CHAPTER XIV

VEDĀNTA—THE VAISṆAVA (THEISTIC) SCHOOLS

A. RĀMĀNUJA (VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA)

INTRODUCTION

The Vedānta is the living philosophy of India today and its popularity is due to its being a view and a way of life at the same time. It is a speculative enquiry into the nature of Brahman as the highest reality as well as the way of spiritual realization of Brahman as the supreme goal of life. Of the three dominant systems of the Vedānta, Advaita, Dvaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita, the Advaita is so well known that the Vedānta is sometimes identified with it, and the Dvaita is regarded as the best philosophic exposition of theism, in spite of its dogmatic and realistic tendencies. It is the merit of the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja as a synthetic philosophy of love that it seeks to reconcile the extremes of monism and theism and, like all mediating systems, it is misunderstood by its followers as well as by its critics. It is called Śrī-Vaiśṇavism in its religious aspect. Among the leading modern exponents of its philosophy there are many who call it qualified non-dualism or attributive or adjectival monism, by forgetting its essential tenet that jīva is a substance as well as an attribute.

The Dvaita insists on the eternal distinction and difference between jīva and Brahman; Bhedābheda expounds the dual and non-dual relation between the two. Pantheism says that all is God or God is all. But the Viśiṣṭādvaita is different from all these systems as it states that God is immanent in all beings as their inner self and at the same time transcendent. Reality and value are one and Brahman is so called because it is infinite by nature and at the same time it can infinitize or Brahmanize the content of the finite self without destroying it. The name Viśiṣṭādvaita can, however, be retained on account of its traditional associations and the rich meaning it has acquired in the historic developments.

The Viśiṣṭādvaita is essentially a philosophy of religion in which reason and faith coincide and become reasoned faith. Its problem is “What is that by knowing which everything is known?” and the answer is “It is Brahman.”1 Reality is knowable or realizable and not unknowable. The classical exposition of this method is contained in the Taittirīya-Upaniṣad2 in the dialogue between Varuṇa and his son Bṛgū. The
teacher elicits from the disciple that Brahman is annamaya, prānamaya, manomaya, vijñānamaya and ānandamaya, and the disciple by a process of spiritual induction seeks to verify them successively.

The history of the Viśiṣṭādvaita, like that of other Schools of the Vedānta, claims the authority of immemorial tradition. It is based on the triple authority of the Upaniṣadic seers or rṣis, the Vedānta-sūtra of Bādarāyaṇa who systematized their intuitions and the Gitā containing the quintessence of the Upaniṣads. Rāmānuja, the first historic exponent of the Viśiṣṭādvaita, says in his Vedārtha-Samgraha and Śrī-bhāṣya, the commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra, that his system is founded on a work of an ancient teacher, called Boddhāyana- víttī and the prior teachings of Dramida, Taṅka and Guhadeva; it is also traceable to the teachings of Nammāḷvār, the super-mystic of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism. It was Nāṭhamuni (born in South Arcot in A.D. 824) who belonged to the Bhāgavata tradition from the North, that elevated the Āḻvārs’ divine songs in Tamil to the level of the Vedānta in the well-known scheme of Udbhaya-Vedānta, which insists on the language of the heart as the true spiritual language, and not merely the spoken word. The next important teacher of Viśiṣṭādvaita was Āḷavandār, the grandson of Nāṭhamuni, who established the Vedāntic value of the Pāṇcarātra. Then came Rāmānuja (born in A.D. 1017), the Vedāntic successor of Āḷavandār and the greatest exponent of Viśiṣṭādvaita. Śaṅkara reinterpreted Buddhistic nirvāṇa and thus proved the truth of the Advaita. Bhāskara, who came next, refuted Śaṅkara’s māyā theory by his theory of upādhis and bhedābheda and Yādava, his successor, made bhedābheda more realistic, and it was left to Rāmānuja to give a new turn to philosophy by his synthetic philosophy of love. Soon after his time, conflicts arose in the interpretation of Udbhaya-Vedānta, the nature of God-head as Lord and Śrī and the meaning of bhakti and īrāvattī. While Vedānta-Deśika on the whole tried to balance the two sides, Piḷḷaiḻokācārya laid stress on the Tamil Vedānta, the monothestic idea of one God, the efficacy of grace and the social side of the service of God (kaṅkārya).

The method of exposition followed in this brief article is the classical way of developing Viśiṣṭādvaita under the headings of reality (tattva), good (hita) and end of human life (puruṣārtha), as revealed in the Upaniṣad, “He who knows Brahman attains the highest.” It deals with the knowledge of reality (or tattva) as Brahman, a-cit and cit, the means of attaining Brahman (or hita), and the nature of attainment (or puruṣārtha). It is an improvement on the Kantian way of stating the problem, namely, “What can I know? What ought I to do? and what may I hope for?” as it avoids scepticism and harmonizes metaphysics, morals and religion. Metaphysics includes epistemology and the study of the pramāṇas and ontology or the study of the three tattvas. Viśiṣṭādvaitic morals deal with the Sādhanas or the ways of knowing Brahman and its religion expounds the nature of mukti.
THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

That reality is knowable is the key thought of the Viśiṣṭādvaitic theory of knowledge; and knowledge as darśana in the widest sense includes what is perceived through the senses, what is inferred by anumāṇa and what is intuited spiritually as Brahma-jñāṇa. If there is an unbridged gulf between being and knowing, then the theory of knowledge is the theory of no knowledge and scepticism becomes inevitable. This tendency is clearly discernible in the Kantian opposition between the noumenal and phenomenal Reality, the Bradleyan contrast between Reality and appearance and Śaṅkara’s distinction between the transcendental (or pāramārthika-satya) and the empirical (or vyavahārīka-satya). Rāmānuja avoids this impasse by accepting the trustworthiness of knowledge in all its three levels ascending from sense perception, science and philosophy, to the integral and immediate experience of Brahman. The logical apprehension of Brahman (or Brahma-jijñāsā) as the supremely real leads to the intuitive realization of Brahman (or Brahmānubhava). Knowledge is the affirmation of reality and even negation presupposes affirmation. If Brahman is real, the world rooted in Brahman is also real and we can go from the partial to the perfect. Truth is an immanent criterion of knowledge. Truth is true and it attains the more of itself, till it is fully realized as Truth or the eternal value of Reality. To realize this end, Rāmānuja utilizes all the ways of knowing Brahman and employs the principle of dharma-bhūta-jñāṇa, the logical rule of a-prthak-siddha-viśeṣaṇa, the grammatical rule of sāmānādhikaranyā and the realistic view of sat-kārya-vāda.

The theory of dharma-bhūta-jñāṇa or attributive consciousness of the self furnishes the raison d’être of Viśiṣṭādvaitic epistemology as it throws light on the nature of the external world, the ātman and Brahman. Consciousness presupposes the self of which it is an essential attribute and it cannot be conscious of itself. The self and its consciousness are distinguishable but not divisible. Self-consciousness implies the self that is conscious and consciousness of the self and the distinction between substantive intelligence and attributive intelligence, like light and its luminosity.

Jñāṇa is attribute-substance like sunlight which is a quality and at the same time the substratum of colours. In the empirical state, jñāṇa is obscured by avidyā and contracted by karmāṇa; it reveals external objects and it is the source of all the mental states dealt with by psychology, normal, abnormal and metapsychical, from the stage of instinct to that of supranormal consciousness. The three states of jñāna, namely, the waking consciousness, dreams and sound sleep, are psychologically the variations of the same jñāna and are therefore continuous and not self-
contradictory. When *jñāna* is freed from *avidyā-karman*, it expands into infinity and becomes the integral consciousness of God (*Brahmānubhava*).

The theory of judgment may now be developed in the light of *jñāna*. The *ātman* is ever self-luminous and it is its *jñāna* conditioned by *karman* that reveals the external world either as objects or as a whole. Judgment is thus due to the judging activity of the self-conscious *ātman* and not to the passive reception of impressions from the visible and tangible world. All knowledge is *sa-vikalpaka* or determinate and not *nir-vikalpaka* or indeterminate perception without difference. Rāmānuja's view that the external object is for consciousness and not in consciousness and that *jñāna* illumines or reveals objects, avoids the *impasse* caused by extreme realism and idealism and has the merit of simplicity. Realism is justified, when it refers to the object as given and not as constructed by thought, and idealism is true in so far as it accepts the *a priori* nature of consciousness and denies the utter externality of the object. Knowledge arises from the subject-object relation of the self (*cit*) and the not-self (*a-cit*), and the ultimate subject of every judgment is the whole of reality. It is *Paramātman* who shines in all thinkers and things and is yet beyond them.

The theory of *a-prthak-siddha-viśeṣaṇa* the adjectival theory of the Absolute, brings out the meaning of judgment in its logical and ontological aspects. In the proposition, “man is rational,” the predicate is the inseparable or essential quality of the subject which is more than mere connection of content. The quality subsists in the substance and shares in its substantiality though it is different from it. The self as the knower is an eternal thinking subject and it has intelligence as its inseparable quality (*prakāra*). Logic is rooted in ontology and the ultimate subject of every proposition is the whole of reality. The logical subject is the knowing self (*cit*) with consciousness (*caitanya*) as its quality and the ontological subject is Brahman as the self of the self or the ultimate substance (*prakārin*). Just as knowledge (*jñāna*) is substance-attribute, so the self (*cit*) is itself a substance and also a quality of Brahman as an adjective of the absolute. As the logical ego, the self is a mode (or *prakāra*) of Brahman, but as an ethical ego it is a monad having its own intrinsic nature. It is at once an organ of the absolute and an organism.

The same truth is brought out by the grammatical rule of *sāmānā-dhikaranyā* or co-ordination and the *Mīmāṁsā* rule of connotation. According to the former, words in a sentence having different meanings can denote only one thing as in the example, “This is Devadatta.” It refers to co-ordination and personal identity and not to abstract identity. According to *Mīmāṁsā*, words connoting genus and quality (*jāti* and *guṇa*) also connote individual and substance (*vyakti* and *guṇin*) respectively, as in the example “This is a cow,” and in the *Upaniṣadic* text “Thou art that.” A substance may become the body or quality of another substance.
and a word connoting the body (śarīra) may connote the self, its possessor (śarīrin) also. In the last example, the term “thou” which connotes jīva (as śarīra) connotes also Brahman (the śarīrin). Thus, in the highest Vedāntic sense all terms connoting a thing or a person or a god connote also Brahman as the source, support and ultimate self of all.

THE THEORY OF TRUTH

The Viśiṣṭādvaita theory of Truth holds that what exists (sat) is alone cognized and that there is no bare negation. The Absolute is not Brahman versus māyā but is all Brahman (Brahmamaya), and since Brahman is real, the world rooted in it is also real. Reality and value are one and the more real a thing is the more true it is. The not-self (a-cit) is ever-changing and it is called unstable (a-sat). The self (cit or ātman) is eternal though its consciousness contracts and expands according to its kārmaṇ and it is called stable or real (satya). But Brahman is eternal, pure and perfect and is the supreme reality (satyasya satyam). Truth is true and becomes the more of itself till it expands into Truth which is Brahman itself as the only reality which sustains all things as the being of their being.

Viśiṣṭādvaita utilizes every theory of truth, pragmatic, realistic and idealistic, in so far as it satisfies its main thesis. Truth is ordinarily defined as the knowledge of a thing as it is and as what satisfies the practical interests of life. If the object as it is does not correspond to sense perception and the thinghood of things in their structural unity in a realistic way it is rejected as false, as in the case of the shell mistaken for silver. The pragmatic test is useful in cases like the mirage which is false owing to its failure to serve the practical purpose of satisfying thirst. Dreams are real psychic occurrences caused by the moral law of kārmaṇ. When jñāna is purified, it can intuit Brahman and thus become perfect. But in the empirical state, knowledge is fragmentary as is evidenced in the three ways of knowing, namely, perception, inference and Scripture (pratyakṣa, anumāna and Sāstra) which are ascending stages and not stopping-places. The knowledge given in sense-perception is partial and is trustworthy as far as it goes. Inference establishes the integrity of the causal relation, and it identifies the cause with the because and finally with the ground of knowledge philosophically, and it relies on the evidence of reason though particular reasonings may not come up to the mark. Sāstra, as a body of spiritual truths verified and verifiable by the seekers after truth, furnishes the ultimate basis for valid knowledge. In all these cases truth is a progress to the more of itself and is not based on non-contradiction and sublation. Ignorance of nescience (avidyā) is not an innate obscuration of Brahman, but it is kārmaṇ. It is an imperfection of the finite self (jīva) and when one seeks to overcome it one becomes a seeker after Brahman (mumukṣu).
ONTOMETRY

The central truth of Viśiṣṭādvaita ontology or theory of being is the identity between the Absolute of metaphysics and the God of religion. It discards the distinction drawn between nir-guna Brahman which transcends the duality of relational thought and sa-guna Brahman or the personal God of theism as the highest conceptual reading of the Absolute by the popular mind. The Bhedābheda (dualism—non-dualism) Schools of Bhāskara and Yādava bring out the self-contradictions between the two standpoints by appeal to revelation, reason and sense-perception and reject the theory of nir-guna Brahman as pure abstraction in which being and non-being are one. Scripture would stultify itself if it first affirms the existence of sa-guna Brahman and then denies it later on. The theory is the denial of the reality of moral and religious consciousness. Negation denies only the finitude of reality and not the finite itself. The Absolute is in the conditioned but is not the conditioned, and if the world of space and time given in sense-perception is illusory and non-existent, the inevitable result would be acosmism and nihilism. Rāmānuja accepts Bhāskara’s refutation of the dualistic theory but repudiates his theory of limiting adjuncts (upādhis) of Brahman as a vicious view which attributes imperfection to God. The absolutisms of the West, like those of Plotinus, Spinoza and Hegel, are more allied to Bhedābheda than to Viśiṣṭādvaita. Plotinus’s view of the emanation of the many from the one, Spinoza’s philosophy of substance and modes and the Hegelian view of the fusion of opposites are all Western versions of Bhāskara’s view of upādhis, and even the adjectival theory of Bosanquet suffers from the defect of predicating imperfection to the Absolute. No School of the Vedānta is pantheistic if pantheism identifies Brahman with the universe without preserving its transcendence. In the history of the Vedānta from the age of Śaṅkara to that of Rāmānuja there is a transition, chronological as well as ontological, from the views of illusory adjuncts (mithyopādhis) of Śaṅkara to the real limiting adjuncts (satyopādhis) of Bhāskara, from the transformation theory (parināma-vāda) of Yādava and the dualism-non-dualism (dvaivādvaitya-vāda) of Nimbārka to the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja which makes the finite self responsible for the errors and evils of life.7 There is, however, not much difference between Śaṅkara, the practical Advaitin who adores Vāsudeva or the All-Self, and Rāmānuja or Plotinus. Plotinus comes nearest to Rāmānuja amongst the philosophers of the West specializing in mystic ecstasy.

Rāmānuja conceives Brahman as the absolute. Brahman is the whole of Reality and the home of the eternal attributes or values of Truth, goodness, beauty and bliss. Brahman is perfect as the secondless and stainless Reality (sat) and has all perfections (satyam, ś jñānam, apakahita-
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pāpmaivam, sundaram and ānandam) and thus satisfies the highest spiritual demands of metaphysics, morals, aesthetics and mysticism.

The word “satyam” connotes Brahman as real Reality, the true of the true to distinguish it from the migrating jīva and the perishing prakṛti. It is being which is the ground of becoming, the one which explains the many and the eternal in the temporal and is not bare being, identity or timelessness. Brahman is and has consciousness as the light of lights (jyotisām jyotis); it is self-related but not contentless pure consciousness arrived at by the negative method. It is the infinite with the quality of infinity (anantam). Brahman is called Śarīrin. It is a symbolic name which signifies Brahman as container, controller and goal (ādhāra, niyantī and ṣeṭin), a unity in trinity. Brahman is the source of all beings, cī and a-cit, and their inner controller, and they exist for its satisfaction. The Antaryāmi-vidyā in the Brhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣād furnishes the chief text for this truth: “He who dwells in jīva, with jīva, who, it does not know, whose body ĥava is, and which He rules from within, He is the self, the Inner Ruler, Immortal.” He is unknown. Yet He knows without the help of the mind and the senses. There is no other knower than He. Everything else is of evil.” Brahman is the life of our life, the inner ruler and the means and the goal. It is ādhāra or the being of our being and in it we live, move and have our being. It is the immanent ground of all existents and their inner meaning. This idea brings out the intimacy between God and the self which is so essential for spiritual communion, and it avoids the pantheistic tendency. It accepts the distinction between self and God (ātman and paramātman) but denies their separateness. The idea of Brahman as controller (niyantī) stresses divine transcendence and it provides the inspiring motive for ethical religion. It marks the transition from the Vedic imperative of duty as enjoined in Pūrva-Mīmāṁsā to the Vedantic idea of the deity as the supreme ruler of the universe or niyantī. Brahman as ādhāra is the indwelling self, but Brahman as niyantī is the extra-cosmic ruler who is holy and perfect and therefore different from man who is steeped in sensuality and sin. As the moral ruler of the universe, Īśvara apportions pleasure and pain according to the karmān of the jīva and there is no caprice nor cruelty in the divine law of righteousness. But the law of retribution is mathematical and legal and offers no scope or hope for redemption. The Viśiṣṭādvaita as ethical religion transforms God (Īśvara) from a ruler into a world-redeemer (rakṣaka). The moral law of karmān is now fulfilled in the religion of mercy (kṛpā or dayā) and not merely tempered by it. The creative urge in the godhead is said to be impelled by kṛpā and it turns into the dual form of law and love (Nārāyaṇa and Śrī). Overpowered by kindness, Īśvara incarnates Himself in moments of cosmic crisis, into humanity in order that He may recover the lost self. In this process the transcendental Brahman assumes three other concrete forms of mercy (kṛpā) which are equally real and valuable,
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viz. as Īśvara the infinite or the cosmic self that enjoys the cosmic līlā or play of creation, preservation and destruction; as the Inner Ruler in the hearts of all beings in order that they may directly intuit Him; and also as the temple god for worship. These three, added to the two already mentioned (namely Nārāyaṇa and Śrī) constitute the five forms of the manifestation of Brahman.

