmānuja is fulfilled in the expositions of Deśika. The school of *Bhakti* has thus a unique place in the history of Indian philosophy in general and *Viśiṣṭādvaita* in particular.

The Meaning of *Bhaktiyōga*:

The *Gīta* describes the meaning of *Bhakti* and its greatness. While commenting on stanza 34 of the Ninth chapter Rāmānuja expounds very vividly the meaning of *Bhakti*. *Bhakti* is defined here as an unceasing and loving meditation upon the Supreme Being, who is the Home of all auspicious qualities, and who is untainted with any imperfection whatsoever. It is verily the reflection of the infinite qualities and the glory of that Absolute Brahman, the *Puruṣōthama* whose *Svarūpa*, *Rūpa* and *Guṇas* are enjoined to be meditated upon. Rāmānuja puts this as follows:

‘मयि सर्वेश्वरेश्वरे ... परस्मिन् ब्रह्मणि पुरुषोत्तमे
अनालोचितविशेषाशेषलोकशरण्ये सर्वस्वामिनि
तैलधारावदविच्छेदेन निविष्टमना भव’ । गी.भा. 9-34

Meditation is thus a constant remembrance of the *svarupa*, *Rupa* and *Guṇas* of the *Paramātman* flowing like an unbroken stream of oil poured from one vessel to another. This is what is prescribed in the scriptures as

‘निदिध्यासितव्यः’ (बृ. 3-2-45), ध्यायथ (मुं.उ. 2-2-6); ‘ध्रुवा स्मृतिः’ (छा.उ. 7-26-2); ‘आवृत्तिरसकृदुपदेशात्’ (श्री.भा. 4-4-1)

and others. As the Gīta also has enjoined,¹⁵ the aspirant is asked to fix his mind on the Supreme Being without any break in the interval. Rāmānuja declares, while commenting further on the above stanza, the essential nature of Bhakti as follows:

‘मद्भक्तः अत्यर्थमत्प्रियत्वेन युक्तो मन्मना भवेत्यर्थः । पुनरपि विशिनष्टि - मद्याजी - अनवधिकातिशयप्रियमदनुभवकारित मद्यजनपरो भव । यजनं नाम परिपूर्णशेषवृत्तिः ।’ गी.भा. 9-34

Bhakti is not a dry remembrance of the Svarūpa, Rūpa or Guṇa of the Lord. On the other hand, this meditation is of the form of love of God on account of which every act performed by the aspirant is dedicated to Him. The aspirant gets submerged in the huge flood of his love towards God, and as he considers Him alone dearest to him, thinks of Him alone and engages himself in activities that please Him. He discards the idea of the ‘I’ and the ‘mine’ and attains a state of Divine realization. He dedicates himself heart and soul to the eternal service of his Lord. He serves God alone in all his actions. Bhakti is thus an expansion of a special kind of knowledge which is related to the Divine Being. The terms ‘नमस्कुरु’ and ‘मत्परायणः’ in the stanza referred to here are significant as they define the nature of Bhakti. The meaning of Namaskāra is explained as ‘अतिमात्र प्रह्वीभाव’¹⁶. Namaskāra here signifies subservience to the Lord. The realization of the Majesty of God on the one hand, and of the infinitesimal smallness of the aspirant on the other, urges

the aspirant from within to surrender himself at the feet of the Lord Who is All Merciful. Namaskāra here stands for this kind of supplication. The other word Matparāyaṇa is none-the-less important. It points out that an aspirant, in whom love of God grows and assumes the form of supreme devotion or Paramabhakti, cannot any more bear to live without God. The Bhakta has no other aspiration. He is drawn towards God just like an iron piece towards a magnet. These characteristics of Bhaktiyōga are remarkably condensed in one sentence by Rāmānuja in his Gīta Bhāṣya.

‘तदेवं लौकिकानि शरीरधारणार्थानि वैदिकानि च नित्यनैमित्तिकानि कर्माणि मत्प्रीतये मच्छेषतैकरसो मयैव कारित इति कुर्वन् सततं मत्कीर्तनयतननमस्कारादिकान् प्रीत्या कुर्वाणो मन्नियाम्यं निखिलजगन्मच्छेषतैकरसमिति चानुसन्दधानोऽत्यर्थप्रियमद्गुणगणं च अनुसन्धाय अहरहरुक्तलक्षणं इदमुपासनं उपाददानो मामेव प्राप्स्यसि’ ।

गी.भा. 9-34

The preparation for, and the process of, Bhaktiyōga along with the fruit thereof are condensed in this statement.

1. The Bhakta practises renunciation in all his activities i.e., he dedicates them all to God. The Bhaktiyōgin realizes in full measure, that he is only an instrument in the hands of God, and that Vāsudēva is making him do those things, only for His satisfaction. He delights in service to the Lord and performs his duties of life in a spirit of devout service to the Lord. He realizes the immanence of the Lord in all objects of the world both sentient and non-sentient, and so behaves in a way agreeable to each and everyone for the sake of that Immanent Vāsudēva.

2. His love for God finds expression in various forms such as Kirthana and others. Having intensified and directed his love towards God, the Bhakta cannot bear himself even for a moment without lovingly uttering the names of the Lord. He gets thrilled by reciting the names of God. He forgets himself as he remembers the infinite kindness of the Lord. He offers himself to serve very lovingly his Master in various ways such as building temples, bringing flowers for his worship or lighting lamps and so on. He reflects upon the innumerable auspicious qualities of the Lord and forgets himself in ecstasy.
3. He considers that the entire world is subservient to the Lord.

Bhaktiyōga is Greater than Karmayōga or Jñānayōga:

Bhaktiyōga is greater than Karmayōga or Jñānayōga. Karmayōga and Jñānayōga are meant for the purpose of Ātmāvalōkana whereas the aim of Bhaktiyōga is the attainment of Divine communion.

Deśika expounds the greatness of Bhaktiyōga over the other two Yōgas namely Karma and Jñāna.

‘तुशब्देन कर्मयोगज्ञानयोगाभ्यामपि अस्याधिक्यम् विवक्षितम्;’।

ता.चं. 9-1

Bhaktiyōga is greater than the other two as this leads the Bhakta directly to the realm of his realization. It is for the sole purpose of attaining God and pleasing Him. It is natural, sweet and gentle. The Bhakta feels the joy of keeping company With God even from the very beginning. Lord Krishna says in the Gita about this as

‘प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुं अव्ययम्’ ।

गी.भा. 9-2

Even at the time of *Sādhana*, the *Sādhaka* feels the rapture of Divine Experience.¹⁷ It is 'Priya' by its very nature and so is of the form of beatitude by itself as it, so to say, causes Divine experience even then. This *Bhakti* happens to be the ultimate means of attaining God-head which alone is of the form of illimitable delight.

As this *Bhakti* is *Aryantha priya*, it is also easy to practise. It is also *Akṣayam*. It never dies out after getting us Divine experience; On the other hand, it remains ever eternal with us.¹⁸

Definition and Scope of *Bhaktiyōga*:

Bhaktiyōga is defined as-

‘महनीयविषये स्नेहपूर्वमनुध्यानम्’ ।

It is an unceasing loving meditation upon the Supreme. It is essentially of the form of pure love towards God.¹⁹ It is *Amṛtasvarūpa* and a person who gets it becomes a *Tṛpta*, an 'Amṛta' and a 'Siddha'.²⁰ He neither laments over the loss of anything nor gets elated over the gain of any other thing. He does not think of any earthly benefit.

Bhakti is the attachment that one develops towards God after knowing the nature and glory of God. A thorough knowledge of the nature of the soul and the Absolute Brahman is a prerequisite for cultivating intense devotion.²¹ *BhaktiYōga* is the same as *Upāsana*, *Vēdana* or *Dhyāna*. It is of the form of a series of unceasing meditation upon God culminating in a vivid and direct perception of the Lord. *Rāmānuja* defines this as

‘स्मृतिसन्तानरूपं दर्शनसमानाकारं ध्यानोपासनादिशब्दवाच्यं’

गी.भा. 7-1

The scriptures ordain that God reveals Himself to those whom He chooses. The cause of one being chosen by God is that the chosen has an intense love for Him. God loves him who loves Him most. This is Bhakti.

‘परेणात्मना वरणीयताहेतुभूतं स्मर्यमाणविषयस्य अत्यर्थप्रियत्वेन स्वयमप्यत्यर्थप्रियरूपं स्मृतिसन्तानमेव उपासनाशब्दवाच्यमिति हि निश्चीयते । तदेव भक्तिरित्युच्यते’ ।

गी.भा. 7-1

It is ordained that it is impossible to attain Godhead by any means other than staunch devotion. Sravana and manana cannot by themselves lead us to God-realization. Texts like

‘तमेवं विद्वानमृत इह भवति,’ नान्यः पन्था’ विद्यतेऽयनाय, पु.सू.
‘नाहं वेदैर्नतपसा’ भा.गी. 11-53 ‘भक्तयात्वनन्यया लभ्यः’
भ.गी. 11-54, ‘न वेद यज्ञाध्ययनैः’ भ.गी. 11-48

and a host of others declare that Upāsana or Vēdana of the Paramātmān is the only means to Mukti. By this, it should not be made out that Śravaṇa and maṇana are totally discarded. It must be known that some particular characteristics, which is possible of being observed, and which richly contributes to our being chosen by the Lord, is prescribed by this. This particular condition is to be attained to be chosen by God. What then is this condition ? It is nothing other than Bhakti.

‘सा च वरणीयताहेतुसाध्यो गुणः भक्तिरेव । प्रियतम एव हि वरणीयो भवति । परमात्मविषयप्रीतिमानेव च परमात्मना वरणीयः ।

ता.चं. 7-1

Thus Rāmānuja expounds in the light of the scriptures that Bhakti is the sole means to Mukti.

‘उपासनं तु भक्तिरूपापन्नमेव परमप्राप्त्युपायभूतमिति वेदान्तवाक्यसिद्धम्।’ गी.भा 7-1, ‘तस्यैव वेदनस्य ध्यानरूपस्य अहरहरनुष्ठीयमानस्य ... ब्रह्मप्राप्तिसाधनत्वात्।’ श्री.भा 1-1-1

Even in the introduction to his Gītabhāṣya Rāmānuja declares the same.

Yāmunāchārya defines Bhaktiyōga as ‘भक्तियोगः परैकान्त प्रीत्या ध्यानादिषु, स्थितिः’ (गी.सं. 24) and affirms that it is of the form of meditation upon the Lord with intense love of God. From all this Vedānta Deśika draws four conclusions :

1. Upāsana alone, and never mere knowledge, is the means to Mukti.
2. Even then, it is Upāsana which has assumed the form of Bhakti that is the means to Mukti.
3. Upāsana of the above type only is the means to salvation, and not Upāsana coupled with Karma.
4. The Upāsana again should have for its object only the Supreme Paramātman.

‘उपासनमेव न तु ज्ञानमात्रमित्येका प्रतिज्ञा । तत्रापि भक्तिरूपापन्नं नोपासनमात्रमिति द्वितीया । एवं विधमुपासनमेव न तु कर्मसमुच्चितमिति तृतीया । तच्च परविषयमेवेति चतुर्थी।’

ता.चं 7-1

It is impossible to describe Bhakti. It is only to be felt and experienced. Bhakti is incessant, very subtle and increases from moment to moment. Higher Bhakti or Parābhakti is free from any desire other than that of

pleasing the Lord. It is energised by the quality of Satva and is free from the tinge of Rajas and Tamas. It comforts, soothes and fills the heart with intense delight. The Blessed get this kind of love towards God. They realize God as the God of love. Bhakti is self-existent and is of the form of perfect peace and absolute joy. The bhakta who establishes the Lord in his heart and lovingly worships and adores Him forgetting all else covets for nothing else. He enjoys the Supreme Bliss of Divine Love.

Is Bhakti a Kriyā or a Kind of Knowledge ?

This question has been much discussed by Savants of the past. "Bhakti", some argue, 'is not an activity or Kriyā for the very reason that immortality is unattainable by Kriyā. Texts like 'न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन' ordain that one cannot attain Brahman by mere Kriyā. Śāṇḍilya says that Bhakti is not a Kriyā as there is no prayatnānuvidhāna here. If Bhakti is admitted to be a Kriyā then one will be bound to admit that the fruit obtained thereof will never be everlasting, just like any other object achieved through Kriyā. In that case, it would be impossible to attain immortality through Bhakti. So it is maintained that Bhakti is not a Kriyā. Śāṇḍilya declares that Bhakti is neither knowledge.²² The reasons adduced for this by his commentator Svapnēśvara are as follows :

- a. Prapatti is prescribed for those who are endowed with spiritual knowledge (B.G. 7-10)
- b. Devatā Bhakti is meant by Prapatti (B.G. 7-20), in this context.
- c. The mention of Bhakti after a mention of Jñānam also shows that Bhakti is not the same as Jñānam (B.G. 15-19; 9-13)

So, Svapenēśwara, following the Sūtrakara Śāndilya expounds that Bhakti is not Jñānātmika. But he does not altogether deny the status, to Bhakti, of its being a kind of knowledge, by virtue of its having Rāgatva.²³ Bhakti can in no sense signify knowledge of Brahman according to him.

The standpoint of Viśiṣṭādvaita on this question is remarkable. It declares that there is really little difference between Jñānam and Bhakti. Bhakti is never a Kriyā but only a special kind of experience of knowledge. Rāmānuja declares that Bhakti is a particular kind of knowledge.²⁴ Bhakti is not verbal knowledge or knowledge indeterminate. It is essentially of the form of "Intellectual Love" or 'शेमुषी भक्तिरूपा'²⁵. While discussing about the means of liberation, Rāmānuja affirms that "Upāsanātmakam Jñānam" alone could finally terminate Avidyā and never Ātmaikya Jñānam. This Upāsana or Dhruvānusmrithi is identified with Bhakti.

‘एवंरूपा ध्रुवानुस्मृतिरेव भक्तिशब्देनाभिधीयते उपासन
पर्यायत्वाद्भक्तिशब्दस्य।’ श्री.भा. 1-1-1

This terminator of Avidyā is verily knowledge of the nature of reverential love, having for its object nothing other than the Supreme Being. Deśika reitreates the same thing in his Nyāyasiddhānjana and expounds that Bhakti is a kind of expansion of knowledge,

‘भक्तिरूपापन्नोपासनवेदनध्यानादिशब्दवाच्यः असकृदावृत्तः
आप्रयाणादन्वहमनुवर्तमानः ज्ञानविशेषः’। न्या.सि p- 216

Bhakti is thus a particular type of knowledge only, according to the teachers of this school.

The Sādhana of Bhakti :

Bhaktiyōga presupposes certain rigorous disciplines. These are meant for the sublimation of the feeling and the training of the intellect. These are called the Sādhana Saptakas and Rāmānuja quotes in his Sribhāṣya, the Vākyakāra who describes them as follows :

‘तल्लब्धिः विवेकविमोकाभ्यासक्रियाकल्याणानवसादानुद्धर्षेभ्यः
संभवान्निर्वचनाच्च’ । श्री.भा. 1-1-1

They are, (1) discrimination, (2) controlling the passions, (3) Practice, (4) Sacrificial work ; (5) Purity; (6) Strength and (7) Suppression of excessive joy.

1. Vivēka or discrimination is the very first of these means to Bhaktiyōga. It is described as Kāyaśuddhi or purification of the body which is essential for purity of mind. The food one takes must be pure. Rāmānuja states that food should be free from the three kinds of impurities.²⁶ It must not be Jātidusta or impure by its very nature such as garlic and others. It must not be Āśrayaduṣṭa also. It should not be taken from wicked and accursed people. Nor should it have "nimittadōṣas". It must be free from the impurities such as hair or dirt etc. The food we take goes a long way to determine our mental constitution and so the Bhakta is advised to maintain himself upon pure food.²⁷
2. Vimōka is defined as "Karmānabhiṣvanga" i.e. freedom from the cycle of Kāma and Krōdha. This is indispensable for Divine realization. Conquest over one's senses is the most essential thing for successfully meditating upon Brahman. The aspirant attains

mental tranquility when he totally detaches himself from the circle of Kāma and Krōdha.

3. Abhyāsa is defined as

‘आरम्भणसंशीलनं पुनः पूनरभ्यास इति’ । (श्री.भा. 1-1-1)

This is an unceasing practice of fixing the mind upon the auspicious form of the Supreme Being who is immanent in one and all. A doubt may arise here as to the nature of this practice. Is not such an unceasing meditation upon Brahman the end of the Bhakta ? How can, then, this Abhyāsa be the means at all ? Is not this alone the very goal of the Bhakta ? The answer to this is as follows : "Dhruvānusr̥m̥thi" which is termed as Dhyānayōga that is to be practiced at the prescribed time and space according to the scriptures, is to be attained. This Abhyāsa here, is only a preparation for attaining that steadfastness at the time of Dhyāna. So, it is ordained in the scriptures that one should meditate, for ever, on that Divine presence to attain steadfastness in Brahman.²⁸

4. Kriyā : This is the performance of the fivefold duties according to one's ability. The aspirant cannot tear himself off from his moral obligations to others. The scriptures do not ordain what is impossible of doing, and so one is bound to perform one's duties as laid down in the sacred texts. The Mundaka says that the Kriyāvān is the best of Brahmanvits.²⁹ What are these Kriyās ? The scriptures describes them as follows :

‘तमेतं वेदानुवचनेन ब्राह्मणा विविदिषन्ति यज्ञेन दानेन तपसानाशकेन’ ।

बृ.उ. 6-4-22

Vedic recitation, sacrifices, benevolence and penance are mentioned here by which the aspirants seek to know

Brahman. Upāsana needs the performance of the Panchamahāyajnas as a means of purification.³⁰

5. Kalyāṇa : This is the practice of virtue. Internal purity is more essential than external purity. One may maintain the purity of the body but without achieving internal cleanliness it is of no use. Rāmānuja quotes six qualities that are conducive to Kalyāṇa as follows:

‘सत्यार्जवदयादानार्हिसानभिध्याः कल्याणानि’ श्री.भा. 1-1-1

These virtues are (1) truthfulness, (2) integrity, (3) doing good to others, (4) benevolence (5) non-violence, (6) not coveting another's property. Satya is defined as "Bhūtahitam" or that which is conducive to the good of others—all living things. Arjava is sincerity in thought, word and deed. Dayā is the quality of being incapable of seeing others suffering. It is doing good to others without the thought of any gain to one's own self. Dāna is benevolence. It is the absence of Lōbha. Ahimsā is non-injury to others. It is ‘करणत्रयपरपीडा निवृत्तिः’ (श्रु.प्र.प-53) The Bhakta is required to divest his mind of jealousy, the greatest enemy to mankind and make it ever pure. He must extend the principle of non-injury to all beings both sentient non-sentient and be very careful to avoid even the slightest injury to others by his thought, word or deed. He is required to realize the immanent principle in one and all and make himself wholly agreeable to Him, who manifests Himself in all. Anabhidhyā is defined as follows :

‘अभिध्या परकीये स्वत्वबुद्धिः यद्वा निष्फलचिन्ता अथवा परकृतापकारचिन्ता । तद्राहित्यं अनभिध्या । श्रु.प्र. प- 53

Not coveting others' goods, not thinking vain thoughts or not brooding over the injuries caused by others is

Anabhidhyā. The aspirant must realize in full measure that he is not the master of anything in this world. He, as well as all other beings, along with their possessions, belongs to Him, the sole master of the universe. Then how can he covet the goods that are granted to another person by God? Thinking of the Lord always leads to happiness, and one should, by constant practice, gain that power of concentrating one's mind upon the Lord. All other vain thoughts must be dispelled from the mind. Likewise we should never brood over the injuries caused to us by others. The injuries we have suffered are not due to the actions of other people, but they are the inescapable consequences of our own former deeds. Then, why should we blame anybody other than our-selves for those things? The practice of these virtues richly contributes towards the attainment of Bhaktiyōga.

6. Anvasāda is freedom from weakness. This is defined as follows :

‘देशकालवैगुण्यात् शोकवस्त्वाद्यनुस्मृतेश्च तज्जं दैन्यभास्वरत्वं
मनसोऽवसादः तद्विपर्ययः ।’
श्री.भा 1-1-1

This is freedom despair due to melancholy born out of untowardness of time and place and also the remembrance of sorrowful things. The Upaniṣads declare that one who is weak-minded can never attain the Supreme.

7. Anuddharṣa or freedom from excessive merriment is also a Sādhanā of Bhakti. One should guard oneself against the pitfalls of excessive merriment as well as of excessive depression. Both the above are obstructions to a devoted life. The mind should, therefore, be kept in a steady and peaceful condition to progress on the path of Bhakti towards God-realization.

While ascertaining the fundamental factors leading to Bhakti, Vedānta Deśika points out that four factors namely (1) Viveka, (2) Nirveda, (3) Virakti and (4) Bhiti are essential for developing Bhakti.

1. Viveka here signifies the acquisition, through the benevolent preceptors, of a thorough understanding of the scriptures. The aspirant acquires, placing faith in the saving grace of the Guru, the true knowledge or the Supreme Lord-Vāsudēva and of the eternal relationship that exists between him and that Supreme Being. All doubts, misconceptions, ignorance and perverse dispositions drop off and the aspirant realizes through this discriminatory knowledge the Lord's greatness and his own smallness and utter dependence on Him. This viveka opens his heart and then he feels that metaphysical agony for having moved farther away from his Lord. This is the stage of Nirveda. Then he repents for all his past sins, and pines with grief for his separation from his Lord. He assumes satvic courage, checks all anti-currents and makes an all-out effort to pull himself up. He avoids the extremes of excessive depression. Such nirveda based on the strong foundation of true knowledge saves the aspirant from dangers of malignity and degradation. At this stage Virakti is needed to energise the aspirant with the fire of devotion and to divert him from the craving of pleasures. Through virakti the aspirant steers himself clear of all ungodly ideals and turns towards God alone. Virakti shapes the path on which the aspirant has to move. He now realizes what he ought to do and what he ought not to do. Now he aspires not after wealth, valour or progress anywhere. His only object in life will be the attainment of Godhead.

These three pre-requisites viz., Viveka, Nirveda and Virakti serve three definite and significant purposes. Viveka saves the aspirant from the dangers of egocentric tendencies. Nirveda is very useful in preventing the aspirant from perpetrating prohibited deeds resulting in sin. Likewise Virakti enables the aspirant successfully to dissociate himself from the performance of Bandhaka and Kāmya Karmas that ultimately lead to bondage. In addition to these three essential conditions the aspirant should also feel a sense of fear regarding his future. Fear is an effective motivator and often times urges one to act. The soul-stirring horror of our future drives us to act in such a way as to save ourselves from danger. The aspirant consciously puts forth his effort to save himself only when he realizes the terrible situation, to which he is being led by his own actions. So Bhiti is an essential pre-requisite for following the path of Bhakti. The aspirant gets horrified at the thought of his future that would be shaped according to the inexhaustible store of his past actions, and goes about searching for some means or other that would take him across the vast ocean of Samsāra. He then realizes that there is no possible way of saving himself from the impending disaster other than bitterly praying to the all powerful God for His grace. He feels the urgency of saving himself from that doom of disaster and sorrow, and hastens³² to approach the All-merciful Lord who receives with open arms, and readily saves the multitudes of Souls that lovingly go to Him. Thus Deśika points out that Viveka, Nirveda, Virakti and Bhiti are essential for Bhakti.³³

When the Sādhana of Bhakti are analysed we understand that three factors are absolutely essential for cultivating and developing a life of devotion. They are:

1. A thorough knowledge of the true nature of the Supreme Being and the individual soul, gained through the kind preceptors and the holy texts.
2. Purification of the mind and cultivation of proper dispositions or Ātma Guṇas, highly conducive to a life of devotion, through a continuous and conscious effort. .
3. Implicit faith in the saving grace of God, by means of which alone the cultivation, development and fulfillment of a life of devotion is possible.

How is Bhakti Practically Developed?

The process of developing love of God has been ably expounded by the teachers of the past. What is most essential for this is the attainment of the true knowledge of Paramātmān, particularly the knowledge of the 'Guṇas', 'Vibhūti', 'Ubhayalingatva' and 'Phalaprada' of the Lord. Through faith in the holy Acharya, one becomes blessed with this knowledge of Paramātmān.³⁴ The Bhāgavata declares that one develops love by listening to the accounts of the kind deeds of Paramātmān, and through the only way of service to the pious devotees of the Lord.³⁵

When one has developed great interest in listening to the glories of God, he naturally gets influenced, and repeats with love and respect the holy names of that Merciful Paramātmān, and this is the second stage. He takes delight in 'Nāmasankīrtanam' and this cleanses his heart of all impurities. The Immanent Principle, who is in the deeper depths of his heart, bursts forth shining in all His glory and the Sādhaka realizes gradually the greatness of the Lord.³⁶

As the Rajas and Tamas of his heart are washed away gradually by the grace of God, his Satva increases, and he develops intense devotion towards God.³⁷

His mind becomes Sātvic, and he lives in that ever-auspicious Paramātmān untainted by passion or desire (Kāma). He becomes endowed with tranquility of mind and becomes fit for realizing in experience the true nature of Paramātmān.³⁸ He realizes that the great Paramātmān is verily responsible for the creation, sustenance and destruction of the universe, and that every object in the universe belongs to Him. He realizes Him as his ultimate Goal and from then onwards he intensely meditates upon Him only, for obtaining Him. He gets that Supreme love or Parābhakti towards God, which is verily described as the means to Mukti.

The school of Viśiṣṭādvaita has expounded all these in its scheme of Sādhana. According to this school the process of development of Parābhakti may be described as follows:

1. Sāmānya Bhakti, or Love of the Lord, which is caused by close association with the Sātvikas and the study of the scriptures.
2. Performance of disinterested actions, lovingly dedicating the fruits thereof, to the Lord-i.e. performance of Karmayōga.
3. Reflection upon the true nature of the Individual Self by the grace of God i.e. Ātmānusandhāna.
4. Realization of the self as subservient to God-i.e. Śeṣarva Jñāna.

5. Realization of the truth that the Highest object of attainment in life is communion with God.
6. Pulsating desire and determination to see the Lord, the Śeṣin (Parabhakti).

Parabhakti is the direct means to Mukti and this is obtained as described above gradually through Sāmānya Bhakti.

The Gīta expounds clearly the process of developing Parābhakti.³⁹

Being endowed with the true knowledge of the soul, the aspirant should arrest his mind from all outward tendencies. Discarding Rāga and Dveṣa that originate from the contact of the objects of the senses, he must withdraw himself to a secluded place convenient for meditation. The activities of his mind, body and speech should be made conducive to meditation by means of control over the body and the mind. He must engage himself in Dhyānayōga, day in and day out, developing an attitude of distinterestedness in every thing other than the object of his meditation. He must check the force of Vāsana and give up impetuosity, passion, anger and others. He must liberate himself from the clutches of mamatva, and must rejoice in self-experience. Such an aspirant enjoys the great delight of self-experience. He becomes a Brahmabhūta who realises his true nature of being subservient to the Lord and so he is not disturbed by intense grief or excessive joy. He feels sorry only at the separation of the Lord. He desires nothing other than the attainment of the Lord. Such an aspirant is blessed with that supreme devotion towards God.

‘ब्रह्मभूतः आविर्भूतापरिच्छिन्नज्ञानैकाकारमच्छेषतैकस्वभावात्म
स्वरूपः; ...मद्व्यतिरिक्तेषु सर्वेषु भूतेषु अनादरणीयतायां समो
निखिलं वस्तुजातं तृणवन्मन्यमानः मद्भक्तिं लभते परां-मयि सर्वेश्वरे
निखिलजगदुद्भवस्थितिप्रलयलीले निरस्तसमस्तहेयगन्धे
अनवधिकतिशयासंख्येयकल्याणगुणगणैकताने लावण्यामृतसागरे
श्रीमति पुण्डरीकनयने स्वस्वामिन्यत्यर्थप्रियानुभवरूपां परां भक्तिं
लभते ।’

गी.भा. 18-54

Deśika points out that one gets qualified for Parābhakti after one has realized one's soul through the proper means of Karmayōga and Jñānayōga.

‘एवं कर्मयोगादिसाध्यप्रत्यगात्मानुभवस्य परमभक्त्यधिकारा
पादकत्वमुच्यते ब्रह्मभूत इति श्लोकेन’ । ता.चं 18-54

Lord Krishna advises Arjuna to follow the path of devotion, to attain the summum bonum. In the 12th Chapter of the Gīta Arjuna asks Krishna to tell him who, of the two viz., the Bhakta and the Akṣaraṇiṣṭa, or one who contemplates on the nature of his own individual soul, is the greater. The answer of Lord Krishna is significant. He affirms that one who is attached to Him solely, with unceasing love, is verily the greatest of all (XII-2). Only those who firmly fix their minds upon the ever auspicious Paramātmān and live in Him, desiring earnestly His eternal communion, are said to attain Him alone easily and quickly.

‘ते युक्ततमा मे मताः मां सुखेनाचिरात्प्राप्नुवन्तीत्यर्थः ।’

गी.भा. 12-2

There is difference between one who cherishes to attain Paramātmān and another who cherishes to attain his own soul. Both have to choose God alone for leading them

to their objects of attainment. Yet the former attains God early, with little difficulty, where as the latter has to struggle hard to realize his end, as his mind will not be fixed upon God alone, though he worships and chooses God as a means of securing his goal of self-realization.

‘अक्षरशब्दावाच्यं प्रत्यगात्मानं प्राप्यतया निश्चित्य परमात्मानं
प्रापकतया उपासते ।’ ता.चं 12-3, 5

अव्यक्तजीवात्मासक्तचेतसां क्लेशस्त्वधिकतरः मय्यावेशित
चेतस्त्वाभावात् । ता.चं. 12-3-5

The Gita expounds that only those aspirants that perform all their duties, secular and religious, in a spirit of devout service to the Lord, with the firm conviction of attaining Him alone as their Goal, and worship Him with meditation, salutation, praise and prayers (with immeasurable joy) would be very soon saved from the sorrows of Samsāra by that Supreme Being. They alone would be soon blessed with Divine Communion. So every aspirant is urged by the Ever Merciful Lord to know and think of Him alone. Arjuna is asked by the Lord to set his heart firmly upon Him alone and to decide that He alone is the object of his attainment, because of the fact that Bhakti or Bhagavadupasāna alone can lead the aspirant directly and quickly to the attainment of that highest aspiration.⁴⁰

This Bhakti is verily the means of attaining the Lord. This intense love of God has for its purpose the attainment of Divine Communion and nothing else. But it is not easy to attain steadfastness in Brahman, who is never before seen by the aspirant whose mind is drawn towards the objects of the senses by his residual impressions-Vāsana. The Gita teaches the way of attaining this steadfastness in

Brahman. One is advised to fix one's mind firmly in the Lord, by means of Abhyāsayōga. The aspirant is asked, lovingly to think, without any break, of the innumerable auspicious qualities of the Lord, and to attain firmness of meditation. One can gain firmness in meditation by means of constant practice, and the mind is to be fixed again and again in that ever auspicious Lord; who is far from any imperfection. Abhyāsa and Vairāgya are the two powerful means of checking the outward tendencies of the fleeting mind. Through Vairāgya it should be checked from running to undesirable objects, and through Abhyāsa it must be compelled to live in the object of attainment. By this double process the Vāsanās will be subdued, and the mind will be brought under control. By such constant practice the mind dwells firmly in the Lord, and on account of such firm meditation the aspirant attains his goal. How should, then the aspirant meditate upon God? People generally think of those that are full of virtues, and it is the remembrance of these noble qualities that draws our minds towards them. When we think of the infinite perfections of God we are drawn towards Him. He is the cause of all in this universe, and is verily to be loved as the Father. Being qualified by innumerable perfections, He is far from even a tinge of imperfection. He is, therefore, to be remembered with infinite love and gratitude. It is through this means of constantly remembering his auspicious qualities that one can attain steadfastness in meditation which can secure our release from the bondage of Samsāra.

If it is not possible to reflect upon the auspicious qualities of the Lord as explained above, on account of the restive mind, that would be impelled to some kind of activity or other by the Vāsanās, there is another way of

attaining firm meditation in God. The mind is ever changing and difficult to conquer. It may engage itself in such of the pleasures that are perceptibly realized soon in this world. So it may not be possible for the mind to practise dwelling even in the Lord, who is ever pure and a home of all perfections. The mind may be impelled to engage itself only in activities, and never in Abhyāsa.

