

BHAKTI: ITS PHILOSOPHICAL BASES

Bhakti: definition – general: Nārada : It is the intense love of God and has the nature of nectar-(parama premarūpā ca am_rtasvaūā ca). Śāndilya: Love of God with exceeding affection (fondness) is bhakti (sā bhakti parānurktir Īśvarī)

Bhāgavata (III 29.12) defines bhakti as the selfless love of the Supreme Person (ahetuka-vyavahitā yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame).

Definitions of Bhakti according to Viśiṣṭādvaita: (Viśiṣṭādvaita Kośa ed. By D.T. Tatachā yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame).

Definitions of Bhakti according to Viṣṭādvaita: (Viśiṣṭādvaita Kośa ed. By D.T. Tata chārya p. 184)

1. Rāmāyaṇa defines: adhikamānyaviṣayaḥ snehaḥ attachment to the Supreme. Utk_rṣṭe pṛītiḥ = supreme love.
2. Rāmānuja: Snehapūrvam anudhyānam = continual meditation with attachment. Vedāntodida sapatikara bhakti yogah = Bhaktiyoga is done with the accessories spoken by the Vedānta.
3. Vedānta Deśika: Mahanīyaviṣaye pṛītireva: snehapūrvam anudyānam iti: Pṛītirūpāpanna dhyānam sā eva bhaktiyogāḥ: Pramabhaktir atīśayita pṛītiḥ: exceeding love is Pramabhgakti
4. Bhāvaprakāśikā: Upakārajātvakṛtaḥ snehaviśeśaḥ: That attachment which is helpful in its activity.

This definition of Bhakti is almost identical with that of Madhva: sarvato adhikaḥ bhakti; attached to Him who is absolutely supreme or superior.

Bhakti: (Madhava in Śrīmad Mahābhārata tātparya nirṇaya) loving God more than anything else knowing his greatness is bhakti and that is the only thing that can confer liberation: mahātmya-jñāna-pūrvastu sudṛidha sarvatodhikaḥ sneho bhaktir iti proktas na cā anytha.

The definitions can also be derived from the religious attitude which is *par excellence* bhakti-suffused.

The definitions can be from three points of view: ādhyātma, ādhibhūta and ādhidaiva.

Ādhyātma: The cognitive (jñāna), conative (karma) and affective (bhakti).

Ādhibhūta: Typologies regarding the individual natures devasura; introvert-extrovert: guṇa – vibhāga: sattva-rajas-tamas; puruṣārtha-vibhāga: artha, kāma, dharma and mokṣa : and lastly division according to urgency: ārti-distress, arthārthī-poverty, jijñāsu (ignorance); and jñāni (realisation).

Ādhidaiva: Avyaktā amūrta: Bhakti as to the object: Gods of the pantheon, One God- Transcendent Para, ineffable, unknowable to or beyond Reason, inaccessible, nirguṇa unpredictable as existent or non-existent, qualified or unqualified (nirguṇa, nirākāra, nirālamba, neti) Absolute divined by Revelation or Intuition:

Amūrta: God as Cosmic Cause, Ruler, Self of all types of processes which reasoning can apprehend or infer; God as the Perfect Power, Perfect qualified, transcendent to the process of the world.

Amūrta- God is Self of all (antaryāmin)

Mūrta- God as incarnate Person –Savior-Redeemer, historical descent- Avatār, and God as Arcā- lovable Radiant Form adapted to devotee's needs.

All these five form sare objects of Bhakti: They are one and must be conceived as One;

Bhakti is a rasa: the modifications of rasa into the nine fold forms: the most valuable being *tanmaya* and *dasya* and *sakhya*: familial relations as capable of drawing out in a unique pattern (gestalt) the several other rasaas:

Bhakti in philosophical relationships: Advaita Tanmya aikya: in Dvaita as *dāsya-sakhya*: in Viṣṭādvaita *śārīrativa*, *tanamayatva*, *dāsativa* or *sevakatva*, *kāntatva* (*nāyikīṭva*) and all: It explains also the *acintya bhedābheda* of Caitanya:

Bhakti pre-eminently is the religious approach to God or the Supreme Reality. It si the religious consciousness or rather the religious mode of consciousness. Though it is related to the affective mode of consciousness, it is something more than that which is mere subjective experience. there is the relation to the Object which demands a relationship with it, through it is apparently not a simple affective relation. It entails a complex sentiment of awe, fear, holiness and dependence. It is capable of being felt in certain deep moments of spiritual ‘

Disclosure’ to the individual. It may be sensed as a superior power, luminous and compelling, as a law supernatural and even impersonal, as a universal sense and meaning of all existence, or something surpassing all categories of experience. the object of bhakti may be experienced as a ‘personality’; some Being which can come into personal relations with man, as a friendly authentic voice or saviour and so on. It is experienced as a luminous power and intelligence, infinite and incomparable, which is experienced also as the Ground and Origin and self of all things.

It must, however, be pointed out at the very beginning that though all these experiences are those registered by men who had dedicated themselves to the pursuit mainly, it has been possible for other simple folk also to have been 'revealed' this rich manifoldness of the Infinite Being. The 'primitive religions' do inform us of these concepts of God as Mana, Orenda, Tao, Yahveh, Anu or Bel, Ahura-Mazda, and Brahman. But each one of them gives us a clue to the power and presentation of just one aspect of the Divine. Later religious thought has not made much progress except in so far as it has emphasized the further revelations of the Divine Nature to man.

