

# ŚRĪ VIṢṆUCĪTTĪYA OF ŚRĪ VIṢṆUCĪTTĀ

(ENGALAZHAVAN)

COMMENTARY ON ŚRĪ VIṢṆU PURĀNA  
A STUDY



By  
*Dr. M.A. Ranganayaki, M.A., Ph.D.*

## About: Śrī Viṣṇucitta

Śrī Viṣṇucitta (Eṅgaḷāḷvān) was a direct disciple of Śrī Rāmānuja. He is also reverentially referred to as a "Śrībhāṣya Simhāsanādhipati". His commentary on the Purāṇaratna (Śrī Viṣṇupurāṇa) is a Vyākhyāna-ratna itself. There are several references in it to the Śrībhāṣya. The value of this commentary is therefore quite evident. So far no attempts have been made by scholars for study this in detail. The present publication of Dr. Ranganayaki, I am sure, will delight Śrī Eṅgaḷāḷvān, a great preceptor who walked in the foot-steps of the King of Ascetics, Śrī Rāmānuja, and who also was held in high esteem by his illustrious student, Śrī Vātsya Varada(or Naḍādūr Ammāḷ).

## SRIMATE RAMANUJAYA NAMAH

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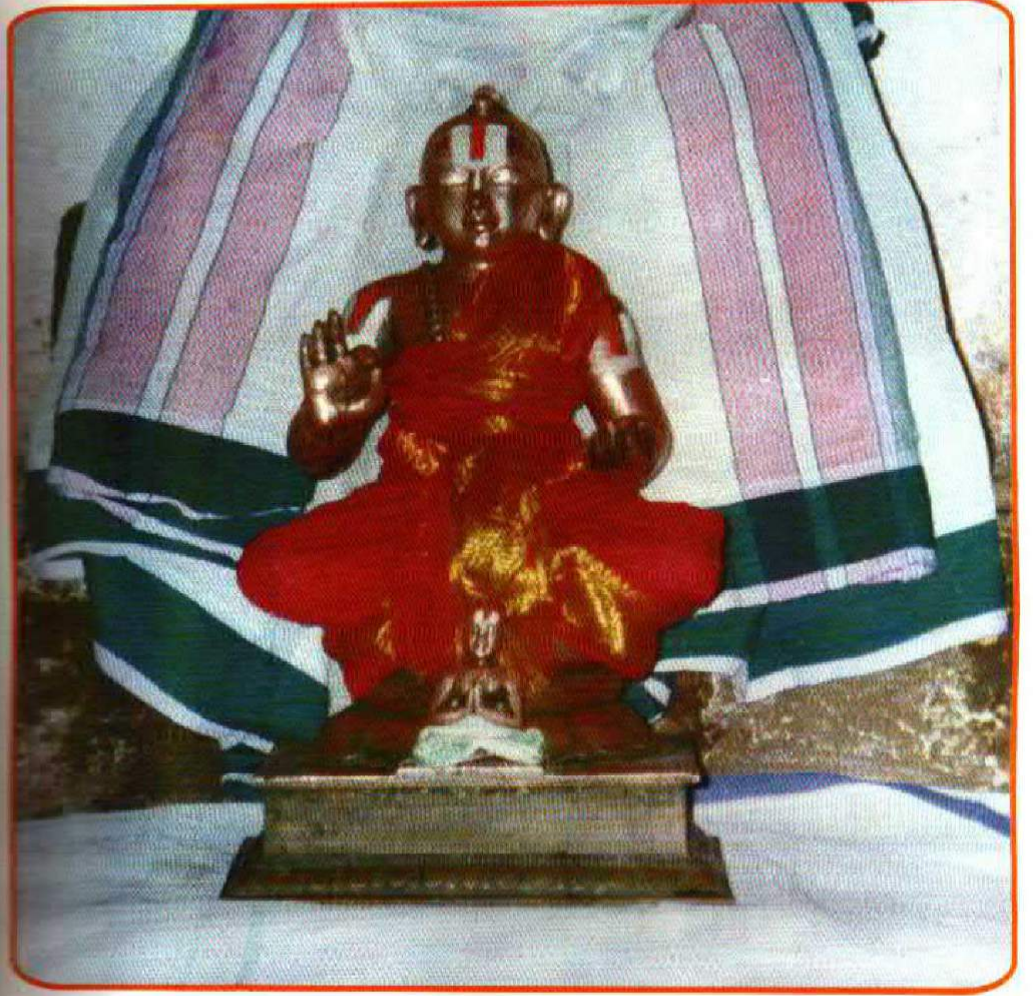
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# Dedication

*To  
'Ayya'  
my beloved husband\*,  
that wonderful person  
life with whom has shaped me  
into what I am today;  
and  
to our families past and present.*

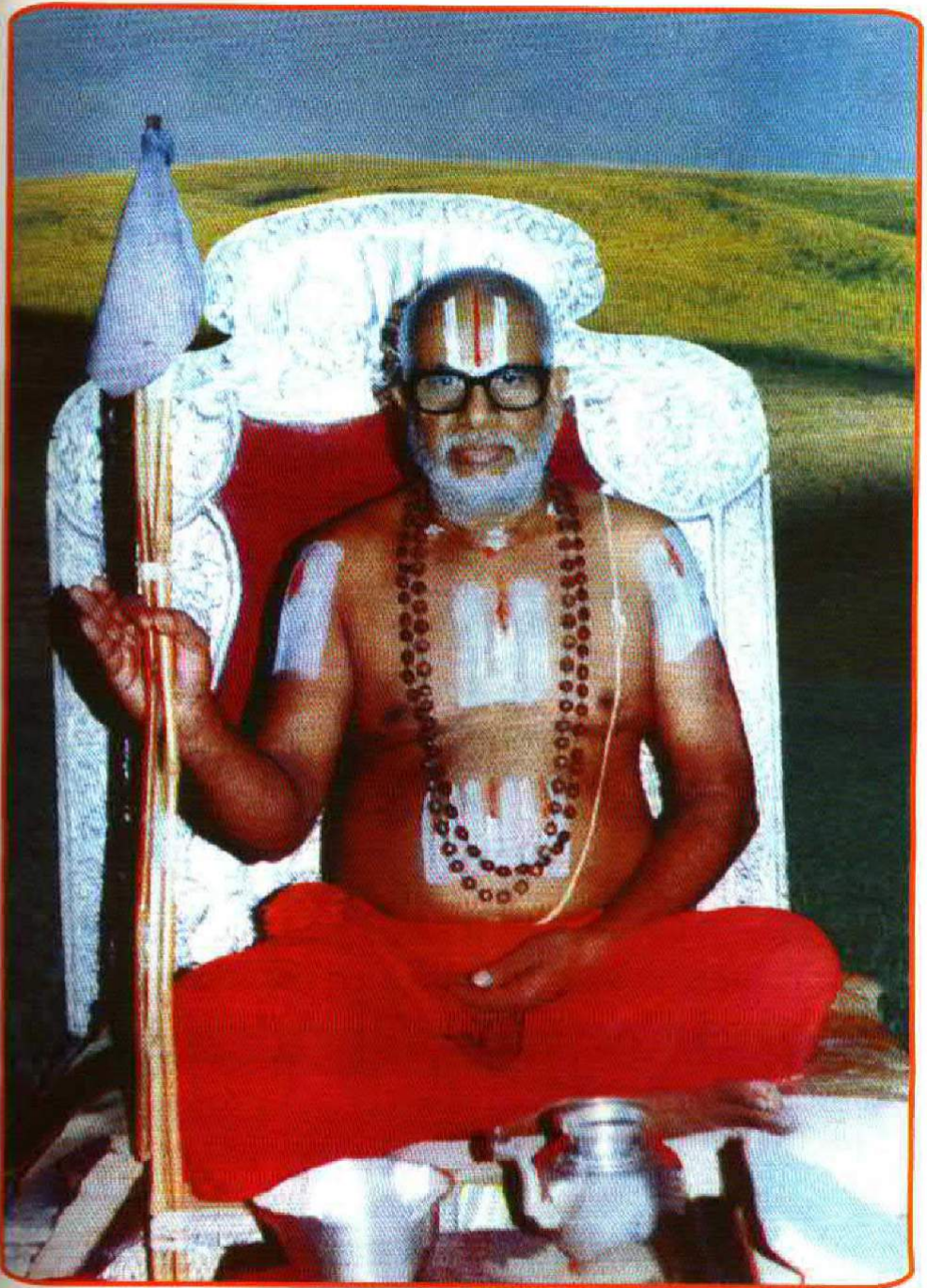
*\* the late Brigadier M. A. Ramaswamy, AMC.*

श्रीविष्णुचित्तपदपङ्कजसङ्गमाय चेतो मम स्पृहयते किमतः परेण।  
नो चेन्ममापि यतिशेखरभारतीनां भावः कथं भवितुमर्हति वाग्विधेयः॥



The Utsavamūrti of Śrī Viṣṇucitta(Eṅgaḷālvān) with the image of Vātsyavaradācārya(Naḍādūr Ammāḷ) his disciple, in his shrine at Tiruveḷḷarai, his birth place.

# Srimadyatindravararayogipadabja Bhringah



**30th Peetadhipathi His Holiness  
SRIMATH PARAMAHAMSA**

**SRI KALIAN VANAMAMALI RAMANUJA JEEYAR SWAMI**  
Vanamamalai Mutt, Nanguneri - 627 108, Tamilnadu



## AN APPRECIATION - I

My dear spiritual friends, more especially those of Sri Vaishnavism, I am extremely happy to write a few lines on “Sri Vishnuchitteeya of Sri Vishnu Chitta – A Study” of Smt. S.T. Ranganayaki, who was a Research Scholar of Department of Vaishnavism, University of Madras. She did her Research under the supervision of Dr. M. Narasimhacharya, Professor and Head of Vaishnavism Department of University of Madras. At the outset itself, I should say that it is simply a wonderful project, subject wise First and Foremost one and un dealt previously by any other scholar. For preparing her Thesis for Ph.D. degree, under effective supervision of Dr. Narasimhacharya, she came here to our Vanamamalai.

There was dire necessity for her to get the book Sri Vishnupurana with the commentary of Sri Vishnucitta, who is very famous by the name in Tamil Engal Azhvan. I affectionately allowed her to search for the book in the cupboard of our Saraswati-shala, the library. She could find out the book Sri Vishnu Purana with the commentaries of Vishnuchitteeya and Sridhareeya, within ten minutes! Both of us were very much surprised and she took it as an auspicious augury to select this subject, as she very much wished. Really it indicated that Smt. Ranganayaki will certainly select this subject for her Ph.D. thesis and accomplish this rare research work most successfully, by the grace of Divya Dampati/ Divya Mithuna. This built up great confidence and interest to do the research and submit her Thesis.

She has done the job so effectively and beautifully and has become Doctor of Philosophy very creditably. The Vishnu Purana of Sage Parasara, the father of Vedavyasa Maharshi, comes under the category of Satvika Puranas. This is consid-

ered as Adi Purana among eighteen Puranas. The Vishnu Purana is called as 'Purana Ratna' as it is hailed thus by Sri Yamunacharya, the Alavandar in his *Stotraratna*.

‘निरमिमीत पुराणरत्नं तस्मै नमो मुनिवराय पराशराय ॥’

is Alavandar's Slokamsa.

Veda Vyasa, the author of Brahma Sutra also receives special credit, as the son of great sage Parasara.

“व्यासः वसिष्ठनप्तारः, शक्ते पीत्रमकलमषम् । पराशरात्मजा वन्दे  
शुकतातः तपोनिधिः ॥”

Yamunacharya's great gratefulness towards the Sage Parasara, the author of Sri Vishnu Purana and its revelation through अङ्गुलिमुद्रा in his चरमशरीर could give us भगवद्रामानुज, our Emberumanar, as दर्शनप्रवर्तकाचार्य and दर्शनप्रवर्धकाचार्य and through him Sri Parasarabhatta, an unparalleled महाचार्य to our Acharya Parampara. Similarly Sri Vishnu Chitta, the commentator of Sri Vishnu Purana was receipt of श्रीभाष्यकार भगवद्रामानुजाचार्य - परिपूर्ण अनुग्रह and received the pet name from him directly Engalazhvan, by which only all Sri Vaishnava People identify him.

My dear spiritual friends, Smt. Ranganayaki having chosen the rare subject for her research thesis has written her Thesis in such a nice manner, which is really praise-worthy. She has very appropriately taken quotations from very great works of our Mahacharyas – Sri Bhasya, Siddhitraya, Agamapramanya, various Stotras etc. The arrangements of subject points, their gradation, expression of all important points in fluent and simple language are very hail-able. The first chapter 'Introduction' contains quint-essence of our विशिष्टाद्वैत सिद्धान्त, श्रीसम्प्रदाय, भगवद्रामानुजदर्शन । This becomes great motivation to go further to go through fully her worthy Thesis with rapt attention and

interest. Here lies the success of her Thesis – “Vishnuchiteeya of Vishnuchitta - A Study”.

Dear Atmabandhus, Now she wishes to publish her Thesis, as a book, which I personally consider very much necessary. This publication will certainly prove itself very useful and thought-provoking factor to all the people of our Sri Vaishnava Sampradhaya and all our scholars too. I whole-heartedly wish the publication a grand success and Smt. Ranganayaki a long, healthy and prosperous like.

Auspicious day of 'Theertha  
Uttsava' of Sri Manavala  
Mamunigal  
Sri Vanamamalai Mutt



Sri Kaliyan Vanamamalai Ramanuja Jeeyar Swamin.

## An Appreciation - II

It gives me immense pleasure to go through this valuable treatise “on Śrī Viṣṇu purāṇa and Śrī Viṣṇucittīya” of Dr S.T. Ranganayaki and make a note of Appreciation of the same. To cite a few important places of interest.

The entire cosmos with the various orders of being from a blade of grass to the creator Brahmā is but a drop in the ocean of the limitless glory of Viṣṇu. The whole universe is but a fragment of His infinite Being.

He, along with Lakṣmī, as Śrīmannārāyaṇa is the goal, Upeya, for mumkṣus; and eternal service to the Divine Couple in Paramapada, is the highest aspiration (paramapurūṣārtha) of the finite self.

In no other religious philosophy does Śrī occupy such an important and supreme position, either equally with or second only to Nārāyaṇa as in Rāmānuja's. There are two different sets of views about the Svarūpa and status of Lakṣmī: Whether She is aṇu or Vibhu, whether she can carry out the jagadvyāpāra, whether she can grant mokṣa, whether she is by nature subservient to Viṣṇu and the like. These points are being debated even today. But what matters is that She is there for us, at all times.

Describing the last stage of Khāṇḍikya's, life, the sage describes how he went to the forest with his thoughts fixed on Govinda. There, with one pointed concentration on Him, and practising yama, niyama etc., he attained laya in Viṣṇu, the pure Brahman. Viṣṇucitta here describes ātyāntika laya (V.C.VI.7.104), and gives a detailed account.

Laya stands for ultimate destruction of name, form and activities. This has been mentioned so in passages like “Even as

rivers merge in the ocean, losing their name and form”; “Shaking off sin as a horse would shake off the hairs”; “the knot of the heart is loosened”; “taintless, he attains utmost similarity (with the Lord) etc. Laya is not identity in essence, as is demonstrated in the nitya, naimittika and prākṛta layas. If that is so, the Lord will have defects like partiality and cruelty. The jīvas also will have the defects called “acquiring results of actions which they have not performed”, and “destruction of the results of works already done”. Absence of association with a body again is the special feature of Ātyantika laya”:

An attempt has thus been made to present the concepts Tattva, Hita and Puruṣārtha in this chapter, drawing material from the commentary of Viṣṇucitta. It has also been noticed that some of the ideas are adumbrated in the Śrī Bhāṣya of Rāmānuja.

Thus I deem it a great privilege to conclude that it would be of unblemished value to cherish this volume of Śrī Eṅgaḷāḷvān in the present form. I would like to compliment the author for achieving many laurels in the field of Vaishnavism.

Dr. V.K.S.N. RAGHAVAN  
Professor & Head  
Department of Vaishnavism  
University of Madras

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## SCHEME OF TRANSLITERATION

अ	=	a	क	=	ka	थ
आ	=	ā	ख	=	kha	द
इ	=	i	ग	=	ga	ध
ई	=	ī	घ	=	gha	न
उ	=	u	ङ	=	ṅa	प
ऊ	=	ū	च	=	ca	फ
ऋ	=	r̄	छ	=	cha	ब
ॠ	=	r̄̄	ज	=	ja	भ
ल	=	l̄	झ	=	jha	म
ए	=	e	ञ	=	ña	य
ऐ	=	ai	ट	=	ṭa	र
ओ	=	o	ठ	=	ṭha	ल
औ	=	au	ड	=	ḍa	व
अं	=	m̄	ढ	=	ḍha	श
अः	=	h̄	ण	=	ṇa	ष
			त	=	ta	स
						ह

## Foreword

I have immense delight in writing this foreword to the book, "Śrī Viṣṇucittīya of Śrī Viṣṇucitta" written by Dr. S.T. Ranganayaki for which she was awarded the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Vaishnavism, by the University of Madras, in 2000.

'Viṣṇucittīya' is the name of the commentary on the Viṣṇupurāṇa, written by Eṅgaḷāḷvān known in Sanskrit as Viṣṇucitta. He should not be confused with Periyāḷvār, who was also known as Viṣṇucitta. The Viṣṇupurāṇa occupies a special place in the Śrīvaiṣṇava literary tradition, composed by Sage Parāśara (Vyāsa's father), it brings out the basic concepts of the Śrīvaiṣṇava school of thought, in unmistakable terms. It has explained the concept of Tattvatraya (ie., Cit, Acit and Īśvara), the inherent nature of these three constituents, the nature of enjoyment (i.e., experience of the Karma by the sentient beings), the nature of liberation, the means there of and the like. No other purāṇa has dealt with the topics in such an emphatic and authoritative way. For this reason, it has been reverentially referred to by Yāmuna as *Purāṇaratna*. The commentator Eṅgaḷāḷvān was a direct disciple of Śrī Rāmānuja. He was the preceptor of Naḍādūr Ammāḷ (also known as Vātsya Varadācārya). His commentary as is shown in several places in the present publication, reveals the profound influence of Śrī Rāmānuja's *Śrībhāṣya* on it.

I am glad that this commentary on the *Purāṇaratna* is taken up for a detailed study by my *Śiṣyāratna*, Smt. S.T. Ranganayaki. She has done a commendable job, setting a trend for the successive line of scholars to follow and emulate.

Dr. Ranganayaki has a superb command of English. Her knowledge of Sanskrit language and acquaintance with the Śrī -



vaiṣṇava tradition are of a very high order. These qualifications have made her the right person to handle the present work with a rare gift of skill and devotion.

It has been, the trend of late, among scholars to take up topics for research without proper background. What I mean by background is "traditional knowledge." Scholarship sans tradition is a ship drifting with no direction. Generations of scholars following such works will surely miss their goal. In giving Dr. Ranganayaki, the 'Viṣṇucittīya' for study, I thought I was doing the right thing. And I am proved right. She has the required knowledge of the text and backing of a strong tradition. I am happy that the outcome is a paragon of perfection.

The study has come out in bold colours. Several details about the commentator have been presented by Dr. Ranganayaki, with accuracy and perfection. Otherwise these would have remained a closed book for many. In the Śrīvaiṣṇava circles, there are several authors and teachers before and after Rāmānuja who are not so popularly known. Śrī Viṣṇucitta (Eṅgaḷāḷvān) is one such writer. The present author, Dr. Ranganayaki deserves our compliments and congratulations for the splendid work she has done by bringing to light, the Viṣṇucittīya. It is now open to the generations of researchers to probe this work and derive benefits for further studies and researches.

I wish Dr. Ranganayaki good health and many more years of fruitful service for the cause of Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition.

Dr. M. Narasimhachary

## PREFACE

An attempt has been made in the following pages, to present a study of the “Viṣṇucittīya”- a commentary in Sanskrit on the “Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa” of Sage Parāśara, by Śrī Viṣṇucitta, a direct disciple of the great Ācārya, Śrī Rāmānuja. The aim of the endeavour has been to highlight the way the author has succeeded in establishing the cardinal tenets of Viśiṣṭādvaitic Śrīvaiṣṇavism, as expounded by Śrī Rāmānuja himself, and his predecessors. After dealing with topics like the Life and Works of Śrī Viṣṇucitta (Eṅgaḷālvān) a brief account of sage Parāśara and a summary of the six Aṁśas of the Viṣṇupurāṇa, etc., this study is concerned mainly with the exposition of such pivotal topics as the Tattvatraya; the establishment of the Paratattva as Nārāyaṇa; His being the repository of all auspicious attributes; His being the personal, loving, caring Godhead along with His Consort Śrī, for His devotees; the means of liberation viz., Bhakti and Prapatti; the concept of Vaikuṅṭha or Paramapada, where the Divine Couple is attended and served by liberated and ever-liberated souls and the untenability of several concepts of other schools of thought, mainly Advaita. These topics have been arranged in the form of five chapters in this Thesis.

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa has been and is still held in high esteem by Ācāryas of all schools of thought and especially so by those of Viśiṣṭādvaita, as is evident by their profuse use of the sage’s sayings to buttress their interpretations. It has been equated with the Veda itself. Hence, the Viṣṇucittīya assumes great importance in this tradition.

So far, no attempt has been made by scholars to study the Viṣṇucittīya from the traditional point of view. And hence this has been a long-felt desideratum.

When my revered Professor and Guide proposed this topic for study for my doctoral thesis, I was elated and at the same time rather doubtful about my own capabilities in this direction. While I was still debating whether I would be wise in attempting such an arduous task, I had the great good fortune to be in Naṅguneri and have audience with His Holiness Śrīmad Paramahansa Vāṇamālai Kalyāṇ Rāmānuja Jīyar Svāmin.

The present Head of the Śrī Vāṇamālai Math - of which I am a disciple, when told that I was considering this topic for a thesis, His Holiness threw open his library and graciously lent me a rare copy of a 1910 edition of the Purāṇa with both the commentaries of Śrī Viṣṇucitta and Śrī Śrīdharaśvāmin, with His blessings, saying "There, your topic has been decided for you. Go ahead and do it." With such "anugrahabhāṣaṇa" from my Ācārya, I was encouraged to attempt the task. I am deeply grateful to His Holiness for His encouragement and blessings.

Now it is my pleasant privilege to record my heart-felt gratitude and thanks to all the people who have helped me in this project I have taken up. First, I would like to thank the authorities of the University of Madras, for allowing me to enrol as a student of the Department of Vaiṣṇavism, as a full-time research scholar.

I find no adequate words to express my sense of deep reverence and gratitude to my professor and guide, Dr.M.Narasimhachary, for accepting me as his student for research and setting me on this challenging task. It was his confidence in me that spurred me to greater effort than I thought I was capable of. I have had the honour of being his student for eight years now from Certificate, Diploma, through M.A., and now as a Ph.D. research Scholar in his Department, and I am

deeply grateful to God for leading me to such a wonderful guru at this stage of my life. I am glad he did not spoon feed me; he made me think for myself and correct my mistakes. I have learnt the true meaning of the word “guide” in these last four years of study with him. If I have achieved anything worth-while by this thesis, it is entirely due to his masterly guidance. I have great pleasure in recording my humble heart-felt thanks to him.

My warm thanks to Dr.V.K.S.N.Raghavan and Dr.M.A. Venkatakrishnan of the Department of Vaishnavism for the interest they evinced in my progress, their ready help in getting me reference books and for all the help they have given me in various ways.

I wish to place on record my gratitude to the present day learned ācāryas of this tradition, whose talks and writings have helped me greatly in comprehending the subject.

It is with affection and gratitude that I acknowledge my indebtedness to my family, for their unfailing confidence in me, and the support they extended to me in their various ways throughout this period. I thank my children, especially, not only for their positive support, but even more for refraining from trying to dissuade me from this arduous task I had set myself.

I thank my friends and well-wishers, in the Department and outside, for their encouragement and support.

My sincere thanks to Dr.M.A.Venkatakrishnan and Dr.Bhooma Venkatakrishnan for their great help in getting the matter computer-typed and ready for submission.

It goes without saying that none of this would be possible without the Saṅkalpa and Anugraha of the Divine Couple Śrīmannārāyaṇa, and I acknowledge this in all humility; Śrīmate

Nārāyaṇāya na maḥ; and offer this effort as a flower at their Lotus Feet.

S.T.Ranganayaki

**PS: I would further like to thank, in this publication of thesis as a book, his Holiness the Sri Kaliyan Vanamamalai Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami, for his appreciation, the high praise and encouranging words as expressed by him.**

I would also like to thank Dr. M.Narasimhachary, for his foreword in the same vein as his Holiness. Also<sup>7</sup> thank Dr. V.K.S.N. Raghavan for his appreciation and encouragement.

I thank Sri. R. Mukundan for his great help in preparing the DTP in record time.

I thank Sai Shiram Printers for getting the book ready in record time inspite of pressure of work.

OM  
Śrimate Rāmānujaya Namaḥ  
Śrimate Viṣṇu Cittāya Namaḥ

## INTRODUCTION

**Om!**

This Vedic sound, 'The Hindu Sound' as one Western writer calls it, reverberated to the heavens from the towering mountains, from the forests and river valleys, and the hearts of devotees ever since the Vedas were seen and heard by the ancient Rṣis, the Seers of this land.

"Jambūdvīpe Bhāratavarṣe Bharatakhāṇḍe Merordakṣine pārśve..."

In the karmabhūmi known as Bhāratavarṣa or India, the practice of Viṣṇu worship is as ancient as the Vedas. The devotees of Viṣṇu are known as Vaiṣṇavas, Sāttvatas, Bhāgavatas or Ekāntins and the system as Bhāgavata or Sāttvata. It is a system based on the Vedic teachings, and is more a way of life and code of conduct around a central focus of worship of a loving and personal god. The ultimate aim of human endeavour is to reach Him, and be free from the cycle of births and deaths. This system was also broadly designated as Sanātana Dharma.

There are various schools of Vaiṣṇavism; mainly those of Nimbārka, Vallabha, Caitanya, Rāmānanda and Svāmī Nārāyaṇa popular in the North of India, and Rāmānuja and Madhva in the

South. These schools vary in details of doctrine and practice, but the main objective of all is the worship of Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa as He is also known, and through that the attainment of Mokṣa. Mokṣa or Mukti means release (from the cycle of births and deaths).

Śrīvaiṣṇavism is the term used for the Sampradāya (tradition) of the school of Rāmānuja. It is also known as Śrī Sampradāya, because of the great importance given to Śrī or Lakṣmī who is the consort of Viṣṇu. The object of worship, here, is never Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu alone, but, always the Divine Couple (Divya Mithuna) - Śrīmannārāyaṇa. No other tradition accords such a degree of importance to the role of Lakṣmī. She is the consort of the Supreme Being and Mother of all created beings. In this dual capacity, She acts as a mediator between the just and strict father and the errant individual soul. For this mediation, She is known as "Puruṣakāra".

The way to the jīva's salvation lies in loving meditation or Bhakti towards the Supreme God-head. Or, it could be whole-hearted surrender at His feet (Prapatti). Religion is a way of approach to God. This, in order to avoid becoming an emotional and evanescent outburst of feeling, or an exercise in intellectual acrobatics has to be founded on a strong philosophical basis. Only then can it survive criticism and hold its own among other schools of thought.

Viśiṣṭādvaita is the philosophy, the foundation, the bed-rock on which the Bhakti tradition of Śrīvaiṣṇavism is founded. It is based on the Prasthāna Traya, which is the testing stone on which any religious philosophy has to prove its worth.

## WHAT IS VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA?

The term Viśiṣṭādvaita, roughly translated, means "The Non-Dualism (Monism) of the Qualified One". "Viśiṣṭasya advaitam - Viśiṣṭādvaitam". Śrī Yāmuna in his *Samvit Siddhi* says:

एकमेव अद्वितीयं तद्ब्रह्मेत्युपनिषद्वचः ।

ब्रह्मणः अन्यस्य सद्भावं ननु तत् प्रतिषेधति ॥

"ekameva advitiyaṁ tadbrahmetyupaniṣadvacaḥ |

brahmaṇaḥ anyasya sadbhāvaṁ nanu tat pratiṣedhati||"<sup>1</sup>

The term "advitiya" cannot be interpreted as negating the existence of things other than Brahman.<sup>2</sup>

The Advaitins explain the passage "ekameva advitiyaṁ brahma" as speaking of the unreality of everything other than the Brahman<sup>3</sup>.

Śrī Yāmuna continues:

तेनाद्वितीयं ब्रह्मेति श्रुतेरर्थो अयमुच्यते ।

द्वितीयगणनायोग्यो नासीद्भूति भविष्यति ॥

यथा चोलनृपः संराडद्वितीयोऽब्रू भूतले ।

इति तत्तुल्य नृपति निवारणपरं वचः ।

न तु तद्भूत्य तत्पुत्रकलत्रादि निषेधकम् ॥

"tenādvitiyaṁ brahmeti śruterartha ayamucyate |

dvitiyagaṇanāyogyo nāsīdasti bhaviṣyati ||

yathā colanṛpaḥ samrāḍadvitīyo'dya bhūtale |

iti tattulya nṛpati-nivāraṇaparaṁ vacaḥ |

na tu tadbhūtya - tatputrakalātrādi-niṣedhakam||"<sup>4</sup>

The meaning of the Vedic phrase is that there is nothing equal or superior to the Brahman, never was, nor shall be. Nothing else can ever be counted in the same category. When it is said



that the Coḷa king is the Emperor, without a second in this world, today, it is meant that there is no king equal to him. It does not negate the existence of his servants, sons, wife and others.

The word "ekam" has the meanings : One, the only (Singular), true and excellent.

Thus Śrī Yāmuna establishes the unparalleled sovereignty of the Supreme Brahman, that It has no equal or Superior. And this Advitīya tattva is qualified by everything other than Himself, sentient and non-sentient, as His Body. Thus, Viśiṣṭasya advaitam- Viśiṣṭādvaitam.

Śrī Rāmānuja himself is believed to have used the word "Viśiṣṭadravyaikyam". The term Viśiṣṭādvaita was used by his followers.<sup>5</sup>

Viśiṣṭādvaita is neither pure abstract philosophy nor mere emotional religion. It is a vital, pivotal force in the lives of its followers, a philosophic religion or a religious philosophy. It appeals to both reason and faith, to the intellect and to the heart. It is one of the most joyous systems, with a caring and personal dual God-head, Śrīmannārāyaṇa, as the ultimate goal of an aspiring soul, with the promise of eternal bliss and kaiṅkarya (Service) to them.

The chief doctrines of this system can be classified under the heads, "Tattva", "Hita" and "Puruṣārtha" (and the obstacles - "Virodhi"). A brief discussion of these should provide a back-ground for the study proposed in the following chapters.

## TATTVA

Viśiṣṭādvaita accepts three Tattvas or Realities - the **Tattvatraya**. They are Cit, Acit and Īśvara. Cit is sentient, Acit is insentient and Īśvara is the Ruler of both. All the three are true, and Cit and Acit are not caused by Māyā or Avidyā. Śaṅkara accepts only Brahman as the One True Reality - "Brahma Satyaṁ Jagan Mithyā".