The idea of Brahman as sēśin brings out the nature of God as the end and aim of the world. The self (cit) and nature (a-cit) exist for the satisfaction of the Lord who is at once the way and the goal. Owing to this self-consciousness and moral and spiritual freedom, the self realizes that Paramātman is the real actor in the universe, and attunes itself to His redemptive will by shedding its egoity and making a self-gift of itself to God. The true self says, "I live, yet not I, but the God in me." This view solves the dualism between human freedom and divine freedom.

The definition of Brahman as bhuvana-sundara or the supremely beautiful is more important to mystic communion than the values of truth and goodness. The aesthetic philosophy of the Viśiṣṭādvaita enshrined in the Bhāgavata and the divine songs of the Ālavārs brings out the nature of Brahman as Śrī-Kṛṣṇa the enchanter of souls who ravishes them out of their fleshy feeling.

It will thus be seen that the Viśiṣṭādvaita idea of Brahman is different from that of monism, pantheism and theism and is wrongly construed as that of qualified non-dualism, adjectival absolutism or pan-organismal monism. It is a synthetic view of the Vedānta which is not to be confused with eclecticism though it is comprehensive enough to accept whatever is good and true in other systems and sects. It is the meeting-ground of the extremes of monism and pluralism and the doctrines of Ruler and Redeemer. It equates Brahman or Nārāyaṇa of the Upaniṣads with Vāsudeva of the Pāñcarātra, the Īśvara of the Purāṇas, the avatāras of the Itihāsas and the sundara of mysticism.

COSMOLOGY

The cosmology of Viśiṣṭādvaita is based on the integrity of the causal relation in its mechanical, teleological and spiritual aspects of uniformity and moral progression. Brahman is the ground of the cosmic order as its creator, sustainer and destroyer in terms of immanence and transcendence. Creation is not out of nothing, but is only the transformation of the potential into the actual (sat-kārya-vāda). The effect is continuous with the cause temporally and logically and does not contradict it, and by applying this rule to religion the Vedāntin concludes that by knowing Brahman everything is known. The Real (sat) without a second wills to be the many⁴ and becomes the world of name and form (nāma-rūpa) by its
own inner creative urge. God before creation is without any difference of name and form and the same, after creation, differentiates itself into the infinity of the space-time world and individuals and becomes their Inner Self. The cosmos is a physical and moral order and is sustained by the will of the Lord. When vice predominates over virtue, Isvara destroys the world and thus prevents evil. The powers of doing evil by jīva are withdrawn for a while by the redemptive will of Isvara, and punishment (daṇḍana) is ultimately the effect of mercy (daya). Creation and dissolution take place in a cyclic way endlessly and the cosmic purpose of the world process is the liberation of souls.

Causality connotes continuity in spite of change. Nature (prakṛti) is subject to transformation (parināma), that is, change in which the potential becomes the actual and the cause is continuous with the effect. The self is morally free to strive towards perfection for itself. God has the inner purpose of adapting the process of nature to the spiritual progress of the individual and moulding him into His own nature (tattvamaya). The evolutionary process of nature here is of the Śāmkhya pattern which is perfected by the addition of the twenty-sixth category of the Supreme Self or God (Puruṣottama) who enters into the heart of creation as sarīrā or over-soul. It is the divine creative urge that makes prakṛti energize and evolve into mahat, ahamkāra, the eleven sense-organs including manas, the five tanmātras and the five dhūtas. Then the process of individuation goes on by Isvara entering into the jīvas as their Inner Self and bestowing bodies to them equitably, according to their previous karman. In this way there is an infinity of individual (jīvas) from the amoeba to gods. Evolution is followed by involution and the process goes on in a uniform rhythmic manner. Ultimately creation is the re-creation or sportive spontaneity of the Lord or līlā in which the idea of parināma and the moral idea of karman are reinterpreted by recognizing the reality of prakṛti, puruṣa and Puruṣottama and avoiding the extremes of naturalism, personalism and idealism. Evolution of nature is an occasion for the moral progress of self (puruṣa) and his attaining godliness. As the Vedānta is directly interested in the spiritual knowledge of Brahman by the self, cosmology as the philosophy of nature is only an indirect aid to such spiritual knowledge.

PSYCHOLOGY

The psychology of the self or ātman is described negatively by examining certain faulty definitions and views. The materialist (Cārvāka) view that the ātman is an assemblage of atoms and physical changes, is erroneous as matter does not think and seek mukti. For the same reason, the view of the vitalist that it is life (prāṇa) which is an inner activity or vital impulse that maintains and multiplies itself is untenable. The
sensationalistic or empirical view of the Buddhists that the self is a cluster of sensations or five skandhas made of mind-body is rejected on the ground that it denies the unity and continuity of the enduring self. Manas, the inner sense organ, is itself a mode of prakriti and is not a spiritual entity. The rationalist or idealist who says that “because I think, therefore I am,” ignores the different lapses and levels of consciousness and it is more true to say that “because I am therefore I think.” The sociologist also errs when he makes the self an element of the social organism. The adjectival theory which makes the self an attribute of the absolute ignores its uniqueness. Finally the monistic (Advaita) explanation that the jiva is an illusory reflection of Brahman in avidyā regards it as a mere fiction or phantom without any moral or religious value. Rāmānuja repudiates all these views. The term ātman brings out its eternal self-conscious and free nature more than the Western terms, soul, spirit or self, as they are not free from animistic and spiritualistic associations. It is a tattva or ultimate reality like God (Paramātman), and it is by metapsychical or logical insight and not by mere empirical knowledge that its meaning and value should be discovered. It is self-manifest and is its own proof.

The Gītā, according to the Viśiṣṭādvaita, as expounded by Ālavandār, Rāmānuja and Vedānta-Deśika, clearly brings out the nature of the ātman by distinguishing it from prakṛti and Paramātman. The ātman is different from the twenty-four categories of prakṛti and is eternal, self-luminous and morally free.17 Owing to the confusions of previous ignorance (avidyā), it mistakes itself for prakṛti, is imprisoned in embodiment and migrates from body to body. But by self-renunciation it can realize its own true nature. Then the self is freed from egoity or ahamkāra and knows it has its own intrinsic value. The jīva is monadic18 and infinitesimal, but its jñāna is infinite and all-pervasive like light and its luminosity, though at present it is limited by its karman. It can contract and expand according to its normal and spiritual development and it thus admits of different degrees of evolution and involution. It is almost inert in the unconscious state of sleep, dim in the sub-conscious state of dreams and clear in the waking state and is confused in the abnormal states of illusion, hallucination and hysteria. These states shade into one another and are continuous, but not self-contradictory like light and darkness. The ethical and religious meaning of dream psychology is ignored by psycho-analysis and subjectivism. The psycho-physical conditions of jñāna in the subtle or sūksma-śarira and their feeling tone are the effect of the moral law of karman. If knowledge is obscured by avidyā, even omniscience is nescience on a cosmic scale and scepticism would be the only result of such panillusionism. Jñāna as self-consciousness is therefore an integral quality of the ātman. It is self-realized and exists in and by itself, but jñāna as attribute (dharma-bhūta-jñāna) exists for the self (dharmin) as its revelatory quality. The two are distinguishable but not separable.
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The relation between ātman and Paramātman in terms of the logical, ethical and aesthetic ego was already referred to in the triple attributes of Brahman as ādāra, niyantar, śesin and sundara. The logical ego (jñātṛ) is the effect (upādeya) of Brahman the cause (upādana). It is its a-prthak-siddha-vidśesana or inseparable quality and anśa or mode of Brahman who is thus the source, subject and true infinite (vibhu). As the ethical ego (kārtṛ), it stands to Brahuman who is pure and holy as His means (śesa) or servant (dāsa) or son (putra) and exists as a means to His satisfaction; it subserves the divine end of spiritual perfection. The aesthetic ego (bhokṛ) combines intimacy and holiness as the enjoyer of the beauty and bliss of Brahman and is divinely transfigured. Brahman is thus the soul (śarīrin) of the jīva, its source, sustenance and controller. Though the jīva is the subject of its knowledge (attributive intelligence), it is itself, from a higher standpoint, the attribute (prakāra) of God and is inseparable from Him, the substance (prakārin).

The Bhedābheda explanation of jīva as an emanation of Brahman deprives jīva of its moral and spiritual value. The monist explains away individuality as a figment of avidyā. Rāmānuja's view reconciles pluralism and monism, moralism and mysticism by insisting on the integrity of jīva as a moral and spiritual entity with its own freedom, but it abolishes separateness and exclusiveness by the idea that it is a spark of the supreme self, and therefore capable of mystic union. It is an organism and also an organ of the absolute. Rāmānuja's view gives a new orientation to avidyā by identifying it with karman, and by attributing the imperfections of life (like avidyā, karman and kāma) to the jīva. Every jīva comes from God and goes back to Him as the home of all perfections, and is deified.

SĀDHANA—MEANS TO LIBERATION

The speculative philosopher who enquires into the nature of Brahman as the supreme Reality or tatva becomes a mumukṣu or seeker after liberation (mukti) by moral and spiritual endeavour. Liberation can be attained by the triple method of karma-yoga or self-purification, jñāna-yoga or self-realization and bhakti-yoga or the practice of the feeling of the presence of God as Love, as formulated in the Gītā.

Karma-yoga is the practice of nīkāma-karman or duty for duty's sake irrespective of the consequences. Nobody, not even a god or Īśvara, can be inactive. Consciousness in all its levels is conative, and even introversion which aims at cessation (niyāti) from activity is itself conative, and a life of inaction (a-karman) is a psychological impossibility. The metaphysic of morals based on this psychological principle turns out to be a philosophy of the ātman. Though every animal follows an end, man alone has an idea
of the end on account of his buddhi or reason and will. But owing to his false identification with the body made of nature (prakṛti) and its guṇas, the desire (kāma) for the pleasures of the body arises in him, and when it is frustrated it leads to anger or krodha and mental confusion and finally to moral death.\textsuperscript{22} Every empirical action is impelled by the subjective inclinations (kāma) and induced by the objective or utilitarian motives of gain (lābha). It is determined by the three guṇas of satvā, rajas and tamas\textsuperscript{23} or serenity, restlessness and inertia. But every man has the moral freedom to subdue his guṇas and the karman influenced by them. By his disciplined will or practical reason he can subdue his sensibility based on the body-feeling and free himself from the feelings of “I” and “mine” (ahamkāra and mamakāra) which are the twin perils of empirical life. Then action (karman) is freed from all selfish inclinations of kāma and becomes nīskāma-karman or duty for duty’s sake, and the moral man acquires self-sovereignty.\textsuperscript{24} He is no longer a thing of nature swayed by guṇas and externally determined, but a person with moral autonomy gained by soul power (ātma-śakti). He is then a person of steady wisdom (sthita-prayāna) who has gained not freedom from, but freedom in, action.

*Karma-yoga* or self-less action is only a stepping-stone to self-realization gained by jñāna-yoga. When the moral man seeks to know himself (the ātman) as different from the not-self (a-cit), he ascends from morality to spirituality. There is a transition from nīskāma-karman or what a man ought to do, to what he ought to be, and such a soul-culture (jñāna-niṣṭhā) demands self-renouncement (vairāgya) and ceaseless practice of contemplation (abhyāsa). The contemplative should free himself by yogic practice from the confusions of avidyā by which he mistakes the ātman for the bodily feeling and the seductions of kāma by which he is drawn to sense objects. He seeks the state of complete detachment (kaivalya).

The state of kaivalya attained by jñāna-yoga may, however, lapse into the defects of subjectivism and quietism and these defects are overcome by bhakti-yoga. Bhakti-yoga marks the consummation of moral and spiritual endeavour as attained in karma-yoga and jñāna-yoga. The Viśiṣṭādvaita constructs a ladder, as it were, from ethics to religion and from religion to mystic union, and Rāmānuja refers to seven ancient sādhanas\textsuperscript{25} as aids to bhakti called viveka, vinoka, abhyāsa, kriyā, kalyāṇa, anavasāda and anuddharsa. The first is the purification of the body as the living temple of God and such cleanliness is next to godliness. Vinoka is the inner detachment from the disturbing conditions like desire and anger. Abhyāsa is the ceaseless practice of the sense-presence of God as the Inner Self of all. Kriyā is the social side of the contemplative life and it is the duty of service to all living beings from the sub-human and the human to the celestial beings or devas. Kalyāṇa is the practice of virtue as the inner side of duty and dāna or benevolence and ahimsā are among the cardinal virtues. Anavasāda and anuddharsa go together as they
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connote freedom from despair and absence of exultation. All these sādhanas aim at the physical, mental, moral, spiritual and religious development of man and are integral aids to devotion to God (bhakti). They are different from the Greek idea of harmonizing the animal, the human, and the spiritual side of man and the sādhanas of Sāṅkara which are really no sādhanas at all as Brahman is self-accomplished and not attained as something new. Brahman the absolute of metaphysics is Bhagavat or the God of religion and, according to Rāmānuja, vedāna or knowledge of Brahman, dhyāna or upāsanā or meditation on Him and bhakti or devotion have the same meaning and they connote the inter-relation and unity of jñāna and bhakti. Dhyāna is ceaseless contemplation up to death on Vāsudeva or Nārāyaṇa as the Inner Self or the Self in the form “I am, Thou holy Divinity and Thou are myself,” and it means that Brahman is the soul (sāririn) of jīva in the same way in which jīva is of the body. The two are inseparable as soul and body, but not identical. When bhakti deepens into perfect devotion and love (pārā-bhakti and premān) the quest for God becomes an irrepessible thirst for Him. But the soul-hunger for God is not so intense as the God-hunger for the soul. The Eternal One beyond, incarnates Himself as love in human form to satisfy His longing for union with the devotee (bhakta) whom He regards as His very self (mahātman). In the union that follows love is for love’s sake and bhakti is preferred to liberation (mukti) itself.

The building up of bhakti is a veritable Jacob’s ladder from earth to heaven (parama-pada-sopāna) owing to its arduousness and it is well-nigh impossible to ascend it owing to its many pitfalls on the way. The Gītā, as the essence of Upaniṣadic wisdom, in its infinite tenderness to erring humanity offers prapatti or self-surrender as the easiest and most natural means to liberation (mukti). As the religion of universal redemption, it invites every man as the son of God, but laden with the sin of separation, to seek refuge at His feet and guarantees mukti to him.

The Ālvārs are the seekers and seers of God like the Upaniṣadic ṛṣis and in their Tamil hymns which are equalized with the Vedānta owing to their divine wisdom, they stress the superior value of prapatti on account of its appeal to God as redemptive love and its universal applicability to all jīvas regardless of their birth, worth and station in life. In juristic religion, justice must be tempered by mercy, but in redemptive religion justice or retribution is dominated by redemption and even so-called punishment or dandaṇa has its roots in dayā or mercy.

In Śrī-Vaiśṇavism as the religion of the Viśiṣṭādvaita, Godhead is both Nārāyaṇa and Śrī in whom the impersonal qualities of law and love are eternally wedded together in a dual personality. If law rules over love, karman is inescapable; and if love rules over law, caprice becomes inevitable, but in the divine nature the two are harmonized and fused into one.

In the history of Śrī-Vaiśṇavism two conflicting sects have arisen
called the Teṅkalai School founded by Piḷḷai Lokācārya and the Vaḍakalai school led by Vedānta-Deśika. The former insists on the unconditionality and spontaneity of the grace of God (nir-hetuka-kaṭākṣa) and the latter to sa-hetuka-kaṭākṣa, that is, the joint method of God’s mercy and the devotee’s merit called prapatti-yoga. But both recognize the truth that God is Himself the endeavour and the end (upāya and upeya) and that karman is cancelled by mercy (kṛpā). The problem is not solved by the logical category of hetu or cause but is dissolved in the mystic experience of communion.

The Śri-Vaiṣṇava and Christian theories of redemption have affinities as ethical religions in their acceptance of sin as a violation of the Divine Law, in their faith that sin is forgivable and actually forgiven by the mercy of God and in the doctrines of justification by faith and justification by works. But the Vaiṣṇavaite theory has a universality of appeal which is missed in the Christian doctrines of the only Begotten Son of God, original sin and the Judgment Day. In the former case retribution is followed by and transformed into redemption, but in the latter redemption is succeeded by the Judgment Day when wheat is separated from the chaff. Sin in Śri-Vaiṣṇavism is separation from God and true atonement is at-one-ment with the God of love and followed by the practice of service to all jīvas prompted by the immanence of divine love in their hearts. The highest state of devotion is the līlā or sport of love in which the Lord as the lover plays the game of hide-and-seek with the beloved till the two become united for ever. The līlā of love consists of two stages, namely, the joy of union (saṁśleṣa) alternating with the sorrows of separation (viśleṣa) leading to what is called the dreariness of the dark night of the soul. The līlā ends when jīva attains the eternal bliss of mukti.

**MUKTI**

Among the four ends of life (purusārthas), namely dharma or the practice of righteousness, artha or economic gain, kāma or enjoyment of the pleasures of life here and in heaven, and mokṣa or the attainment of freedom from the ills of birth, the last is extolled by the Vedānta as the supreme end and aim of life. The devotee liberated from ignorance and desire has a foretaste of the bliss of Brahman and the intimation of immortality in his momentary intuition of God in this life. But the experience of Brahman in this life is not eternal and integral and it is only by going to the world of Brahman that the mukta attains the security and stability of immortal bliss. The Advaitin thinks that liberation (mukti), is the knowledge of the self-existent absolute (nir-gūna Brahman). Liberation is possible in this life, here-now (jīvan-mukti), and also afterwards (videha-mukti). All the other Vedāntins repudiate the theory. They
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contend that mukti is one and it is not freedom in empirical life here but freedom from empirical life by actually transcending the world of space and time.

If, as Advaitins hold, Brahman is not to be attended anew by any sādhana, then moral endeavour and religious attainment have no meaning and value. The Viṣistādvaita avoids these defects by distinguishing between the empirical world of space-time and pleasure-pain and the transcendental realm (parama-pada) which is also the home of the eternal values of truth, goodness, beauty and bliss. It describes ascent of the mukta after the dissolution of the body to the blissful land of Vaikunṭha by the straight and shining path of deva-yāna.²⁸ There matter shines in a supernatural (a-prakṛta) way without any mutability. Time exists under the form of eternity and the mukta freed from the limitations of karman regains his infinite jñāna and is deified but without the quality of cosmic rulership.

The liberated soul has a direct vision of Brahman and is absorbed in the eternal bliss of union with Him (sāyujya). To him the pluralistic world remains but the pluralistic view is abolished. The distinction between the ātman and Brahman is eternal, but the sense of separateness disappears in the state of union (a-vibhāga). There is no loss of personality. The liberated soul does not serve God by co-operating with Him but gives up egoity by realizing “I and yet not I, but Thou in me.”