There have been many definitions of Religion: subjective (*ādhyātmika*), social (*ādhibhautika*) and transcendental (*ādhidaivika*). That modern world religion has all these aspects, even as it had at the beginning, is a fact of religious history. But in what we may call the most important aspect, the subjective, the dominant note is the search for liberty or freedom (*mokṣa*) from *samsāra*, the cycle of conflicting relationships eternally repeating themselves, confounding understanding. The urge 'native to human mind and integral to human nature' is given at the very start of life. By what means this liberty or freedom from 'Samsāra' or the chain of causes and effects and effects and relationships could be achieved is only to be discovered by making a serious exploration into the nature of the 'liberating' Knowledge. The main question arises whether this subjective knowledge is sufficient to solve the problem of human bondage to process. The *jñāna-mārga* devotes itself to the elucidation of the problem of the consciousness in all its several aspects – subjective, objective and the transcendental. The true nature of the subjective or Self being known, the problem of freedom of the subjective gets solved. The devotion that is engendered by this quest for the meaning of the Self (subjective or immanent) can scarcely be called *bhakti*, though it is a variant of the same in so far as it might lead to the experience of the grandeur of the Self as the transcendent and the objective (social), or identical with it. The Vedic seers of this path have

proclaimed it as the summit of realisation, 'He am I' (So' ham) and 'That art thou' ('Tat tvam asi'.) This is the perception of the transfigured Atman (Self) in all things and of all things in it. Such an experience is altogether beyond the normal human nature but the miracle is that it falls within its possibility which is recognized as something of a 'Grace'. *Prasāda*, which quietens the fever of samsāra and gives meaning to existence. This is brahma-nirvana. One attains to jñāna which is the knowledge of the immortal (Amṛtam) beyond all impermanence, imperfection, and limitation, and which was Free, Infinite, Real Being. The experience of Brahman is the goal of jñāna-yoga.

The way of works or karmayoga, again subjectively treated, may be said to lead to the performance of works selflessly for the purpose of gaining freedom. Selfless (niṣkāma) karma of course must be based on the correct appreciation of the cause effect sequences so that our acts should not lead to bondage but to freedom. Desire for the things of the world is the most powerful cause of bondage and ignorance and misery. Freedom from desire, or even from a taint of it, is necessary in the performance of works. Correct and right performance of works includes the three levels of thought, word and deed, and with the possible and inevitable fourth, namely right meditation. The rightness of a thought, word or deed or meditation lies in its capacity to liberate one from the bonds of limited being and dhukha (sorrow). Thus dharma is definitely identified in the purely subjective sphere with the desire less liberating action. This too removes the strangle – hold of vāsanās one, and leads to the experience of the liberated knowledge (nirvāṇa). There is here no allegiance demanded to any outer and transcendental being or nature. Work here does not become an offering as it would when it is performed to achieve the grace or knowledge of God. Buddha's dharma is the subjective choice of the liberating experience: work that usually binds is set to do the unrolling work or binding work: this is the rotation of the dharma-cakra which is the opposite of the adharma which binds.

Thus we can clearly see there can be a purely subjective jñāna-yoga and a purely subjective karma-yoga directed towards the liberation of oneself. The bhakti or śraddha that comes in is the consequence of the belief that such paths do lead to Nirvāṇa.

The objective (ādhibhautika) view of religion leads us to the consideration of the individual in relation to other individuals and Nature on the one hand and on the other to God who is recognized as the Spirit immanent in all process. As the individual is born in the world of Nature and man and is himself embodied, he realises the intimate connection he has with them. Thus religion is said to be a social phenomenon, comprising certain institutions, 'avowing certain beliefs and entailing certain obligations and duties in the members of the society. The knowledge of the ground of these may lead us to the consideration of the common experience of the spirit behind Nature which is the mysteries. Animism, mythology, symbology and other features of popular religion belong to this domain. Even so the worship of the natural phenomena and the strict performance of the rituals of appeasement and enjoyment of the powers of Nature are considered to be the necessary Karma. Thus all religions do contain an element of ritual; the more advanced religions, however, reduce the ritual to the minimum importance by exalting the spirit over the 'form'. The worship of Nature is explained by means of the notion that each element in nature has a presiding deity (adhidevata) which is being worshipped. Thus the more subtle casuistry of Nature-worship turns it into the worship of the devatā (God or goddess). But more often than not these worships have the characteristic of propitiations and sacrifices for prosperity, wealth, health and victory over enemies and inimical natural forces. The history of these practices has been a long and continuous one, and throughout two important features have been pronounced; awe and pleading for mercy. Supernatural causation is not within human control except through supernatural means such as ritual, including sacrifice of every thing dear and near. The belief again in the mantra or the incantation which almost becomes a craze or fanatical faith is a significant development in the history of religious practices.

Nor again should we forget that men are not identically constituted. There are psychological differences. The science of typology shews that there are two major types: introvert and extrovert, or adopting Śrī Kṛṣṇa's formulation the daivī and the āsurī; there are men in whom the former predominates and there are men who share the work of the latter. The Vedic Gods are devas working for the good (ultimate good) whereas the asuras are demoniacal powers antagonistic to them. They are the polar opposites on the highest planes of being. Devas are powers of light, knowledge and freedom; asuras are powers of strength, might and binding. The human being aligns himself either with the one or the other and gets the daivi nature or the asuric nature¹. Thus the general conception

¹ Bhagavad Gītā XVI. 4-9:

Dambo darpo bhimānāśca krodhaḥ pārūṣyameva ca |

ajñānam cābhijātasya Pārtha sampadām āsurīm ||4||

Daivī sampadivimokṣāya nibandhāyasurī matā ||5a||

Pravṛttim ca nivṛttim ca janā na vidurāsurāḥ |

Na śaucam nāpi cācāro na satyam teṣu vidyate ||7||

Asatyam apratiṣṭam te jagadāhuran īśvaram

Aparasparasambhūtam kimanyatkāmahaitukam 118 cf. Lokāyata view

Etām drṣṭmavaṣṭabhya naṣṭatmāno lpabuddhayaḥ |

prabhavantyugrakarmānāḥ kṣayāya jagato hitāḥ ||9||

(Translations: Sri Aurobindo); Pride, arrogance, excessive self-esteem, wrath, harshness, ignorance, these, Pārtha, are the wealth of the man born into the Asuric nature. (4) Daivik qualities lead towards liberation, the asuric towards bondage-5a.

of the nature of the world or the universe presents itself in the ādhibhautika sense. Men worship these forces and sacrifice to them.