Cit is the collective term used for the countless individual souls or jīvātman, which are sentient. Jīvas are numerous; there are as many jīvas as there are bodies and they are different in each body, but because of the similarity of their nature, they are referred to collectively as Jīva.

Īśvara is also sentient, but He is the Supreme Being and is by Himself a special independent category.

The jīva or finite self is described by Śrī Yāmuna as one who is distinct from the physical body, the senses, the mind, the prāṇa or vital breath and intellect. It is self-luminous, eternal, vyāpī (pervasive), numerous and different in each body. It is, by its very nature, blissful.<sup>6</sup>

देहेन्द्रिय मनः प्राणधीब्योऽन्योऽनन्य साधनः ।

नित्यो व्यापी प्रतिकेनमात्मा भिन्नः स्वतः सुखिः ॥

"Dehendriya manaḥ prāṇadhībyo'nyo'nanya sādhanah|

Nityo vyāpī pratikṣetramātmā bhinnah svataḥ sukhī ||"

The term vyāpī is explained as the jīva's ability to perceive pain and pleasure throughout the body it is inhabiting through his knowledge, even though by nature He is aṇu or atomic in

size. This jñāna is an integral and inseparable attribute of jīva (apṛthaksiddhaviśeṣaṇa), and is termed the "dharmabhūtajñāna". Śrī Yāmuna in "Ātmāsiddhi" quotes the Viṣṇupurāṇa.<sup>7</sup> The Self continues to have knowledge even in the state of Mokṣa.

This refutes the Advaitic view that there is nothing real other than the One Supreme Brahman, which is pure consciousness and that It is without qualities - Nirviśeṣa. The world and the finite selves are an illusion brought about by Avidyā or Māyā (which is superimposed on the Brahman). Once that Avidyā is removed, what appears as the finite individual self is realised as the Brahman Itself.

The ātmā (jīva) is housed in a body which is determined by its previous karma. This body is sustained by the jīva which activates it (kartṛtva) and enjoys it for its own pleasure (bhoktṛtva). It is identical with the entity realised as Ahaṁ (I). It is a sense of self-awareness which is present in deep sleep, and even in the realised state of Mokṣa.<sup>8</sup>

He is Satya, truly existent, and Nitya, eternal, and has neither birth nor death. These terms refer only to his association with a particular body, and the cessation of it. He is indestructible "Nainam chindanti śāstrāṇi".<sup>9</sup> He is without parts and is not subject to Vikāra or modification. The only change is in the contraction or expansion of his knowledge, jñāna, because of association with a material body.

Jivātmā is not cognizable by the senses. He is aṇu in size and occupies the region of the heart. He is, by nature, completely and eternally subservient, śeṣa, to the Lord, Īśvara, who, is the Master or Śesin. He is Śarīra to the Lord, who is his ind-

welling Ātmā and Controller (Śarīrī) just as he is Śarīrī to his own body.

"The finite self is an inseparable attribute of the Infinite as its aprthaksiddhaviśeṣana or prakāra"<sup>10</sup>.

Jīvas are of three kinds: the Baddhas, those bound by Karma in the eternal cycle of Samsāra. These are from a blade of grass to Brahmā - in the four categories of bodies viz., deva, manuṣya, tiryak and sthāvara, and inhabit all the fourteen worlds. The Muktas are those who have been in Samsāra, and by good company and God's grace, attained Him. The Nityamuktas or the Nityasūris are those who are never tainted by karman, who never have to undergo birth and death because of karman. These are souls like Ananta, Garuḍa, Viṣvaksena and others, who rejoice for all time in service to the Divine Couple.

Jīva is distinct from both Acit and Īśvara. Acit is Prakṛti or primordial matter out of which the Universe is made. It is insentient. It forms the Bhogyā, the Bhogopakaraṇa and the Bhogasthāna for the jīvas, and for Īśvara in His earthly manifestations. Bhogyā is the material for enjoyment, Bhogopakaraṇa, the senses of perception and action in the body; Bhogasthāna is Līlāvibhūti, all the fourteen worlds of the Cosmos, upto Brahmāloka, and the bodies of jīvas.

Prakṛti is Satya (True), Nitya (eternal) like the other two tattvas. But it is subject to modification (vikārāśpada) and the locus of different states (avasthāśraya).

The various bodies from Dēvas to Sthāvaras, Brahmā to pipīlikā (ant) are each indwelt by an individual soul, each distinct from the others. These embodied souls are further per-

vaded by the Supreme Ātman as the inner dweller and controller - antaryāmin.

In laya, a state of quiescence, both Prakṛti and Puruṣa (jīva) are absorbed in and lie dormant in the Brahman, in a subtle state - sūkṣmāvasthā. Everything is one conglomerate mass in this state, without any distinction between individuals, or even between Prakṛti and Puruṣa. This is also referred to as Avyakta-Unmanifest.

When the time is ripe for creation, the Brahman bestirs Himself and forms the resolve to create: "tadaikṣata bahu syām, prajāyēya".<sup>11</sup> By His Saṅkalpa or will, He causes a disturbance in the equilibrium of the three guṇas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. And so the process of creation is initiated. This disturbance of the guṇas is a pre-requisite for sṛṣṭi, as there can be no transformation as long as they are in equilibrium.

In Śrī Rāmānuja's Siddhānta, it is accepted that Prakṛti undergoes modification leading to the production of twenty four evolutes, as explained in the Sāṅkhya system. The cause for the evolution, however, is different. For the Sāṅkhyas, the proximity of Puruṣa brings on the necessary changes in Prakṛti, while according to Viśiṣṭādvaita the Saṅkalpa of the Lord alone brings about the necessary reaction.

The evolutes, the Pañcabhūtas are then compounded by the process called Trivṛtkaraṇam, later expanded to Pañcikaraṇam. This is essential for both Samaṣṭi and Vyaṣṭi Sṛṣṭis. The latter is the creation of individual entities with names and forms. The

uncompounded pure elements are incapable of evolving further in this state.

The universe, whatever is perceived by the senses, whatever is experienced, is all real. So also the finite selves. The worlds and the ātmās inhabiting them are no illusion, no product of Māyā or Avidyā as is claimed by the Advaitins. The Samvit Siddhi of Yāmuna says, "yathārtham sarvavijñānam iti vedavidām matam", "यथार्थं सर्वविज्ञानं इति यामुन भषितम्" "yathārtham sarvavijñānam iti Yāmuna bhaṣitam" (Cf. Vedāntakārikāvaḷī, pratyakṣa nirūpaṇam v.24; p.13) "Sarvam vijñānajātam yathārtham" (Śr.Bh. I.1.1.1)

And there is a very real and permanent relationship between them and Īśvara.

Śrī Yāmuna, in the opening verse of his Īśvara Siddhi, declares that the Supreme Being is the Prime Controller of the Universe :

तत्र कस्यचिदेकस्य वशे विश्वं प्रवर्तते ।

एको ह वै नारायण आसीत् न ब्रह्मा नेज्ञानः ।

सदेव सोम्य इदमग्र आसीत् एकमेव अद्वितीयम् ॥

"tatra kasyacidekasya vaśe viśvaṁ pravartate]"

"eko ha vai nārāyaṇa āsīt, na brahmā neśānaḥ]"<sup>12</sup>

"sadeva somya idamagra āsīt, ekameva advitīyam]"<sup>13</sup>

This Supreme Being, Paraṁ Brahman, who is Eka and Sat, is conclusively identified by Pūrvācāryas as Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu on the authority of Śrutis.

He is Viṣṇu because of His pervasive character (from the root viṣṭ-vyāptau). He is Vibhu.

यच्च किञ्चित् जगत्स्यस्मिन् दृश्यते श्रूयतेऽपि वा ।

अन्तर्भूय तत्सर्वं व्याप्य नारयणः स्थितः ॥

“yacca kiñcit jagatyasmin dṛśyate śrūyate'pi vā  
antarbahiśca tatsarvaṁ vyāpya nārāyaṇaḥ sthitaḥ||”

He is Brahman (“**br̥hadvāt br̥hmanāvāt ca**”). Br̥hadvā is greatness; (with the thing denoted by it). Br̥hmanāvā is causing others to grow, or become great . **And because there** is nothing or no one equal to or Superior to Him, **He is Paraṁ Brahman.**

This Supreme Ruler, Īśvara in Viśiṣṭādvaita is Saguṇa, as different from the Advaitic Nirguṇa Brahman. He is full of auspicious qualities and devoid of and hostile to all that is evil. He is Bhagavān, possessor of the Ṣadguṇas, the six qualities of jñāna, śakti, bala, aiśvarya, vīrya and tejas. His intrinsic nature is one of jñāna and ānanda; knowledge (Sarvajñāḥ Sarvavit) and bliss. That is, He is the possessor of (the āśraya for), these qualities and not the qualities themselves. He is ananta, unlimited by deśa, kāla or vastu (space, time or object). He is avāptasamastakāma, satyasaṅkalpa, apahatapāpmā, etc.

He has an indescribably beautiful divine form, (divyamaṅgala vighraha) of Śuddha Sattva. He is the Lord and consort of Śrī (Lakṣmī) - (Śrīyaḥpati) and inseparable from her (“Viṣṇoḥ Śrīranapāyini”, V.P.1.8 .17) in whichever form He is.

He is the jagatkāraṇa, the cause of the world, both Upādāna or material cause, and Nimitta, the efficient cause. As sūkṣmacidacid-viśiṣṭa, qualified by avyaktaprakṛti and unmanifest ātmās, he is the material cause. He also forms the efficient cause, by His saṅkalpa to create - (“tadaikṣata bahu

**syām, prajāyeya”).<sup>14</sup> This doctrine is special to Viśiṣṭādvaita, that He is both Upādāna and Nimitta kāraṇas.<sup>15</sup> Kāla (time), which is also an aspect of His, is to some extent, the Sahakārikāraṇa (auxiliary cause). He is Kāraṇa, as sūkṣmacidacidviśiṣṭa (subtle) and Kārya, as sthūlacidacidviśiṣṭa - (gross).**

Even though He shares most of the insignia of His sovereignty with his consort Lakṣmī, certain powers are His prerogatives, exclusively. These are the cosmic functions like creation, sustenance and dissolution (jagadvyāpāra), and the granting of final emancipation (mokṣapradatva).

He is the Śaraṇya, Refuge of all creatures. Cf. Vibhīṣaṇa's words in Vāl.R.Yuddha Kāṇḍa - “Sarvaloka Śaraṇyāya” (17-15).

He is Śaraṇāgatavatsala, full of love towards those who have sought Him as refuge. The fruit of the four human aspirations dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa, of the four classes of aspirants ārta, jijñāsu, arthārthī and jñānī are all bestowed by Him. He is Satya, Nitya and Antaryāmin to all the jīvas residing in all the bodies in all the worlds of the Universe. He is qualified by everything other than Himself as His Body (Śarīrin) and Ruler and Master of all this (Sarveśvara ) and Sarvaśeṣin. This Lordship is unexcelled and natural to Him.<sup>16</sup>

He is Nirvikāra, not subject to modification. He is not affected by the imperfections of Cit and Acit, even though He resides in them. He supports, controls and rules this body of His.



His abode in Nitya Vibhūti of Śuddha Sattva is known as Paramapada or Śrī Vaikuṅṭha.<sup>17</sup> Here He resides with Śrī, Bhūmi and Nīlā Devīs. His consorts, along with Ananta, Garuḍa, Viṣvaksena and other Nityas and Muktas.<sup>18</sup>

The entire cosmos with the various orders of beings from a blade of grass to the creator Brahmā is but a drop in the ocean of the limitless glory of Viṣṇu. The whole universe is but a fragment of His infinite Being.

His identifying characteristics (Svarūpanirūpaka dharmas) are His being the Lord of Lakṣmī (Śrīyaḥpatitvaṁ), cosmic activities (jagadvyāpāra) and being the sole granter of Mokṣa (Mokṣa pradatva).

He is the subject of all Vedic literature, and of all Vedic Searching (Vēdattin viḷupporul)<sup>19</sup>. He is the object of all worship and human aspirations for any desired goal. It is impossible to know Him. He who thinks he knows Him, does not know Him. He who knows he cannot know Him, knows Him.

He cannot be cognised by the senses. So, insofar as Iśvara is concerned, pratyakṣa cannot be a pramāṇa. Our pūrvācāryas do not accept Inference as pramāṇa in proving the existence of the Supreme Being. Therefore, of the three pramāṇas accepted in Viśiṣṭādvaita only Śabda, i.e., Vedic ( and other allied) texts form our authority.

He, along with Lakṣmī, as Śrīmannārāyaṇa is the goal, upeya, for mumukṣus; and eternal service to the Divine Couple in Paramapada, is the highest aspiration (paramapuruṣārtha) of the finite self.

He is Himself the Upāya or means . Any performance of Bhakti or Prapatti can only serve to elicit His grace and make Him bestow Mokṣa. The performances and observances by themselves, cannot achieve the objective. His grace is the only means of liberation.

He exists in five forms 1) Para, as Paravāsudeva in Paramapada 2) Vyūha, as His emanations in the Milky Ocean: Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, each with specific qualities in greater proportion in accordance with their cosmic functions 3) Antaryāmin, in the heart of the jīvas, 4) Vibhava, as avatāras like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa and finally 5) Arcā, as the Mūrtis installed according to Āgamic requirements, in temples. His qualities of Saulabhya, Sauśilya and Vātsalya are said to increase progressively from Para to Arcā.

He is present in the Arcā form<sup>20</sup> to His aspiring devotees, even today, and this is His most accesible form to mortals. As Pillai Lokācārya says -

புகதஜலம் போலே அந்தர்யாமித்வம், ஆவரண  
ஜலம் போலே பரத்வம், பார்க்கடல் போலே  
வ்யூஹம், பெறுக்காறு போலே விபவங்கள், அதிலே  
தேங்கிய மடுக்கள் போலே அர்ச்சாவதாரம்.

“bhūgatajalam pole antaryāmitvaṁ, avaraṇa jalam pole  
paratvaṁ, pārkaḍal pole vyūhaṁ, perukkāru pole  
vibhavaṅgal, adile teṅgiya maḍukkaḷ pole arcāvataram.”

[Antaryāmī is like underground water; Para is like the enveloping cosmic waters; Vyūha is like the Milky Ocean. Vibhava is like flash floods, and Arcāvatāra is like the pools left by the flash floods ].

In Arcāvatāra, the Lord is āśrītaparādhīnaḥ, arcakaparādhīnaḥ, and Sarvasahiṣṇuḥ, dependent on His devotees and priests, and bearing all that is done to Him by them. He is most easily available to us in this state for doing prapatti.

## THE RELATONSHIP BETWEEN THE THREE TATTVAS

The Śarīrātmabhāva or the Śarīra-Śarīribhāva, described above is the Cardinal tenet of Viśiṣṭādvaita, the pradhāna pratītantra. Tantra has one of its meanings as principal doctrine. Pratītantra is derived as "Pratīniyatam tantram pratītantram". This means a doctrine which is exclusive to this school of thought and not found elsewhere. With this as Pradhāna, it becomes the chief among such doctrines. Applying Śrī Rāmānuja's definition of śarīra, all Śrutis can be explained by this concept.<sup>21</sup> "Any substance which a sentient soul is capable of completely supporting, controlling for its own purpose and which stands to the soul in an entirely subordinate relation, is the body of that soul"<sup>22</sup>. This definition of śarīra, makes every other definition of other schools incomplete, and difficult to apply in certain situations.<sup>23</sup>

Śrī Yāmunā in his Ātmasiddhi seems to have dealt with the relationship between the Supreme Being and the world of Cit and Acit. This portion of the text is now lost. But the Bṛhadāraṇyaka passages of the Antaryāmi brāhmaṇa quoted by him towards the end of this work, clearly show the trend of his thought and the origin of the concept of the Śarīrātmabhāva. For instance,

यः पृथिव्यां तिष्ठन् - यस्य पृथिवी शरीरम्

“yaḥ pṛthivyām tiṣṭhan --- yasya pṛthivī śarīraṁ”

यस्यापः शरीरं

“yasyāpaḥ śarīraṁ”

यस्यात्मा शरीरं

“yasyātmā śarīraṁ” and so on.<sup>24</sup>

Śrī Rāmānuja quotes from the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, various stan-  
zas in support of his argument.

जगत् सर्वं शरीरं ते

“Jagat sarvaṁ śarīraṁ te”

यदम्बु वैष्णवः कायः, ततो विप्रं वसुन्धरा

“Yadambu vaiṣṇavaḥ kāyaḥ, tato vipraṁ Vasundharā”

(V.P.II 12-37)

तत् सर्वं वै होस्तनुः

“Tat sarvaṁ vai hōstanuḥ” (V.P.I.22.38)

तानि सर्वाणि तद्वपुः

“Tāni sarvāṇi tadvapuh”(V.P. I.12.86),etc.

The entire universe of sentient and insentient entities is only a mode (Itthambhāva) or Prakāra of the Supreme. This relation is called the Prakāra-Prakāribhāva, which in later terminology became “śarīra śarīri bhāva”<sup>25</sup>; See also Samvitsiddhi - “Pādo'sya viśvā bhūtāni... ityādikāssamastāśca taditthambhāvātāparāḥ.” This is also referred to as “tādātmyam” as different from “tādaikyam” (essential identity) of the Advaitins. The Chāndogya makes this clear “aitadātmyamidam sarvaṁ ... tattvamasi śvetaketo” (VI. 8. 6). Śrī Rāmānuja echoes this in his Vedārtha Saṅgraha: “eka vijñānena sarva vijñāna pratijñā sarvasya tadātmatkatvenaiva satyatve siddhayati.”

The grammatical rule of **Sāmānādhikarānya** is made use of by Śrī Rāmānuja in the exposition of the śarīra-śarīri-bhāva or relation of the body and the soul. **Sāmānādhikarānya** conveys the idea of one thing being qualified by several attributes.<sup>26</sup>

The body is the Prakāra (mode) of the embodied self and a word connoting a mode has its ultimate import in the self of which it is a mode and therefore connotes the self. Words connoting the physical bodies of jīvas also connote the jīvas to which the bodies belong. Likewise, words connoting Prakṛti and Puruṣa also connote Paramātmān for whom they are the Prakāras.

Piḷlai Lokācārya describes nine kinds of relationships between jīva and Īśvara in his “Nava vidha sambandha”, one of the “Aṣṭādaśa Rahasyas”. Briefly stated, they are:

‘पिता च रक्षकश्चेषी भर्ता ज्ञेयो रमापतिः ।

स्वाम्याधारो ममात्मा च भोक्ता च आद्यमनूदितः ॥”

“Pitā ca rakṣakaśśeṣī bhartā jneyō Ramāpatiḥ|

Svāmyādhāro mamātmā ca bhoktā ca ādyamanūditah||”

### **Sambandha - Relation between the Īśvara and Jīva:**

Pitā-Putraḥ - Father and Son

Rakṣakaḥ - Rakṣyaḥ - Protector and the Protected

Śeṣī-Śesaḥ - Master and Servant

Bhartā - Bhāryā - Husband or Lord and wife

Jñeyaḥ-Jñātā - The entity to be known, and the knower

Svāmī-Svaṁ - Possessor and the Possession

Ādhāra - Ādheya - The Support and The Supported

Ātmā-Śarīra - Soul and Body

## Bhoktā - Bhogya - Enjoyer and Enjoyed

The Divine Couple is the Father and Mother of the Universe.

“Mātā Devi Tvamasi Bhagavān Vāsudevah pitā me|” says Śrī Deśika in his Śrī Stuti (Śl.23)

Various devotees have experienced Him in various relationships. Even enemies, constantly thinking of Him in fear and hate, have attained Him through the concentration of their thoughts on Him.<sup>27</sup>

The Āḷvārs enjoyed Him and despaired of Him, as Child, Beloved, Supreme Being and Protector. Pūrṅvācāryas also praised the Divine couple as Father and Mother, Īśvara and Īśvarī, in their stotras.

"Lokaikēśvari! Lokanāthadayite!" ( Catuśślokī of Yāmuna).

He is the Paratattva, the Supreme Reality.

## THE ROLE OF ŚRĪ

Śrī or Lakṣmī is the chief consort of Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Being. She is full of loving qualities like dayā, vātsalya, kāruṇya, saulabhya, sauśīlya etc. She cannot by Her very nature, be harsh or punitive - “nityaṁ ajñātanigrahā” (Yatirāja Saptati of Vedānta Deśika, v.2)

In Her dual role as the beloved Consort of the Lord on one hand, and Mother and Mistress of the World on the other, She is in an ideal situation to play a mediatory role between the erring jīva and the strict and judicial father, the Paramātmā. She, being the beloved of His heart (manaḥkāntā), His pleasure lies in delighting Her. Even the sport of creation, etc. is for Her

delight. **She participates by her approval and evident delight. She plays on this and brings His qualities of compassion and mercy to the fore, suppressing those of justice and retribution. She thus prepares the ground for His accepting the repentant sinner in a forgiving mood.**

As Mother, on the other hand, **Jaganmātā that She is**, she enfolds the errant soul in her love, **cajoles and threatens** him, to give up his wrong ways. She makes him realise that his only hope for emancipation lies in approaching Him, the Father, for pardon.

An important aspect of this role is her inseparable association with Nārāyaṇa. “Viṣṇoreṣā anapāyini”<sup>28</sup>, “agalalgillēn iraiyum.”<sup>29</sup> This ensures that the jīva can approach the Lord whenever he is impelled to the proper frame of mind, knowing that She will be there to plead his cause.

Our pūrvācāryas advocate and have practised themselves, Prapatti, first to Lakṣmī and then to the Lord, so that she may intercede on our behalf.

She plays this role of **Puruṣakāra (mediator)** in the performance of Prapatti (**Upāya-anuṣṭhāna**) but in the attainment of the result of Prapatti, **kaiṅkarya**, She is the recipient of adoration and service, equally with the Lord. (“Kaiṅkarya pratisambandhi divya mithunam”).

She is the bestower of all good fortune.<sup>30</sup> One glance from her apāṅga, corner of her eye, (**Katākṣa Viṣṇa**) is enough to shower any being with all good fortune and skills.<sup>31</sup> The absence of that causes the opposite, a withdrawal of all good<sup>32</sup>.

Because she is the Chief consort of Īsvara, she is Īsvari, and Śeṣiṇī to everything other than her Lord, Nārāyaṇa. Being Īsvari as Lokanātha dayitā, She enjoys all the powers and insignia of His Lordship. She is inseparable from Him, whatever form He is in: "bhāskarasya prabhā yathā"(V.R.Sund.21-1). She accompanies Him to earth in his avatāras in a form appropriate to His.

“देवत्वे देवदेहेयं मनुष्यत्वे च मानुषी ।

विष्णोर्देहानुरूपां वै करोत्येषात्मनस्तनूम् ॥”

“Devatve devadeheyam manuṣyatve ca mānuṣī |

Viṣṇordehānurūpām vai karotyēṣātmanastanūm||”

(V.P.I. 9.145)

She appears and disappears with Him, just as He does (āvīrbhāva and tirobhāva). Because of this, the Śrutis do not even mention Her separately. She is called Lakṣmī because she is His identifying mark, lakṣma. The sport of creation, etc. of the Lord, is for Her pleasure. She participates in these activities by Her encouragement, approval and evident delight.

S.N. Dasgupta says that God enjoys Himself, in world creation, according to scriptural testimony, either for the good of created beings, or for His Own pleasure and playful activity.

In no other religious philosophy does Śrī occupy such an important and supreme position, either equally with or second only to Nārāyaṇa, as in Rāmānuja's. There are two different sets of views about the Svarūpa and status of Lakṣmī: Whether She is aṇu or Vibhu, whether she can carry out the jagadvyāpāra, whether she can grant mokṣa, whether she is by nature subservient to Viṣṇu and the like. These points are being debated even today. But what matters is that She is there for us, at all times.



‘अनन्याधीन कल्याणं अन्य मङ्गल कारणम् ।

जगन्निदानं अद्वन्द्वं द्वन्द्वं वन्दामहे वयम् ॥’

“Ananyādhīna kalyāṇaṁ anya maṅgala kāraṇaṁ|

Jagannidānam advandvaṁ dvandvaṁ vandāmahe vayam||”<sup>33</sup>

## HITA

Hita is defined as welfare, and the means to welfare. This refers in traditional terminology, to **that which causes welfare of the ātman as different from welfare of the physical body.**

Priya is that which is pleasing, agreeable to the mind and the senses, leading to pleasures that are limited and transient (Svalpa and asthira). So, Hita, here means that which leads the ātmā towards Īśvara , for the attainment of his desired goal (puruṣārtha).

Puruṣārthas are (classified) as four: Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa. The first three are limited in scope and impermanent. The fruits of these are confined to the fourteen worlds of creation. The last, mokṣa is release from the eternal cycle of birth and death , by the destruction of karma. Any jīva aspires for one of these goals, and those that aspire for mokṣa, are known as mumukṣus. The Lord classifies His devotees as ārta, jijñāsu, arthārthī and Jñānī ((Bh.G.VIII 16). The last named is the mumukṣu who loves God for His own sake and is dearest to Him. "Sa ca mama priyaḥ" (Bh.G.VII. 17)<sup>34</sup>.

The means as described in the scriptures, are the same , whether the goal is one or the other of the four. The object of worship, the granting authority, "phalaprada", is also the same in our Siddāntha. Śrīmannārāvana.

The four means mentioned as attaining the self's puruṣārthas are: Karma, jñāna, bhakti and prapatti. These may be pursued, towards attaining the first three goals by propitiating other deities,<sup>35</sup> but for those aspiring for release from Saṁsāra, Śrīmannārāyaṇa is the only upāya. He, in eternal association with Lakṣmī, is also the upeya, the goal to be attained.

**Karma** is the performance of duties by an individual, which are ordained by the scriptures for his status in life, in respect of his birth and stage of life - "varṇāśrama dharma". There are three types of Karma: nitya (daily rituals), naimittika (for specific occasions) and Kāmya (for specific gains). Yajña, dāna, tapas, tīrtha etc. fall in the first category and they form the chief means for earthly gains. They will form an accessory to jñāna yoga, if performed without attachment to the results. (phala tyāga or niṣkāma karma). This will lead to a frame of mind receptive to jñāna, which is knowledge of the true nature of his own ātmā and of the Paramātmā. This is a realisation of his svarūpa (inherent nature) as dāsa to Īśvara, Who is the Master of all creation.

**Jñāna yoga** is meditation, introspection, a search into one's self for the true knowledge of the nature of self and Īśvara. Śrī Śaṅkara holds that vākyārthajñāna, the knowledge of the syntactical meaning of certain abheda śrutis like "Aham Brahmasmi" and "Tattvamasi" is enough to gain mokṣa. But Śrī Rāmānuja begs to differ. He opines that performance of one's own duty, (Svadharmā) in a spirit of detachment leads to antaḥkaraṇa śuddhi (purification of the mind). This will lead to jñāna, a true realisation of the nature of one's own self and the Brahman. Jñāna will then lead to Bhakti and thence to Mokṣa. Mere Vāky-

ārtha jñāna will never lead to salvation. This meditation on the self, if done properly, will lead to Bhakti. Otherwise, it will lead to Kaivalya.

The combined practice of Karma and Jñāna will lead to Vairāgya, says Yāmuna: "Svadharmā jñāna vairāgya sādhyābhaktyeka gocaraḥ" etc. (G.S.v.1). Vairāgya is detachment to worldly goods and pleasures.<sup>36</sup> This state of mind leads to Bhakti which, according to Śrī Rāmānuja is also a form of jñāna. Śrī Rāmānuja defines Bhakti which is synonymous with Dhyāna, as "tailadhāravat aviccinna smṛti santāna rūpam", an unbroken stream of loving contemplation of God, like a flow of oil. This steady contemplation, "dhruvā smṛti" on Nārāyaṇa will in time lead to a state of almost direct perception of the Brahman - "darśana samānākāraḥ". Śrī Rāmānuja equates the Upaniṣadic terms Vedana, Upāsana, Nididhyāsana with dhyāna or Bhakti.

As Bhakti develops, the devotee progresses from parabhakti, through parajñāna to paramabhakti. This third stage is the highest, extreme stage where one moment without Him is misery for the devotee. This state is conferred on him by the Lord in His mercy, and through that he attains His abode, His feet.<sup>37</sup>

But Bhakti, as a means to salvation, is full of difficulties. It is not open to all. Only those eligible to study the Vedas can follow this path. It is difficult to achieve the desired state of detachment to worldly objects and bonds, and attachment to the Lord.<sup>38</sup> This can be done only with the help of the Sādhana Saptaka, and the aṣṭāṅga yoga.<sup>39</sup> If something is done wrong, it will have adverse effects. This aṣṭāṅga yoga is described in detail in Aṁśa VI of Śrī Viṣṇu Purāna.

Considering all this, the Lord has shown us the way of **Prapatti**, which our pūrvācāryas have followed, and they have initiated their followers into Prapatti.

**Prapatti** or Śaraṇāgati is total and complete surrender to the Lord. It is known by various terms, such as Nyāsa, Bharanyāsa, Sarṇnyāsa, Ātma Nikṣepa, even Namaskāra and so on. It has **no** limitations as to time, place, circumstance or eligibility. It **may** be done in dire distress, as in the case of Gajendra and Draupadi, or in a more calm and collected mood, in the proper way shown by our ācāryas. The latter is to approach an ācārya who is himself qualified and has compassion for the supplicant. Through his advocacy, he does prapatti to Lakṣhmī first, for her mediation, and then to the Lord. This Puruṣakāra prapatti is an important doctrine of Śrīvaiṣṇavism.

Prapatti is to be done only once, (Sakṛt Kartavyā prapattiḥ)<sup>40</sup> but the *dvaya mantra* should be repeated constantly, exulting in its meaning and its promise (Śrī Rāmānuja's Śaraṇāgatigadyaṃ; Cūṃikā 18).

For all its seeming simplicity, prapatti is not as easy as it sounds. It has five aṅgas, or auxiliaries, that have to be fulfilled.

1) Ānukūlya Saṅkalpaḥ: the decision to engage only in activities pleasing to the Lord.

2) Prātikūlya vivarjanaḥ: the opposite of the first auxiliary; to avoid any activity which might displease Him.

3) Mahāviśvāsa: Rakṣiṣyati iti viśvāsaḥ - Unassailable faith that He will protect one.

4) *Gopṛtva Varāṇam*: Choosing Him to be one's protector. Even though He is always ready and eager to protect a *jīva*, to redeem a soul, the first move, the choice of the *Śaraṇya*, the Refuge, and the prayer that He should be the Redeemer has to come from the supplicant;

5) *Ātmanikṣepa* and *Kārpaṇya*: The supplicant declares that he has no other means of protection, and no other protector.