CONCLUSION

The Viṣistādvaita is a philosophy of religion which thinks out all things in their togetherness or the synthetic unity of Brahma-jñāna and at the same time seeks to realize the union between ātman and Brahman. Brahman is the ground of all beings and also the goal of spiritual endeavour. By its definition of revelation (Sāstra) as a body of eternal spiritual truths spiritually verifiable by each man, it bridges the gulf between revelation, reason and intuition and frees itself from the charges of dogmatism, agnosticism and eclecticism. Its ontological view that Brahman is the soul of all beings and is their source, sustenance and goal brings out the divine purpose of creation. Prakṛti is a becoming, puruṣa is progressive and Paramātman uses prakṛti as an instrument for the perfection of the soul. While material things exist, ātman lives as an eternal person and not as a thing and Brahman is the infinite interested in infinitizing the finite. This view sets aside the errors and evils of materialism, personalism and abstract monism. The three spiritual paths of work, knowledge and devotion (karman, jñāna and bhakti) are a triple discipline of will, thought, and feeling and they avoid the pitfalls of moralism, intellectualism and sentimentalism. The doctrine of surrender (praṇātī) guarantees
God to all jīvas without any distinction and offers an inspiring motive for spirituality and service. Every jīva can intuit God directly and serve others by intuiting the truth that all beings are in Brahman and Brahman is in all beings. This view combines contemplative insight and activistic outlook. Viṣiṣṭādvaita thus follows the way of synthesis and brings to light the working of divine love in humanity.

In the post-Rāmānuja period in the South, the two Schools of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavaism, namely, the Vaḍakalai and the Toṅkalai, became prominent and doctrinal differences came to a head at the time of Pīḷḷailokācārya and Vedānta-Deśika and needless frictions and jealousy arose and tended to bring down the high level of spirituality realized in the earlier stages. Progress is not always in a straight line and in the so-called mediaeval period of Indian history, especially in the North, great Vaiṣṇava reformers arose to check the proselytizing zeal of Islam and revitalize Hinduism. A follower of Rāmānuja called Rāmānanda migrated to the North and became the pioneer of the Vaiṣṇavaite movement there which influenced even the Punjab and Bengal. He tried to re-establish God’s kingdom (Rāma-rājya) on earth by spreading its triple truths of monarchy, monogamy and monotheism in the political, social and religious aspects of life and thus became the precursor of Mahātma Gāndhi. Of the followers of Rāmānanda, Kabīr, Dādū and Tulsīdās were the most popular and of these Kabīr, born in 1398, did the greatest service to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity both by precept and practice by stressing the common features of the Vedānta and Sufism. Tulsīdās has immortalized himself by the Hindi translation of the Rāmāyaṇa in the same way as Kambar has done in its metrical translation in Tamil. Dādū (1544–1603) had frequent interviews with Akbar in the cause of cementing Islam and Hinduism. The Suddha-Advaita of Vallabha has affinities with Śrī-Vaiṣṇavaite mysticism especially in its teachings of puṣṭi-bhakti or the intense love of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa which resembles the (nāyaka-nāyikā) love as experienced by Nāmālvar and Āndāl. Bengal Vaiṣṇavaism known as Acintya-Bhedabheda was founded by Śrī-Caitanya born in 1485 in Nuddea and it was deeply influenced by Madhva’s teaching of Vaiṣṇavaism. The leaders of the Brāhma-Samjā were deeply touched by bhakti and they repelled the attack of Christianity by accepting Jesus as a great bhakta and rejecting Churchianity. While Bengal Vaiṣṇavaism is mainly emotional, that of the Mahratta bhaktas like Jñānadeva and Nāmadeva was influenced by Rāmānanda and it laid great stress on jñāna and bhakti. All the Schools of Vaiṣṇavaism agree in their view of God as Love and compel comparison with the Saivaite theories of Śiva as love and with the teachings of Sufism and Christian mysticism. The idea of God as the beautiful is on the whole peculiar to Vaiṣṇavaism. The Viṣiṣṭādvaita has thus through the ages permeated Indian life and made its own contribution to philosophy by its synthetic insight into the whole of reality as the soul of the
universe, and to religion by the intuitive realization of life, and the home of eternal values of truth, goodness and beauty. It offers to every man the most inspiring motive for spirituality and service and enables him to attain the immortal bliss of communion with Brahman.

NOTES

1. Chāndogya-Upaniṣad, VI. 1. 3.
3. Taittirīya-Upaniṣad, II. i.
5. Yātindra-mata-dīpikā, I. 7
7. Śrī-bhāṣya, II. iii. 18.
8. Taittirīya-Upaniṣad, Ananda-vallī, 1.
10. Rahasya-traya-sūtra, Chapter III.
14. Chāndogya-Upaniṣad, VI. i. 4.
15. Vedānta-sūtra, II. i. 15.
17. Śrī-bhāṣya, II. iii. 19, 33.
18. Śrī-bhāṣya, II. iii. 26.
20. Bhagavad-Gītā, II. 47.
24. Kaṭha-Upaniṣad, I. iii. 6.
25. Śrī-bhāṣya, I. i. 1.
26. Śrī-bhāṣya, IV. i. 3.
27. Paramā-pada-sopana.

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CHAPTER XIV—continued

VEDĀNTA—THE VAIŚNAVA (THEISTIC) SCHOOLS

B. MADHVA (DVAITA)

Madhva and his Works.—The philosophy of Brahman (Brahma-Mimāṃsā) expounded by Madhva is popularly called Dvaita. Madhva was born in A.D. 1138 near Udiipi. His social environment was moulded by the general tenets of this philosophy. Scholars studied this philosophy with great interest. Some were dissatisfied with the prevalent ideas about its meaning.

His works exhibit a unity of purpose. They may be studied under three heads: (1) Criticism of categories of knowledge and reality leading to the philosophy of Brahman, (2) Exposition of the philosophy of Brahman and (3) Application of the philosophy of Brahman.

I. CRITICISM LEADING TO PHILOSOPHY OF BRAHMAN

Madhva holds that correct knowledge (pramā), as well as correct source of knowledge (pramāṇa), is that which grasps its object as it is (yat-hārthā). Both knowledge and its source grasp their object as it is. Both are therefore correct. To dispute this is to make knowledge impossible. No knowledge is objectless. No object is unknown. Each is an element in the system implied by the other. To hold that knowledge is objectless is to make it baseless. To hold that the object is superimposed on knowledge is implicitly to recognize the object, for otherwise superimposition becomes impossible. Without recognizing real silver, superimposition of silver on a shell (in illusion) is impossible. Abstraction of knowledge and object, each from the other, is responsible for wrong theories, like one-sided idealism or objectivism.

False cognition is that which apprehends its object as what it is not. It is no knowledge. Its cause is some defect in its condition. Knowledge or true cognition is independent of false cognition. The latter presupposes correct knowledge. Mistaking a shell for silver involves the correct knowledge of a shining something. True knowledge is characterized by intellectual and volitional harmony. Yet without any reference to any such
criterion such knowledge directly presents itself as true. The truth of any knowledge is thus self-evident. Only in cases of doubt, harmony as a criterion helps decision. False cognition is marked by the absence of harmony. Falsity is inferred from this absence.

It is wrong to say that the truth of knowledge is inferred from the soundness of its source (e.g. sense organs, data, etc.). For it makes truth (pramanya), which is the very essence of knowledge, dependent on conditions external to knowledge. If knowledge were not essentially true (i.e. that which apprehends its object as it is), then it would imply: (1) That knowledge is objectless and it has nothing in it to explain itself, and (2) that knowledge is dependent on external conditions.

Knowledge grasps its object as it is. It is evident to the self as "witness" (saksin). Every person has a "witness." The witness apprehends all that occurs to every thinking being.

Self, knower, knowledge, "witness" and their self-evident nature are only distinctions in unity. If they were altogether different, then they could never be brought together. It is absurd to insist on pure identity or non-duality in respect of knowledge. Pure identity is contradiction in terms. Every case of identity necessarily involves distinction of things identified. Every case of identity is thus qualified (sa-višeṣa). The division of things into substances and attributes is also unwarranted.

The "witness" is the self itself. It endures in all states. In the waking state it witnesses the knowledge caused by perception, inference and verbal testimony.

Perception is the result of the operation of some organ of knowledge like "witness," mind (manas), eye, ear, nose, tongue, and touch. But an organ does not work by itself. It is directed by the self. The self is thus an active principle. Analysis of perception shows that the self is not determined by things that are external to it.

Inference is the knowledge of the major term (sādhyā) from that of the middle (hetu) on the basis of the knowledge of the invariable concomitance between the middle and the major and that of the presence of the middle in a relevant minor (pakṣa). Concomitance is determined by repeated observation. It is expressed as "if the middle, then the major."

Verbal testimony (āgama) is the source of the valid cognition of what is intended to be expressed by words. Its validity consists in the unsublated character of the knowledge yielded.

In the waking state mind (manas) causes memory on the basis of past impressions. In dream also mind functions on the basis of past impressions. The dream objects are actual as such. But they do not possess the same status as objects perceived in the waking state. Mind and external sense organs do not function in deep sleep. This proves that they are different from the self which endures even then. The awareness produced by the senses and mind is always of some object and it is apprehended by
“witness” as a “this,” being external to self. In all cases of such objective awareness there is a modification of mind, a psychosis of the form “this.”

In dreamless sleep the witness alone functions. It apprehends the self as having sleep, happiness caused by sleep and duration of happiness. This is evident by the later memory “till now I slept happily.” The following are the points of difference between knowledge by “witness” and knowledge through the modification of mind.

The former grasps its object as it is but the latter occasionally does not do so. The awareness of “I” as “I” and awareness of happiness as enjoyed by “I” are never falsified. But an awareness like “this is silver” may not sometimes be correct. Further, knowledge by “witness” is independent of knowledge as a modification of mind. But the latter is ever dependent on the former. Awareness of “I” is independent of mind. But the knowledge of an object like “this is silver” necessarily involves the knowledge of time which is due to the witness. The knowledge of time cannot be the work of mind. For, though the mind does not operate in dreamless sleep, there is still the knowledge of time. Further, “witness” is self-evident. It presents itself while presenting its object. But the modification of mind is not self-evident. Moreover, its object is specified as a particular. Specification is not its work. It is the expression of distinction of the particular from the rest of the universe. Therefore it presupposes the general awareness of the rest of the universe. But this general awareness of the rest of the universe falls outside the jurisdiction of the knowledge by mental modification limited to the particular object to which mind is related through sense organ. It must therefore be the work of “witness.”

Distinction is not something externally imposed on a thing. It is the explanation of the thing as thing. To deny it is self-contradiction. The denial must be distinct from non-denial.

Knowledge is never indeterminate. It is wrong to suppose that perception at the first instance is indeterminate being devoid of all determining factors. This supposition is falsified by the fact that perception involves modification of mind which is not independent of witness and witness by nature grasps its object as it is (with its characteristics). Further, to hold that indeterminate knowledge can be had from reflection and meditation is also not correct; because the contributions of mind and witness even to such knowledge can never be denied. Hence the claim for indeterminate knowledge is inconsistent with the very nature of knowledge.

Indeterminate knowledge is inconsistent with the nature of the object also. Every object is a system containing different elements within itself. It is also a member of a system of objects. It is in itself a unity of distinctions. With reference to the rest of the system of which it is a member it is a distinction in unity. To abstract it or its aspect from the system of which it is a member is unwarranted. But without abstraction indeterminate knowledge is impossible.
Scripture (Agama) receives special treatment in Madhva. He does not regard it as an authority or command. Authority and command arrest knowledge. They only prescribe courses of action. A spiritual text is essentially a source of knowledge.

Under verbal testimony Madhva chiefly considers the Vedas and the Upanisads. He points out that perception, inference and verbal testimony form the different levels of an identical process of understanding. He holds that the knowledge of Reality that is all-inclusive and self-explanatory can be had from the Vedic scripture.

To understand the Veda in this sense, Madhva points out, is to understand that it is indispensable (nitya) for all true knowledge. Perception, inference and even verbal testimony yield the knowledge of partial reality. But with the help of the Veda they become able to present the whole reality. The Veda is, therefore, the language of Reason. It has in view the whole of Reality.

The different passages of the Veda appear to state things that are opposed because of the distraction of mind. Distraction results from attraction to partial reality. To appreciate identity of purpose in the Veda is to realize the identical purpose of all sources of knowledge and therefore of life itself in all its aspects. With this realization one cannot abstract or over-emphasize particular portions of the Veda against others.

After the Mundaka-Upanisad Madhva distinguishes between two types of Vedic interpretation—lower and higher. The lower consists in giving the common-sense meaning to the Veda. The higher consists in seeing that the Veda presents the Truth Imperishable (a-kśara). This higher meaning is not necessarily opposed to the lower. It includes in itself the significance of all that is lower. For after all it is seeing the Imperishable in the perishable. For this reason the Mundaka concludes: “Every Vedic passage gives rise to the knowledge of the Imperishable.”

To see the Imperishable as the meaning of the whole Veda presupposes great insight and deep study. This insight or study is not one among many insights or studies. It is the insight or study which is the origin and goal of all insights or studies. It is in this sense that the Mundaka arrives at the conclusion: “The Philosophy of Brahman is the origin and aim of all knowledge.”

To see the Imperishable as the only truth taught by the whole Veda is the result of a regular process of thinking involving, in order—understanding texts (śravaṇa), reflection (manana) and assimilation (nididhyāsana). This is the process of appreciating the inner harmony that governs the whole Vedic thought in all its aspects.

So the Veda, according to Madhva, is not authority, command, instruction
or revelation. It is not the exposition of Truth in its different grades or aspects by different persons according to their light. It is not a verbal testimony composed by different poets or philosophers according to their own beliefs. It does not teach different grades of discipline like action (karman), faith (bhakti) and knowledge (jñāna). It does not uphold different gods as the rulers of the world and recommend their worship. Nor does it hold different theories of the world or of its elements.

After the Kaṭha-Upaniṣad Madhva notes that to miss the real teaching of the Veda is to miss spiritual peace (śānti). Emancipation is the culmination of spiritual integrity. If it is possible, then the Veda is indispensable. Acceptance of the Veda (Veda-svākāra) presupposes not only rejection of common-sense ideas as applying to the Veda but also conscious recognition of indispensability of higher reason, i.e. Veda. Further, to have Veda is to see the inner harmony that pervades the Veda and thereby the All-pervading Truth as its meaning.

Madhva recognizes that this requirement is satisfied by Bādarāyaṇa’s Brahma-sūtra, i.e. Brahma-Mīmāṁsā, i.e. philosophy of Brahma. “Brahma-sūtra” is the language of reason that brings out the unity of the Veda. It is the deciding principle. It discovers the real meaning of Vedic texts. Without it the Veda is unintelligible.

Brahma-sūtra and the Veda are therefore one unit of thought. Each is unintelligible without the other. The former, being the expression of inner harmony of the latter, merges itself in the latter so that what remains is only the Veda in its true essence.

All works of Madhva aim at achieving this end. Under each aphorism (sūtra) he shows on what principle the aphorism decides particular texts of the Veda the meaning of which is misleading and self-contradictory without the application of this integral principle. For an example, take the ordinary meaning of the passage in the Puruṣa-Sūkta which says: “One who knows the self (Puruṣa) in this manner becomes immortal.” Apparently this passage will be thought to say that knowledge is the cause of immortality. But this would imply the negation of Brahma, the ground of all. For the Taittirīya-Upaniṣad says: “From which all these creatures arise. . . . That is Brahma.” If Brahma is the cause of all, how can knowledge cause immortality? Or if knowledge cause immortality how can Brahma be the cause of all? Hence the idea that knowledge causes immortality is opposed to the truth of Brahma.

The apparent meaning is attributed to the passage owing to the influence of common language. But taking an integral view of things the first aphorism of Brahma-sūtra, in order to counteract the evil influence of common usage, shows that the true knowledge from philosophical enquiry
(jiññāsā) arises through grace (prāsāda), independent Will, of Brahma and therefore immortality is the result of this Will. With the application of this governing principle given by Brahma-sūtra the passage in question naturally means that the attainment of immortality by means of knowledge is also ultimately due to the grace of Brahma.

In the same connection Madhva examines carefully and thoroughly all possible views that are opposed to his position. He shows that their defects consist chiefly in self-contradiction. For example, he shows the defects of the view that action (karman) or faith (bhakti) is the way to liberation. Action presupposes knowledge. It is therefore an expression of dynamic character of knowledge. Faith is the element of devotion in knowledge. It is therefore an expression of intensity of knowledge. Abstraction of action from knowledge presupposes doership on the part of the individual. It is therefore the negation of the truth that Brahma is the All-doer. To abstract faith from knowledge is to uphold non-spirituality.

In the language of the Īśāvāsya-Upaniṣad, abstraction or partial knowledge is delusion (avidyā) and knowledge is integral awareness (vidyā). Knowledge cannot properly be appreciated without understanding delusion as delusion. But to concentrate on either alone is to miss the real significance of both. Brahma (Īśa) is the author of both. It creates delusion to justify knowledge. To create delusion is to create all circumstances that make delusion effectively oppose knowledge which may finally shine in all its perfection.

In recognition of these ideas Madhva defines knowledge not as a case of passive awareness but as an active process of understanding, reflection and assimilation in order. This process must involve (1) the rejection of delusion, (2) the substantiation or appreciation of knowledge and (3) the retention of the element that makes continuity of the process inevitable. Delusion is rejected because the ground that supports it is found to be logically defective. Knowledge is established because the principle that justifies it is recognized to be defectless. In the act of establishing knowledge against the agnostic, Madhva adopts two standards. The upholder of non-knowledge is totally unfamiliar with knowledge. So non-knowledge is criticized from his own point of view. Knowledge has its own standard. In full satisfaction of this standard he establishes knowledge. The speciality of knowledge is such that once it is appreciated there is no going back. In full appreciation of this fact he shows that non-knowledge is condemned by itself, i.e. by the self-contradiction it involves.

Self-establishment characterizes knowledge. To become fuller and fuller is its tendency. Madhva thinks that the recognition of this fact is the highest discipline (tapas, upāsanā or dhyāna). He says "Not even for a moment one ought to be without knowledge, i.e. philosophy of Brahma (jiññāsā). If there is a break owing to sleep, etc., immediately after one comes to consciousness one ought to recontinue the same." The whole
process of philosophy illustrates how action and faith are in essence knowledge. They are the language of the movement from understanding to reflections and then to assimilation. An appreciation of this truth enables one to see unity of purpose running throughout the Veda.