But there is also another typology which is derived from the purely bodily nature. Sattva, rajas and tamas are the qualities of material nature (prakṛit). They

are never in an unmixed condition. They are recognized by the presence of a greater or lesser proportion in all things. Thus a man is said to be sātvik or pure and harmonized, intent on knowledge alone, when the sattva-quality is predominant over the others. Similarly with respect to the rajasa nature or tamasa nature. Men seek in the environment objects according to their (physico-psychical) nature and enjoy and delight in them. The three guṇas of Prakṛit are really gathered into the two-typical forms of Daivī and Dāsūrī. The mahātmā is one who chooses to follow the 'daivī prakṛit' whereas the alpātmā (alpa-medhas) follows the āsurī prakṛit. Thus we have firstly two general types, and combined with the triple guṇas of prakṛit, we have six dominant and general types in human nature. There are indeed many degrees of each kind under each general type.

Asuric men have no true knowledge of the way of action or the way of abstention: truth is not in them nor clean doing or faithful observance. (7).

'The word is with God' they say, not true, not founded in truth brought about by mutual union, with desire for it as sole cause, a world of change (8)

..... asuric men become centers or instrument of a fierce titanic violent action, a power of destruction in the world, a fount of injury and devil. (9)

There is also one more division to be considered in this connection. These characteristics are more closely allied to the physiological distinctions between the two sexes. Some are number of types of twelve (6×2). This division is clearly traceable to the Veda¹, but it is given a philosophical meaning and not the physio-logical. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa² also gives this clear-cut functional distinction between the Supreme Lord who is said to be the one Male (Puruṣa—pumān) and the souls who are said to be females. The Bhāgavata also accepts this view. The soul's progress to the Divine is the progress of the loving woman to her Lord from whom she has been separated. Or it is the bride's march to the Divine bridegroom. This view was accepted by Christian Saints like St Thomas Aquinas. The female-mind is said to be centre-petal, whereas the male-mind is centrifugal. Here again the peak of attainment for a soul is to be entirely centre-

petal and absolutely free from centri-fugality (which is almost identical with self-centre-petal, whereas the male-mind is centrifugal. Here again the peak of attainment for a soul is to be entirely centri-petal and absolutely free from centri-fugality (which is almost identical with self-centered-ness). No one is wholly female or wholly male as he is. But some ālvārs were 'seeking to be female', entirely devoted to be object of their love (God).

The female – mind is an intuitive, sympathetic intellectuality, utterly self-giving or losing itself in the object

¹ Rg. Veda: I. 164.16:

Striyalḥ! satīstān u me pumas āhuḥ |

Paśyad aksavān na vi cetadandhaḥ ||

² Viṣṇu Purāṇa: I.9-35

Devatirayañmanuśyeṣu pumān Bhagavān Hariḥ |

Strīnāmnī śrīīśca vijñayān ānaylor vidyate param ||

loved. Its approach is much nearer the integral approach, since the woman loves with her whole being, than the rational male-approach. It should , however, be remembered that this analysis is typological: we do find in actuality many who share both and are typically more or less androgynous or hermaphroditic.

Nor again have we exhausted our typology. There are four type of men, men who seek artha, kāma, dharma and mokṣa (wealth, pleasure, righteousness and liberation). The first three types are nearer to each other whereas the last is the renounce of the first two ends of life much more fundamentally than the third (dharma). The liberation instinct or 'motive' is almost identical with what we now call the mystic frenzy and is often in peril of being diverted into the terrible path of rajasic and āsuric natures. Endowed with the will to power, the mystical soul may lose the essential goal of emancipation from all desires. As contrasted with the

mystic's absolute – freedom drive, the seeker of religious consciousness renounces the will to power of every sort, and seeks only dependence on the Divine Godhead. The mumukṣu on the path of Bhakti is a religious soul who seeks inseparable dependence or oneness with the Divine. The mumukṣu on the path of jñāna is a mystic seeking absolute freedom in God and of God. The apprehension of the nature of God is necessary, and that determines the type of relationship sought with God, whether it is one of utter dependence out of love or absolute losing of oneself in God so as to live and move and have the being of god¹ – sālokya, sāmīpya, sārūpya and sāyujya, or of

¹ Brahma-bhāva

losing oneself in Him even as a drop of water in water¹ or rivers in the ocean, or as sugar in the water. Thus the psychological grounds of the nature of Bhakti are clearly brought out by the types of personality and the ends pursued by each type.

Having thus expounded briefly the nature of the subject (soul-embodied), who seeks to experience, realise and attain the Divine Godhead, and the possible ways by which he so seeks to attain the Godhead, all of which do not help however the quest (siddhi) eternal, I shall deal with the relationship which the soul adopts or gains in respect of the Divine Godhead. The individual, who is at the level of the human species or consciousness-plane, can be considered to be a complex personality having metaphysical, psychological, and physical relationship. In stating that there are several types of relationship, it is necessary to know whether there is any one fundamental relationship around which all others constellate or from which ever other could be deduced. Again there is another question whether these relationships are simultaneously possible and necessary or should they be realised successively in the evolution of the human being or his religious consciousness so that the higher ones sublate to include the lower relationships.

The *natural* or 'specific' object of the religious consciousness is God, the infinite, Omniscient, creator, sustainer and redeemer, saviour . he is organic to the soul as its self. The soul is metaphysically the amśa (part understood in the spiritual sense) of Brahman. It *psychically* reveals its utter integral inseparable relationship to God. It finds itself losing itself in Him and yet aware of such a fissional identity with Him, even as in deep sleep (suṣupti) or in samādhi (of the yogis). Vitally, the soul displays an irrespressible yearning for the fullest experience of God; *cosmologically*, it recognizes God as its creator as well as of the universe; *aesthetically*, it seeks its enjoyment of Beauty in God, in Nature and all as welded in the glory and harmony of God's nature, *morally* it finds in this Godhead the harmony of the Universal dharma (law of God) and the inward freedom of each to act in the knowledge of God's eternal commandment.