With these five *aṅgas Śaraṇāgati* or *Prapatti* becomes complete. The third *aṅga*, *mahāviśvāsa* however, is very difficult to achieve, considering the apparent simplicity of the act of surrender and the magnitude of the result promised. Strictly speaking, the Lord is the *Upāya* (since the decision to grant *Mokṣa* is His) and not the actual act of supplication. It can only lead to His grace. The *Rahasya Traya*,<sup>41</sup> the group of mantras comprising the secret *Upadeśa* of *Śrī Vaiṣṇavites*, declares this meaning. The *aṣṭākṣara mantra*<sup>1</sup> declares that the *Jīva* is not his own nor any other's possession, but belongs exclusively to the "Akārātha", *Viṣṇu*, completely, and for all time.

The *Dvaya Mantra* speaks of the actual implementation of *prapatti* in the first half, and prayer for eternal *kaiṅkarya* to the Divine couple in the latter half. The *Caramaśloka*s are three, declared by the Lord Himself in the *Varāha*, *Rāma*, and *Kṛṣṇa Avatāras*. They are the promise, the charter given to mankind by the Lord Himself in these *avatāras*. Of these, the *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Carama Śloka* is the most widely known.<sup>42</sup>

The concept of *Śaraṇāgati* is found in the *Upaniṣads*, and has been developed in the *āgamas*. The *Śvetāśvatara Up*(6.18)

says: "yo brahmāṇaṁ vidadhāti pūrvaṁ, yo vai vedamśca  
 grahiṇoti tasmai, taṁ ha devaṁ ātmabuddhiprakāśam,  
 mumukṣurvai śaraṇamaharṁ prapadye". The Śrī Sūkta of the  
 Rgvedakhila stresses the importance of prapatti to Śrī: "Tām  
 padmanemīm śaraṇamaharṁ prapadye". The Lakṣmī Tantra and  
 Ahirbudhnya Samhitā among others, deal with the subject of  
 Prapatti or Śaraṇāgati.

Prapatti may be considered a means independent of Karma,  
 jñāna and Bhakti yōgas, and may be practised as such, by a  
 person who is, for whatever reason, incapable or ineligible for  
 the other three.

Both Ācāryas Śrī Yāmuna and Śrī Rāmānuja, have in their  
 writings laid great emphasis on Bhakti as the means of libera-  
 tion. This they have done, because they were addressing a wide  
 erudite audience of different, often opposing, schools of thought,  
 and had to convince them. Such an audience would not or might  
 not have understood the concept of prapatti or believed in it.  
 The Lord Himself has said, in the Bhagavad Gitā, immediately  
 after saying, "māmekam śaraṇam vraja", "this secret teaching  
 should never be imparted to one without devotion to Me, nor to  
 him who is unwilling to hear, nor again to him who has asūyā  
 towards Me." (Bh.G. XVIII, 67).

But in their own personal conviction they realised that prapatti  
 is the only viable alternative and preached it to a few select  
 disciples and called it Rahasya. They also practised prapatti in  
 their personal lives, as is evident from some of their works.<sup>43</sup> In  
 their other works, they hinted at prapatti as a means, either by

itself, or as aṅga of Bhakti, but the emphasis is on Bhakti. The Rahasyas are so called because they were closely guarded secrets and passed on from preceptor to student on a "one to one" basis (ōrāṅvalī). It was Śrī Rāmañja's great compassion for mankind that changed it by declaring these secret truths in public and ordering his disciples to make them available to those who were interested.<sup>44</sup>

Both bhakti and prapatti are mental attitudes. In the former, the bhakta is making his best efforts to win the grace of God and is conscious of it. It is done as a means to attain Him, with the belief that liberation is possible through these efforts. In prapatti, the prapanna does what is required with a sense of complete dependence on His grace, for the attainment of the objective.<sup>45</sup> The Lord says "Tameva śaraṇam gaccha sarvabhāvena bhārata| tat prasādāt parām śāntim sthānam prāpsyasi śāśvatam"(Bh.G 18.62) Śrī Rāmañja comments, " Tameva ..... tvatsārathye avasthitam ..... mām ..... śaraṇam gaccha. Tatprasādāt parām śāntim śāśvatam ca sthānam prāpsyasi". This śāśvatam sthānam is further identified as "Tadviṣṇoḥ paramam padam sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ"

Bhakti is full of pitfalls, and one cannot be sure of His grace. Prapatti on the other hand, is "Nirbhaya Rājamārga" because one depends wholly on His grace, and with the Mother's presence and intercession, the result is assured.

The ācāryas advocate a further limit to this Bhagavad Bhakti, which is Ācāryabhakti, as in the example of Madhurakavi Alvār and Vaḍuga Nambi. Pleasing His devotees will please Him more than pleasing Him . This is the parā kāṣṭhā of Bhakti.

## PURUṢĀRTHA

Puruṣārtha is the objective the jīva seeks. It could be any one of the four: dharma, artha, kāma or mokṣa. The last named will be dealt with briefly here.

**Mokṣa** or Mukti, means, “release”. For the bound finite soul (baddha jīva ) it means release from the cycle of births and deaths, known as Saṁsāra. During the process of realising the true nature of his own self through jñāna yoga, an individual arrives at a stage where he becomes aware that he, the ātmā is different from the body which is subject to all the ills and miseries of this life; and that he is blissful by nature. (“Svatassukhī”). Overwhelmed by this knowledge of himself as blissful, he prays to be released from this body and from further births and deaths. Sometimes, immersed in the bliss of enjoying his own self, (Svātmānubhava), he may not proceed further to the realisation that he is also dāsa or śeṣa to the Lord in his intrinsic nature. He thus falls into the pit of Kaivalya which is also bliss, but a lower order of emancipation, being mere ātmānubhava without Bhagavadanubhava or kaiṅkarya. Whether a soul can redeem himself from this state, or whether it is an irrevocably permanent state; and where this kaivalya is located, in Paramapada or outside in Līlāvibhūti, are points of controversy still debated, even to day. The Teṅgalais hold that it is located in Paramapada from where there is no return, and hence there is no chance for the Kevalin to progress to Bhagavadanubhava. The Vaḍagalais maintain that it is located outside the sphere of Paramapada; so there is no question of apunarāvṛtti (non-return). Hence there is a chance for a change in this situation, in time.



This inherent danger being passed by praying for Mokṣa accompanied by eternal service to the Divine Couple, the ultimate goal of the aspirant is for joining the Lord in Paramapada in all His Splendour, with Lakṣmī and His other consorts, and attended by nityas and muktas, bhaktas and bhāgavatas.<sup>46</sup> There he attains Sālokya, Sāmīpya, Sārūpya, and Sāyujya. The last is the highest degree of enjoyment, as he experiences equal enjoyment in most things, with the Lord with the exception of Jagadvyāpāra, Lakṣmīpatitva, and other exclusive characteristics of His Sovereignty. He prays for, and attains, eternal service to the Divine Couple, Śrīmannārāyaṇa, at all times in all states, unceasingly, in whatever way the Couple pleases to use him. He derives pleasure from Their pleasure in his service.<sup>47</sup>

The self does not lose his identity, the awareness of ahaṁ, (I), even in the released state. This bliss is eternal and there is no return to birth or death due to karma - "na ca punarāvartate". The Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā states "Prāpyate paramaṁ dhāma yataḥ na āvartate punaḥ"- This is one of the sources for Śrī Rāmānuja in his writings. The last of the Brahma sūtras declares - "Anāvṛtīḥ Śabdāt" (4.4.22).

This is the Parama puruṣārtha according to Śrī Rāmānuja's Siddhanta-the ultimate aspiration of all human endeavour.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHILOSOPHY THE EARLIER ĀCĀRYAS:

Śrīvaiṣṇavism, as mentioned earlier, is as ancient as the Vedas themselves. Its teachings are found scattered in the Vedas,

Āgamas, Smṛtis, Itihāsas and Purāṇas, and the songs of the Āḷvārs. These have been gathered and systematised by the earlier Ācāryas, based on the interpretations of their predecessors, Bodhāyana, Tāṅka, Dramaḍa, Guhadeva and others.

The first of the Śrīvaiṣṇavite ācāryas was Śrī Nāthamuni, also known as Śrīraṅganāthamuni. He was born in Kāṭṭumannārguḍi or Vīranārāyaṇapuram in South Arcot, (AD.824-916). He was a descendant of the Bhāgavata immigrants from the Gangetic valley, to the south. He was a yogin and ardent devotee of Viṣṇu.

Tradition has it that he retrieved the forgotten “Tiruvāymoḷi” and the other hymns of Nammāḷvār and the other Āḷvārs also, by the grace of Śrī Nammāḷvār himself, and was endowed with their insights and hidden meanings. He arranged these pāśurams sung in Tamil, in to four parts of roughly a thousand songs each, set them to music, and introduced the practice of their recital on a regular basis in all Vaiṣṇavite temples in the South. This practice obtains even today. He also held discourses on the Vedāntic literature and the “Nālāyira Divya Prabandha ” as the Āḷvār's hymns were called.

He was the pioneer in systematising the tenets of Viśiṣṭādvaita found in the various scriptures, and he set them down in a treatise. This was the “Nyāya Tattva” which is lost today except for a few passages quoted by other Ācāryas following him.

It is said that he had the direct knowledge of a secret yoga, which was an easy way of reaching the Supreme Being. This could, very likely, have been the subject of his only other known work, “Yoga Rahasya” which is also lost.<sup>48</sup> It is thought that this treatise might have been about prapatti.

The Prapannāmṛta says that Śrī Nāthamuni practised the Aṣṭāṅga yōga, and also transmitted it to his disciple, Kurukaikkāvalappan. It is further said that Śrī Yāmuna was asked to meet Kurukaikkāvalappan at a certain place at an appointed time, to receive instruction in the secret yoga. Śrī Yāmuna was unable to keep this appointment and so the knowledge of this yoga was lost.

It appears that Śrī Nāthamuni, in spite of his great yogic powers and practice of the aṣṭāṅga yoga, considered Prapatti as the superior means of attaining the Lord's grace and practised the same in his personal life. Dr.M.Narasimhāchāry in his "Contribution of Yāmuna-ācārya to Viśiṣṭādvaita" mentions a paper ms. entitled "Nāthamuni-prapannatva samarthana" by one Deśikasudhī, on this subject.<sup>49</sup>

"Nāthamuni was a great scholar, philosopher, musician and yōgin, all in one"<sup>50</sup>. He spent his life in service to the Lord, meditation and disseminating the knowledge of the "Nālayira Divya Prabandham" as the songs of the Āḷvārs came to be called.

He had a daughter, and a son named Īṣvaramuni. He died in A.D.916, in his nineties. He foresaw that his grandson, to be born to Īṣvaramuni, would be a great religious leader. He directed that he be named Yāmunaśiṣya and left instructions to his disciples to pass on his teachings to his grandson, and to see that he became a leader of the faith.

Nāthamuni was succeeded by Puṇḍarīkākṣa, otherwise known as Uyyakkoṇḍān and he by Śrīrāmamiśra or Maṇakkāl Nambī. There are no known works of these two ācāryas.

Pundarikākṣa died before he could carry out his mission of educating Yāmuna in his grandfather's tradition and so the responsibility for accomplishing this fell on Śrīrāmamiśra.<sup>51</sup>

## ŚRĪ YĀMUNĀCĀRYA

The next bright star in the firmament, in this galaxy of our pūrvācāryas, was Śrī Yāmuna, son of Īśvaramuni and grandson of Nāthamuni. Born in Kāṭṭumannārguḍi about AD 918, (tradition accords him the dates AD 918-1038) he was a prodigy even as a young boy, showing remarkable learning and debating skills. He defeated a renowned court pandit of the Chola King. Greatly impressed by the young boy's brilliance, the queen called him "Ālavandār ", and the king gave him rulership of part of his kingdom.

Maṅakkāl Nambi was watching him and biding his time to carry out his ācārya's orders. He gradually weaned him from courtly pleasures and duties, to his ancestral heritage, Lord Raṅganātha, at Śrīraṅgam. He taught him the Bhagavad Gītā, before taking him there.

With Maṅakkāl Nambi's continued teaching, he renounced his former life and took to a religious way of life. He became head of the Math, and by command of the Lord, looked after the administration of temple affairs.

Some say his disciples numbered eight, some eleven. The Periya Tirumuḍi Aḍaivu gives a list of twenty two. To these he imparted religious instruction and teaching, explaining the Vēdāntas, Śāstras, Rahasyas, the Divya prabandham and other Saṁpradaya literature. He wrote brilliant treatises on the

Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy and defeated opponents from other schools in debate and established this philosophy on a firm footing.

His works number seven, counting the “Siddhitraya” as one. Of these only five are extant. The “Siddhitraya”, the “Āgamaprāmāṇya”, the “Gitārtha Saṅgraha” and the two stotras, the “Stotra Ratna” and “Catuśśloki”. Two other works, “Puruṣaṇiṃaya” and the “Kāśmīrāgamaprāmāṇya” which seem to have been lost, are referred to by Śrī Yāmuna himself in his Āgamaprāmāṇya.

The “Siddhitraya” consists of the Ātmā, Īśvara and Samvit Siddhis,<sup>52</sup> which form the source book for Śrī Rāmānuja's Śrī Bhāṣya, along with the Vṛitti of Bōdhāyana.

The “Āgamaprāmāṇya” establishes the authority and validity of the “Pāñcarātra Āgamas”, which were not understood properly and were therefore criticised as anti-vedic, and not acceptable as authority, by Śāṅkara and others.

“Puruṣaṇiṃaya” or “Mahāpuruṣaṇiṃaya” is believed to have established the Paratattva as Viṣṇu, with relevant support from the Vedas. “On the authority of Śrī Vedānta Deśika, we know that the portion of the “Vedārtha Saṅgraha” of Śrī Rāmānuja, dealing with the supremacy of Viṣṇu over other deities, is based on the “Puruṣaṇiṃaya” of Yāmuna, which, however is not available”<sup>53</sup>.

The “Stōtra Ratna” and The “Catuśśloki” are the first stotras sung by this Ācārya and condense all the essential Upaniṣadic truths between them. They form the basis for all later literature and stōtras.

Śrī Yāmuna and Śrī Rāmānuja never met, but Yāmuna is said to have seen the young Rāmānuja in a group of students of Yādavaprakāśa. He instructed his disciples to make sure he occupied the position of head of the Math and appointed five of his disciples to teach Rāmānuja the various texts and Rahasyārthas, as he himself would have done. During his last days he sent for Rāmānuja, but passed away before he could arrive. Rāmānuja turned away inconsolable, back to Kāncīpuram.

He lived a long and glorious span of a hundred and twenty years (AD 918-1038) leaving four sons, and a host of disciples and followers.

He was Rāmānuja's paramācārya, and his great influence on Rāmānuja's thinking is evident in the latter's works.

## ŚRĪ RĀMĀNUJA

The most illustrious of this great line of Ācāryas was Śrī Rāmānuja, also known as Yatirāja, Uḍaiyavar, Emberumānār, and Ilayālvār. Born in Śrīperumbūdūr in A.D.1017, he was the son of Śrī Āsūri Keśava Somāyāji and his wife Kāntimatī, who was the sister of Tirumalai Nambi (Śrī Śailapūrṇa).

His early Vedāntic education was under Yādavaprakāśa, an Advaitin. During the course of this study, there was more than one instance where Rāmānuja could not agree with his teacher's interpretation of certain vedic passages and dared to express a differing opinion.

He was taught by five of Āḷavandār's best disciples, each a specialist in his subject. According to hagiological works:

1. Peria Nambi or Mahāpūrṇa, taught him the meanings of the Brahma Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa (or Vyāsa), and also the first three thousand verses of the "Nālāyira Divya Prabandham" of the Ālvārs.

2. Tirakkoniyūr Nambi or Goṣṭhīpūrṇa was assigned by Yāmuna to teach him the meanings of the "Tirumantra" and "Carama Ślokas".

3. Tirumālai Āṇḍān taught him the meanings of the "Tiruvāymoli" as he had heard them from Āḷavandār. "Āḷavandār arulicceyyārēga Tirumālaiyāṇḍān arulicceyyuṁ paḍi" is a statement frequently found in Īḍu and other commentaries of the "Tiruvāymoli".

4. Peria Tirumalai Nambi, who was Rāmānuja's maternal uncle, taught him the hidden meanings of "Śrī Vālmīki Ramāyaṇa".

5. Tiruvataigapperumāl Araiyaṛ, the eldest son of Yāmuna and also a disciple of Maṇakkāl Nambi taught him the Arulicceyal "Santai" (learning by heart), Caramopāya and some "nalvittaṅga".

The last named, eventually pleased Lord Varadarāja with his songs (Araiyaṛ Sevai) and begged to take Rāmānuja with him to Śrīraṅgam, when offered a boon.

Rāmānuja thus went to Śrīraṅgam and succeeded Yāmuna as the head of the Religious Order, and also took over the administration of temple affairs.

He had great adoration and respect for Yāmuna and his one great regret was that he could not meet him in his life-time. He

as initially attracted to him by hearing a verse of his Stotra  
mna.(v.11).

He authored nine works, for most of which Yāmuna's works  
are the inspiration and source books. These are:

1) His *magnum opus*, the "Śrī Bhāṣya" on the Brahma Sūtras  
of Bādarāyaṇa. While he was in Kāśmīr during his pilgrimage,  
he was able to lay his hands on the Bodhāyana Vṛtti for a short  
while. With the help of his devoted disciple and trusted friend,  
Āṅgīrattālvān, they both studied it. And after returning to  
Śrīraṅgam, he wrote the Śrī Bhāṣyam based on the traditional  
interpretations found therein<sup>54</sup>. Āṅgīrattālvān, with his phenomenal  
memory, was an eka-sandhāgrāhī, and could recall the text of  
the Vṛtti, in its entirety. He helped Rāmānuja in this task by  
being his scribe, and also by reminding him of any points he  
might miss, in his elucidation of the sūtras.

His other works are 2) Vedānta Dīpa 3) Vedānta Sāra  
) Vedārtha Saṅgraha. Yāmuna's "Siddhi-traya" was the  
source book for these.

5) A commentary on the Bhagavad Gītā known as the Gītā  
bhāṣya, which was also based on a work of Yāmuna's, the  
Gītārtha Saṅgraha". Having shown the truths found in the  
Vedas and Upaniṣads by these polemic works, Rāmānuja did  
surrender himself to the Divine Couple one Paṅguni Uttarāṁ day  
(the asterism Uttarāṁ in the month of Phālguna) at Śrīraṅgam,  
and showed the path for a mumukṣu to take, in practice and  
recept, by writing the Gadyatraya. This consists of 6) Śrīraṅga  
Gadya 7) Śaraṅgati Gadya and 8) the Śrī Vaikuṅṭha Gadya. He



also laid down the daily rituals and code of conduct for a prapanna to follow, in his 9) Nitya grantha<sup>55</sup>.

He was away in Melkote for about twenty years<sup>56</sup> because of the persecution by the Coḷa King, Kulottuṅga Coḷa I. While there, he converted many Jains, along with their ruler Biṭṭi Deva. With his help, he built a temple to Lord Tirunārāyaṇa, established a Math there, which is even today known as the Yadugiri Yatirāja Math. He continued with his discourses on the Ubhaya Vedānta, anxiously awaiting news from Śrīraṅgam.

He returned to Śrīraṅgam after the Coḷa King died, delighted at being reunited with Āḷvān and his other disciples. He took up the duties of administration of the temple and Math again and continued with his discourses and writing.

When he felt his end was near, he named seventy-four Simhāsanādhīpatis from among his disciples, and entrusted them with the task of propagating Viśiṣṭādvaitic Śrī Vaiṣṇavism, which by now was known as "Emberumānār Darśanam". He gave the responsibility for dissemination of Vedantic knowledge, the Sanskrit literature, the Śrī Bhāṣya and other Sanskrit works to some. To others he gave the responsibility of nourishing and disseminating the knowledge of the "Arulicceyal" as the songs of the Āḷvārs are known. He himself was deeply inspired and influenced by this body of literature. Thus, he made sure that the Ubhaya Vedānta tradition was in safe hands.

It is interesting to note that he gave Piḷḷān, who was his abhimānaputra or jñānaputra, the charge of both streams - the Sanskrit and the Tamil Vedas. Piḷḷān was also directed to write

a commentary on the Tiruvāymoḷi. The commentary he wrote is called the "Ārāyirappaḍi" as it contained six thousand granthas. This commentary was followed by four more, the 9,000, the 12,000, the 24,000 and the famous Īḍu, or 36,000, by other authors.

Rāmānuja, when he knew his time had come, entrusted the care of Eṅgaḷāḷvān or Viṣṇucitta, to Piḷḷān, to nurture this promising young contemporary and disciple of his. Incidentally, the present Thesis represents a study of the Viṣṇucittīya of Eṅgaḷāḷvān which is a commentary on the Viṣṇupurāṇa.

Rāmānuja died in A.D.1137 in his hundred and twentieth year, at Śrīrangam, after a full, eventful and illustrious life. He left behind multitudes of disciples and admirers to mourn his loss.

## SUCCESSORS OF RĀMĀNUJA

Rāmānuja nominated Āḷvān's son, Parāśara Bhaṭṭa, as his successor. Bhaṭṭa was a brilliant scholar and debator and won over opponents to the darśana. Most notable of these opponents was an advaitin known as Vedāntin. He later became Bhaṭṭa's ardent disciple and successor, and was known as Nañjīyar. He wrote the "Onbadināyirappaḍi" (the 9000), commentary on the Tiruvāymoḷi.

Nañjīyar was followed by Nambiḷḷai, equal to, if not more brilliant than Nañjīyar, especially in his exposition of the Tiruvāymoḷi. The hall of Śrīrangam, used to be crowded to capacity during his discourses. His disciples, Perivaccānpiḷḷai and Vaḍakkutiruvīdippiḷḷai wrote the Irubattunāyirappaḍi

(24000) and the **Muppattu Ārāyirappaḍi** (36,000) respectively, both commentaries on the **Tiruvāymoḷi**. The 24,000 was written on the express directive of **Nambiḷḷai**, but **Vaḍakkutiruvīdippiḷḷai** wrote down each night, word for word, what he had heard in the discourse during the evening. When this work was **submitted to Nambiḷḷai for his approval**, though he was greatly pleased, he froze it because the author did not have his permission first. Eventually when it saw the light of day, it was found to be so superior to the others, it came to be known as the **Īḍu**, meaning it was equivalent to the **Tiruvāymoḷi** itself.

The **Pannīrāyirappaḍi** (12,000) was authored by **Vādikesari Aḷagiyamaṇavāḷa jīyar**. **Piḷḷai Lokācārya**, who succeeded **Vaḍakkutiruvīdippiḷḷai** was his son, named after his **Ācārya Nampiḷḷai**. **Nampiḷḷai was known as Lokācārya**, and the prefix, **Piḷḷai**, was added to differentiate him from the senior **Lokācārya**. He lived in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. **Vedānta Deśika was a younger contemporary of Piḷḷai Lokācārya**.

Somewhere around this time, certain differences arose, in opinions and conduct, of the **Śrīvaiṣṇavas**, which gradually widened into a schism called the **Teṅgalai** and **Vaḍagalai** sects, brought about by the followers of each. But in the face of real danger to the **darśana**, in the form of the Muslim invasion under **Malik Kafur**, both parties rose to the occasion heroically. **Piḷḷailokācārya**, who was quite old then, escaped with a few followers, carrying **Namperumāl**, the **Utsavamūrti** at **Śrīraṅgari**

to safety, with them. He got out of range of the invaders, but ended in Jyotiṣkuḍi, while still seeking sanctuary.

Deśika, in his turn, clasped the manuscript of Sudarśana Śāri's Śrutaprakāśikā and fled to safety with the two infant sons of the latter. Piḷḷailokācārya was the first teacher to write down the Rahasyārthas for posterity. He wrote in a lucid, simple style easy to understand, a collection of treatises known as the Aṣṭādaśarahasyas in Maṇipravāḷa a mix of Tamil and Sanskrit. This, following Rāmānuja's compassion in allowing the Rahasyārthas to be taught to whoever was interested, was instrumental in creating a growing "prapannakula", in the place of a closed group of Ācārya - Śiṣya paraṁparā, which ordinary mortals had no way of entering.

Rāmānuja himself had to approach his ācārya Tirukkottiyūr Nambi, eighteen times, before he would teach him the secret truths. Tirukkottiyūr Nambi was the last of the "anuvṛttiprasannācāryas" and Rāmānuja, the first of the "Kṛpāmātraprasannācāryas".

Piḷḷailokācārya's brother Aḷagiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷ Nāyanār wrote the Ācāryahṛdayam in support of his brother's Śrīvācana bhūṣaṇam, as this latter work caused some scepticism and criticism. Maṇavāḷamāmunigaḷ commented upon three of the eighteen rahasyas of Piḷḷailokācārya viz., the Tattvatraya Sāra, the Mumukṣuppaḍi and the Śrīvācana bhūṣaṇam. He has also commented upon the Ācāryahṛdayam.

After Piḷḷailokācārya came Tiruvāimoḷipiḷḷai whose original name was Śrī Śaileśa. He also excelled in the exposition of the

Bhagavadviṣayam and thus earned the appellation. He had the distinction of being ācārya to the great Maṇavālamūnigaḷ, who succeeded him to the Pontificate. He is believed to have been another incarnation of Rāmānuja, who was himself considered by his followers as an incarnation of Ādiśeṣa.

Varavaramuni's (another name for Maṇavālamūnigaḷ) discourses on the Bhagavadviṣayam were so spell-binding, that Lord Namperumāl Himself ordered him to conduct these in His presence. For one full year, tradition has it that all utsavas (festivals) in the temple were kept in abeyance, till these discourses were finished. At the end of it, at the Śāttumurai, the Lord Himself appeared as a young brahmin boy and recited a *taniyan* to him, which is repeated in all Teṅgalai homes and temples even today:

"Śrī śaileśa dayā pātraṁ dhībhaktyādi guṇārṇavarāṁ,  
Yatindra pravaṇarṇ vande rarhyajāmātaraṁ munirṁ"

He also wrote commentaries on :-

1. That portion (the first four hundred pāṣurams) of "<sup>īśvara</sup>Perumāl Tirumoli", for which Peria<sup>īśvara</sup>vaccānpillai's commentary was lost; *Mumukṣu upadīś Srinivāsa Bhāṣana*
  2. A Pramāṇa tirattu for "Īḍu". *Tattya trayam + Acarya*  
*hrdayam*
  3. The Upadeśa Ratnamālai.
  4. Ārtiprabandham.
  5. Yatirāja Vimśati (in Sanskrit) and
  6. Tiruvāymoḷi Nūṅṅantādi .
- his own works.* →

He designated the Aṣṭadiggajas, eight of his best disciples, to protect and spread the faith. He is considered the greatest Teṅgalai Ācārya, since Rāmānuja's time.

Piḷḷān was entrusted with the task of preserving and propogating the knowledge of both the Sanskrit texts and the Tamil literature-the "Ubhaya Vedānta". His disciple was Viṣṇucitta or Eṅgaḷālvān, our author, who was a young contemporary of Rāmānuja. He is believed by some to have completed the task of transcribing the Śrī Bhāṣya which was left unfinished because of Rāmānuja's departure to Melkote and Ālvān's losing his eyes. Rāmānuja, when his end was near, handed him over to Piḷḷān's care.

Eṅgaḷālvān or Viṣṇucitta is the author of the commentary on the "Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa" of Sage Parāśara. This commentary known as the "Viṣṇucittiyam " is the subject of the present study.

His disciple was Naḍādur Ammāḷ or Vātsya Varada, whose disciple was Appuḷḷār, an uncle of Vedānta Deśika. Naḍādur Ammāḷ was greatly impressed by the boy Venkaṭanātha (as Deśika was named ) and prophesied great scholarship and fame for him<sup>57</sup>. After Naḍādur Ammāḷ and Appuḷḷār, Venkaṭanātha became the religious leader.

Sudarśana Śūri, of the lineage of Harita, son of Vāgvijaya and pupil of Vātsya Varada, was the author of "Śrutaprakāśikā" the famous commentary on the Śrī Bhāṣya of Śrī Rāmānuja. This treatise incorporates, often word for word, what he heard from his teacher Vātsya Varada<sup>58</sup>. He also wrote the "Śruta

Pradīpikā", a less detailed commentary on the "Śrī Bhāṣya" and the "Tātparyadīpikā" on the "Vedārtha Saṅgraha" of Rāmānuja<sup>59</sup>.

Venkaṭanātha or Vedānta Deśika as he came to be known, roughly three centuries after Rāmānuja, was one of the greatest teachers of the tradition, a giant among giants. Born in Tūppul in AD 1268, to Ananta Śuri and Totarāmbā, he was a student of Appuḷḷar or Ātreya Rāmānuja, his maternal uncle, but he also seems to have studied under Vātsya Varada himself.

He was a gifted poet and a brilliant logician - kavitārkika kesarī - a lion among them. He was a prolific writer, gifted in many languages. He had the anugraha of Garuḍa and Hayagrīva. He spent a great part of his life writing religious and philosophic works, poetry, drama, stotras, each a classic of its kind<sup>60</sup>.

He taught the Ubhaya Vedānta and prapatti as the means of salvation. He wrote three metrical works on this subject, "Nyāsa Daśaka," "Nyāsa Virṅsati" and "Nyāsa Tilakam". He defeated opponents in debate and wrote prodigiously, polemic works and rahasyārthas. He lived a simple devout life, refusing invitations from the Royal Court, and was the greatest Ācārya of the Vaḍagalai sect. He was succeeded by his son Varadācārya.

Thus, the ācāryas established the Siddhānta of Viśiṣṭādvaitic Śrī Vaiṣṇaviṣm and nourished and nurtured the Ubhaya Vedānta.

The Āḷvārs were no theologians; they were immersed in God-love and poured out the ecstasy of their experience of communion with Him<sup>61</sup>, and the agony of separation from him in song

and verse. The Ācāryas were also immersed in God-love . They were greatly influenced by the songs of the Ālīvārs, but they harmoniously blended this divine ecstasy with theology. Thus they have given us the most joyous philosophic religion known today as "Śrī Vaiṣṇavism".

## THE PLACE OF PURĀNAS IN TRADITIONAL LITERATURE

The teachings of Viśiṣṭādvaita and Śrī Vaiṣṇavism are based on the truths found in the Śrutis, Smṛtis, Itihāsas and Purānas.

The Itihāsas and Purānas elaborate on and explain clearly in simple unambiguous language, the truths found in the śrutis. These Śrutis are short and cryptic statements which easily lend themselves to different interpretations. The Vedas are apprehensive that they may be misconstrued by dilettante scholars. That is why it is advised that Vedāntic studies should always be undertaken under an able teacher.

The Itihāsas viz., the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata are accepted as authority by our ācāryas on matters of Dharma. The Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa is a revealed text, inasmuch as Sage Nārada blessed Vālmiki with direct perception of the entire story of Rāma and Sītā, even to the extent of intuiting the thought processes of the characters. The episode of Vibhīṣaṇa Śaraṇāgati is an oft - quoted passage in the Rahasya literature.