Madhwa shows that to emphasize the Veda against the philosophy of Brahman leads nowhere. The theories (of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja respectively) that Brahman is attributeless (nir-viśeṣa) and that Brahman is the soul of the world (śarīrin) illustrate this truth. These theories are based on the apparent meaning of particular statements of the Veda. They are therefore cases of dualism and they create more problems than they solve. The attributeless is opposed to that with attributes. To maintain the attributeless is to negate itself. Nor does nescience (avidyā) explain dualism. If Brahman is attributeless, it cannot support nescience. Nescience is then baseless. Nescience and the attributeless Brahman cannot go together. Emphasis on nescience makes it independent and ultimate over against Brahman.

The other theory that Brahman is embodied is an expression of dualism. It is the dualism of substance and attribute. Every idea of relating them confirms dualism.

Madhva sees that the application of the philosophy of Brahman to the interpretation of the Veda results in an entirely different conception of Brahman. In formulating this position he brings Vedānta thought to its culmination. The conception of Brahman according to him is something arrived at only by means of philosophy in its application to the Veda. Hence it is Vedīc. To be attributeless and to be Vedīc are a contradiction in terms. The conception of Brahman as embodied is based on empirical distinctions, substance, attribute and their relation. But Brahman as taught by Veda transcends all empirical distinctions.

The Veda as a source of knowledge transcends all other sources of knowledge. It does not negate them. It gives them fresh significance. To illustrate, perception is commonly supposed to present an external object. If in the capacity of pure philosophy the Veda shows that the object is an expression of Brahman, its underlying principle, perception ceases to be independent of the Veda. In this circumstance in place of common object it presents Brahman, the principle of object. In this experience awareness of object is merged in the knowledge of Brahman, the ground of object; and the object is merged in Brahman, its ground.

So the Veda transcends all other sources of knowledge without excluding them. Similarly Brahman transcends all other objects without excluding them. Hence no source of knowledge exists unenlightened by the
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Veda. Similarly no object exists outside Brahm. The Veda is the source of the sources of knowledge. Similarly Brahm is object of objects. The Veda is the highest source of knowledge. Similarly, Brahm is the highest Reality. The Veda is thus the supreme source of knowledge. Similarly, Brahm is the only Reality.

Madhva points out that this position can be arrived at only through philosophy. As philosophy, the Chandogya comes to the conclusion “Brahman is secondless.” (ekam evav diksyam Brahma). Those that hold that Brahm is secondless, therefore the world is unreal, or that Brahm is identical, therefore the world is its body, take Veda as a mere verbal testimony and attribute common-sense meaning to it.

To hold that the world is unreal is to make the very consideration impossible. To hold that the world is body is to limit Brahm by something external. Hence these conclusions cannot withstand the philosophy of Brahm. Neither of them is, therefore, the position of the Veda.

The position of the Veda that Brahm is secondless is the result of the philosophy of Brahm. It implies that the world is real so that it gives rise to the problem of finding out its real ground. The reality of the world implied by the Veda is such that it makes the philosophy of Brahm indispensable.

That Brahm ought to be arrived at through the philosophy of Brahm is the one position of the Veda illustrated by expressions as “Enquire into That,” “Enquire with devotion into Brahm,” etc. The Brhadaranyaka-Upanisad defines the philosophy of Brahm as “If Atman were to be realized, then it ought to be understood, studied and assimilated.” Brhma-sutra brings out the implication of those statements by defining knowledge as philosophy of Brahm consisting of understanding, reflection and assimilation in order. Understanding is that of Brahm as it is expounded by the Veda. It takes place on finding out the insufficiency of all empirical explanations. The subject-matter of reflection is that which is understood. It consists in criticizing understanding with reference to all passages of the Veda so as to see the application of understanding to the whole Veda. Assimilation is the process of application of what is understood and criticized. It is this process that is called meditation or worship (dhyana or upasan). Meditation or worship in the usual sense of fixing attention on what is already known is the act of obstructing spiritual progress. Philosophy of Brahm is thus the expression of freedom from passions and it is marked by spiritual progress. So philosophy creates mental equipoise. This enables the student to appreciate Brahm as is being expounded by the Veda. This is another reason why Madhva calls philosophy the highest discipline.
Philosophy is thus the process of finding out the *Veda*, the language of Brahman. It is not assuming some statement as the *Veda* and justifying it by philosophy. It is rather recognizing the language of Brahman as the *Veda*. Philosophy and the *Veda* are therefore the expressions of the absolute Mind. In the order of understanding philosophy comes first, takes the form of the *Veda* and makes further philosophy on its basis inevitable. In recognition of this truth Madhva describes himself as one who is not influenced by the *Veda* (*tyakta-veda*), i.e. one who is not a theologian. Consistently with this Jayatirtha observes that *Brahma-sūtra* is not composed after the *Veda* though it defines or finds out the *Veda*.

It may, however, be noted that to understand Madhva’s thought, i.e. *Brahma-Mīmāṁsā*, in the light of the foregoing ideas, is difficult. But Madhva says that it is indispensable. He notes that to understand Brahman is finally to understand that it is only Brahman that understands Brahman. Using the *Vedic* terms, philosophy of Brahman is the way in which *Nārāyaṇa*, the Highest, knows Itself as *Vāsudeva*, the All-comprehensive. In recognition of absolute All-comprehensiveness of Brahman, Bādarāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa or Vāsudeva is characterized as Viṣṇu by *Veda*. Hence the process of Brahman understanding Itself as Viṣṇu is the philosophy of Brahman. It is the plan according to which creation takes place. There is, therefore, nothing apart from philosophy. In recognition of this truth Madhva calls philosophy the science of Viṣṇu. It is this that makes this science so comprehensive that it is the origin and goal of all sciences—branches of learning. Its study is the highest discipline including the merits of all disciplines. With a view to justifying all these ideas Madhva expounds the philosophy of Brahman.

**II. EXPOSITION OF PHILOSOPHY OF BRAHMAN**

Philosophy of Brahman is the process of finding out the inner richness of *Vedic* teaching and thereby infinite and absolute perfection of Brahman. Clash between knowledge and different levels of non-knowledge and establishment of knowledge against it accounts for this richness. The reason (*yuktī*) employed in bringing out this richness is purely *Vedic*. It transcends the empirical. It has nothing to sublate it. It is marked by an integral spiritual outlook. It is, therefore, self-established. But the same reason employed empirically involves contradiction. It falsifies itself. For on the empirical level nothing is absolute and nothing complete.

On the general basis of these ideas the leading features of Madhva’s philosophy may be briefly indicated.
The sense of imperfection leads to the idea of perfection. In some cases it leads one to doubt the existence of perfection, i.e. Brahman. Doubt is the source of philosophy. The doubt whether there is Brahman, whether there is any source of the knowledge of Brahman makes philosophy indispensable. But to hold that Brahman is self-evident in the sense that it is not an object of knowledge negates philosophy. But such negation presupposes some philosophy. It therefore contradicts itself.

Philosophy is possible so long as the standpoint of Brahman is kept in view. Any modification in the viewpoint makes philosophy fallacious.

Desire for emancipation does not lead to philosophy. Desire is misery. Illusion is its cause. Illusion and philosophy are incompatible. Illusion is due to prepossession. But philosophy presupposes nothing. It is the outcome of joy. It is in itself joy.

This joy is transcendent. It is not conditioned by the empirical. It is the expression of dispassionateness which again results from the conviction that nothing other than Brahman commands love. Everything is relative and falls short of the highest.

Philosophy is not the creation of man. It is rather the expression of the divine element in man. It is the result of the grace of Brahman.

Philosophy is the process of finding out the highest source of knowledge and highest Reality as its object. The word Brahman means both. Brahman as source of knowledge is indispensable (nitya), defectless (nir-doṣa), self-valid (svataḥ-pramāṇa) and impersonal (a-pauruṣeya). In this sense it is called the Veda. Brahman as Reality is All-complete. The All-Complete is All-powerful which is the giver of reality to all. Reality implies (1) The thing itself (svarūpa), (2) its objectivity (pramiti), and (3) its functions (pravṛtti). As the doer and giver of all Brahman is called Viṣṇu.

Philosophy of Brahman becomes thus philosophy of Viṣṇu. To ignore this is bondage. To understand it is emancipation. Both are the works of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is both the means and the goal. The Veda recognized as pure philosophy is the only source of this knowledge. In the presence of this knowledge every idea and every word become expressions of the truth of God, so that the whole existence becomes dedicated to God (Viṣṇuvāpa).

Brahman (Viṣṇu) as All-Complete is beyond comprehension. But it is eternal and indispensable. It is made intelligible by seeing that it is the origin of all.

The world consists of conscious souls or knowers and unconscious
objects. Individual souls are many. They pass through eight states—birth, existence, destruction, relative position, knowledge, ignorance, bondage and freedom. Different individuals have them in different degrees. All souls influence one another. Hence no one is completely free. The influence of one on others may be very great though each has an ontological status of its own. To be subject to change is to be dependent. Hence every conscious or unconscious entity in the world is found to be dependent (para-tantra) in its very nature. Just as the dependent does not explain itself, it does not explain others. Therefore the dependent presupposes the Independent (sva-tantra).

To negate the dependent or to hold that it is illusion is to posit negation or illusion in its place. But negation or illusion is dependent. At least as its source there must be the Independent. Hence the dependent is in some sense or other real. The Independent is therefore the real source of the real world. It is self-established in all its aspects. It manifests itself through its effects from which, therefore, it can be known. It is Eternal and All-powerful. It is the doer of all. It is the doer of doers. As All-doer It is all. It has all aspects. Every aspect is Independent. It is devoid of all distinctions within itself. But it is even distinguishable from the dependent. To posit the dependent against it is to negate it. But to negate It is to establish It. In recognition of these truths the Veda speaks of Its identity with the dependent as well as Its distinction from the dependent. The idea is that identity and difference each opposed to the other are irrelevant to the distinction between the Independent and the dependent.

Plurality, variety, grades, levels, kinds, activity, etc., of things are all due to the Independent. Independent is complete in all these aspects. All-doership therefore proves All-Completeness.

3

The truth that Brahman is All-doer is opposed to empirical ideas based on the wrong belief that every thing existent is self-active. Hence philosophy is the only source of this knowledge.

A dependent entity, conscious or unconscious, is dependent in all its aspects. It cannot, therefore, cause anything. That alone can be truly said to be self-active which has the power of doing, undoing and doing differently. This power must possess (1) ability to avoid evil and do good, (2) freedom from exhaustion, anxiety, failure of memory, misery, etc., (3) freedom from dependence, (4) ability to accomplish what is desired, (5) intelligibility, (6) absence of dissipation of energy and (7) self-sufficiency. None of the things of the world can be said to possess such power and cannot therefore be said to be a real doer.

Brahman alone is possessed of such power and is the All-doer. It is Independent. Doer, doing and done of the world are Its work. They amplify Its creative power. The world of activity is not therefore opposed
to the All-doership, i.e. Viṣṇu.

All-doership consists both in creating things and in making them do things. The world is the result of All-doership, i.e. doing and making doers. This signifies that just as that which is done is not a doer, the doer is not a doer. For doer and done are finally the same. So whether a thing is presented merely as being done or as doer it is the manifestation of Viṣṇu's creative activity. It is an expression of Its All-doership. The Veda is the expression of this truth.

4

The true meaning of a Vedic teaching is determined by the philosophy of Brahman. This point may be illustrated by taking, for example, Madhva's interpretation of the science of the Independent (sad-vidyā) of the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad.

This passage begins with the Independent, the Real (sat), as the origin of all. It concludes with the idea of that which gives being to all (satya) as well as the idea of that which is All-complete (ātman). It emphasizes the All-pervading character of the Independent. With the application of this truth even the smallest entity like a banyan seed is recognized to be an expression of the Independent. “That thou art” (Tat-tvam-asi) is the expression of the result. This expression signifies that before this truth is realized the individual is taken to be independent of the Independent. But with this realization the individual is recognized as being entirely derived from the Independent. This realization constitutes emancipation. Uddālaka, the teacher, praises this knowledge as being all-inclusive and therefore indispensable. The whole weight is given to this knowledge. Lastly, the Independent as the origin of all presents the reason that explains the whole passage. The truth of the unaffected position of the Independent is further illustrated by means of nine examples. Taking the example of salt into consideration, it is obvious that salt is salt whether it is seen or unseen. Similarly, whether there is creation or no creation the Independent is Independent. It is therefore distinguished from all. So the real meaning of the passage is brought out by the method of interpreting a passage by considering its beginning, its conclusion, its point of emphasis, the result, the weight and the reason.

With reference to the same passage Madhva notes further the higher significance of Truth Independent. The passage illustrates the creation of the Independent from Itself as “The Independent intended: Let me be infinite in form. Let me create.” Consistently with this, whenever Madhva speaks of creation he has in view two types of creation: (1) Infinite forms of Viṣṇu coming from Viṣṇu, and (2) the corresponding things of the world coming from Viṣṇu. The former is the explanation of the latter. This idea can be applied to any passage on creation. Take the passage “From Ātman space came.” According to the meaning (1) Ātman is Viṣṇu
Space also is Viṣṇu. According to the meaning (2) Ātman is Viṣṇu and space is empirical space. The whole idea is that space came from Viṣṇu, the space complete coming from Viṣṇu, the Independent.

Applying the same idea to the present passage, viz. the science of the Independent, it may be seen that all words that are applied to the things of the world really mean different forms of Viṣṇu complete with reference to the attributes that characterize the respective things. These forms are the immanent principle of the corresponding entities of the world. There are entities because of these forms.

The same idea may be applied to the concluding statement of the passage, “That thou art.” “That” means Viṣṇu. “Thou” means Viṣṇu, the source of the individual, i.e. Śvetaketu. “Art” means the identity of the two. This is what is meant by seeing identity of Viṣṇu throughout creation. Identity is Viṣṇu Itself. This is seeing All-doership and this is understanding All-completeness.

God (Viṣṇu), the Independent, is thus the primary meaning of every word. To apply a word to other things is negation of God or Viṣṇu. In explaining this truth Madhva considers first why at all a word is applied to a thing. The usual science of language is based on convention. It presents no reason. So he gives the correct approach.

A word by nature means something which comes to mind immediately after the hearing of the word. Hence there is something in the nature of the thing that determines the application of the word to it. It is this inherent and underlying nature and principle of the thing that makes the thing what it is. This implies then that the application of a word to a thing is, in the ultimate analysis, the application of the word to the principle that governs the thing. But this principle is nothing but God. He is therefore meant by every word.

The same rule applies to sounds inarticulate. The sound of the flow of a river produces the feeling of wonder, the principle underlying which is also God. So sound means God. In this connection Madhva studies the process of linguistic developments and comes to the conclusion that the Veda is the highest form of language because it presents Viṣṇu. He therefore calls the Veda perfect language (saṃskṛta).

To hold that Brahman is beyond consideration is itself consideration. Brahman is thus essentially an object of knowledge. There is nothing that conditions Brahman. Brahman is bliss. Its creation is bliss. Attainment of bliss is emancipation.

Madhva concludes “Brahman, i.e. Viṣṇu is complete, defectless, object and goal.”
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III. APPLICATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF BRAHMAN

Madhva mentions two kinds of expressions of God, the Independent and the dependent. The former is the principle, and the latter is the effect of the principle in operation. So the dependent illustrates the richness of the Independent.

The dependent consists of the conscious and the unconscious. There are three kinds of the latter: (1) what is produced incessantly, e.g. the Veda; (2) Mixture of incessant production and occasional production, e.g. matter, time and space; and (3) what is occasionally produced, e.g. jar, etc.

A knower or a conscious being is incessantly produced in every case of mental activity. The application of philosophy should be the aim of life for all knowers. But there are different kinds of individuals: those that are after philosophy, those that are indifferent to it and those that are opposed to it. Just as wrong knowledge is no knowledge, the latter two are not real knowers.

The philosophy of Brahman is difficult to comprehend. One can follow it only in accordance with the grace of Viṣṇu. This causes degrees of philosophical knowledge. Accordingly five grades of knowers, in respect of philosophy, are distinguished—Controller (deva) of the world, teacher (ṛṣi), father (pītṛ), protector (pa) and man (nara). This gradation implies that controller, etc., are necessarily philosophers of different orders. To call others controllers, etc. is wrong.

Degrees of philosophical knowledge imply degrees of non-knowledge, including illusion. Superimposition of doership on man causes illusion. Illusion causes evils—attachment, hatred, etc. Birth, death, etc. are the results. These are all dependent on Viṣṇu who is their author. Viṣṇu as All-doer is the principle of every soul. This implies that no soul can be inactive or irresponsible unless it superimposes doership on it. To appreciate Viṣṇu as All-doer is to see that one’s body is the vehicle of Viṣṇu but not of the individual self. This results in acting consistently with disposition, birth, environment etc., which are creations of Viṣṇu. Action is life. It is an expression of knowledge. It consists in realizing that it is dependent. This is to appreciate the Independent in Its creative activity. This is the practical worship of Viṣṇu.

The study and teaching of the philosophy of Brahman frees the soul from bondage. It presupposes complete absence of an opposite bias. The expressions of this absence are in order—interest in finding out Truth, study of philosophy, devotion to Truth, absence of illusion, appreciation of Truth, overcoming opposition, satisfaction in knowledge, apprehension of the self-sufficiency of Truth, sense of dependence of the individuality, the sense of absence of essence and endurance in the elements of the world and unconditioned interest in understanding Brahman.
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One who has no preconceptions has legitimate doubt with regard to the source of the knowledge of Truth. Absence of doubt means presence of preconception. One who really doubts comes to enquire into the best source of knowledge that presents the highest Truth. This enquiry is philosophy. With philosophy the previous virtues become pronounced and help philosophy in turn.

So according to Madhva ethical or spiritual discipline is the process of making philosophy of Brahman indispensable, intensive and comprehensive. It results in clearer expression of the Veda and its meaning, Brahman. This state is attained by teaching. Teaching pleases Viṣṇu.

Study and teaching have a social implication. Madhva insists on a social reconstruction in which no body should go without philosophy. His leading ideas in this connection are these. In characterizing the disposition favourable for philosophy he prefers merit to birth. He holds that even the lowest caste (śūdras) may study the philosophy of Brahman. He recognizes that even the untouchable (antyajas) are devoted to Viṣṇu. He holds that enquiry into Viṣṇu is the common purpose of the human community.