‘अथ शब्दादिविषयवासनाकृष्टचेतसोऽत्यन्ताद्दृष्टपूर्वे त्वयि कथं स्थिरं
चित्तसमाधानं शक्यमित्यर्जुनाशयमुन्नीय तदुपायमुपदिशति’ ।

ता.चं. 12-9

Such aspirants are advised by the Lord to associate themselves, according to their psychological background, in some activity or other that is related to God. By so doing, they will gradually attain, through Abhyāsayōga’ steady memory, stead-fastness of mind in God. So people of such temperaments and abilities are required to engage themselves in activities which are really devout services to the Lord, such as building of shrines, raising flower gardens for the worship of God, lighting lamps before God, cleaning temple precincts, bringing flowers for worship, making garlands for decoration of the Holy Image, reciting the holy names of God, praising the Lord with hymns and prayers, salutation and others. The activities referred here are those that enrich our devotion towards God. All these activities are to be done with immense love for God, and for the sole purpose of His pleasure. The aspirant will be reflecting actually upon the glory of God, at the same time as he is observing these various activities. All these activities are sacred, as they are dedicated and related to God, and as they comprise in themselves the reflection upon the Supreme Being. So the aspirant, very soon, becomes capable of meditating upon

the auspicious qualities of the Lord and ultimately attains the Lord through the attainment of stead-fastness in Him.

‘अत्यर्थप्रियत्वेन मदर्थं कर्माणि कुर्वन्नपि अचिरादभ्यासयोगपूर्विकां मयि स्थिरां चित्तस्थितिं लब्ध्वा मत्प्राप्तिरूपां सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि’।

भ.गी. 12-10

This performance also, of various activities, for the sake of God alone, might not be possible for an aspirant whose mind is bound with selfish activities. How could such a person, who is incapable of performing lovingly, even such activities related to God, that ultimately lead one to Bhaktiyōga, develop meditation of God? Lord Krishna suggests that such an aspirant who is not capable of doing even those Divine duties that precede immediately the stage of Bhaktiyōga, should practice Karmayōga, renouncing his desire in the fruits of all his actions. This Karmayōga or performance of disinterested actions leads him to self-realization, which in turn causes intense love in him for that Supreme Paramātman.

‘अथ मद्योगमाश्रित्यैतदपि कर्तुं न शक्नोषि-मद्गुणानुसन्धानं कृतमदेकप्रियत्वाकारं भक्तियोगमाश्रित्य भक्तियोगाङ्कुररूपं एतन्मत्कर्मापि कर्तुं न शक्नोषि, ततः अक्षरयोगमात्मस्वभावानुसन्धानरूपं परभक्तिजननं पूर्वषट्कोदितमाश्रित्य तदुपायतया सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं कुरु । ... प्रत्यगात्मनि साक्षात्कृते सति मयि पराभक्तिः स्वयमेवोत्पद्यते।’

गी.भा. 12-11

When once he knows his nature, his love for the Paramātman will be natural and intense. The classical example of a prince, who, as a child, walks out of the palace in play and is taken away by the hunters and is brought up in the hunter's village, develops intense love for his father,

the King, soon after he learns from honest and sincere well wishers his parentage and future destiny, is given here to illustrate the way in which the individual soul develops intense love for Paramātmā after he realizes his own soul. His love for God will be spontaneous and intense.

The teachings of the Gīta are strictly according to the capabilities of the several aspirants, and are adapted to their practical needs. It does not prescribe an only way which deters a large majority, owing to its exceedingly great difficulties. It keeps in mind the shortcomings and limitations of the generality of aspirants, and so prescribes only such of the ways as are practically possible even for such ordinary aspirants. Just to encourage even them to follow some Sādhana, for attaining intense devotion and also to remove their depression at being unable to follow the direct way of attaining devotion, the Gīta prescribes them the path of Karmayōga to begin with, and commends that it would ultimately perfect the Sādhana of Bhakti. A person who is not qualified to follow the path of Abhyāsayōga will do well to attain self-knowledge, for which he is required to meditate upon the soul. This, he can do efficiently, only when his mind is cleansed of all impurities of the form of Rāga and Dvēṣa through the performance of disinterested activity. Only when he has renounced his desire in the fruits of all his actions, can he attain Sānti or inner tranquility which gradually leads him on to Parābhakti. The course is as follows: The mind becomes calm only when its impurity is washed away by means of Asaṅgākarma. The meditation upon the true nature of the soul becomes possible only when the mind has attained tranquility. Self-realization becomes possible only after self-meditation. Intense devotion to God will be

born of only self-realization. Thus this Ātmaniṣṭā is more helpful than any other thing to an aspirant who is incapable of following the path of Bhaktiyōga, all of a sudden. An aspirant of this path is required to practice the various virtues that are conducive to the path of Sādhana. These virtues are enumerated in the Gīta from XII-13 to XII-19. Being endowed with these noble dispositions, he would do well with the means of Karmayōga, and would attain Parābhakti through the realization of his soul.

So we find that aspirants after the Bhaktimārga are classified into two categories viz., those that are capable of following the path of devotion directly, and those that are incapable of doing so. Those that are capable of following the path, directly of devotion are advised to commence with Bhagavatkarmaparatva and to proceed through Abhyāsayōga for attaining Chittasamādhāna, by means of which they would attain the Supreme Being. Aspirants of the other category who are incapable of following Bhaktiyōga directly, are advised to attain Parābhakti through the path of Karmayōga and Ātmāvalōkana.

The stages of developing Parābhakti or Bhaktiyōga prescribed as the means of liberation, have been expounded by Deśika also in the same order in his Rahasyatrayasāra.⁴¹

Classification of Bhaktas:

Parābhakti or Supreme love of God, which is described as the means to Mukti, is gradually developed through successive stages from Sāmānyabhakti or love of the Lord resulting from the company of noble souls. Bhakti has for its object the ever auspicious Lord and a thorough knowledge of the nature of the Supreme Being, Vāsudeva,

is absolutely essential for it. In the Gīta Lord Krishna preaches His nature and His Absolute supremacy over others, to Arjuna again and again⁴² The entire universe comprising of the sentient and the non-sentient is born out of Him, is living in Him, and will return to Him in the end. The people are born in this world in different categories strictly according to the consequences of their past actions and are deluded by the powerful Prakṛti, which screens from them the true object of their life. Owing to the impelling power of Prakṛiti composed of the three Guṇas, the majority of the people fail to know their goal, and so indulge themselves in pleasures of the senses, and delight in the enjoyments of nature. This Māyā, or Prakṛiti of the Lord, which also is functioning according to His will and pleasure, cannot be transgressed without surrendering oneself unto Him. It is surrender only, and that unconditionally, to the will of God, that can, at any time, save the aspirant from the perils of rebirth and degradation. It is only through this path of choosing God that one can successfully go across the vast ocean of Samsāra. Then, why do not all follow this means and save themselves? The Lord says that four types of people never seek refuge in Him, owing to their past sins.⁴³

Though all these are moving away from God, indulging themselves in sin, they are classified into four categories according to the difference in degree of their sin. The first category of people sink in worldly pleasures, not knowing that they belong to God, on account of their perverse knowledge. These are not enlightened upon the ever auspicious nature of the Paramātmān. But the second category of people are those who are unfit to march Godward, though they know, in general, the nature and

greatness of God. The third class of people are worse than the second. Though they have in them the knowledge of God and His glory, they discard it through unsound arguments that appear as though disproving it. And the fourth kind is the worst. They are those for whom the confirmed knowledge of God and His glory results only in hatred of God. These are dominated by the Āsurabhāva.

The cause, owing to which all these kinds of people turn away from God, is nothing other than the amount of their past sins. These also have every chance of turning towards God, at some remote future owing to their Karmavipāka when some good or other will be done by them knowingly or unknowingly, to deserve the grace of the Paramātmān. As contrasted to these four kinds of unfortunate people, the Gīta describes four classes of people that are devoted to the Paramātmān. They have intense love for God, and they have chosen to worship Him alone for attaining their aspirations. Those who have done meritorious deeds in their past births deserve the grace of the Paramātmān, and on account of His grace alone that flows towards them unobstructed, come upon to serve the Lord and become blessed.⁴⁴ They surrender themselves to the Supreme Being and worship Him alone, for attaining all their aspirations. The devotees of the Lord are of four kinds according to the differences in their merit. They are the Ārta, Arthārthin, Jijñāsu and the Jñānin.

An Ārta is one who is desirous of attaining again the wealth, he has once lost. An Arthārthin is one who wants to acquire riches, never before attained. A Jijñāsu is one who longs to attain the pure state of his individual self, freed from the contact of matter, and a Jñāni is one who

cherishes to attain the Paramātman Himself. Of the four types of devotees mentioned above, the first two are after extrinsic objects, while the last two are after intrinsic objects. Even of the last two, the Jijñāsu is after attaining the Pure state of his individual self, and is therefore inferior to the Jñānin,, who yearns for Divine communion only.

जिज्ञासुः प्रकृतिवियुक्तात्मस्वरूपावाप्तीच्छुः; ज्ञानमेवास्य-
स्वरूपमिति जिज्ञासुरित्युक्तम् । गी.भा. 7-16

‘ज्ञानमिह शुद्धात्मानुभवरूपं विवक्षितमिति भावः’ । ता.चं. 7-16

All these four classes of people are devotees of God as they worship the Lord alone, for attaining their objects. The Lord considers them generous, for it is only they that bring to light His bountiful nature, by receiving gifts from Him.

‘सर्वे एवैते मामेवोपासत इत्युदाराः वदान्याः । ये मत्तो यत्किञ्चिदपि
गृह्णन्ति, ते हि मम सर्वस्वदायिनः’ । गी.भा. 7-18

Devotion towards the Supreme Being has its own merits, though it is followed for varied purposes. The Supreme Being is the Sārvatmā or the inner soul of all, and is verily being worshipped through the worship of other deities also. But there is difference between the one who worships the Lord with this true knowledge of his immanence, and the other who is not endowed with this essential knowledge. Worship of the other deities leads to limited attainments, whereas the worship of the Supreme Being yields eternal delight. It is only after a long chain of Punyajanas that a person becomes convinced of the truth that Vāsudeva is everything to him. Worshippers of other deities also get their desired objects granted by the

Paramātman alone, but they verily are not in the know of it and are deprived of the Supreme benefit. But a Bhakta knows that the Supreme Being alone is worshipped, through the worship of others also.

Of the four types of devotees, the Jñānin is the greatest, for he is cherishing to attain God alone, instead of any other object. The sole object of his attainment is Paramātman, and for attaining Him he chooses Him alone.

‘तेषां ज्ञानी विशिष्यते । कुतः ? नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिरिति च ।
ज्ञानिनो हि मदेकप्राप्यस्य मया योगो नित्यः; इतरयोस्तु यावत्
स्वाभिलषितप्राप्ति मया योगः । तथा ज्ञानिनो मय्येकस्मिन्नेव भक्तिः;
इतरयोस्तु स्वाभिलषिते तत्साधनत्वेन मयि च; अतस्स एव विशिष्यते
। किञ्च प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहम् ।’ गी.भा. 7-17

The Jñānin is the greatest of all devotees for:

1. He is a Nityayukta. While other devotees worship the Paramātman till they attain their aspirations, the Jñānin is eternally devoted to the Lord. The Lord Himself is the end and the means to him.
2. He is an exclusive devotee, an Ekabhakti: Other devotees are attached to the several objects of their aspirations, and also to the Supreme Being as the means of attaining them. But the Jñānin is solely attached to the Paramātman as he has no other objects to attain. His devotion is undivided.
3. The Jñānin holds the Paramātman so dear to him that even the All-knowing and all-Powerful God cannot describe it. The Jñānin is praised by the Paramātman as his very soul.

‘तदायत्तधारणोऽहमिति मन्ये । कस्मादेवम् ? यस्मादयं मया विना
आत्मधारणासम्भावनया मामेवानुत्तमं प्राप्यमास्थितः अतस्तेन विना
ममापि आत्मधारणं न सम्भवति । ततो ममात्मा हि सः ।

गी.भा. 7-18

The Paramātmā considers the Jñānin as his support and soul, because the Jñānin cannot bear to live without Him. The Jñānin is dear to God for the very reason, that God is very dear to the Jñānin, who is endowed with the true knowledge that God alone is the Supreme object of his life. Though all the four kinds of devotees are attached to the Absolute Paramātmā, Vāsudeva, the Jñānin or the Ekāntin is the greatest for he is purely a Bhagavatkāma.⁴⁵ The devotee who is attached to Vāsudeva with undivided devotion, and for whom the attainment of Divine communion is the only goal in his life, is verily the greatest of all devotees. He is the rarest of the rare. Lord Krishna praises such a devotee as a Mahātmā⁴⁶.

This ascertainment of his utter dependence upon, and subservience to, the ever auspicious Lord, whom alone he follows, worships, adores, praises, reflects upon, and aspires to attain, is arrived, at the end of not one birth, but at the end of a long succession of good births. It is the result of the good done in a number of previous births that one attains this true knowledge, by which he discards all attainments, other than the Supreme Being, as little and extrinsic. He decides that the Supreme Vāsudeva Himself is the highest good that he has to attain. He will be firmly convinced that Vāsudeva Himself is the goal and the means of attaining that end. He will be endowed with that definite knowledge that Vāsudeva is his all. Such an ardent devotee

of God who aspires after nothing other than the attainment of the Paramātmā is very hard to be found in this world. The generality of people in the world are drawn by their Karmavāśana towards the external objects of the world, and they follow different deities other than the Supreme Being for attaining their desires. They are thus deprived of the essential knowledge that the highest object of their attainment is the Supreme Vāsudeva. But a Jñānin is never misguided. He steadily progresses on the path of his Sādhana towards his goal of Divine communion, depending entirely upon Him alone, for his means.

Bhaktiyōgādhikarins:

The scriptures have prescribed the necessity of certain qualifications for practice of Bhaktiyōga. Bhaktiyōga or meditation upon the Supreme, as prescribed in the scriptures is not possible of being practised by anyone and everyone. Though everyone is fit to develop Bhakti or devotion towards God, everyone is not fit for Bhaktiyōga. This needs certain essential prerequisites. Only those who are fit for observing the Vedic rites are competent to practise Bhaktiyōga, as this has to be built up, upon the duties of their station in life. So, only those who are entitled to the study of the Veda are authorised to follow Bhaktiyōga. This does not, anyhow, come in the way of any body's developing Bhakti towards the Lord, which is a fundamental necessity for gradually developing Parābhakti or Bhaktiyōga. Bhakti is essential for everything, and everyone is fit to develop Bhakti towards God. But those who are born in the higher three births on account of great Puṇya become fit for practising Bhaktiyōga.

‘एताः सर्वाः तत्तच्छास्त्रप्रतिपादिततत्तद्वर्णाश्रमधर्मनिष्ठत्रैवर्णिक
मनुष्यदेवासुरादिसाध्याः । स्त्री विधुराणामपि
जपोपवासाद्यङ्गाधिकृतानां ब्रह्मविद्याधिकारोऽस्त्येव ।
अनाश्रमित्वात् आश्रमित्वमेव ज्याय इति विशेषः ।
नैष्ठिकादिपरिभ्रष्टानां तु अनधिकार एव; तथा स्मृतेः
शिष्टबहिष्कारादेश्च । कृतप्रायश्चित्तानां अपि तेषां
ब्रह्मविद्याधिकारो नास्त्येवेति - ‘बहिस्तूभयथापिस्मृतेराचाराच्च’
इति सूत्रे अभिहितम् ।’

न्या.सि p - 217

The women folk and others have Adhikāra in Brahma Vidyā through Japa and others. But it is imperative that one must commence Brahmōpāsana as enjoined in the holy texts, only in the three higher births, but it may be continued in the lowest birth also, that has come upon one, on account of one's prarabdha karma. It is the definite conclusion of the sacred scriptures that Brahmōpāsana is to be practised by such aspirants who are endowed with this essential qualification of birth in the higher three births. But what about the last? They are required to perform the duties of their station in life developing devotion towards God by means of which they will be blessed with the circumstances that are favourable for practising Bhaktiyōga, in course of time.

As there is this condition of Varṇa, there are certain conditions regarding the Āśramas also. What are the Āśramas in which one can commence Brahmōpāsana? The Sūtrakāra declares that an aspirant, in anyone of the four Āśramas, is fit for practising Bhaktiyōga or Upāsana. These Āśramadharmas aid towards the perfection of one's

Upāsanā. But have the Anāśramins any Adhikāra for Brahmōpāsanā? The aphorism

‘अन्तरा चापि तु तदृष्टेः’

श्री.भा. 3-4-36

affirms that the anāśramins also have the necessary qualifications for practising upāsanā.

‘अन्तरा वर्तमानानां अनाश्रमिणामपि विद्यायामधिकारः अस्त्येव कुतः (तदृष्टेः) दृश्यते हि रेक्वभीष्मसंवर्तादीनां अनाश्रमिणामपि बह्वविद्यानिष्ठत्वं न चाश्रमधर्मैव विद्यानुग्रह इति शक्यं वक्तुम्’।

श्री.भा. 3-4-36

It is affirmed in the scriptures that even Anāśramins are authorised to practise upāsanā, by following the spiritual discipline of Japa and others. But the Sūtrakāra says that the qualification of Āśramitva is better suited than Anāśramitva⁴⁷.

But the Sūtrakāra definitely declares that the Naiṣṭhikas that have fallen down from their vows and duties of their state, have absolutely no qualification for following Brahmōpāsanā. The sacred texts ordain that there is no prayāschitta that can purify such Naiṣṭhikas that have fallen from their vows. So they are not fit for Brahmōpāsanā⁴⁸.

It may be asked: ‘How are the aspirants of all Āśramas fit for Upāsanā, while the Chandogya text definitely points out that one, who thus practises Bhaktiyōga or Vēdana, remaining in the state of a householder lifelong, attains the Supreme? The Sūtrakāra has answered this objection.⁴⁹ The conclusion of the Sūtrakāra is that the case of a householder is mentioned here to suggest that Brahmōpāsanā is

possible in all the Āśramas. So it is concluded that only those endowed with the specific qualifications of birth etc. are fit to practise Bhaktiyōga, irrespective of the Āśrama in which they remain.

The Upāsanā of a Jñānin:

The mode of meditation relating to a Jñānin is quite different from that of the other three types of devotees. The Ārta, Arthrāthi and the Jijñāsu choose God as the means of attaining the particular goal of theirs—lost wealth, unattained wealth or self-experience, as the case may be. The object of their attainment varies, whereas the Jñānin is solely devoted to the Lord, and aspires to attain Him alone from the very beginning. The Gīta calls him an Ananyachēthāh and Nityayukta⁵⁰. He remembers the Lord lovingly at all times, and he cannot bear to live without thinking of Him. He cannot brook any delay in attaining Divine Experience. His Upāsanā is directed from the very beginning towards the attainment of Godhead, and is not coloured with the desire of attaining any other objective, such as wealth or self-experience. He lovingly remembers the Lord without any break in the middle. He is a nityayukta. He desires an eternal communion with God alone, and not the wealth and others similar to that of the Supreme Being. Such an aspirant attains God easily, for the very reason that God cannot bear separation from such a loving Bhakta. God alone grants him the necessary strength of mind and vision of wisdom with which he overcomes all obstacles to his meditation and attains the Lord quickly and easily. God verily chooses such devotees who choose Him with their heart and soul⁵¹. The Jñānin who steadily meditates upon God thus attains Him alone,

and never more returns to the world of Triguna, the abode of sorrow. He attains the Lord, his goal, on whom he has set his heart, with his loving meditation.

Of the four classes of devotees, the first two viz., the Ārta and the Arthārthi are born again in this world, but even they are sure to aspire for the highest object of their attainment viz. Divine Communion, and by virtue of the grace of the Lord whom alone they worship for gaining their objects, they will be gradually transformed into Jñānins who hunger for only Divine experience. Such is the wonderful power of Divine Grace. Divine Grace works out our salvation gradually without depriving us of our desires but never forsaking us to the objects of the world. The Kaivalyarthin is blessed with the delight of self-experience, and is gradually led to the rapture of Divine experience, completing and perfecting his Sādhana. The Jñānin, who is never misguided from the very beginning, attains the Lord directly, without the interruptions of other attainments. All these four classes of devotees are dear to the Lord, for they choose him alone for attaining their ends of life. So, they are all praised by the Lord as 'Udāras'. Of the four, as pointed out before, the Jñānin is the greatest who is considered by the Lord Himself as His very soul.

These noble souls who cannot live without thinking lovingly of the Lord as their all, are called 'Mahātamās' by the Lord. They surrender themselves to the Lord, and entrust Him with their care and the merciful Lord makes Himself manifest to those worthy people so that they may delight in His worship. The Devotees know Him in His, incarnations, and they worship Him with their heart and soul⁵².

The devotees of the Paramātmān love him intensely, and therefore cannot spend even a fraction of a second without His memory. The very remembrance, of the names of the Lord that signify His auspicious qualities, moves the hearts of the Bhaktas, and they shed tears of joy. Their entire body experiences a horripilation, owing to excessive delight. Their throat chokes with joy. They always recite with immense delight the names of the Lord. They engage themselves in such activities that are related to the worship of the Lord. They praise the Lord with the hymns. They feast their eyes with the bewitching beauty of his Divine form. Their hearts will be set upon that ever auspicious Lord that they dedicate themselves wholly to His service. Every one of their activities would be connected, in one way or the other, with the service of the Lord. All these are different ways in which their deep feeling of love for that Supreme Being bursts forth spontaneously.

‘अत्यर्थं मत्प्रियत्वेन मत्कीर्तनयतन-नमस्कारैर्विना क्षणाणुमात्रेऽपि
आत्मधारणमलभमानाः मद्गुणविशेषवाचीनि मन्त्रामानिस्मृत्वा
पुलकाश्रितसर्वाङ्गाः हर्षगद्गदकण्ठाः नारायण कृष्ण
वासुदेवेत्येवमादीनि सततं कीर्तयन्तः तथैव यतन्तः मत्कर्मसु
अर्चनादिकेषु ... दृढसङ्कल्पाः यतमानाः ...’ गी.भा. 9-14

These Māhatmās attain the Lord eternally, by following the path of meditation, which is delightful to practise, and which has infinite and eternal bliss for its fruit. The Bhaktas of the above type are described by the Gīta as ‘Ananyās’. They have no benefit to attain other than the Lord. Meditating over the Lord is itself their supreme good, for they cannot bear to live without the remembrance of the Lord. They reflect upon the Lord as qualified by all auspicious qualities, together with all His glory. They desire

the eternal communion with God, and the ever merciful Lord grants Himself to them and sees that they never lose Him.

‘अनन्याः अनन्यप्रयोजनाः मच्चिन्तनेन विना
आत्मधारणालाभान्मच्चिन्तनैकप्रयोजनाः मां चिन्तयन्तो ये
महात्मानो जनाः पर्युपासते सर्वकल्याणगुणान्वितं सर्वविभूतियुक्तं
मां परित उपासते अन्यूनमुपासते तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां नित्याभियोगं
कांक्षमाणानां अहं मत्प्राप्तिलक्षणं योगं अपुनरावृत्तिरूपं क्षेमं च
वहामि’ ।

गी.भा. 9-22

Lord Krishna personally gives an assurance to all that he would bear the burden of granting their objects of desire, and also of protecting the same, if those devotees are ‘Ananyās’ and ‘Nityābhiyuktas’. This assurance is not held out by the Paramātman to an Aisvaryarthi. The very deeds done by them in “the proper way yield them the desired results, through the will of God. All those people function with some definite purpose whereas the Jñānin does all his activities, only for winning the favour of God. While some others also, that worship other deities, gain their objects, through the all pervading Paramātman, they are deprived of this essential knowledge of the nature of Paramātman and so they do not get the maximum benefit that the other a Bhagavatkāmi, would get. The Sūtra

‘फलमत उपपत्तेः’

श्री.भा. 3-2-38

declares that the Supreme Vāsudeva Him self grants the fruits of the several karmas, performed by different people. Those who do not realize that they are worshipping Vāsudeva, in worshipping various deities do not verily get eternal and infinite results, whereas another who worships

all deities with this firm conviction that one and the same Paramātmān is worshipped, through all these various deities that form his body, never misses the Supreme attainment. If the worship is not according to the norms of the scriptures, one gets oneself bound to limited results that ultimately bind one down to this world. But, on the other hand, if the secondless Supreme Being is worshipped through all those deeds, with this firm and true knowledge that the ever auspicious Vāsudeva Himself, the inmost soul of all others, is being worshipped, they will attain the Highest good.

Whoever may worship any deity in this universe, he is worshipping the same Visvātman through that Deity. The same deed done, with proper dispositions and true knowledge, yields infinite good but, if it is not motivated with that true knowledge, it results in bondage. There is nothing wrong with the worship of other deities as such. It depends upon the Sankalpa or mental disposition of the aspirant. A deed which binds one down to Samsāra when dedicated to the petty deities or the Pitrs, with the hope of gaining some selfish desire, may verily help one to liberate oneself from Samsāra, when performed without having any selfish motive, in a spirit of service to the Lord.⁵³ Thus, there is difference in result, though the effort is the same, owing to the mental dispositions with which those actions are done.⁵⁴

It is clear from the above that a Jñānin dedicates all his actions, both secular and religious, to the Lord and is fully endowed with the true knowledge that Vāsudeva Himself is being worshipped, through all worship of other deities in the Universe, as He is the inmost soul of all.

The Jñānis who are Bhagavadyājins attain the Lord through the very karmas, through which the devotees of Indra and other Gods, the Pitrs and the Bhutas attain them alone. The Gīta declares that those worshippers of the Lord are not required to trouble themselves as worshippers of other deities in worshipping the Paramātmān. The Paramātmān is the Sarvasulabha who is eager to gain back the Jñānin to His side. So He gives more significance to the love of His devotees for Him, and receives gladly what ever is offered to Him lovingly.⁵⁵

The Lord assures that the means of worshipping Him is very easy, owing to His utter accessibility to one and all, irrespective of one being a sinner or a saint. The transcendental Brahman is, at the same time, the immanent Antaryāmin who rules over and guides from within everyone. We have to follow and worship Him, not because He is our master and dispenser of justice but because it is our essential nature to attain Him. We lose our essential nature itself, if we fail to recognise and attain Him. The Lord has given us exceptional freedom either to choose Him or not. He bestows Himself upon him who chooses Him, whereas the other who moves farther from God becomes deprived of his essential nature. Nor is it very hard to follow the ways of God. God has been ever merciful and ever watching to accept all those that turn to Him, even in pretence, showing even an inclination to become Godly. God showers His mercy even on those people, so that they might grow strong in faith and devotion, and ultimately become His staunch devotees.

The mode of worshipping the Lord is also not difficult. The Lord shows his Saulabhya to the maximum, and accepts whatever is offered to Him with a feeling of

genuine love, be it a Tulasi leaf, a flower or a fruit or the most easily available water. The spirit of devotion and dedication is here what matters most, and never the material that is offered. The devotee is not required to offer costly things that he cannot command. Owing to the non-availability of such articles of worship, nobody need despair. The devotee cannot remain without offering something or other to the Lord, who is dearest to him, and so he feels satisfied with making such devout offerings. His mind will not be sullied with any selfish desire, but will only be anxious to fulfil itself by offering to the Lord whatever is available to him. When the devotee remembers the greatness of the Lord and His infinite mercy on one and all, he feels so much grateful and attached to Him that he offers to Him what all he has, as a humble token of his great love for Him.

The Gita stresses on two points in this context:

1. The feeling of intense devotion.
2. The significance of worship.

God becomes pleased with even the little that is offered to Him with intense love, but He does not feel glad even though much is offered to him, without this essential factor of devotion.⁵⁶

The Lord holds out the guarantee that he would accept all those offerings of the ananya Bhakta, with such eagerness and love, with which he would have received some dear object (very much coveted by him) which was far from His reach.

The Mahābhārata says that the Lord, though full, accepts what little is offered to Him by His devotees, as though he is in need of it, and that He bestows upon them, being pleased with that little, a good lot.

‘परिपूर्णोऽपि भगवान् भक्तैर्यत्किञ्चिदीरितम् । सापेक्षवत्तदादत्ते तेन
प्रीतो ददात्यलम् । (मा.भा. 12-35-64)

The Lord is verily the master of the entire Universe, and every thing in this world belongs to Him. So, all these objects of worship, as well as the worshipper, belong to that worshipful Bhagavān. Knowing the secret of this truth, the Jñāni offers to Him in a spirit of utter devotion, the objects that belong to Him alone and gains His Grace.⁵⁷

The Secret of the Greatness of the Mahātmā:

The Gīta calls the Jñānin a Mahātmā. The secret of his greatness lies in the exceptional attitude, he takes in all his activities. His whole life is a dedication to the Lord. He is ever-conscious of the truth that he is subserving the purposes of the Lord, and that He, the Sarvāntaryāmin, is the super-subject of all activities. As nobody can escape the domination of Karma, as long as one is embodied in this world, the Jñānin discovers the secret of his life in this world, and rightly does what all he is required to do, and offers the fruits thereof to that Supreme Being. The Bhakta is impelled to action not by any selfish motive but by the irrepressible desire to serve the Lord therewith. He considers that all his actions are guided by the Paramātmān, and that these are meant for His supreme satisfaction. The Lord gives this Divine imperative that all our activities must be lovingly dedicated to Him, the Antaryāmin of all.

“Whatever Karma you do, be it for the maintenance of your body or the Nityanaimittika Karma such as oblation, donation, penance, etc., offer it all to me says the Gīta. Rāmānuja comments on this as follows:

‘सर्वस्य लौकिकस्य वैदिकस्य च कर्मणःकर्तृत्वं भोक्तृत्वं आराध्यत्वं च यथा मयि समर्पितं भवति तथा कुरु । एतदुक्तं भवति-यागदानादिषु आराध्यतया प्रतीयमानानां देवादीनां कर्मकर्तृभोक्तृस्तव च मदीयतया मत्सङ्कल्पायत्तस्वरूपस्थितिप्रवृत्तितया च मय्येव परमशेषिणि परमकर्तरि त्वां च कर्तारं भोक्तारमाराधकमाराध्यं च देवताजातं, आराधनं च क्रियाजातं सर्वं समर्पय । तव मन्नियाम्यतापूर्वकमच्छेषतैकरसतां आराध्यादेश्चैतत्स्वभावगर्भतां अत्यर्थप्रीतियुक्तोऽनुसन्धत्स्व - इति ।

गी.भा. 9-27

The mode of doing all Karmas, secular and Vedic, has been excellently expounded in the above passage by Rāmānuja. Though the Bhakta is different and distinct from the Paramātman, he cannot exist independently of Him. The ever Blissful Supreme Soul is the ground and inner controller of all and the individual soul derives his doership and enjoyership from the Supreme Being.⁵⁸ Though he is the doer and the enjoyer, all that is derived from the Lord is to be attributed to Him in the ultimate analysis. So, the Devotee is required to reflect upon this basic truth of doership and enjoyership as related to the Paramātman in each and every action of his, as He is the Supreme Subject, being the Sarvātman. Every action that is referred to in this context relates only to actions that are not prohibited. Perpetrating in sin and prohibited deeds leads to degradation and transmigration as it is coloured by hatred, jealousy and anger, the archenemies of mankind. All such prohibited actions are to be totally avoided. Only such activities that are indispensable for the maintenance of the body, which is to be taken care of, for successfully completing one's Sādhana for attaining spiritual

perfection, and only such activities as are enjoined upon one by the scriptures are to be performed without fail, but with this spirit of dedication to the Lord. Similarly 'whatever you eat' does not cover all the luxurious delicacies that are indulged in by the sensuous. It is that sātvic food which is taken to maintain the body intact, so that it may aid the spiritual discipline of the soul. What is important here is this 'Buddhiviśeṣa'. The Bhakta who is endowed with this Buddhiviśeṣa has no selfish attachment with any activity of his, though he is actually engaged in it. He is decided that all those activities are meant for serving the single purpose of serving the Lord, because he will be fully convinced that he himself, as well as all the deities that are worshipped by him, along with all the articles of worship, belong to that Supreme Being, and that all activities are motivated by Him for his own satisfaction. The Jñānin is uniquely different from others on account of this Buddhiviśeṣa which is a necessary part of his Bhaktiyōga.