The Mahābhārata was authored by Veda Vyāsa (son of Sage Parāśara) who was considered an amśa of the Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself. He is known as Veda Vyāsa in each Dvāparayuga, as he arranges the Vedas under four groups.<sup>62</sup> The present Veda



Vyāsa, says Parāśara, is my son, Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana, born of Jatukarnī<sup>63</sup>. So, the Mahābhārata is also accepted as pramāṇa by our Ācāryas.

Purāṇās are numerous but eighteen of them are considered important. Some of the purāṇas are ancient. This is evident since statements about Purāṇas are found in the Brāhmaṇas, which indicate that they existed earlier. They are referred to in the Mahābhārata, Upaniṣads and Smṛtis.

The Purāṇās are classified in the Matsya Purāṇa according to the guṇas that were predominant in Brahmā, the original author of the Purāṇas. They are thus Sāttvic, Rājasic, and Tāmasic.

The Sāttvika Purāṇas speak of Viṣṇu, the Rājasic of Brahmā and the Tāmasic of Rudra, Agni, Śakti and others, as Supreme.

The Sāttvika Purāṇas are accepted as authority by our Ācāryas. Some of the Sāttvikapurāṇas are the Śrī Viṣṇu, the Varāha, the Matsya, the Bhāgavata, and the Pādma.

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa in particular has been profusely quoted and cited, ever since our ācāryas started their literary activity, writing treatises. Every one of them has quoted from it, in their most important works. We do not unfortunately, have the works of Nāthamuni, but Yāmuna, Rāmānuja, commentators on the Tiruvāymoḷi and other Prabandhas, Śrī Deśika, Maṇavāḷa Māmunigaḷ and others have all quoted profusely from this Purāṇa. It is said in the Pādma Purāṇa:

‘वेदेषु पौरुषं सूक्तं धर्मशास्त्रेषु मानवम् ।

भारते भगवद्गीता पुराणेषु च वैष्णवम् ॥

"vedeṣu pauraṣaṁ sūktaṁ dharmāśāstreṣu mānavam|  
bhārate bhagavadgīta purāṇeṣu ca vaiṣṇavaṁ ||"

The Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa qualifies for the definition "Purāṇaṁ  
mūcalakṣaṇaṁ" more than any other purāṇa<sup>64</sup>

H.H. Wilson, in his English translation of Śrī Viṣṇupurāṇa  
says "There is not one to which it (this description ) belongs so  
entirely as to the Viṣṇupurāṇa, and it is one of the circumstances  
which gives this work a more authentic character than most of  
its fellows can pretend to".

The reasons for the authority of this purāṇa will be dealt with  
in more detail in a later chapter.

### Notes

1. Samvit Siddhi, p.40
2. Contribution of Yāmuna to Viśiṣṭādvaita, p.249
3. Ibid.
4. Samvit Siddhi, p.41
5. Contribution of Yāmuna to Viśiṣṭādvaita, p. 310; foot notes 1095 & 1096
6. Ātmasiddhi, p.3
7. Cf. nirvāṇāmaya evāyamātmā jñāmaya'malah|  
duḥkhājñānamayā dharmā prakṛteṣtu nātmānaḥ|| (V. P, VI.7.22).
8. "The consciousness of "I" in the absence of all contradictory factors.  
refers primarily to the Self. When it refers to the body, it is termed  
"avidyā" or ignorance. Śrī Yāmuna quotes V.P. VI .7.10 in support.  
Cf. "Contribution of Yāmuna to Viśiṣṭādvaita", p.155
9. Bhagavad Gītā, II.23
10. The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita, p.38
11. Chāndogya, 6.2.3
12. Mahopaniṣad, 1.1.
13. Chāndogyopaniṣad., 6.2.1.
14. Chand. Up. 6.2.3; also "so'kāmayata bahu syām prajāyeyeti"  
(Taitt.Ār.8)
15. Vide Ved. Saṅg. p.34. ("brahmaṇo jagadupādānanimittatva  
siddhiḥ")-" prathamam upādāna - kāraṇatvam pratipādyā nimitta

**kāṣṭhamāpi tadevoti pratipādayanti....."**

16. See Stotra Ratna, V.11

17. "viṣṇoḥ pade parame madhva utsaḥ" Yajur Veda 2.4.6

18. "vaikunṭhe tu pare loka śriyā sārddham jagatpatiḥ  
aste viṣṇuracintyātmā bhaktair bhāgavataissaha"

19. See Śr.Bh. dhyāna Śloka. "Śruti sirasi vidipte bhrahmaṇi Śrīnivāse"  
Also "yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha" Tait. Ār. 9.1.

20. See Mudal Tiruvantādi (Poigai Āḷvār), v.44

21. "Śarīraṅ nāma cetanaṅ prati sarvātmanā ādheya vidheya śeṣatva  
niyamaiḥ aprthaksiddhaḥ dravya viśeṣaḥ"

22. Tr. by M. Yāmunācāya.

23. Cf. Śr.Bh, II 1.3.8 and 9; Vol II pp.219-222.

24. Bhr.Up., V.7.22.

25. Contribution of Yāmuna, p.302

26. " Bhinnapravṛttinimittānāṅ śabdānāṅ ekasmin arthe vṛttis  
sāmānādhikaraṇyaṅ" (Patañjali quoted by Rāmānuja in Ved.Saṅg.  
and Śr. Bh. I.1.1.1).

27. See Bhāgavata. (VII. 1.30)

"Kāmāt gopyaḥ bhayātkaṅso dveṣāt caidyādayo nṛpāḥ|  
Saṁbandhāt vṛṣṇayaḥ snehāt yūyaṅ bhaktyā vayaṅ vibho||"

28. See V.P., 1.8.17

29. T.M., 6.10.10

30. a. "Catuṣśloki" of Yāmuna, śl. 3

b. "Śrīguṇaratna Kośam" of Parāśara Bhaṭṭa śl.58

c. "Śrīstava of Kūrēṣa", śl. 7; śl.10.

31. Śrīstuti of Vedānta Deśika - śl.15.

32. Cf. V.P. I 9.29, "niśśrikānām kutaḥ sattvaṅ?"

33. Maṅgala śloka of Śrī Parāśara Bhaṭṭa's "Lakṣmīkalyāṇa

nāṣakaṁ"(Text lost)

34. Cf. Yāmuna's Gītārtha Saṅgraha, V.29 "Jñānī tu parmaikāntī....."
35. "ārogyaṁ bhāskarādicchet dhanamicchet hutāśanāt!  
     Īśvarāt jñānam anvicchet mokṣamicchet janārdanāt!!", Mātsya  
     Purāṇa (28-14).
36. Cf. "paramātmani yo raktaḥ virakataḥ aparamātmani"
37. G.S. V.32 "ekāntātyanta dāsyaiḥkaratiḥ tatpadarṁ āpnuyāt"
38. "Viḍumin murravum" T.M. ( 1.2.1)
39. "abyāseṇa hi kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca grhyate" (Bh.G. 6-35)
40. Vide Rāmacarama śloka (V.R. Yuddha, 18-33)
41. The Tirumantra (Aṣṭākṣara), the Dvaya and Carama Śloka.
42. "sarvadharmān parityajya māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja!  
     ahaṁ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi ma śucaḥ|| (Bh.G., 18-66)
43. a. Yāmuna's "Stotra Ratna".  
     b. Śrī Rāmānuja's "Śaraṇāgatigadya"  
     c. Nammālvār's T.M. - 6.10.10.
44. Upadeśaratnamālai of Manavāja Māmunigaḷ - V.37
45. Nāyamātmā pravacanena labhyaḥ --- vivṛṇṇute tanūṁ (Kaṭa. 1.2.23)
46. Vide "Śrī Vaikuṇṭhagadya", Cūrṇikā 3-(7)
47. Contribution of Yāmuna to Viśiṣṭādvaita, p.306. (f) The characteristics of the state of Mukti.
48. Contribution of Yāmunācārya to Viśiṣṭādvaita P.6, para 3 ff. See however, the "Yogarahasya" published by Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram, Madras. 1998.
49. Contribution of Yāmuna to Viśiṣṭādvaita , p.5.
50. Ibid, p.4
51. Vide "Prapannāmṛta" Ch.10. p.426 ff. for the lives of these ācāryas.
52. Portions of these are also lost.

53. For details, see Contribution of Yāmuna - p.308.
54. See Śr. Bh. Vol I p.7  
 "pārāśarya vacassudhān -----pūrvācārya surakṣitān-----  
 nijākṣaraiḥ----- pibantu"  
 See also Śr.Pr. p.9.
55. For a fuller account of Yāmuna's influence on Rāmānuja, refer to  
 "Contribution of Yāmuna to Viśiṣṭādvaita" Ch.VI . p.307 ff.
56. H.I.P., Vol,III,p.113.
57. Pratiṣṭhāpita Vedāntaḥ pratikṣipta bahirmataḥ|  
 Bhūyaḥ traividyaṁnyaḥ tvaṁ Bhūrikalyāṇa bhājanarṇi||" ascribed  
 to Vātsya Varada.
58. Refer to "A History of Indian Philosophy". Vol III by S.N. Das  
 Gupta, P.130.
59. S.N.Das Gupta . mentions a commentary on Śr. Bh. prior to Śruta  
 Prakāśikā.  
 Ibid. p.114, para1;also Śr. Bh. Vārttikā, p.117.
60. For a complete list of his works, see "Vedānta Deśika" by  
 Satyavrata Singh. (Pub. Chowkāṛṇba Sanskrit Series).
61. Cf. G.S. of Yāmuna V.29  
 "Tatsamśleṣaviyogaika sukhaduḥkhaḥ tadekadhiḥ."
62. See V.P. III 3; vv 5 and 6.  
 "Dvāpare dvāpare Viṣṇurvyāsarūpī mahāmune|Hitāya  
 Sarvabhūtānāṁ vedabhedān karoti saḥ||".
63. Ibid III 3.19.
64. "Sargaśca pratisargaśca vamsō manvantarāṇi ca;  
 Vamsānucaritaṁ caiva purāṇaṁ pañcalakṣaṇaṁ"  
 According to Wilson, this definition is found in the Viṣṇu, Matsya,  
 Vāyu and other Purāṇas.

## THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ENGAĻĀLVĀN

Śrī Viṣṇucitta (A.D.1106-1206) is the author of a commentary on the "Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa" of Sage Parāśara, which is the subject of the present study. This commentary is known after him as "Viṣṇucittīya". He was born in Tiruveḷḷarai or Śvetagiri, near Śrīraṅgaṁ, in a family of "Pūrvaśikhā" or "Puraścūḍā" Śrīvaiṣṇavaite brahmins. This was in the month of Cittirai, under the asterism Rohiṇī, in the year A.D.1106.

Among the Āḷvārs, Periaḷvār, Toṇḍaraḍippodi Āḷvār and Madurakavi Āḷvār are known to belong to the "pūrvaśikhā" Śrīvaiṣṇava community. Among the Ācāryas, Uyyakkoṇḍār (Śrī Puṇḍarikākṣa), Tirukkottiyūr Nāmbi, Periaḷvāccānpillai and Tiruvāymoliḷipillai or Śrīśaileśa are known to belong to this group. The Pūrvaśikhā brāhmins are believed to have come to the South from the plains between the Ganges and the Yamunā and settled in Tiruveḷḷarai to do service to the Lord Puṇḍarikākṣa, who has His Temple there. Uyyakkoṇḍār was the disciple of Śrī Nāthamuni, who lived in Kāṭṭumannārguḍi.

Śrīviṣṇucitta was a younger contemporary of Śrī Rāmānuja, who came under his influence, according to tradition, in the later part of Śrī Rāmānuja's life, after his return to Śrīraṅgaṁ from Melkote.<sup>1</sup>

The writing of the Śrī Bhāṣya, it is said, was abruptly held up because of the persecution of Śrī Rāmānuja and Kūrattāḷvān by the then Coḷa King. As stated earlier it is believed that Kūrattāḷvān acted as the scribe for writing down the Śrī Bhāṣya

of his master. Since Ālvān had lost his eye-sight in the Coḷa King's court, Viṣṇucitta was destined to take his place as scribe, after the return of Rāmānuja from exile. He proved a worthy disciple and accomplished this task to the utmost satisfaction of Rāmānuja, who remarked "Eṅgaḷālvāno!"<sup>2</sup> (Is it our Ālvān himself!). This, according to tradition, is the origin of his name, as "Eṅgaḷālvān".

Prof S.N. Das Gupta says that writing down two-thirds of the Śrī Bhāṣya was finished before the Coḷa persecution began. But he disagrees with the date of completion given in the "Rāmānujācārya Divya Caritai" by Śrī Piḷḷailokaṅkār Jiyar (which is 1077 Śāka or A.D.1155). He says this date cannot be right as Rāmānuja died in A.D.1137.<sup>3</sup>

When Kulottuṅga Coḷa I died in A.D.1117, Rāmānuja returned to Śrī raṅgaṅkār from Melkote, and sent for Ālvān, who was waiting for his return at Aḷagarmalai. Ālvān hastened forthwith to Śrīraṅgaṅkār and there was a joyous but tearful reunion, because of all that had befallen in the intervening period.

According to Prof. Das Gupta, it is very probable that the Śrī Bhāṣya was completed between A.D.1117 and A.D. 1125. He also mentions a Mādhva work called "Chalari sṛṅṭi", where it is said that by A.D.1127 the Śrī Bhāṣya was already a work of great reputation.

However, by this time, Eṅgaḷālvān would have been in his late teens or early twenties, and it is reasonable to believe that he acted as the scribe for the final third portion of the Śrī Bhāṣya, if it is correct that the work was not completed before.

Piḷḷān, into whose care Śrī Rāmānuja entrusted Eṅgaḷālvān when his end was near, was the son of Periya Tirumalai Nambi (Śrī Saileśa-Pūrṇa), the maternal uncle of Śrī Rāmānuja. He was given to Śrī Rāmānuja by his father<sup>4</sup> through Kiḍāmbiyāccān, and was regarded by Śrī Rāmānuja as his "abhimānaputra" as well as a favourite disciple.

The word "Piḷḷān" in Tamil means one who has knowledge. Śrī Rāmānuja named him Tirukkurugaippirān, after Nammālvār and so he was known as Tirukkurugaippirān Piḷḷān<sup>5</sup>.

He was taught the Ubhaya Vedānta by Śrī Rāmānuja himself, and was directed by him to write a commentary on the "Tiruvāymozhi". This was the first ever "Maṇipravāḷa" commentary on the "Tiruvāymozhi" and came to be known as the "Ārāyirappaḍi", because it contains six thousand granthas<sup>6</sup> (units of thirty-two letters). As stated earlier this was succeeded by other commentaries like the 9000, 12,000, 24,000, and the 36,000.

However, the "Ārāyirappaḍi" of Piḷḷān, though the most brief, is the closest to Śrī Rāmānuja in time, and approved personally by him. But for these commentaries, it would be difficult for us to understand the hidden meanings of the 'Thiruvāymozhi'.

Eṅgaḷālvān, then, tutored as he was, first directly by Rāmānuja and later by Piḷḷān<sup>7</sup> was pre-eminently qualified to undertake the writing of the commentary on the "Śrī Viṣṇupurāṇa". This commentary, the "Śrī Viṣṇucittiya" is held in high esteem by our ācāryas.

He was appointed one of the seventy-four "Simhāsanādhīpatis" by Śrī Rāmānuja and was probably made respon-



sible for the nurture and dissemination of both the Sanskrit and Tamil streams of the Ubhaya Vedānta thought, as his Ācārya Pillān was<sup>8</sup>.

As pointed out earlier, Engaḷāḷvān lived in Tiruveḷḷarai (near Śrīraṅgarū) which was also the place of his birth.

Naḍādūr Āḷvān or Varada Viṣṇu Miśra was one of the direct disciples of Śrī Rāmānuja, and was appointed one of the "Śirnhāsanādhipatis" in charge of teaching the Śrī Bhāṣya to worthy disciples. His grandson Vātsya Varada (son of Devarājācārya) later known as Naḍādūr Ammāl, was a brilliant and precocious youngster. He learnt the general Śāstras with his father and grandfather, but when he started on the Śrī Bhāṣya, his grandfather felt that because of his own advancing years, it would be difficult for him to teach this enquiring young mind. He asked Vātsya Varada to go to Engaḷāḷvān at Tiruveḷḷarai and request him to teach him the Śrī Bhāṣya<sup>9</sup>.

Ordered thus by his grandfather, Vātsya Varada journeyed from Kāñcī to Thiruveḷḷarai. Arriving one early morning, he knocked at the door of Engaḷāḷvān's residence. The latter asked from inside, "Who is that?" and Varada replied, "Nāntān" (It is I). Without opening the door, the Ācārya said, "Nān śettapiragu vā" meaning "Come when 'I' (the ego) is dead". It also means "when I am dead". Varada was puzzled and disappointed. He went back to Kāñcī and related what had happened, to his grandfather. Naḍādūr Āḷvān understood what the Ācārya had meant, that the feeling of egotism should be destroyed, and told his grandson, "You should have said 'Aḍiyen' (servant) and and

not 'nāntān'. Go back to him and say "aḍiyen" and pray to him to teach you the Śrī Bhāṣya<sup>10</sup>.

Eṅgaḷālvān-accepted him this time, with a few conditions. One of them was that he should get his parents' permission to do the 'carama kainkarya' (last rites) for him, as he had no son; either by himself as a śiṣya, or through his only daughter's son, if a son should be born to her.

Getting this permission from his parents, he came back and was taken in by the teacher. He lived a long time with him, doing "śuśrūṣā" to his ācārya and learning the meanings of the Śrī Bhāṣya from him with out any room for doubt, or any ambiguity. He became an authority on Śrī Bhāṣya.<sup>11</sup>

As Vātsya Varada is known as "Naḍādūr Ammāl", Eṅgaḷālvān is also known as "Ammāḷācāryar". Even today the image of Vātsya Varada can be seen at the feet of his Ācārya, in Eṅgaḷālvān's shrine at Tiruveḷḷarai.

Vātsya Varada, having imbibed the teachings of the Śrī Bhāṣya from his Ācārya, wrote the 'Tattvasāra' which is a brief metrical exposition of the Śrī Bhāṣya. Later, his disciple, Sudarśana Bhaṭṭārya or Sudarśana Sūri, wrote the elaborate Śrutaprakāśikā. This treatise on the Śrī Bhāṣya incorporates, almost word for word, what he had heard from his teacher, Vātsyavarada. This, till date, remains the most comprehensive and authentic commentary on the Śrī Bhāṣya<sup>12</sup>.

Thus, it may be seen that though not much is known about the personal history of Eṅgaḷālvān, he is undoubtedly one of the most respected ācāryas of this system.

Being a much younger contemporary of Śrī Rāmānuja, almost ninety years younger (date of birth A.D.1106), he lived around a hundred years and was alive in the time of Nañjīyar and Nampiḷlai. This is mentioned in Periyavāccān Piḷḷai's Vyākhyāna on the Mudal Tiruvantādi of Poigai Āḷvār, and in the Ārāyirappaḍi Guruparamparāprabhāvam of Pinbaḷagiya Perumāḷ Jiyar.

Piḷḷān and Nañjīyar being roughly of the same age (A.D.1061 and A.D.1054 respectively), there must have been a lot of interaction and exchange of ideas between them also.

An episode is related by Periyavāccān Piḷḷai in his commentary on the Mudal Tiruvantādi while explaining the Pāśuram, "Tamaruganda devvuruvam avvuruvam"<sup>13</sup>. This describes how Nañjīyar's icon of daily worship whom he had named, 'Āyartevu' (in private), appeared to Eṅgaḷāḷvān, and declaring Himself to be Nañjīyar's son 'Āyartevu', demanded 'jambū' fruit (rose-apple) and butter from him. When Eṅgaḷāḷvān reported this to Nañjīyar, the latter was wonder-struck, as he had not revealed the name 'Āyartevu' to any one<sup>14</sup>, and reflected that He had done this to reveal His Name to the world.

Nampiḷlai is recorded as saying that Eṅgaḷāḷvān is an expert in all the Śāstras. This is found in the Guruparamparā prabhāva (Ārāyirappaḍi).<sup>15</sup>

Tradition has it that Eṅgaḷāḷvān lived for some time in a place called, "Kollaṅkoṇḍān" near Śrīvilliputtūr and gave discourses on the Śrī Bhāṣya there. This must have been towards the last part of his life.

Probably around this time, a son was born to his only daughter "Śeṅgamala Nācciyār" at Āmūr. Naḍādur Ammaḷ named the boy Varadācārya, after himself, adopted him, and taught him all the scriptures. When the great Ācārya Eṅgaḷāḷvān's end came, he performed the last rites for him as promised, through the agency of the grandson.

Eṅgaḷāḷvān lived a glorious hundred years (A.D.1106-1206), leaving behind a great tradition of teaching in both Bhagavadviṣaya and the Śrī Bhāṣya.

The following verse of his most renowned disciple Vātsya Varada, which forms the first verse of his "Tattva-Sāra", is actually, a "taniyan" (dedicatory verse) to his ācārya, Śrī Viṣṇucitta.

"Śrī Viṣṇucitta pada paṅkaja saṅgamāya  
Ceto mama sphayate kimataḥ pareṇaḷ  
No cenmamāpi yatiśekhara bhāratīnārṇ  
Bhāvahaḥ katharṇ bhavitumarhati vāgvidheyahaḥ||"

**Roughly translated, this means:-**

"My mind, heart and soul yearn to be united with the Lotus feet of Śrī Viṣṇucitta (my preceptor). Of what avail is anything else? If such a union did not take place, how could such a person as I (of poor intellect), be able to understand and put into words the opinion and intention of the divine utterances of that best among yatis, Yatirāja (i.e., Rāmānuja).

#### **OTHER WORKS OF VIṢṆUCITTA**

Śrī Viṣṇucitta, apart from the commentary on Viṣṇupurāṇa, is said to have written the Prameya Saṅgraha, Saṅgati-mālā, Taittirīya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya and Gadyatraya

Bhāṣya. These are all lost, but for a few portions quoted and used in support of their interpretations by Vedānta Deśika, Piḷḷailokācārya, Maṇavāḷa Māmuniḡaḷ and others.

There are other traditional interpretations of the passages of the Divya Prabandha called "nirvāhaṅgaḷ" attributed to Eṅgaḷāḷvān, handed down through the generations, which are now gathered and available in print.<sup>16</sup>

The "Vārttāmālai" also contains certain statements made by Eṅgaḷāḷvān, on various occasions, including the well known "Sārārtha Catuṣṭayaṁ". Śrī Maṇavāḷa Māmuniḡaḷ quotes extensively from the Śrī Viṣṇupurāṇa, with the commentary of Śrī Viṣṇucitta in his "pramāṇatiraṭṭu for Bhagavadviṣayaṁ Īḍu(36000 paḍi)".

Kumāra Varada's "Cintāmaṇi Vyākhyāna" on Śrī Vedānta Deśika's "Adhikaraṇa Sārāvaḷi"<sup>17</sup> refers to Viṣṇucitta as having composed the Prameya Saṅgraha and as having his origin in the Śaṭhamarṣaṇa goṭra ("Śaṭhamarṣaṇa goṭraprabhavāḥ). Śrī Viṣṇucitta refers to himself, in his "Gadyavyākhyāna" as being born in the "vaṁśa of Yāmunamuni". This has given rise to the opinion, among some, probably followers of Kumāra Varada, that the Viṣṇucitta who wrote the "Prameya Saṅgraha" was different from the author of the Viṣṇucittiya.

Eṅgaḷāḷvān's reference to himself as belonging to the "vaṁśa of Yāmunamuni" could be a figure of speech, and mean the "jñāna vaṁśa" rather than the vaṁśa by birth, as Āḷvān, in his "Varadarājastava" refers to Śrī Nāthamuni as belonging to

**Nammālvār's varṇa and Nammālvār as belonging to Lakṣmī's varṇa.<sup>18</sup>**

Elders of the Sampradāya say that there has been no mention of any Viṣṇucitta other than Eṅgaļālvān in any work of any pūrvācārya. An additional proof is found in the 1985 edition of Śrī Bhāṣya published by the Academy of Sanskrit Research, Melkote. The commentary on v.25 of "Adhikaraṇa Sārāvāḷi" reads "Viṣṇucittaiḥ - Eṅgaļālvān iti prasiddhaiḥ Śrī Viṣṇucittāryaiḥ".

So it may be accepted without any hesitation that the Viṣṇucittārya who wrote the Prameya Saṅgraha is the same as the Viṣṇucittārya of Viṣṇucittiya, popularly known as Eṅgaļālvān.

Śrī Viṣṇucitta, from these accounts, emerges as a very learned and proficient scholar and teacher of the Ubhayavedānta tradition. And his only work that has come down to us is the commentary on the Viṣṇupurāṇa. The statements of Nampīlāi<sup>19</sup> and Nadādūr Ālvān<sup>20</sup> confirm the fact that Eṅgaļālvān was an expert in Śāstras and that his expressions are marked by clarity and poise.

**Extracts from other works of Eṅgaļālvān:**

**Prameya Saṅgraha:**

Given below is an account of the Prameya Saṅgraha of our author built up purely on the basis of the references made to it by Śrī Vedānta Deśika, in his works like the Nyāya Siddhānta jana (N.S) and Nyāya Pariśuddhi (N.P).

No:1; N.S.,(P.40). jaḍadravya

The following quotation made in the Nyāya Siddhāñjana in the jaḍadravya section points out that according to Viṣṇucitta, perception does not cognise bare existance (Sanmātra). According to Viṣṇucitta, since Kāla also forms an attribute of an existent entity, it also forms part of all perceptual operations and cognitions.

"Uktañca Prameyasañgraha Śrī Viṣṇucittāryaiḥ Sanmātra Pratyakṣa nirākaraṇa prasañgena 'Kālasya vastudharmatayā sarva- pratīyantarbhāvāt na pṛthagrūpatvañ' iti"

No: 2. N.S, (P. 52 ) - jaḍadravya.

This is more or less a continuation of the previous quotation about Time forming a part of all cognitions. The additional point, which this quotation supplies is that in Viṣṇucitta's Prameya Sañgraha, Ether (gagana), and the Directions also have colour, through the process of Trivṛt Karaṇa.

"gaganasya diśāñ ca trivṛtkaraṇena rūpavatvañ" ityādi.

No: 3 N. S, (p. 53) - jaḍadravya.

This quotation reflects the view of Viṣṇucitta that the eye, though it be of a new - born baby cannot grasp air (Vāyu), because it has no colour.

"Yattu Prameya Sañgraha 'adyajātasya cakṣurapi nahi arūpañ Vāyuñ gṛhñāti' iti".

No. 4. N. S. (p. 56) jaḍadravya.

According to this quotation, Viṣṇucitta opines that even the sense organ of touch (tvagindriya) has its capacity (to feel) confined only to objects that have the quality of touch.

"Prameya Saṅgrahasca 'tvagindriyasyāpi sparśavadvastu-  
viṣaye śaktiḥ' iti".

No. 5 N. S. (p.92) jaḍadravya.

This quotation is actually a fuller quotation of what was given  
under No : 2 above.

"ataḥ cakṣuṣāṃ sarvaṃ saviśeṣameva gr̥hyate" iti.

This means that whatever is cognised by ocular perception is  
only a qualified perception.

"Yattu Prameya Saṅgrāhe proktaṃ 'gaganasya disāṃ ca  
trivṛtkaraṇena rūpavatvaṃ, atascakṣuṣāṃ sarvaṃ saviśeṣameva  
gr̥hyate' iti".

No. 6. N.S (p.126), jīva pariccheda.

This quotation is in relation to the self-luminosity of the  
Ātman. According to Viṣṇucitta, this can be proved through  
an inferential statement, thus - "The Self is self-luminous, be-  
cause he is consciousness like Attributive consciousness".

"anumitistu ātmā svayaṃprakāśaḥ, jñānatvāt dharmabhūta  
jñānavat iti Śrī Viṣṇucittairuktaṃ".

Source unidentified - probably Prameya Saṅgrāha.

No.7 N.S. (p.340) Adravya Paricchedaṃ.

This quotation points out that according to Viṣṇucitta, kriyā  
(action) is given as the meaning of the word vega (speed). In  
other words, action is an outcome of speed or velocity. In the  
section where Viṣṇucitta refuted Inference as a means of prov-  
ing the Existence of God, we find the following argument;



"All activity is preceded by an effort, because it is an activity, like movement. This logic, according to Viṣṇucitta cannot be applied in the case of the Lord, because the above rule goes astray in the case of the speed of an arrow and the flow of water. If you ascribe this to their nature itself, then it goes contrary to your belief that they have a cause behind even those activities".

"Kriyā vegārthatvena Paṭhita. Tathāhi. Īsvarānumāna nirākareṇe 'sarvakriyā kṛtipūrvikā; kṛiyātvāt gamanavat iti cenna; Śaravegajala syandanādau vyabhicārāt teṣāṃ svabhāvavatvakalpane hetumattva kalpanā virodhāt' ityuktaṃ".  
Source unidentified.

No: 8.N.S (p.363).Adravya Pariccheda.

This quotation explains that while a thing is being perceived, it is perceived as a qualified entity. Colour, size, separateness, space, and the remoteness and proximity caused by Time are also simultaneously cognised along with the object. The difference between the perceiver and the object is not separately grasped during cognitive experiences. The only instance where this distinction can be cognised is the body-soul illusion. It is only here one can feel, that his ātmā is different from his body, senses, etc.

"Yattu Prameya Saṅgrāhe Śrī Viṣṇucittairuktaṃ - 'dūre kathamiticet; tatra kuśalameva - dyumaṇi gaganādītara - vyāvṛttameva hi rūpaṃ parimāṇapṛthaktvadeśa - kālakṛtaparatvāparatvādi ca indriyayogyāṃ sarvaṃ sahaiva jñāyate' iti".

"Tatraivamuktaṃ andhakāre sthāṇupīśāca - strīpumsādi samśayāstadavāntarā eva. Naktāṃ hi dyumaṇi dīpa mahī gagana svātmādi vyāvṛttirapi na jñāyata iti na śakyāṃ vaktuṃ. Na hi dehātmabhramam antereṇa kvacit draṣṭṛdṛśya saṅkaro'pyasti' iti".

No:9 Nyāya Pariśuddhi (p.67) pratyakṣa (2).

From this quotation it is clear that Rāmānuja has accepted **only** three pramāṇas (Valid means of Knowledge).

"Uktaṁ ca Prameya Saṅgrāhe 'pramāṇa saṅkhyā vivāde'pi' **ityatra** 'tripramāṇatvaṁ bhāṣyoktaṁ' iti"

No:10. N.P. p(69) pratyakṣa (2).

Here it is pointed out that pratyakṣa consists in direct experience. This directness (Sākṣātvam) is a generic attribute (jāti).

"Prameya saṅgrāhe tu evamuktaṁ Sākṣādanubhavaḥ **pratyakṣaṁ**; sākṣātvaṁ jātiḥ' ityādi".

No:11. N.P (p.234) Śabda pariccheda.

This quotation concerns the validity of the words of a person **who** may be an āpta(trustworthy person). According to Viṣṇucitta, the words of a person may carry some conviction **but** unless the knowledge of the speaker is understood through **reference**, those words cannot be totally trusted.