Society is the creation of political organization. Madhva holds that it is the duty of Government to establish the environment in which alone philosophy of Brahman is possible. The ideas that are consistent with this education ought to be encouraged at all cost and the ideas that are opposed to this must be put down. Hence political organization is essentially the means of establishing knowledge.

Knowledge is at first mediate. With practice it becomes clear, i.e. immediate. With this the person enjoys philosophy of Brahman according to the intensity of his knowledge. This is emancipation in life (jīvan-mukti). By the grace of Viṣṇu, one attains to Viṣṇu. This is emancipation. It consists in enjoying the bliss of Viṣṇu, i.e. enjoying Viṣṇu as the dearest.

CONCLUSION

Madhva's philosophy of Brahman can thus be construed as the highest form of Monism, tracing the universe to a single principle. His distinction of the Independent from the dependent makes Monism faultless. His conception that the Independent is conceived only by philosophy distinguishes his Monism from other forms of the same.

Madhva's philosophy is distinctive in every respect. Vigour of logic, clearness of thinking, insight into Truth, universality of thought, comprehensiveness of outlook are the outstanding features of his thought.

His discovery of the knowledge caused by "witness" as defining self and of the highest reason as expressed in the Veda are his chief contributions to psychology and logic. His idea of social reconstruction and
political organization in terms of philosophy of Brahman gives a fresh significance to social and political philosophy. His position that the Independent is the maker of reality and individuality; that man contributes to the welfare of the world, including himself only when he appreciates Viṣṇu, the All-doer; that ethical and spiritual virtues are those that make philosophy of Brahman indispensable; that for a philosopher, the Veda and Brahman are ever in the making; that emancipation is the philosopher’s enjoyment of Viṣṇu as the dearest—is a real contribution to philosophy. An appreciation of this opens a fresh chapter in the history of world philosophy.

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CHAPTER XIV—continued

VEDĀNTA—THE VAIŚNAVA (THEISTIC) SCHOOLS

C. NIMBĀRKA (DVAITĀDVAITA)

1. INTRODUCTION

Nimbārka, a Tailang brahmin, is generally supposed to have flourished in the eleventh century A.D. after Rāmānuja.

Like other Vaiśnava Vedāntists, Nimbārka, too, admits three co-eternal, equally real substances (tri-tattva), viz. Brahman, cīt or the sentient and a-cīt or the non-sentient. The highest Reality, or Brahman, he calls "Kṛṣṇa" or "Hari." The word "brahman" literally means "one which possesses greatness" ( vrh + man ). That is, that alone is Brahman which is the greatest Being, which has no one superior or equal to it, which is beyond all limits of space, time and the like, whose nature, attributes and powers are unsurpassedly and incomparably great. Brahman alone is the cause of this vast universe of souls and matter. The universe is originated from Brahman, sustained in Brahman and dissolved in Brahman. Thus Brahman alone is the material (upādāna) and efficient (nimitta) cause of the world. Ordinarily, the material cause of a thing is different from its efficient cause, as the lump of clay is from the potter. But Brahman is both the material and the efficient cause of the universe. It is the material cause because it transforms itself into the form of the world, just as the lump of clay is transformed into the form of the clay-jar. Again, it is also the efficient cause, because it is its own self which transforms itself into the form of the world. Thus, the universe is a real transformation (parināma) of Brahman. Like other Vaiśnava Vedāntists, Nimbārka, too, propounds the doctrine of parināma or real transformation of the cause into the effect.

2. BRAHMAN

Brahman being the material cause of the universe is immanent in it. Just as in a clay-jar there is nothing but clay, so in the universe, the effect of Brahman, everything is Brahman through and through. All the various sentient and non-sentient objects, as found in the world, though
apparently different from Brahman, are, as transformation of Brahman, nothing but Brahman in essence. That is why, it has been said in the Upanishads “All this, verily, is Brahman.” The fact is that although Brahman is transcendent to, yet it is immanent in the world. Brahman is not a mere external creation of the world, as a potter is of the pot. On the contrary although Brahman is not absolutely identical with the universe, although Brahman is higher and greater than it, as it cannot fully and completely manifest Brahman, yet Brahman abides in the universe and pulsates it as its inner soul and controller.

Several objections may be raised against this doctrine of the causality of Brahman. The first question is: Why should Brahman create the world? All the philosophical systems of the world have to answer this important question at the outset. The acts of a rational being must be due to a definite motive or an end. Now, creation is an act; hence this, too, must be due to some motive on the part of Brahman, the supremely rational Being. But what possible motive can God have in creating the world? Our acts are due to some wants or imperfections, some unfulfilled desires or unattained ends. But Brahman is eternally perfect, eternally satisfied, eternally blissful—there can never be any incompleteness or insufficiency in it. Hence the creation of the world cannot be for God’s own sake, as He lacks nothing. It cannot be also for the sake of individual souls, for the world, admittedly, is full of pains and sufferings, and the salvation of the souls consists in getting rid of this miserable mundane existence for ever.

This leads to a second difficulty, no less formidable, viz. Why should merciful God create the world and thereby plunge the souls into such infinite and intense sufferings? If He cannot prevent pains and evils on earth, then He is not all-powerful; if He can, but does not, then He is not all-merciful. Again, people undergo different lots in the world. The honest and the good often suffer; the wicked prosper. Hence, if God be the creator of the world, He must of necessity be charged with cruelty, partiality and unjustness.

In solving the first problem, Nimbārka, like other Vedāntists, has pronounced the famous Vedānta doctrine of “līlā” or creation in sport. According to this view, the creation of the world by God does not imply any want of imperfection on His part, as it is but a mere sport to Him, just as a king indulges in sports, not because he is in want of anything, but, on the contrary, because, as a king, he has all his desires fulfilled and can therefore indulge in pastimes at will. In the same manner, God, the ever-perfect, ever-blissful Being, creates the universe out of the fullness of His nature, out of the abundance of His bliss. That is why Scripture describes the world as originating from bliss (ānanda), sustained in bliss, dissolved in bliss.

This līlā-vāda is, indeed, an ingenious attempt at explaining the motive
of creation. The dynamic conception of Reality as becoming (e.g. Hegel’s) finds no difficulty in explaining creation because according to it the very nature of Reality is to transform and manifest itself constantly, so that the Absolute and the world mutually involve each other from all eternity—it being the very nature of the Absolute to evolve itself into the form of the universe. Thus the Absolute is not a static, unchanging, ever-complete Being, but is essentially dynamic, ever-changing and ever-evolving. Such “becoming” is the very nature of the Absolute. The Absolute is neither unchanging Being nor non-existing non-being, but the synthesis of Being and non-being, i.e. becoming. An object that becomes or is transformed into another object is neither pure Being nor pure non-Being, but both, e.g. the seed becomes the sprout—it is existent as seed, but non-existent as sprout, yet must of necessity, from its very nature, become the sprout. In the same manner, the Absolute must by nature become the world, there being no question of any motive on its part. But the conception of Reality as an ever-perfect Being accepted by the Vedāntists, cannot avail itself of the above explanation, and thus is faced with the above formidable difficulty regarding the motive of creation. If God be unchanging and self-sufficient by nature from all eternity, then why should He again create the world? Here the Vedānta līlā-vāda does, indeed, afford an explanation. It denies the common view that all acts are due to some motives, wants or imperfections. Some acts, like sports, are not of this kind. Sports do not aim at any gain, not even at the attainment of joy or pleasure. For they are rather due to the exuberance of joy than to any lack thereof. When one’s heart is full, when one’s happiness is complete, then only does one safely relax and indulge in pastimes, for happiness has a natural tendency to overflow and express itself in external actions. Thus creation, too, a sport on the part of God, is but an outer expression of His eternal perfection and infinite bliss, and not an indication of His insufficiency or incompleteness. If we accept the view of ever-perfect Reality, this is the only way out, and credit must be given to the Vedāntists for having thought of it.

But another question remains here to be solved. The creation of the world may be a spontaneous sport, and not a necessity, on the part of Brahman, but to the poor souls it is not so. How can God be called a merciful Being if He thus plunges the souls to infinite sufferings for the sake of sport only, not even for any essential necessity? The answer is that God’s indulgence in this cosmic sport, though not serving His own purpose is not altogether arbitrary or motiveless, as it serves the fundamental purpose of justice. Justice or morality demands that every person should undergo the results of his own actions (karmans), good or bad. This is the famous law of karmans of Indian Philosophy. But as an individual cannot experience the results of all the karmans he does in one birth, he has to be born again for undergoing them, and in that new birth he
performs many new karmans, and is born again—this goes on and on until he gets rid of all karmans by moral and spiritual perfection and is free. So the world, though ultimately rejectible, has yet a moral purpose—as it affords opportunities to the individuals to experience the results of their past karmans and thereby attain freedom, provided in that new birth they no longer perform new karmans in a selfish spirit, but in an altogether unselfish way—for the fruits of the sa-kåma-karmans or selfish acts alone are experienced, leading to further births, and not of the niṣ-kåma-karmans or the unselfish ones. Hence God creates the world according to the past karmans of the individuals, and so cannot be held responsible for their suffering and varying lots—it is the individuals themselves who are really responsible through their own karmans.

As against the Advaita doctrine, Nimbārka takes Brahman to be sa-guna or possessing numerous auspicious attributes, which are of two kinds: attributes of majesty, such as omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence; and attributes of sweetness, such as beauty, bliss and mercy. Thus Brahman is transcendent yet immanent, all-powerful yet all-merciful, all-pervading yet abiding within the heart of man, ruler yet helper. God’s supreme might and majesty constitute no truer aspect of His nature than His infinite love and sweetness.

The nature and attributes of Brahman being thus determined, the next question is: What is the proof of the existence of such a Being or Brahman? The answer is that Scripture alone is the proof of Brahman. Hence Brahman is described in the Vedānta as one which can be known through Scripture. The entire Scripture, though apparently concerned with a variety of topics, really depicts Brahman and Brahman alone. Brahman cannot be known either through ordinary perception or through inference. No senses can perceive Brahman; no inference can prove it, as inference is based on the similarity between things, e.g. when we argue:

\[
\text{All men are mortal.}
\]
\[
\text{Ram is man}
\]
\[
\vdots \text{Ram is mortal,}
\]

Ram is taken to be similar to all other men, and that is why we can conclude that he too, like them, is mortal. But Brahman is unique and incomparable—so no inference is possible with regard to it.

Nimbārka frankly admits the limited capacity of ordinary human reason. Ordinary human beings, like ourselves, can infer or reason about ordinary, mundane and empirical objects only. But what is extra-mundane and transcendent is beyond the scope of reason. It is here that Scripture becomes our sole guide.

But what is Scripture? It is nothing but the product of the sustained thinking and mature reflection, superb inspiration and profound realization of saints and prophets. To them, to those extraordinary minds,
minds that are wiser and purer than our own, nothing is a sealed book, and even transcendental truths are known directly through intuition or super-developed power of reasoning. Thus Nimbārka does not deny that God can be known directly. He only draws a distinction between ordinary and extraordinary individuals. In the former case, of course, the reasoning faculty, being immature and imperfect, naturally fails to grasp God; as such, individuals have to rely on the Scripture, which, as pointed out above, is but the record of the elevated thinking and direct realization of wiser and maturer minds. In the latter case, however, the reasoning faculty having attained its full development and culminating point, has the intuitive power to realize God directly; and so here God can surely be known by reason or its super-developed form, intuition. Hence it will be totally wrong to accuse Nimbārka, and for the matter of that, other Indian philosophers, of dogmatism—of a blind uncritical faith in authority or revelation alone. In the first place, the Indian philosophers are frank enough to recognize different grades of human reason—its undeveloped and super-developed forms. In ordinary life also, we have to admit this: what is intelligible to a father is not so to his son, and the son has to learn it through reliance on the father; what is simple and easy to a scientist is not so to a layman, and the latter has to gain scientific knowledge only through the help of the former. In the same manner, without the help of the sages who themselves directly realized the truth, ordinary individuals can never hope to learn of God. In the second place, even in the case of ordinary men, the Indian philosophers insist on the need of manana or reflection and logical reasoning, after śravaṇa or acquisition of philosophical truth from Scripture. After that, there should be nidīdhyāsana, constant meditation for direct realization of that truth, first acquired, on trust, from Scripture and then logically tested.

3. SOUL AND MATTER

The second reality, cit, the sentient or the soul, according to Nimbārka, is consciousness in essence and a conscious knower, a doer of deeds, and an enjoyer of the fruits thereof. Against the Advaita doctrine of the soul’s unity and universality, Nimbārka propounds the doctrine of the plurality and atomicity of souls. According to him, the infinite number of infinitely small souls are identical neither with one another nor with Brahman. Even the freed souls retain their individuality or separateness, and are not merged into God. Thus according to Nimbārka, salvation does not imply any annihilation of the personality of the soul; on the contrary, it means the full development of its real nature and attributes. When the soul acquires such a state of supreme self-development, it acquires the nature and attributes of God and is similar to Him. Such a state of salva-
tion is attainable only after death, and not here and now, as held by the Advaitins.

As regards the way to salvation, Nimbārka points to the straight and narrow path of virtue which alone, according to him, can lead us to our cherished goal. Nimbārka speaks of five sādhanas or spiritual means, viz. work (karman), knowledge (jñāna), devotion and meditation (bhakti and upāsanā), self-surrender to God (prāpti), and self-surrender to guru or spiritual preceptor (gurūpasattī). Works by themselves do not lead to salvation, but when performed in an unselfish spirit, they purify the mind and help the rise of knowledge and devotion in it. Of these five sādhanas, the first three are meant for those who are confident of reaching the goal through their own efforts by hard study, deep meditation and ceaseless activity. But the last two are specially meant for those who are too timid to place any reliance on their own efforts, but must constantly be led and helped by someone, God or guru, to whom they completely resign and dedicate themselves.

The third reality, a-cit, the non-sentient, according to Nimbārka, is of three kinds: (1) prākṛta or what is derived from prakṛti, the primal matter, the stuff of the world; (2) a-prākṛta or what is not derived from prakṛti, but from a non-material yet a non-sentient substance, the stuff of the world of Brahman; and (3) kāla or time.

4. AN ESTIMATE

The above is a very brief account of the fundamental tenets of the Vedānta system of Nimbārka. There are five main Schools of the Vedānta, viz. Śaṅkara's "Kevalādvaita-vāda" or strict Monism, Rāmānuja's "Viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda" or qualified Monism, Nimbārka's "Dvaitādvaita-vāda" or Dualism-Monism, Madhva's "Dvaita-vāda" or Dualism, and Vallabha's "Suddhādvaita-vāda" or pure Monism. The main question here is as to the relation between Unity and plurality, God and world: Whether there is a relation of absolute non-difference (abheda) or absolute difference (bheda) or both (bhedabheda) between them. Briefly, according to Śaṅkara, Brahman alone is true, the world is false, so that the latter is absolutely non-different from the former. According to Rāmānuja, the world is real like Brahman, and both non-different and different from it, but here the stress is more on non-difference. According to Nimbārka, too, the world is real and both non-different and different from Brahman, but here stress is equally on both non-difference and difference. According to Madhva, the world is absolutely different from Brahman. According to Vallabha, the world is real and non-different from Brahman.

The system of Nimbārka is very similar to that of Rāmānuja. Still, it has been given a separate place and ranked as one of the five main Schools
of the Vedānta because of its new approach to the fundamental philosophical problem of the relation between the One and many, God and the world. Nimbārka insists on taking both bheda or difference and a-bheda or non-difference between the two to be equally and simultaneously true. This may sound self-contradictory. But Nimbārka’s brief yet entirely logical explanations dispel the doubt. He takes his stand on the cause-effect or whole-part relation. The cause-effect relation is neither a relation of pure identity, nor that of bare difference, but one of identity-in-difference. Thus the effect is different from the cause because it has a peculiar nature and many peculiar functions of its own. The clay-jar, the effect, for example, has a peculiar nature and form as a jar, and special functions, like fetching water, etc., not found in the lump of clay, the cause as such. Again, the effect is also non-different from the cause because it being a modification of the cause is nothing but the cause. The clay-jar, for example, is non-different from the lump of clay, for it is, after all, nothing but clay and depends on it for its very origin and existence.

The cause, on its side, is different from the effect because it is not fully exhausted in it but something over and above. The lump of clay, for example, is different from the clay-jar, because it is not only the jar but a hundred other things, like clay plates, etc. Still, the cause is non-different from the effect because it is the effect, so far as it goes, and permeates it through and through. The lump of clay, for example, is non-different from the clay-jar because, after all, both are equally clay. Thus, the cause-effect or whole-part relation is one of identity-in-difference.

In the same manner, the universe of souls and matter is different from Brahman, as its attributes (viz. impurity, grossness, finitude, etc.) and activities (viz. selfish works, etc.) are quite different from the attributes (viz. purity, omnipresence, etc.) and activities (viz. creation, etc.) of Brahman. But the universe is also non-different from Brahman because they, as modifications of Brahman, are Brahman in essence. Again, Brahman is different from the universe because it is but one among its infinite powers and elements, and Brahman as a whole is not exhausted in a single world. Brahman is no less non-different from the world because it permeates the world through and through as its cause.

Thus, according to Nimbārka, bheda or difference means: (i) difference in attributes and activities from the standpoint of the effect; (ii) transcendence over the effect from the standpoint of the cause. A-bheda or non-difference means: (i) non-difference of essence, from the standpoint of the effect; (ii) immanence in the effect, from the standpoint of the cause. If we understand difference and non-difference in this sense of transcendence and immanence, no contradiction will be involved in taking both of them to be equally real, natural and compatible. Here, non-difference does not mean absolute identity like the complete merging of a drop of water into the ocean; it simply implies sameness of essence and
the immanence of Brahman in the world. And difference does not mean absolute separateness or distinction, like that between a man and a table, but it only implies the difference of forms, attributes and activities, and the transcendence of Brahman over the world. This is Nimbārka's famous Svābhāvika-bhedā, bheda-vāda or Doctrine of Natural Difference and Non-difference between God and the universe.

Thus from the philosophical standpoint, Nimbārka can well claim to have contributed something new to the history of philosophical speculation as regards the vexed question of the relation between the One and the many. In some other respects, too, Nimbārka's solutions regarding the fundamental problems of philosophy are really praiseworthy, especially his doctrine of "power" (śakti-vāda) which enables him to unravel many a knotty and seemingly insoluble problem of philosophy.