God is the alpha and the omega (ādyanta) of all things. He is the supreme artha and kāma and dharma and mokṣa, and not merely the giver of these. The seers of old have discovered these truths through their many vidyās (sciences of *ānanda*, *ananta*, *amala*, and the characteristics of antaryāmi (daharātma) and apahatapāpmā and Īśvara have all to be known through the several approaches of the soul; but in some ways some attributes are more easily and quickly perceived and realised than some others. In whatever way therefore a soul approaches the Divine Lord in that way and in the manner desired does the Lord reveal Himself to him. Ye yathā mm prapadyante tāmstathaiva bhajāmyham (BG. Iv. II). There are certain social relationships that also tend to occur in respect of the Divine Lord. This is inevitable when the Divine incarnates in the Universe. This brings us to the consideration of the Nature of Godhead. The Godhead is utterly transcendental¹, beyond the process. He is the para – Absolute. This Divine Nature is super-personal in so far as it is beyond the impersonal and the personal forms of the Divine. God is also the creator, sustainer and governor and destroyer of the processes; these forms of God are phases in the process of change. God is beyond all change but He is also the controller (niyantā) of all

process according to Divine Law (ṛtam). In this phase of God He is three-fold; purāṇically Brahmā Viṣṇu, Rudra, or āgamaically Samkarṣaṇa, Pradhymna and Aniruddha aspects of Nārāyaṇa (Vāsudeva). God is also the sole indwelling presence in all things and creatures though manifested (vyakta) in advanced seers and devotees but un-manifest (avyakta) in all others. He is the anantaryāmin. The fourth descent is als the supreme saviour-redeemer principle incarnating in the world-periods of History in suitable forms. He is a divine descent (avatar) unlike any other's births. The last descent is the Arcā (luminous presence divine in iconic forms) amenable to worship by all who have no possibility of enjoying the experience of the other four descents.

These five forms of the Divine are integral to one another for they are not five Godheads but One only. The worship of the one should include and embrace others also simultaneously. To think of them as separate is to lose the fundamental truth about the nature of God. The avatār in historical personalities of the Redeemer and Saviour of creatures who have sought refuge in Him, for the purposes of resorting dharama and destruction of the forces of adharma and

¹ Ekam sad Viprāḥ bahudhāvadanti Rg V.I.164.46

the tortures of the good souls who have sought refuge in Him, however has played the most important role in the history of Religion. When in addition to all the saving redeeming and restoring functions the function of a Teacher is added to the Avataār, it becomes particularly significant. We have this culmination in sri Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rāmā. (Later we have Gautama, the Buddha). This integral conception of the Deity is the most complete explosion available in any Religion. The Bhāgavata Religion, which Hinduism acknowledges, is therefore considered to be theologically perfect Religion. The approaches to the Divine Lord Incarnate fall into the social patterns. Thus the human relationship of Father, Mother, Teacher, Wife, Brother, Ruler Friend Beloved¹ and so on are possible to some of the Relatives of the God Incarnate as expounded by Dśaratha and Vasudeva, Arjuna and Sugrīva and so on. Kausalyā, Devakī and Yaśodā enjoyed the Divine as Son. The more suited to the ordinary individual is dāsatva, servanthood

(slavehood). But then the other relationships could be induced such as fatherhood of God. Mother-hood of God is metaphorically and causally conceived, as He is the womb and He has the vātsalya (mother-love for the soul) which tolerates if not enjoys faults of His children (doṣa-sahamativa if not doṣa-bhogyatva). These relationships are enacted and on these lines the ālvārs and saints have achieved a pregnant unity with the Godhead.

¹ Pitṛ matr suta bhrātr dārā mitrādayopi v& |
Ekaika phala-lābhāya sarva lābhāya Keśavaḥ ||

Sometimes the aesthetical approaches are adopted to enjoy the repute of divine nature. Though there are said to be nine rasas, aesthetic sentiments, such as śānta, hāsyā, vātsalya, adbhuta, mādhyura (rati), śoka, viraha, krodha and vismaya, the Bhakti school thinks that in respect of God, the sentiments that are most valuable and desirable are Adbhuta, Vātsalya, śānta and Mādhyura (with Bhayānaka). For God is wonderful Beauty, transcendent in His attractiveness, He is all love for His children. He grants the Ultimate peace and Freedom; and He is eminently the object of our selfless self-given adoration and love (premā), and above all, He is so immeasurably great that not to love Him, adore Him, seek Him as the abode of Peace and Freedom from samsāra means great sin; thus fear of Śīn haunts the non-seeker. Also God is the Ultimate Power for fear of whom all the elements. All gods can creatures do their work. His wrath is also great. But it is grace.

Bopadeva gave a description of bhakti which included all types of relationships. Eh distinguished between the *vihita* and *niṣiddha* types. Under the *vihita* (prescribed and right modes) he mentioned two, namely, the śuddha and the miṣra, karma-jñāna miṣra and jñāna-karma-miṣra. Again these are of three kinds namely the uttama, madhyama and adhama, and along with the three qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas there are further divisions of the karma –

miśra. The sattva-karma-miśra is of three kinds: karma-ksáyārtha (for dissolution of karma), Viṣṇupriyārtha) for pleasing Viṣṇu God), Vidhisiddhayartha (for fulfilling the command of scriptural duties or ordained duties in the scripture). The rājasakarma-miśra is of three kinds: viṣayārtha, yaśortha, aiśvaryārtha; the tamaskarma miśra cannot be called bhakti at all for its aims are himsā (cruelty), dambha (vanity) and mātsarya (maliciousness).