"'Sāmānya yogyatā grahaṇe api vyaktiyogyatāyāḥ vaktṛjñ **numānaṁ** antareṇa asiddheḥ' iti Prameya Sangrahādiṣu **samarthitaṁ**".

Saṅgatimālā:

No:12. N.S. (p.174) jīvapāriccheda.

This quotation explains as to how a person carrying on meditation so as to attain liberation ultimately ends up in Kaivalya. Viṣṇucitta explains this with an analogy drawn from the sacrificial parlance; one may start performing a sacrifice with a view to attain Heaven. But he may ultimately become a brahma-

rākṣasa if the sacrifice is not done according to the rules laid down in the scripture.

"Uktaṁ ca saṅgatimālāyāṁ Śrī Viṣṇucittaiḥ 'Nanu brahma prāptīcchayopakrāntasyopāsanasya katham kevala (Kaivalya) - prāpakatvaṁ? ucyate; yathā svargakāmasyaiva yāge prakrāntasya yathāavadananuṣṭhāne brahmarākṣasatvādi bhavati' iti".

No:13. N.S. (p.175) jīvapariceheda.

The passage quoted is a metrical one. According to Viṣṇucitta, what happens in deep sleep is the experiencing of one's own self, which is full of bliss. That one enjoyed sleep is understood through the recognition of the type "Sukhamahaṁ asvāpsaṁ". (I slept well). That deep sleep is a source of happiness can also be understood in a practical way, when a person, sleeping well, is aroused, then he will get angry. For the sake of such sleep he would also forego other things. This nature of deep sleep is also referred to by many Śruti and Smṛti passages.

"Śrī Viṣṇucittaisca uktaṁ 'Svāpe sukhatvābhijñānāt tadvicchede ca roṣataḥ. Tadarthaṁ anyatyāgācca śrutismṛti śatairapi' iti".

No.14. N.S. (p.275) - buddhipariccheda.

This passage purports to establish that sukha, duḥkha, etc., are different aspects of knowledge. Śrī Viṣṇucitta states that during deep sleep and dissolution (suṣupti and praḷaya) the jīva will be bereft of qualities like doubt, certitude, contradictory knowledge, love, hate, ego, etc., which distinguish him from

the Supreme Being. The jīva corresponds to the brilliance and the heat of fire which is the Lord. In other words, during those states, the jīva will be similar to the Lord. The purpose of this quotation is, however, to confirm that rāga, dveṣa etc., are all different aspects of dharmabhūta jñāna.

uktam ca saṅgatimātayām Śrī Viṣṇucittaiḥ "evam Paramāt-  
 mahāpāvaka prakāśauṣṇyādīsthānīyām jīvasvarūpamapi susupti-  
 bhārayoḥ paramātmāno bhēdaka samsāya nirṇaya viparyayā  
 jñāna pratyakṣānumānāgama rāga dveṣa lobha moha mada  
 māhātmya dhairya vicikitsā śraddhā lajjā bhayādyananta jñāna  
 āstrāṇa rūpa vikārbheda śūnyam' ityadi".

No.15 N.S.(p.374) adravya pariccheda.

Here, the point to be made is the definition of sādṛṣyam (simi-  
 larity). It is of two kinds, similarity of attributes and similarity of  
 form. In the substances we see we may notice similarity of  
 attributes. In the words of Viṣṇucitta what is referred to by the  
 form similarity is the commonality of a large number of compo-  
 nents found in one object in relation to its counter-  
 relative (pratiyogin).

"tāvadapekṣayā ca Śrī Viṣṇucittaiḥ uktam-'bhūyo'vayava  
 mānyameva pratiyogyapekṣayā sādṛṣya śabdavācyam".

No.16 N.P. (P.217). anumāṇa.

In this quotation, Viṣṇucitta opines that the Self-luminosity  
 of the ātman has been justified by Śrī Rāmānuja with the help  
 of perception, inference and scripture, corroborated by tarka  
 (logical arguments). Under the sūtra 'racanānupapatteḥ'(II.ii.1)  
 what is stated is not an inference about the existence of Īśvara.  
 It is a mere statement of pratitarka (Counter argument). The

word tarka means ascribing an undesirable feature purely on the basis of vyāpti (invariable concomitance). Even a tarka should have a vyāpti about it.

"Yaccoktaṁ Śrī Viṣṇuchittaiḥ :

'Bhāṣyakāraistu pratyakṣa-anumāna-āgamebhyaḥ tarkopa-  
br̥nhitebhya ātmanaḥ syavaṁprakāśatvaṁ samarthitaṁ' iti.  
tathāhi; taireva Saṅgatimālāyāṁ uktaṁ 'racanānūpapatteḥ' iti  
sūtre - nātra Īśvarānumānamucyate iti śaṅkanīyaṁ, pratitarka  
mātravacanāt. Vyāpti balamālambya aniṣṭaprasaṅgastarkaḥ iti  
tarkasyāpi vyāptyavaśyambhāvāt' iti - tadāpi bhāṣyavadeva  
yojyaṁ".

No.17 N.P. Smṛti 2. P.295.

This quotation is related to the nature of pratyabhijñā (recognition). It can be included in Pratyakṣa itself. But according to some there are two elements in it - Smṛti and anubhava. So how can it be brought under pratyakṣa alone? In reply, Viṣṇucitta states as follows - "There will be a difference in the amśas if there is a difference in the object. When there is identity of the object seen before through perception involving recognition, we do not have two different aspects. How can a Saṁskāra give rise to direct knowledge? It is replied that since the knower is one and the same person and because he is having his saṁskāra assisted by the eye and other organs, there arises the cognition 'This is the same as that'. This is a direct knowledge, therefore recognition of the type 'He is the same as that person' is capable of establishing the oneness of the entity directly. Because it is not produced by mere saṁskāras it is not recollection, it is pratyakṣa itself.

"Pratyabhijñātāvat grahaṇātmikaivetyeke, tathā hi -  
 pratyabhijñāyāmapi smṛtiranubhava ityarnśabhedo'(stviti), 'sticet  
 viśaṅkya pratyuktaṁ Śrī Viṣṇucittaiḥ:

'Yadi Viṣayabhedah, tathā arṁśabhedhaḥ sambhavet;  
 kyaṁneva hi nirarṁśaṁ pratyabhijñāpratyakṣaviṣayaḥ. Kathaṁ  
 arṁśkāraḥ aparokṣādijanakaḥ? iti cet, na,  
 akṣurādīndriyasahakṛtasya saṁskārasya jñāturaikyāt tadidamiti  
 aparokṣādi hetutvopapatteḥ.----- aparokṣārthaikyasādhikā. Sā  
 pratyabhijñā so'yaṁ vai pumānityevamātmikā.  
 arṁśkāramātrajanyatvāt na smṛtirmānameva tat'iti".

No.18. N.P. Smṛti (2). p.295).

This quotation is also found in the same context where the  
 nature of pratyabhijñā and smṛti are discussed. Viṣṇucitta raises  
 the question as to how there could be a distinction in terms of  
 smṛti and anubhava in one and the same knowledge which is  
 capable of manifesting its own self and its object? He then an-  
 swers ' Because of the distinction between luminosity (prakāśa)  
 and means of knowledge (māna). We can draw a distinction in  
 and the same knowledge concerning a given object. To  
 that this is possible, Viṣṇucitta cites a few illustrations.  
 In a knowledge of the form 'this is a cow', there are two as-  
 pects in terms of the prakārin (individual cow) and the genus  
 prakāra) of cowness.

Another illustration is when we say 'ghaṭapaṭau' - a pot and a  
 piece of cloth. Though the knowledge concerning these two  
 entities is unitary, still there is difference in so far as the object  
 component is concerned.

Another illustration is from the parlance of the Advaitins. In all erroneous knowledge, (as in shell-silver), there is validity in so far as the locus of error is concerned (the shell part). There is invalidity in the other aspect, namely silver. Therefore in all cases of recollection the aspect of self manifestation belongs to its saṁskāra, because there is no other cause present there such as the sense-organs. Making all this a pūrvapakṣa, Viṣṇucitta says 'Not so, knowledge by nature is self-manifest.

"Uktaṁ cedam Śrī Viṣṇucittairapi - 'Svaprākāśakaṁ viṣaya prakāśakaṁ caikameva jñānaṁ: tatra smṛtiranubhūtiriti kuto bhedaḥ? iti paricodya, 'prakāśamāna bhedāditi brūmaḥ; yathā gaurayamityekasminneva jñāne prakāripakāra viṣayabhedena jñānāmśabhedah; yathā ca ghaṭapaṭāviti ekasminneva jñāne amśabhedah; yathā vā parābhyupagata bhramajñāne'dhiṣṭhanāmśe prāmānyaṁ, itaratra aprāmānyaṁ ca' iti parihārāt. tathā smṛteḥ svaprākāśamśo'pi saṁskāramātraja eva; indriyādi pratiniyata- kāraṇāntarābhāvāt' iti paricodya, 'naivaṁ, jñānānām prakāśamānatvasya svābhāvikatvāt' iti parihāracca".

No.19. N.P. Smṛti(2) - (P.299) Upamānaṁ.

This quotation concerns the status of upamāna. When somebody hears the statement 'The gayāl is like a bull', the sentence meaning first of all, refers to the commonality of the individual animal mentioned before wherein similarity with the bull is posited. If the animal marked by similarity with the bull is not decidedly identified, the same condition prevails even afterwards. If the decision is taken in a different way, that will also continue there-after. Therefore, right at the time of listening to the statement, the identity of the animal as gayāl must have been made.

"Uktaṃ ca Śrī Viṣṇucittaiḥ:- 'Gosaḍḍṣo gavayaḥ iti  
 sādḍṣyaikādhikaraṇaṃ sāmānyaṃ vācyamiti vyutpannaṃ,  
 athamaṃ vākyārthatayā pratīteḥ. gosāḍḍṣya-upalakṣitasya  
 mṛṇṇaye paścādapyanimāyaḥ anyathānimāye tathā paścādapi.  
 no vākyāśravaṇavelāyāmeva niṃṣṭam' iti.

No.20. N.P. Śmṛti(2) (p.300) Upamāna.

This is a one-line quotation. It means that according to  
 Viṣṇucitta also, Arthāpatti (presumption) is included in Infer-  
 ence.

"Uktaṃ ca Viṣṇucittaiḥ, 'arthāpattiranumānaṃ', ityādi."

No.21 Adhikaraṇasārāvaḷi (Śl.25).

In his Adhikaraṇa Sārāvaḷi (v.25) Vedānta Deśika refers to  
 the traditional view that the Catuṣṣūtrī - portion of the  
 Sūtrasūtra (I.1.1.1. to I.1.1.4 ) is introductory to the rest of the  
 sūtra. This is according to Seneśvarācārya, the author of "Śārīraka  
 Adhikaraṇa artha saṅgraha" - a metrical composition;  
 Kūḷabhṛtkiṅkara - namely Varadanārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭāraka, author  
 of Nyāya Sudarśanaṃ; Vyāsārya (Sudarśanasūri) author of  
 Nyāya Sudarśanikā, Śrutapradīpikā etc., Śrī Viṣṇucitta and  
 dihaṃsāmbuvāha, ie, Ātreya Rāmānuja, Deśika's maternal  
 uncle who wrote the Nyāya Kuliśa. The only writer who con-  
 sidered only the first sūtra as introductory is Meghanādasūri. In  
 probability this is a quotation from the Saṅgatiṃlā of  
 Viṣṇucitta. The reference in the As. is:

"Yattat Seneśvarāyairagaṇi Vakuḷa -

bhṛtkiṅkarai raṅgyakāri |

Vyāsāryairmyāsi ca dviḥ śrutamiti

viśadaṃ Viṣṇucittair vivavre ||"



## No.22. Gadya Vyākhyāna.

Deśika in his Gadya Bhāṣya refers to Viṣṇucitta as preferring the reading 'asman mātaraṁ' on the analogy of 'asmat svāmin'.

"atra 'asmat svāmin!' (Śaraṇāgatigadye) itivat 'asman mātaraṁ'; ityapi Śrī Viṣṇucittādayaḥ paṭhanti"

Obviously this is from Śrī Viṣṇucitta's "Gadya vyākhyāna".

No.23. Catuśślokībhāṣya of Deśika (p.12) (p.95) (Gadya vyākhyānam).

The next quotation is from the Catuśślokībhāṣya of Deśika. According to this, Viṣṇucitta in the introduction to his Gadyavyākhyāna points out that Rāmānuja is doing śaraṇāgati to Śrī, whose only form is Mātṛtva (Motherhood). A mother primarily is concerned with what is dear to Her son rather than what is good for him. But the Father is concerned with both. Therefore at this particular stage Rāmānuja seeks refuge with the Mother, in whom the aspect of being a punisher is absent.

"Uktaṁ ca Śrī Viṣṇucittaiḥ Gadyavyākhyānārambhe-  
'Mātṛtvaikarūpāṁ Śrīyaṁ prapadyate. Mātā hi hitādapi putrasya priyameva paśyati, Pitā ubhayaṁ paśyati; ato danḍadharatva-  
hīnataiva avalambanaṁ asyāṁ daśāyaṁ āsīt', iti".

No.24. N.S. adravya (P.295). Upaniṣadbhāṣya.

This quotation found in the Adravya pariccheda section of N.S., refers to the statement made by Viṣṇucitta in his Upaniṣadvyākhyāna' according to which no object is comprehended bereft of all attributes. Even the ear, like any other sense organ will cognise its own object, namely Sound, as possessed

a variety of distinguishing features like, far or near, loudness, stness, softness, harshness, pitch (high or low).

"Yattu Śrī Viṣṇucittairuktaṁ - 'Śrotramapi itarendriya  
jayavat śabdatva-gatva-mṛdutva-paruṣatva-mandatva-  
adhyamatvādyananta viśeṣātmakavastu-grāhakaṁ' iti (tadapi  
viśeṣavastu grahaṇa- nirākaraṇa-abhiprāyam).

Unidentified Quotations.

No.25. N.P. Pratyakṣa 1. (p.14).

This quotation in Nyāyapariśuddhi is from Viṣṇucitta. The  
act source, however, is not clearly known. It seeks to explain  
it inference is that experience of an object which includes in  
elf a knowledge of invariable concomitants.

"Yattu 'jñāna sambandhasya' ityādigranthaṁ upādāya  
antaramuktaṁ Śrī Viṣṇucittaiḥ 'vyāptidhigarbhānubhavo  
umānamityarthaḥ. Nyāyaśāstre tu tadviśeṣanirṁayaḥ' iti".

This could be from Prameya Saṅgraha.

No.26. N.P. Pratyakṣa (2). (P.68)

This quotation explains the nature of yogic perception ob-  
ned through the grace of God, as divya (divine) in nature. This  
uld also be from Prameya Saṅgraha.

"Yathoktaṁ Śrī Viṣṇucittaiḥ:-

'Bhagavat prasādalabdhayogipratyakṣaṁ divyaṁ' iti.

No.27. N.P. Pratyakṣa (2), (P.78)

This quotation which in all probability is from the Prameya  
ṅgraha is concerned with the explanation of Savikalpaka jñ  
aṁ. (determinate knowledge). According to Viṣṇucitta, that  
nowledge generated by the sense organs, which in turn are

assisted by the raking up of the latent impressions is called Savikalpaka (determinate).

For instance, the apprehension of an individual out of many belonging to the same species, done for the first time is Nirvikalpaka. In other words, that knowledge which arises due to the contact of the sense-organ with its object for the first time and which is carried over to the apprehension of the individual for the second and subsequent times, is called nirvikalpaka (in-determinate).

Else where, according to Deśika, Viṣṇucitta has said that nirvikalpakajñāna is produced by the mere contact of the eye etc., (with the object).

"Ata eva hi Śrī Viṣṇucittairuktaṁ 'Saṁskārodbodha sahaṅgā indriyajanyaṁ jñānaṁ savikalpakaṁ, ekajātīyeṣu prathama piṇḍagrahaṇaṁ                      dvitīyādipiṇḍagrahaṇeṣu prathamākṣasannipātaṁ ca jñānaṁ nirvikalpakaṁ' iti. anyatra ca uktaṁ - 'Kevala cakṣurādīndriya janyaṁ nirvikalpakaṁ' ityadi".

No.28. N.P. Anumāna (4) (P.221)

This quotation tries to explain the nature of tarka (ratiocination). According to Viṣṇucitta tarka is positive in nature and its object is qualified by an attribute of the sādhana which is invariably associated with the characteristic of the sādhyā.

"nirṇayātmakatvaṁ ca tarkasya Śrī Viṣṇucittairuktaṁ - 'tarkasca sādhyā dharmāvyabhicari sādhanadharmānvita vastu viṣayaḥ' iti".

This is also probably from Prameya Saṅgraha.

Apart from these quotations, we have three references to Śrī Viṣṇucitta's Viṣṇupurāna Vyākhyāna in the Tattvatraya Vyākhyana of Maṇavāla Māmuniḡaḡ.

According to cūrṇai 103 of this work, each preceding tanmātra pervades each succeeding tanmātra, and also takes over its special qualities.

"(etena) pūrva pūrva tanmātraṁ uttarottara tanmātraṁ adviśeṣaṁ ca - āvṛṇoditi darśitaṁ". (V.C.1.2.38.p.11.)

The reference to Viṣṇucittiya in cūrṇai 106 of the same work, points to the origination of the sense-organs from the Vaikārika ahaṅkāra successively, in due order, with the assistance of the śabda tanmātra and others, creating the five sense - organs, viz., the ear, eye, etc; and similarly, the origination of the five organs of action, like speech, and others, from the same Vaikārikāhaṅkāra, with the aid of the five tanmātras. But the creation of the mind is done without any assistance (from the tanmātras.).

"(Viṣṇupūrāṇavyākhyāna) - 'ayamatra indriyasya sṛṣṭikramaḡ - vaikārikāhaṅkāraṭ krameṇa śabdatanmātrādipaṅcakasahāyāt krameṇa śrotrāidijñānendriyasya paṅcakasya sṛṣṭiḡ; tasmādeva tatsahāyād vāḡādikarmendriya paṅcakasya sṛṣṭiḡ; asahāyātu tasmāt manasaḡ sṛṣṭiriti". (V.C.I.2.47.p.12).

According to cūrṇai 109, the sense-organs are the representatives, so to say, of the Sāttvikāhaṅkāra, and there is nothing wrong in making such a reference.

"ahaṅkārasyendriyāṇi prati nimittatvameva, bhūtānāmeva upādānatvaṁ tathā nirdeśopapatteḡ." (V.C.I.2.47.p.12).

In addition to these few statements, here and there, saved for posterity through the quotations of ācāryas following Eṅgaḷāḷvān, there are a few nirvāhas (interpretations) as they are called, expressing his opinion on various topics.

Some of these are found in the collection known as "Vārttāmālai" compiled by Pinbazhagiya perumāl jīyar, incorporating the utterances of the elders of this Sampradāya on various occasions.

Of these, vārttas 17,118,153 and 174 are attributed to Eṅgaḷāḷvān.<sup>21</sup>

### Notes

1. See S.Krishnaswamy Iyengar, 'Eṅgaḷāḷvān Vaibhavam' p.194, Śrīvaisṇava Sudarśanam,577.
2. Ibid, p.194.
3. See History of Indian philosophy, Vol.III. p.103, fn. 4.
4. See "Eṅgaḷāḷvān Vaibhavam" Śrīvaisṇava Sudarśanam, no.577. See also Rāmānujācārya Divya Caritai (Piḷḷailokaṁ Jīyar) p. 243, para 2.
5. See "Rāmānujācārya Divya Caritai", p.131.
6. Ibid, p.175.
7. "Eṅgaḷāḷvān Vaibhavam" p.197 ; Śrīvaisṇava Sudarśanam., No.577. see also Guruparaṁpara prabhāvam.
8. "Yatirāja Vaibhavam" of Āndhrapūrṇa (Vaṭuka Nambi) v.108, "Piṭhādhiśāṁśca Kāṁściccaturadhigaṇāyuktasaptatyabhikhyān tatrāpyagryaṁśca kāṁściccatura iha tathā bhāṣyasiṁhāsaneśān| tatra jñanātmajaṁ taṁ tadubhayanigamāntāgrya bhāṣyeśvaraṁ ca| Śrīmān Rāmānujāryō yatirpātimahādeśikendrascakāra||
9. See "Eṅgaḷāḷvān Vaibhavam", p.195. Śrīvaisṇava Sudarśanam. No.577.
10. cf. R.D.C. p.172. "Ātmāvukku pradhāna nirūprkamedu?..... anantararṁ nambiyum Āḷvānaippārtu, " Āḷvān, nān engiraviḍattil 'aḍiyenuḷḷān' enrapaḍi kaṇḍire "enna,..",
11. See P.B.A's Bhūmikā to "Śrī Viṣṇupurāṇa", p.2.
12. See introductory verses to "Śrutaparakāśikā", v.11; "Gurubhyo'rthaḥ śrutāḥ śabdaiḥ"
13. See "Mudal Tiruvantādi", v.44

14. See commentary on "Mudal Thiruvantādi", v.44.
15. Guruparamparāprabhāvam, P.372.
16. This is a part of a compilation by Pinbazhagiya Perumāḷ Jiyar known as Vārttāmālai.
17. See Śrī Vedānta Desika's, "Adhikaraṇa Sārśvāḷi" ś;25,"Cintāmaṇi Vyākhyānam".
18. Varadarājastava, v. 102.
19. "Sakala Śāstraṅgaḷum poruvadu Piḷḷai Engaḷāḷvānukku. Avar pakkal Śenru Keḷuṅgaḷ" ("Eṅgaḷāḷvān is well-versed in all the Śāstras. Go to him and ask him")
20. "Tinavukeḍaccolluvān Tiruveḷḷaraicchozhian"(The Pūrvaśikhā brahmin from Tiruveḷḷarai will explain without room for doubt or ambiguity)
21. See Appendix.

## THE ŚRĪVIṢṆUPURĀṆA OF PARĀŚARA *ORIGIN OF THE VIṢṆU PURĀṆA:*

The eminent and learned **brahmin Maitreya**, who had already learnt the Vedas and other **Śāstras** from Sage Parāśara, a renowned and qualified **ācārya**, **approaches** him once again, desirous of further knowledge, **seeking to know** the fundamental truths. He **approaches him at the proper time<sup>1</sup>**, when he had finished his **anuṣṭhāna** and was in a pleasant and tranquil frame of mind in the morning, when **Sattvaguṇa** is predominant after **Bhagavadārādhana**; in the proper manner, as a good disciple should, (**praṇipatyā abhivandya**), **prostrating** with reverence and saluting him, and seeks further instruction (**paripapraccha**).

The Sage, pleased, acquiesces, and the Purāṇa unfolds in the form of a narrative, as Parāśara answers the questions posed by Maitreya, for the benefit of the world (**loka-hitārthāya**).

He is reminded of how it was fore-told earlier that he would compose the Purāṇasamhitā and reminisces about the circumstances that brought about the **benediction** by Pulastya and Vaśiṣṭha.<sup>2</sup>

### ABOUT THE COMPOSER (PURĀṆAKARTĀ)

Sage Parāśara is not merely a sage and philosopher; he is a poet, a poet with a vision of the Paratattva, which he knows to be Śrīmannārāyaṇa, the goal of all human aspiration.

This vision he weaves, with the background of the Puraṇic themes of Creation and Dissolution, the Manus and Manvantaras,

the royal dynasties and so on, for the warp. With Maitreya's skilful questioning eliciting incidents and stories, the sage weaves an astonishingly beautiful tapestry, with the Supreme Truth shining in all its effulgence through it. And in the end, it leaves the listener with no doubt about what he intends to convey - that Śrīmannārāyaṇa is the Supreme Puruṣa (Parapurūṣanirmāya) and that the ultimate goal of salvation is attained by His Grace alone.

As in all great literature of any culture, the language is beautiful, simple and concise.

Śrī Yāmunaçārya, in the beginning of his 'Stotraratna', pays obeisance to his grandfather Śrī Nāthamuni, Sage Parāśara and Nammālvār. Saluting Parāśara, he says,

‘तत्त्वेन यश्चिदचिदीश्वरतत्स्वावभोगापवर्गं तदुपायगतैर्द्वारः ।  
 सन्दर्शयन्निरामिमीत पुराणरत्नं तस्मै नमोमुनिवराय पराशराय ॥’  
 "Tattvena yaścīdacidīśvaratatsvabhāva-  
 bhogāpavarga tadupāyagatirudāraḥ |  
 Saṅdarśayanniramimīta purāṇaratnaṅ  
 tasmai namomunivarāya Parāśarayā || (v.4)

[My salutations to that noble-minded, munificent and excellent Sage, Parāśara, who (out of great compassion for Maitreya and the world) composed the Viṣṇupurāṇa, a gem among purāṇas; thereby illuminating the great truths of the Vedāntas exactly as they are:- namely, Cit (Sentient), Acit (insentient), Īśvara, their ruler, their natures, worldly pleasures, mokṣa (release), means of attaining them and the paths (routes) to reach them.]



He condenses in one line, the main contents of the purāna; Tattva, Hita and Puruṣārtha.

By this verse, he proclaims the greatness of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa as a ratna, a gem among Purāṇas.<sup>3</sup>

Śrī Vedānta Deśika in his commentary on this śloka elaborates on some of the terms used here by Yāmuna :-

**Tattvena:** Just as it is - Yathāvasthitākāreṇa

**Yah:** This relative pronoun carries great weight, indicating the author to be that great-grandson of Prajāpati, grandson of Vaśiṣṭha and father of Vyāsa. The Taittirīya Āraṇyaka carries a statement (1-9) "Sa hovāca vyāsaḥ pārāśaryaḥ" 'And thus spoke Vyāsa, the son of Parāśara.' The authenticity of Vyāsa, the great sage and prolific composer is seen to be based on his father's integrity and credibility. This in turn, devolves from his paradevatapāramārthyajñānam (true knowledge of the Supreme Being) granted to him by the boons of Pulastya and Vaśiṣṭha.

**Udāraḥ:** Indicates his generous nature in giving Maitreya and through him the world, this great treasure of tattva-jñāna, Knowledge of Reality, without expectation of any return. This, his generosity, is further emphasised by the Sage's benedictory verse bringing to a conclusion the Purāṇa, where he prays for the Lord Hari to grant *all mankind (aśeṣapurīsām)* that blissful state, free from birth and decay.

“इति विविधमजस्य यस्य ह्यम् प्रकृतिपरात्ममयं सनातनस्य ।

प्रदिशतु भगवानशेषपुंसां हरिरप्यजन्मजरादिकां स सिद्धिम् ॥”

**Tattvena Saṁdarśayan:** Śrī Vedānta Deśika explains this as elaborating and explaining clearly, the essential teachings of all the Vedas and Vedāntas, *as they are*.

**Āramimīta Purāṇaratnam:** Śrī Vedānta Deśika recalls the boon bestowed on Parāśara by Pulastya for listening to his grandfather's advice and stopping the slaughtering of the rākṣasas, and which was endorsed by Vaśiṣṭha -

"Purāṇasaṁhitakarṭhā bhavān vatsa bhaviṣyati."

'You, dear child, shall become the composer of a Purāṇasamhita'.

**Tasmai:** To such a person as described by yaḥ in the beginning.

**Munivarāya:** excellent among munis (those that constantly contemplate god) also muninārṇ varaṅṅyāya.

**Parāśarāya:** Sage Parāśara. His name is derived as "Parān Āśṇāti iti Parāśaraḥ". Parān indicates people outside the Vedic tradition and those who misinterpret the Vedic teachings (bāhyakudṛṣṭīn). Pramāṇa tarka śaraiḥ āśṇāti; destroys, tears as under, with his arrows of proof.

Even though this Purāṇa has been known earlier, in this narration by Parāśara, it is as new, as enjoyable as if it had never been experienced before. (purāpi navam purāṇam) The Matsyapurāṇa says:

"Varāhakaḥ pavṛttantām adhikṛtya Parāśaraḥ |

Yat prāha dharmānakhilān viṣṇostad vaiṣṇavaṁ viduḥ ||

... Trayoviṁśatisāhasraṁ tat pramāṇaṁ vidurbudhāḥ ||"<sup>4</sup>

[That purāṇa in which Parāśara beginning with the events of the Varāhakalpa, expounds all duties, is known as the Vaiṣṇava. And the learned know its extent to be twenty-three thousand stanzas].

The present editions of Viṣṇu Purāṇa, consisting of six thousand stanzas, appear to be the first part of the original purāṇa.<sup>5</sup> This purāṇa, as mentioned earlier, qualifies for the term, as it satisfies the five criteria that characterise a purāṇa.<sup>6</sup>

Śrī Vedānta Deśika illustrates how this purāṇa qualifies to be called a ratna (gem), in a beautiful verse:

"अत्रासं मानदं रत्नं स्थिरं भोग्यं प्रकाशकम् ।

महार्घं मङ्गलं मान्यं सुरक्षं सुग्रहं नृणाम् ॥"

"atrāsaṁ mānadaṁ ratnaṁ sthiraṁ

bhogyam prakāśakaṁ|

mahārghaṁ maṅgalaṁ mānyaṁ

surakṣaṁ sugrahaṁ nṛṇām||"

[Commentary on Stotraratna. v.4]

A ratnaṁ by nature is

*atrāsaṁ*: Faultless

*mānadaṁ*: Confers honour and respectability on the possessor.

*sthiraṁ*: Permanent, existing for all time

*bhogyam*: To be enjoyed

*prakāśakaṁ*: Brilliant, illuminating, revealing

*mahārghaṁ*: Of great worth, priceless, invaluable

*maṅgalaṁ*: Auspicious, causing welfare

*mānyaṁ*: Deserving respect

*surakṣaṁ*: Deserving protection

*sugrahaṁ*: Easy to grasp, to carry

Among the gems of Vedic Śrīvaiṣṇavite literature there are three perfect ones (ratnas) held in great esteem by the teachers. The first of these is the Mantrarātna, which is the Dvaya-Mantra, one of the three rahasyas (secret teachings). The second is the Purāṇarātna, i.e., the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, so designated by Ālavandār (Śrī Yāmuna) in his Stotra. This stotra itself is reckoned as the third gem in this treasury 'Stotrarātna'.

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa is believed to be the most ancient among the eighteen important purāṇas<sup>7</sup> and Parāśara led the way in composing them.

In the paramparā of the five great sages, Vaśiṣṭha, Śakti, Parāśara, Vyāsa and Śuka, it was Parāśara who initiated the composition of purāṇas.<sup>8</sup>

Sri P.B.A. comments that among all the works which elaborate and clarify the Vedic statements (upabṛmhaṇaṁ), it cannot be disputed that the Viṣṇupurāṇa is held in great esteem and veneration.

Śaṅkara and Śrī Yāmuna have quoted the Viṣṇupurāṇa in their works. Śrī Rāmānuja in his Śrī Bhāṣya and other works like the Vedārtha Saṅgraha, gave special importance to this purāṇa. Śrī Vedānta Deśika has quoted profusely from it in his works. So also have commentators on the "Bhagavadviṣayaṁ", Parāśara Bhaṭṭa, Periyavāccān Piḷḷai and Maṇavāḷa Māmuniḡal, to name a few.