‘परमकर्तृत्वात् कर्तृत्वसमर्पणम्; परमशेषित्वात् आराध्यत्वादि
समर्पणम्’ ; ता.चं. 9-27

Being thus endowed with the above kind of mental decision, that the individual soul is dependent upon and completely subservient to the Paramatmam, and that all his actions are of the form of worship of the Lord, the aspirant has to perform all his work, worldly and spiritual. By so performing his duties, the aspirant will be freed from all the bonds of past Karma leading to good or bad results that are obstructions for the attainment of the Paramātman. Being rid of these obstructions, the devotee attains the Supreme Being. ⁵⁹

All the Bhaktas are Treated Alike by Bhagavān:

It cannot be argued that the Lord becomes tainted with the defects of partiality and cruelty, owing to his interest in the above type of Jñānins. The Lord is showering His grace equally on one and all, irrespective of the distinctions and variations of caste, form or nature of true devotees, who surrender themselves unto Him, with a deep feeling of devotion. He is eager to grant the same fruit to one and all that choose Him, without making any distinction among them, on counts of birth or possession of knowledge or otherwise. The Lord is impartial and equal to one and all or His devotees. He is equally accessible to one and all, be they of any station or attainments in life. The Lord is inseparably related to all other beings in this Universe, as their 'Antarātman', and every other being forms the body of that great Lord. How can He, then, discard anyone who approaches Him succiently bent with devotion? Nobody is to be welcomed and regarded as high, and nobody is to be discarded as low. All those that are devoted to Him are treated alike by Him. Here is a, positive hope for humanity, for the Lord has given us a guarantee that He would accept anyone that lovingly worships Him, irrespective of his caste, sex, creed or colour or attainments. It is the birthright of every human being to gain spiritual freedom, through devotion to the Lord. To whatever class one might belong, such as that of a cow, a man, a brahmin, a Ksatriya or a Śūdra, of whatever nature one might be, the satvic, the rajasic or the tamasic or whatever be one's mental attainments God is sure to accept one who chooses Him with intense love, desiring for no other object. Such Ananyabhaktas are Mahātmās as they live in Him, and as they enjoy the infinite delight of Divine meditation. The Supreme Vāsudēva, on his part, treats

them with much regard as though one would treat one's superiors.

‘अत्यर्थमत्प्रियत्वेन मद्भजनेन विना आत्माधारणालाभात्
मद्भजनैकप्रयोजना ये मां भजन्ते ते जात्यादिभिरुत्कृष्टा वा अपकृष्टा
वा मत्समानागुणवद्यथासुखं मय्येव वर्तन्ते । अहमपि तेषु
मदुत्कृष्टेष्विव वर्ते ।’

गी.भा. 9-29

Not only the limitations of caste and other such things are ignored by the Lord, in accepting those that are devoted to Him, but also the disqualifications of behaviour are overlooked, if they only pray and worship Him penitently. That devotional attitude itself will transform them into the virtuous, and they will be in the becoming of great devotees. The Lord declares that even one, who has omitted what was commanded of him and committed what was prohibited of him, is to be highly respected and treated on a par with the other Jñānins, provided he lovingly worships Him only for the sake of his intense love for Him, without any other object of attainment, with the decisive knowledge that Bhāgavan Vāsudeva, the sole cause of the entire Universe, is his Lord his friend, his father, his mother, his supreme goal and endeavour. This definite knowledge is not easy to get and therefore this aspirant is to be considered great in spite of his past misbehaviours. This definite understanding of the nature of the Paramātmā is rare to be found in all that strictly follow the rules of good conduct. So he is definitely declared to be a Sādhu.

‘तस्मादतिवृत्तोऽप्युक्तप्रकारेण मामनन्यभाक् भजते चेत् साधुरेव सः
वैष्णवाग्रेसर एव मन्तव्यः बहुमन्तव्यः पूर्वोक्तेः सम इत्यर्थः :
उक्तप्रकारभजने सम्पन्ने सति तस्याचारव्यतिक्रमः स्वल्पवैकल्यमिति
न तावता अनादरणीयः ।’

गी.भा. 9-30

Such unshakable faith in the saving grace of the Lord, as well as such true knowledge about the nature of himself and the Paramātmā, cannot be gained with little effort. This decision of his is the result of his good actions in the numberless births of the past, leading to an unceasing worship of the Lord, without which he cannot bear to live. Such a noble soul should never be treated indifferently on grounds of Āchāra Vyathikrama.

आकरेऽपि शिलाशकलमनुपादेयम् ; अवकरेऽपि रत्नमादरणीयं
इतिभावः ।' ता.चं 9-30

Such a devotee frees himself from the bindings of all sins that are obstructions to Bhaktiyōga, by virtue of his being exclusively devoted to the Lord. He becomes a Dharmātmā, endowed with the necessary discipline of the mind fit for intense meditation, as all the obstructions in the form of sins will have been destroyed. The Lord declares that his devotee never gets destroyed.

‘न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति’ । भ.गी. 9-31

He asks Arjuna to take a vow that the devotee of Kṛṣṇa never perishes. The scriptures ordain, no doubt, that one who is immersed in sin fails to attain the Lord through true knowledge. Sinfulness no doubt obstructs the path of Sādhana, but all these sins will melt away, like snow before the Sun, if that aspirant worships the Lord with intense love for Him. Such an aspirant becomes a paripūrṇōpasāka soon and attains the Highest.

‘मत्प्रियत्वकारितानन्यप्रयोजनमद्भजनेन विधूतपापतयैव
समूलोन्मूलितरजस्तमोगुणः क्षिप्रं धर्मात्मा भवतिक्षिप्रमेव
विरोधिरहितसपरिकरमद्भजनैकमना भवति ।’ (गी.भा. 9-31)

‘प्रतिबन्धकरजस्तमोमूलभूतपापनिरासायहाचारः । तस्मिंश्च पापे
मद्भजनेन विनिवृत्ते सति नोपासनप्रतिबन्ध इत्यभिप्रायेणा-
हमत्प्रियत्वेति’ । ता.चं 9-31

The path of Bhakti is the only way to become worthy of the grace of the Lord. Nothing prevents anyone from following the path of Bhakti. It is only through this way of exclusive devotion to the Lord that one attains supreme Bhakti or Parābhakti which is the means to Mukti. The Gita expounds in unequivocal terms that not only people who are tainted with contingent sins, (Āgantuka Pāpa) but also those who are born sinners, can hope to achieve the Summum Bonum also, in spite of their disqualifications of birth and attainments, only if they surrender themselves to the Lord. They endear themselves to the Lord by means of their staunch devotion, and ultimately attain Him through loving meditation, strengthened and perfected by Him alone. An assurance is given to all that every one, under whatever handicaps of caste or knowledge or behaviour one might be, if only he chooses the Lord, and worships him exclusively with that intense eagerness to gain communion with the Lord, would certainly be led to Him by that very merciful Paramātmā alone. The Lord is accessible to one and all-sinner and saint, prince and peasant, high and low, wise and stupid, if only one takes a genuine turn in his life, and hungers for Divine Experience. Thus ‘Bhajana’ or devotion itself towards the Lord wards off the obstacles for starting Bhaktiyōga.

‘भजनमेव कथं भजनोत्पत्तिप्रतिबन्धकनिवर्तकमिति चेत् तत्र
परिपूर्णभजनस्य साध्यत्वात् । भक्त्युपक्रमस्य च हेतुत्वात् तदेतदाह
- क्षिप्रमेवेत्यादिना’ । ता.चं 9-31

It is affirmed that Bhaktiyōga or the unceasing meditation upon the Lord is the means to Mukti, and that every human being is open to follow the path of Bhakti to attain his highest aspiration. It is also confirmed in the Gīta that the Lord is uniquely equal to one and all that choose Him. Even those of very low births and attainments are authorised to worship the Lord with love, for the attainment of Bhaktiyōga.

‘देवादीनां भगवत्समाश्रयणं ‘तदुपर्यपि बादरायणः सम्भवात्’ ।
इत्यधिकरणे समर्थितम् । तिरश्चामपि गजेन्द्रवानरेन्द्रादिषु
पुण्याधिक्य निबन्धनज्ञानविशेषवत्सु प्रथितम् । तस्मात्
तिर्यगधिकरणाविरोधः । स्थावरेष्वपि शापादिजातेषु क्वचित् ज्ञानं
महर्षयः कथयन्ति । ततश्च मनोवृत्तिरूपं समाश्रयणं तत्रापि
संभवेदेव ।

ता.चं 9-29

Then a doubt arises here: Are all people irrespective of caste or creed or attainments qualified to commence Bhaktiyōga? The answer for this is as follows: The scriptures ordain that only those of the first three castes are qualified for choosing the path of Bhaktiyōga which is to be based on self-realization, resulting out of Karmayōga and Jñānayōga. Bhaktiyōga or Parābhakti is the same as Upāsana or Vēdana that is prescribed in the Upaniṣads. So, for following Bhaktiyōga, the Sastraic qualifications of birth and attainments are essential.⁶⁰ The Bhajana or worship of the Lord with intense love for Him, that is prescribed here is universal in appeal and applies to one and all, as this is the prerequisite for the attainment of Parābhakti. Everyone is required to worship the Lord with intense love and to wish for Himself, performing all the while the respective duties of his station in life.⁶¹ Though all are not qualified

to follow the path of Bhaktiyōga, everyone of every community, caste and creed is qualified to develop cardinal Bhakti towards God, which ultimately provides him with all necessary qualifications and transforms him into a complete devotee or Paripūrṇabhakta. Those that are devoted to the Lord attain the highest state even though they are subjected to sinful births, owing to their unexhausted Prārabdakarma, or any curse, or any personal offence. Once, one becomes an ardent lover of God, God takes good care of him, and leads him to his goal in spite of all obstructions. So, it is the decided conclusion of Savants, like Deśika, that taking refuge with the "Lord is common to one and all in the above context."⁶²

Here, seeking of the Lord for protection by Bhakti is stated to be common to all by the Lord. Even for the Upāsana, though the beginning is made in anyone of the three higher births, the end of the course can be attained in the body of any caste.⁶³

Bhakti is of two kinds namely Sāmānya Bhakti and Parā Bhakti. Sāmānyabhakti is common to all and is essential for every thing. This makes the aspirant grow from strength to strength and ultimately leads him on to Supreme Bhakti which is the means to Mukti. As stated above, Sāmānya Bhakti is the root cause of all progress here and hereafter, in this Universe. Without that intense feeling of devotion one cannot be first of all a successful Karmayogin, and then a Jñānayogin. This Sāmānyabhakti is verily the foundation of all Sādhana, on which alone the super structure of Karma, Jñāna or Bhakti has to be built up. The Bhaktas are of four types and of these, the first three, namely the Ārta, Ārthārthi and Jijñāsu, choose to

attain their respective goals through the Supreme Paramātmān. They choose God as their means of attaining their ends. The Jñānin yearns to attain the Supreme Being alone, and chooses Him alone for gaining that end. For the Jñānin, Bhāgavan is the end and the endeavour. He is the prāpya and the prāpaka. The Jñānin is an aspirant after Mukti and his exclusive devotion to the Lord is Parābhakti. The other categories of devotees also attain that highest state of a Jñānin, in course of time, through a gradual process of upward evolution. Whatever might be the goal of the devotee in the start he is sure to eschew all non-conducives, and to choose ultimately the highest object of attainment the Supreme Vāsudeva as his goal. Divine grace works out wonderfully the salvation of all those that choose Him, even for the attainment of worldly goods. A Bhakta of the Lord progresses steadily, stage by stage, and ultimately transforms himself into a Bhagavatkāma from an Ātmakāma, or from an Ātmakāma, owing to the wonderful nature of Divine grace. This is essentially the difference between a devotee of the Supreme Lord and a devotee of some other deity. The Lord grants the necessary Buddhiyōga to His Bhaktas, with which they attain Him, and enjoy, for ever, the rapture of His communion.

Parābhakti is the Means to Mukti:

The scriptures declare, in unambiguous terms, that only meditation of the above nature is the means of Mukti. The ideal of love towards the universal Being, is the highest, as this results in the love of the universe. The Bhakta realizes the immanence of God in one and all, and serves God through service to His body, the Universe. The devotee knows his Master and loves Him and worships

Him with eternal constancy, concentrating his mind on Him alone. The Bhakta directs his love towards the Paramātman alone, and sheds every other thing that is lower than Him. Bhaktiyōga signifies the intense love of the Highest, which keeps out the devotee from the little selfish desires of the world. The Bhakta realizes God as the centre of all activities, and he rises up from the lower levels of love to that of the Highest level of real love. He feels amazed at the innumerable ways of the manifestations of Divine Love and mercy. He realizes that all forms of attraction in this world derive their power from Him alone. The Bhakta is attracted towards God, and on account of this attraction, all other attractions of the world will have no value.

He is a virakta, or non-attached, to all the things of the world and is an anurakta in God. The aspirant who attains this renunciation and firm determination loves the Paramātman intensely and wishes for nothing else. His mind will be reflecting over that ever auspicious Lord unceasingly, and this supreme love or Parābhakti is declared to be the means of spiritual realization.⁶⁴

It is through devotion only that one becomes endowed with the true knowledge of the Paramātman, and again, it is only through devotion that one, endowed with such true knowledge, attains a vivid and comprehensive vision of the Supreme Vāsudeva. TatvaJñāna is to be obtained through Bhakti or devotion to the Lord, and through Parābhakti, originating from that TatvaJñāna, the Lord is to be attained. The attainment of TatvaJñāna is the first step which is to be obtained through Sāmānyabhakti. After the true knowledge of the Supreme Vāsudeva is obtained, the love of the aspirant for God becomes intensified and he

cannot bear to live, without lovingly reflecting upon Him. He cannot bear to live, without the vision of the Supreme, and he becomes intensely eager to attain Him at once. This state of intense eagerness for Divine experience is Parābhakti, or Supreme love of God, and this is declared as the direct means to Mukti.

‘स्वरूपतः स्वभावतश्च योऽहं गुणतो विभूतितोऽपि यावांश्चाहं तं मां एवरूपया भक्त्या तत्त्वतोऽभिजानाति मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा तदनन्तरं तत्त्वज्ञानानन्तरं ततो भक्तितो मां विशते प्रविशति । तत्त्वतः स्वरूपस्वभावगुणविभूतिदर्शनोत्तरकालभाविन्या अनवधिकातिशय भक्त्या मां प्राप्नोतीत्यर्थः । अत्र तत इति प्रामिहेतुतया निर्दिष्टा भक्तिरेवाभिधीयते ‘भक्त्यात्वनन्ययाशक्यः’ इति तस्या एव तत्त्वतः प्रवेशहेतुत्वाभिधानात् ।’ गी.भा. 18-55. ‘यथावज्ज्ञानमपि काष्ठाप्राप्तभक्तेः । अन्योन्याश्रयणं च भक्तेः पूर्वभेदात्परिहृतम् । सैव तु तथाविधावस्था साक्षात् मोक्षसाधनमित्याह तत्त्वत इत्यादिना’ । ता.चं. 18-55

Different Modes of Upāsana:

It is already pointed out that Parābhakti is the same as Vēdana or Upāsana. The Upaniṣads describe thirty two modes of Vidyās or Upāsana, and the Sūtras affirm that the goal of all these Vidyās is the same.⁶⁵ The object to be attained through all these different upāsana is the same Parabrahman, but these modes of upāsana are different, as they are qualified by different characteristics.⁶⁶ The ways of upāsana are many and different, as they are meant for aspirants of various capabilities or temperaments. The aspirants are required to choose anyone of them, and follow it, till they gain the object of their attainment.⁶⁷

These Vidyās are found in different Upaniṣads. Sometimes the same Vidyā is found in more than one Upaniṣad. Then a doubt naturally arises whether these several modes of Brahmōpāsanā are different from one another. Likewise a doubt arises as to the essential nature of the same mode of Upāsanā found in different Vedāntic texts. Are the different texts teaching different types of the same upāsanā, or are they referring to one and the same Vidyā? For example, the Vaiśvānara Vidyā, the Prāṇavidyā and others are found in different texts. Though the name is the same, there are certain special characteristics attributed to them. Are they to be taken as one or different? The guṇōpasamhārapāda' of the Sūtras deals with this question in great detail, and affirms that there is unity of Vidyās, though found in different Vedāntic texts. So the characteristics of the particular Vidyā are to be taken together.⁶⁸

To ascertain the unity of the Vidyās the following factors are helpful:

1. Samyōga
2. Rūpa
3. Chōdanā
4. Ākhyā

The Vaisvānaravidyā is being dealt with in the Chāndogya and the Vājasanēyaka. The Chōdana is the same in both. The object of meditation is common to both. The name is also common. So, though found in different branches of the Vedāntic texts, it is concluded, that one and the same Vidyā is being discussed in both. When the same

Upāsanā is being dealt with in different Vedāntic texts one is obliged to follow it with the characteristics found in the other text also as they are connected with it.⁶⁹ It is ordained that the Guṇas prescribed in one place have also to be followed, along with those found in the other sacred texts, if they deal with one and the same Upāsanā, leading to the same goal.⁷⁰

The essential qualities of Satyam, Jñānam, Anantam, Ānandam and Amalam are common to all Vidyās, and the Absolute Brahman is to be meditated upon, as qualified by the particular attributes of each kind of Vidyā, along with these essential qualities. The Sūtrakāra affirms that the qualities that determine the essential nature of Brahman such as Ānanda and others are to be meditated upon, in each and every Vidyā.⁷¹ Brahman is verily the abode of all auspicious qualities, and it may be asked whether one is not obliged to meditate upon Him, as qualified by all those qualities, in which case there would be no difference between one mode of Upāsanā and another. For this we answer as follows: The essential attributes of Brahman that determine His nature are to be followed in every type of Upāsanā. They are, Satyatva, Jñānatva, Ānandatva, Amalatva and Anantatva. The Supreme Being qualified by all these essential attributes is to be meditated upon, for the essential nature itself, of Brahman, cannot be known without these attributes. Though there are infinite auspicious qualities that qualify the essential nature of Brahman (Nirūpita svarupa viśaṣanas) such as Kārunya and others, only such particular attributes that are prescribed for certain Vidyās are to be meditated upon, according to the injunction of the holy scriptures.⁷²

‘अतः उपास्यब्रह्मस्वरूपावगमाय सर्वासु विद्यासु
आनन्दादयोऽनुवर्तन्ते । ये तु निरूपितस्वरूपस्य ब्रह्मणः कारुण्यादयो
गुणाः प्रतिपन्नाः तेषां गुण्यपृथक् स्थितत्वेऽपि
प्रतीत्यनुबन्धित्वाभावात् ये यत्र श्रुताः ते तत्र उपसंहार्याः इति
निखद्यम्’ । श्री.भा. 3-3-13

These thirty two Vidyās are different modes of Brahmōpāsānā, and each Vidyā has its own specific character, determined by the factors of Prakriyā, Nāmadhēya, Guna, Samkhya and Abhyāsa.⁷³ These are meant for different types of Adhikārins. The beginning and the procedure of each Vidyā differs from the other, but the ultimate goal of each Vidyā is the attainment of the Supreme Being. The sacred texts declare that the fruit of all these specific meditations is the illimitable rapture of Divine communion, and as each and every Upāsānā leads the aspirant to the same goal, an aspirant is required to choose anyone of these thirty two Vidyās for attaining Godhead.⁷⁴ There is no need for combining these Upāsānās, as each one is actually capable of yielding the same fruit as the other. Only Kāmyakarmas, that give limited fruits, need to be combined.⁷⁵ The Upaniṣads declare that each and every Vidyā is complete in itself. They are many, only to suit the psychological dispositions of the Adhikārins who are given the option of choosing anyone of them, for attaining spiritual perfection.

Performance of Nitya and Naimittika Karmas:

Is the Brahmōpāsaka required to perform the Nitya and Naimittika Karmas of his station in life? In the opinion of the Sūtrakāra, the performance of the Nitya and

Naimittika Karmas is obligatory, on the part of each and every Brahmōpāsaka. The Yajnas and others are ordained to be performed by one, only subordinated to his Brahma Vidyā. The Yajnas and the like are to be performed even by a non-Brahmopasaka, as the scriptures prescribe: "One should perform Agnihōtra as long as he lives for the purposes of leading the life of his Āśrama. But the performance of these sacrifices and others can be made to serve both the purposes of, the life of an Āśrama, or the life of BrahmaVidyā. The Sūtra 'सर्वथापि त एव उभयलिङ्गात्' (श्री.भा. 3-4-34) confirms the two-fold purposes of the performance of these karmas. By the aphorism,

‘सर्वापेक्षा च यज्ञादिश्रुतेरश्ववत्’ । श्री.भा. 3-4-26

it is ordained that the performance of the nitya and naimittika karmas is essential to support and strengthen one's upāsana. The simile of a horse is given here to suggest that, as the horse, the means of travel from one place to another, requires the necessary equipment of the saddle and others, Upāsana needs the observance of the nitya and naimittika karmas.⁷⁶ The abandonment of the observance of the Varṇāśrama dharmas is nowhere suggested. Moreover, the Gita calls such an abandonment of the duties, of one's station in life, a Tāmasa Tyāga. Nityakarmas are, therefore, required to be performed by one, either as a part of his BrahmaVidyā or as a part of his Āśrama Dharma.⁷⁷

The Relationship Between Karma and Vidyā:

The Sūtrakāra discusses the relationship between Karma and Vidyā, in the beginning of the fourth section of

the Third Chapter. It was affirmed above that Upāsana had to be followed with the performance of the Nitya and Nairittika Karmas, and now a doubt might arise as to the relationship between the two. How are these two namely Karma and Vidyā related? Which is the main means, and which is the secondary one in attaining our goal? The Sūtrakāra gives the purport of the opponent's view-point, that Karma is the main means of salvation, and that it is to be supported with Vidyā, and then criticises the same and comes to the conclusion that the Summum Bonum is attained only through Vidyā, and that Karma is only an Anga or part of that Vidyā.⁷⁸ The highest object of attainment is achieved through Vidyā only. This standpoint is objected to by the Mīmāṃsaka, on the following grounds.

1. The statement, "The knower of Brahman attains the highest" does not affirm the attainment of the highest, only through Vēdana. This prescribes that the true nature of the soul, who is the doer is a pre-requisite, for performance of Karma. It forms a Samskāra of the Kartā, and so this knowledge is only subordinated to Karma. The declaration, of the attainment of the goal through this knowledge, is to be taken as an Arthavāda. Jaimini declares that such a type of 'Phalaśruti' is an Arthavāda.⁷⁹ It must be therefore made out that the Vēdantic texts are devoted to the enlightenment of the true nature of the individual self, different and distinct from the body. So, it is to be admitted that Vidyā fulfils the purpose of achieving the realization of the soul, after attaining which, the soul has to attain the highest Goal through Karma.

2. The following indications confirm the same view point.
 - a. Even the Brahmanas are engaged in Karma.⁸⁰ Even such great Jñānins, like Janaka and others, are said to have attained the Highest through Karma.
 - b. The scriptural texts themselves affirm that whatever is done with the Vidyā becomes very powerful.⁸¹
 - c. Vidyā is always associated with Karma.⁸²
 - d. The Chandōgya and other texts prescribe the performance of Karmas, after attaining knowledge from the Ācharya. So Brahmanvidyā is of use to Karma.
 - e. The sacred texts command that one should be engaged in Karmas lifelong, and so it is to be admitted that the Highest is attained through Karma alone.

All these arguments are severely criticised by the Sūtrakāra who establishes the conclusion that the Summum Bonum is obtained only through Vidyā.

The sacred texts ordain that the Supreme Brahman who is different and distinct from the doer, the individual soul, and who is far superior to every other, by virtue of his being a home of all perfections bereft of any taint of imperfection, is to be known for attaining the Highest. Innumerable texts like 'अपहतपाप्मा' (छा.उ. 8-2-5) 'सर्वज्ञः' (मुं. उ. 1-1-9) affirm that only the Supreme Being, of the above nature, is to be known for freeing one-self from the wheel of Samsāra. So the aphorism

‘अधिकोपदेशात् बादरायणस्यैवं तद्दर्शनात्’ श्री.भा. 3-4-8

declares the conclusion of Bhāgavan Bādarāyana that the sacred texts ordain that the Supreme Brahman is to be known for salvation. All the arguments of the Mīmāṃsaka are countered effectively by Bhāgavan Bādarāyana.

- a. Vidyā is not karmāṅga, for it is seen in the case of some Brahmanavits that they have abandoned all karmas. Had Vidyā been a Karmāṅga, such an abandonment would have been impossible.
- b. The argument of the opponent that Karma is stated to become effective when done with Vidyā, does not affect this position, for that applies specially to the ‘Udgītha Vidyā’ alone. This particular Vidyā only is Karmāṅga, but not any Brahma Vidyā. The conclusion, that whatever is done is to be done with Vidyā, does not follow from this.
- c. Of Vidyā and Karma, each leads to different fruits, and a mere mention of these two together does not at all mean that Vidyā is subordinated to Karma.
- d. The argument put forth by the opponent that Vidyā is karmāṅga, for the very reason that the Vedic, Texts enjoin the performance of Karma to one who has completed the studies of the Veda along with their meanings, is also not sound. The "Adhyayana vidhi" by itself, does not relate to the understanding of the meaning, and so one who has completed his studies takes to Karma-Jñāna or Brahmajñāna, according to his nature of being a seeker after Karma, or a seeker after Mokṣa. So Vidyā cannot become Karmāṅga. Even

taking for granted, that Vedic studies culminate in understanding their meaning, it must be admitted that Brahmanvidyā is not a karmāṅga, as it is quite different from knowing the meaning of the texts. Vidyā is Dhyāna or Upāsana or steady meditation and never a mere knowledge of the nature of Brahman as known from the texts.

- e. The text 'कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि' (ईशा. 2) does not ordain the performance of Karmas lifelong, turning away one from the path of knowledge. The Karmas that one has to perform like this, are those that form part of the Vidyā and not any independent Karmas. Moreover, it is for expounding the greatness and efficacy of Vidyā that one is permitted to do such Karmas. Though the Brahmanvit does Karma always, he is not tainted with them, by virtue of the greatness of the Vidyā. So Vidyā is never a Karmāṅga.
- f. Every sacred text affirms that all Karmas of the form of Puṇya and Pāpa, the origin of pain and misery in the world, get destroyed by Brahmanvidyā. How can such Karma be taken to have Brahmanvidyā as its Anga?
- g. In certain Āśramas like that of the Sanyasins, the practice of Brahmanvidyā is existent, whereas the performance of Karmas like Agnihōtra, Darśa, Paurṇamāsa and others is not seen. Therefore, it must be known that Vidyā is never a part of Karma.

The great Badarayana has thus expounded that Karma is only an Anga of Brahmanvidyā and never the contrary.⁸³

Upāsanā is to be Supported by Aṣṭāṅgayōga:

The Aṣṭāṅgayōga, prescribed by the great teachers of the Yōga school, is a necessary limb of Upāsanā. The Sūtrakāra prescribes the practice of Yōga in the practice of meditation. The Sūtra 'आसीनस्सम्भवात्' (श्री.भा. 4-1-7) prescribes that one should choose a convenient place, and sit in the proper posture for meditation. One should develop concentration of mind, and for this one should choose such a place and such a posture, is highly conducive to it. So the Sūtrakāra says 'यत्रैकाग्रता तत्राविशेषात्' (श्री.भा. 4-1-11.) and allows the choice of selection of the place and posture to the aspirant.⁸⁴ Concentration of mind is to be gained for meditation, and for this all the limbs of Yōga are necessary. The mind must be calm, and all its outward tendencies have to be checked for this. The mind, being drawn from all outward tendencies, is to be fixed upon the ever auspicious Paramātmān. In this way, the eightfold limbs of Yōga are indispensable for Upāsanā.

Upāsanā Must be Repeated:

Upāsanā is to be repeated and followed to the very last day of one's journey from this world. The Sūtrakāra declares this in the Sūtras, 'आवृत्तिसकृदुपदेशात्' 'आप्रयाणात्तत्रापि हि दृष्टम्' (श्री.भा. 4-1-1, 12.)

Upāsanā is of the form of a series of reflections, and not merely a single remembrance. This word Upāsanā relates to the steady and unbroken concentration of the mind, which signifies this repeated series of reflections.

‘ध्यानं च चिन्तनं तच्चस्मृतिसन्ततिरूपं न स्मृतिमात्रम् ।
उपास्तिरपि तदेकार्थः।’ (श्री.भा. 4-1-1)

How Should the Supreme Being be Meditated Upon:

The aphorism ‘आत्मेति तूपगच्छन्ति ग्राहयन्ति च’ (श्री.भा 4-1-3.) lays down that the Supreme Being must be meditated upon by the Upāsaka, as his Antarātman. It is no doubt prescribed in the sacred texts that the supreme is different and distinct from the soul. The Sūtrakāra also expounds that Brahman is superior to the aspiring individual self.⁸⁵ But the scriptures lay down that the aspirants have to meditate upon Brahman as their Antarātman. The Upāsaka must turn his vision inward, and think himself into the Antaryamin in the form ‘I am indeed thou, holy divinity, and thou art myself’ ‘त्वं वा अहमस्मि देवते अहं वा त्वमसि’ The Śāstras enlighten the aspirants on the essential factors of the mode of Upāsana. They teach that the aspirants know that they are Brahman, though Brahman is different and distinct from them. The sacred texts expound that He, who dwells within the soul, who is different from the soul, Whom the soul does not know, of Whom the soul is the body, Who rules the soul from within, He is thyself, the inner ruler Immortal.⁸⁶ The Chandōgya Upaniṣad (6-8-4 and 3-14-1) declares that all are having the Sat, as their ground, inner controller and inner soul from whom they are born, in whom they live, and to whom they return. The Supreme Vāsudeva is the ‘all self’. All objects in this world are rightly designated as Brahman, as they derive their value only from their Antarātman, that Supreme Vāsudeva. Every other thing is established in Brahman, and so, every word refers ultimately to the Absolute Brahman,

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by virtue of His being the Antarātman of all others. So, the text 'त्वं वा अहमस्मि' is quite apt as it confirms the truth of the entire universe of the Chit and the Achit being ensouled by Brahman. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka text declares that he, who meditates upon Brahman as some one unrelated to him, and who considers himself separate from Brahman, is devoid of true knowledge. Such an aspirant who considers Brahman separated from him, and him as separated from Brahman, would not be practising a complete and comprehensive meditation. His reflection would be wanting in this realization of the essential truth of the inseparable relation between God and every other object in this Universe.

In the above mode of Upāsana, comprising of the reflection of Paramātman as the inner self of all, the essential teachings of the scriptures are strictly followed for the following reasons.

1. On account of the form of meditation, comprising of the mode of, 'I am indeed, thou, holy divinity', the aspirant will be free from the dangers of meditating upon something other than the Ātman as warned by the sacred text -

‘सर्वं तं परादात् योऽन्यत्रात्मनः सर्वं वेद’ (बृ.उ. 6-5-7)

The aspirant here reflects upon the deity as his own Antaryāmin.

2. Meditating upon Brahman, as his Antarātman who is greater and superior to himself, gives full value to the Vedic injunction that the Paramātman must be meditated upon, as one who is different and distinct from the soul, and as one who happens to be the inner controller as enjoined in the text

‘पृथगात्मानं प्रेरितारं च मत्वा’

(श्वे.उ. 1-6)

3. The Supreme Being who is greater than the individual soul is verily its Antaryāmin, and the individual soul forms the body of Brahman. Meditation of the above type alone, that brings about the full significance of the inter-relationship of Brahman with the individual soul, is complete and proper.

So, the Sūtrakāra prescribes that Brahman is to be meditated upon, only as the Antarātman of the aspirant.

Śama, Dama and Others are Necessary for Upāsana:

Just as the performance of Karma is essential for Upāsana as its Anga, even the virtues of Śama, Dama and others are required as an anga for Upāsana. The Sūtrakāra takes up this question and declares that inner quietitude is not incompatible with the performance of his various duties. ‘The sacred texts prescribe the virtues of Śama, Dama and others as a part of Upāsana.