The niṣiddha type of bhakti comprises four elements of kāma, dveṣa, bhyaya and sneha. Love of God should never fall into rati (kāma), dveṣa (persecution of Godhead), or treating God as a mere ordinary friend, human and equal to oneself (sama). Nor is it right to fall into dejection (śoka) because of failures in life and love. Separation from the Divine (viraha) is merely an incident which increases the contemplation of the beloved, for it brings with it the sense of inseparability.

But above all śānta (the full meaning of which is to be seen in the conception of sthita - prajñā and the mahāviśvāsa of the Agama) is the approach that is absolutely necessary. Among the *nava-rasas* for the fundamental bhakti approach śānta-vātsalya and adbhuta are necessary. The Divine History of the Avatāras (Bhāgavata) reveals all types of rasas, the modes of approach of friends, devotees and lovers on the one hand, and the modes of approach of those who hate and reveal and refuse the divinity of God on the other. Bopadeva's analysis¹ shows all these possibilities of relationships, and

¹ Bhakti-Mimāmsa Sūtra: Gopinath Kaviraj (Sarasvati bhavan studies): Bopadeva's views according to Mukṭāphala is that sneha is niṣiddha when it refuses to see the Divine as Divine though friend. The ṛṣis held Gods to be friendly but not the asuras. Indra was a sakha. So too we have Rāma Sugrīva friendship as also the proverbial Kṛṣṇa-Arjuna friendship as well as the great Nara-Nārāyaṇ friendship, but the lesser partner knew the divinity of His friend.

Sneha – bhāva is greater than even sex-bhāva (rati-bhāva). But there is hardly any comparison for the latter gets its fulfillment in the former.

rightly holds that the śuddha vihitā must be accepted. There is no doubt that the dialectical opposition to God, as revealed in the lives of the three great figures of Hiraṇya, Rāvana and Siśupāla is absolutely negative and the reverse of bhakti¹. Nor is the erotic much favoured. Above all the fundamental sentiment is not even adbhuta (numinous or holy of Rudolf Otto), or Śānta and vātsalya but Karuṇa or Dayā (which is the sublimated rati) of God to the soul. Abhinavagupta spoke of the Śānta as the right approach to God's impregnable Peace. Deśika (Venkaṭanātha) whilst showing his preference to this view of śānta-rasa also includes as an equally important rasa Karuṇa or Daya, which causes the illumination that dispels all the darkness and the gleam of ignorance that is the cause of misery, separation, sin. Pṛīṭ, and maitrī, friendship, are both manifestations of a single intuition of the unit between souls, and more so between the soul and God.

The individual soul (jīva) is metaphysically viewed (1) to be identical with Brahman (God), or (2) in the relationship of prakāra (real attribute i.e., an existence in the real relation of attribute to the Divine) inseparable from God, or (3) a dependent existence, independent in essence (substance) but absolutely dependent for existence. The philosophical theories espousing these three views are known as the Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. There are several intermediate views such as the Bhedābheda (identity and difference), acintya-

¹ Sneha means literally attachment, fellowship

bhedābheda (unthinkable identity-difference) or pure identity (śuddhādvaita) as distinct from the māyāvādic advaita and so on. The tattva, the real view of Bhakti would very much depend upon which among these views we adopt. But it is also

very much possible at that the meaning of bhakti would change. Again there are views which try to reconcile the manifold and differing views by proposing a gradation or relativity of validity fro devotional approach. Dāsa-bhāva of Dvaita, leads to ātma)(śarira) bhāva of Viśiṣṭādvaita and from thence to the aikaya-bhāva of Advaita. The ultimate complete mergence of the individual soul in the Divine is facilitated by the constant ‘osmotic’ exchange of the body and soul as belonging to the Divine and the soul. Since it is not know ho this double possession of the body or the soul happens, and the soul experiences the grandeur of the Brahman’s full plentitude of presence and power, it is called acintya-ununderstandable or miraculous glory of the soul’s oneness and distinctness. Thus the souls is different form God buy can and ones experience the Divine as in oneself and oneself as of the Divine¹.

There is no doubt that these thee vies (advaita, viśiṣṭādvaita and dvaita) recognize the simple fact of the soul’s inherent natural (svābhāvika) relationship with the Divine. The Brahman is One only, all the rest at we know of belong to Him, are part of Him, are in a deep sense on with Him. The

¹ Īśa 6-7: Yastu satvāni bhuūtāni ātmanyevānupaśyat
 Sarvabhūteṣu catmānam tato na vijugupste |
 Yasmin sarvāṅ| bhūtāni ātmaivābhūt vijānataḥ
 Tatra ko mohaḥ ka śokah ekatvam anupaśyatah |

soul is His (tasyaivāham) is followed by the expression ‘He is Mine’ (mamaivāsau) and finally by the great transition ‘I am He’ (Sa0evāham), according to the great Advaita¹ school. The Viśiṣṭādvaita view sees the soul to be gradually consciously made organic fully, what it is essentially in nature. Thus the soul perceives al to be His, and its souls to be the Divine , and that the Divine who is the soul of oneself is the soul of all including the gods like Sūrya, Indra and others who are but His bodies. Dvaita recognizes that the soul is different form God in every respect except that it is sentient (jñāna), but ever thing is

different from God who is infinite and All Ruler. Thus there can be no question of *sāmya* with the Divine but *d7sya* (supreme dependence which is release and perfection for the soul). Even this is the destination. God is not, cannot be the soul, nor vice versa. If the Advaita stated that the individual soul and its difference is a product of *Māyā*, Dvaita affirms the utter delusiveness of the view that holds the Divine is soul, is Nature, and that the soul's business is to become Brahman. Dvaita accepts Monotheism but refutes Monism as delusive. It recognizes hierarchy whilst rejecting polytheism. It affirms that real bhakti-attitude is fully exemplified by the strong note of *dāsa* – *bhūtatva* where all work is just worship only of the One Supreme All-Lord.