**Śaṅkara seems to be the earliest Vedāntin to have interpreted verses of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, of course in favour of Advaita.**

### **THE SCHEME OF THE PURĀṆA: A SUMMARY OF THE AṂŚAS:**

The purāṇa **consists of six aṁśas** or parts, with a varying number of adhyāyas in each. In addition to the oft-quoted description of purāṇālakṣaṇa found in the Viṣṇu, Matsya, Vāyu and other Purāṇas<sup>9</sup> there is another definition found in the Brahmavaivarta- purāṇa, (Kṛṣṇa janma khaṇḍa, 132nd adhyāya -) which goes on to describe the characteristics of Mahā Purāṇas<sup>10</sup>:

"Mahatām ca purāṇānām lakṣaṇām kathayāmi te|

Sṛṣṭiścāpi viṣṛṭiśca Sthitiṣṭeṣām ca pālanām||

Karmaṇām Vāsanā Vārttā manūnām ca krameṇa ca|

Varṇaṇām praḷayānām ca mokṣasya ca nirūpaṇam||

Utkīrttaṇām Harereva devānām ca pṛthak pṛthak|

Daśādhikām lakṣaṇām ca mahatām parikīrtitam||".

**Creation and resolution, the stable existing state of the world, and its protection, the Vāsanā of Karma (impressions left by previous Karma), Vārttā (information/news), the order of Manus, the description of the different kinds of praḷaya (dissolution), the definition of mokṣa (release) and the praising of Hari, Lord Viṣṇu, by the Devas, individually. These should be the characteristics or contents of a Mahāpurāṇa.**

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa speaks of all these elements within its six parts.<sup>11</sup>

The "Śrīdhārīya," Śrīdhara Swamy's commentary on the **Viṣṇu Purāṇa**, gives a very brief summary of the six arṇśas.

(V.P.I.1.31; p.3-4 V.S.P edn.)

### The First Arṇśa:

As observed earlier, Maitreya poses a series of questions to **Viṣṇu**, in order to elicit information on particular topics.

The first Arṇśa consists of the answers to the first eight of these questions, with occasional questions interposed during the narration, which causes some digression in the answering.

These main eight questions deal with sarga and pratisarga, creation and dissolution, the dimensions and nature of physical matter and the elements and the origination of the gods. They are phrased as follows:-

यथा जगत् बभूव-भूयश्च यथा भविष्यति;  
यन्मयं च जगत् ब्रह्मन् यतश्चेतच्चराचरम् ।  
लीनमासीद्यथा यत्र लयमेष्यति यत्र च;  
यत्प्रमाणानि भूतानि देवादीनां च संभवम् ॥"

- . Yathā jagat babhūva: How the world was created.
- . Bhūyaśca yathā bhaviṣyati: How it shall be again.
- . Yanmayam ca jagat : What the world consists of.
- . Yataśca etat carācaram: From whence this world of movable and immovable objects has emerged.
- . Līnamāsīt yathā yatra: Where did it go in resolution, and how.
- . Layameṣyati yatra ca: Where shall it go again.
- . Yat pramāṇāni bhūtāni: What are the dimensions and nature of physical matter and the elements.

## 8. Devādīnāṁ ca sambhavaṁ: How did the origination of the devas and other forms of life happen?

Sage Parāśara states, categorically in the very beginning, that Jagat Vyāpāra, the Cosmic functions of Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution are all the work, or play, of Viṣṇu, the Supreme Being<sup>12</sup>.

This aṁśa has twentytwo adhyāyas. Parāśara starts by praising the glory of the Lord and describing His nature; the other two tattvas or realities - pradhāna and puruṣa are also His manifestations. His other aspect is Time (Kāla) without which no creation or dissolution can take place.

"He, that Brahman, was all things, comprehending in His own nature, the indiscrete and the discrete" etc. (Wilson, V.P; p.8)

The details of creation, the evolution from subtle to gross, Sūkṣma prakṛti or avyakta, to Sthūla prakṛti or Vyakta; the evolutes from Mahat and Ahaṅkāra to the five tanmātras and elements; which latter, the elements, are further compounded in Trivṛtkaraṇa, later accepted as pañcīkaraṇa; the ten organs of sense and action and manas, the eleventh; in short, primary creation (Samaṣṭi Sṛṣṭi).

The course of the elemental creation follows the Sāṅkhya philosophy, but the agency that operates upon passive matter is, here, the Saṅkalpa of the Supreme Being.

Then comes a description of the Secondary Creation (Vyāṣṭi Sṛṣṭi) through the agency of Brahmā and the prajāpatis.

The divisions of Time, the duration of Brahmā's and others' days, years and lifetimes, on which depend Sṛṣṭi and Laya, is

described. This is followed by the three kinds of laya or praḷaya (rest periods) for the Supreme Being.

An account follows of the Varāhāvatāra assumed for the purpose of raising the Earth from the waters of the deluge, and restoring her to her original position; with the praises sung of Him by the Earth and the Sages.

The order of creation of devas, asuras and others<sup>13</sup>, the creation of the four castes (Varṇas) of human beings; the gradual deterioration of the condition of human beings, as the ages progress from Kṛta to Tretā and Dvāpara, creating the need for providing themselves with shelter and food.

The peopling of the Earth, starting with the creation of Bhṛgu and other prajāpatis; providing them with wives through the agency of Svāyam̃bhuvamanu and Śatarūpā; Rudra Sr̥ṣṭi is narrated.

Then follows a description of the glory of Lakṣmī and the account of Durvāśa's curse on Indra. The three worlds were wholly divested of prosperity by the withdrawal of Lakṣmī's favour, and gloom prevailed, because of the curse. This is followed by the narration of the churning of the milky ocean to regain Lakṣmī and her favour, and to obtain Amṛta for immortality. V.P. (Ch.8.and 9).

A further account of the descendants of the Prajāpatis follows. Stories of Dhruva; Vena and Pṛthu are told and more about Pṛthu's descendants, followed by more legends. The story of Prahlāda is presented in some detail. The state of the world in Pṛthu's reign is described.



The four varieties of spiritual contemplation; the perceptible and imperceptible attributes of Viṣṇu, and the ways of attaining the state of bliss with Brahman from which there is no return, are all described.

A description is given of the Divine Form of the Lord, fit for contemplation, with his weapons and ornaments (astra bhūṣana adhyāya).

The amśa closes with a declaration that everything with or without form, here or elsewhere, whatever is created, all these are the Lord's body.

### The Second Amśa:

This part answers Maitreya's question about the descendants of Priyavrata, son of Svāyambhuva and brother of Uttānapāda (the father of Dhruva). Among these descendants of Priyavrata, is the illustrious Bharata, son of R̥ṣabha, after whom the land is known as Bhāratavarṣa.

Parāśara goes on to describe the geography of the world, in answer to the next four questions of Maitreya from those asked in the first part.

9. "Samudra parvatānām ca Saṁsthānam" - The configuration and situations of the oceans and mountains;
10. "Yathā bhuvah (Saṁsthānam)" - as also of the Earth;
11. "Sūryādīnām ca saṁsthānam" - positions of the Sun, Moon and stars;
12. "Teṣām pramāṇam" - and their magnitude and dimensions.

The seven continents are described<sup>14</sup>, each with their surrounding oceans<sup>15</sup> to their outermost limits.

There is a description of Bhāratavaṛṣa with its nine differentiated parts<sup>16</sup>; its mountains and rivers. It is the Karmabhūmi, whence one can attain Svarga or Mokṣa, by their actions.

Other worlds, starting with the nether regions of Atala, Vitala, Nitala, Gabhastimat (Talātala), Mahātala, Sutala and Pātāla, and a description of Śeṣa, who bears the entire world on his hoods is also given.

Then the account follows of the Hells (narakas) situated beneath the Earth and the waters, where sinners go. These are numerous and of different kinds (V.P.II.6). After this horrifying description comes the greatness of Bhagavān Viṣṇu's Names, as a way out of this fearful prospect.

This is followed by a description of the higher worlds - Bhūvaḥ, Suvāḥ, Mahaḥ, etc.; Viṣṇu's powers, the planetary systems - the dimensions and situations of the sun and other luminaries. The planetary system in the form of a porpoise, Śimśumāra<sup>17</sup>; the Kālacakra and the Jyotiścakra, the chariot of the Sun. There is a description of the Arcirādi and other Mārgas taken by released souls according to their destinations; how the Sun is the nourisher of the Earth, by providing rain, and thus crops.

The power of Viṣṇu, called Vaiṣṇavī is declared as supporting the Solar System.

Satisfied with these answers to his questions Maitreya reverts to the story of the king Bharata who crowned his son and retired to Sālagrāma to do penance. Parāśara narrates the story of the king, who did not attain mokṣa but first was born as a

deer and then as a brahmin, and comes to be known as Jaḍabharata. The concepts of ātmaka and anātmaka (relating to self and non-self, are explained, along with the nature of true and false knowledge (Paramārtha and Aparamārtha).

The Arṁśa closes with the account of Ṛbhhu and Nidāgha and the dialogue between them.

### The Third Arṁśa:

Part III answers six questions Maitreya had posed earlier:

13. "Devādīnām Varṁśa" : The geneology of the gods;
14. "Manunām" : of the Manus.
15. "Manvantarāṇi" : The duration (manvantaras) each Manu reigns over-past, present and future.
16. "Vedaśākhā praṇayanām yathāvat Vyāsakarṭṭkam" . The Vyāsas of different ages, and their division and arrangement of the Vedas.
17. Dharmārṁś ca brāhmaṇādīnām : the rules of conduct for the four varṇas (Castes).
18. Tathā ca āśramavāsinām : and for the people in the four stages of life.

Parāśara answers with a detailed account of the Manus, Indras, Devatās, Saptarṣis and the sons of the Manus, beginning with Svāyambhuva Manu to the present Manu, Vaivasvata (son of Vivasvān, the Sun) who presides over the seventh Manvantara. He continues with a list of Manus who will preside over the remaining seven Manvantaras of the future, when the Kalpa will end, with a praḷaya (Each Kalpa will contain fourteen manvantaras).

The story of the Sun, father of Vaivasvata Manu, and his wives Samjñā and Chāyā is related.

Then follows an account of how Viṣṇu protects the world in the Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kaliyugas; of how each Dvāpara, He appears in the form of Vyāsa, and arranges the one vast Veda into four parts, with numerous branches in each.

The Vaivasvata Manvantara has given rise to twentyeight Vyāsas, and the present one is Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana, son of the narrator Parāśara.

The seventh adhyāya has an interesting conversation between Yama and his servants, about how Yama has no authority over worshippers of Viṣṇu.

As a natural sequel, there is instruction on how Viṣṇu is to be worshipped.

This is followed by a detailed description of the duties and obligations enjoined on the people belonging to the four Varnas (Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra), and the four āśramas, or stages of life viz., Brahmacharya, Gārhashthya, Vānaprastha and Saṁnyāsa. It emphasises how the stage of the householder is very important for the sustenance of the other three.

Maitreya then desires to be instructed about the daily, occasional, and voluntary acts to be done by men in various situations; the Saṁskāras (ceremonies) to be performed for a person, from the beginning of life, to the end, including the Preta-saṁskāra and Uttarakriyā (Ceremonies performed after death).

Parāśara obliges, relating these at great length.

The Chapter comes to an end with a description of who a Nagna is (one who has renounced the Vedas and the Vedic way of life) and the consequences of associating with such a person.

The story of Śatadhanus and his wife Śaibyā illustrates this.

### The Fourth Amśa:

Part IV answers Maitreya's question regarding the genealogy of the Devas, Ṛṣis and rulers of the world ("Devarṣi pāṛthivānām Varṇśa").

Parāśara speaks of ancient Hindu history and gives a comprehensive record of dynasties and individuals; and events interspersed with legends and stories.

It begins with the origin of the solar dynasty from Brahmā; sons of Vaivasvata Manu, the story of Sudyumna (Iṭa) and their descendants.

The legend of Raivata, Revatī and Balarāma; Brahmā's praise of Viṣṇu. Revata's descendants; the birth of Ikṣvāku; the story of Saubhari is narrated, as also the stories of Triśanku and Sagara, and the birth of Śrī Rāma in the Solar race, and His story.

The lunar race, Kings of Mithila; the birth of Janaka and of Sītā, his daughter; the legend of Purūravas and Ūrvaśī, the birth of Jamadagni and Viśvāmitra; the story of Paraśurāma, are all related.

Yayāti and his sons; Puru; the Yādava race, the story of Kārttavīryārjuna and his descendants; the story of Satrājīt and the Syamantakamaṇi follows. The children of Devaka and Ugrasena; Pṛthā and Pāṇdu. The story of Śiśupāla and his pre-

vious births. Vasudeva, his wives and children; wives and children of Kṛṣṇa - the numerous descendants of Yadu, are listed.

Descendants of Puru, the birth of Bharata, son of Duṣyanta; the kings of Magadha - Jarāsandha and others; the descendants of Kuru - Śantanu and his son Bhīṣma by Gaṅgā, his other sons, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his sons; the five sons of Pāṇḍu, married to Draupadī. Their descendants; Parīkṣit, the presently reigning king, are all spoken of.

Future kings of the various important dynasties, the progression of Kali, a period of universal decay; the coming of Viṣṇu as Kalki, the destruction of the wicked, restoration of the Vedas and Vedic practices, the end of Kali, the return of Kṛtayuga are foretold.

The Amśa ends with the song sung by Pṛthivī, the Earth.

### **The Fifth Amśa:**

This part is devoted entirely to the life and exploits of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and deals extensively and in detail, with the story of how the Lord Nārāyaṇa descended to Earth in human form as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the race of the Yadus, born to Devakī and Vasudeva. This avatāra was in response to the pleas of Mother Earth, to allieviate her burden and her distress.

This narration is very much like what is found in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and does not require elaboration here.

### **The Sixth Amśa:**

The final Amśa of the six is in the form of answers to Maitreya's three questions on (1) Kalpas (2) Vikalpas and (3) the nature of Kalpānta - the end of kalpas, which is dissolution.

Cf. "Kalpān, Kalpavikalpān, kalpāntasya svarūpaṁ ca".

The characteristics of the Kali age, which set in the day Śrī Kṛṣṇa left for His Heavenly Abode.

Parāśara describes the measurements of Time, from the day and year of men, to the day and year and lifetime of Brahmā. At the end of one day of Brahmā's life occurs the Brāhma or Naimittika praḷaya in which the worlds up to Janoloka are destroyed. This is Brahmā's night and lasts as long as his day.

The prakṛta praḷaya occurs at the end of Brahma's life, which is a thousand years, each year consisting of three-hundred of his days and nights.

In this praḷaya, everything, including the elements, ahaṅkāra and mahat and all life forms are absorbed into the Supreme Being, and abide in him in the subtle state, Sūkṣmāvasthā, awaiting His Will to create. The particulars of the end of all things (except the Supreme Being) by fire and water are graphically described.

Ātyantika praḷaya is the final release (mokṣa) of the individual soul.

There is a digression, describing the course of the Kali age, progressive deterioration of the condition and morals of men and women, of the state of the land, and the quality of life in general.

There is a description of the three kinds of suffering which afflicts man in the world - tāpatraya; ādhyātmika (physical and mental), ādhibhautika (those caused by other living creatures), and ādhidaiivika (those caused by the elements and natural calamities). A graphic account of the afflictions imposed upon a

human being, right from conception, leads to the seeking of a remedy for these ills.

The only remedy is declared as the Lord. The ways to attain Him are described in detail.

A mention is made of the saving grace of the Kali age, which is the easy way of attaining Him.

The way to realise the goal of release is described as Yoga (meditation) with its eight aṅgas - which will lead to a realisation of the nature of the Ultimate Reality.

The terms Bhagavān and Vāsudeva are explained. The intrinsic supremacy of the Brahman is described.

Then follows the anecdote of the cousins Keśidhvaja and Khāṇḍikya; the teaching of Keśidhvaja to Khāṇḍikya regarding the nature of Mokṣa and the way to achieve it through Aṣṭāṅga Yoga; the ultimate aspiration of the human soul and description of the Śubhāśraya (the auspicious refuge of the mind in meditation) which is the form of Viṣṇu in all its beauty and effulgence (Divya Maṅgaḷa Vighraha) follows. Constant meditation on this with devotion will obtain for the aspirant his goal of Mokṣa.

The narration of the Purāṇa is concluded with the listing of the merits of the Purāṇa, the phala-śruti, a hymn of praise to Viṣṇu, and a benediction to all mankind.

The questions Maitreya asked were of a general nature, as to the origin and nature of Creation, the Creator, and so on. He does not specify the Deity about whom he wishes to learn. So there is no pre-conceived bias as to the identity of the Creator, the Para Puruṣā, as in certain purāṇas like the Laiṅga.



This and the sage's own account of how he was blessed with the knowledge of the Supreme Being 'as it is' "*devatā pāramārthyam ca yathāvat vetsyate bhavān*", gives added weight to the authority of the Purāṇa. *Yathāvat* is interpreted by Śrī Viṣṇucitta as - 'without doubt or erroneous knowledge'.

High praise coming from Śrī Yāmuna shows the important place the purāṇa holds in Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition, and the reason why it has been so profusely quoted from. It has been recorded that nearly a thousand verses from this text have been quoted in various situations by different teachers including Śaṅkara, Yāmuna, Rāmānuja, Parāśara Bhaṭṭa, Sudarśana Sūri, Vedānta Deśika and commentators on the Tiruvāimozhi.

Certain statements, however, probably because of their brevity lend themselves to more than one interpretation<sup>18</sup> and this is where the commentators step in. Each interprets in the light of his philosophy and belief. In the "Viṣṇucittīya", the author very clearly explains these passages in the light of Śrī Rāmānuja's teachings. His views hold credence, as he was a contemporary and direct disciple of Śrī Rāmānuja.

The Bhūmikā to the V.S.P. edition of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa says "Brāhmaṇāntargatametad purāṇam nāma viśvasya pūrvāvasthā pratipādakam vedārtha nirūpakam."

'This Purāṇa is mentioned in the Brāhmaṇas, and shows the previous states of the Universe, and proves the meanings of the Vedas.'

Śrī Ajavāli (Yāmuna) has set the seal of authority on the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, by classifying it as a 'Ratna'.

## NOTES

1. V.C.I 1.1.-----"praṇipātādibhiḥ upasaṁpannāya sacchiṣyāya sadācāravatā tatpṛṣṭhena gurūṁ svadharmānūṣṭhānāvīrudhe manaḥ prasādakara samaye purāṇaṁ vyākhyeṣaṁ iti śāstradarśanāt."  
V.P. I.1.26 - "Purāṇasarhitaḥkartā bhavān vatsa bhaviṣyati."  
For a detailed commentary of Deśika on this, refer St. R. bhāṣya, v.4. Wilson, preface, p.21, fn.41.  
Ref. Bhūmika to V.S.P. edn.  
"Sargaśca pratisargaśca varṇso manvantarāṇi ca |  
Varṇśānucaritaṁ caiva purāṇaṁ pañcalakṣaṇam||"  
(See Viṣṇu, Matsya, Vāyu and other Purāṇas; also Amarakośa).  
Ref Wilson.V.P. Preface, page lxi, end of first para.  
See Bhūmikā to V.P. P.B.A.'s Edition  
"Vaśiṣṭhaḥ Śaktiḥ Parāśaraḥ Vyāsaḥ Śukaḥ ityevaṁ pāramparikeṣu pañcasu maharṣiṣu Parāśaropajñam hi purāṇapraṇayanam"  
See fn.5 on p.3  
See Bhūmikā to Viṣṇu Purāṇa (V.S.P.Edn)  
1. These six ṛṣis seem to be the pūrvabhāga, (the first part) of a much more extensive Viṣṇu Purāṇa. It is said in the Nārādīya Purāṇa (pūrvabhāga, the fourth part, 94th adhyāya) :  
"Trayovimśati sāhasraṁ sarvapātakanāśanam |  
Yatra ādibhāge nirdiṣṭaḥ ṣaḍamśaḥ śaktṛjena hall"  
2. Ref. V.P. Wilson, p.5, f.n.16.  
"How was the world created? By Viṣṇu. How will it be? At the periods of dissolution it will be in Viṣṇu. Whence proceeded animate and inanimate things? From Viṣṇu. Of what is the substance of the world? Viṣṇu. Into what has it been and will it again be resolved? Viṣṇu. He is therefore, both the instrumental and material cause of the Universe".  
The four categories of life-deva, manuṣya, tiryak and sthāvara - Gods, men, animals, birds and lower forms of animate beings, and fourthly, the inanimate, mountains, trees and other plant life, right down to a blade of grass.
14. Jambū, Plakṣa Śālmālī, Kuśa, Krauñca, Śāka and Puṣkara (See V.P. II.2.5).
15. "Lavaṇa, Ikṣu, Surā, Sarpis, Dadhi, Dugdha and Jala, - Salt, Sugarcane juice, Wine. Ghee, Curd, Milk and Pure water (V.P. II.2.6).
16. Indradvīpa, Kaśeru, Tāmraparṇa, Gabhastimān, Nāgadvīpa, Saumya, Gāndharva and Vāruṇa (V.P.II.2.6and 7).
17. Wilson translates Śimśumāra as "Porpoise", with Dhruva situated in the tail.
18. See Wilson V.P. (preface xxii) "There occur passages in which the difficulty arising from the subject itself is enhanced by the brief and obscure manner in which it is treated."

## THE VIṢNUCITTĪYA

The Purāṇa being in the form of responses of Sage Parāśara to his disciple Maitreya's questions, the commentary also lists these questions as the basis of the narration. Viṣṇucitta, at the very beginning of his commentary quotes Śrī Rāmānuja<sup>1</sup>. What Maitreya desires to learn from his teacher is Brahma Svarūpa (the particular nature of the Supreme Being), His Vibhūtis (super human powers and wealth), ways of worshipping Him and the rewards of such worship. Maitreya knows from his previous experience of studying under him, that the sage is no dilettante, no ordinary teacher, but has a thorough knowledge of all the Vedas, and in addition has been blessed by Pulastya and Vasiṣṭha with the gift of knowing the Truth, "exactly as it is" ("devatāpāramārthyam ca yathāvat vetsyate bhavān"), Viṣṇucitta explains this as, "You shall know the Devatā, the Supreme Reality, with His glories, His divine form, His qualities, His activities, and His essential nature, without doubt or erroneous knowledge, exactly as He is".

Another aspect which distinguishes this Purāṇa from others is that the questions asked are general, such as how the world was, shall be again, whence it originated, where shall it return and so on. They do not seek to know about a specific deity, thus eliminating bias in the answers. But the answers very specifically and persistently point to Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa as the Supreme Reality; the Cause of the Cosmic Functions, the ultimate goal of all human endeavour, and the only authority who can grant Mokṣa.

This is the Truth declared in the Upaniṣads, which the Purāṇa elaborates in simple language.

The answers to the first six questions, from "Yathā jagadbabhūva" to "layameṣyati yatra ca" (V.P.I.1.4-5)<sup>2</sup> deal with the particular nature of Brahman. Viṣṇucitta quotes Bhāṣyakāra (Rāmānuja) here as saying that since Brahmasvarūpa is what is established by Śruti statements like "Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante", that quality is what is inquired into here. The nature of Brahman is declared in the Nārāyaṇa-anuvāka and other Śruti passages. All the statements and references found scattered in various texts, are collected and connected to Nārāyaṇa as the Supreme Brahman by the Sāmānya Viśeṣa nyāya<sup>3</sup>. This is the "Upabṛñhaṇam" accomplished by the Itihāsas and Purāṇas, which are composed by sages who have a thorough knowledge of all the branches of the Vedas.<sup>4</sup>

In "Yathā babhūva" and "bhūyaśca yathā bhaviṣyati", the question is whether the process of creation is the same in all creations, or different in different ages. The questions on Sṛṣṭi and Laya include Sthiti also, as the answer "Sthiti samyama bhūtā'sau" indicates.

Since the question "yataśca etat carācaram" [Whence is this world of animate and inanimate principles? What is its source?] relates to the Nimitta and Upādāna Kāraṇas, (efficient and material causes) the first part, "Yanmayam" has a different purpose. It is asked "What or Who is the Ātmā-the Inner Controller-of the Universe which is subject to the actions of Creation, sustenance and Dissolution?" The answer is "jagacca saḥ" [And the world is He]. Viṣṇucitta makes it very clear here that the

jagadātmakatva, His constituting the Ātmā or Self of the World, is as antaryāmin, the inner controller and not due to aikya (oneness), identity of the entities. ("natu vastvaikyakṛtam"). What is meant here is tādātmya--having Him for Ātmā and not tādaikya-(numerical identity)-of the two substances. The phrase "jagacca saḥ" ['The world is He'] is used here as a case of Sāmānādhikarāṇya.<sup>5</sup>

In the question "yanmayarṇ" (what does the world consist of?), the suffix 'mayat' is not used in the sense of Vikāra (modification) as upādāna, as there is another question relating to that "yataścaitaccarācararṇ". If taken in that sense, this separate question would be redundant (vaiyarthya). Nor is it used in the sense of the word to which it is added, (Svārtha) as in the expression Prāṇamaya. If it were, the answer would be "Viṣṇureva"-["Viṣṇu Himself"], and the answer "jagacca saḥ" would be inappropriate. If the answer is 'Viṣṇu is jagat' as Svārtha, in "Yanmayarṇ" it will negate jagat, as in "sthāṇureva na puruṣaḥ" [It is a pillar only, not a man]. If mayat is taken as aikya, also, it will mean "no world, only Viṣṇu" ("na jagat viṣṇuriti"). In both cases, it will be opposed to Śrutivākya. Therefore mayat here is used in the sense of prācurya (abundance)<sup>6</sup>. Since the entire Creation is His Body, the sense of excessive abundance is reflected in the answer "And the world is He", declaring the Śarīrātmabhāva [the body-soul relationship], which is the pradhāna pratitantra (cardinal tenet), of Viśiṣṭadvaita.<sup>7</sup>

Otherwise, all these questions and answers would be irrelevant in a Śāstra devoted to establishing a Supreme Principle devoid of all attributes. If such a Nirviśeṣa Brahman were to be

accepted, the question would be "What is the basis of the illusory world?" and the answer can only be "Pure intelligence devoid of all attributes." The oneness of the world with Brahman is due to the invariable association of the two, in the relationship of body to soul. The statement "jagacca saḥ" ["And the world is He"] however, does not imply the oneness of substance between the world and the Brahman. If the second position were true, all the Śrutis proclaiming His myriads of auspicious qualities and His being the antithesis of all that is evil or undesirable, would be stultified. Also, if Pure Intelligence, devoid of all attributes, is equated with jagat as aikya (oneness) of substance, this Brahman would also be the locus of all *aśubha* (inauspiciousness). Therefore, the Sāmānādhikaraṇya can only mean the body-soul relationship<sup>8</sup>.

Recalling the circumstances of his becoming a purāṇakartā, and the boon bestowed on him by Pulastya and Vasiṣṭha, his grandfather, by which the śāstrārthas were made manifest to him, Parāśara says, "So'haṁ vadāmi", indicating his eligibility to be teacher. V.C. prefaces his commentary thus by vouchsafing the authority of the composer sage. Rāmānuja also refers to P. as "Smṛti" on an equal status with Bhagavad Gītā, and as Utra. Parāśara, knowing that his disciple's chief interest lay in being taught about that Truth that is the Cause of the cosmic creation etc., and the relationship in which the world stands to him, he starts answering that important question first, and in so doing, gives the chief purport of the Purāṇa in brief.

So to the question "How did this world come into existence?" - "Yathā jagat babhūva", he answers "Viṣṇoḥ sakāśāt"; from the Saṅkalpa (Will) of Viṣṇu. The word sakāśa is explained as

kāśaḥ-prakāśo—jñānaḥ (intelligence, knowledge). He quotes the Śruti passages "Sa aikṣata lokānu sṛjā" and "tadaikṣata bahu syām". It can also be explained as "from Viṣṇu" as in "Ācāryasya sakāśāt".

"Yathā bhaviṣyati" has the same answer, as the order of creation is ordained by Bhagavān, in succeeding periods, exactly as they were in the previous ones; just as the seasons appear in each succeeding year, exactly as in the previous year, in the same order, and with the same characteristics. To the question "linamāsīd yatra" "where, into what, was it absorbed?" the answer is "tatraiva sthitam". "It is absorbed in Him only". The resolution of the effect into the cause is what is known as laya. "Sthitisamyama kartā'sau" is explained by the Vedas thus: Sthiti is of two kinds, sustaining life from inside as indweller (ānātmā) as stated in Śrutis like "Yena jātāni jīvantaḥ" and the second kind, sustaining from outside, in the form of the nourishers of the world, the sun, moon and others. Saṁnyama or Samāna, Destruction, is also carried out by Him in the form of Agni, Yama and others.

In the work of sustenance and dissolution carried on from outside, He is described as "sthitisaṁyamakartā". In the sustenance from inside, He is described as "Jagacca saḥ". This alone is the answer to the question "Yan-mayaḥ" which relates to the relationship between Jagat and Brahman.

The sage thus sums up in brief the main idea of the Purāṇa: "The world came into existence from the Will of Viṣṇu, and it is existent therein. He is the cause of the preservation and de-

struction of this world, and the world is Himself."9 ( M.R.. Eng. Tr. of Śr. Bh. Vol.I. p.137).

Having thus condensed the Vedic truths found in the Purāṇa in one terse verse<sup>10</sup>, he elaborates on this capsule teaching in the rest of the Purāṇa, digressing as and when Maitreya's questioning leads him elsewhere. He starts by saluting his abhimānadevatā, Nārāyaṇa, in His various forms, describing in glorious verse, Bhagavat Svarūpa-- the essential nature of the Supreme Being.

With this introduction, this study proposes to present the various aspects of Viśiṣṭādvaita under the captions Tattva, Hita and Puruṣārtha.

## TATTVA

Three Realities are accepted in Viśiṣṭādvaita as has been mentioned before; Cit, Acit and Īśvara. Of these, Acit is the insentient Principle, consisting of Primordial Matter and Time. A description of Acit as found in the Viṣṇucittīya is attempted in the following pages, with references to Rāmānuja's treatment of the same, where warranted.

## ACIT

Primordial matter, which forms the substance, the source material, out of which the visible Universe is fashioned, is known as Pradhāna and Prakṛti. In the causal aspect, or āraṇadaśā, it is subtle (Sūkṣma) and is described as avyakta (not made manifest). In this state, it is one, indiscrete mass. The ge refers to avyakta as akṣaya, because it does not change in entirety. Viṣṇucitta explains this word here as (akṛtsna



pariṇāmi). Avyakta, the uncreated state of Pradhāna, is not subject to decay; it does not have (require) anything else as support, it is not measurable by **Deśa or Kāla** (Space or Time) because it has no dimensions. **It is not aged** by Kāla, because in laya Kāla has no divisions, it is akhaṇḍa and is also in a subtle state. Avyakta **possesses the three guṇas** of Prakṛti - Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, **but it is stable** (dhruvaṃ) because the guṇas are in equilibrium. **In this state** of quiescence it possesses **no** qualities of sound, touch etc., and hence cannot be apprehended by the senses. **Nor does it have any forms.**<sup>11</sup> It is called **Sūkṣma Prakṛti**, is eternal, containing in itself sat and asat--cit and acit; like fire in wood<sup>12</sup>.