‘तस्मादेवंवित् शान्तः दान्त उपरतस्तितिक्षुस्समाहितो भूत्वा
आत्मन्येवात्मानं पश्येत् ।’

(बृ.उ. 6-4-23)

It is imperative on the part of all Upāsaka to practise all these, for these contribute in a very large measure towards the origination and consolidation of the Brahmavidyā through Chittasamādhana. There is no contradiction whatsoever between these virtues namely, Śama, Dama and others and the performance of Karma, for they relate to different things. Śama, Dama and others do not signify cessation of all activities. Nor can it be doubted that the practice of Śama and Dama will not at all

become possible, due to the residual impressions caused by the performance of various activities through various sense organs, for all the duties that are enjoined upon the aspirant are meant to be performed in a spirit of devout service to the Lord, only for becoming Blessed with His Grace, to result in the total destruction of all such *Vāsanas*. So, the *Sūtrakāra* prescribes as follows:

‘शमदमाद्युपेतः स्यात् तथापि तुतद्विधेस्तदङ्गतया
तेषामप्यवश्यानुष्ठेयत्वात् । (श्री.भा. 3-4-27)

Śama, *Dama* and others are thus *Sahakarins* or accessories for the practice of *Upāsana*. As the *Chandogya* text ordains in the statement

‘तस्माद्ब्राह्मणः पाण्डित्यं निर्विद्य बाल्येन तिष्ठासेत्’ ।
(छा.उ. 8-15-1)

an aspirant of the path of *Bhaktiyōga* is required not to reveal his greatness at all to others. He must be divested of any vanity regarding his spiritual attainment. This means that the *Upāsaka* must engage himself in meditation upon Brahman, and become a ‘*Muni*’ in reality, and yet be as unassuming as a child. The text affirms that he will become a *Muni* after attaining *Pāndityam* and *Bālyam*. The significance of *Bālyam*, here, is not that such an *Upāsaka* is required to behave wildly as a child but that he, though great *Brahmōpāsaka*, is to be wholly unassuming as an innocent child. The *Sūtra*

‘अनाविष्कुर्वन् अन्वयात्’ (श्री.भा. 3-4-49)

ordains this. The text ordains that one should become a *Muni* or a *Mananasīla* after attaining the two pre-requisites

-Pāndityam and Bālyam. The Sūtrakāra expounds in the Sūtras (III-4-48) that Maunam or Prakṛṣṭa Mananam is enjoined upon an aspirant, just like the performance of the duties of one's station in life.

Upāsana is an Effective Destructor of Prachēna Karma:

It may be doubted that salvation is impossible out of Upāsana, just as it is argued by some that salvation is not possible out of verbal knowledge, for the vast heap of karma amassed in all the previous births, of the, form of merit and sin, has got to be experienced. Karma does not vanish without being experienced, if it is not controverted by Prāyaścitta. The scriptures contain any number of statements to prove that Karma, vanishes not, without being gone through. So, it is contended that the destruction of Karma is impossible through Brahmavidyā, to lead one to the realisation of the Supreme. Such of the scriptural statements, that any how speak of the annihilation of Karma through Brahmavidyā, are only to be taken as Arthavādas, as they surely praise the mode of attaining Brahman. So, Karma-phala has got to be experienced, if it is to be exhausted, it is maintained.

This objection has been emphatically refuted by the school of Vedānta which declares that the collection of all sins amassed before, with the exception of those that have already begun to act, is going to be annihilated, whereas that might occur unnoticed even after the attainment of Upāsana is going to be untainted, by virtue of the extraordinary power of Upāsana itself. The Sūtrakāra maintains in the Sūtras (S.B. IV-I-13) that when one has attained Brahmavidyā, the huge mass of sins committed prior to

one's attainment of Vidyā would get destroyed. Vidyā itself is to be the Niṣkṛti for all such sins, as it has no aim other than the annihilation of all such sins that obstruct Divine experience,. So Vidyā itself, by virtue of its efficiency, would check the potency of all such Karmas. Likewise it would also ensure the non-relationship of such sins that were done by the aspirant by oversight, without any intention at all, even after the time of the attainment of Upāsana.

For an aspirant after Mukti, Puṇya is as bad an obstruction as Pāpa, as he considers all things other than the attainment of Brahman, as little and undeserving. The Dharmas of the first three Vargas namely Dharma, Artha and Kāma also chain him to this world, and he is required to free himself from all kinds of bondages of Puṇya and Pāpa to become worthy of Divine Communion, and so, the Karma that is annihilated in this context refers to even the Puṇyakarmas done purposively, prior to one's following Upāsana. Likewise, the Puṇyakarma that is unintentionally done after taking up Upāsana, also does not cling to such an aspirant. Puṇya is of no use to an aspirant of Mukti, and so the scriptures ordain that even Puṇya of this type is another kind of Pāpa. The Sūtrakara expressly affirms this in the Sūtra:

‘इतरस्याप्येवमसंश्लेषः पाते तु’

(श्री.भा. 4-1-14)

and declares that one established in Upāsana becomes rid of the previous Karmas of the form of Puṇya and Pāpa, and also that he will, not be touched by that Karma which he performs unintentionally later.

A Vidyāṇiṣṭa generally will not engage himself in purposive deeds or Kāmyakarmas and whatever Karma he does, he does it with a spirit of detachment, only as a mark of service to the Lord. The performance of such disinterested action is the divine imperative and will not at all be harmful to his career of Upāsana. Such Karmas that are unknowingly done by the aspirant, due to inadvertence, will not cling to him owing to the effect of Upāsana.

Upāsana is not all powerful as to annihilate all past sins. The scriptures ordain that only such Karmas, that have not yet commenced to yield their results, are going to be destroyed. So, even the Upāsaka is obliged to go through the full course of the prārabdakarma, or such sins that have already commenced to act.⁸⁷ The statement

‘तस्य तावदेव चिरं यावन्न विमोक्ष्ये अथसंपत्स्ये’ (छा.उ. 6-14-2)

expressly states that the aspirant is subjected to the experience of such particular Karma that has begun already to give its result. He is, therefore, obliged to experience and exhaust completely the prārabdakarma; that has commenced to work out its fruit, before attaining Brahman.⁸⁸

Thus, we find that Upāsana or Bhaktiyōga has very great power to nullify a very large part of our past sins. The entire mass of Puṇya and Pāpa that is amassed from beginningless time, along with such sins that might be committed unknowingly in future, will all be destroyed with the exception of only Prārabdakarma, on account of the power of Upāsana. The aspirant will attain Brahman after exhausting his prarabdakarma which he is obliged to go through at any event.

What is after all *Punya* and *Pāpa*? They are nothing other than the pleasure and displeasure of the Supreme Being, that are incurred by us by certain of our activities. In the ultimate analysis, the destruction of *Punya* and *Pāpa* means that God, being pleased with our unceasing meditation, will give up his inclination of rewarding us with some earthly gifts, as prayed for by us before, or of punishing us for our misdeeds.⁸⁹

Upāsana is the means of attaining Brahman, and this can be achieved only when all the obstructions on that path is cleared. When God becomes pleased with *Upāsana* He gives up his inclination to punish us, and He readily grants us communion with Him⁹⁰.

Self-surrender Essential for Bhaktiyōga:

Self-surrender at the feet of the Lord is necessary for commencing, perfecting and completing *Bhaktiyōga*. Everything in this universe is under the direct control of the Supreme *Vāsudeva* and nothing can be gained without His grace. *Bhakti* is also the gift of God. The aspirant has to choose God alone for aiding and completing his course of *Sadhana*. The aspirant cannot conquer his sense organs and become a *Karmayōgin*, or gain steadfastness in his self, without surrendering himself unto God, and without entrusting himself unto His care. Likewise, surrender at the feet of the Lord is essential for the perfection of *Bhaktiyōga* also. It is not at all easy to gain that intensity of *Parabhakti* through which one can attain the Lord. Even for the attainment of such a *Bhakti-yōga*, one has to take refuge with the Lord and pray to Him for it.⁹¹ If the aspirant is indifferent and quiet, the Lord cannot act. The supreme *Vāsudeva*, the *Antaryāmin* of all, is causing all

those embodied in matter, to function in accordance with the several *gunas* of nature. So, one is required to worship the Lord and follow Him alone, to attain the Highest. Without surrendering oneself to the Lord, one cannot get over the obstacles to *Bhaktiyōga*. The Lord alone is to be chosen for leading one to *Bhaktiyōga*, and for helping one to complete it successfully. The aspirant, after the path of *Bhakti*, has chosen *Bhaktiyōga* as the means of attaining his Goal, and he observes self-surrender as a sub- means to perfect and complete his main way of *Sadhana*. Here this self-surrender is called the *Anga Prapatti* or a factor which, helps the main means. *Bhaktiyōga*, without *Prapatti*, therefore, is an impossibility. The aspirant has to pray to God earnestly to stand by him, and to make him strong enough to proceed to his Goal, unscared by any obstructions whatsoever on his way. *Rāmānuja* explains the significance of *Prapatti* as related to *Bhakti-yōga* in a double sense.

1. The aspirant is required to perform in the prescribed way all the *Dharmas* of the form of *Karmayōga*, *Jñānayōga* and *Bhaktiyōga*, with the firm conviction that the Supreme Being alone is both the *Prāpya* and the *Prāpaka*. The Supreme Lord would free an aspirant of this type, from all kinds of sins that are obstructions to attain Him.
2. The aspirant is required to give up all *Dharmas* of the form of *Chāndrayāna*, *Kūṣmānda*, *Agniṣtoma* etc., that are to be performed according to the intensity of his sins, to clear away the obstructions to the commencement of *Bhaktiyōga*. He is further required to surrender himself to the Lord for becoming capable

of commencing Bhaktiyōga. The Lord would free him from all sins and such obstructions that hinder the commencement of Bhaktiyōga.

From this, it becomes clear that self-surrender unto the Lord is inevitable for the commencement of Bhaktiyōga.

‘कर्मयोगज्ञानयोगभक्तियोगरूपान् सर्वान् धर्मान् यथाधिकारं कुर्वाण एवोक्तरीत्या फलकर्म कर्तृत्वादिपरित्यागेन परित्यज्य मामेकमेव कर्तारमाराध्यं प्राप्यमुपायं चानुसन्धत्स्व । एवं वर्तमानं त्वां मत्प्राप्तिविरोधिभ्यः अनादिकालसंचितानन्ता कृत्यकरणकृत्याकरणरूपेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि ।’
..... ‘आत्मनो भक्तियोगारम्भानर्हतामालोच्य शोचतोऽर्जुनस्य शोकमपनुदन् श्रीभगवानुवाच भक्तियोगारम्भविरोध्यनादि कालसञ्चितनानाविधानन्तपापानुगुणान् दुरुन्ष्टानान् सर्वान् धर्मान् परित्यज्य भक्तियोगारम्भसिद्धये मामेकं शरणं प्रपद्यस्व।’

Three Stages of Higher Bhakti:

The unique contribution of Rāmānuja to the philosophy of Bhakti is the elucidation and exposition of the three successive stages in the evolution of Supreme Devotion. These three stages are described as Parabhakti, Parajñānam and Paramabhakti. Bhakti is ordinarily classified into Sāmānya Bhakti and Parabhakti by almost all teachers. Sāmānya Bhakti is at the root of all Sadhanas both material and spiritual. It is essential for all spiritual discipline. It is developed as described before from a devout study of the sacred texts and also from contact with godly people. This is the cause of Parabhakti. Bhakti, in general,

is the means of Parabhakti which is verily the means to Mukti. That means, which is followed for the attainment of spiritual perfection, is called Parabhakti. Bhakti-yōga or Upāsana or Vēdāna which has been prescribed as a means of obtaining Mukti is called Parabhakti.⁹²

While speaking of intense devotion Rāmānuja invariably mentions the three successive stages of that Bhakti. In the Śaraṇāgati Gadya he states-

‘‘भगवच्चरणारविन्दयुगलैकान्तिकात्यन्तिक परभक्तिपरज्ञान
परमभक्तिकृतपरिपूर्णानवरत’

and so on. Deśika comments on this passage as follows:

‘अत्र परभक्त्युत्तरोत्तरसाक्षात्कारेच्छात्मिका धीः । सा च या प्रीतिः
इत्यादिष्विव विषयस्वभावजा न तु इष्टसाधनत्वबुद्धिजा । परज्ञानं
उत्तरोत्तरसाक्षात्कारः । साक्षात्कृते निरन्तरानुबुध्वा परमभक्तिः ।’
(ग.भा.)

Sri Sudarśana Sūri, the celebrated commentator of Rāmānuja explains them as follows:

उत्तरोत्तरसाक्षात्काराभिनिवेशः परभक्तिः । साक्षात्कारः परज्ञानम् ।
उत्तरोत्तराभिनिवेशः परमभक्तिः ।’
(ग.भा.)

Parabhakti produces an eager and intense desire and determination to see the Lord. The aspirant wins the grace of the Lord by this keen desire. He bitterly cries out to the Lord to show Himself to him some day.

The ever merciful Lord being pleased with this keen desire, rewards the aspirant with His perfect and comprehensive vision for the time being. This visual perception is called Parajñānam. Vedānta Deśika states in

his Rahasya Traya Sāram that this visual perception lasts only for the time being.⁹³

This leads on to the highest state of supreme Bhakti. That is the stage of Paramabhakti. When the aspirant is blessed with the perfect vision of the Lord, an excessive unsurpassed love is born in him for the Lord, and he yearns to enjoy the Lord for ever without any break. This keen desire for the eternal enjoyment of the vision of the Lord is Paramabhakti. He becomes one with the Lord and cannot bear to be without Him. As the aspirant loves the Lord excessively, and also as he yearns to be united with Him eternally, the Lord also becomes eager to grant him Mukti without delay, and to be united with him for ever. Thus Paramabhakti is the highest stage of love for the Lord, by attaining which, one feels it impossible to live any longer without enjoying the Lord.

Thus Sāmānya bhakti leads to Parabhakti, which is ordained as the means to Mukti and that Parabhakti leads to the state of Parajñānam, signifying the visual perception of the Lord, which further on leads to Paramabhakti, the highest stage of love which is unsurpassed, and which lasts for ever, and this is communion with the Lord.

All other means to an end vanish after reaching the goal. But not Bhakti. It is *avyaya*. The excessive love for the Lord does not become abated with the realization of Mukti. On the other hand it goes on increasing for ever. The Nityas or the eternal as well as the Muktas-the liberated who are blessed with the eternal experience of the Lord feel all these three stages of Bhakti at different moments. Bhakti is the means to Mukti and again the state of Mukti is qualified by Bhakti. It is eternal and the spiritual discipline begins, continues and culminates in Bhakti.

Different Expressions of Bhakti:

The savants of the past have described variously the different expressions of Bhakti. The Bhāgavata enunciates nine ways of Bhakti ...

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम् ।

अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् । (भाग. 7-5-23)

These are all different ways of realizing the essential nature of the Transcendental Reality which is immanent in one and all. The aspirant has to observe certain discipline and cultivate his whole being for God realisation. Of the above nine, the first three namely Śravanam, Kīrtanam and Smarṇam relate to contemplation, the second three, namely Pādasevanam, Archanam and Vandanam relate to the divine activities and the last three, namely Dāsyam, Sakhyam and Ātmanivēdanam relate to the attitude of subservience and self-surrender.

To sum up we may state as follows:

1. Bhaktiyōga is of the form of intense love towards God.
2. Bhaktiyōga is the same as Vēdana, Dhyāna or Upāsana of the Upanisads and it is of thirty two modes as prescribed in the sacred texts.
3. Ātmadarsana that is achieved through Karmayōga and Jñānayōga is a prerequisite for Bhaktiyōga.
4. Bhaktiyōga is possible for only such aspirants who are sufficiently evolved.
5. The Bhaktiyōgin is required to perform the duties of his Āśrama and Varṇa.

6. Meditation must be practised till it results in a vivid and perfect perception of the Lord.
7. The Supreme is to be meditated upon by the aspirant as his Anrātman.
8. Prapatti at the feet of the Lord is essential for the commencement as well as perfection of Bhaktiyōga.

References :-

1. Rg. V. (X-133-6)
2. Rg. V. (X-7-3)
3. Rg. X - 63-10
4. Rg. V. VIII - 92-32.
5. Rv. V. I-24-14; X-101-2; X-101-3; II-12-5; IV-11-3; II-28-3
6. Rg. V. X-25-1
7. 'वयमिन्द्रत्वायवः' Rg. V. VII-31-4; 'तव स्याम पुरुवीरस्य शर्मन्' (Rg.V.II-28-3); 'यस्य ते स्वादु सख्यं' Rg.V. (VIII-57-11); 'देवानां सख्यमुपसेदिमा वयम्' (Rg. V. I - 89-2)
8. 'कदा भवन्ति सख्या गृहा ते' Rg. V. (IV-3-4)
9. 'न किष्टं कर्मणा नशद्यश्चकार सदावृधम् । इन्द्रं न यज्ञैर्विश्वगूर्तमृध्वसमधृष्टं धृष्ण्वोजसम्' ॥ Rg. V. VIII-70-3.
10. 'अयामि ते नम उक्तिं जुषस्व' Rg. V. III-14-2
11. (VIII-61-11), (X-183-1)
12. Rg. V. VI-29-3
13. 'भगवन् भक्तिमपि प्रयच्छ मे' स्तो.र.
14. 'उभयपरिकर्मितस्वान्तस्य एकान्तिकात्यन्तिक भक्तियोगलभ्यः' सि.त्र.
15. 'मय्येव मन आधत्स्व' भ.गी. 12-8
16. G.B. 9-34
17. 'भक्तिरूपेणोपासनेन उपास्यमानोऽहं तदानीमेवोपासितुः प्रत्यक्षतामुपगतो भवामीत्यर्थः।' (गी.भा. 9-2)
18. 'अव्ययं अक्षयं मत्प्रप्तिं साधयित्वापि स्वयं न क्षीयते' (गी.भा. 9-2)
19. ना.सू. 1; शां.सू. 2
20. 'ना.सू. 4

21. 'इदानीं भक्त्युत्पत्तये तद्विवृद्धये च भगवतो निरङ्कुशैश्वर्यादिकल्याणगुणानन्तं कृत्स्नस्य जगतःतच्छरीरतया तदात्मकत्वेन तत्प्रवर्त्यत्वं च प्रपञ्चते' ।

गी.भा. 10-1; (गी.भा. 11)

22. 'तद्वतः प्रपत्तिशब्दाच्च न ज्ञानं इतरप्रपत्तिवत्' । शां.सू. 9

23. यद्यपि रागत्वेनैव ज्ञानभेदः सिद्धः तथापि भक्तिशब्दो ब्रह्मज्ञाने गौण इति शङ्कानिराकरणार्थमेतत् ।' स्वप्नेश्वरभाष्य. शां.सू. 9

24. 'भक्तिश्च ज्ञानविशेष एव' वे.सं p - 219

'भक्तिरपि निरतिशयानन्यप्रयोजन स्वेतरवैतृष्यावह ज्ञानविशेष एव' ।

वे.सं. 198

25. Sri Bhasya-Mangalasloka

26. 'जात्याश्रयनिमित्तादुष्टादन्नात्कायशुद्धिर्विवेकः' श्री.भा. 1-1-1

27. छां.उ. 7-26-2

28. 'सदा तद्भाव भावितः' (भ.गी. 8-6) श्रु.प्र. p - 53

29. मुं.उ. 3-1-4

30. श्री.भा. 3-4-26

31. 'स्वार्थनिरपेक्षपरदुःखासहिष्णुत्वम्' श्रु.प्र. 53

32. 'अहंभीतोऽस्मि देवेश संसारेऽस्मिन्भयावहे । पाहि मां पुण्डरीकाक्ष न जाने शरणं परम्' । - जितन्तास्तोत्रम् ।

33. Paramapada Sopana of Vedanta Desika

34. B.G. IV-34

35. भाग. 1-2-11

36. 'हृद्यन्तस्थो ह्यभद्राणि विधुनोति सुहृत्सताम्' भाग. 1-2-17

37. 'नष्टप्रायेष्वभद्रेषु नित्यं भागवतसेवया । भगवत्युत्तमश्लोके भक्तिर्भवति नैष्ठिकी ।

भाग. 1-2-18

38. 'एवं प्रसन्नमनसो भगवद्भक्तियोगतः
भगवत्तत्त्वविज्ञानं मुक्तसंक्रस्य जायते" भाग. 1-2-20
39. B.G. 18-48 to 54
40. B.G.XII - 6,7
41. R.T.S. 9. p. 107
42. B.G. VII-6 to 12; IX-4 to 11; X-2, 8, 19 to 42; XI; XVIII
43. See ता.चं IX-12; B.G. VII-15
44. B.G. VII-28
45. महाभारतम्-मो.घ. 342-33-53
46. B.G. VII-19
47. Shri Bhashya, III-4-39
48. Shri Bhashya, III-4-40
49. 'कृत्स्नभावात्तु गृहिणोपसंहारः' Shri Bhashya, III-4-47
50. B.G. VIII-41
51. 'मुं. उ. 3-2-3; B.G. X-10, 11
52. G.B. IX-13
53. B.G. IX-24, 25
54. See तां.चं. IX-25,26
55. B.G. IX-26
56. 'भूर्य्यभक्तोपहतं न मे भोगाय जायते' Quoted in ता.चं IX-26
57. ता.चं IX-26
58. Shri Bhashya, 3-41
59. G.B. IX-28
60. Shri Bhashya 1-3-9
61. 'स्वजातिप्रतिनियतधर्मैः भजनात् न अपकृष्टजातिनिर्देशविरोधः'।
तां.चं IX-29

62. See R.T.S. 24, p. 161

63. 'धर्मव्याघादयोऽप्यन्ये पूर्वाभ्यासाज्जुगुप्सिताः ।

वर्णविरत्वे संप्राप्तास्संसिद्धिं श्रमणी यथा ॥" Quoted in R.T.S. 24

64. B.G. XVIII-55; XI-54

65. Shri Bhashya, III-3-56, 57

66. N.S.P. 217

67. T.M.K. II-31

68. Sri Bhasya III-3-1

69. Sri Bhasya III-3-5

70. Sri Bhasya III-3-5

71. Sri Bhasya III-3-11

72. Sri Bhasya III-3-13

73. Sri Bhasya III-3-56

74. Sri Bhasya III-3-57

75. Sri Bhasya III-3-58

76. Sri Bhasya III-4-26

77. T.M.K. II-38, 39, 40

78. Sri Bhasya III-4-1

79. 'द्रव्यगुणसंस्कारकर्मसु परार्थत्वात् फलश्रुतिः अर्थवादः स्यात्'

पू.मी.सू. 4-3-1

80. Chāndogya Upanisad 5-11-5; B.G. III-20

81. Chāndogya Upanisad 1-1-10

82. बृ.उ. 6-4-2

83. T.M.K. II-33, 34

84. B.G. VI-11 to 14, T.M.K. II-34

85. See श्री.भा. 2-1-22 and 3-4-8

86. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanisad V-7-22; Mādhyandina Reading
87. 'अनारब्धकार्ये एव तु पूर्वे तदवधेः। श्री.भा. 4-1-15
88. Sri Bhashya 4-1-19
89. 'न च पुण्यापुण्यकर्मजन्यभगवत्प्रीत्यप्रीतिव्यतिरेकेण शरीरस्थितिहेतुभूत संस्कारसद्भावे प्रमाणमस्ति'। श्री.भा. 4-1-15
90. See N.S. 218-219; T.M.K. 11-54 to 57
91. B.G. XVIII-61, 62
92. R.T.S. 9. P.107
93. R.T.S. 9, P. 107

PRAPATTI

A Brief History of the Doctrine of Prapatti

Prapatti is an intrinsic truth of the Vedas and never an outside growth. The sacred Vedas ordain ,that one should evolve a life of devotion and godliness for an upward evolution. Unshakable faith in Divine guidance is implicit in the entire mass of the holy texts. Man has realized his smallness and inability to achieve his goal of life and so he has prayed sincerely to the All-knowing God to lead him on safely to that highest aspiration. The hymn;

‘मूरा अमूर न वयं चिकित्वः’ (Rg. V. X. - 44)

lays bear that man who is very insignificant cannot realize the truth without the assistance and guidance of God. God is described as everything to man. Man's progress depends upon Divine Grace. The Rigvedic hymns are pregnant with feelings of devotion and self-surrender. The following are some of them:

‘वयमिन्द्र त्वायवः सखित्वमारभामहे’ Rg. V. X. - 133-6

‘त्वमस्माकं तव स्मसि’ Rg. VIII-92-93

‘अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान्’ Rg. I-189-1

‘श्रिये ते पादा दुव आमिमिक्षुः’ Rg. VI-29-3

‘अयामि ते नम उक्ति जुषत्व’ Rg. III-14-2

These, and a host of others signify that surrender at the feet of God, with implicit faith in His saving grace, is essential for human progress of every kind, both here and here-after. God is verily called a Nētā- ‘Agnirnētā’ ¹, a leader who leads, one and all, to peace and happiness through the turmoils of life. God is described as , ‘जनानां

जामिः मित्रः प्रियः' (Rg. V. I-75-4) a dear friend and a near relative of all men. He is called a universal saviour whom nobody could obstruct -

‘अदब्धो गोपा अमृतस्य रक्षिता’ (Rg. V. V - 7-7)

The realization, that none other than Himself is capable of protecting man from the ocean of Samsāra, is also explicit there-

‘न हि त्वदन्यः पुरुहूत कश्चन मघवन्नस्ति मर्दिता’
(Rg. V. VIII-66-13)

He is compared to a spring of clear water in the midst of a sandy desert, capable of saving the lives of all that come upon there-

‘धन्वन्निव प्रपा असि’ (Rg. V. X-4-1)

Likewise, He is also spoken of as a non-leaky boat that can safely take men from one shore to the other, through the disturbed waters of life-

‘दैवीं नावं स्वरित्रामनागसं अस्रवन्तीं आरुहेमा स्वस्तये’।
(Rg. V. X-63-10)

God is compared to a staff on which an old and weak man can lean and walk safely.

‘आ त्वा रम्भं न जिब्रयो रम्भा शवसस्पते’ (Rg. V. VIII-45-20)

All these references point out that man is subservient to God, and that he cannot achieve anything without surrendering himself to God. The mantras declare that man has to choose God for attaining peace and prosperity here and hereafter. The comparison of a spring of water, a non-leaky boat and a firm staff to God is very significant. One should reach the spring of water in the vast desert to be

saved. One has to board on a ship to be carried across the vast ocean. One has to hold on firmly to the staff, if he needs any support from it. Likewise one has to choose God who is accessible to all and pray to Him sincerely for help. This is the secret of Prapatti. Though the words Prapatti and Śaraṇāgati are not found in the Samhita portions of the Vedas, we find that the principle of Prapatti is already there. These invaluable authorities imply the principle of self-surrender, as a means for attainment of Spiritual perfection.

The Upaniṣads which are the significant sources of Vedānta philosophy have expressly ordained Prapatti. The Īśāvāsyā declares the necessity of Prapatti for self-realization.

अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान्
विश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।
युयोध्यस्मज्जुहराणमेनो
भूयिष्ठां ते नम उक्तिं विधेम ॥' (ईशा.18)

This glorious mantra ordains that God is the Prāpaka and the Prāpya. The aspirant is advised to surrender Himself at the feet of the Lord, with implicit faith, unreservedly, to be saved and led to Him alone. This 'Namaukti' refers to the means of Śaraṇāgati'. The Śvetāśvatara explicitly expounds the necessity of self-surrender for the redemption of the self.² The oldest of the Upaniṣads, and one of the most important of the sacred texts, the Chāndōgya Upaniṣad enjoins self-surrender on one and all to be immortalised.³ It declares that one becomes a 'Brahma Samstha', only when one has surrendered unto the Supreme.⁴ The Mundaka also

declares the same truth.⁵ The Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad also glorifies Nyāsa.⁶ The Smṛthis and Purāṇas are abounding in references to Prapatti. The Bhagavadgīta which is acclaimed as the quintessence of the teaching of all Upaniṣads declares, in unmistakable terms, the significance of Prapatti as means to Mukti.⁷ The Gīta represents the true teachings of the Upaniṣads and as Prapatti is ordained in it, becomes established that it is not alien to vedic teachings.

These are some of the very significant texts enjoining self-surrender as a direct and valid means to the realization of the supreme. The spiritual experience of the Ālwars, the mystics, is enshrined in the Tamil Veda, the Divya Prabandhams. These Tamil Prabandhams contain this mystic wisdom of self-surrender. Nammālwar who is rightly claimed as the Prapanna Jana Kūtaṣṭha, has performed self-surrender (I-IX-10), and shown the world its importance as means to Mukti. The Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, admitted as a text book of practical religion, is described as Śaraṇāgati Veda, of which, the instance of Vibhīṣaṇa's. surrender to Rāma is regarded as the Upaniṣad part, enshrining in itself the very essence of Rāmāyaṇa .

The great Ācharyas of the past such as Nāthamuni and Ālawandār have followed this pathway of prapatti for attaining the Supreme Vāsudeva.⁸ Thus we find that this doctrine of prapatti is enjoined by the Vedas, and that it has an unbroken tradition.

Rāmānuja and Prapatti :

A doubt is sometimes raised by some regarding the

importance assigned to Prapatti by Rāmānuja. It is pointed out by certain critics that Rāmānuja has not shown his leaning towards Prapatti anywhere in his works, and on the basis of this, it is further contended that Prapatti was not admitted as a direct means to Mukti by Rāmānuja. This argument has to be carefully examined. First of all we must decide what all are the works of Rāmānuja. According to Śrīvaiṣṇava traditions, which are reliable, the Śrī Bhāṣya, Deepa, Sāra, Vedārtha Samgraha, Gītabhāṣya, Śaraṇāgathigadyam, Śrīraṅgagadyam, Vaikuṇṭhagadyam and Nityam are attributed to Rāmānuja. These can be established as the works of Rāmānuja definitely, on the basis of various evidences both external and internal.

It is not possible, on the other hand, to disprove the authorship of Rāmānuja as related to anyone of these works. Of the above nine works, the authenticity of Rāmānuja's authorship of five works viz., Śrī Bhāṣyam, Gīta Bhāṣyam, Vedānta Dipa, Vedānta Sāra and Vedārtha Samgraha, is unquestioned. The authenticity of Rāmānuja's authorship is doubted only regarding four of his works namely - Śaraṇāgathigadyam, Śrīraṅgagadyam, Vaikuṇṭhagadyam and the Nityagrantha. The reasons put forth by the objectors are: (1) The gadyas are different in spirit from the other works as they expound prapatti as a direct means to Mukti. (2) The gadyas contain many new concepts such as the concept of Nitya Kainkarya etc., that are conspicuously absent in his other works. (3) These contain imaginary descriptions as found in Vaikuṇṭha Gadyam.

The above arguments are not at all convincing. The

concept of Prapatti as direct means to Mukti cannot be said to be foreign to Rāmānuja, only because it is expounded in the Gadyas. It is not opposed to the doctrine of Rāmānuja, as found in the other works. Unless a reference is found in the other works refuting this concept, it cannot be held as alien to Rāmānuja. The concept of Nitya Kainkarya is likewise very old. It is found in the Pre-Rāmānuja Jitanta Stōtra, the Stōtrarātna and the Thiruppāvai of Āṇḍal. As regards the description of Vaikuṇṭha in the Vaikuṇṭtagadyam we must note that it is not geographical in character, but only emotional being the uttering of Rāmānuja in one of his devotional ecstasies. It is meant for steady practice by the devotees. The Śrī Bhāṣya, Deepa, Sāra and Vedārtha Samgraha compare with the Siddhitraya, the Gītabhāṣya with Gītārtha Samgraha, the gadyas and the Nitya with the Stōtrarātna, the devotional hymn of praise, of YamunĀchārya, his great preceptor. If we get to know Rāmānuja as a dialectician and philosopher from his first set of works viz., Śrī Bhāṣyam and others, we also get to know him as a theologian and devotee from the other set of works. No one can be expected to develop one's dialectic only, in all his works.

Rāmānuja's authorship of the Gadyas becomes confirmed for:

1. There is a continuity in the thought of Rāmānuja, as represented in all his works.
2. These works do not display any doctrinal differences.
3. These are closer to Rāmānuja's other writings in terms of basic doctrines and fundamental point of view.

4. The Srīvaiṣṇava traditions are invariably reliable regarding the attribution of authorship and
5. These are the summaries of conclusions arrived at in all other works.

The Sāranagathi gadyam and others have: been commented upon by Sudarśana Suri, the celebrated commentator of the Śrī Bhāṣya, Peria Vāchan Pillai and VedāntaDēśika. These celebrated personages were not far from Rāmānuja in point of time, and their traditions and beliefs were directly derived from the immediate successors of Rāmānuja. Moreover, the opening paragraphs of Sāranagathi gadyam, as well as the texts of the other gadyams, are almost the same in style and content, as his introduction to Gītabhāṣya. Rāmānuja's authorship of the gadyas cannot therefore be questioned. The great Vedānta Dēśika and others of the northern school, as well as Pillai Lōkāchārya and others of the southern School, are united on this point. So the suggestion of some critics that doubt Rāmānuja's authorship of the Gadyas, has to be dismissed once for all, as unfounded and indefensible.