From the standpoint of religion, too, Nimbārka's contributions are no less noteworthy. What he repeatedly emphasizes is the essential need of a sweet, personal, intimate relation of love and comradeship between God and man. Reverence for and awe at the grandeur and majesty of God constitute only the beginning of religion. But religion must of necessity consummate itself in a closer and sweeter personal relation of voluntary submission in place of external compulsion and coercion, of love and trust in place of fear and mere blind obedience. Although one may at first be overwhelmed by the grandeur and majesty of the Lord, yet one cannot remain at a distance from Him for long, but is irresistibly drawn nearer by a bond of mutual love and living fellowship. Thus Nimbārka, the first Vaiṣṇava philosopher to emphasize mādhurya-prādhanā bhakti or devotion springing from love at God's infinite sweetness, in place of aīśvarya-prādhanā bhakti or devotion due to reverence at His incomparable greatness as emphasized by Rāmānuja and Madhva.

From the ethical standpoint, Nimbārka emphasizes not empty external ritualism but the inner cultivation of the spirit—the acquirement of the ethical virtues of self-control, simplicity, purity and the rest. According to Nimbārka, one need not give up the life of a householder to become free. It is the spirit in which one performs one's duties that counts. If a man performs the duties incumbent on his stage of life in a disinterested spirit, he is sure to reach his cherished goal of salvation whether he be an ascetic or a householder.

Thus the Vedānta doctrine of Nimbārka is indeed a valuable contribution to the history of thought from the philosophical, religious and ethical standpoints. The most noteworthy feature of Nimbārka's system is its spirit of compromise and adjustment. Perfectly equipsioed and tranquil in his deep and comprehensive insight into the many-sided nature of Reality and into the multifarious impulses, inclinations and capacities of mankind, Nimbārka is ever eager to avoid the extremes and work out a happy synthesis between the conflicting claims of rivals and opposites.
That is why, in the sphere of philosophy, he tries to reconcile difference (bheda) with non-difference (a-bheda) or plurality with unity, by taking both to be equally real and compatible. In the sphere of religion, again, he strikes a happy balance between the rigid intellectualism of Advaita-vāda which denies a personal relation between God and man—and the impetuous emotionalism of later Vaiṣṇavaism which over-emphasizes such a relation—by giving a proper place to both reason and feeling, but not over-emphasizing one at the expense of the other. In the ethical sphere, no less, he manifests the same well-balanced judgment, the same commendable spirit of adjustment and broad-mindedness by providing for the manifold inclinations and capacities of the various types of human beings—scholars or workers, ascetics or householders, self-confident or timorous. It is this emphasis on the golden mean, this spirit of toleration and accommodation, this open-hearted generosity and catholicity that has made the doctrine of Nimbārka one of the popular philosophico-religious creeds in India.

NOTES

2. Bhārata-sūtra, 2. 1. 32.
3. Taittiriya-Upaniṣad, 3. 6.
4. Śastra-yonitvā, B.S., I. 1. 3.

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CHAPTER XIV—continued

VEDÂNTA—THE VAIŚNAVA (THEISTIC) SCHOOLS

D. VALLABHA (SUDDHÂDVAITA)

Life and Work.—Vallabha (A.D. 1473–1531), the advocate of the Śuddhādvaita (pure Non-dualism) system of Vedānta, was born of a learned Tailang brāhmin family living in a village called Kankaravad, about fifty miles to the north-west of Madras in South India. The parents of Vallabha left their home for Banaras, and Vallabha’s birth took place in a place called Campāraṇya near Raipur in the Central Provinces. The family belonged to the Tatttirīya School of the Kṛṣṇa-Yajur-Veda, claimed Bhāradvāja as its gotra and scrupulously followed the karma-kāṇḍa by performing many soma sacrifices, with the result that it came to enjoy the title of Dīkṣita. It also followed a form of Vaiṣṇavaism and worshipped the image of Gopāla. Starting with this spiritual legacy Vallabha received his education in Banaras, travelled thrice throughout the whole country, won laurels at the court of Vijayanagar, attracted a large following by his sermons, spent his life in Adel (a village about two miles from Allahabad), and breathed his last in Banaras, leaving two sons behind him. His connection with Viṣṇusvāmin is rather doubtful.¹ He has written several works in Sanskrit some of which are not available in a complete form. His principal works include the commentaries on the Brahma-sūtra, the Jaimini-sūtra and the Bhāgavata, Tatvārtha-dīpa-nibandha and sixteen treatises.² His mission was carried on by his descendants,³ and the line of his family continues even today; and there are at present about eighty male members in the family. The followers of Vallabha are generally found in the United Provinces, Rajputana, Saurāṣṭra, Gujarāt and Bombay, and belong to all the strata of society, from the order of princes to the most backward class.

Sources of Authoritative Knowledge.—Vallabha accepts four basic works as the highest authority for the solution of philosophical problems, viz. (1) the Vedas (including the Upaniṣads), (2) the Gītā, (3) the Brahma-sūtra, and (4) the Bhāgavata.³ These sources of knowledge are complementary to one another, and in case of doubts the preceding authority is to be interpreted in the light of the authority that follows in the above-mentioned order. As a natural consequence of this relative position, the Bhāgavata comes to enjoy a unique status in the School. From another point of view, the Vedas and the Brahma-sūtra form one group, while the Gītā and the
Bhāgavata form another group. The Bhāgavata has been, in fact, considered to be an exhaustive commentary on the Gītā, with full justification. There were several Schools of the Vedānta before Vallabha, and the founders of these Schools interpreted the sacred texts in their own way. The interpretation of Śaṅkara, for instance, evoked much criticism; and we are told that Vallabha was ordered by the Lord to appear in the world for bringing order out of chaos which resulted from Śaṅkara’s method of interpretation. Vallabha, therefore, describes himself as a missionary of the Lord, as a form of fire, and fulfils the mission by offering a different interpretation of the authorities, by criticizing the doctrines of Śaṅkara, and by opening the gates of the city of God to all, without any reservation.

That the problem of God in all its bearings has to be discussed solely in the light of the Sruti (revealed texts), there being no scope for independent reasoning, follows clearly from the authorities. Vallabha accepts this principle in toto, and interprets the sacred texts most literally, attaching equal importance to all passages, without caring to know what reason has to say on the point. This fundamental difference between Śaṅkara and Vallabha in the approach to the Vedic literature is responsible for the divergence in their philosophical views. Vallabha actually criticizes Śaṅkara for his complete reliance on dry logic in the discussion of metaphysical problems, and for the interpretation of the Sruti-texts so as to suit his preconceived notions, and remarks that he (Śaṅkara) is not a faithful interpreter of the sacred texts. Vallabha, therefore, naturally becomes a severe critic of Śaṅkara, and describes him as an incarnation of Mādhyamika Baudhā and a crypto-Buddhist, a remark offered by Bhāskara, Rāmānuja and others also.

Brahman.—The highest reality according to Vallabha is Kṛṣṇa known as Brahma in the Upaniṣads, Paramātman in the Bhāgavata. Puruṣottama (the Supreme Person) or the Lord Kṛṣṇa is, in fact, the highest God who represents the divine (Ādhitāvika) form of Brahma. He is one, and one only without a second, possesses all divine qualities, even attributes which are contradictory, and is absolutely devoid of material qualities. He is existence, intelligence and bliss. He is full of rasa (sweetness) and infinite joy which is His true form (ākāra), and from this point of view Vallabha describes the highest reality as possessed of form (sākāra-Brahman). He is eternal, unchanging, omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. He has got the capacity to become anything and everything at any time, and this is what is generally known as His māyā-sakti. He possesses many powers such as knowledge, action, evolution and involution. He is absolutely free from all sorts of distinctions. He is the creator of everything and is both the material and efficient cause of the world. He is not different from the souls which emanate from Him. He is the enjoyer. All the attributes of God are quite

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natural, and non-different from him.\(^11\) In short, Brahman possesses all qualities and is the origin of both nature and intelligence which lose their differences in Him, and in this respect Vallabha may be compared with the German philosopher Schelling. The world and souls are in essence one with Brahman, and consequently the system of Vallabha is known as \(\text{Śuddhādvaita}\) (pure non-dualism) as contrasted with the \(\text{māyā-vāda}\) of \(\text{Śaṅkara}\).\(^{12}\) Brahman is absolutely pure, and is not affected in any way by anything like \(\text{māyā}\) (as in \(\text{Śaṅkara}\)'s theory). Moreover, both the cause (Brahman) and the effect (world) are pure and non-different from one another, and hence there is pure non-dualism. The whole \(\text{Vedic}\) literature describes Brahman only, in its various aspects. The \(\text{Pūrva-kāṇḍa}\) deals with Brahman’s quality of \(\text{karman}\) in the form of sacrifices, while the \(\text{Uttara-Kāṇḍa}\) deals with its quality of \(\text{jñāna}\). The \(\text{Gītā}\) and the \(\text{Bhāgavata}\), on the other hand, give a complete picture of Brahman in all its aspects.\(^13\)

\(\text{Aksara-Brahman.} — \text{Vallabha accepts three forms of Brahman, viz.}\)

\(1\) \(\text{Para-Brahman or Puruṣottama,}\)

\(2\) \(\text{Antaryāmin,}\)

\(3\) \(\text{Aksara-Brahman.}\)

\(\text{Krṣṇa or Puruṣottama is the Lord \text{par excellence,} full of rasa (sweetness) and \text{ānanda} (joy), and is the object of love and worship. The joy of Puruṣottama is infinite. He is, in fact, a complete undivided mass of \text{bliss.} \)\text{He dwells in the souls in the form of Antaryāmin (innercontroller) who possesses limited joy. In the case of Aksara-Brahman, the joy is also finite. The Aksara-Brahman which is the spiritual (\text{ādhyaātmika}) form of Para-Brahman, is the object of meditation by the wise (\text{jñānins}) who become one with it in their final stage. It is looked upon by the \text{bhaktas} as the foot and the abode of the Lord Krṣṇa (and in this capacity it is described as, \text{caraṇa, parama-dhāman, vyoman, etc.}). It is the Aksara-Brahman from which the souls, generally, emanate like sparks from fire. When the Lord desires to grant liberation through knowledge, He makes the Aksara-Brahman appear in four forms, viz.}\)

\(1\) \(\text{Aksara,}\)

\(2\) \(\text{time (\text{kāla})},\)

\(3\) \(\text{action (\text{karman})}\) and \(\text{(4) nature (\text{svabhīva})}.\)

The Aksara form, then, appears as \(\text{prakṛti and puruṣa},\) and becomes the cause of everything. The four forms referred to are eternal principles being one with God. When the joy of Aksara-Brahman is obscured by the will of the Lord at the time of creation, it is generally known as \(\text{mukhya-jiiva} — \text{a view which can be favourably compared with that of Auddulomi who is of the opinion that the intelligent soul merges into the intelligent Brahman. Aksara as \text{mukhya-jiiva is, however, superior to souls. As a matter of fact, Aksara-Brahman possesses limited joy, and assumes the \text{puruṣa} incarnations of the Lord. The first will of the Lord, when it materializes, is known as \text{prakṛti}. The Aksara is higher than both \text{prakṛti and puruṣa, and contains within it innumerable worlds. It is described in the Upaniṣads and the Gītā as \text{avāyika, etc.}}\(^{15}\) The negative description of Brahman generally refers to Aksara-Brahman, which is lower than Puruṣottama, and similar to Śaṅkara’s Para-Brahman.\)
Vallabha rightly deserves the credit for the conception of Aksara-Brahman which remained till then a forgotten chapter in Indian Philosophy.

*World*.—God is quite alone, and desires to create the world for the sake of mere pleasure, and He actually creates it from His own self merely by His own desire, on the analogy of a spider and its web. The world comes out of the very essence (sva-rūpa) of Brahman, and not from the māya, or the body, or the power of Brahman, as found in the systems of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja Nimbārka and others. In upholding the doctrine of the transformation of essence (sva-rūpa-parināma), Vallabha remains most faithful to the Scriptural authority. God, therefore, happens to be both the material and efficient cause of the world; and although the Lord becomes the world by the process of modification (parināma), He does not suffer any change within Himself (a-vikṛta-parināma)—a position, although it fails to satisfy the test of logic, has to be accepted on the strength of the Sruti which is the final authority for Vallabha. The creation of the world is mere līlā (sport) on the part of God who is absolutely self-sufficient. The world is the sat (existence) aspect of Brahman, the other two qualities of Brahman, viz. intelligence and joy being obscured by the divine will.16 The world is, therefore, a real manifestation of Brahman, the physical (ādhībhaṭṭika) form of Para-Brahman, and is not an illusion. It is non-different from Brahman. The relation between Brahman and the world is that of cause and effect, and that of pure non-dualism, as there is nothing like Śaṅkara’s māya to mark their purity. The world gives us an idea of the greatness of the Lord, and those who realize this greatness cannot but worship Him.17

Everything in the world is Brahman, and different qualities manifest themselves in different objects at the will of the Lord, and the objects consequently are known by different names. But ignorance (māya) obscures the vision of souls and creates in their mind another unreal (māyika) object similar to the real object in the world, and superimposes it on the real object. The result of this process is that objects are seen not in their true form but as possessing the imaginary (māyika) attributes superimposed on them by the deluding ignorance (vyāmohikā māya). The imaginary object created thus is technically called viṣayatā, while the real object as the manifestation of Brahman is called viṣaya. The viṣayatā is of two types; one is obscuring (the true nature of things) and the other is responsible for wrong impression. Those who have known Brahman can truly see the objects of the world as Brahman, and thus there is no error (a-khyāti) in their case, while others see only the imaginary objects (viṣayatā), and hence there is apprehension of something else (anya-khyāti). The scriptural passages describing the world as māya, really refer to this world of the individual’s erroneous experience (viṣayatā), and not to the real world (viṣaya) which is the manifestation of the Lord.18

Vallabha draws a fine distinction between the real world and the unreal
world (saṁsāra) which is the creation of soul’s ignorance. The saṁsāra consists of selfishness (ahamta) and mineness (namatā), and is destroyed by the knowledge of Brahmā which the soul comes to possess. Viḍyā and avidyā are the two powers produced by the māyā-sakti of the Lord, and have their own bearing on souls only. Viḍyā has got five forms, viz. (1) renunciation (vairāgya), (2) knowledge (sāṁkhya), (3) mental discipline (yoga), (4) penance and (5) devotion to Keśava. Avidyā also has its own five varieties, viz. (1) ignorance of one’s own self, and the superimposition of the (2) inner organ, (3) vital breath (prāṇa), (4) senses and (5) body. When viḍyā destroys avidyā of a soul, the creation of avidyā, viz. the saṁsāra, is automatically destroyed, and the soul enjoys full freedom. The world (jagat) is not destroyed by viḍyā; but it is merged in the Lord when He desires to wind up the whole creation in order to enjoy within His own self.19 This distinction between the two worlds (jagat and saṁsāra) is a special contribution by Vallabha, who thereby succeeds in maintaining pure non-dualism. There are several ways of the creation of the world, according to the will of the Lord.20

Soul.—At the time of the creation of the world, souls come out of the Lord or the Akṣara-Brahman, like sparks emanating from fire. Souls are many, eternal, atomic, and parts of Brahmā. They are the knowers, agents and enjoyers. At the desire of the Lord, the quality of joy is suppressed in the soul which possesses the other two qualities of Brahmā, viz. sat (existence) and cit (intelligence). The soul being the part of Brahmā is non-different from it, and the pure-non-dualism desired by Vallabha is not at all affected. The soul, although atomic in size, pervades the whole body by virtue of its quality of intelligence, on the analogy of a flower whose fragrance spreads in other places also. The soul is an intelligent reality, a part of Brahmā, and not phenomenal as is the case with Śaṁkara.21 When the Lord desires to play the so-called game of the world, merely for the sake of pleasure—and pleasure is not possible without diversity—the element of joy becomes latent in the soul, and consequently the six divine qualities (bhaga) such as aiśvarya, etc. are suppressed, and a fine variety of souls comes into being. The disappearance of the six divine qualities—(1) aiśvarya, (2) vīrya, (3) yaśas, (4) śrī, (5) jñāna, and (6) vairāgya, from the soul is responsible for (1) dependence, (2) suffering of all miseries, (3) inferiority, (4) calamities of birth, etc., (5) ego and false knowledge, and (6) attachment to worldly objects respectively.22 In other words, the suppression of the first four divine qualities gives rise to the bondage of the soul, and that of the other two results in wrong knowledge. The soul is atomic, but when the suppressed element of joy becomes patent, the soul, like Brahmā, enjoys omnipresence. The Scriptural passages mentioning the all-pervading nature of the soul refer to this aspect of the soul which, at the full manifestation of joy, has become Godlike. When the joy of the soul finds full expression,
innumerable worlds begin to appear in that soul which, then, knows no limitation of space. The soul is essentially one with Brahman.

The world is full of diversity, and souls stand on different levels. Although God has created such a world and made some happy and others unhappy, He is not open to the faults of partiality and cruelty, as the status of the world and souls is determined by the previous cycles of the world and the actions of the souls. As a matter of fact, the world and souls have come out of the very suva-rāpa of God, the whole universe is the self-creation (ātma-sṛṣṭi) of Lord, the creation by Lord from His own self, and hence there is no scope for any criticism.23

Means of Liberation.—The temperamental differences in the world are responsible for the different ways of approaching God, and the Scriptures mention the three paths of action, knowledge and devotion, as the means of liberation. The emphasis on one of these three factors has resulted in differences among the different Schools of the Vedanta.

Vallabha has divided the souls into three classes in the descending order, viz. (1) pusti, (2) maryādā, and (3) pravāha.24 Souls, which are aimlessly moving in the world, which are completely engrossed in it and which never think of God, belong to the class of pravāha (the current of the world), while those which study the Scriptures, understand the real nature of God and worship Him accordingly form the second class of maryādā (Law of Scriptures). The pusti souls are, however, the chosen people of God, who worship Him most ardently out of their boundless love for Him. The souls are called pusti (grace of God) as they are blessed enough to enjoy the divine grace, which enables them to realize the highest ideal.