Love and loyalty are necessary qualities of a devotee, and the individual is granted all power and sovereignty by God but they are dependent on the grace of the Lord, and thus not native to the individual being but derivative powers. All gods

¹ cf. Madhusūdhana Sarasvati-Bhaktirasāyana.

and men and creatures, saints and sages are thus dependent on the Lord's grace-powers for their work and weal. Dualism is the characteristic of all relations. God and the souls are real entities and different from each other, though rightly they have consciousness (awareness): and love is a matter of conscious self-giving to the Lord, whom one feels as one's absolute need. Needing the other is the characteristic of all pursuit, of all desire, of all love. This dualism between God and the souls is essential to the process of devotion. It is a metaphysical assumption of the two-ness (*dvaita*) that renders the relationship possible, and actual in experience. but if it were merely a dualism, then it may well be argued that two disparate things can never come into yoga (union), into unity, which seems to be precisely what is sought after by the two entities, God on the one side and the soul on the other. The fact that the soul is in the grips of nature (or rather related to it to state the same fact baldly) also reveals that the difference between these two (Nature and the soul) is at bottom a unity from

which the soul is trying to escape in order to unite itself with God. All *mumukṣutva* (search for freedom) is this process of detachment from Nature and attachment to God, Nature and God being considered to be opposed to each other radically. *Bhakti* is the process so relating oneself to the Divine Lord even as it is a process of unrelating oneself from Nature, because of the knowledge of their radical difference, and the nearness of God to oneself and the opposition of Nature to oneself.

As we can see, the knowledge of the terms (*tattvas*) is necessary even if it be just the minimum (*svalpam api* as Śrī Kṛṣṇa puts it). This knowledge leads to the works that please and encourage the relationship on the part of the Divine lord who helps to make the withdrawal from Nature's categories possible and quick. This realisation shows that after all union with God is natural to the soul, whereas disunion is unnatural and sinful and the cause of all misery. Wherefore we find that Yoga or Union with God is that which grants the *svarūpa* to the soul in all religious thinking.

In Advaita however duality is an illusion. The soul is not different from God. Indeed it recognizes that if there is dualism then the need for God is absolute and necessary. But the dualism is an illusion and when this illusion is abolished then both the souls and God become One Absolute, In illusion, God is the creator, sustainer, destroyer and redeemer and so on: in illusion God is to be worshipped and adored: but when one sublates this illusion through knowledge of one's identity with Brahman, both these pass away: the One Absolute alone remains. The illusion is a radical one: it is caused by *Māyā-Avidyā*. The soul is one with the Divine: its difference vanishes when the *māyā* is transcended or crossed over and it merges itself in Brahman. Thus it is that *Bhakti* for *Īśvara* is a step towards *Jñāna* that is ultimate consciousness of identity with Brahman. God is not however an illusion but the Absolute which looks or appears as such to the soul divided or differentiated in Nature. That is the reason why in Advaita more emphasis is laid not on the relationship between the soul and God but on the

realisation of abolition of all relations by mergence with the Absolute. Relations are the cause of suffering; the abolition of all relationships and relations and the relata (things related) is the attainment of peace – śānti, prasāda, and mukti. The cause of these relationships and the differentiations is the mind which grants sensations or rather affective states. The mind being controlled from all objects that produce the affective states, leads to the attainment of the state of amanaska-non-mindedness. It is nivr̥tti (withdrawal) from experience of the divided kind. Even jñāna which is the relationship between a subject and an object, when this mind is controlled and the differentiating distinguishing activities as are annulled become an objectless and then a subject-less-objective experience of the Brahman. Of course this is not religious consciousness in the ordinary meaning of the phrase. It is not even the mystic consciousness of transcendence of the object. It is just a transcended which is indescribable and incommunicable. In the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita, the individual soul is described in the language of organic unity. It is the body of the Divine Self. It is a śarīra—that which breaks up into its elements when not sustained by the self (śari). This meaning of the word śarīra is now re-enforced by defining the several implications of the term. The Self sustains the unity of the body; it controls all its activities, it enjoys all the results of the activities; during their process as well it enjoys the performances; and the self does all this not for the body's but for its own purposes. If the self passes out of the body, the body falls to pieces, disintegrates, and the several elements that comprise the body join their sources. The 'deha' is perishable but not the 'dehi' this perishability is thus the obvious characteristic of the body. It is right therefore to speak of the physical –psychical body of man as śarīra (body), but how to speak about the soul which is declared to be imperishable (avadhya) as a śarīra? To this question we may find an answer. The soul cannot exist apart from the Divine (lord). It is integrally or organically related to Him. the part cannot exist apart from the whole (amśi): the attribute cannot exist apart from the substance (just as the rays of the Sun cannot exist apart from the substance (just as the rays of the Sun cannot exist apart from the Sun): so too the body cannot exist apart from the self: in its sense

the soul cannot exist apart from the Self Supreme. It loses its sense of existence itself when it is apart from God and its triple states of consciousness (jāgrat, svapana and śuṣupti)¹ find disintegration in this separation from the Divine Self. When the self is known and entered into then this knowledge becomes unitary and unified and its svarūpa becomes real, luminous, steady and delight-production. In this sense therefore the soul is śarīra. The śarīra cannot be a śarīra apart from the śarīrin. This organic relationship is of greatest significance to Yoga. The definition of Śrī Rāmānuja gives the soul a dynamic necessity of seeking God without whom it can only be a mere non-existence or as the Vaiśeṣika-nyāya system stated--pāśāṅga-tulya. The latter system is wrong only when it states this condition to be the goal also. The reality for the soul is integration with the Īśvara, the realisation of the Īśvara. Its liberation is this finding of the Īśvara which grants it freedom from sorrow. But it is not the equivalent to stone-like existence which is its contradictory state.

¹ I have explained this point rather in an original way by applying analogically the Mandūkya Upaniṣad's analysis. According to Rangarāmānuja however the Praṇava analysis is of the Brahman in His vyūha form.