The position of Rāmānuja regarding Prapatti must be studied as related to all of his works. Dēśika declares that Rāmānuja has expounded the doctrine of Bhakti in his Śrī Bhāṣyam and Gītabhāṣyam and that he has expounded the doctrine of Sāranagathi in his great Gadyas. (R.T.S. 24, p. 171).

Rāmānuja has no doubt expounded the greatness of Bhakti in his Gītabhāṣyam and Śrī Bhāṣyam, quite in accordance with the textual context. He is not opposed to

Bhakti at all. It is also admitted definitely as a valid means to Mukti. It is on account of this that he expounds the secret of Bhaktiyōga in his *Gītabhāṣyam* declaring the same there as

‘भक्तियोगमवतारयामास’

Even while commenting upon the *Charamaśloka*, the Supreme *Rahasya* of *Sāranagathi*, Rāmānuja describes it only as relating to Bhaktiyōga . *Prapatti* is prescribed here not as a substitute to Bhakti, but as an aid to it. So it is an *Aṅga* or part of Bhakti there. *Prapatti* is absolutely essential for Bhakti-yōga , as the very commencement of it becomes impossible without *Prapatti*.

Even in his *Vedārtha Samgraha*, while describing the means to Mukti, Rāmānuja declares that the Supreme is attained through Bhakti, which is uninterrupted, and which has taken on the character of the most-vivid and immediate vision of the Lord. But this depends entirely upon *Prapatti*. An inclination towards God is to be got through self-surrender only. Only by offering one's all and one's very self at the feet of the Lord, does one develop Bhaktiyōga.⁹

Though Rāmānuja propounds the doctrine of Bhakti, as the means to the attainment of Mukti, he also admits the efficacy of *Prapatti* as a direct means to the realization of Godhead. In his three great *Gadyas*, the literary gems that are the outpourings of his love for the Supreme person, Rāmānuja expounds the doctrine of self-surrender. These *Gadyams* are called *Śārasvatam Śāsvatam*', and are said to be of utmost importance¹⁰ by *Vedānta Dēśika*. It is said that all the other works of the *Āchārya*, though very

great, were only a preparation for the singing of this great Śāraṇagathi gadyam. This gadyam is an exposition of the Supreme Mūlamantra, Dvaya Mantra and Charamaśloka. Vedānta Dēśika analyses the Śāraṇagathi gadyam as explaining each word of the Dvayamantram, the Mūlamantram and the Charamaślōka.¹¹ This gadyam is considered as the crown and culmination of the expositions of Rāmānuja, by all sections of his followers.

Prapatti was not a new invention of Rāmānuja. It is enjoined in the sacred scriptures and the Smṛtis, Itihāsas and Purāṇas, and it was being observed by the Savants of the past, such as Nāthamuni and Yāmunamuni who were the great predecessors of Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja himself was initiated into the three great Rahasyas by his preceptor Goṣṭipūrṇa. Rāmānuja taught the doctrine of Prapatti to his innumerable disciples and opened the gates of emancipation to the majority of human beings that were depressed owing to their inability to follow the hard discipline of Bhaktiyōga .

All these show that Rāmānuja held Prapatti as a direct means to Mukti.

The Śāraṇāgati-Gadyam describes self-surrender which is complete and unconditional. It is meant for not perfecting another means, but for the attainment of the eternal service of the Lord. The Prapatti that is observed in the Gadyam is, thus, definitely for being blessed with divine communion. It may be asked, why then, there is a prayer for the continuance of Parabhakti, Parajñānam and Paramabhakti. This Bhakti, that is prayed for in this context, is not that which happens to be the Upāya or

means to salvation. On the other hand, it is the life-long Bhakti of a Prapanna that is prayed for here, as in the Stōtraratanam of Ālavāṇḍar. So, the Prapatti here is not for the enrichment of and completion of Bhakti, but is, on the other hand, for the attainment of Mokṣa directly.¹²

A mere prayer for Parabhakti and Parajñāna and Paramabhakti should not be mistaken for Bhaktiyōga, which is the Upāya or means for the attainment of the goal. Bhakti and Jñānam are the two things that are always to be sought for by each and every aspirant. Bhakti becomes enriched and remains eternally with the individual self, even in the state of Mukti. Thus the Bhakti that is prayed for in the gadya is the Phala or the fruit of the Sādhana, and not an Upāya. It was Rāmānuja's conviction that Mokṣa was not possible of attainment for one, without one's complete surrender at the feet of the Lord. He says in his Vedārtha Samgraha that there is no way of emancipation, without surrendering absolutely to the Lord.¹³

The Vaikuṇṭa gadyam describes that one who is in the habit of chanting continuously the dvayamantra, realizes the Summum Bonum. He exhorts all, in that gadyam, to take refuge with the Lord, to be saved.

‘परमपुरुषं भगवन्तं नारायणं स्वामित्वेन सुहृत्त्वेन गुरुत्वेन च परिगृह्य
... श्रीमतश्चरणारविन्दयुगलं अनन्यात्मसञ्जीवनेन तद्गतसर्वभावेन
शरणमनुब्रजेत् ।’
वै.ग.

Rāmānuja has definitely stated in this gadyam his firm conviction that Prapatti at the feet of the Lord is also the direct means for the attainment of the Supreme bliss of the eternal service of the Lord.

‘एकान्तिकात्यन्तिक तत्पादाम्बुजद्वयपरिचर्यैकमनोरथः’ (वै.ग.)

explains the object of desire, and for the attainment of that, there is no means other than surrender at His feet.. This is expressed in the phrase -

‘तत्प्राप्तये च तत्पादाम्बुजद्वयप्रपत्तेः अन्यत्रमे कल्पकोटिसहस्रेणापि
साधनमस्तीति मन्वानः’ (वै.ग.)

which categorically affirms that Prapatti is the direct means to the goal of God-realization. It is impossible to set aside all these significant statements that reveal the position of Rāmānuja regarding this Upāya. It must, therefore, be admitted that Rāmānuja affirmed both Bhakti and Prapatti as means to Mukti. Rāmānuja has shown in his Gadyams that one, though bereft of the performance of Karmayōga , Jñānayōga and Upāsanas, that are ordained as Upāyas for the attainment of Godhead,

(एवंभूत मत्कैर्यप्राप्त्युपायतया अवक्लृप्तसमस्तवस्तुविहीनोऽपि
(श. गद्यम्)

though enmeshed in ignorance, though overpowered by hindrances for the commencement of Parabhakti and others, and though not endowed with the true knowledge of the reality, would be capable of obtaining release from bondage, and be blessed with the eternal service of the Lord and infinite bliss of Divine communion, sheerly on account of the compassion of the Lord that is awakened by one's uttering the Dvaya Mantra and surrendering oneself at the feet of the Lord, in any manner whatsoever. This very statement of Rāmānuja bears testimony to the fact that Prapatti was held by him, as also a direct means to Mukti, just as an indirect means.

Prapatti was being observed as a direct means to Mukti, even before Rāmānuja, and Rāmānuja has given only a reorientation to it in his glorious gadyas. If he did not deal with it in his Śrī Bhāṣyam and Vedārtha Samgraha directly and thoroughly, there was no occasion for it, as he was bound down by the textual context there. Rāmānuja has synthesised this philosophy of Sādhana in the light of, the teachings of the scriptures, the priceless traditions of the past, the glorious expositions of a long line of illustrious and eminent teachers, and the mystic wisdom of the God-intoxicated Āṭwārs in such a unique manner, that he gives equal importance to both Upāsana (or Bhakti) and Prapatti, without harming either. He has expounded in his great works that Bhakti cannot be actualized without Prapatti. Likewise, the other aspect of Prapatti, namely its efficacy to function as a direct means to Mukti, has also been emphasised. Thus Bhakti and Prapatti are both valid means to Mukti, according to Rāmānuja and there is no contradiction between these two.

Two sub-schools namely Vadagalai and the Tengalai schools emerged after the time of Rāmānuja, and the teachers of both Sampradayams developed the doctrine of Prapatti. The Tengalai Sampradāyam was expounded by Pillai Lōkāchārya and Manavāla Mahāmuniṅgal, whereas Vēdānta Dēśika was the Chief of the exponents of the Vadagalai school.

The credit of explaining, elaborating, reaffirming, consolidating and establishing on solid grounds, the doctrine of Prapatti goes to Śrī Vēdānta Dēśika, one of the greatest successors of Rāmānuja, in the School of Viśiṣṭādvaita. Dēśika has expounded the inner meaning and

significance of the doctrine of Prapatti in all its aspects, on the authority of the sacred scriptures, Purāṇas Itihāsas, Āgamas, the Divya Prabandhams and the expositions of the ancient Āchāryas in his Magnum Opus, 'The Rahasya Traya Sāra', which is the finest fruit of his mature mind. This great work is a landmark in the history of Śrivaishnava philosophy, as it is an original and authentic exposition of the essentials of Vēdānta, as related to Sādhana. The exposition of Prapatti here, is all-comprehensive and definite. Many important topics such as the nature and scope of Prapatti, the difference between Prapatti and Bhakti, fitness for Prapatti, the accessories of Prapatti, the mode of performing Prapatti, the conduct of a Prapanna, have all been dealt with in a masterly way in this work. Had it not been for the timely exposition, clarification and systematization by Dēśika, of the very many points referred to above, the doctrine of Prapatti would have ever remained hazy and indefinite. Vedānta Dēśika has based his expositions invariably on the innumerable authorities of the Śrutis and the teachings of the ancient masters, and never does he give an arbitrary or imaginary account of it.

It is a fact that this religion of Śāraṇagathi was a subject of study even before Dēśika. A number of post Rāmānujaite Āchāryas had formulated their own views about it, and this fact may be known from the very many references that are found in the Rahasya Traya Sāra. Vedānta Dēśika wrote a work in Sanskrit namely 'Nikṣēpa Raksha in defence of Prapatti. One endowed with the rare gifts of the acutest logical acumen, a thorough mastery of the subject, a clear and lucid way of exposition, a staunch devotion to the cause, and a wonderful sense of syncretism,

like Vedānta Dēśika, is hard to be found in the field of Indian Philosophy, and Rahasya Traya Sāram, one of the noblest works of this eminent personality, has stood as an authority, for all time, on the religion of Śaraṇāgati, and has inspired many a philosopher-devotees find his pathway to Mukti. This philosophy of self-surrender is thus an intrinsic part of Vedānta, and has a rich and weighty tradition.

Prapatti is a direct means to Mukti: .

The ever existent means for the attainment of the Supreme Goal of life, the eternal bliss of Divine Communion, is the ever merciful Lord Himself. Bhakti and Prapatti are the two ways of awakening Divine mercy which is to be sought for the realization of all aspirations, both worldly and spiritual. The multitudes of souls are floundering in this world in an ocean of reason and doubt, and they cannot save themselves without faith in the saving grace of the Lord. The ever merciful Supreme Being has allowed the Jīva freedom of action, since He is free from cruelty or arbitrariness.¹⁴ He has made man strong enough to withstand the temptations and to march steadily on the path of progress towards spiritual perfection. He has, out of compassion, granted him the necessary knowledge in the form of the scriptures, by means of which, he can understand and follow the ways of that Universal Being and attain Him alone in the end.

A change of heart on the part of the Jīva, and a sincere prayer for Divine mercy, change his whole career and make him forgivable. The philosophy of Sādhana in this school is based on this fundamental truth of Divine Grace and human endeavour.

This human endeavour, which is adopted for the awakening of Divine Grace is of two categories viz., Bhakti and Prapatti.

‘भक्तिप्रपत्तिप्रमुखं तद्वशीकारकारणम्’ (र.त्र.सा. 23 p-159)
(न्या.वि. 17)

Bhaktiyōga and Prapatti are the two chief Upāyas to be adopted for attaining salvation. These two means are quite different and distinct, and are meant for two different types of aspirants. These are the only two ways of gaining spiritual perfection, according to this school of thought.

‘भक्त्या परमया वापि प्रपत्त्या वा महामते ।

प्राप्योऽहं नान्यथा प्राप्यो मम कै’र्यलिप्सुभिः ॥

(र.त्र.सा. 29 p-234)

Bhakti and Prapatti are very closely interrelated, and are generally given a common name as Prapatti or Bhakti. The difference between the two viz., Bhakti and Prapatti is pointed out by terming them 'Sadvāraka' or 'Aṅga Prapatti', and 'Advāraka' or 'Angi Prapatti', respectively. Bhakti is included in Prapatti and Prapatti is included in Bhakti. That is why Bhakti is called Sādhana Bhakti, and Prapatti is called Sādhya Bhakti. Those, who adopt Prapatti as the sole and direct means, are adopting Sādhya Bhakti whereas those who adopt Prapatti as an auxiliary means to perfect another means (viz., Bhaktiyōga), are adopting Sādhana Bhakti. The fundamental difference between these two means is this, namely, that Prapatti is a sub-means in one, and the Chief means in another. Both the aspirants of the path of Bhaktiyōga and Prapatti are virtually prapannas since the former adopt it as an Aṅga or part of Bhakti,

whereas the latter adopt it as an independent means. Likewise both of them are Bhaktas, for Bhakti is the Phala or fruit for one and the Sādhana or means for another.

‘स्वतन्त्राङ्ग प्रपत्तिभ्यां प्रपन्नावत्र तावुभौ ।

फलसाधनभक्तिभ्यां भक्तावपि च दर्शितौ ।’ (र.त्र.सा.8 p-103)

Prapatti or self-surrender is an essential factor of Every spiritual discipline. When the aspirant realizes that he cannot get his desire, either by himself or with the help of some other, he takes refuge, with unshakable faith, in the Lord, for attaining his goal. He chooses God as the means of attaining his aspiration. Surrendering himself at the feet of the Lord is absolutely essential for a successful practice of Karmayōga , Jñānayōga and Bhaktiyōga.¹⁵

Self surrender or Prapatti may be observed for two-purposes.

1. 'It may be followed for perfecting another means like Bhaktiyōga . This is called Sadvāraka Prapatti, for it is used as an indirect means of perfection. This prapatti enriches and perfects Bhaktiyōga . The aspirant who is confronted with innumerable hindrances to his career of Bhakti Yōga surrenders himself at the feet of the Lord, and prays to Him to lead him safely on the path of Bhaktiyōga to his goal. Bhaktiyōga is the chief means of this type of aspirant, and he observes self-surrender for the commencement and perfection of his chosen means of Bhaktiyōga . This is also called Aṅga Prapatti as Prapatti is here a part of Bhaktiyōga .
2. Prapatti may be observed as a direct means for attaining Mukti itself. As it is capable of perfecting any other means, it can also function as an

independent means to Mukti. For this aspirant, there is no need for any other means for the attainment of his Goal. Though Prapatti is inclusive of Bhakti, Bhaktiyōga is not adopted here as means to Mukti. This is called Advāraka Prapatti or self-surrender as the sole and direct means. Prapatti is the chief means and Bhakti is a part of it and so, is also designated as Angi Prapatti. .

The Supreme Being waits for the observance of some Vyāja for his intervention, in saving the Jīva from the Wheel of Samsāra, though He is Himself the goal and the endeavour, the Prāpya and the Prāpaka. The Śāstras affirm that God's mercy needs a Vyāja to function, and that Bhakti and Prapatti are those Vyājas.

Prapatti is a substitute for Bhakti :

The scriptures have prescribed different types of meditation for different classes of aspirants, according to their respective competence and temperaments. The Sūtrakāra affirms that all the modes of Vidyās are different and distinct from one another though all of them are meant for the same goal of Mukti.¹⁶ The scriptures ordain those different types of Vidyās for different types of aspirants who are qualified for it. The unity of the several vidyās is affirmed, and the aspirants are required to choose anyone of those Upāsanas for attaining their goal, as each and every Vidyā has the same Phala.¹⁷ Even as there is a distinction between one Upāsana and another, according to the respective qualifications or competence of the aspirants, and even as one Vidyā is an alternative to another, there is a distinction between Prapatti and the different Vidyās.

Prapatti is again a substitute for anyone of those thirty two modes of Upāsana, since the goal for both is the same. As some aspirants after Mukti are qualified for Daharavidyā, some for Madhuvidyā, and some others for Sadvidyā, and so on, on account of their special qualifications and temperaments, some are qualified for Prapatti. Prapatti has been prescribed as a substitute for Bhaktiyōga, and is meant for a different class of aspirants.¹⁸

Bhakti and Prapatti:

Just as there are differences in Upāsanas, there are differences in Nyāsavidyā also in different. Śākhās of the Vedas. Namaskāra is said to have three forms, and likewise Prapatti is also of different kinds. All these are capable of yielding the desired object, according to the competency of those that adopt them.¹⁹

The path of Bhakti is to be built up very carefully. It is to be developed on Ātmadarśana, for which, the means of Karmayōga and Jñānayōga are to be adopted, strictly according to the injunctions of the scriptures. This is an elaborate and difficult design, It is so very Sublime that an ordinary man cannot follow it. So it is not within the competency of one and all. For Bhaktiyōga certain requirements are absolutely necessary. They are:

1. Capacity to understand thoroughly the meaning of the Śāstras, as relating to Karma, Jñāna and Bhakti.
2. Ability to perform fully what all has been ordained in the scriptures.
3. The Śāstraic qualifications of birth in the three higher castes, and qualities like Āstikya, Śadāchāra, Samskāra and others.

4. Sātvic patience to wait for any length of time, till all Prārabdha karmas are completely exhausted by endurance, for the attainment of the Highest.²⁰

Being endowed with all these requirements, without any exception, the aspirant embarks on the path of Bhaktiyōga to attain the Absolute. He distinguishes the self from the non-self, and engages himself in the performance of his duties, with no interest in the results thereof. By constant practice he gains self realization and realizes the spirituality of the souls, as well as the subservience of all souls to the auspicious Paramātman. This God-consciousness develops into Upāsana or meditation upon the Supreme. This steady remembrance of the Lord is to be repeated along with the practice of Astāṅgayōga , till it results in a direct and vivid comprehension of the Lord. He attains then, the Highest Goal of life, viz., the eternal service of the Lord.

This path of Bhaktiyōga is strewn with infinite pitfalls. There is a hurdle at every step, and there is very little chance of one's reaching the goal. The multitudes of obstacles that stand in the way of Sādhana, have to be carefully cleared, and for this, the Sādhaka has to adopt Prapatti at the feet of the Lord. It may be argued that the effort put in, this direction would never go in vain. This is true, but yet, it cannot be said when the fruit will be attained, as it is subject to the condition of exhausting all Prārabdha Karmas by endurance. It may take a Kalpa or a Manvantara or a Yuga. The aspirant of the Bhaktimārga has, therefore, to wait patiently for any length of time for attaining the Highest. The example of Vyāsa and others who had to it patiently for a long time has been given as

followers of Bhaktiyōga. Bhaktiyōga thus requires the fulfillment of each and every condition without any exception.²¹ It collapses even if one condition is not satisfied.

But Prapatti is not so. It is a means which is within the competency of one and all, without any restriction. The essential requirement for Prapatti is any one, or a combination of the following:

1. Inability on the part of the aspirant for adopting such Upāyas as Bhaktiyōga , Karma and Jñāna.
2. Ignorance of the required knowledge of the Śāstras as relating to Upāsanas and the like.
3. Śāstrāic disqualifications of birth and others.
4. Inability to endure delay in attaining Mukti.

An aspirant becomes fit for Prapatti, even if anyone of the above conditions is obtained. These may occur in combinations of two three or four also.²² The very disqualifications for the adoption of Bhaktiyōga are the requirements of Prapatti, Want of a thorough knowledge of the Śāstras, along with the ability to perform all that is ordained therein, need not discourage and deter anyone, for the Śāstras have prescribed an alternative way for this arduous and steep path of Bhaktiyōga , so that the weak and the infirm also might attain the same goal of Divine Communion. The special requirements of Prapatti are threefold as follows.²³

1. A knowledge of the nature of the relationship between the Jīvatman and the Paramātman.
2. Ākinchanyam or want of ability for adopting any other means.

3. Ananyagatitvam-aversion to all interests other than the one desired, or a determination not to seek refuge with anyone other than the Supreme Being.²⁴

Prapatti is thus meant for a particular class of aspirants who are incapable of adopting the means of Bhaktiyōga, due to want of knowledge and ability, who cannot bear any delay in attaining their objects of desire and, who are blessed with the true knowledge of their subservience only to the Supreme Being. Prapatti stands efficiently as a substitute for Bhakti, and guarantees the Lord to one and all without any restriction.

Prapatti preserves in itself the essentials of Bhaktiyōga without its hard conditions. It has a universal appeal as there are no restrictions to it. It is powerful enough as to avert all hindrances. It is a means for achieving all aspirations. It is to be observed only once. It produces the result very soon. It is also easy of performance. It yields to no opposition or obstacles.²⁵

Prapatti is just like the Brahmāsāstra which by itself is capable of yielding the result, without the intervention of any other. Just like that missile it will not tolerate the adoption of any other means along with it.²⁶

The differences between the requirements for Bhakti and Prapatti may be noted as follows:

Bhaktiyoga	Prapatti
1. A thorough knowledge of the scriptures relating to the philosophy of Karma, Jñāna and Bhakti	1. The knowledge of the relationship between the soul and the universal being.

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|---|---|
| 2. Ability to perform all that has been ordained in Sastras. | 2. Inability to perform all those things that are required for Bhaktiyoga and others. |
| 3. The Śāstraic qualifications of birth in the three higher classes. | 3. All people are qualified for performing Prapatti without any restriction of caste or birth. |
| 4. Performance of Karmayoga and Jnanayoga is necessary for Ātma-darsana, which in turn leads to Bhaktiyoga. | 4. Performance of any other thing is not necessary, as Prapatti itself stands in place of Parabhakti and leads on to Parajñānam and Paramabhakti. |
| 5. One must have the patience to wait for any length of time, till all the ills of Prārabdha Karma are exhausted by experience, for the attainment of God-head. | 5. The inability to endure any delay in attaining Divine Communion. |
| 6. Bhaktiyōga is a very steep and sublime scheme that it is above the capacity of ordinary men. | 6. It is easy of performance and within the the competence of one and all. |
| 7. Bhaktiyōga is to be repeated and practiced till the time of departure from this world. | 7. This is to be performed only once for a thing. |

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|---|---|
| <p>8. The practice of the eightfold yoga is essential.</p> <p>9. The practice of the eightfold yoga is essential.</p> <p>10. The mass of sins amassed in all the previous births, as well as those to come, are destroyed on account of the efficacy of Bhaktiyōga. But the prarabdha Karmas have got to be completely experienced.</p> | <p>8. This cannot tolerate the adoption of any other means with it.</p> <p>9. This yields the result very quickly. The man who has performed Prapatti attains the goal, according to the intensity of his desire, either at once or at the end of that life. His moksa will be waiting his disembodiment.</p> <p>10. Prapatti is capable of destroying even that part of the Prārabdha Karma that has not yet begun to result in addition to the Samchita Karmas. So the Prapanna is not obliged to be born again and again to exhaust the Prārbdha Karma just like the aspirant of the Bhaktiyōga.</p> |
|---|---|

It is seen from the above that Prapatti has all the merits of Bhaktiyōga without its limitations. It is, just like Bhaktiyōga, a means for the attainment of all types of desires, both worldly and spiritual. The speciality of Prapatti is that it has a universal appeal, without any

restricition unlike Bhaktiyōga. Akinchanyam and Ānanyagatitvam are the two necessary requirements of Prapatti. Prapatti is by itself capable of acquiring the desired fruit and does not depend upon any other means.

The Sutrakara affirms that "the fruit is from Him as it stands to reason".

फलमत उपपत्तेः'

(श्री.भा. 3-2-37)

As the Supreme Lord is the bestower of all kinds of desires, Parapatti or self surrender at the feet of that ever merciful God happens to be the means of attaning all kinds of objects. The aspirant gets Bhakti, if he performs Prapatti for the sake of Bhakti, or gets Mokṣa itself, if he performs Prapatti for the sake of Mokṣa itself. All the fourfold Puruṣārthas are secured through Prapatti, as through Bhakti.²⁷ The Visnu Purana substantiates this by declaring that there would be anxiety to recover lost wealth, desire for fresh wealth, delusion and sorrow, only so long as one does not perform Prapatti to the Lord.²⁸

Prapatti also is thus a direct and valid means to Mukti.

The Three Mysteries or Rahasyas imply Self-surrender:

The Śāstras deal with the triple philosophy of the Reality, The goal and the way for the good of the soul that is enmeshed in Samsāra, from beginningless time. The knowledge of the Śāstras is enshrined in a remarkable way in the three Rahasyas. They are the Mūlamantra, the Dvaya and the Charama śloka.²⁹ The Mūlamantra has three words and comprises of eight letters. Of these the first word is the Pranava which sums up the wisdom of the sacred scriptures. This is the Supreme Mantra of Nyāsa vidyā.

According to tradition the Mūlamantra is the expansion of the Praṇava, and the Dvaya Mantra is an expansion of the Mūlamantra. The Charama Śloka is for the elaboration of the same theme. It contains three letters, each of which forms a word. The first letter 'अ' connotes the Paramātman, the sole cause of the Universe, the Saviour of all, the innerself and controller of all, the Sarvaśeṣin and the Lord of Śrī. It also denotes the relationship of the Lord with others by means of the usage of the dative case. The middle letter 'उ' affirms emphatically the relationship of subservience of the Jīva only with the Lord. The third letter 'म' refers to the Jīva who is to be saved, who is of the nature of knowledge and bliss, who is atomic and different and distinct from matter, and who is entirely subservient to the Lord. Thus the Pranava affirms that the Jīva is entirely dependent upon the Supreme Being. The second word 'Namas' comprises of two letters each forming a word. It signifies the abnegation of self conceit and self-dependence. This word means Śaraṇāgati. It prays for the annihilation of evil. This one word itself signifies the entire wisdom of Vedānta, has it prescribes the self-oblation of the Jīva to the Paramātman. The third word 'Nārāyaṇa' is significant and relates to the Supreme Brahman, who is the ground of all existence, who is immanent in one and all, and who, at the same time, transcends in eminence all others and to whom this soul is to be offered. The word Nārāyaṇa is in the dative case, and this implies that the goal of self-surrender is that the Lord should accept the Jīva and appropriate it to His eternal service. This sacred Mantra prescribes Śaraṇāgati as the Chief means of attaining the Lord.

The Dvaya Mantra makes the meaning of the Mūlamantra more explicit. This comprises of two parts. The former relates to the means, while the latter relates to the goal. The former part forms one sentence, while the latter contains two sentences. The first part of this eminent Mantra connotes the Supreme Lord who is inseparably united with the Goddess Śrī to form the Supreme Reality, who is overflowing with Vātsalya, Svāmitva, Souśeelya, Saulabhya and Dayā. The word 'Carāṇa' shows what the Jīva has to hold on for being saved. The Jīva has to realize his utter unworthiness and has to cast himself to be saved on the lotus feet of the Lord shedding all egoism. The Lord's mercy will then spontaneously shower on him. The word 'Sārana' signifies that the Lord's feet are the means of attaining the Highest Object of desire. The word 'Prapadye' shows the way of surrendering oneself to the Lord. It signifies the need for renouncing egoism and self-responsibility. It points out that an aspirant who is utterly helpless by himself, should entrust the burden of his protection to the Lord, having unshakable faith in His saving Grace. Thus, the first part of this Supreme, Mantra prescribes self-surrender at the feet of the Lord. The second part of this great mantra indicates the Supreme Lord, as the goal of attainment, as inseparably united with Śrī, as one who is the goal as well as the endeavour and as one whose eternal service is to be attained for all time to come. The word 'Nārāyaṇa' in this part signifies the Sarvaśeṣi as qualified by all perfections and goddess Śrī and as the Nirathisaya Bhōgya. The dative case found here signifies the prayer for eternal service to the Lord as found in the Mūlamantra, The quintessence of this sacred Mantra is this: "I take refuge, in the two holy feet of Śrīman

Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Śrī, for attaining the eternal service at the feet of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa". This holy mantra brings out the full implications of the supreme Tatva, and so has pre-eminence over other Mantras.

The third great Mantra, the Charama śloka ordains self-surrender at the feet of the Lord. This Divine imperative implies the abandonment of the sense of egoism. This Supreme Rahasya lays bear that self-surrender is meant for one who is unable to follow any other means, and that this does not need the fulfilment of any other condition. This mystery contains three sentences and has twelve words. The first sentence enjoins the means to be adopted. The second signifies the fruit of Prapatti. The last sentence relates to the conduct of one after Prapatti. The Divine injunction to renounce all Dharmas signifies the non-requirement of any other Dharma for Prapatti, or the state of an aspirant who has given up the adoption of any other Dharma for the attainment of his goal. The words 'मां एकम्' Only "me" show the supreme Being who is qualified with Soulabhya and other auspicious qualities, who is the bestower of all desires, and who, by Himself, is the Chief means of all attainments. The words 'Śaraṇam Vraja' prescribes Nyāsa qualified by Mahāviśvāsa and others. The sentence 'I shall release you from all sins' signifies the omnipotence of the Lord who takes upon Himself the burden of saving the surrendered, and the destruction, in totality of all obstructions to Divine Service. The assurance 'Do not grieve' points out that the aspirant should be free from anxiety after he has entrusted the Lord with his care.³⁰

Thus, these three Supreme Rahasyas explain and elaborate the theory of Śaraṇāgati, and prescribe it as a

means to be adopted for attaining Mokṣha for those who are incapable of following Bhakti yōga .

Accessories of Prapatti:

Though Prapatti does not need any other condition like Ātma darśana or Karmayōga or Jñānayōga as in the case of Bhaktiyōga it comprises of five Aṅgas or parts which are essential for it. These form six along with Ātmanikṣepa.

These are as follows:

1. Will to do whatever is agreeable to the Lord.

आनुकूल्यस'ल्पः

2. Avoiding whatever displeases Him.

प्रातिकूल्यस्य वर्जनम्

3. Utter helplessness.

कार्पण्यम्

4. Supreme faith.

महाविश्वासः

5. Seeking His protection.

गोप्तृत्ववरणम्

6. Surrender of the self.

आत्मनिक्षेपः

Of these six, Ātmanikṣepa or Nyāsa is the Angi, or the main factor, for which the other five are accessories or Aṅgas. This is just like the statement 'Aṣṭaṅga Yōga ' or the eight fold Dhyāna yōga, consisting of the eight factors

namely-Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhyāna, Dhāraṇa and Sāmādhi, of which the last namely 'Samādhi' is the Aṅgi for which the other seven are, Aṅgas. Prapatti is therefore called 'Śadaṅga Yōga ', taking into consideration the totality on the Angi and the Aṅgas, the main factor and its accessories.³¹

Lakshmī Tantra (17-74) definitely declares that the five are accessories to Nyāsa in the following stanza.³²

‘निक्षेपापरपर्यायो न्यासः पञ्चासंयुतः ।

संन्यासस्त्याग इत्युक्तः शरणागतिरित्यपि ॥

These five Aṅgas are the natural conditions that exhort the aspirant to offer himself to the Sarvaśeṣi for getting his protection. Self-offering becomes impossible in the absence of anyone of these. The aspirant intuits himself to the will of God, and submits himself without any reserve to be instrumentalised according to His will. He gets his will emptied of egoism, and attunes it with the redemptive will of the Lord. He forms that Satvic motive to follow the will of God.

Ānukūlya Samkalpa and Prātikūlya Varjana result out of the 'Pārārthya Jñānam' or 'Śeṣatva' knowledge that he exists only for the satisfaction of the Supreme. It is this true knowledge of his subservience to the Lord that enables the aspirant to determine to do what is agreeable to Him and to avoid whatever displeases Him.

The aspirant realizes that the entire universe, comprising of the sentient and the non-sentient entities, forms the body of the Supreme, and so determines to act in a way which is agreeable to all.

चराचराणि भूतानि सर्वाणि भगवद्भुः ।

अतस्तदानुकूल्यं मे कार्यमित्येव निश्चयः ॥ र.त्र.सा. 28 p-229

Kāraṇyam or helplessness is very essential for becoming worthy of Divine mercy. This may be:

1. the reflection upon one's unworthiness or helplessness

or

2. the absence of pride or being endowed with humility.