This avyakta, the source of the Universe is without beginning, birth or end. And everything, matter and soul, were all absorbed into this at the time of the prakṛta praḷaya and before Creation, as waters absorb salt (ambhaseva lavaṇam).

This avyakta, as also vyakta, puruṣa (jīvātmā) and kāla, are all but different prakārās (forms) of the Lord<sup>13</sup>, and their nature, existence and activities are all under His control. They form His body. But the prakārin, the Brahman does not under modification -- (avikāra).

There was neither day or night, nor sky nor earth<sup>14</sup>. There was no darkness, and there was no light, other than Him. Pradhāna, devoid of its characteristics of sound, touch and so on, could not be apprehended by the senses. Only the One, the Samaṣṭi Puruṣa, the Supreme Brahman, Was<sup>15</sup>. H.H.Wilson comments that as Prādhānika is a derivative word, it can also be

and attributively in the sense of having, conjoined with, Pradhāna, (qualifying Brahman)<sup>16</sup>.

Thus Avyakta, containing in itself Pradhāna and Puruṣa (matter and soul), quiescent, abides in Viṣṇu in laya, awaiting creation, like fire in wood, in subtle state.

As Vyakta in the Kāryadaśā, as the effects of creation, Pradhāna or matter is many, gross and manifests in a variety of visible forms.

In the created state, Prakṛti stands in relation to the Puruṣa (soul) as Vikāri (subject to change); while the latter, the Bhoktā (enjoyer) who has to undergo the fruits of his Karma through these various bodies of matter, himself remains immutable.

At the time of creation, from Viṣṇu's Form, were produced two forms, Pradhāna and Puruṣa. And His other form is Kāla which these two are either joined or separated, in Creation and Dissolution. So, Viṣṇu Himself stands as avyakta, vyakta, Pradhāna and kāla. The pre-eminent form of Viṣṇu is puruṣa, because of his kartṛtva, bhoktṛtva and cetanatva (doership, enjoyership and sentience, in relation to prakṛti). These four forms in due relation to each other, immutability, enjoyment, and action, without saṅkara (mixing) are the causes, in Creation, etc., as Prakṛti, knowers, and existence. With these four ingredients Viṣṇu creates. Pradhāna and Kāla are insentient, and do not have activities of doer and enjoyer. Pradhāna or Prakṛti can be created and enjoyed only by the soul inhabiting them. It is in constant state of flux. All material bodies undergo a series of changes, but these do not affect the soul inhabiting them.

Emphasising the impermanence of the body and the eternal nature of the soul, the sage describes five stages a body inevitably undergoes - "janmādi-pañcakam". These are birth, childhood, youth, old age and finally death.

When the time is right for Creation, the Supreme Being in the form of Kāla agitates Prakṛti and Puruṣa<sup>17</sup>, disturbing the equilibrium of the Guṇas. This sets in motion the process of Creation, which will be described in greater detail later, under the caption Īśvara and his Jagadvyāpāra (Cosmic activities). It is sufficient to mention here that Viśiṣṭādvaita accepts the twenty four evolutes listed in the Sāṅkhya system<sup>18</sup>, with one very important difference. The Sāṅkhya system holds that Prakṛti evolves spontaneously in the presence of Puruṣa, (that it exhibits Kārṭtva). Viśiṣṭādvaita maintains that Prakṛti evolves by the Saṅkalpa of the Lord<sup>19</sup>. Viṣṇucitta says in this context, "If it is asked, since Pradhāna etc, is the cause of Creation, how can causality be attributed to Viṣṇu?", the answer is "Vyaktādīnāṃ tadadhīna svarūpasthiti pravṛttitvena taccharīratvāt tad viśiṣṭasya Viṣṇoḥ kāraṇatvaṃ nānupapannaṃ." [Since the nature, sustenance and the course of the existence of vyakta and other forms are dependent on Him, as part of His body, it is appropriate that Viṣṇu is the Cause of Creation.]<sup>20</sup>

Just as avyakta emerges from the Supreme Being at the time of Creation, Vyakta elements are absorbed in the reverse order of Creation, into avyakta, akṣara and finally into the Supreme Being<sup>21</sup>.

The evolutes from the Bhūtadi Ahaṅkāra, the five elements, Ākāśa, Vāyu, Tejas, Āpaḥ and Pṛthivī (Space, Air, Light, Waters and Earth), along with their tanmātras (special subtle forms)

are incapable of further evolution. So Bhagavān institutes a process of combining them, referred to as Trivṛtkaraṇa in the Śrutis, and Pañcīkaraṇa in Smṛtis and Itihāsa Purāṇas<sup>22</sup>. Out of this compounded material, He creates the Brahmāṇḍa - This is the Samaṣṭi Sṛṣṭi.

The Vyaṣṭi Sṛṣṭi of names and forms follows, through the agency of Brahmā.

The sage gives us a comprehensive and detailed description of the manifested Creation - the Cosmos, the seven nether regions<sup>23</sup>, hells, the earth, the six upper worlds, the planetary systems, and the four categories of souls<sup>24</sup>, who inhabit these regions in various bodies according to their previous Karmas.

Summing up, after this description, the entire cosmos is described as tadātmakam - having Him as the indweller, Ātmā, and itself forming His body. The poet-composer expresses this in a few beautiful verses.

"यदम्बु वैष्णवः कायस्ततो विप्र वसुन्धरा ।

पद्माकारा समुद्भूता पर्वताब्ध्यादि संयुता ॥"

"Yadambu Vaiṣṇavaḥ kāyaḥ tato vipra vasundharā |

padmākārā samudbhūtā parvatābdhyādi samyutā||"

(V.P.II.12.37).

The Viṣṇucittīya explains this sloka thus: By the statement that the waters form the body of Viṣṇu, the Earth and all other modifications arising out of the waters, the entire Brahmāṇḍa (the Cosmic Egg) is declared to be His body, and Viṣṇu its Soul. The upabrahmaṇam (amplification) of this Truth found in all the

Śrutis is expressed as the grammatical equation (Sāmānādhikarāṇya) in the following lyrical verse<sup>25</sup> :

"ज्योतीषि विष्णुर्भुवनानि विष्णुर्वनानि विष्णुर्गिरयो दिशश्च ।  
नद्यस्समुद्राश्च स एव सर्वं यदस्ति यत्रास्ति च विप्रवर्य ॥"

"Jyotīmsi Viṣṇurbhuvanāni Viṣṇur  
vanāni Viṣṇurgirayo diśāśca|

Nadyas samudrāśca sa eva sarvaṁ

yadasti yannāsti ca Vipravarya||"

(V.P.II.12.38).

[The lights are Viṣṇu, the worlds are Viṣṇu, the forests are Viṣṇu, the mountains and the quarters; as are the rivers and the seas; all that is existent and all that is non-existent; He alone is All, oh best of brahmins!].

Viṣṇucitta comments that all that is-*asti*, and all that is not-*nāsti* (cit and acit) which comprise the worlds, is described as His body, and hence as having Him for its soul.

This refutes the advaitic interpretation which says "He has all this for His form. But He is no material thing, and the distinctions of mountain, ocean, land etc., are indeed born out of Him and are the outcome of illusion in the Intelligence".

All these forms of Acit are created by His Saṅkalpa - "tad vijñānavijṛmbhitāḥ".

Elaborating further on the negative term used for *acidvastu*, *nāsti*, the commentary continues - that the nature of *acidvastu* is such that it is in a constant state of flux. That entity which attains a different state every moment, and which abandons its

previous state in each succeeding condition, is completely different from Cit- (jīvātmā), which is not subject to change or decay. Therefore, it is differentiated from Cit, which is *asti*, by using the opposite term, *nāsti*. He illustrates this point with the example of a lump of clay becoming a pot, then breaking into pieces - shards, then, -"cūrṇam", which is powder, then *rajaḥ*, - smaller, like dust and finally *aṇu*, which is an even finer form of the dust, atomic<sup>26</sup>. This matter, which forms the bodies of the immutable jīvas whose self-knowledge is limited according to their Karmas, can it ever be described in the same terms as the eternally unchanging nature of the jīva, which has no beginning, middle or end? The question is rhetorical and the answer is "No". No *acidvastu* can be described by the word "existent" or "asti". That term is only for the immutable ātmā which is of the nature of knowledge.

The terms *avastu* and *asat* and *nāsti* are not used in the sense of insignificant, illusory or false as in *māyāvāda*, but in the sense of its being subject to destruction. There is nothing, no object in the perceptible world which is not subject to change and decay caused by Time.

### KĀLA - ( TIME)

Kāla also comes under the classification of the Insentient Reality or Acit Tattva. It is also a *prakāra* or mode of the Supreme Being. "Kālasvarūpaṁ Viṣṇośca Yanmayoktaṁ" (V.P. I.3.6.). It is the Sahakāri Kāraṇa, the accessory cause of the Cosmic activities of creation, etc<sup>27</sup>. None of them can take place without the influence of Time, which is eternal, having neither beginning nor end. As a crucial factor in the evolution of Prakṛti

and Puruṣa, at the time of creation, it is not absorbed into Prakṛti at laya, as everything else is; it is absorbed directly into the Paramātmān, as Prakṛti and Puruṣa are<sup>28</sup>.

In the state of dissolution, there is no day or night<sup>29</sup>, or other divisions of Time, because the factors that cause them, like the sources of light - the Sun and Moon etc., are all absorbed in Sūkṣma Prakṛti. But Kāla though not in sthūla form, exists in subtle form, where it is akhaṇḍa or indivisible. This is indicated by the usage of the verb "āsīt" in the verse below (fn.3) which predicates a state of existence. Our author quotes scriptural authority to show the Paramātmā's control over Time<sup>30</sup>. Time being without beginning or end (Kālasya anādyantatvāt) there is a continuous process of Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution<sup>31</sup>.

At the end of the parārdha of laya, when the situation is ripe for the initiation of the Sṛṣṭi process, Kāla becomes conducive to it, and manifests in gross form (sthūla). This form of Kāla, known as khaṇḍa, is divisible into units, ranging from the smallest units of kāṣṭhā and nimeṣa to the time - frames of the gods and Brahmā up to a 'para' or 'dviparārdha', as the duration of Brahmā's life is known<sup>32</sup>. This is a hundred years of Brahma's days. These divisions of Time are the same in all systems.

All this magnificent creation consisting of mountains, rivers, oceans forests and the wonderful variety of life found in them, the fourteen worlds, the Sun, Moon, Stars and all the planetary systems, all the souls inhabiting them. from Brahmā to an ant, are all part of His Vibhūti, or glory<sup>33</sup>. The created Prākṛta universe is His Līla-Vibhūti. + His own domain, of aprākṛta Śuddha

Sattva is Nitya Vibhūti<sup>34</sup>, where Prakṛti does not exist, and Kāla, though present, has no authority. (na Kālastatra vai prabhuh). In Līlavibhūti, Time rules the lives of all created beings, from the movements of the sun and moon, which cause day and night, all the astral and planetary movements, and through them the lives of all the created beings, governed as they are by the divisions of Time, in Sthiti. Four kinds of praḷaya (pratisañcara, laya) are described, effected by Time, and affecting all of Prakṛti and Puruṣa. They are the Nitya, Naimittika, Prākṛta and Ātyantika. Wilson translates them as perpetual, occasional, elemental and absolute.

The *Nitya* is the on going, perpetual destruction of all things that are born or created. These are caused by the progeny of Adharma, listed as Death, Sorrow, Disease, Old age and others, who are all described as terrible forms of Viṣṇu which cause the Nityapraḷaya<sup>35</sup>.

The *Naimittika* or Brāhma occurs at the end of a Kalpa, which is a day of Brahmā (a thousand caturyugas), and lasts an equal period of his night. Brahmā enters Viṣṇu who sleeps during this period. The Supreme Brahman, having Caturmukha Brahmā for His body, creates in Kṛtayuga and destroys in Kali. An uninterrupted succession of such caturyugas follows, till the Prākṛta Praḷaya. The first and last yugas gain importance thereby.

*Prākṛta Praḷaya*: The duration of the life of Brahmā is called a 'para' consisting of two half-paras or dviparārdha, and is a hundred years of his days and nights. At the end of this period all things created at the time of Sarga, all the discrete entities, which are the effects of Prakṛti, are absorbed again, into the



Cause, Mūlaprakṛti or Avyakta in an order reverse to creation. This is called Prākṛta Praḷaya or Mahā Samhāra. Avyakta and Jīva are finally absorbed in the Supreme Being, Viṣṇu, and repose in Him till it is time for creation again. [Kāla is not absorbed in Avyakta, it is absorbed directly into Brahman].

"अव्यक्तं अक्षरे लीयते अक्षरं तमसि लीयते तमः परो देवा एकीभवति - इति श्रुतेः ।"

"Avyaktaṁ akṣare līyate akṣaraṁ tamasi līyate tamaḥ pare deva ekībhavati" iti Śruteḥ'.

The *Ātyantika Praḷaya* is the release of the individual soul from Saṁsāra, as and when it attains Mokṣa, after the complete destruction of his karma and avidyā(ignorance). For him there is no re-birth (apunarāvṛtti). In the other praḷayas and in suṣupti and utkrānti (death) there is rebirth, because his karma is not exhausted.

To recapitulate briefly the essential nature of the Acittattva or the Insentiant Reality:-

Acit is Satya (True) and Nitya-(Eternal) like Cit and Īśvara, but subject to modification(Vikārāspada), and the locus of the three Prākṛta guṇas of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. (guṇāśraya). It is present as sūkṣma (subtle) and sthūla (gross) forms. It is subject to growth and decay. It is the material for the creation of the Universe. It forms the body for the individual souls, one for each, and both together form the body of the Supreme Being. Prakṛti (Nature) is part of god's Vibhūti, and its beauty is due to His being its indweller.

It being acetana, without sense, has no kartṛtva (capacity to do) or bhokṛtva (capacity to enjoy). It has no self-knowledge or knowledge of other things.

## CIT

The individual souls are collectively referred to as Jīva, or the Cit Tattva. Īśvara is also 'cetana' or sentient, but He is superior to and different from the jīvas. Sometimes they are referred to in the same terms, and it has to be understood from the context and from the commentary, which is meant.

The individual soul is of the nature of knowledge-jñānaśvarūpa. People, through erroneous knowledge, see it as the embodied form it takes due to its previous karma, as deva, manuṣya and others. The bodies are real; only the perception of the ātmā as the body is delusion<sup>36</sup>.

“ज्ञान स्वरूपमखिलं जगदेतदबुद्धयः ।

अर्थस्वरूपं पश्यन्तो भ्राम्यन्ते मोहसंप्लवे ॥

"Jñāna svarūpamakhilam jagadetadabuddhayaḥ |

arthaśvarūpaṁ paśyānto bhrāmyante mohasamplave||"

(V.P.I.4.40).

The commentary says here, "atra jñānaśabdena jñāna guṇasāratvāt pratyagātmā ucyate| nāyaṁ ślokaḥ paraṁviśayaḥ". The Viṣṇucittīya says, this śloka is about the individual soul, and not the Supreme Being. Ignorant men are unable to distinguish between body and soul, how can they hope to know the Supreme Ātmā?

The Advaitins interpret it thus; This which appears embodied belongs to that Supreme Brahman who is of the nature of

Intelligence. Those who are ignorant perceive it, on account of erroneous knowledge, as though it were the world. All the world is jñāna svarūpa, but the ignorant look up on it as though it were made up of material bodies and things and are whirled about in a flood of delusion. Those of pure mind, and know what is jñāna look upon the entire world as of the nature of jñāna, and as the Supreme Brahman Himself. (V.P.I.4.39-41). Viṣṇucitta interprets this thus: those of pure mind who have knowledge, perceive the entire universe made up of diverse forms (such as deva manuṣya and others) caused by the modifications of prakṛti, as indwelt by souls who are of the nature of knowledge and who form the body of the Supreme Brahman.

At the time of Creation, the Supreme Being Creates, but He is only the Causal Agent of Creation, the souls attaining their bodies according to their previous karma<sup>37</sup>. "Sṛjya Śaktaya" is explained as "Jīvānām prācīna karma vāsanāḥ" and "Svaśaktya" as "Svakarmabhiḥ". "devādi vastu svakarmabhī tadrūpatām nīyate". The soul attains its body which is decided by its previous Karma. God is only the Causal agent as far as Creation is concerned<sup>38</sup>. There is no partiality or mercilessness on the part of the Creator. (no 'vaiṣamya' or 'nairghṛṇya').

Thus Cit, the individual soul, is shown to be an entity different from the material body it inhabits. It is further established that the jīvas are many numerically, one inhabiting one body, however big or small-supporting the bahu-jīva-vāda of Viśiṣṭādvaita. There are as many ātmās in Samsāra as there are bodies. But they are all of the same nature of jñāna (knowledge) and purity. For this reason, and because they do not possess the qualities of the bodies belonging to the various jātis

pecies) in themselves, it is not possible to distinguish one ātmā from another and so the question "Who are you?" and the declaration that "I am such and such", become meaningless<sup>39</sup>. The usage of the phrase "mattaḥ anyaḥ" (other than me) posits different entities. Therefore this statement does not mean the oneness of the various entities in the Advaitic sense. It only means that all ātmās, free of their bodies, possess the same qualities of pure knowledge.

Viṣṇucitta refutes the ātmaikatva pakṣa of Advaita by the usual statements "nityo nityānāṁ, cetanascetanānāṁ" and "ham tvaṁ ca tathā anye". The contention that ātmas have different forms, is also refuted.

The ātma is atomic in size, whatever the size of the body, and has no parts. It cannot be divided.

Concluding the prakaraṇa on dehātmaviveka (the distinction between body and the soul), Viṣṇucitta says -"andhatamasī ṣinimīlane ca niravayavatvena ātmanaḥ pratyaktatayā ahaṁ bhāsamānatvāt idambuddhibodhyaṁ adṛśyāparabhāgaṁ ca o ādi nātmā, na ca ātmano avayavaḥ". [From the fact that even in pitch darkness or when the eyes are closed, the consciousness of the ātmā as something apart, different from the body, and having no parts, shines forth, it is clear that there is something superior that cannot be perceived and which causes the realisation of "I"-ness. The parts of the body like the head, neck, etc., are not the ātma; neither does it have any parts].

Therefore, something other than these parts (like the head, neck, torso, limbs etc.,) namely the soul, is present in the body.

As Yāmuna has said **aham'bhū(y; pr;gq;Rt( p[TygqoR ih ī.tēṁṁ)** "Aham'buddhyā parāgarthāt pratyagartho hi bhidyate"; [The inner self is different from the external object by reason of its being referred to as 'aham'']. According to the Śr.Pr., this quotation is from "Samvit Siddhi". Viṣṇucitta also says, "Tasmādebhyaḥ pṛthagātmā vyavasthita ityarthāḥ. yathoktam yāmunācāryaiḥ 'aham'buddhyā parāgarthāt pratyagartho hi bhidyate' iti." (V.C.II.14.103.)

The Paramātmā is different from the jīvātma, and continues to be different, even in 'samādhi' and 'mukti'. In the verse beginning "paramātmātmanor yogaḥ"<sup>40</sup>, the commentary says "Yogaḥ tādātmyam, anyathā uttarārdhenāsaṅgateḥ etadaikyam mithyā; tatra hetuḥ:- anyaditi"<sup>41</sup>.

In this verse, the yoga of Paramātmā and ātmā is said to be "paramārtha"; yoga means having Him for Ātma, as otherwise it will not agree with the second half of the verse, which says that this numerical oneness is false; one substance does not become another (does not attain the nature of another). The contention of the Advaitin that the jīvā loses its identity and merges with the Paramātmā in yoga or mukti is refuted. Viṣṇucitta has said elsewhere (V.C.I.1.31). "If it is admitted that the individual soul merges into the Paramātmā in Mokṣa, thus losing its individual identity, then Mokṣa itself ceases to be a human end (*puruṣārtha*). No human being will strive to achieve a goal which results in his own annihilation.

The ātma is "one"; an indivisible unit, not a collection of various parts like the body; it is vyāpī - pervading by his intrinsic knowledge everywhere; though situated in dissimilar bod-

ies, is of the same nature; pure, without blemish, by his own essential nature; devoid of the *prākṛta* *guṇas* of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*; he is superior to *Prakṛti* and is not subject to the *Ṣaḍbhāva Vikāra*<sup>42</sup> ending in decay and death. He is not affected by hunger, thirst or other afflictions which the body is subject to. He is 'Cetana'-Sentient, 'svayaṁprakāśa'- aware of himself as "I", 'Sarvagata' - all pervasive, pervading the perishable elements like fire and water by his *Saukṣmya* (subtle nature) being *aṇu*<sup>43</sup> (atomic in size); and therefore not subject to burning or drenching<sup>44</sup> etc. He is immutable, imperishable.

The *ātmā*, "Pumān" is all pervasive, not by "paramamahatva"- extreme magnitude, like the *ākāśa*, but because of his extremely subtle atomic size, and (being without parts) he is present in all insentient entities however minute. But he is not capable of moving from one place to another by himself and can do so only through a body, (see "Viṣṇu cittiya", II .15.24.). This is because of the absence of action in unembodied souls. Thus, even though the soul is formless by nature, he travels through his *āśraya* (the body) as a lame man does with a vehicle.

The *jīvātmā* is of the nature of *para**jñāna* (knowledge of the supreme) as different from the *viśaya**jñāna* (the knowledge pertaining to worldly things); of the nature of *Sukha-Samvit* (Bliss and Knowledge); not one with the perishable identities of gods, men and others, ever -- in the past, present or future. He is *Vibhu* - the master of his body and the organs of sense and action. He is the *kartā* and *bhoktā* - doer and enjoyer. Free of karma, he is *Svarāt*.

They who attribute the qualities of deva, manuṣya and others to the Soul and consider them as of various characteristics are in delusion. The soul attains the appearance of difference, just as the wind, blown through the various perforations of a flute, though the same, is transformed into various musical notes as the "ṣaḍja" "ṛṣabha", etc. (V.P.II.14.32). So while emphasising the sameness of the ātmasvarūpa, this stanza also establishes the plurality of souls, which is an important doctrine of Viśiṣṭādvaita.

The advaitins interpret "Paramātmā" as the Supreme Self and declare oneness of the souls with Him.

So, according to the Sage, Paramārtha -- the highest knowledge -- is the knowledge that all differences vanish, once Karma is destroyed.

The important thing to know, besides the above, is this: All creation, consisting of sentient and insentient entities, is the form of the One Who is known as Vāsudeva. All this is His Body.<sup>6</sup>

So the phrases saying "Know this to be one" applied to the individual soul means only similarity in their nature of knowledge (jñānaikākāratā) and not identity (Svarūpaikatva) of their forms. This is the non-duality intended here. Further, the statement that the world of Cit and Acit forms the body of Vāsudeva, shows that the sage does not hold the opinion that there is abheda (non-difference) between Paramātmā and ātmā (the Supreme Soul and the individual soul.) The non-difference between the Ātmā and Paramātmā is seen as tādātmya, with the Supreme Ātmā as the Soul and the jīvātmā as the body.

So the individual soul resides in his body of acit, sustaining it, controlling it, using it and experiencing the fruits of his karma

through it; and is himself, (embodied), the body of the Supreme Ātmā, Who is not affected by His association with Cit and Acit in this manner<sup>46</sup>, being beyond karma.

Ātmās exist in three states: baddha-those bound in saṁsāra; mukta-those who have been baddhas and have attained mokṣa and are liberated from the cycle of births and deaths; and the jīvas, who have never been in saṁsāra and are eternally liberated. Viṣṇucitta mentions these in commenting upon the terms "śuddhāya", "nityāya" and "paramātmāne" in the verse "avikārāya śuddhāya--" etc., (V.P.I.2.1).

The essential nature of the ātmā is dāsya (servitude, service) to the Paramātmā, and is in the relationship of possession and possessor - (Svarṇ and svāmi)<sup>47</sup>. The word "Svarṇ" in the verse (V.P.I.2.1) refers not only to possessions but to his own self, ahaṁ bhavāmi - (I am mine) and not the śeṣa or dāsa of the Paramātmā.

## ĪSVARA

The "Śrītattva", the Reality that is Śrī or Lakṣmī, the consort of Nārāyaṇa, is considered a part of the Īśvara tattva because of her position and inseparable association with Him. She is always "Śrīmannārāyaṇa". This is dealt with briefly but clearly in the "Viṣṇucittīya".

Answering Maitreya's question as to how Lakṣmī, (who it is well known), appeared in the churning of the Milky Ocean for amṛta (nectar) could be born as the daughter of Sage Bhṛgu and Khyāti, sage Parāśara explains that Lakṣmī is eternal, like iṣṇu; she can also appear and disappear (āvīrbhāva and



tirodhāna) according to circumstances, just as He does. She eternal, she is the "Jaganmātā" (Mother of the world). She constantly associated with Viṣṇu (or Nārāyaṇa) who is t Jagatpitā (Father of the world)<sup>48</sup>.

She, who was first born as the daughter of Bhṛgu and Khyā disappeared from the world by the curse of Durvāsas<sup>49</sup> on Indr The former was angered by Indra's careless treatment of t celestial garland given him by the sage, by his arrogance. I cursed him saying that the Śrī of the three worlds will be lost She appeared again from the ocean of Milk, at the time of t churning for Amṛta.

Just as Viṣṇu is Sarvagata (all pervasive) she is also Omnipresent, "Sarvagato Viṣṇuḥ yathā-yatsvabhāvaḥ, iyamapi tat -tatsvabhāvā iti". (see V.C. on V.P. I.8.17) Śrī Viṣṇucitta sa here that this can mean an extended application (atideśa) of t qualities like Omnipresence, Knowledge and eternal Exister and other auspicious qualities present in Viṣṇu, to Lakṣmī al Athavā- Or -- he gives an alternate explanation; Bhagavār Omnipresent by His Vibhutva (quality of being unlimited Space, Time or Object), while She, by Her Śakti (Powers), e though she is aṇu by Her nature, being associated with H can also be considered as Omnipresent; "athavā Bhagav vibhutvena sarvagataḥ; asyāstacchaktivaśādaṇutve'pi tatra t sandhānāt sarvagatatvam uktam. iyam ca sarvagatā".

It has to be pointed out in this context that whether Śrī is or vibhu is a moot point among the followers of Śrī Rāmān The doctrinal differences between the Teṅgalais and Vaḍaga which surfaced in the thirteenth century, are eighteen in n

ar, of which the essential nature (Svarūpa) of Śrī is of great importance. The passage of Viṣṇucittīya quoted above is found in all the three editions consulted for the present study<sup>51</sup>, and it categorically refers to Śrī as "aṇu".

Further, the inseparable nature and sarvātmakatva (being the soul of all things), is illustrated by a long list of examples. To mention a few:

Viṣṇu is the Meaning; She is the word (speech). She is Nyāya śāstra; He is Nyāya. He is the Creator; She is Creation; She is the Earth; He is the support; (Bhūdhara) Keśava is the Sun; amālāyā (Lakṣmī) is His effulgence.

He is the Moon, She is the Moonlight, always present with Him. Govinda is the Ocean; She is the Shore. He is the Gods; She is their Consorts. Gadāpāṇi is the Support, Lakṣmī is the Śakti (power). She is the Light; He is the Lamp,. She is the Reeper, He is the Tree<sup>52</sup>.

The list being endless, the sage says, "In short, among all the created categories of gods, men, animals, and others, whatever is masculine is Bhagavān Hari and all that is feminine is Śrī. There is nothing else, other than They<sup>53</sup>.

All this is Their Vibhūti (splendour, glory, wealth). There is nothing higher than They.

Both of them are the inner self of everything in Creation - good or bad, (she being anapāyinī). A few instances are mentioned as being apt examples.

She, Lakṣmī, is described as a Śakti (power) of Viṣṇu. "avaṣṭāmbho Gadāpāṇiḥ Śaktirlakṣmīḥ dvijottama!" [He is the Support; She is the Power] (V.P. 1.8.29).

"Kalā kāṣṭhāmuhūrtādikalāśūtrasya gocare|

Yasya Śaktirna Śuddhasya prasīdatu sa no Hariḥ  
(V.P.I.9.45). This is Brahmā's stuti.

Viṣṇucitta says here "Śaktiḥ-Lakṣmīḥ| Vīgrahaparijar  
paricchadādirvibhūtiḥ|| He quotes the Śruti vākya  
'Kalāmuhūrtādi-mayaśca Kālo na yadvibhūteḥ pariṇāmahet  
ityādeḥ||'. [He and His Śakti, Lakṣmī are above the influen  
of Time. Time has no authority over Them and Their Vibhū

The word "pranaṣṭa" in "pranaṣṭalakṣmīkaṁ" occurring  
Durvāsa's curse on Indra<sup>54</sup> does not mean lost or destroyed  
since Lakṣmī is eternal and imperishable, as also Her grace.  
only means the disappearance of Her grace from Indra's c  
main, the three worlds, because of the Sage's curse.

Describing the effects of Durvāsa's curse, Sage Parāśara sa  
that the three worlds along with Indra became "niśśrika". (I  
reft of Śrī's Grace) There was a dearth of bhogyavastu, (obje  
of enjoyment) and herbs and other ingredients necessary for  
performance of sacrifices. There was no tapas, and there wa  
decline of Sattvaguṇa. The devas lost their might and were  
defeated by the daityas. (Sons of Diti, asuras.). There was a g  
eral decline in the qualities of a moral code, like truth, clear  
ness and good conduct. So the entire quality of life was erod  
due to the absence of Lakṣmī's Grace.

Yāmuna's Catuśślokī conveys the same idea.<sup>55</sup>

The three worlds were lost before, because of the abse  
(withdrawal) of the nectar of Your compassionate glances. N  
with the restoration of Your Grace, being drenched by the l

ring nectar of your glance, though fleeting, the worlds are protected and there is a boundless resurgence of prosperity.

Both Nāyanārācān Piḷḷai and Vedānta Deśika who have commented on this Stotra say that the previous sad plight of the three worlds was caused by Her neglect and the absence of Her grace, and not by Her anger, as She is incapable of anger.

Indra praises Lakṣmī, saluting Her, addressing Her by various epithets, by the principle of Sāmānādhikaraṇya. She is the Mother and Hari is the Father of all the worlds; and the Universe of animate and inanimate entities is pre-empted by Them. Just being looked at by Her, even people without virtue, obtain immediately good conduct and wealth<sup>56</sup>. Even the Vedas are unable to describe Her. She is all kinds of vidyā, and is the giver of mukti<sup>57</sup>.