To know that one is organic to God, and is the body is the fundamental knowledge¹. Sri Vedānta Deśika says that this is the distinguishing feature (pradhāna pratitantra) of the system itself. This conception makes for the type of absorption of the individual soul in the Personality of God, total and integral. It rescues these souls from their mere mechanical nature (as amśa) or attributive nature (as viśeṣaṇa) and as mere expression or manifestation (as prakāra). Once the soul gains this organic conception through its awareness of God as the Īśvara who keeps it integral through His control, sustention, redemption and saviourship, the soul attains the status the Body of God. It must of course be borne in mind that this status is reality and existence. Undoubtedly this position and status are very difficult to attain since the complexity of natural evolution and involvement in natural process has granted the soul a body which it control and

sustains and enjoys for its own purposes and uses for its own purposes (puruṣāthas). This is its ignorance (avidyā), and the activities it performs with this consciousness are its karma which bind it and render its consciousness limited (saṅkoca). But nothing less is demanded than the surrender of this conception that the body it has is its own: for it belongs to the Self whose body it is.

The fundamental conception is thus śarīra - śarīrī-bhāva between the individual soul and God, even as it is between Nature (prakṛti) and God. Once then the soul's body is known to be God's then all activities begin to be directed by God's

¹ Katha 4.12: Anbguṣṭha mātra puruṣo Madhya ātmani tiṣṭhati |
Īśanam bhūtabhavyasya na tato vijujpsata etad Vaiṣṇavism tat ||

consciousness albeit through the soul's mediating subordinate will. This is the minimal knowledge necessary for the practice of true or freedom-granting or liberating Karma. But this leads us to another conception included in the definition of the body which is sometimes said to be more important by some thinkers at any rate, namely, Śeṣatva.

The individual as the body of the Divine has only one śeṣi, the whole on which it depends (śeṣataika – svaūpam). The śeṣa is that which exists for another : śeṣah parārthatvāt: says Pūrva Mīmāṃsā (III. i.2). This another truly can be God alone (Para) in the context of the svarūpa of the soul. In this conception unlike as in the Pūrva Mīmāṃsa where the principal and the subsidiary could be reciprocal under certain conditions, the Para or Śeṣi cannot be at any time śeṣa, and the śeṣa cannot become śeṣi. this is a nitya sambandha relationship that is permanent and non-reciprocal. The śeṣa is thus not only that which is subsidiary to the principal and existing for that principal, but something more. Thus śeṣa as viśeṣa is a fine development of the concept of dependence into uniqueness-differentia so to speak of each individual in respect of the Divine

Principal. Viśeṣaṇa as attribute is the manifestation of the characteristics of the Substance through which alone we apprehend the substance. Though it is the substance (dravya) that one perceives yet it is with the quality or attribute that the substance comes into our consciousness almost simultaneously if not earlier. This can be clearly seen in the case of light where we apprehend firstly the rays of light and trace it its source; the light itself coming to be seen later. Even as the perception of the rays of light leads us to trace it to its source, the śeṣa here, the dravya is sought by the person who perceives the attribute (viśeṣeṇa) or viśeṣa (particularity).

A more fanciful derivation of śeṣa comes from the root śis to lie. Śeṣa is that on which one sleeps or lies. As is well known. In Indian Mythology (Purāṇas) refer to the Supreme Being resting on the śeṣa: serpent.

The Ādiśeṣa is the primeval serpent who serves the Absolute Brahman. Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa, and who incarnates with the Divine also in all His manifestations (avatāras). He may be said to be the Kūṭastha or the representative of all souls or the collective soul. He is also declared to be a multi-purpose soul. He is also known as ananta, infinite, this reference may be taken to refer to the infinite number of souls, whose collective Being He is. His inseparability (apr̥thaksiddhatva) and his śeṣatva are the most important attributes which make him the archetype collective soul.

We have thus far see that the relationship between the souls and Brahman is so close and intimate that the experience this unit is a very unique one. There is again still more important sense in which the word 'Śeṣa' could be taken. The great Veda mantra 'Pūnam adaḥ pūrṇam idam pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate pūrṇasya pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idam pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam idam vaiśiṣyate' contains the word 'vaiśiṣyate' – which is rendered as that which remains or left over. The ordinary meaning in the process of subtraction or division is thus contained in it. The description in

the passage is that the Divine Wholeness is such that whatever is taken away from it or whatever is left behind after something has been taken away is still whole and integral. This manta has reference to the *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad* as its śaṅṭimantra and belongs to the *Vājasaneyā Samhitā* or the *Śukla Yajur Veda*. We can of course ingeniously explain it in many ways. But I should firstly refer only to one supreme process: the Brahman is the whole: the individual soul and Nature are also those which are pervaded by him; and in this status of Brahman He is whole; thus He also is in ever creature having become their self—*ātmaiva abhūt*, and in this status also is He the whole. Thus God is whole as transcendent. God as the self-pervading all as *Īśa* is whole, and as resident in all souls and in nature is He whole, that is as avatars and *antaryāmi*, He is whole. But He is more than all these and in that More or Reminder He is Whole. Thus as the Sacrifice, Sacrificer and the Sacrificed and the result of Sacrifice is He the Supreme Being.

This conception of the integral Divine is unique in religion. The Divine is indivisible into fragments, for everything in Him is Whole (full). He is *aksśaya*, *aksara*. In another sense too we may speak of the Divine Himself as *śeṣa*: because everything is pervaded by Him and everything is His. When the individual passes there remains something – souls other than oneself and Nature too. When Nature passes, then too souls and God remain: when both nature and souls pass then God alone remains: He is the *Śeṣa*. When every type of predication is denied of Him, He the so-called *nirguṇa* is the *śeṣa*. Thus in a sense some thinkers could argue about the Divine Himself as the great remainder. But in the connotative sense in which it has been used by *Śrī Rāmānuja* we can see that the *śeṣatva* is the differentiating feature or characteristic of the soul, both metaphysically and practically.