This expresses the feeling of incapacity to follow any means like Karma, Jñāna or Bhakti. This feeling of wretchedness or helplessness helps the aspirant to abstain from seeking any Upāya other than God, for the attainment of his aspirations. The aspirant feels convinced that there is no other means for him as pointed out in ³³ 'कार्पण्येनाप्युपायानां विनिवृत्तिरिहेरिता।' This utter helplessness of the aspirant heightens the compassion of the Sarvarakṣaka.

Mahāviśvaṣa or Supreme faith in the saving grace of God is absolutely essential for observing Prapatti. Prapatti becomes a show and proves ineffective, if it is not performed with absolute and firm faith in the Universal Saviour. This means that Prapatti becomes possible only when one has unshakable confidence in it. This serves two purposes.³⁴

1. This leads to the performance of Prapatti without entreating any doubt whatsoever.
2. This frees one from all cares or anxieties after that performance.

Goptrtvavarana is also an essential Aṅga, because seeking Divine-mercy is the only hope for Mokṣha. Though

everyone is entitled by one's true nature to Mokṣa, one cannot get it without asking for it. It has to be asked for, just like other *Puruṣārthas*. Protection would not be given when it is not sought.³⁵

These five are inevitable for the performance of Prapatti. The last factor is the *Ātmanikṣepa*. This is very significant, for, without this surrender cannot be complete. Seeking protection from God with implicit faith in His saving Grace has to be followed by the self-offering to the *Śeṣi*, to be saved. Protection cannot come from him, at whose hands it is sought, if the object to be saved is not actually handed over to his care. So the aspirant, who is incapable of following the prescribed path of Karma, Jñāna or Bhakti, but who has unshakable confidence in the saving mercy of the Supreme Being, offers himself to that universal redeemer to be saved, with the firm conviction that it is also a gift of God's Grace.

These five *Aṅgas* and the *Aṅgi* may be seen in all *Śaraṇāgatis* observed by the ancients. The Supreme *Dvayamantra* enshrines all these *Aṅgas*. The *Śaraṇāgati* of *Trijata* and *Vibhīṣana* have become classical examples, and the above five accessories are found in their *Śaraṇāgatis*.³⁶

The truth that *Nyāsa* comprises of the five accessories may be evidenced from an analysis of the above classical instances of self surrender. All these factors can be found out either explicitly or implicitly in all contexts of Prapatti without an exception. These are invariably found even in all instances of deposits of property with others in ordinary life.³⁷

A person who deposits a property, which he cannot keep safely, with another, does invariably act in a pleasing

way to him with whom he deposits it. He will never incur the displeasure of that person. He places full confidence in the ability of that person to keep that property safe. He also requests him to take the property to his care, and begs him to be its custodian. Then he makes over the property to that person actually, and after that, he becomes rid of all cares and anxieties. This is what is found invariably in all instances of depositing, and these apply in full measure to Prapatti also.

Vedānta Dēśika analyses the significance of these five accessories in a very remarkable way. These accessories signify the essential attitude and aim of the Sādhaka: of the five accessories, Ānukūlya samkalpa and Prātikālya Varjana make the Sādhaka avoid all transgressions of Divine commands. The Aṅga 'kārpaṇya' makes him feel that there is no other Upāya. Māhaviśvāsa or Supreme Faith it the saving grace of the Lord makes the Sādhaka attain firmness of the mind. Gōptṛtvavaraṇa signifies the will of the Lord to save. Each, of these five Aṅgas, thus serves a special purpose and makes this yōga possible. The aspirant after Mukti will be over-swayed", by the true knowledge of his subservience to the Sarvaśeṣi, and he rightly thinks that all these are dependent upon the ever merciful Lord.³⁸

It becomes established, in the ultimate analysis, that Prapatti becomes possible and effective only under the following conditions:

1. One should attune oneself to the will of God, by keeping away from transgressing Divine Laws.
2. One should be definite that there is no means of redemption other than the Supreme Lord.

3. One should have that firmness of mind for placing unshakable faith in the Lord.
4. One should be convinced of the redemptive will of God.
5. One should actually entrust the Lord with the burden of one's protection with a feeling of through subservience to Him.

Complete surrender or Sānga Prapadana : -

Vedānta Dēśika describes Prapatti as follows:

अभीष्टे दुस्साधे स्वत इतरतो वा कचन तत् भरन्यासं
याचान्वितमभिवदन्ति प्रपदनम् । इतः पश्चादस्मद्यतननिरपेक्षेण
भवता समर्थोऽसावर्थस्त्वितिमतिविशेषं तदविदुः । र.त्र.सा.

A person who finds himself incapable of attaining his desired object by himself, or by the help of others, entrusts that burden of securing it to some one who is verily capable of getting it to him. This action of placing the responsibility upon some one is Prapadana. The intention of the surrendered is that 'the object of his desire should be secured for him, without any of his efforts thereafter, by that person on whom he has placed this burden. This is a 'Mativiśeṣa', or a particular kind of knowledge of the form of implicit confidence of attaining the particular object of his desire without his personal effort, and solely with the help of the person to whom he has surrendered. This Prapatti can be observed by one and all for attaining all kinds of aspirations. The Śāstras ordain that Prapatti can be performed at the feet of the Supreme Vāsudeva for the attainment of Mukti also.

In this Upāya, the surrender of one's self or 'Ātmanivedana: is the Angi, and the other five are accessories or 'Aṅgas. This Ātmanikṣepa must be 'Yathāvasthita'. One should be fully aware of the fact that one has no independence either in Prapatti or in the fruit thereof. This also is only a 'Vyāja' and not the main cause of one's attainment of perfection. The ever merciful Paramātmān is the spontaneous and eternally present resort.³⁹ Moreover, in Prapatti also, there cannot be even the slightest tinge of Ahamkāra. It is not something of ours that we are dedicating to the Lord. All the sentient and the non-sentient are verily the property of God, and we were so long labouring under the misconception that they belonged to us. We, as well as all that is ours, belong to God and we were not so long fully endowed with this true knowledge, owing to our beginning-less Avidyā Karma. We had really become Ātmāpahārasikas, entertaining the idea of ownership in another's property. When the aspirant realizes his true nature of being subservient to the protector and Śeṣi of all, he sheds all egoism and surrenders himself to the Lord, just like some one surrenders a jewel belonging to another to that person himself. The aspirant says-I have surrendered this self, which is verily your property to you alone.⁴⁰

What is the exact attitude, then, with which the aspirant has to surrender himself to the Lord? Vedānta Dēśika describes as follows:

'Prapadana is the specific reflection of one's being Śeṣa to the Lord being entirely dependent upon Him, which reflection has, the surrendering of the 'responsibility of one's protection as the most important feature, so as to

severe all interest or connection with one, in the protection or the fruit thereof, of one's self or those that belong to oneself. This reflection comprises of three important factors:

1. Svarūpa Samarpaṇa
2. Bhara Samarpaṇa
3. Phala Samarpaṇa

The soul should realise that he lives only as the Śarīra of God, and that he has his being only in Brahman, and that he belongs to Brahman only.

A number of texts⁴¹ enlighten us on this essential nature of the soul. The Jīva should, therefore, realize his utter subservience to and utter dependence upon⁴², the Supreme Being, and should discard Ahamkāra totally and offer his self to God, who is its real owner as laid down in the scriptures. So the aspirant after Prapatti should declare to God that he, as well as all that belongs to him, is verily the Lord's. This is Svarūpa Samarpaṇa.

Bhara Samarpaṇa is the most important factor of self surrender. In fact this is its unique feature. Protection is sought here of God, and that responsibility or burden of protection, is placed on the Lord by the aspirant, for he cannot protect himself or those that belong to him, without the Lord. The aspirant who feels incapable of bearing the burden of self-protection entrusts the Lord, who is the Sādhya and the Sādhaka, with his care. Ātmanikṣepa is rightly called the surrender of one's responsibility, for the protection of one's self as well as of what is one's.⁴³ If Bhaktiyōga demands self-effort and arduousness on the part of the aspirant, Prapatti entrusts the Lord with that

responsibility. The Prapanna casts himself on the mercy of the Lord and becomes rid of all cares and worries. This is Bharasamarpaṇa.

The next aspect of Prapatti is Phalasamarpaṇa, or the abandonment of desire in the fruit. The fruit of this protection should be considered to be the Lord's alone, for a true Prapanna knows that he is existing for the satisfaction of the Lord only, being His Ananyārhaṣeṣa. He realizes that he belongs to the Supreme Being alone, and therefore is nothing for himself or has nothing for himself. He renounces the egoistic feeling of the 'I' and the 'mine', and so will have nothing to gain for Himself. His protection is only to glorify the Lord himself. It serves only God's purposes, as he is entirely dependent upon Him. God rejoices at the redemption of the self and on the gain of a lost-self to his side.⁴⁴ So the fruit of this protection also should be considered to be primarily His.

Vedānta Dēśika summarizes the meaning of Prapatti in the following two stanzas:

‘अहं मद्रक्षणभरो मद्रक्षणफलं तथा ।

न मम श्रीपतेरेवेत्यात्मानं निक्षिपेद्बुधः ।

स्वामिन् स्वशेषं स्ववशं स्वभरत्वेन निर्भरम् ।

स्वदत्तस्वधिया स्वार्थं स्वस्मिन् न्यस्यसि मां स्वयम् । न्यास दशकम्^{1,2}

The words ‘अहं न मम’ and ‘स्वशेषं’ signify that the Jīvatman, the Śeṣa, exists for the satisfaction of the Supreme, and that the realization of Divine will is the only end of Prapatti. This is Svarūpa Samarpaṇam. The words ‘स्वभरत्वेन निर्भरम्’ and ‘मद्रक्षणभरो न मम’ signify "Bhara Samarpaṇam". The words ‘फलं तथा न मम’ signify that the

'Rakshana Phala' is also of the Lord. When we analyse these essential aspects of Prapatti and compare them with other spiritual disciplines we find that (1) Svarūpa Tyāga and Phala Tyāga are common to all aspirants after Mukti, whether they are following the path of Bhakti Yōga or Prapatti.

2. Bharanyāsa or the surrender of the responsibility of protection is an additional factor (Angi) to one, who performs Prapatti, by virtue of his being unable to follow other means.
3. Rakshā Bhara Nyāsa is common to all Prapannas irrespective of the objects desired by them.
4. The surrender of one's Svarūpa, along with the Phala, is required in addition to BharaNyāsa in the case of all Prapannas who desire for Mukti only.⁴⁵

The mode of performing complete surrender has been stated in one sentence by Vedānta Dēśika as follows: One should surrender the responsibility of one's protection to the Lord, uttering the holy 'Dvayamantra', and being accompanied with all the five accessories such as 'Ānukūlya Samkalpa' and others, along with the Anusandhana of 'Kartṛtva Tyāga', 'Mamatā Tyāga', 'Phala Tyāga' and 'Phalōpāya Tyāga', also paying due respect to his 'Guruparampara'.⁴⁶

Complete surrender consists in the act of surrendering the responsibility for the protection of one's self, along with the surrender of one's Svarūpa and the Phala arising from it, preceded by the giving up of:

- a. the thought of one's doership;

- b. the thought of 'Mamatā' or ownership as mine;
- c. the thought of interest in the fruit thereof ;
- d. the thought that he himself adopts the means for obtaining the fruit and that Prapatti is the cause of the fruit.

It must also be accompanied with :

- a. the five accessories of Ānukūlya Samkalpa, Prātikālya Varjana, Kārpaṇya, Mahāviśvāsa and Gōpṛtṭvavaṇa.
- b. The uttering of the holy Dvayamantra.
- c. The homage paid to the illustrious line of his preceptors.

The abandonment of doer-consciousness results out of the true knowledge of his subservience, for all time, to the supreme Being alone. ,He has attained doership only through the merciful Lord. The abandonment of his attachment to the surrender and to its fruit thereof, results out of the 'भगवदेकशेषत्वज्ञानम्'

The giving up of the thought, that Prapatti is the Upāya for the fruit, results from a thorough knowledge that the performance of Prapatti is only a remote cause to a vivid and comprehensive vision of the Supreme, and also that Prapatti is incapable of willing to grant the fruit being itself an Achetana.

The abandonment of these perverse thoughts affirms that one should, at the time of Prapatti, reflect upon the primeval cause of everything, the Supreme Being, who has endowed the self out of sheer compassion with the body, the senses, the discriminatory knowledge and the rare opportunity of uttering the holy Dvayamantra, as the

primary means of attaining Mukti. He wills to shower His grace upon those that seek Him and happens to be the direct and immediate means to Mukti. Thus Bhagavān is understood from the Śāstras to be the existent means to Mukti, and the aspirant should perform Prapatti with this true knowledge that his Prapatti is only a Vyāja to awaken Divine Grace. Complete self-surrender must be inevitably accompanied with all these accessories and reflections.

Prapatti is to be performed only once for a thing:

Prapatti is to be performed only once for a thing, as laid down in the Śāstras, being accompanied with all the above accessories. This is compared to the function of a clever archer who shoots the arrow at the aim in a moment. The Upaniṣads may say that the soul is to be installed in Brahman as follows:

‘प्रणवो धनुः शरो ह्यात्मा ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते ।

अप्रमत्तेन वेद्धव्यम् शरवत्तन्मयो भवेत् ।

मु.उ. 2-4

The Pranava is the bow. The self is the arrow. Brahman is the target. So it must be hit at the aim with great care. One should have keen concentration in so doing.

This ordains the way in which the soul is to be offered to Brahman. The act of surrender is to be actually done once only for one thing. If he thinks of doing it again it becomes evident that he is lacking in Māhaviśvāsa. But nothing prevents the aspirant from surrendering the responsibility for protecting me other thing, or for some fruit other than that, for which he has performed Prapatti before. Prapatti may be performed as pointed out above for all purposes and the aspirant may perform it again and again for different purposes. An aspirant after Mukti will

however perform Prapatti once in his life, for the purpose of Mokṣha. But, at a later stage, he may perform 'पुनः प्रपदन' for getting rid of the consequences of any transgressions that might have occurred unnoticedly. This second Prapatti it must be noted, is meant not for securing Mukti, but only for a different purpose, namely the removal of any Aparādhā that might have been committed. This second Prapatti is not an essential factor at all, if only, at the time of surrender itself, the aspirant has prayed for protection from such transgressions during his lifetime after Prapatti. Thus it is established that Prapatti is only "Sakṛtkartavya" and not to be repeated as in the case of Upāsana.

The various types of Prapatti :

Prapatti is broadly classified into two types namely 'Ukti Niṣṭā' and Āchārya Niṣṭā

Ukti Niṣṭā is Prapatti that is observed by one's utterance of the words of surrender. Some aspirants have no knowledge of all the Aṅgas, such as 'Ānukūlya Samkalpa' and others. But they possess the qualification of Ākinchanya, namely that they have no means of protection other than the Bhagavān. They will also be endowed with the faith that the Lord would save them, if only a prayer is made to Him. Such people are required to follow the mode of Uktiniṣṭā. They pronounce before the Lord, the words of surrender taught to them by their Āchāryas as follows- "May you take upon yourself the burden of protecting me". This is just like the surrender of the ignorant princes to an emperor, accompanied with the utterance of words taught to them by their nurses. A boy who is even ignorant of the

meaning of words and sentences utters 'भवति भिक्षां देहि' at the doors of good men, and actually gets favourable response immediately. The words themselves carry weight, and it is not necessary that their meanings have got to be understood always. The Lord who is the Universal saviour cannot ignore even this mere utterance of an aspirant who entirely depends upon it. Rāmānuja declares in his Gadyam

‘येन केनापि प्रकारेण ह्यवक्ता त्वम्’

and affirms that redemption would be the responsibility of the Lord when the Dvaya mantra has been uttered, be it in whatever manner. The savants of the past have also affirmed the same fact that the utterance of the aspirant seeking protection would never become fruitless before the ever compassionate Bhagavān.⁴⁷

An Āchārya Niṣṭā is one; who depends entirely upon his Āchārya. The Āchārya includes the protection of his disciples also in his own prapatti as part of it. The Śāṇḍilya Smṛthi ordains this mode of Prapatti and says that the Preceptor has to state-"This is my son, my servant and my disciple and he is to be saved".⁴⁸ An Āchāryaniṣṭā is sure to enjoy the fruition of Prapatti, as he delights in the service of the devotees of God. This aspirant gets himself intimately connected with his Āchārya, and owing to that alone comes to be saved. Vedānta Dēśika quotes the statement of Mudaliyāṇḍān in this connection as follows: 'Just as a lion leaps from one mountain to another along with the insects that cling to his body we also have been saved when Rāmānuja crossed the Samsāra, owing to our natural and intimate relationship with him'.⁴⁹ This quotation expresses the idea that all those, intimately

connected with a Prapanna, are going to be saved, by virtue of the Prapatti performed by him alone. The protection accorded by mother Sita to the other demonesses along with Thrijata, as well as the protection given by Rama to the four followers of Vibhīṣana, along with the protection given to him, have been cited as examples. But it must be noted here that the Āchārya is required to perform Prapatti separately on behalf of each of those that seek refuge with him.

Āchārya Niṣṭā has thus been expounded as being capable of according protection to the aspirant along with the Āchārya, being included in his own Prapatti. This has been further elucidated by Dēśika in his Nyāsa Thilaka as follows:

'Just as a blind man is kindly led by one who is not blind, and just as a lame man is taken in the boat across the river by the boat-man, and just as the children of the servant of a king enjoy the pleasures of the palace, even though they do not know the King, even so the Āchārya is certainly capable of making the disciple attain God.⁵⁰ In the first example, there is effort on the part of the aspirant but want of knowledge. He walks with the help of one who is endowed with the eye of knowledge. This is Uktiniṣṭā. The second example illustrates Āchāryaniṣṭā. In this case there is the fact of knowledge but the effort is absent. On account of the efforts of another, he also gets the desired result.

It is ascertained from the Śāstras that salvation is impossible without surrender at the feet of God, in some way or other. It is some times said that Bhāgavatābhimāna and Bhagavadviṣayavāsa result in salvation. Here it must

be known clearly that these bless the aspirant, in some way or other, as to take refuge in Prapatti or Bhakti to result in Mukti. There will be some connection with Prapatti even here. These two noble factors namely, 'Bhāgavatābhimāna' and 'Bhagavadviṣayavāsa' enrich and promote the development of the Upāya he has chosen. They by themselves cannot be the cause of Mukti.

In this connection it must be stated that there is another type of Prapatti in usage according to the timeless tradition. This is called Svaniṣṭā. A person who is endowed with the true knowledge of the Jīvatman and the Paramātmā, as well as of the Parama Puruṣārtha and the means of attaining that goal of life, may himself perform Prapatti at the feet of the Lord independent of others. The Prapatti that is performed by such an aspirant, with all the necessary accessories of Kārpaṇya and Māhaviśvāsa, is sure to work out his salvation. This type of aspirant who can directly approach the Lord with full faith in His saving grace is called a Svaniṣṭā, and he needs not the help of another in his performance of Prapatti to the Lord. The great Yāmuna, Rāmānuja and Dēśika have all followed this way of Prapatti.

A person who is thoroughly enlightened upon the philosophy of the Reality, the end and the means, but, who unfortunately, had not had an occasion to perform Prapatti formerly, though he has implicit faith in Prapatti as the sole means of attaining Godhead, may perform Prapatti directly at the feet of the Lord when he is urged to do so. One who is endowed with the necessary knowledge of the means as well as the way of its performance, is an Adhikarin for svaniṣṭā.

When God does not ignore the Prapatti done by an ignorant person who utters the words of Prapatti, as taught by others, He will certainly not neglect the conscious and willing surrender of an enlightened devotee. We have only to note that such an Adhikarin is very rare among the common generality of the aspirants.

Ārta Prapatti and Dṛpta Prapatti:

Prapatti or self-surrender at the feet of the Supreme Being is the means of attaining the fourfold Puruṣārthas of life through the ever compassionate Bhagavān. Those that are after objects other than Mukti have desire in the fruits thereof and they attain the same. But aspirants after mukti cherish for nothing else other than the attainment of the Supreme Bliss of Divine Communion. They pray to God for nothing else, as Bhagavān is the only Prāpya or the object of attainment of them. So, such aspirants choose God as the means of their attaining the eternal service of Paramātmān. Among such aspirants after Mukti, there are two types, according to the urgency of their desires. They are called Ārta Prapannas and Dṛpta Prapannas. Some pray for immediate salvation, as they cannot bear any separation from the Lord, whom alone they desire to attain without any delay. They are so much moved with the fiery love of God that they attain Him at once. They are Ārta Prapannas. Their Ārti, or intense yearning, is verily the cause of their attaining the Lord quickly. Some others surrender themselves unto Him, with the prayer to lead them on to His eternal service, granting them His communion at the end of their life-time. They are called Dṛptas. Why should there be any difference at all between these two in point of time, regarding the attainment of the fruit? It is justly due to the difference in the prayers they

make to the Lord, and this difference in prayers to the Lord is again due to the variations in their meritorious deeds of the past (Prārabdha Sukṛta Viśeṣa). An aspirant who prays for immediate attainment of the Lord attains Him without delay, whereas another who prays for his attainment at the end of that life-time of his attains the Lord soon after that. He gets the happiness of devout worship of the Lord here for some time more than the other, but after the end of that life, he attains the same happiness of serving the Lord for all time to come, being rid of all his Karmas in Mokṣa. Thus the difference between an Ārta and a Dṛpta is described according to the intensity of feeling and the ability or inability to bear any delay in attaining the Supreme object of life, and it must be remembered that there is absolutely no difference in the enjoyment of Divine Bliss, between them.⁵¹

A Prapanna is a Kṛtakṛtya :

When once an aspirant has performed Prapatti at the feet of the Lord for the purpose of attaining Mukti he becomes a Kṛtakṛtya, or one who has done what ought to be done, what should be the mental disposition of such a Prapanna? Rāmānuja declares in his Gadyam that such a Prapanna should be free from all cares and doubts regarding the attainment of the true knowledge, vision and eternal service of the Lord.

‘मज्ज्ञानदर्शनप्राप्तिषु निस्संशयः’

श.ग.

The Lord who is worthy of our confidence, and who is verily capable of our redemption and who happens to be our means of attainment of eternal bliss, will have taken upon Himself the responsibility of our protection, and so, we have nothing more left to be done for purposes of our

protection. The attitude of such a Kṛtakṛtya must be as follows: 1) The Prapanna should have no doubt regarding the fruit of his Prapatti 2) He should be free from all fears and anxieties that pestered him before. 3) He must discard totally all other ends of life. 4) He must also discard in totality all other means meant for the sake of attaining salvation. 5) He must be rejoicing heartily at the Supreme end of life that he is to be blessed with. 6) He would reflect upon the glory of the Lord who is really worshipped through all the duties of one's station in life, such as the Panchamahā Yajñās. 7) He must serve his ruler, the Sarvaśeṣi, by implicitly obeying His commands, as known from the Śāstras, just like the liberated souls serve Him directly according to His wishes. 8) He must lead the rest of his life with a spirit of loving service to the Lord and His fold, avoiding even the least offence to any one⁵²

It was on account of the infinite compassion of the Lord that even we, who were wandering in Samsara, were blessed by our kind Āchāryas that enlightened us upon the truth and taught us the way of saving ourselves. They most kindly initiated us into the holy Dvayamantra and completed our Prapatti to the Lord. So the Lord will pardon all our sins and grant us His communion as desired by us. With this faith the Prapanna should lead the rest of his life.⁵³

The aspirant should have grief and anxiety regarding his salvation only prior to Prapatti, for without it, Prapatti will not be effective. But the aspirant should be rid of all grief after Prapatti. If it continuous even after Prapatti, it must be understood that Prapatti is incomplete, and that the fruit will be delayed up to such a time by which it becomes completed.⁵⁴ Thus a Prapanna has nothing more

to do for the purposes of salvation after Prapatti, other than reflecting upon the glory of the Lord and the Supreme bliss he is to get.

How would a Prapanna be steadfast in his knowledge of the Reality:

A Prapanna who is endowed with the true knowledge of the philosophy of reality, the goal and the way would rejoice to lead a befitting life in this world beneficial to himself as well as others. He would, by the might of that true knowledge, be capable of encountering and overcoming all obstacles. Vedānta Dēśika expounds the nature of such a Svaṇiṣṭā admirably in the Svaṇiṣṭābhijñānādhikāra of his Rahasyatrayasara.⁵⁵

A person can be known to be in the proper state regarding the true knowledge of the Reality by the following marks:

- a. He would be free from sorrow or depression, even when he is abused and dishonoured by others, owing to his knowledge that these faults would relate only to his body and the like and never to his essential nature.
- b. He would pity those people who would amass sin by abusing him and thus do how harm to themselves.
- c. He would feel grateful to those people who revile him as they would be reminding him of the faults plausible in one.
- d. He must possess a mind free from any vikāras at such of those revilers of his, as he is convinced of the fact that they behave so, only according to the

prompting of God directed according to our and their past Karma.

- e. He would also rejoice that he is exhausting the store of his Prārabdha Karma in part, in the humiliations thus inflicted.

The essential nature of the Jīva is that:

1. he is different and distinct from matter;
2. he possesses the knowledge that can enable him to be agreeable to one and all;
3. he is utterly helpless;
4. he is entirely dependent upon, and subservient to, the Lord and
5. his good is possible only from the will of God.

'When the aspirant is steadfast in his essential nature of the above type, as ascertained from the Mūlamantra, he will have all these marks. Only he who has all these characteristics may be said to be steadfast in his Svarūpa.

The following are the characteristics, by means of which one can be understood to be firm in one's Upāya:

- a. He should understand that Īśvara is his only protector, and never some one other than Himself.
- b. He should not entertain fear and anxiety, even when he confronts with causes of fear even to the extent of death, but, on the other hand, he should become pleased that he is coming nearer to the Supreme desire of his life viz., Mukti.
- c. He should have Supreme confidence in the Lord,

the Universal Saviour, Whom he has chosen for his redemption.

- d. He should give up further efforts of his own to save himself, when once he has entrusted his care to the Lord.
- e. He should feel convinced that the removal of evil and the attainment of good are in the hands of that Lord alone.

If one has all these signs he may then consider that he is steadfast in his Upāya, as prescribed in the former part of the Dvaya and the first half of the Charama Śloka. A person who is firm in his Puruṣārtha or Supreme object of life will have the following signs:"

1. He would not feel any attachment to the maintenance of his body, as it is subject to his past Karma.
2. He would be convinced that nothing would happen in this world except according to the will of God, even if he is anxious about it.
3. He would experience such things which are not forbidden in the Śāstras, that come to him by the will of God and without his seeking, with the reflection that he is exhausting the fruit of his Prārabdha Karma.
4. He would neither be elated nor depressed upon his gaining or losing something in this world, as they are the consequences of his Karma.
5. He would love immensely to serve the Lord according to his essential nature; and
6. He would have an intense yearning for attaining the Supreme Object of his life and bitterly cry out for the same.

If one finds these signs in oneself, one may then realise that one is steadfast in one's Puruṣārtha which is indicated in the dative 'Nārāyaṇāya' in the 'Mūlamantra', in the word 'Namas' in 'Dvaya', and in the latter half of the 'Charama Śloka'.

The above characteristics show the mental equipoise of a Prapanna, as well as his dispositions. The Prapanna lives in this world even after Prapatti and he never discards the world. Association with this world does not bring him down from his stand. He considers his life in this world as an opportunity afforded to him by God to dedicate it to Him alone. The after-life of a Prapanna is led here with the never-fading Divine consciousness. He feels glad to spend his time here, in loving service of God and the Godly souls. He is a Śānta, Dānta, a Titikṣu and an Uparta who leads a saintly and devoted life, and who inspires and enlightens godliness in all that come near him. He marches steadily at the goal, never even once losing sight of it, and rejoices at the great good he is to get. He never feels either glad or sorry for either the gains or losses he sustains in this world, for he is endowed with the true knowledge that all these gains or losses are extrinsic to the essential nature of the self, and that they have come upon him only according to his past Karmas. He will be free from all worries or anxieties as he would be sure of attaining the Supreme goal of his life through divine Grace. The Prapanna does not run away from the life of the world. He would be in it but not of it. Mere enjoyment of sorrows or pleasures that are unavoidable due to the impact of Karma does not harm him, for he would be entirely disinterested in those things. Thus we find that a Prapanna submits himself wholly to

the will of God and reflects upon his essential nature of being subservient, to the Lord, even while going through the experiences of this world.

How should a Prapanna conduct himself in this world?

A Prapanna, who has entrusted, the responsibility of his emancipation to the Supreme Being, has nothing more to do in that behalf. He has also no responsibility of his regarding the maintenance of his body etc., in this life, for that is shaped strictly according to his previous Karma. Then how should the Prapanna conduct 'himself' in this world till the fall of his body? He cannot lead a wreckless life here, as it does not befit him. He is not required to seek any other means for his emancipation. The only thing he is required to do is to prepare himself thoroughly for the eternal service of the Lord that is to follow immediately by a line of conduct which is Svādutama and Svayamprajana-an end by itself. It is this loving service of the Lord that is to be practised here wholeheartedly. The Prapanna should dedicate the rest of his life here to the service of the Lord, by means of which alone, he derives immeasurable delight. Vedānta Dēśika summarises the duties of one after Prapatti, as follows:

1. For the sake of the excessive delight of hearing the noble qualities of the Lord, he studies with good men the sacred texts of Vedānta.
2. He delights in reciting as well as listening to the sweet and noble sayings of the God-intoxicated Ālvars.
3. He follows a line of conduct which is faultless and pleasing to one and all, while performing the duties of his station in life.

4. He will be convinced of the fact that his responsibility regarding the seen and the unseen has ceased, as it has been entrusted to the Lord.⁵⁶

Vedānta Dēśika states in his *Rahasyatrayasaram* that Bhagavān Rāmānuja pointed out the duties of a Prapanna as follows :⁵⁷

1. Studying the Śrī Bhāṣya and spreading the knowledge got from it.
2. If incapable of this one should study and propagate the sayings of the Ālwars.
3. If incapable of even this, one should spend his time in Divine services in holy temples such as lighting lamps, wreathing garlands, offering food and preparing sandal paste, etc.
4. If one is incapable of even this, one is required to meditate on the meaning of the holy Dvaya Mantra.
5. If even this is not possible one should at least seek the goodwill of some Śrī Vaiṣṇava who is well disposed towards him and should spend his life with him.

These are constructive commands, and take into account the various capabilities and dispositions of all kinds of people. What is important here is that the Prapanna should so shape his life here on earth after Prapatti, that he will on no account be dissociated with the reflection of the ever blissful Supreme. The lifetime of a Prapanna here, after Prapatti, is in no way different from that of a Mukta for this devout self will be blessed with the delight of divine service in an equal measure. The Prapanna never thinks of extrinsic objects of the world, but instead, reflects upon the auspicious qualities of the Lord, by means of which alone he subsists. So, the mode of conduct that is laid down for a

Prapanna is only that which enriches delight in the thought of the supreme.

So a Prapanna engages himself in the loving worship of God throughout his life here, and observes without fail the duties of his station in life, as they are Divine Commands. He seeks spiritual knowledge from suitable Gurus and prays of the Lord for both Jñāna and Bhakti as these are always desired. He must also associate himself with such noble souls as are established in true knowledge. He must follow a proper path, lest he should fall into the pitfall of thinking of his own superiority and the inferiority of others. He should also remember his utter helplessness and his dependence upon Brahman. He need not lament for what is past, but he should make himself fit for the future by reflecting upon his present fitness, owing to the mercy of the Lord.

A Prapanna should serve Archā form in which the Lord has incarnated Himself, out of compassion towards the devotees, and derive out of it immense delight of divine communion. He must remain ever grateful to the holy Āchārya who initiated him into the rear knowledge of Paramātmān and the way of attaining Him, and also remain grateful to the Lord who has of His own natural compassion saved him from the shackles of Samsara through such holy preceptors.