Persons who live an objectionable life have to suffer and to move in the cycle of the world. Those who perform sacrifices for the fulfilment of desires or get their rewards accordingly and go to heaven, if desired, by the path of manes, and have to return to the world of mortals when their merit is exhausted. When a person performs Vedic sacrifices without any desire, he enjoys spiritual happiness (ātma-sukha), and later on when his life is over, assumes a new body according to the procedure laid down by the doctrine of five fires.25 In this new birth he gets the knowledge of God, and ultimately qualifies himself for union with Him by passing through the different stages of the path of gods. In the Vedic sacrifices, God manifests Himself in the forms of rituals (agni-hotra, darśa-pūrṇa-māsa, ṗaṣu, cāturnāsya and soma); and those who worship the ritual power (kriyā-sākṣī) of God by performing these sacrifices and possess at the same time the knowledge of God, enjoy liberation in the form of divine joy.26

The liberation in the maryādā-marga is gradual, as one is required to move spiritually by the path of gods. Immediate liberation is possible only through the grace of God.

There are, again, persons who come to possess the knowledge of God,
realize His presence everywhere in the world and devote their whole time to the meditation upon Him. These people, passing by the path of gods, merge in the Akṣara-Brahman which was the content of their knowledge. They consider Akṣara-Brahman as the highest reality and are not aware of anything else, such as Puruṣottama, the Supreme Person. But if these knowers of Brahman happen to worship Lord Kṛṣṇa, none is superior to them. These learned devotees of the Lord, at the end of their lives, become one with Him.27

Devotion to Lord assumes different forms. There are nine varieties such as (1) hearing, (2) reciting, (3) remembering, (4) falling at the feet, (5) worship, (6) salutation, (7) service, (8) friendship, and (9) self-dedication.28 These stages are in the ascending order, and show the progress of the devotee who ultimately comes to love God. One who studies the Scriptures realizes the greatness of God, considers Him as his own soul, and consequently bows down to Him out of strong boundless affection.29 This kind of devotion which has been enjoined in the Scriptures and which is, therefore, practised accordingly, is known as maryādā-bhakti, and corresponds to the vaidhti-bhakti of other Vaiṣṇava Schools. The maryādā devotees generally enjoy union with Puruṣottama. Sometimes they enjoy the status of the Lord, or dwell in His vicinity, or remain in His place.

The Scriptures mention the aforesaid means for the realization of the goal, and declare in the same breath that the ultimate reality cannot be obtained by any means excepting God’s grace.30 Vallabha removes this contradiction by means of his theory of maryādā and puṣṭi. The knowledge and devotion which can be acquired by human efforts and which are recommended by the Scriptures, give rise to liberation called maryādā; while the liberation granted by God to those who have no means of approaching Him is known as puṣṭi. In the path of maryādā, the Lord desires to grant liberation according to the achievement of souls, while in the path of puṣṭi, the Lord wishes to liberate souls, although the latter have not acquired, even in the least, the means laid down in the Scriptures.31

The doctrine of election is, as with Augustine, a special feature of Vallabha’s system which is, therefore, otherwise known as puṣṭi-mārga. The devotees of the puṣṭi type have got natural love for Lord Kṛṣṇa, and do everything simply out of their boundless love for the Lord, as in the rāgānugā-bhakti of Bengal Vaiṣṇavaism. They, in all humility, solely depend on God and can enjoy divine bliss only when chosen by Him. In the path of maryādā, love for the Lord is the result of the nine forms of devotion, while in the puṣṭi-mārga, love is the starting-point which naturally results not only in the nine varieties of bhakti but in other spiritual activities also. Puṣṭi is thus the opposite of maryādā.

In the class of puṣṭi, the devotees are further divided into four categories according to their special qualities. The four types are (1) pravāha,
(2) maryādā, (3) puṣṭi, and (4) śuddha. The devotees of the first type are always engaged in the activities connected with the Lord, while those of the second type know the qualities of the Lord and worship Him. Devotees of the third type are omniscient, and those of the last type have got boundless love for the Lord, and are rare indeed! The gopīs are the best illustration of this. The puṣṭi devotees, in general, are first united with Puruṣottama without going through the stages of the path of gods, and the Lord, out of sheer grace, then brings them out, gives them a new divine form, and allows them to participate in His eternal sport (rāsa-līlā).32 The devotees of the highest order, like the gopīs, immediately enter into the Lord’s arena of sports, and enjoy the very bliss of the Lord for all time. In the eternal līlā, the devotee enjoys all sorts of pleasure in the company of the Lord who entirely places Himself at the disposal of the former. This is, according to Vallabha, the highest stage of liberation, the summum bonum.

Vallabha tells us that action, knowledge and formal devotion (maryādā-bhakti) had their day in the past, but they had ceased to be in his own time on account of unfavourable circumstances.33 It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to depend upon the grace of God for liberation. He who realizes his spiritual bankruptcy and utter helplessness naturally seeks the shelter of God, like an insolvent approaching a court of law for protection against his creditors. Such a person, a puṣṭi-bhakta, completely throws himself at the feet of the Lord by dedicating not only his own self but also all his belongings. He devotes his whole life to the service of the Lord, reads His account in the Bhāgavata, and minimizes worldly affairs, if any. Self-dedication does not leave any scope for selfishness and attachment to worldly objects, and the saṁsāra of the devotee automatically vanishes. The home of such a devotee becomes the temple of God, and the whole family can enjoy the divine happiness even in this world.34 The puṣṭi-bhakta loves God so intensely that he gives up all earthly loves and ignores the duties of class (varṇa) and order (āśrama). God Kṛṣṇa is rasa, ānanda, beauty par excellence, and Vallabha develops a special philosophy of aesthetics.35 Kṛṣṇa represents all the rasas (sentiments) in general, and śṛṅgāra-rasa (sentiment of love) in particular, and as śṛṅgāra has two aspects of union and separation, Kṛṣṇa exhibits them in His dealings with His devotees. The whole description of the boyhood of Kṛṣṇa, as given in the Bhāgavata, is most enchanting, and one who reads it indeed becomes God-intoxicated. All the actions of Kṛṣṇa in Gokul, which are full of philosophical significance, clearly show the wonderful efficacy of His grace, and it is for this reason that the boy form of Kṛṣṇa is recommended for worship. The gopīs were smitten with the marvellous beauty of Kṛṣṇa, became mad after Him, sacrificed all things at the altar of love, proved their sincerity by defying even Kṛṣṇa's moral instructions, lost the company of the Lord on account of their
pride, expressed regret in a touching manner, won the Lord's favour and enjoyed the divine bliss of His company.

It was by the grace of God that the gopīs cherished love for Him and could reach the goal. Whoever succeeds in establishing a permanent contact with God by any means such as love, anger, fear, affection, identity and friendship, undoubtedly enjoys the divine bliss.36

These are some of the ways of soul's approach to God. The closest contact between God and soul is possible only through the ardent love of a lover and his beloved, and Rādhā is an embodiment of such love. Vallabha tells us that females alone are competent to enjoy the divine bliss, and it is well known that devotion is not possible without some kind of femininity.37 Some devotees worship Kṛṣṇa as their child and others as their lover. As a matter of fact all souls are females and their natural husband is Lord Kṛṣṇa.35 Every soul is, therefore, expected to love Kṛṣṇa, as a wife loves her husband, a theory which can be well contrasted with Sufism. The doors of the puṣṭi-mārga are thus open to all.

The puṣṭi-bhākṣi, as illustrated in the case of gopīs, although the highest ideal, is very difficult in the present circumstances. Vallabha, therefore, offers another happy solution in the form of self-surrender (prapatti) to God.39 All persons, irrespective of caste and nationality, can reach the goal by sustaining throughout the whole life the spirit of self-surrender and resignation to the will of God. With this mental attitude they may devote their life to the worship of the Lord, hearing and reciting the Scripture, the Bhāgavata.

The rāsa-līlā of Kṛṣṇa in Gokula is eternal, and the idea has been traced to the Rg-Veda.40 The conception of rāsa-līlā has been variously interpreted from the time of Śuka to the modern period.41 Vallabha understands it both literally and metaphorically. When it is taken in the literal sense Vallabha is most anxious to show that there is no tinge of sensualism, as God and all His activities are free from passion and as the reflection on the rāsa-līlā not only purifies a man but engenders in him devotion to the Lord.42 In the case of metaphorical interpretation there is no danger of the rāsa-līlā being misunderstood. The gopīs, according to Vallabha, are the Vedas or Srutis, and the Srutis are always connected with the Lord who is their only topic. The constant association of the Srutis with the Lord is represented in the form of the rāsa-līlā.

Conclusion.—Vallabha taught the philosophy of Śuddhādvaīta and the religion of puṣṭi on the authority of the Scriptures which are to him the final court of appeal. Some of his doctrines such as Brahmān possessing attributes, transformation of Brahmān into the world, the reality of the world, and combination of action with knowledge, were known even before Śaṅkara. The ideas of devotion, self-surrender and divine grace were current before Vallabha. What is, then, Vallabha's own contribution to Indian Philosophy?

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The doctrine of non-dualism, the conception of God as full of deliciousness (rasa) and joy, the coexistence of contradictory attributes in Brahman, the idea of Akṣara-Brahman, the theory of the creation of the world from the very form (sva-rūpa) of Brahman, the transformation of Brahman into the world without suffering any change, self-dedication to the Lord, emphasis on God's grace, and the aesthetic and emotional form of devotion are the special features of Vallabha's teaching.

Vallabha criticizes Śaṅkara for the doctrine of māyā, Bhāskara for his doctrine of upādhi, Rāmānuja for the trinity in the final stage, Nimbārka for his emphasis on dualism, Madhva for his advocacy of pure dualism, and the Śāktas for their doctrine of šakti as the efficient cause of the world. Vallabha holds that the Scriptures teach realistic (vāstavika) non-dualism which can be reconciled with devotion (a view expressed now by Sri Aurobindo also) and not that monistic idealism as desired by Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara, as Radhakrishnan remarks, is unmatched for his metaphysical depth and logical power, and is supreme as a philosopher and dialectician.43 Vallabha, however, is matchless in his acceptance of the Scriptures as the final authority, and, naturally his system is purely theological and reminds us of Christian theology. Śaṅkara and Vallabha can, therefore, never agree.

Under direct instructions from Lord Kṛṣṇa, it is said, Vallabha started his mission of turning people to God, without any distinction of caste and nationality, by initiating them in the service of the Lord.44 Vallabha, like Plotinus, remarks that just as children immediately torn from their parents and for a long time nurtured at a great distance from them, become ignorant both of themselves and their parents, so also the souls separated from the Lord are suffering, and the earlier they are put again in His charge, the better for them. Vallabha's teaching elevated the life of all the sections of society and proved to be completely democratic. Painting, music and literature in Sanskrit, Hindi and Gujarati have richly flourished under the inspiration obtained from the system of Vallabha. And there has been a regular stream of mystics in the School of Vallabha who lost all individual life in an ecstasy of immediate union with God.

NOTES

4. T., II. 64, 218, 219.
5. Ānubhāṣya (A.), II. 2. 26.
7. Brahma-sūtras (B.), I. 1. 2; II. 1. 27, etc.
8. A., II. 1. 14, 27, etc.; T., I. 24–7, 57, 64.
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10. T., I. 6, 14; II. 118.
13. T., I. 12, 20; II. 90.
15. T., II. 98–103.
17. T., I. 43, 44.
18. S., II. 9, 33; III. 26. 30.
22. A., III. 2. 5.
23. A., II. 1. 34; T., I. 78.
24. Pußth-pravâha-maryâda (Pu).
25. A., III. 1; T., II. 4–9, 254–68.
28. Bhágavata (Bh), VII. 5. 23, 24.
30. Mûndaka Úp., III. 2. 3; Katha, Úp., I. 2. 22; Śvet., III. 20, etc.
31. A., III. 3. 29, 42; 4. 46; IV. 1. 13; 2. 7: 4. 9.
32. A., IV. 4. 1–12.
34. T., I. 54; II. 249–50.
35. T., II. 226–8.
36. Bh., X. 26. 15; VII. 1. 30; S. on Bh., X. 84. 23.
38. S. on Bh., X. 26. 24; 44. 60.
40. RV., I. 154. 5; 6; 156. 3: 22. 18–21; VII. 100. 4: X. 113–14, etc.; YV., VI. 3; TS., I. 3. 6. 1; A., IV. 2. 15, 16; Vidvan-mândana, pp. 279–349.
41. G. H. Bhatt: Introduction to Tâmasa Phala Prakarâya Subodhini.
42. S. on Bh., X. 26. 42.
44. Saîdhânta-rahasya.

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CHAPTER XIV—continued

VEDĀNṬA—THE VAIŚṆAVA (THEISTIC) SCHOOLS

E. CAITANYA (ACINTYA-BHEDĀBHEDA)

I. INTRODUCTION—RELATION TO OTHER SCHOOLS

The following account of Caitanya’s philosophy is mainly based on Daśa-mūla-śloka (the ten basic verses) ascribed by the Gauḍīya (Bengal) Vaiśṇavas to Caitanya himself.

It may be mentioned at the outset that though Caitanya’s spiritual preceptors (his dikṣā-guru as well as samnyāsa-guru) were Mādhvaites and Caitanya considered himself to belong to the Mādhva sect and to be expounding the Mādhvaite dualistic standpoint in his teachings, yet what he actually preached, as would appear from Daśa-mūla-śloka as well as from the accounts of his teachings by his disciples, was a form of bhedābheda or difference-in-non-difference which was very near the position of Nimbārka. Caitanya’s philosophy, as it has come down to us, is not undiluted dvaita-śāda or dualism emphasizing as it does not merely an eternal distinction between the Lord, the finite spirit, and the material world as we have in the Mādhvaite interpretation of the Brahma-sūtra, but also an essential a-bheda or non-difference in spite of the eternally fixed distinction, an a-bheda or non-difference despite difference which is not intelligible to the logical understanding. It should, therefore, be known as it rightly is, not as a form of dualistic personal Idealism as we have in Mādhvaite Dvaita-śāda, but as a-cintya-bhedābheda or a form of idealistic Monism that reconciles all dualities in a superlogical unity or whole that surpasses strict logical comprehension.

Common to all Schools of Vaiśṇavas is their acceptance of the reality of the world and the rejection of māyā-śāda and its concept of jagān-mithyāśāda or falsity of the world as adopted by Śaṅkara. This is a common feature not merely of all Vaiśṇava sects but also of all Śaivas and Śāktas, i.e. all who acknowledge the authority of the Āgamas and accord to them the status of revealed Scriptures. Caitanya as a Vaiśṇava is no exception in this respect so that while Śaṅkara would accord to Īśvara or the Lord as world-creator-preserver-and-destroyer an inferior status compared with the Indeterminate Brahman as the ultimate absolute Reality, the Caitanyakaites as believers in the reality of the world would reverse the
relation, making nir-guna Brahman a passing phase or stage in the progress to the complete Truth which is the realization of Brahman as the Lord of Creation in intimate relations of love and affection with His creatures. A second point is the Caitanyaite conception of the Lord and His energy or Sakti in the form of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā—a conception which distinguishes the followers of Caitanya, Nimbārka as well as Vallabha from those of Rāmānuja and Madhvacārya, who conceive the Lord in the form of Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa with Lakṣmī as His Consort or Sakti in Vaikuṇṭha, which is to Rāmānuja and Madhvacārya what paradise is to the Christians. The difference between the two conceptions of the Lord is radical and deep. In the conception of the Lord and His Sakti as Lakṣmī–Nārāyaṇa lording over Vaikuṇṭha and its denizens, what is emphasized is the Lord in His aspect of majesty (aiśvarya), so that while one can prostrate oneself before Him and otherwise show one’s reverence for His surpassing greatness and glory, one can do it only from a distance never daring to come in intimate living contact with Him. It is otherwise, however, in the conception of the Lord and His Sakti as Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa where one has a taste of the Lord’s companionship in Vṛndāvana-lilā in intimate human social relationship as friend, child or beloved. It is described as the realization of the Lord in his mādhuryya-rūpa or sweetness of intimate fellowship, and this is held by the followers of Caitanya, Vallabha, etc., to be a nobler, sweeter realization than the one that is afforded by the Lakṣmī–Nārāyaṇa concept with its stress on greatness and glory. In Siddhāṅta-ratna, mādhuryya-rūpa is described as one in which the Lord appears as human being amongst other humans without transcending the limitations of manhood (nara-rūpam anatikramya) as distinguished from the aiśvarya-rūpa wherein the Lord appears in his transcendent glory and power (e.g. four-handed as in the case of the Lord’s appearance in Dvārakā). Thus though both the forms afford scope for devotion or bhakti, yet while the latter affords scope for bhakti only as awe, submission and reverence, in the former bhakti takes the more intimate form of affection, fellowship and love.

2. SOURCES OF VALID KNOWLEDGE

Of the ten ślokas or verses of Daśa-mūla-śloka, the first deals with the question of pramāṇa or source of valid knowledge while the remaining nine verses expound the prameyas or ultimate objects of knowledge recognized by the followers of Caitanya. According to the first śloka, the Vedas constitute the real pramāna and perception, inference and the so-called other pramāṇas are sources of valid knowledge in so far as they conform to the fundamental teachings of the Vedas and expound the nature of reality consistently with the
Vedic declarations. Mere logic has no competence in the determination of the ultimate reality. In so far as arguments are based on Vedic teachings and purport to expound the contents of Vedic declarations have they any scope in the determination of the spiritual reality. A reality that is spiritual surpasses the limits of ordinary, discursive thought. Ordinary thinking and reasoning follow in the wake of perception and have application therefore to such spatio-temporally limited objects as can be perceived by the senses. Therefore both perception and ordinary logical thinking are at home only in the domain of the sense-perceived material world (jāda-jagat). When, however, one has to deal with a reality that is spiritual not circumscribed in space and time as ordinary sense-objects are, perception and ordinary thought are of no avail and must be superseded by some higher mode of experience such as is attributed to sages and seers (ṛṣis). Hence in the determination of the ultimate spiritual reality, the Vedas are our true guide—the Vedas, i.e. as the records of the higher, mystical experiences of seers and sages.