The soul is the body of God alone: in its nature, it is dependent on God alone. Its business is to regain this unity-consciousness that is granted by being the body of God and absolutely dependent on God. Thus it has been stated

śeṣatve sati jñātr̥tvam—the cognitive activity of the individual soul itself is a resultant of its śeṣatva: All the functions of the soul depend on the Divine Lord who is the śeṣi, and who is the śarīri.¹

Not merely is the Lord known and recognized as the Self of oneself but He is recognized and acknowledged as the Self of all souls and Nature as well. Thus the omnipresence and omnipotence and omnigraciousness of God are known to the soul. It is only when the soul realises, even if it be in a general way, the nature of God as intimately related to it, that devotion or love has a possibility of arising.

So too the viśiṣṭādvaita teachers have held that the Self thus known and recognized however slightly or in a general way, must also be known as capable of being known and

¹ Ref. 'Evolution of the Concept of śeṣa' .

Sri Ramanuja's Philosophy of Society

Idea of God: for the triple kinds of definition of Religion

Living Teaching of Vedānta: about the integral unity of the soul in the three states to be sought: and Nyāya Siddhāntam by Vekāṇātha: Īṣvarapariśeḍa.

known to be beneficent and benevolent.

This is what is known as the subhāśraya nature of God: it is capable of being the object of our meditation – it is also auspicious to meditate on that supreme Form of the Divine -- Kalyāṇatamam r̥pam. It is the goal of the individual to meditate on this supreme auspicious Form of the Lord always.

All the forms of God are auspicious: whether it is the all-embracing viśva-form within Whose body all gods and creatures were seen: (*devadevasya śarīre*) or others¹.

The form thus shown to Arjuna by Lord Kṛṣṇa was what the gods were always beholding. The transcendent Form is said to be constantly beheld by the SvetadvīPāñcarātra-vāsins. The Lord also can be seen in the heart by the yogis and in all creatures and things always. Even so is the residence in the forms installed by the Gods for their worship and by the ṛṣis and seekers. But surely the most important is the self-revealed or manifest (svayam-vyakta) Form. All these are of course taught in the Mahābhārata; and the Pāñcarātra has given a comprehensive account of the multiple – nature of God which is a supreme Oneness, who maintains the Whole. This is the account given by sages who had this is Paripūrṇa-Brahmānubhava.

It can now be stated that Bhakti is that unique relationship which a soul bears to the Divine Lord or the Absolute recognized as absolutely necessary for existence. The metaphysical relationship is rightly contended to be a multiple relationship thanks to the multidimensional nature of Brahman-¹. Its transcendental richness and all-comprehensive perverseness, evoke the corresponding so-called psychological statuses on the part of the individuals. It is something true generated by knowledge of the 'More', the 'Great', however dimly the soul becomes assured of it. Knowledge of the greatest Being. If not in all its comprehensiveness (since that is impossible to all except the Divine Himself) has the natural capacity to evoke the feeling for union—sāyujā—with Him. This is characterized by a graduated series of practices of worship, prayer, surrender, and love. The bondage to selfishness (ego), fruits, to action, to all self-seeking protective instincts are slowly dropped. Worship becomes natural and prayer ceases to be a seeking to get anything or get out of anything unforeseen. A quiet resignation to the Ways of God surely is the sign of a successful prayer and worship. Love develops as an overflowing need for God's experience; a giving up of oneself for God and to God, a sacrificial nyāsa, becomes the quality of the individual's consciousness. In this giving up of oneself for God to God, the soul

discovers a new expansion of its existence- feeling. In this sense one enters into God. The soul feels itself freed when its

¹ It was stated by a writer that Advaita concentrates on the Cit aspect of the Brahman. Viśiṣṭādvaita on the sat-aspect and Dvaita on the ānanda aspect. But the cit of Advaita does not take the śakti aspect also; if it did it becomes Tantra: the Sat – aspect of Viśiṣṭādvaita includes the cit aspect as well, and also the ānanda. The real is the existential unit of all the three-in-function.

love is accepted, for no longer does it live for itself nor seek to worship God for its own welfare: but for God alone. That is why there is said to be a slight difference between bhakti and p̄rit, Devotion and Love.

The study of bhakti has led to the study of the nature of the individual and the nature of the Object of the devotional love. This object of love is as complex as the individual himself. The love itself undergoes changes of attitudes according to the approach as well as the aspect of the Object adored, loved and united with. The love in order to reach the peak of union must obviously have multiple forms. In this first lecture an attempt has been made to show these complexities and yet point out the possibility of an all comprehensive integral love. The Divine Object which is the only object capable of evoking the religious love attitude (bhakti-rasa) is a quintuple –status Binēg¹. With each aspect of the Divine Object there is a corresponding attitude of love. this is the general perfection of the integral affection, which loves the Divine in all His statuses and in all its own functional alliances. Viśiṣṭādvaita is the only system which fully integrates in a functional (organic) unity the several statuses of the Divine with individual's several attitudes. true mystic union is not any unilateral or uni-statal one but a multi-statal complex

¹ It may be recalled here that the view about the complex statuses of the Divine linking up or uniting with the corresponding statuses of the individual soul has great similarity to the śāṣṭha theory point of Vīraśaivism. But the śāṣṭha theory almost elucidates that lower sthalas are less than the higher. It does not arrive at the integral unity of simultaneous experience of all real statuses.

experience. Bhaktirāsa becomes the Rasa par excellence because of this rich complex organic unity of ever attitude centered on the unique Object. It is that which includes at once the double possibility of real adoration and worship and love with the experience of union and identification with the Divine. This is a great experience of yoga. But bhakti rasa is richer than the prapatti which is but a step towards the fuller experience, though it cannot have real completeness or even a transcendental beginning without prapatti.