Viṣayāsvādam, or indulgence in the sense object, is the one important thing that is to be totally discarded by a Prapanna. Likewise he should ever cherish the memory of the great Āchārya who has done him immense good out of infinite mercy. He must take care never to speak of his superiority lest he might be deprived of Kārpaṇyam. Similarly the most important thing that he should utter

always is the holy 'Dvaya Mantra', which keeps him ever in the remembrance of his steadfastness; in the means of Prapatti. The one thing he should invariably avoid, by speech, thought or action, is offence towards the Brahmavids or Bhāgavatas, lest he might incur the wrath of God. Similarly what he has to do, to enrich the attainment of this supreme object in life, is loving service to noble Bhāgavatas, such as the holy Āchāryas. Thus, a Prapanna is required to conduct himself here, after Prapatti, in the above way, so that he may feel always the delight of the company of the ever blissful Paramātman whom he is to attain thereafter. ⁵⁸

A Prapanna should be guided by the Śāstra:

A Prapanna who has placed the burden of his redemption on the Lord is verily like a liberated soul, as he has become rid of his sins. Till the time of his release from bondage of this world, he is to continue in this world alone, and he is required to follow the Śāstras as he cannot know directly the will of God then.

‘मुकुन्दे निक्षिप्य स्वभरमनघो मुक्तवदसौ ... अनुसरति
शास्त्रीयसरणिम्॥’

र.त्र.सा. 17-p-129

In this world a Prapanna cannot escape contact with different kinds of people. He rejoices at the sight of spiritually favourable people, and dreads the company of the spiritually unfavourable ones, whereas he becomes indifferent towards those who are neither. If this conduct is not followed, it means he is leaning towards Artha and Kāma. The wrath of Bhagavān is kindled if good and noble souls are ill-treated or treated with contempt. Likewise god becomes disgusted with those that become subservient to even spiritually unfavourable people, on counts of wealth

and desire. Treating those who are neither the one nor the other serves no useful purpose and, god will have no regard for him.

The advice of Bhagavān Rāmānuja is also in accordance with the codes of Śāstras that prescribe the particular conduct to be adopted by one, in regard to the above three classes of persons.

That which does not agree with the Śāstras is Āsuric in nature and is to be totally avoided. The Śṛuti and the Smṛti are the commands of the Lord, and he, who transgresses them, violates the commands of god. The term 'निजकर्मादि' used by Ālavandār in his *Gitārthasangraha*⁵⁹ signifies that it should be followed without exception. So one is bound to follow the duties of his station in life.

The holy texts⁶⁰ ordain that the ordinances of the Śāstras are to be strictly followed. A Prapanna will incur the displeasure of the Lord, if he fails in his duty, and for him there is no greater hell than this. The observance of the ordinances of the Śāstras is helpful to one and all. It removes the hindrances to the completion of Prapatti, in the case of those who have not yet completed their Prapatti, whereas, in the case of those who have completed Prapatti, it will get them the favour of the Lord, and will guard the Prapanna from incurring the displeasure of the Lord in future.

The Śāstra Padhati is of two categories, namely, the obligatory and the permissive. The Kāmya Karma yields the respective fruits that are desired, and has to be performed strictly according to the Śāstraic injunctions. The performance of Ājñā Karma is meant for avoiding the

Lord's punishment. A Prapanna is warned against the performance of Kāmya Karmas for certain extrinsic ends of life, but he may perform them with the purpose of serving the Lord thereby. If a Kāmya Karma is not performed there is not transgression, but if a Nitya or a Naimittika Karma is not performed, it amounts to transgression. A Prapanna is therefore required to follow the ordinances of the Śāstras without fail, till the time of his journey from this world.⁶¹ Thus a Prapanna is treated on a par with an Upāsaka, in regard to the performance of the Nityanaimittika Karmas of his station in life.

Should the Prapanna atone for his offences?

It is sometimes argued that a Prapanna has won divine grace to the full extent, and so there is no need to make any atonement for sins, committed even deliberately by one, after Prapatti. It is also stated by some that even sins, committed by a Prapanna deliberately, do not cling to him, though there is no authority to support this. Likewise, it is argued that the Prapanna need not atone for even sins deliberately done, and that there will be no punishment meted out to him, even though he does not atone for them. Even the argument that there will be no delay in the attainment of the supreme goal, even though such offences are committed, if in case he is impatient of delay, is put forward. It is further said that there would be neither any break nor any diminution in the service of the Lord here, that is obtained as a result of past meritorious deeds, even in the case of those who have deliberately sinned, after Prapatti.

All the above arguments serve the purpose of maintaining the power of Prapatti and glorifying the auspicious qualities of the Lord. But they do not represent the correct position.

It is not at all likely that a Prapanna, who is guided by the Śāstra, and who is solely devoted to the loving service of the Lord, will offend against the Lord by committing deliberate sins. It is possible that some offences do occur, on account of his Prārabdha Karma, and owing to the adverse conditions of space, time and circumstances, as well as owing to inadvertence. But all these are not deliberate, and so do not stain him at all, as in the case of an Upāsaka. But, if a person does not pray to the Lord at the time of Prapatti, to clear off such sins as lead to further sins, it is possible that such sins do occur, owing to certain defects in himself. It must be understood that God, the Universal saviour, will not discard one who has thus fallen a victim to such lapses. He stands by, ever ready to save even such a Prapanna. On account of His unfailing Grace, the aspirant realises his weaknesses and sins, feels ashamed of himself, heartily repents for them and performs such Prāyaschitta as is suitable for him. What is then this atonement? It is nothing other than performing Prapatti at the feet of the Lord for pardoning him his for offences.⁶² If an aspirant takes up Karma Yōga and others as means to Mukti, after performing prapatti for the sake of Mokṣa he is committing an offence for which also he is required to perform an atonement.

According to this, it becomes clear that one should perform Prapatti again at the feet of the Lord for pardoning such of the sins committed deliberately by him. But it is to be remembered that he should not perform Prapatti for Mokṣa a second time, because that has been granted for his former Prapatti itself. The purpose of the second Prapatti is only to gain the pardon of the Lord, for the offences committed against Him. Even if such a

Prapanna does not perform Prapatti, he will not be deprived of his Supreme goal of Mokṣa for which he has surrendered his responsibility to the Lord.⁶³ Then why should he perform Prapatti again praying Him to pardon his offences? It is meant for the purpose of winning Divine favour so that He may not punish him even lightly for his offences, which result in the breakage or diminution of divine service here. The Śāstras ordain that the Lord never forsakes one who has surrendered unto Him but punishes him in such a way, as a generous king punishes the attendants of his harem, in order to correct them and keep them safe from offending in future.

God is even merciful, and so he directs those that are gentle to seek his pardon, but punishes mildly those that are hard by nature, just for the sake of correcting them.

It should not be doubted, therefore, that the Prapatti will be in vain, even in the case of those that deliberately commit sins for which they are punished by the Lord. In the case of such Prapannas that have not performed a further Prapatti for their deliberate sins, there might be delay in release from Samsāra through their life time being extended. Likewise, they suffer certain handicaps such as becoming blind and lame and having disobedient sons and the like.⁶⁴ God will not punish him very severely as before. Nor will he be very kind to him. The punishment given to a Prapanna is light, just like that given to the princes. A further Prapatti is ordained, in order to avoid even this light punishment. Transgression of Divine command is harmful in two ways. Firstly, he misses the happiness of Divine service, and secondly, he has to suffer the fear of punishment. So, it is ordained that a further Prapatti must be performed to atone for such offences. The following factors affirm this position:-

1. The tradition of observing a further prapatti by the savants of the past.
2. The sacred texts that ordain methods of atonement for sins in the case of Prapannas.
3. The texts that declare delay in attainment of Mukti for those who did not indicate the time of obtaining it, at the time of Prapatti, though they could not bear delay. Though the statement 'सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि' is a general one, the other statement namely-'प्रायश्चित्तिरियं सात्र यत्पुनश्शरणं ब्रजेत्' refers to particular instances. So it is clear that a further Prapatti is the atonement for the deliberate sins of one committed after Prapatti. It cannot be argued that a further Prapatti is or joined, only in the case of those who have not performed Prapatti to cover even the subsequent deliberate sins, because there is no such statement that Prapatti may be performed to cover even the future sins to be done, deliberately. If people come to know that the original Prapatti can be observed in such a way as to cover future sins, the text ordaining a further Prapatti becomes futile, as no one would even think of it. The general statement applies to all cases, except the particular, and so, the text ordaining a further Prapatti for atonement of deliberate sins stands valid.

It cannot also be argued that the first Prapatti may be performed in such a way as to cover deliberate sins of the future, according to one's own will, even though not sanctioned in the Śāstras. Then the same will apply to even Bhaktiyōga or Upāsana. This standpoint is opposed to the authorities of the expositions of the Āchāryas like Bhagavān

Rāmānuja and others. A Prāyaschittā has to be observed only for an offence already committed by one, who feels-remorse for it, and never in anticipation of some offence in future. There cannot be an application without an occasion.⁶⁵

So it stands to reason that one takes to a further Prapatti for atoning the sins actually committed by one after the original Prapatti. So one has to perform a further Prapatti, in the occurrence of deliberate sins after the original Prapatti. The Prārabdha sins of one are the root causes of future deliberate sins. So, if one is afraid of the possibility of future sins, he should perform Prapatti to atone his Prārabdha sins of the past, so that he may get rid of such deliberate future sins.

It is very essential that one should take special care as to avoid all possible offences leading to deprival of God's mercy. The root cause of all offences is 'Aviveka' or non-discrimination of the type of-Dehātmabhrama and Svatantrātma Bhrama. So one should attain true knowledge of the self to get rid of these delusions.⁶⁶

The greatest of offences is the offence done to Bhāgavatas, and this is said to be an obstacle to the attainment of Mukti at a fixed time.⁶⁷ So, one who has offended the Bhāgavatas is required to gain the pardon of such Bhāgavatas, in some way or other, and thereby get the pardon of Bhagavān. We may sum up, according to the opinion of Vedānta Dēśika that is supported by a host of authorities, that the original Prapatti observed by one will never be in vain, for it has that supreme power of getting Mukti through the grace of God. But, if such a Prapanna perpetrates in sin deliberately after Prapatti, he does not

stand to lose Mukti, but only meets such of the punishments that are given to the princes and the like, in case he does not perform, with repentance, a further Prapatti for atoning his sins. After undergoing that punishment he is sure to gain that supreme goal of life. The Lord expiates such sins by punishment, and afterwards, certainly takes the Prapanna to Himself.⁶⁸

Where should a Prapanna live?

The environment in which a Prapanna lives should be conducive to his unbroken reflection upon, and service to, the Lord and his devotees. The best place fit for the habitation of a Prapanna is that wherein ardent devotees of the Lord reside. The holy places where the Supreme Vāsudeva has stood in the form of Archa out of compassion for man are best suited for the habitation of Prapannas. Those places are sanctified by the presence of the Lord as well as his devotees, and so have the remarkable power of imparting purity to the minds of men. It is desirable that the Prapanna chooses one of such holy places for his residence where he can serve the Lord with his living service.

यत्किञ्चिदपि कुर्वाणो विष्णोरायतने वसेत् ।

न किञ्चिदपि कुर्वाणो विष्णोरायतने वसेत् । र.त्र.सा. 19-p-138

is a statement that stresses the significance of holy shrines and places, living wherein, one's mind gets purified in the last moments. So the Prapanna is advised to live in a place that is sanctified by the presence of Bhagavān and the Bhāgavatas, and which is capable of promoting his Satvaguṇa.

It should not be taken, then, that a Prapanna is obliged to live only in such a place as described above. A suitable

place has been suggested only to assure an unbroken continuity in his association with the noble souls who are solely devoted to the worship of the Lord so that he may not be deprived of the joy of Divine service and company of the holy men. His Mokṣa has nothing to do with the place of his residence, for salvation is assured to him at the very moment of his Prapatti.

‘ज्ञानसमकालमुक्त्वा कैवल्यं याति गतशोकः ।

तीर्थे श्वपचगृहे वा नष्टस्मृतिरपि परित्यजन्देहम् ॥’

र.त्र.सा. 19-p-138

It may be therefore concluded that any place on the face of the earth which is liked by the ardent devotees of the Lord that delight in listening to the stories of Bhagavān is a fit place for the habitation of a Prapanna, and conversely no place be it Kanchi, or Kāsi, or Avani, or Madura, or any other great city is a fitting place of residence, if that place is not to the liking of those great devotees of the Lord.

Some objections against Prapatti answered

Prapatti has supreme importance in shaping the future of the multitudes of finite selves, and therefore needs to be thoroughly understood so that one might not be led away from the great fruit that comes through it. It is essential that one should have unshakable confidence in its saving power, when only, one will take to it heart and soul. The culture of Prapatti should be based upon the firm foundation of the Real knowledge about the Sādhyaopāya. Though one has a clear knowledge of the Supreme Lord, the saviour of one and all, though one has become adverse to the noneternal and ever changing Samsara, though one has developed an intense eagerness for the attainment of

the Supreme Goal, and although one has that feeling of urgency regarding one's salvation, there is no way of attaining the Supreme Being, until and unless one understands thoroughly the Upāya that is to be adopted.⁶⁹ So it is very essential that one should have a full understanding of the Sādhyopāya, free from all kinds of misconceptions and doubts.

Vedānta Dēśika has analysed these misconceptions as three-fold such as (1) the misconceptions regarding the competence or Adhikāra; (2) misconceptions regarding the essential nature of Prapatti; and (3) misconceptions regarding the accessories of Prapatti.

All possible kinds of doubts and objections are raised against Prapatti, and they are answered in one of the major sections of the Rahasya Traya Sāra.

We will consider first of all, some of the objections raised against the competency of one and all for Prapatti. Four main objections are raised as follows:-

1. There is no need at all for the Śāstras to enjoin Prapatti.
2. In that case all the various types of Upāsanas are inconsistent with one's essential nature.
3. Even then the Jīva need not at all surrender unto the Lord, as he is by his essential nature already subservient to Him alone.
4. Even granting it, Prapatti cannot be said to have a universal appeal, being open to all classes, as it is also a Vedic injunction.

Let us examine these objections one by one:-

I Objection- It is within the common experience of one and all that one who is incapable of saving oneself will run, of his own accord, to someone nearby who is capable of giving that protection. Likewise an aspirant who has obtained true knowledge of the individual self and the Supreme self from the scriptures will of his own accord surrender himself at the feet of the Supreme Being. So, where is the need for the Śāstra to enjoin this Upāya at all? It is therefore improper that the Śāstras should enjoin Prapatti in the place of Bhakti like this.

This objection, though based on appropriate reasoning, is unsound, as it is carried too far. Even in ordinary life, whenever a person seeks the help of another he tries to know before-hand the particular way in which he has to proceed, to be sure of his help, and only after that, he seeks his protection. Even here it is so. one should first of all know who is competent to seek the protection of God and also in what manner he should seek for it, so that the Lord might take pity on him and save him. No authority other than the Śāstras can teach the way of approaching the Lord. It is only the Śāstras that enlighten us that God saves the particular kinds of aspirants who seek His protection in the particular manner.

It may be objected to this, here again thus: Can we not infer that the Lord protects us, if we seek refuge under Him? Where is the need then for such an injunction?

The above objection is answered thus. It is not possible to know the particular way of seeking God's protection by inference. If we admit that it is possible by inference, then we have to admit that all those who are endowed with the true knowledge of the Supreme being are verily capable of adopting the means, in which case,

there will have to be innumerable ways as suggested by their own inferences. This results in the futility of the sacred scriptures that prescribe definite ways of Upāsana. Moreover, inference cannot lead to and establish the distinctive knowledge that Upāsana is meant for one who is capable of it and that he who is not capable of it should adopt Prapatti. Had not the Śāstras enjoined the performance of Prapatti in place of Upāsana to those who are, incapable of them, they would have stood to lose the Supreme fruit itself, as they were incompetent to adopt those Upāsanas.

Even in ordinary experience we see that acts of service done against the Śāstras and convention become offences. They will have to be done only in the way, in which they should be done. Likewise worship of the Lord and service unto him have to be done with all accessories as laid down in the holy scriptures. The relationship of means and end (Sādhya Sādhana bhāva) between the Prapatti performed with special mantras in the prescribed manner and the benefits that result from them, can be known only from the Śāstras. If this is not admitted, then the rules prescribed for the service of the Lord become incompatible; instruction of the Āchārya as well as initiation into the sacred mantras also become unnecessary. So, one has to admit the authority of the Śāstras. As pointed out above, no inference can determine the fact that even those who are incompetent for the utterance of the mantras can attain the Supreme Fruit, if only they perform Prapatti in the particular manner as ordained therein. So it is quite proper and appropriate that the Śāstras should prescribe the performance of Prapatti with all its accessories.⁷⁰

II Objection-It is maintained above that Bhakti and Prapatti are enjoined by the Śāstras for two different kinds of aspirants. Of these only Prapatti is in accordance with the essential nature of the Jīvatman, and Bhakti or Upāsana is opposed to his essential nature.

Answer:

This objection is not valid. This may be taken to mean only to praise the greatness of Prapatti and not to condemn the Upāsanas. The Upāsanas are not opposed to the essential nature of the Jīvatman for the following reasons:-

1. The Upāsana cannot destroy the self which is eternal.
2. The finite self is endowed with doership of the form of being the locus of knowledge, desire to act and effort, though this doership is dependent on Brahman. It cannot be argued that the finite self is absolutely incapable of action, for it results in its becoming a non-existent entity, for the mere reason that Arthakriyākāritva or purposeful action is the sign of the existence of a thing. The self cannot be deemed to have mere existence, in which case, he would be deprived of enjoyment also. In that case, it would also result in needing no Upāya at all for attaining salvation. Nor can it be argued, as is done by the Sāmkhyas, that the self has no doership in its essential nature. 'अचेष्टमानमासीनं श्रीःकंचिदुपतिष्ठति' is a statement which declares only that certain benefits come out of certain Karmas performed in prior births and never the futility of the Upāsanas ordained in the Śāstras.
3. Upāsanas never bring forth evil consequences. Only the performance of the prohibited actions and Kāmya

Karmas leads one to danger and degradation. They bind the finite self down to Samsāra as they arise from desire and the like. But the Upāsanas are not like that. They are not observed for the fulfilment of worldly desires but only for the attainment of salvation.

Thus the Upāsanas do not destroy the essential nature of the finiteself, they are not impossible of being observed and they do not bring evil results. So, they are not opposed to the essential nature of the finite self.⁷¹

It is further argued that the essential nature of the self is different and distinct from the body, and so the performance of the Varṇāśrama Dharmas as well as the Upāsanas that are connected with the body is against the nature of the self. This argument is unsound for it is based on false foundations. The self in its essential nature is not a Brahmin or a Kshatriya or any other, but yet, it is associated with the body which has attributes of caste and others owing to its past Karmas. It is this association of the self with the respective bodies that demands the performance of varied Dharmas enjoined for them by the Śāstras. Just as the soul makes its endeavour to ward off hunger, thirst and the like, that arise from the association of the body, it should also observe the Varnāśrama Dharmas according to its ability. The competence, to the performance of these Dharmas, comes from association of the soul with the several bodies that have the attributes of Brahmin hood and others. So it stands to reason that there is no conflict between Upāsanas and the essential nature of the soul. The Upāsanas are also free from the notion of Ahamkāra, and are not contrary to the nature of the soul. Though the body and the senses are gained through past

Karmas, one has to perform Karmayōga and the like with the help of them and attain salvation, as the soul cannot by itself effect its upward evolution independent of the body and the senses.⁷²

III Objection:-The next objection is raised as follows:

"Let us admit that the performance of Prapatti is to be enjoined by the Śāstras. We also admit that the performance of such spiritual discipline is not contrary to the essential nature of the self. But there is no need at all for the Jīvatman to perform Prapatti at the feet of the Lord, for he exists solely for the Supreme Being. The Jīvātman is an 'Aryanta Paratantra' or an entirely dependent entity upon Brahman and he cannot protect himself. So is it proper to prescribe a means or an Upāya for him to be observed for his protection? Is it proper also to call it a Sādhyopāya at all? Is not therefore Bhaktiyōga and the like inconsistent with his essential nature of being a Śeṣa and an 'Aryanta Paratantra' ?

This objection leads to the conclusion of Sarva Mokṣa Prasanga, which is not a fact. If the Lord were to liberate the Jīva without taking into consideration any Vyāja done by him, then he should have been a Mukta from beginningless time. On the other hand, it cannot be maintained that Īśvara liberates one whenever He wills by virtue of His freedom and omnipotence, because Īśvara would then become partial and cruel. Further, it would result in the futility of all Śāstras that ordain the means of attaining Mukti. Therefore it is in the fitness of things that this means, which is enjoined upon him as the result of his

Śeṣatva, is adopted by the Jīva. It is also appropriate that the owner takes care of what he owns. On the other hand, 'Pāratantrya' and 'Śeṣatva', instead of signifying passivity on the part of the Jīva, imply that the Jīva should observe such means as are agreeable to the Lord, in accordance with the freedom allowed to him by the Lord and look to him alone for attaining the fruit. These two enable the Jīva to perform that kind of service which is agreeable to the Lord.

It cannot be maintained that the Jīva should not make any effort to save himself, for then he will have, by the same logic, no competence in serving the Lord according to the Śāstras, for attaining his favour and also in observing Prapatti which is prescribed as definitely possible by the Śāstras in the words 'Śaraṇam Vraja'. So, it stands proved that it is proper for the Jīva who is dependent upon, and subservient to, the Lord to adopt according to his competency, some Upāya for his protection.⁷³

IV Objection:- It is further argued that even if Prapatti is an Upāya to be observed for one's protection, it cannot be a universal means of salvation as it is a Dharma prescribed in the Vedas. Does not the Nyāsa Vidyā treat this Prapatti also as a particular kind of Yōga? Then how can this be applicable to all irrespective of this condition of caste and others?

The Vedic injunctions are of two kinds, namely, universal Dharmas and particular Dharmas. Prapatti is a universal Dharma just like the injunction of speaking the truth. 'Satyavachana' is a Vedic Dharma but is universal one. Likewise Prapatti also is a 'Sāmānya Dharma' common to all. It is true that Upāsanās have been declared as

possible only for the three higher castes but no such restriction is put on Prapatti. The universality of Prapatti may be affirmed on two grounds as follows:-

1. There is no restriction in the general statement regarding the competence for Prapatti as found in the case of Upāsanas.
2. There are distinct statements declaring the competency of one and all without any distinction of caste and others for adopting Prapatti.⁷⁴

The Svetasvatara Text declares that the Supreme Lord is the saviour of all. The Rāmāyana, Sātvata Samhitā, Sanatkumara Samhita and- other holy texts affirm that this is open to all classes. No restriction of any kind is imposed upon this as in the case of Upāsanas which are ordained to be commenced only in the three higher castes. So this means of salvation is open to all castes who have a knowledge of the saviour and who possess the qualifications of Ākinchanya, Māhaviśvāsa and others.

- B. The following are some of the objections raised against the nature of Prapatti:
 1. Prapatti is only prayer with faith and not surrender of the self.
 2. Prapatti is mere knowledge of the relationship as Śeṣa to the Lord.
 3. Refraining from one's own activity to save oneself is Prapatti.
 4. Does not the injunction 'Give up all Dharmas' apply to Prapatti also?
 5. Is not the performance of Varṇāśrama Dharmas inconsistent with an exclusive devotee?

We may examine these one after the other.

The first objection is that Prapatti is not self-surrender but mere faith. It is argued that the statement 'उपाय इति विश्वासः द्वयार्थः शरणागतिः' signifies that Prapatti is faith. 'प्रपत्तिर्विश्वासः' and 'विश्वासपूर्वकं प्रार्थनम्' and other statements are said to affirm the nature of Prapatti as being that of faith.

This objection is based on a partial understanding of the context. The above quoted statements affirm the Supreme importance of faith or Māhaviśvāsa in the beginning. The following definitions of Prapatti may be studied:

‘अनन्यसाध्ये स्वाभीष्टे महाविश्वासपूर्वकम् ।

तदेकोपायतया याश्चा प्रपत्तिः शरणागतिः ॥

त्वमेवोपायभूतो मे भवेति प्रार्थना मतिः ।

शरणागतिरित्युक्ता ॥’

These definitely prescribe that it is a sincere prayer with faith. This prayer is an Anga, along with the other four, and the surrender of the self is the Angi'. This prayer is very significant, for the Lord is described to be waiting for the expression of the desire for protection. This prayer is definitely one of the Angas and is not all. In his Śrī Ranga Gadyam, Rāmānuja first makes the prayer as दास्यतीति विश्वासपूर्वकं भगवन्तं नित्यकि'रतां प्रार्थये ।' and concludes with the words 'नमोस्तु ते' and thereby signifies the observance of self-surrender. It can be known from various contexts that this word 'Namas' stands for Ātmanivedanam. But apart from this, Rāmānuja has

definitely prescribed the surrender of the self, preceeded with prayer in his 'वैकुण्ठगद्यम्' in the following words:

‘परिचर्याकरणाय परिगृहीष्वेति याचमानः प्रणम्यात्मानं भगवते निवेदयेत्’ ।

It is, clear from this that self-surrender is different from prayer. The Angi is self-surrender and this is signified by the terms 'Nikṣepa' and 'Bharanyāsa' found in the texts 'स्वात्मानं मयि निक्षिपेत्' and 'आत्मात्मीयभरन्यासः'. This self surrender is the point of injunction. If not, the statement *Ṣaḍvidhā Śāraṇagāthih* will have to signify that each one of the accessories is a form of Prapatti itself which is not actually so.

‘प्रपत्तिं तां प्रयुञ्जीत स्वाः पञ्चभिरावृताम्’ ।

may be quoted to point out that the five are accessories and the one is the Angi. This authority, then, proves directly that Prapatti is not mere prayer or faith, but Nikṣepa or self-surrender.

This conclusion is strengthened by a number of references found in *Lakṣmi Tantra*, *Ahīrbhūdynya Samhita* and the like about Prapatti. The statement 'प्रार्थनामतिः शरणागतिरित्युक्ता' only indicates *Bharanyāsa*, even as in our ordinary experience we speak of an *Anga* as an *Angi*. To give an example, we may point out that the word 'Ālambha', meaning killing, is used to mean in a wider sense 'Yāga'. Likewise, the word prayer is used in a wider sense in this context to signify self-surrender.

Self-surrender is called *Ātntayāga*. *Yāga* or Sacrifice means that some particular oblation is offered to some

particular deity. This Ātmatayāga is also a particular kind of reflection and this indicates that 'this my soul, the most delicious offering, is for the Lord Nārāyaṇā'.

Dēśika summarises the gist of the above discussion in the following stanzas:

‘हविस्समर्पणादत्र प्रयोगविधिश्चित्तः ।
 आत्मरक्षाभरन्यासः अकिञ्चनस्यातिरिच्यते ॥
 अत्र श्रीराममिश्राद्यैः भरन्यासविवक्षया ।
 स्वप्रवृत्तिनिवृत्त्यंशः प्रपत्तिरिति लक्षितः ॥
 अकृते तु भरन्यासे रक्षापेक्षणमात्रतः ।
 पश्चात्स्वयत्नविरतिर्न प्रसिध्यति लोकवत् ।
 आकिञ्चन्यभरन्यासोपायत्वप्रार्थनात्मनाम् ।
 त्रयाणां सौहृदं सूक्ष्मं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥’

र.त्र.सा. 24. p-162

The primary duty, to be observed by one who is helpless is the surrender of the responsibility for one's protection. This is pointed out by (1) the offering to be made and (2) the injunction to offer it in a particular mode.

Śrī Rāma Miśra and other savants of the past pointed out that Prapatti signifies the abstention from one's own activity. If the burden of this protection is not actually shifted and if there is only the desire to be protected, it will not result in the abstention from one's efforts as seen even from our experience in the world.

The three factors, namely helplessness, prayer for being the Upāya and surrender of responsibility, are very much having the same common feature of 'Svaprayatna Nivritti', and on account of their being so closely allied to

one another, the other two are often used to signify surrender.

So, it is established that mere prayer for being saved is not Prapatti but it is actually surrender of the soul at the feet of the Lord to be saved.⁷⁵

Second Objection:- Some others argue that Prapatti is nothing more than the knowledge of the relationship 'Of the individual self to the Supreme Being. It is said that Śeṣatva Jñāna is itself Prapatti. Do not the sacred scriptures ordain one to remember always one's being subservient to the Lord? This relationship of 'Śeṣatva' will be realized the moment he understands the truth of the Śāstras. So there is no injunction other than this to be followed.

This argument is as unsound as the argument of the Advaitin that one gets liberated from the mere knowledge of the sacred Śāstras. This knowledge of Śeṣatva that is obtained from the Śāstras is the fundamental prerequisite of all spiritual disciplines. But it is not everything. It is generally impossible for anyone to follow any spiritual discipline, such as Upāsana or Nyāsa without this knowledge of his subservience unto Him, for the very reason that an aspirant after Mukti yearns to attain the eternal service of the Lord which is nothing other than Śeṣavrtti. Even in the event of one's observance of any spiritual discipline, bereft of this Śeṣatva Jñānam, then also, it, is to be understood that such disciplines themselves will, in course of time, produce that knowledge in one and become completed and perfected. So, it is to be known that what is prescribed here is not mere knowledge of Śeṣatva, but the entrusting of the responsibility of one's protection to the Lord along with this knowledge of Śeṣatva.

This knowledge of Śeṣatva is an important qualification of the Adhikārin for Prapatti. This helps the aspirant to be far from Egocentric tendencies even after Prapatti. The Śāstras definitely enjoin that the Jivatman who has committed the sin of Ātmāpahara must surrender the responsibility of his protection to the Lord as a means of expiating his sins.

। जितकौस्तुभचौर्यस्य सम्राजस्सर्वपाप्मनाम् ।

शिष्टं ह्यात्मापहारस्य निष्कृतिस्स्वभरार्पणम् ॥

परशेषत्वधीमात्रमधिकारविशेषणम् ।

पश्चादात्मापहारस्य निरोधाय च कल्पते ॥ र.त्र.सा. 24- p-162

The very word Ātmasamarpaṇam implies the fact of self-offering and this is to be done along with the prestribed accessories namely Ākinchanya, Māhaviśvāsa, and also along with the determination to be agreeable to the Lord always. This is also to be followed with the specific intention of the particular object desired such as 'स्वाभीष्टकाले मोक्षो मे स्यात्' etc. This self-offering should be observed along with Śeṣatvānusandhāna. So, mere knowledge of Śeṣatva can never be Prapatti. We often say that Mukti is obtained by true knowledge, and here also we mean that it is only through the observance of some Upāya. Likewise with Śeṣatva Jñāna. There are definite-commands, on the other hand, exhorting one to adopt the means of self-surrender such as 'शरणं ब्रज', 'भजस्व' etc.

‘ज्ञानान्मोक्षोपदेशे हि तत्पूर्वोपासनादिना ।

उपासनादिरूपाद्वा ज्ञानान्मोक्षो विवक्षितः ॥’ र.त्र.सा. 25p-163

So, self-surrender is not mere knowledge of Śeṣatva

but actually entrusting the burden of one's protection to the Lord, accompanied by its five accessories.

Third Objection:-It is further argued by some others that Prapatti is only refraining from doing one's own activity for saving oneself. The command 'सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य' is taken to mean the abandonment of all Dharmas or Upāyas. The argument that one has to obtain the condition of abandoning actually all Dharmas is put forth for justification of Prapatti which is taken to be 'स्वरक्षणार्थस्वव्यापारनिवृत्तिः'

But this argument is incorrect. The very act of abandonment itself of all Dharmas happens to be an activity for saving oneself. Thus it is not consistent with their argument at all. Not only does this stand against their own argument of refraining from all activity to save oneself, but it is also contradictory to the various injunctions that expressly ordain the performance of Prapatti.

It may be further argued that if Prapatti is considered as an Upāya or as an auxiliary means to the Siddhopāya, it would be opposed to the essential- nature of the Supreme Being who is the only Upāya, the only existent means, the Supreme Sentient, the Supremely Compassionate, the Omnipotent and the one who does not need any others' help. This standpoint is also contrary to the teachings of the Śrūti and the Smṛti. Further it is fallacious reasoning for it cannot be based on any general proposition. It cannot be said that the fact of a single Upāya is hampered whenever there is an auxiliary condition. Nor can it be affirmed that 'Nirapekṣatva' is harmed whenever an accessory is required. If, on the other hand, the above

argument is maintained inspite of these fallacies, then the same reason holds good with the Upāsanas also and results in the abandonment of Sādhana Bhāva even in the Upāsanas that have been admitted to have it. It cannot be said that even Upāsana is not a means at all for then it amounts to 'स्ववचन विरोध', for the holders of this view interpret the word Dharma in 'सर्वधमान् परित्यज्य' as Upāsana. It cannot be said that unnecessary burdens are loaded as Dharmas by Lord Krishna upon Arjuna to crush his haughtiness. The 'Śāstras and eminent treatises on Dharma declare in unequivocal terms that the worship of the Lord is the Supreme Dharma. They prescribe the process of Karmayōga, Jñānayōga, and Bhaktiyōga through which one can attain the vision of the Lord. The adoration of the Supreme Vāsudeva is declared as the highest Dharma. Can it be possible to deny these well-known Dharmas which are all activities for Mokṣa? Do not the Śāstras cease to carry weight in that case? Would there be any difference between these views and the views of the heretics then? So 'सर्वधर्मस्वरूपत्याग' cannot be the heart of Prapatti⁷⁶

Fourth Objection:- It may be argued further as follows:

The Lord's injunction 'Sarva Dharmān Parityājya' is very significant as it is all inclusive. The word 'all' is very forceful and it applies to all Dharmas. 'Śaraṇavaraṇam' or seeking protection of the Lord is also a Dharma and it is also to be given up as an Upāya lest the meaning of the word 'all' be contracted. So it is opposed to the teaching of the Gītā to consider that Prapatti possess 'Sādhanatva' or 'Siddha Sādhana Sahakāritva'.