3. ULTIMATE REALITY

What are the deliverances of the Vedas as regards the prameyās or ultimate objects of knowledge? According to Caitanya and his followers, the teaching of the Vedas as regards the ultimate reality is as follows. Hari is the ultimate reality, i.e. Hari who is Bhagavān or the Lord. The halo of Hari’s immaterial person or figure (aṅga-kāntī) is the Indeterminate Brahman of Śaṅkara and a mere fraction of Hari’s essence (aṁśa) is the Paramātman or the supreme Self as the indwelling spirit of the created world. Hari is the whole (aṁśin) of whom Paramātman is the part (aṁśa) and Hari is the central reality of whom the radiating halo is the nīr-viśeṣa Brahman. Hari is the unity of perfect beauty (sṛī), perfect majesty (aṁśvarya), perfect strength (vīrya), perfect glory (yaśas), perfect intelligence (jñāna) and perfect detachment (vairāgya). He is the embodiment of these six attributes in their unthinkable plenitude. These attributes are not all of the same rank, being related, as they are, as primary and subsidiary. Sṛī or perfection of beauty is the most fundamental of these attributes being related as aṅgin (primary, principal or essential) to which majesty, strength and glory function as subsidiaries. What we call jñāna or intelligence and vairāgya or detachment in the Lord are only an effulgence of the Lord’s attribute of yaśas or glory. Hence jñāna, and vairāgya, the two qualities which Śaṅkara stresses are attributes of a subsidiary attribute of the Lord and this explains why they appear as the halo of the Lord’s person or figure. As these two attributes constitute the essence of Śaṅkara’s Indeterminate Absolute, Brahman as thus conceived is no independent reality but only an adjectival aspect of Hari as
plentitude of being, joy and consciousness. Just as the light of a burning fire presupposes the fire as its source and substrate, so does the Indeterminate Brahman as the halo of the Lord presuppose the Lord’s spiritual person as its source and substrate. And Lord Hari in His completeness is the duality-in-unity of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā (as the Lord and His Sakti or energy), each bound to the other in inseparable bonds of devotion, love and affection.

What is known as the Paramātman or the indwelling spirit of the world is a fragmented or fractional Incarnation of Hari as the Lord in His completeness and perfection. Hari has created the world of māyā or nescience with the help of His two attributes of majesty and strength and having created it, has entered or charged it with a fraction of His essence in the form of Viṣṇu. Though a fraction of Hari, Viṣṇu as the world-soul does not yet fall short of the perfection and plentitude of the Lord Hari, who is His source. For it is true of the infinite spiritual reality that not only is it complete and infinite as an infinite, all-inclusive whole outside which nothing is, but also that a part (aṇīśa) of the infinite can also share the infinitude of the whole of which it is a part. And so it has been said that subtraction of even the infinite from the infinite leaves yet the infinite intact without diminution.

The question is raised as to how the Lord, Hari, who is infinite of being, joy and consciousness yet has the form of Kṛṣṇa which is limited in space. To have a figure or form is not only to lose the property of ubiquitousness or infinitude but also to be limited in will and efficiency. In reply to this it is pointed out that the objection arises from a mistaken transference of the qualities of material bodies to objects which are spiritual in essence. So far as material objects are concerned, these, as unequal aggregations of sattva, rajas and tamas reveal the properties of limitation in space and time so that for a material body to be in one place at one time is to be absent from all other places at the same time. But the figure of Lord is a spiritual form consisting of pure, unmixed sattva (śuddha-sattva), and not, as in the case of material bodies, of miśra-sattva or sattva mixed with tāmasika and rājasika elements. And so while it is impossible for a material body to be in one place and also in all places at the same time, this is not at all impossible for a spiritual figure made of śuddha-sattva as the Lord’s person is. It is, in fact, one of the a-cintya or unthinkable attributes of the Lord that He may be limited and clearly defined in outline and figure and also be everywhere in His clearly distinguishable form at the same time.

The unthinkable properties which distinguish the Lord’s figure of person also characterize His sva-rūpa or essence and His manifold powers. The relation between the Lord’s essence or sva-rūpa and His manifold powers is one of unthinkable difference-in-non-difference so that while the Lord in one respect is non-different from the various energies (sakti,
He exercises, He has also a transcendent nature which is not exhausted in the different manifestations of His essence. Nor are the powers which the Lord exercises in His different manifestations intelligible in strict logical terms. The powers which the Lord exercises are, e.g. the different forms of His essential power or energy (sva-rūpa-sakti) as the ultimate spiritual reality, and yet this essential power He exercises in the three different forms of cit-sakti or power of illumination and intelligence, jīva-sakti or power of self-fragmentation and self-multiplication into finite selves and māyā-sakti or power of materialization and insentience in the form of an inanimate world. How a sva-rūpa or essence which is inherently spiritual can yet appear as the insentience of a material world or how the infinite spiritual reality may yet split itself into innumerable limited spirits without prejudice to its integrity of being, is one of the mysteries of the ultimate Reality which defies logical resolution.

What precisely, then, is this sva-rūpa-sakti which is supposed to function in the three forms of cit-sakti, jīva-sakti and māyā-sakti? Since the Lord's essence (sva-rūpa) consists of being, consciousness and joy (sat, cit and ānanda), His inherent energy (sva-rūpa-sakti) must also consist of a joy (hlādinī) in being (sat) which is also the experience or consciousness (cit) of the joy in being. Thus the three aspects of the sva-rūpa-sakti are hlādinī corresponding to the joy, sandhini corresponding to the being and samvit corresponding to the experience or consciousness thereof.

The followers of Śaṅkara distinguish between the sva-rūpa-laksana or intrinsic character and tatastha-laksana or extrinsic character of the Absolute, making of saccidānanda (being, consciousness and bliss) the essence or essential nature of the Absolute, and the relation to the created world and creatures, its tatastha or extrinsic determination as arising only through the Absolute (Brahman) appearing falsely through the veil of nescience as creator, maintainer and destroyer of a world (srṣṭi-sthitī-laya-kārtṛtya). Therefore for followers of Śaṅkara while being, consciousness and joy define Brahman's nature truly, the relational characters are unreal appearances which do not belong to Brahman's essence. Since for followers of Caitanya (as also for all Schools of Vaiṣṇavaites) the world of experience is not an unreal appearance, the question of an absolute division between the sva-rūpa or essential and the tatastha or relational characters does not arise. The tatastha or relational characters are thus the sva-rūpa or essence itself in different aspects of its manifestation. And so for Caitanya and his School, what we call cit-sakti, jīva-sakti and māyā-sakti are not unreal appearances having no attachment to Brahman's essence as the followers of Śaṅkara would say, but the diverse manifestations of the Lord's sva-rūpa-sakti as hlādinī, self-enjoying, sandhini, self-realizing or self-positing and samvit, self-apprehending or self-conscious.

What, then is cit-sakti, and what is its character as a sakti or power
of the Lord’s essence (sva-rūpa) as being, joy and consciousness? As cit or intelligence, it is that śakti or energy in the Lord whereby He realizes His sva-rūpa as a spiritual unity-in-duality of the Lord and His śakti, i.e. the unity-in-duality of the Lord, Kṛṣṇa and His śakti, Rādhā, each as the other of the other and yet non-different from the other. In the aspect of hlādinī, this realization consists in the reciprocal love of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā just as in sandhinī it shows itself as the Lord’s immaterial world (Vṛndāvana) and its paraphernalia and as saṁvit as the experience of the joy or delight in this unity-in-duality. The cit-śakti is otherwise called antaraṅga-śakti, a centripetal force of concentration and inwardization whereby not only the whole is apprehended in its integrity as individual unity but also every element of the whole as the whole itself in an essential aspect of its being. It may thus be called a capacity to intuit the many as one and the one as many, a capacity to realize the spirit as a true spiritual unity obliterating all fixed distinctions and resolving external disjunctions into internal spiritual relations.

In direct contrast to cit-śakti is māyā-śakti which also is a form of the Lord’s sva-rūpa-śakti. While as cit-śakti, the sva-rūpa-śakti reveals the Lord as the ultimate spiritual reality as the all-inclusive spiritual unity of all that is, as māyā-śakti it reveals Him as the insentience of the material world and its atomistic, sensuous values and interests. Māyā-śakti is thus otherwise described as the Lord’s bāhiraṅga-śakti, a centrifugal force of self-dispersion and self-alienation in the Lord whereby the spiritual appears as insentient and purely material and the integral total point of view gives way to one of atomistic pluralism and particularism. Thus while in cit-śakti, the Lord’s essence or sva-rūpa appears in its intrinsic character as a spiritual unity integrating as well as transcending differences, in māyā-śakti there is a complete reversal of the outlook so that the integral, total viewpoint is substituted by one of fragmentation and particularization. And so while cit-śakti delivers the truth in its completeness without distortion, māyā-śakti gives us only an inverted image or imitation thereof (chāyā). In this way, through the influence of māyā-śakti, the particular appears not, as it really is, as a subservient element of the whole, but as itself the whole possessing absolute value and significance in itself. Further, while cit-śakti apprehends the spiritual as an immaterial spiritual reality, māyā-śakti reveals it as the insentience of the inanimate material world in which consciousness is in eternal slumber.

4. THE INDIVIDUAL—JĪVA

Between the complete truth as delivered by the Lord’s cit-śakti and the distorted imitation or copy thereof as presented by the Lord’s māyā-śakti, stands jīva-śakti which is the Lord’s sva-rūpa-śakti appearing in the
form of limited finite selves or spirits. As standing between the opposites of Truth and its distorted imitation, jīva-sakti reveals itself as a dual capacity for a spiritual as well as an unspiritual outlook. It is thus otherwise called ītaśṭha-sakti suggestive of the dual nature of the finite individual as belonging to both earth and heaven at the same time. Just as the river-bank may be said to belong to the river as well as the surrounding land, so is the jīva the link between the Lord, in His intrinsic character as the all-inclusive spiritual reality and His extrinsic disrupted appearance as the insentience of a material world of unrelated particulars. The Lord, in other words, appears as jīva-sakti in so far as He splits Himself into infinitesimal spiritual monads bound to the Lord’s spiritual essence or sva-rūpa on the one side and limited by its appearance as a material world on the other. And so while the Lord remains essentially the infinite, all-pervasive spirit which He is, as jīva He becomes finite, limited, monadic, as liable to be led astray by the allurements of māyā-sakti as capable, in virtue of sharing the Lord’s spiritual essence, of extricating himself from the snare.

Since jīva-sakti is nothing but the Lord’s sva-rūpa-sakti in one aspect of its manifestation, it also must reveal, though in a limited form, the being, joy and consciousness that constitutes the Lord’s sva-rūpa or essence.

5. BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

The relation between the Lord and the jīvas is to be conceived on the analogy of a burning fire and the sparks which it throws out. Just as a burning fire gives off sparks from itself which share, in fragmented form, the nature of the source which gives them off, so does the Lord as the integral spiritual reality throw out jīvas as the sparks of its integral being. As such, jīva is both different and non-different from the Lord, non-different as being made of the Lord’s spiritual essence consisting of being, joy and consciousness, and different as sharing the essence in limited form conformably to its monadic nature. Hence while the Lord as the all-inclusive spiritual reality is māyādhiśa in the sense of being master and director of His māyā-sakti whereby He causes insentience and fragmentation to appear in His integral spiritual essence, the jīva as sharing the Lord’s essence in a monadic infinitesimal form is liable to be mastered and subjugated by māya (māyādhiṇa). The Lord’s māyā-sakti, in fact, functions in two different forms, viz. (1) as pradhāna causing the appearance of the insentient material world, and (2) as avidyā or power of nescience in the jīva causing it to forget its real nature as eternally subservient to the Lord and making it set up as an independent absolute possessing self-existence. It is avidyā and the forgetfulness that it produces that account for the undivine self-assertion of the finite self and
this explains the exaggerated values that are ascribed to the finite as such and the suffering and frustration that result therefrom.

The material world, though a product of māyā-sakti and its power of distortion, is not, however, an unreal appearance. On the contrary as a product of the Lord's sva-rūpa-sakti in the aspect of māyā-sakti, it shares the reality of its source and is a very real snare to the limited, monadic jīva. But while it is true that as a real material world it is the source of a very real confusion in the individual jīva, it is also equally true that it is not eternal or everlasting either in itself or in its influence on the finite spirit. In fact, the material world has significance only as a house of correction wherein the individual in its deluded egoism and god-forgetfulness learns through repeated frustrations and failures the vanity of its earthly ways and turns at last to the divine way as the truth and essence of its being.

What, then, is this divine way as distinguished from the undivine and the earthly way? It is, according to the followers of Caitanya, a way of life in accordance with the jīva's true nature, the way, i.e. of bhakti, self-dedication and love wherein the finite spirit awakes to a realization of its real status as a spark of the divine Spirit and eternally subservient to its will. The earthly way is the way of self-will and self-assertion whereby the individual forgetful of its eternal subservience sets itself up as an independent absolute with a spurious claim to have its own way in all things. It is only as by repeated frustration and failure it learns the lesson of its real limitations that it begins to reflect on its true nature and realize its position as a subservient element of the spiritual whole. This marks the dawn of spiritual enlightenment wherein, through the school of suffering and frustration, the jīva perceives at last the error of its earthly ways and awakes to a realization of its true being, not as a self-existent, independent absolute as it mistook itself for, but as eternally subservient to the Lord. What at first comes as a shock of disappointment and failure and, through subsequent reflection on the cause, becomes an intellectual comprehension of the finite nature as a subservient factor of the whole, gradually spreads over the whole being of the finite spirit permeating its thoughts, its emotions and its will. In this way what at first appears as abstract, cold intellectual assent becomes at last a complete self-giving, an unconditional self-dedication of the whole nature, intellectual, emotional and conative. This stage, according to the followers of Caitanya, shows bhakti at its highest reach, wherein not only self-will gives way to the will of the Lord in all things, but all finite values, including the social and moral values of finite group life, are merged in and subordinated to the integral absolute life. When this stage is reached, there is straining of the entire personality towards the integral, whole life—a straining of the soul which is not merely contemplative surrender, which, at its best, is only negative self-emptying, but

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also a burning desire as a soul-hunger and a soul-thirst that will not be appeased by anything short of the integral complete life. This is rāgāmikā-bhakti—bhakti not merely as an intellectual seeking or discovery, but a straining in every fibre of being for the integral, absolute life as an eternally subservient element of the Whole. The culmination of rāgāmikā-bhakti is mahā-bhāva which in the jīva is the imitation (cāya) of its divine archetype as represented in the reciprocal love of the Lord, Kṛṣṇa and His sakti, Rādhā, the love that makes each find its fulfilment in the other and feel incomplete and void in the absence of the other.

Bhakti which defines the jīva’s spiritual destiny is only life according to jīva’s true nature as a monadic fraction of and therefore eternally subservient to the Lord’s perfection and fullness of being. As such, bhakti is something that belongs to the jīva by nature and is not an acquisition or addition ab extra to the regenerate soul. All jīvas, in other words, are by nature bhaktas or devoted servants of the Lord as fractions of His essence or sva-rūpa as being, joy and consciousness. This inherent bhakti or devotion in the jīva is eternally manifest in the nitya-muktas, the eternally free souls, who constitute the Lord’s constant attendants in Vaikuṇṭha and Vṛndāvana, and who, as denizens of these divine spheres, live permanently beyond the range of māyā-sakti and never fall a victim to its allurements. It is otherwise with the baddha-jīvas, the earth-bound souls, who live within the sphere of māyā’s influence and are therefore liable to be deluded and led astray by its charms. In their case the inherent bhakti lies dormant at first till the individual through the hard school of experience realizes the error of his earthly ways and discovers at last the divine way as the path to the fulfilment of his spiritual destiny. When this happens, the inherent bhakti in the jīva awakes from slumber and reveals the individual in his true character as a servant eternally bound to the Lord by the bond of service, devotion and love. The awakening to bhakti and love in the case of the earth-bound soul is thus a reminiscence or self-discovery rather than an acquired quality.

Besides the two broad classes of jīvas as baddha or earth-bound and nitya-mukta or eternally free, there are sub-classes of earth-bound souls corresponding to their level of spiritual perfection and progress. Thus we have not merely the three classes of plants, animals and humans amongst the earth-bound souls but also amongst the humans themselves different levels of spiritual perfection and progress. For example, while some humans live a purely earthly life in utter forgetfulness of their real status as eternal servants of the Lord, there are others who prefer a spiritual life of devotion and love consistently with their destiny as monadic fractions of the absolute Spirit. The idea of the finite spirit as finite, limited and therefore eternally dependent on the Absolute as the inclusive whole is the beginning of bhakti. When the abstract idea through
heightening of consciousness becomes intensified into an intuition, the bare thought has passed over into the warmth and intimacy of devotion and love. Bhakti psychologically is thus knowing intensified and transformed into an intuitive realization—intellection, consciousness or thought so condensed and concentrated (cid-ghana) as to amount to a living, presentative experience. Thus while in the content aspect bhakti is the realization of the jīva's eternal dependence on the Lord, psychologically it is a form of intellectual intuition which transforms the entire personality, intellectual, emotional and conative.

The relation between the Lord, the jīvas and the material world is, as already noted, a relation of unthinkable difference-in-non-difference, not definable in strict logical terms. While jīva-śakti and māyā-śakti are themselves aspects of the Lord's sva-rūpa-śakti, yet the Lord has also a transcendent nature which remains complete and unchanged in spite of His exercise of the different powers. And while the Lord as both immanent in and also transcending the functionings of His various powers reveals Himself in unthinkable difference-in-non-difference from the powers He exercises, the powers themselves as cit, jīva and māyā-śaktis are also beyond comprehension both severally and in their mutual relation.

This is why the followers of Caitanya describe their standpoint as a-cintya-bhedābheda which must be distinguished alike from Brahma-vivarta-vāda and Brahma-parināma-vāda. While vivarta-vāda regards the world-appearance as an adhyāsa or false appearance in the eternally accomplished absolute Reality reducing the world thereby to an unreal appearance that does not affect Brahman's essence, the followers of Caitanya consider the world to be real as a house of correction for the jīva or finite soul though in unthinkable difference-in-non-difference from the absolute Reality. In Brahma-parināma-vāda again the world, though considered to be real, is yet taken to be a parināma or substantial modification of Brahman, the absolute Reality. As against this view, bhedābheda offers the doctrine of Sakti-parināma-vāda explaining the world and finite spirits not as the substantial modification of Brahman itself, but as the transformation of its a-cintya-śakti, i.e. of the inscrutable powers of its sva-rūpa as cit- jīva- and māyā-śakti. This, while saving the integrity of Brahman in its transcendent being yet makes it one with the world through its supernal powers in an unthinkable difference-in-non-difference.

NOTE

1. Such bhakti is possible only amongst the angels, the eternally free spirits who are the Lord's constant attendants in His immaterial world (Brāja-dhāman). For the earth-bound soul what is possible is its imitation or copy in the form of rāgānugā-bhakti, a devotion that follows in the wake of its original in the Lord's immaterial world.
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