This objection is answered thus:

It is agreed that one should not think that Prapatti is a 'Sākṣat Sādhana' or a direct and independent means to Mukti. It is only a 'Vyāja' to win the favour of the Lord who alone is the ultimate means to Mukti. This kind of reflection is common even to the Upāsanas. The Upāsanas, as well as Prapatti, are only meant for winning the favour of the Lord who is Himself the means for His attainment.

‘उपायः स्वप्राप्तेरुपनिषदधीतस्स भगवान् ।

प्रसक्त्यै तस्योक्ते प्रपदननिदिध्यासनसुती ॥ र.त्र.सा.9 p.105

It cannot be argued that we should give up in Prapatti the thought also of being the means of winning the Grace of the Lord. Then one has to give up the thought of Sāadhanatva even in the Siddhōpāya, lest the meaning of the words 'all Dharmas' be contracted. The Śrūtis declare that the Lord is the eternal Dharma and the consequence of giving up that also ensues in the above interpretation. It may be contended that all Dharmas other than the one described in the Charama Śloka, the Siddhōpāya, are to be abandoned. That exception then follows even in the case of Śaraṇāgati which is prescribed in the same context as 'Śaraṇam Vraja'.

'This unique Upāya', namely the Lord, has no beginning like any other Upāya as Upāsana. He needs not to be promoted to higher and higher perfection. He may not also require any auxiliary condition like the Upāsanas. He is eternal and ever compassionate. He is an abode of all perfections and is capable of realizing His will independently without the aid of any other. Then of what

use will Bhakti or Prapatti be to Him ? It may be asked. This objection is answered as follows:-

The Sādhyaōpāyas namely Bhakti and Prapatti are helpful, in as much as they save us from the Lord's Nigraha, which is the result of our transgressions of Divine commands from beginningless time. This is how these two help us when we pray for Mokṣa. When these are adopted for attainment of objects other than Mukti they help us by generating favourable dispositions in the Lord, as are suited to the attainment of such benefits. The Sādhyaōpāyas is only an occasion. The Lord who is Himself the means for His attainment becomes pleased with these Vyājas, and grants us the Supreme benefit of His eternal service after making us fit for it. So it must be understood that there is absolutely no conflict between these two Pramāṇas viz., those that ordain that the Sādhyaōpāyas confers upon the aspirant all benefits culminating in His eternal service, and those that declare that all these benefits are obtained through the adoption of the Sādhyaōpāyas viz., Bhakti and Prapatti, for both Pramāṇas are complementary and never contradictory as explained above.⁷⁷

Fifth Objection:- The performance, of the Varṇāśrama Dharmas and also of Bhaktiyōga which has these Dharmas as its accessories, is opposed it is often contended, to the essential nature of that aspirant who has understood clearly that he exists for Īśvara only and for none else'. An exclusive devotee of the above type is a Śuddha-Yājñin and it is argued that it is not right that he should practise the duties of his Varṇā and Āśrama that imply the association of other deities such as Agni, Indra, Varuṇa and others.

This objection has come only due to want of a clear understanding of the conclusions of the savants of the past. If one has understood thoroughly the nature of the Supreme Reality one will never be misled, for one will be convinced that one and the same Paramātmān, the Āntaryāmin is being worshipped through all one's actions. The Pratardana Vidyā, for example, distinctly ordains that the spiritual aspirant should meditate upon Brahman as having Indra and others as His body. It has been determined that the object of worship, even in the varied rites connected with various Āśramas and Varṇās and addressed to different deities, is the supreme Being alone who is the Āntaryāmin of all those deities. Even if other deities are worshipped with this essential knowledge that the Supreme Being the Sārvatman is only worshipped through them, there is absolutely no harm. But, if one worships other deities, as if they were independent, or if one observes certain rites other than his Nitya and Naimittika duties, owing to desire for certain fruits, it would then be opposed to his exclusive devotion. So there is absolutely no harm to one's supreme and exclusive devotion in one's performance of the Nitya and Naimittika rites and duties, without any desire for the fruit thereof, and with the firm conviction that the names of all Gods such as Agni, Indra and others primarily denote the Paramātmān, of whom all of them are attributes.

It may be further argued that the Upāsanas have been prescribed in order to produce faith in the efficacy of the Śāstras, just like the 'Ābhichārika Kriyas' that are meant for creating faith. The spiritual aspirant has to choose, it is said, the Supreme Being alone as his goal and endeavour.

The Upāsanās have been discarded, it is alleged, as they are not in fact the means. The text

अथ पातकभीतस्त्वं सर्वभावेन भारत ।
विमुक्तान्यसमारम्भो नारायणपरो भव' ॥

is quoted to support this viewpoint. So, it is argued that Prapatti alone is the means and never the Upāsanās.

(1) This argument is untenable for Upāsanās are not sources of evil, just like 'Ābhichārika Kriyas'. So, they are to be adopted as they are for the attainment of Mokṣa. (2) Upāsanās are not prescribed just to create a desire in the minds of the aspirants for the adoption of an easier means. Upāsanās do not yield their fruit in this life, and so cannot create faith in the minds of the aspirants regarding Prapatti. Moreover, success through an easier means causes faith in a more difficult means. It becomes only 'an Arthavāda', if it is described that the desired fruits are got from the 'Anga' instead of the Angi.⁷⁸ (3) The knowledge of the means of attaining the goal is got from the Śāstras, and it cannot be argued that Bhakti or Upāsanās are opposed to the goal in view. If the authority of the Śāstras is questioned as relating to Upāsanās, the authorities prescribing Prapatti become also invalid by parity of reasoning. (4) The word 'पातक' in the text quoted cannot and shall not relate to Upāsanās as there is no proof for it.

So both Bhakti and Prapatti are valid means to Mukti, as they have been enjoined by the Śāstras for different types of spiritual aspirants, according to their competence and ability.

It may be further argued that though Bhakti and Prapatti are enjoined by the Śāstras, only Prapatti is to be adopted as it is the only means adopted by the Āchāryas. Though the Śāstras prescribe 'Gavāmbhāna' in 'Atithi Sārkāra', that is opposed to traditional practice and so is not being adopted. Likewise Upāsanas also are not to be adopted.

This objection again is not well reasoned. A certain observance needs to be abandoned when it is invariably avoided by all Āchāryas and Śiṣṭas. It is said that even a Dharma,⁷⁹ if it is not conducive of Svarga and is an object of dislike for the world, should be given up. But Upāsanas are not so. They have been adopted by great saints like Parāśara. So it cannot be maintained that the observance of Upāsanas is opposed to all tradition.

Nor can it be maintained that these Upāsanas were valid in previous times and that they, due to want of competent people in Kaliyuga are not suited for this age. It is affirmed that Upāsanas are possible in all ages and that great souls who are devoted to the Lord may come in every age.⁸⁰ Want of competent persons does not at any time set aside the fact of spiritual discipline. The Śāstras do not get discarded only by this. The same argument may be turned against Prapatti also. It is not very easy for one to entrust the burden of his redemption to the Lord with implicit faith. It is, thus, very difficult to find men who have that Māhaviśvāsa and who are competent for observing Prapatti. But by this alone, we dare not say that Prapatti is not suited to this age. So, it is established that the Upāsanas are also valid means to Mukti even in this age of Kaliyuga. But they are suited only to such aspirants as are capable of practising

them, and those who are unable to adopt them choose Prapatti as their means to Mukti.⁸¹

- C. We may now deal with some of the misconceptions that might be entertained, as regards the accessories of Prapatti.
1. The very first objection to be raised against Prapatti might be about the necessity of the accessories such as 'Ānukūlya Samkalpa' and others to it. 'The Lord is ever compassionate and has taken the vow of redeeming all that seek refuge with Him, even though they might be enemies or full of faults. The Lord declared that he would not abandon anyone that might run to Him for help, even in the guise of a friend. When the Lord is so gracious as to protect the whole world without taking into consideration any merit or whatsoever, are not these accessories such as Ānukūlya Samkalpa and others unnecessary for performance of Prapatti? They might be however taken to be the attributes that are likely to be found in a Prapanna'.

This standpoint cannot be taken to mean that the accessories such as 'Ānukūlya Samkalpa' and others are unnecessary at the time of performance of Prapatti. There are many authoritative passages that differentiate between the main rite or Angi and its accessories or angas, and these will then become contradicted.⁸² It was explained above that even in our daily behaviour there was need for the observance of these accessories. So, it would be against worldly experience also to think that there is no need for the accessories. If the intention of the objection is that there will be no denial of the fruit of Prapatti, even in the event of the non-continuance of these accessories, such as Ānukūlya Samkalpa and others, after Prapatti, we do not

object. The Lord will redeem such Prapannas by expiating their sins in some way or other, as they have surrendered, in the proper way, the responsibility of their protection to the Lord before. But it cannot be argued that Ānukūlya Samkalpa is not needed, even at the time of performing Prapatti, for the performance of Prapatti cannot become complete without these essential accessories. Even the Brahmāstra requires certain accessories of its own, and likewise Prapatti also requires its accessories. Then, it may be asked, what is meant by the statement that Prapatti does not depend on something else like this at any time.

‘प्रपत्तेः क्वचिदप्येवं परोपेक्षा न विद्यते ।

सा हि सर्वत्र सर्वेषां सर्वलोकफलप्रदा ॥ र.त्र.सा. 24. p-169

The meaning of this stanza is only that Prapatti does not require any other Dharma or rite, such as Karmayōga or Jñānayōga as in the case of Upāsana. It does not mean that Prapatti is not in need of its own accessories which are essential and without which it cannot become complete.⁸³

2. It is further contended by some that, for a believer in Śāstra, there is nothing like 'Māhaviśvāsa' apart from 'Śāstrartha Visvasa', to be ordained as an accessory to Prapatti. It is thus put forth that Māhaviśvāsa cannot be an anga at all for Prapatti.

This objection is refuted on two grounds. First of all, the scriptural authorities prescribe Supreme faith as an anga to Prapatti. Secondly, there are degrees of faith, as evidenced from common experience resulting in different results. The statement

‘यस्य यावांश्च विश्वासस्तस्य सिद्धिश्च तावती ।

एतावानिति नैतस्य प्रभावः परिमीयते ॥’ र.त्र.सा. 24. p-170

declares that different men have faith in the sacred Mūlamantra in varying degrees, and that they attain the fruit thereof in proportion to their faith. So, it is essential that one should have supreme faith at the time of performance of Prapatti.

'If Māhaviśvāsa is not in its full measure at the time of Prapatti, will not the Lord discard one ?'-it may be asked. The answer is in the negative. If Prapatti is performed with this Māhaviśvāsa, though it may vary in degrees, it will definitely yield the fruit prayed for. The supreme Lord will protect even those Prapannas whose Māhaviśvāsa is not strong enough, by gradually strengthening and perfecting it. The savants of the past declare the infinite mercy of the redeemer that never discards anyone that runs to Him for protection. The great Yāmunāchārya conveys the same idea that the sins of one, that folds one's hands in worship to the Lord, in any way at any time, vanish at once, and that it never fails to bear fruit.⁸⁴ Thus, the Supreme Being will make one's Upāya perfect and will protect one within the desired time. So, Māhaviśvāsa rightly becomes an anga of Prapatti according to the Śāstras, since there are different degrees of faith among aspirants.⁸⁵ .

3. 'It is affirmed that Bhakti and Prapatti are capable of yielding either worldly prosperity or Mokṣa according to the mental attitude of the aspirant. An objection is raised here. It is questioned how these means of Bhakti and Prapatti can give such opposite results, only an account of the difference in mental attitudes. As one sows, so one reaps. Can one gather wheat from sowing barley, owing to the intention of the sower?'

The question under discussion is under the province

of the Śāstras, and it cannot be reasoned out otherwise. Even in this world, when we give a noble person some valuable thing for sale, we get only a high price, whereas, if we offer it merely as our offering without having any desire for any return, we get what all we desire. Likewise, Bhakti and Prapatti. They are capable of yielding all kinds of fruits worldly, as well as spiritual. Bhakti and Prapatti become 'Pravṛtti Dharmas' when they are adopted for the attainment of worldly benefits other than Mokṣa. But they are 'Nivṛtti Dharmas' in the case of those who desire nothing other than the lotus feet of the Lord. It is the difference in intention which is verily responsible for the attainment of different fruits from the same means. So, it is established by the Śāstras that one can attain all kinds of aspirations through these means of Bhakti and Prapatti, and this cannot be disproved by reason. It may be remembered here that the same rule holds good regarding the observance of the Nitya and Naimittika Karmas. The same act becomes binding, as well as liberating, according to the difference in mental dispositions.⁸⁶

4. It is asked often, whether it is right to hold that Bhakti and Prapatti, which are different in nature, yield the same result. Bhakti needs to be followed continuously till the time of departure from this world, whereas Prapatti is to be observed only once. Bhakti needs to be supported by Karmayōga and Jñānayōga whereas Prapatti needs nothing of the like except the five accessories. Can such Prapatti yield the same fruit as that of Bhaktiyōga?

The answer is definitely in the affirmative, because the observance of these two Upāyas depends upon the particular competency of such aspirants.

The aspirant who has chosen Bhaktiyōga as his means has the supreme Brahman as his goal, and he puts in his individual effort and grows stronger and stronger in his Upāya-Bhakti. This aspirant is required to possess the particular qualifications essential for Bhaktiyōga, such as a thorough knowledge of the Reality combined with the ability to take up to Bhakti.

The Ādhikārins for Prapatti are different. Those who are helpless and incapable of adopting Bhaktiyōga due to the lack of the necessary elements, but who cannot bear any delay in attaining the Supreme Goal, are fit for Prapatti and these aspirants also get the same fruits as Bhaktiyōgins, To the aspirants of the path of Prapatti the Lord Himself is the endeavour and the goal. But there maybe delay in the attainment of the goal according to the degree of urgency, or 'Tvarā', to attain Divine Communion. So, it is maintained that though Bhakti and Prapatti are different in nature they yield the same fruit as they relate to different kinds of aspirants, and not to the same kind. So the this nothing incompatible about these two ways of spiritual perfection.⁸⁷

5. Some others entertain doubts as regards the effectiveness of Prapatti which is verily capable of giving all benefits, when they fail to secure some worldly benefits through it. It, must be understood that Prapatti can never be in vain, if it is performed along with all the accessories, in the proper way. If one fails to get any benefit it must be only due to some deficiency in his performance of it. There might be some defect in Karma or Kartr or Sādhana or Parikara. Defect in Karma might be the lack of Māhaviśvāsa. If the doer is capable of following some

other means, and if he is a Sākinchana, he will not have the competency for Prapatti. That is called 'Kartṛvaigunyam'. If one is wanting in the teaching of the Āchāryas, there will be defect in parikara and so it is to be known that there is some defect or other somewhere, when Prapatti is not successful. When Prapatti is observed without any of these defects, even the objects of desire, worldly and visible, become fulfilled. ⁸⁸

6. It is further contended by some others that Prapatti, though very significant, is to function only as a part of Bhaktiyōga. These critics argue that the great sages of the past like Vyāsa and others have prescribed Bhaktiyōga itself as the means to Mukti. 'ध्येयो नारायणस्सदा', 'हरिकस्सदा ध्येयः', 'स्मर्तव्यस्सततं विष्णुः' and a host of other such authorities ordain that steady meditation alone is the means of liberation. The Gītā also ordains Prapatti as an Anga of Bhakti. So these argue that Prapatti can be only an Anga of Bhaktiyōga, and that it can never be an independent means of attaining spiritual perfection.

The above argument is not tenable for the scriptures ordain Prapatti itself as an independent means for liberation.

‘शरणं त्वां प्रपन्ना ये ध्यानयोगविवर्जिताः ।

तेऽपि मृत्युमतिक्रम्य यान्ति तद्वैष्णवं पदम् ॥ र.त्र.सा. p- 171

is a text which declares that even those who are incapable of meditation attain the highest abode of the Lord by means of surrender to the Lord. The exposition of Prapatti as an anga to Bhakti in the Bhāṣya does not negate it as an

independent means 'भाष्ये प्रपत्तेः भक्त्य'त्वोक्तिः न स्वातन्त्र्यबाधिका । विषयभेदात् उभयाकारयोगिषु क्वचित् अन्यतरोक्तेरविरोधात्।' न्या.वि.व्या.

The ahirbudhnya Samhitā affirms that Prapatti can be adopted as a direct and independent Upāya, by which one can attain that, which cannot be attained through Karmayōga, Jñānayōga or Bhaktiyōga.

‘तेन तेनाप्यते तत्तन्यासेनैव महामुने ।

परमात्मा च तेनैव साध्यते पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ र.त्र.सा. 24.p-171

These authorities establish the efficacy of Prapatti as a direct and independent means to Mukti. If one adopts this Upāya, he will also be blessed with the capacity to meditate steadily on Brahman, as its reward, as expounded by Rāmānuja in his Vaikunṭa Gadyam. The meditation of the Prapanna is for "Bhogyata" or the rapture of meditation of itself, whereas for an Upāsaka it is essential, as the means of liberation. A Prapanna also meditates upon God for "Svayamprayōjana" just like a healthy man drinks milk for the pleasure of drinking, whereas for an Upāsaka meditation is a means of attaining the goal, just as the drinking of milk by an unhealthy person serves the purpose of gaining good health.⁸⁹

"Can a Prapanna, then, engage in meditation of the Lord, with all its accessories irrespective of his Adhikāra' - it may be asked. The answer to the above question is that it is possible for everyone to meditate upon the Lord, in such a way, as is befitting his competency, and so the Upāsana Śāstras are not set at nought by this.

Bhagavān Rāmānuja has taught this means of Prapatti in his Śrī Ranga Gadyam and Saraṇāgathi Gadyam, and has briefly referred to it in his Vaikunṭa Gadyam also. He has, there, taught also the particular way of meditation upon the Lord, suited to the Prapanna, by means of which his desire for the attainment of this Supreme Goal of his life might grow in strength, without suffering any diminution. So Prapatti is to be adopted as a direct and immediate means to Mukti also in the same way as an indirect means to perfect and complete Bhaktiyōga. Bhakti and Jñāna are the two things that are to be prayed for by one and all in all states, and so the meditation of a Prapanna upon the Lord is svayam Prayōjana, as it strengthens his desire for the goal. There is thus no conflict at all between Bhakti and Prapatti. Bhaktiyōga happens to be the means of liberation but here meditation is not an Upāya, but only the fruit of Prapatti. Thus, it is established that Prapatti is not exclusively a part of Bhaktiyōga, but that is also a direct and immediate means to Mukti.

1. Rg. V. III-20-4
2. Sve. U. 6-17. 'मुमुक्षुर्वै शरणमहं प्रपद्ये।'
3. 'इन्द्रं शरणं प्रपन्नोऽभूवं । प्रजापति शरणं प्रपन्नोऽभूवं । मृत्युं शरणं प्रपन्नोऽभूवम्।' छा.उ. 2-22-3,4
4. 'ब्रह्मसंस्थोऽमृतत्वमेति' छा.उ. 2-23-1
5. प्रणवो धनुः शरो ह्यात्मा ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते । अप्रमत्तेन वेद्व्यं शरवत्तन्मयो भवेत् । मुं.उ. 2-2-4
6. तस्मान्न्यासमेषां तपसामतिरिक्तमाहुः वसुरण्यो विभूरसि; ब्रह्मणे त्वा महस ओमित्यात्मानं युञ्जीत।' म.ना.उ. 24 खण्ड
7. 'मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते।' भ.गी. 7 - 14
न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः ।' भ.गी. 7-15
तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत । भ.गी. 18-62
सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज । भ.गी. 18-66
8. Stotra Ratna, 21
9. 'परमपुरुषचरणारविन्द शरणागतिजनिततदाभिमुख्यस्य;; 'परमपुरुषचरणारविन्दयुगलन्यस्तात्मात्मीयस्य' वे.सं. 97 S.S.R.'s Edition
10. संकल्प सूर्योदयम् - 2-22
11. Gadya Bhashya
12. 'अथ बन्धनिवृत्तेरनन्तरभाविनीः परभक्ति परज्ञान परमभक्तीः प्रार्थयते।' ग.भा of Sudarsana Suri
'अथ शरीरपातसमयभाविनो बुद्ध्याकारानभ्यर्थयते अथवा मुक्तदशाभाविनां परभक्त्यादीनां इदमपेक्षणम् । ग.भा. of Desika
"Parabhakti is described here as कैङ्कर्योपकरणतया and not with the idea of an Upaya". Perivachan Pillai's commentary.
13. 'एतेषां संसारमोचनं भगवत्प्रपत्तिमन्तरेण नोपपद्यत इति' वे.सं. 79 S.S.R.'s Edition

14. S.B. II-1-34
15. B.G. 2-61; 6-14; 7-14; X-10; 18-66
16. S.B. III-3-56
17. S.B. III-3-57
18. R.T.S. 9.P.107
19. R.T.S. 9. P.108
20. R.T.S. 10. P. 109
21. R.T.S. 9, P. 104
22. Those who have one of the above four conditions are of 4 classes; those who have two of these are of 6 classes; those who have three of these are of 4 classes; those who have all the four are of 1 class. Total; 15 classes of aspirants fit for Prapatti. R.T.S. 10.p. 109
23. R.T.S. 10, P. 109
24. R.T.S. 10, P. 109
25. R.T.S. 8, P. 104
26. R.T.S. 8, P. 104
27. R.T.S. 8, P. 105
28. 'तावदार्तिस्तथा वाञ्छतावन्मोहस्तथासुखम् । यावन्नयाति शरणं त्वामशेषाघनाशनम्' ॥ वि.पु. 1-9-73
29. The Mulamantra 'ओं नमो नारायणाय' ।
The Dvaya : श्रीमन्नारायणचरणौ शरणं प्रपद्ये श्रीमते नारायणाय नमः' ।
The Charama Sloka : 'सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज । अहंत्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि माशुचः' ।
30. Rahasyapadavi, pp. 7-8
31. R.T.S. 11-P. 110
32. R.T.S. 11. p. 110
33. Laksmi Tantra, 17-77

34. R.T.S. 11-P. 110
35. Lakshmi Tantra, 17-22
36. See R.T.S. 11, p. 111-112
37. See R.T.S. 11, p. - 112
38. प्रख्यातः पञ्चषाङ्गः सकृदिति भगवच्छासनैरेषयोगः तत्र
द्वाभ्यामपायाद्विरतिरनितरोपायतैकेन बोध्या । एकेन स्वान्तदादर्यं
निजभरविषयेऽन्येन तत्साध्यतेच्छा तत्त्वज्ञानाप्रयुक्तात्विहस
परिकरात्तादधीन्यादिबुद्धिः ॥ र.त्र.सा. 11-p-114
39. 'अव्याजसिद्धमनपायमुपायम्' ।
40. N.V. 18
41. 'आत्मापि चायं न मम' 'स्वरक्षणेप्यशक्तस्य को हेतुः पररक्षणे' ।
42. अनन्यार्हानन्याधीनशेषभूत्वम्, अत्यन्तपरतन्त्रत्वम् ।
43. 'आत्मात्मीयभरन्यासो ह्यात्मनिक्षेप उच्यते' लक्ष्मी तन्त्र 17-79
44. तेन संरक्ष्यमाणस्य फले स्वाम्यवियुक्तता ।
केशवार्पणपर्यन्ता ह्यात्मनिक्षेप उच्यते ॥ लक्ष्मी तन्त्र 17-73
45. 'मुमुक्षुमात्रसामान्यं स्वरूपादिसमर्पणम् ।
अकिञ्चने भरन्यासस्त्वधिकोऽङ्कितया स्थितः ।
अत्र रक्षाभरन्यासस्समः सर्वफलार्थिनाम् ।
स्वरूपफलनिक्षेपस्त्वधिको मोक्षकाङ्क्षिणाम् ॥ र.त्र.सा. 12-p-115
46. R.T.S. 12, P. 116
47. अतिमानुषस्तव - 61; वरदराजस्तव - 84, 92
48. 'पुत्रः प्रेष्यस्तथाशिष्यः इत्येवं च निवेदयत्' ।
49. R.T.S. 8, P. 103
50. Nyasa Tilakam - 21
51. R.T.S.9, P. 105
52. R.T.S. 13, P. 118

53. N.V. 19

54. See R.T.S. 14, pp. 119-120

55. R.T.S. 14, PP. 119-120

56. R.T.S. 15, P. 121

57. R.T.S. 17, P. 129

58. R.T.S. 15, P. 125

59. G.S. 31.

60. 'मनीषी वैदिकाचारं मनसापि न लङ्घयेत्' ;

'सन्ध्याहीनोऽशुचिर्नित्यम्' ; 'तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते' ।

61. 'आज्ञानुज्ञाविभागेन द्विधा शास्त्रीयपद्धतिः ।

निग्रहानुदयायाद्या परा तत्तत्फलाप्तये ॥

अनुज्ञया प्रवृत्तोऽपि क्रमकोपाधिसंभवे ।

आज्ञातिक्रमदोषस्यान्नियमोऽतो दुरत्ययः ॥

अनुज्ञामात्रसिद्धेषु कैकर्येषु विचक्षणैः ।

अकृतौ तत्फलालाभो न तु दोष इरीरितम् ॥

र.त्र.सा. 17, P.-131

62. 'अपायसम्प्लवे सद्यः प्रायश्चित्तं समाचरेत् ।

प्रायश्चित्तिरियं सात्र यत्पुनःशशरणं ब्रजेत् ॥

उपायानामुपायत्वस्वीकारेऽप्येतदेव हि ।

अज्ञानादथवाज्ञानादपराधेषु सत्स्वपि ।

प्रायश्चित्तं क्षमस्वेति प्रर्थनैकैव केवलम् ॥

र.त्र.सा. 18. P.-132

63. R.T.S. 18, P. 133

64. 'न प्राग्वत् बुद्धिपूर्वाधि नचात्यन्तमनुग्रहः ।

लघुर्दण्डः प्रपन्नस्य राजपुत्रापराधवत् ॥'

र.त्र.सा. 18, 134

65. R.T.S. 18, p. 134

66. R.T.S. 18, P. 135

67. S.B. III-4-51

68. R.T.S. 18, P. 137
69. R.T.S. 24, P. 160
70. R.T.S. 24, Pp. 164-165
71. R.T.S. 24, P. 166
72. R.T.S. 24, P. 166
73. R.T.S., 24, p. 167
74. R.T.S. 24, p. 161
75. R.T.S., 24 p. 162
76. R.T.S., 24, p. 163
77. R.T.S., 24, p. 164
78. R.T.S. 24, p. 167
79. 'अस्वर्ग्यं लोकविद्विटं धर्मप्याचरेन्न तु' । या.स्मृ. 1-156
80. R.T.S. 24, p. 168
81. R.T.S. 24, p. 168
82. 'षड्विधा शरणागतिः', 'न्यासः पञ्चाङ्ग संयुतः' 'स्वाङ्गैः पञ्चभिरावृताम्' ।
83. R.T.S., 24, p. 169
84. Sto. Rat., 28
85. R.T.S., 24, p. 170
86. R.T.S., 24, p. 170
87. R.T.S., 24, p. 170
88. R.T.S. 24, p. 171
89. R.T.S. 24, p. 171

CONCLUSION

We have so far dealt with the philosophy of Sādhana in Viśiṣṭādvaita according to Deśika. In the first section we have dealt with the ontological position of the Sādhaka or Upāsaka and expounded that he is as real an entity as the 'Supreme Brahman', though adjectival to him in nature. It is described therein that the true puruṣārtha of the Jīva is the attainment of the bliss of Divine Communion. In the second section the essential nature of the Paramātmā has been expounded. The Supreme Brahman, it is affirmed, is qualified by both Supremacy and accessibility. The Supreme Brahman is an 'Ocean of Mercy' and one would attain one's highest aspiration only through Divine Grace and God is Himself both the 'goal' and 'the endeavour'. In the next section we have discussed about the concept of Sādhana in Viśiṣṭādvaita according to Rāmānuja. We have also detailed the general scheme of Sādhana in Viśiṣṭādvaita according to the path of Bhaktiyoga and Prapatti. The special advantages of Prapatti over Bhaktiyoga have been expounded in the last section wherein the important features, of Prapatti have been delineated.

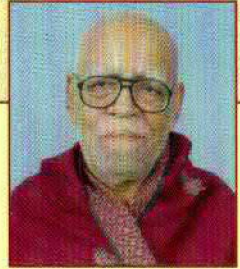
Deśika has interpreted and justified the expositions of Rāmānuja in all his works. He has explained and developed in particular the doctrine of Prapatti that has been expounded by Rāmānuja in his Gadyas.

Though Bhakti and Prapatti are both valid means to Mukti, the school of Viśiṣṭādvaita is following Prapatti more than Bhaktiyoga. Prapatti is, in fact, the living religion of Śrīvaiṣṇavism today. Hosts of Śrīvaiṣṇava aspirants observe Prapatti either directly or through the

mediation of their Āchāryas as the case may be. It is affirmed that Bhaktiyoga is not within the competency of one and all, where Prapatti has a Universal appeal. The Greatness of Rāmānuja lies in the fact that he preached and practised Prapatti and threw open the gates of emancipation through it, to all humanity, irrespective of caste or attainments. All followers of Rāmānuja to whatever group they may belong, honour the path of Prapatti, though they may be divided on the manner of performing it.

Prapatti is mainly the root of all Sādhana in all Philosophical systems. Even the Buddhist finds the need of it. He is required to take refuge with the Buddha, the Sangha and the Dharma. The Advaitin assigns a lofty place for surrender. Teachers of Advaita declare that Bhakti is essential for Jñānam and herein comes the need for Prapatti. The teachers of Dvaita ordain Bhakti as the means of liberation and Prapatti is inevitable for the attainment of such steadfast devotion. The Sakti Viśiṣṭādvaitin assigns a very high place to 'Śaraṇāgathi' in his scheme of Sādhana signified by the 'Śatsthalās'. The doctrine of self surrender is admitted by all these as a sub-means to perfect another means, may be Jñānam or Bhakti. But the school of Viśiṣṭādvaita has come to the conclusion, on the authority of the host of scriptures, that Prapatti can also function as a direct means to Mukti, as it can function as an indirect means. The Lord, it is affirmed, being pleased with the Prapatti performed by the aspirants would grant them even Mukti, just like Jñāna or Bhakti, as every thing is to be obtained only through that ever-merciful Lord.

Though most of the followers of Śrīvaiṣṇavism follow Prapatti, they do not discard Bhaktiyoga. The exposition of Karmayoga, Jñānayoga and Bhaktiyoga is also of immense good to the aspirants, for, by following the virtues ordained therein, they evolve and live a deeply spiritual and devotional life. Thus Bhaktiyoga also is of equal importance to a Śrīvaiṣṇava as Prapatti. The Doctrine of Sādhana in Viśiṣṭādvaita is thus of Supreme Importance to all Śrīvaiṣṇavas. It will interest others also as many of the doctrines described here are Universal in appeal.



ABOUT THIS BOOK

"The Philosophy of Sadhana in Visistadvaita" has all the valuable features of a learned work. As a preamble to the subject under consideration the author describes the triangle of Sadhaka, Sadhya and Sadhana and deals in detail about the means of salvation called Karmayoga, Jnanayoga, Bhakthiyoga and Prapatti yoga as a crowning point of all these. He shows that these yogas do not have water tight compartments, as all of them lead to the same goal of salvation directly or indirectly.

(from the Benediction)