This, in fact, is a moot point but Viṣṇucitta does not comment much on this passage except to give the meanings of words. Concluding the narration of Lakṣmī's appearance from the Milky Ocean, the Sage says that She appears with Viṣṇu in all the Avatāras.

एवं यदा जगत्स्वामी देवदेवो जनार्दनः ।

अवतारं करोत्येषा तदा श्रीस्तत्सहायिनी ॥"

"Evaṁ yadā jagatsvāmī devadevo Janārdanaḥ |  
avatāraṁ Karotyēṣā tadā Śrīstatsahāyīnī ||" (V.P.I.9.142).

Commenting on this, Viṣṇucitta observes:

"Tatsahāyīnī-tena saha ayate-gacchatīti tatsahāyīnī,  
sahacāriṇī ityarthah".

She is His Sahacārīnī because She goes with Him everywhere<sup>58</sup>.

## ĪŚVARA

The Supreme Being, Paraṁ Brahma, Paramātmā, Puruṣottama, Paratattva, Para Puruṣa - as He is variously referred to, is identified as Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu.

The Supreme Being has five statuses - Para - the Highest form, as He is in Paramapada or Śrī Vaikuṅṭha, His Celestial abode of Śuddha Sattva beyond Prakṛti or the Material world. He resides there, along with Śrī, (Lakṣmī), - His Chief Consort - and Bhū and Nīlā, who are also His consorts. They are attended by a host of nityas and muktas to whom eternal service to Him and Lakṣmī constitutes bliss. In Paramapada, as Para Vāsudeva, He is Emperor, regal, with lordship or aiśvarya as his chief attribute. This is His Nityavibhūti, which is the greater part of His Dominion - "Pādo'syaviśvābhūtāni tripādasyāmṛtāḥ divi". Līlavibhūti or the created universe of Prakṛti, is but a fraction of this.

The Vyūhāvatāras are four in number; Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyuṁṇa and Aniruddha. He is present as these avatāras in the Milky Ocean; each has a specific function. All the Ṣaḍguṇas - jñāna, śakti, bala, aiśvarya, vīrya, and tejas - are present in all of them. But Vāsudeva has all of the guṇas in full, while the others have two guṇas predominating in each. This is because of their varied roles in the evolution, sustenance, dissolution and other cosmic activities.

As Antaryāmin He is present in all the jīvas as Inner Controller. He is the Soul of the individual souls, pervading all Creation.

The Vibhava Avatāras are those where He descends to this world, in varied forms similar to the creatures inhabiting it (Sajātīya). Of the well-known ten avatāras, those of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are most important, since He, during these incarnations, was born amongst human beings as one of them, and lived among them.

Arca is that aspect of the Lord, which, sanctified and installed according to the rules laid down in the Āgamas, becomes an object of worship. Once installed in such a manner, the Lord has all the powers that he possesses in his Para aspect.

His qualities of Aiśvarya, Lordship, is paramount in Para; ālambhya (easy accessibility), Sauśīlya (affability) and Vātsalya (parental care and love) increase progressively from Para to Arca; and is most abundant in the last. Lord Nārāyaṇa possess all His qualities in full in all these aspects, and a description of his Param will apply equally to all, though He may choose not to exhibit them.

### **ĪAGAVAT SVARŪPA (The essential Nature of Bhagavān)**

His Supremacy is first declared in the opening verse of the second chapter<sup>59</sup>. He is the Cause (of the world) but He undergoes no modification - 'avikāra'. Though He is the Upadāna-kaṇa - the material cause of the Universe -- He does not undergo change or diminish in any way, from his essential nature. This differentiates Him from Pradhāna or the acetana-(insen-

tient). Since the individual Soul in bondage (baddha) is a avikāra (immutable), the Supreme Being is distinguished from him as 'Śuddha' -- pure, free from sorrow and karman. This distinction from a **mukta**, who is also **śuddha** is conveyed by the expression '**nitya**'; a **mukta** had earlier undergone kleśa and karma, as **baddha**. **All these characteristics are common to the nityasūris also. So He is Paramātmā.** He is Supreme and none else Superior to Him<sup>60</sup>.

These few words sketch His Supremacy and show that He is different from and superior to Acit and the three categories Cit-Baddha, Mukta, and Nitya. The next epithet "Sadaikarūparūpa"<sup>61</sup> describes His eternal unchanging Form. The first rūpa refers to His unique particular nature of possessing powers like the six guṇas - Jñāna, Śakti, Bala, Aiśvarya, Vīrya and Tejas and His special quality of effulgence, as determined in the Upaniṣads (Svabhāvavācī). The second rūpa Vighrahavācī - speaks of His Divya Maṅgala Vighraha<sup>62</sup> -- His Divine Auspicious Form of indescribable beauty and effulgence.

This establishes that the Paramātmā is endowed with unique qualities and has a unique Vighraha. It is not the Nirviśeṣa Nirguṇa Cinmātra (unqualified Pure Consciousness) that is being described here.

As Viṣṇu, He is all - pervasive and He is the Lord, Īśvara indwelling Cit and Acit, and having everything under His control. He is not affected by their deficiencies. The term Sarvajña pre-emptly imperfections attaching to Him because of this Universal Vyāpti.

Cf. V.C.I.2.1: "atha sarvavyāpti lakṣaṇamaiśvaraṁ guṇaṁ khyāpayan viśeṣyaṁ nirdiśati "viṣṇava" iti, cidacidvyāptyā prasaktaṁ doṣaṁ pariharati "Sarvajiṣṇava" iti. jayo hi parasya svavaśe sthāpanaṁ". Vyāpti and Jaya - pervasion and conquest, are natural to Him.

Brahmā and Śiva are His own Vibhūti (aspects of His divine powers). He creates them and activates them in their tasks of Cosmic Creation and Destruction, by controlling them from within. The Cosmic Functions of Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution are carried out through Brahmā, His own avatāra Hari and Rudra (Śiva)<sup>63</sup>. He is the giver of Mokṣa as Vāsudeva (Bhārya Vāsudevāya). He who makes one cross the ocean of Saṁsāra. Bhagavān is the sole authority to grant Mokṣa (Bhagavata eva mokṣa pradatvaṁ uktaṁ.)<sup>64</sup> (V.C.I.2.2.) Hari, as sustainer, is not Bhagavān's Vibhūti. He is His Own avatāra. No one else has the power to Protect<sup>65</sup>. He is Sarveśvara - the Supreme Ruler of all. He is present as Pradhāna (vyakta and avyakta) Puruṣa and Kāla<sup>66</sup>.

He is the support of the world, which is His body, as its indwelling Soul. He is smaller than the smallest atom, pervading it ("aṇīyāṁsamaṇīyasāṁ - prakṛteratisūkṣmā vasthāviśeṣāṇāmapi vyāptyā tato'pisūkṣmataram") - (V.C.1.2.5). He is Acyuta. Viṣṇucitta explains 'acyuta' in this verse as meaning that His jñāna does not undergo contraction in association with jīva. He is of the nature of knowledge. He is "atyantanirmalam" "Sarvathā malarūpa duḥkha ajñānādi rahitam". (V.C.1.2.6) i.e., Completely without blemish, devoid at all times, of sorrow, ignorance and such<sup>67</sup>.



He is the Supreme Lord - Prabhu. He requires no assistance in the Cosmic functions, and is independent. He has no birth or destruction due to karma, (aja, akṣara). He is immutable, imperishable. He is not reduced in any way in the process of Creation, by His being the Upādāna kāraṇa as material causes are. He is qualified by all kalyāṇa guṇas (auspicious qualities)<sup>68</sup>.

"Paraḥ parāṇām" (V.P. II.1.10). He is the Supreme, Superior to the most excellent by His essential nature, form, qualities, lordship and others. There is none superior to Him, and there is none indwelling Him. He is His Own Support "ātmasaṁsthitaḥ". He cannot be classified by any norms, as form, colour, substance, birth or deed, or described by adjectives denoting jāti (species) or qualities.

He is not subject to the changes occurring in the six stages of life, undergone by the soul in Saṁsāra<sup>69</sup>. He can only be described as "Sadā asti" - 'Always Is.' There is no point of Time when He is not. He is eternal, not limited by Time (Kālānavaccheda)<sup>70</sup>.

He is not limited by space. He is everywhere, in everything, and everything is in Him and He is known as 'Vāsudeva' because of this<sup>71</sup>. This shows 'deśa vastu anavaccheda'. (unlimited by space and object).

"antarbahiśca tatsarvaṁ vyāpya Nārāyaṇassthitaḥ".

This establishes antarvyāpti and bahirvyāpti. Though He is present like space in everything, "Vibhu", He is untouched by their defects. And He is the Brahman who is to be known from the Vedāntas - "tad Brahma"<sup>72</sup>

Anticipating the prima-facie view that imperfections will result in Him who is the seat of all auspicious qualities and devoid of all heya, by His being the soul of all things that are the locus of modification and limitations, Viṣṇucitta says that His Indwelling is due to the body-soul relationship and not due to identity of their essential natures<sup>73</sup>. And this Paraṁ Brahman is superior to Pradhāna, Puruṣa, Vyakta and Kāla etc.

This is Viṣṇu's Highest form, excellent beyond anything else in Knowledge and Bliss. This is the Supreme Goal, which is adored by the nityasūris, eternally. This is the Paramaṁ Padam<sup>74</sup>.

The nature, existence and activities of vyakta, avyakta, puruṣa and kāla being controlled by Him, as His Body, He creates, with these as His material, in sport, like a playful boy. Being avāpta samastakāma (one who has all that He desires). He has nothing to gain for Himself, and Creation is mere sport for Him<sup>75</sup>.

Those who know the Vedas and who declare that Brahman is the sole cause of Creation say that in the beginning, only the Brahman was<sup>76</sup>.

As Brahmā, taking the rajo guṇa, (He being unaffected by it) He creates, and as Himself, Viṣṇu, full of Śuddha Sattva Guṇa, He protects. At the end of the kalpa, He, in the form of Rudra, assuming excessive tamoguṇa, devours all Creatures. Thus, extending His Powers to Brahmā and others by entering and indwelling them. He carries out the Cosmic Functions.

He is the Creator and the Created; He is the Protector and the Protected. He is the Destroyer and the Destroyed<sup>77</sup>. All the

words denoting **Brahmā, Rudrā** and the beings created, protected and destroyed, eventually mean **Him only** - by reason of being **His Body**. But even while being present in them as their **Soul**, He is merely a controller according to their **Karman** and not an experiencer of their actions. He is master of **His Own Self** (Svayaṁ Prabhu).

Then how is it that creation etc., are attributed to **Brahmā and others**? The answer is, **He is the "Varada"** - giver of boons - to those who resort to **Him** for help in their functions.

Various entities have their own special powers, which cannot be understood or perceived by logic, but only by the effect of their action-like the heat of fire. Similarly, the Supreme **Brahman** has His own **Special Powers** - essential to His Nature **like jñāna, bala, kriyā** (knowledge, strength and action) etc., which are the efficient causes of creation and other **Cosmic Functions**. These are referred to as **Bhāva Śaktis** - Capabilities natural to **Him**. Admitting His being beyond form (**aśarīratvaṁ**), **His** creatorship is attributed to His Powers. But in truth, He **does** have a **Divine Form**<sup>78</sup>.

Having caused the chain of transformation of **Pradhāna** resulting in the evolution of various entities,<sup>79</sup> He compounded the elements, each with the other four, in the process known as **pañcikaraṇam**, as has been described earlier. Out of this compounded material, the elements, entered by the **jīvātmā** - (**puruṣādhiṣṭhitatvāt**) grew, like a seed sprouting, and gradually expanded like a vast bubble of water, into the immense **Cosmic Egg**. This **Brahmāṇḍa** lay in the waters and was the excellent

mode of Viṣṇu in the material world. This is called **Samaṣṭi** (Aggregate Creation).

At this stage, Brahmā who has a very long life, and enters to Nārāyaṇa during his night (Brāhma or Naimittika praḷaya), produced again by Viṣṇu and is said to be born. Because of his long life, Brahmā is said to be eternal, and the term 'born' is used as 'upacāra' in a secondary sense. Viṣṇu then enters Brahmā by His Own Free Will and creates the Vyāṣṭi Creation of name and form. And these names and forms are recreated as in previous kalpas recalling the words of the Vedas.<sup>80</sup> The commentary says here- 'the names of creatures from gods to inanimate things - like gods, men, animals, birds, trees and other species; their forms - like being unblinking, two-footed, four-footed, with branches and so on; and deeds and objects such as sacrifices and the materials that are used for them, were created, knowing them from the words of the (eternal) Vedas'<sup>81</sup> (V.C. I.5.63).

Here we come across the popular **nirvaçana** (etymology) of the name "Nārāyaṇa":

"आपो नारा इति प्रोक्ता आपो वै नरसूनवः ।

अयनं तस्य ताः पूर्वं तेन नारायणः स्मृतः ॥"

"āpo nārā iti proktā āpo vai narasūnavaḥ|

ayanaṁ tasya tāḥ pūrvaṁ tena Nārāyaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ||"

The commentary of Viṣṇucitta says "----Bhagavān is known as Nara by reason of His imperishable nature (avināśitva). The waters, created by Him, are Nāras. The word "āpaḥ" standing for waters, includes other created elements also. They are His

ayanarñ- His body, because of His pervasion even before the Creation of Brahmā took place.<sup>82</sup>

Hence, "Nārāḥ ayanarñ yasya" and "Nārāṇārñ ayanarñ" - Nārāyaṇaḥ" are the two etymologies possible here. By this etymology of the name, "Nārāyaṇa" Who is the Causal Supreme Being, His distinction from the Created effect, Brahmā is established. The earth, seeing the Lord as Varāha who had entered Pātāla- the nether world -- praised Him bowing in devotion, and prayed to be lifted from the waters, as she had been lifted before by Him.

All that which is grasped by the mind, like happiness(sukha) etc; all that is perceived by the senses - like form; all that is grasped by the mind, through its knowledge, and all that is known by other valid means of knowledge, are all His Form.<sup>83</sup>

He is 'ahetu'- there is no cause of which He is the effect. He has no progenitor. But He is the Cause of all Cosmic Functions.<sup>84</sup> All men are impelled by the Sattva and other guṇas, which follow the Will of the Lord, day and night. He who overcomes this mighty triple power of the guṇatraya of the Lord, reaches the Supreme and does not return. "guṇatrayarñ hyetadbrahman śaktitrayarñ mahat. Yo atiyāti sa yātyeva paramñ nāvarttate punaḥ" (V.C. I.7.48). This Universe is established by a fraction of a one ten thousandth portion (ayutāmśa) of an ayutāmśa of His Śakti.<sup>85</sup>

He is 'abhūta pūrva' - there is none who was prior to Him. He was there before everything else.<sup>86</sup>

He is known as the **Brahman** because of His Greatness and Growth - "Bṛhatvāt bṛmhaṇatvāt ca yadrūpaṁ brahma sarjñī" .<sup>87</sup> (V.P.I.12.55). Śrī Viṣṇucitta gives an alternate meaning for "pāraparaṁ" of the verse "parampāraṁ Viṣṇurapārapāraḥ paraḥ parebhyaḥ paramārtha rūpī" (V.P.I.15.55). He is the secret object to be taught by a guru versed in sampradāya (tradition) from an uninterrupted line of ācāryas. He has infinite powers ( anantaśaktiḥ). Or, He has no limits i.e., He is of immeasurable dimensions. Or, unfinished acts like sacrifices, etc., are completed by chanting His Names or meditating on Him. All these meanings are derived from the root Pāra - a bank, finishing an action - "pāratira karmasamāptau dhātoḥ". By reason of His being the Cause, and having unsurpassed bliss and other qualities, He is Superior to Brahmā and others. He is "paramārtha rūpī"-has a Divine Form, not perishable like those of Brahmā and others, but real, eternal and the resort of all Powers (Sarva Śaktyāśrayaḥ), of the nature of Bliss, Which is for the enjoyment of others.

He protects the Vedas and Vaidikas. He is the Śeṣin - the Master. He is the Ultimate Resting Place ( at laya) of Time who is the limiting adjunct for all else. Or, He fills (pervades), substances like ākāśa(ether) which are themselves vibhu(pervasive)(pālana purāṇayoḥ iti dhātuḥ). He is the Protector of the protectors.<sup>88</sup>

He is the Material Cause. He is the chain of causes from Mahat up to the final product of bodies - 'mahadādi kāryamālā'.

He is the Vedas, He is the Lord of Vedas, He gives the Vedas to Brahmā, He is Viṣṇu. His Supreme Nature, fit to be medi-

tated upon by yogins, is beyond the scope of words - "y vāco nivartante". Words cannot define Him nor can the mind comprehend Him. He is the Supporter, He is the Ruler, from whence the World is, and Who is Himself the World, He is Viṣṇu the Supreme Ruler.<sup>89</sup> His Power - Viṣṇu Śakti, is independent, not answerable to anyone, and most excellent.<sup>90</sup> His pervasion in all things is an indication of His Rulership as Material and Efficient Causes, and His Qualities of Jñāna, Śānti etc. Pervasion is not possible for one who is not the Ruler.

He has a Divine Auspicious Form, the Refuge of devotees (śubhāśraya) adorned with Weapons and Ornaments.

He bears a form immense in His essential nature and qualities. There is nothing other than Him, everything else being His body (tadātmakam). He is distinct from everything else<sup>91</sup> (the world, which is an effect). This is the meaning of the Syllable "OM" and the mantra "Om Namō Vāsudevāya".

And all this Universe is woven in Him, like the warp and the weft. (V.C.I.20.83). He is of the nature of Sat (Reality), Cit (Consciousness) and Ānanda (Bliss), and has no beginning, middle or end.

Here, Prahlāda, completely immersed in Him, considers himself to be Ananta Himself<sup>92</sup>, because of the Latter's universal pervasion.

What is stated here is not the Advaita of Śaṅkara, but Viśiṣṭādvaita.

What is the āśraya (resort) for this Supreme Soul? None, it is His own Resort, He is established in His own greatness.

In the verse dealing with Śambara's attempts to annihilate Prahlāda, Bhāṣyakāra Rāmānuja, explaining the term māyā (Śr.Bh.I.1.1.1.Vol.I.samp.2.p.39) quotes Parāśara "tena māyāsahasraṁ tat śambarasya āśugāminā| bālasya rakṣatā dehaṁ ekaikaśyena sūditam". He says the word māyā does not mean falsity (unreality or ignorance) in all contexts; It is used to denote the weapons of Rākṣasas and Asuras, which were real and existent.

Prahlāda pays obeisance to the various aspects of the Lord - Para, Vyūha, and Antaryāmi. Unable to see the Highest Form, the gods worship the Vyūha and Vibhava avatāras, and He the Ruler, indwelling everything without exception (antaryāmin), watches all that is good and bad. He is the Sarva Jākṣi (Universal witness).

The Lord has two forms, mūrta and amūrta. The first is the embodied forms like Brahmā and others. The second is the formless, muktārūpa. These two, as perishable and imperishable, are present in everything, like fire in wood. These are the powers of the Paraṁ Brahma, distinct from Him, present everywhere, but with differences in knowledge, bliss and so on. Just as the illumination of fire, which is stationary, spreads far, so so these energies of the Lord. The illumination and the heat are greatest nearest the source, and decrease with distance. So the knowledge and bliss, decrease with increasing distance. This simile also emphasises the distinction between the source of the light, Prabhāvān which is the Supreme Brahman and the light, prabhā - which is the world consisting of

'baddhas' and 'muktas'. Viṣṇucitta quotes Bhāṣyakāra in this context<sup>93</sup>. This Prabhā, or Śakti or jñāna (knowledge), de-



creases by degrees from Brahmā to a clump of grass, not cause of the intrinsic nature of the jīva, but because of their individual karma.

This Universe is eternal and imperishable, but it appears and disappears, at Creation and Dissolution continuously, as if it were subject to birth and death. Since jīvas are innumerable in each state, there is no lack of them in each Creation, and the birth and death is merely a contraction and expansion of the knowledge.

Though this is His form, the other, the best of them, the most suitable form for meditation for Yogins in the beginning of the practices, is that of the Brahman invested with form as Viṣṇu bearing all the divine energies and powers - the essence of the Supreme Being with a Divine Vighraha. In Him is the whole world interwoven. In this most excellent form, He bears in Himself the Realities of Cit and Acit, in the form of His Ornaments and Weapons. The various elements of Cit and Acit, are borne by Him, in their Subtle forms, as one or the other of his ornaments and weapons<sup>94</sup>.

Describing the configuration of the astral bodies - the planets and stars the Sage says that the Śimśumāra (Milky Way), cluster of stars in the form of a porpoise, which is the support of the celestial bodies, is also a form of the Bhagavān. The constellation is upheld by Nārāyaṇa, situated in its heart.

Whatever there is, is pervaded by Him as Ātmā. There is nothing other than or higher than Him, and He is the Supreme Soul, known as Vāsudeva.

He is also known as Viṣṇu, because the Universe in its entirety is pervaded by His Śakti, (from the root Viś., to enter, to pervade).

And all creation is His Glory (Vibhūti). He is without beginning, middle or end. Nobody can know His nature of Knowledge and Bliss, and His infinite Powers. Time has no power in His Nitya Vibhūti<sup>95</sup>.

Viṣṇucitta explains the expression "Viṣṇoḥ arṁśāvātāra" with reference to Kṛṣṇa thus: Bhagavān Puruṣottama, possessing in full His infinite qualities of svarūpa, rūpa guṇa and other characteristics, everywhere, in all His aspects of Para, Vyūha and Vibhava, is referred to as arṁśa and arṁśārṁśa, by reason of His taking, by His own desire, the limited forms of gods, men etc. But His Sarvaiśvarya (Lordship over all) in avatāras like Kṛṣṇa and others, is manifested by super human acts like Viśvarūpadarśana and such.

### **HIS MĀYĀ (Aditivākṛyā)**

His Māyā śakti, possessing the three prākṛta guṇas, is extremely enchanting to those who do not know the Ultimate Truth, the Brahman; and deludes them into mistaking non-soul for soul, and ownership (of possessions) where there is none, This sense of possession of that which is not his (in a person) is the act of the Lord's Māyā. She is the cause of bondage. The term 'svaṁ' refers not only to material possessions, but to his own self- "ahaṁ mama iti" (I am mine) and not as "śeṣa" to the Supreme Soul.

This Māyā is an immense whirl-pool which causes Moha (illusion) which is itself the deep darkness enveloping all creatures from Brahmā downwards. It is her work, that worship-

ping the Lord, they ask for worldly gains. rather than Mokṣa.

Only those who are steady in their duties, and their devotion to the Lord, are able to overcome this Māyā and attain release.

He is the only One who can destroy this illusion, because it is He Who causes it. (akhilajaganmāyāmohakāra.).

He cannot be made manifest by any pramāṇa (means of valid knowledge) - pratyakṣa or aṇumāna, other than śabda (the Vedas). He is beyond thought and speech, devoid of forms like deva, manuṣya, etc. But He has a divya maṅgala vighraha exclusively His. This is the Brahman, which is meant by the expression Bhagavān, Who can be attained through Paravidyā, the highest knowledge.

This Param Brahma or Bhagavān is the Supreme Cause; He is Pure, and the Mahāvibhūti is His. The term Bhagavān cannot be applied primarily elsewhere. The word Bhagavān is explained at great length to yield different meanings.<sup>96</sup>

He is Ubhayalingaviśiṣṭa. By His own wish, He takes forms fit for worship, and for the welfare of mankind takes such forms as the task requires, when He decides to descend to Earth in His Various Avatāras. He is Sarvavit, - all knowing, the personification of all powers and Sarveśvara, in all His Aspects. That knowledge alone, by which Puruṣottama, as described above, is known, perceived or (and) reached is jñāna. Because attaining Bhagavān alone is the remedy for the tāpatraya - the three kinds of miseries - the process by which an aspirant knows about Him by knowledge arising from studying the śāstras; and perceives Him by Vivekajanya jñāna; and attains Him in an almost direct perception by knowledge in the form of Bhakti (de-

**otion) - that is knowledge. Any other knowledge is ajñāna. (ignorance)<sup>97</sup>.**

Speaking of Creation, Parāśara says: from the Form of Viṣṇu, appeared two forms - Pradhāna and Puruṣa<sup>98</sup>. He is described as Puṇḍarikākṣa (lotus-eyed) and Śaṅkhacakra gadādhara (bearer of the discus, conch and mace), by Pṛthivī in Varāhāvataṛa. He has a super-natural radiant effulgent form<sup>99</sup> beyond comparison, that existed before anything else - "tamevabhāntaṁ anubhāti sarvaṁ" ityādi śruteḥ) (V.C.I.14.24). His Divine Form, adorned with Weapons and Ornaments is the śubhāśraya (refuge) of devotees. This form is suitable for meditation by yogins in the initial stages of yoga - with His limbs and body adorned by His Weapons and ornaments<sup>100</sup>. Sālarābana yoga has the embodied Paramātmā for its object of meditation.

This imperishable marvellous, fascinating form of Him Who is devoid of forms caused by karma, is for the elevation of mankind by darśana (seeing) anusmaraṇa (constant remembrance) or nāma kīrtana (singing His Names).

This Vighraha of the Paramātmā is eternal as the expression 'sadaikarūparūpa' shows.

## **ŚARĪRAŚARĪRIBHĀVA - THE BODY- SOUL RELATIONSHIP**

The śarīraśarīribhāva is also referred to as tādātmya - having Him for Soul, and Antaryāmitva - indwelling. This is the most distinctive characteristic feature of Viśiṣṭādvaita. Viṣṇucitta has stressed this concept in various contexts in the "Viṣṇucittīya".

In the questions asked by Maitreya at the very beginning, the one "yanmayam" seeks to know what the result of Sṛṣṭi, in the

form of the world, has for its soul. The answer is "jagacca saḥ" - "The world is He". This refers to tādātmya, having the Paramātmā Viṣṇu as the Inner Controller, and not identity of the Paramātmā and jīvātmā<sup>101</sup>.

The phrase "jagacca saḥ" is used in grammatical co-ordination or Sāmānādhikaraṇya -to mean the "body-soul relationship"<sup>102</sup>. Words in a grammatical co-ordination achieve their full significance only when they connote the body-soul relation.

If it is taken to mean identity of the dravya (substance) of jagat and saḥ, it will be inconsistent with the statements regarding His being the repository of all auspicious qualities and the absence in Him of all evil. Brahman will become the substratum of all aśubha (inauspiciousness). Therefore this usage of jagacca saḥ can only mean the body-soul, relationship<sup>103</sup>.

The commentator thus in the very opening passages of his commentary, establishes the pradhānapratitantra (pivotal doctrine) of Śrī Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita.

Having established that Viṣṇu is the Cause of the world which is the effect, (Viṣṇoḥ sakāśāt - V.P.I.1.31.) the relationship between them, the Creator and the Created, as the Controller and the Controlled, is stated. This distinguishes the Supreme Soul and the Individual Soul as distinct and different<sup>104</sup>. He is the only Ultimate Reality, there is none other than Him. It is His greatness by which the universe of animate and inanimate things is pervaded. V.P.1.4.38.<sup>105</sup>

Viṣṇucitta interprets this verse as follows:<sup>106</sup>

"Tvadvyatiriktaḥ paramārtho nāsti," quoting a number of Śruti statements. "atrahetuḥ yena upādānabhūtena tvayā caccarācaraṁ vyāptaṁ tasya tavaiva carācarātmano mahimā; aṭaḥ tvadātmakameva idaṁ sarvamiti, tvadanyaḥ ko'pi paramārtho nāsti iti bhāvaḥ".

Śaṅkara takes this verse to mean that there is no Reality other than Him; that the rest is illusion.

Rāmānuja also quotes this verse in Śrī Bhāṣya. He explains it to refute Śaṅkara's advaitic view. He says it does not imply the non-reality of everything else; but because everything else is pervaded by Him as Ātmā, there is nothing that stands apart from Him, as an independent entity.

The Elements, Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Ether and their respective tanmātras (Subtle forms); manas (mind) and the organs of perception and action; buddhi (intellect) which is the character of Mahat, and hence stands for it; bhūtādi - the tāmasa Abhāṅkāra and primordial matter; all these are His form. As also the soul, which is superior to Pradhāna.<sup>107</sup> He is Sarvajīvaśarīra<sup>108</sup> - has all souls for His body, has the vyakta and avyakta forms of the world for His body; and He is Paramātmā -- the Supreme Soul, with none other Superior to Him or indwelling Him.

He is Time, the worlds, the manus, prajāpatis, sages; He is the Vedas, the Vedāngas, Śmṛtis, Itihāsas and Purāṇas. All literature, science, words, everything that is with form, without form, here and elsewhere, all these are His body.

Aham - the individual soul, which perceives itself as I, is also Hari, as His body<sup>109</sup>. Amplifying and clarifying the truth found in all the Vedas regarding the body-soul relation of the world and Viṣṇu, the sage tells Maitreya:

"Yadambu vaisṇavaḥ kāyaśtato vipra vasundharā||"

and

"Jyōtīmṣi Viṣṇurbhuvanāni Viṣṇur  
vanāni Viṣṇurgirayo diśasca||

"Nadyassamudrāśca sa eva śarvaṁ  
yadasti yannāsti ca vipravarya||"<sup>110</sup>

(V.P.II.12.37,38).

The first principle to be created, Water, forms His body. By the same logic, the other principles, the Cosmic Egg, Earth, etc., are also His body; and He is their Soul.

This tādātmya is further emphasised by the grammatical equation of Sāmānādhikaraṇya. "The luminary bodies are Viṣṇu, the worlds are He; the forests, mountains, the directions, rivers and seas; He is everything, all that is, all that is not. The Universe, consisting of Cit and Acit are His body, and he is the Soul". The Viṣṇucittīya here follows very closely, Rāmānuja's comments on these verses in the Śrī Bhāṣya.<sup>111</sup>

Whatever is permanent (ātmā) and impermanent-subject to modification - (acit), 'asti' and 'nāsti' are all He.

Ātmā is knowledge, pure (devoid of karma) and by that reason, free from the association of impure Prakṛti. Such an ātmā is the body of Vāsudeva and has Him for its Soul. There is nothing that does not have Him for its Soul. (atadātmakam nāsti).

What is spoken of as "the yoga (union) of Paramātmā and ātmā, is the body-soul relation, since ātmā is different from Paramātmā. One substance does not become another, when brought together.<sup>112</sup> The concept of body-soul relation is reiterated. Therefore, the Sage says in the words of Bharata, I am He, you are He and so is everything He. Here, the difference in the entities is not debated. The oneness lies in the relationship. If not, there is no meaning in using the words I, You and everything, pointing to different entities. There is "dvaita" regarding Svarūpa and "advaita" regarding Svabhāva. The teaching of this passage is the difference between body and soul, and the similarity in nature of all souls.

The four Vedas are His form, and He is the essence of the truths found therein, of the four goals in life.

All this Universe, with or without form (seen or unseen) from Brahmā to a clump of grass; diverse, limited by place and time; all this together forms His body.

There is nothing that exists by itself the without having Him is the Indweller. Says the V.C., "pṛthak siddhaṁ atadātmakaṁ rasmāt vyatiriktaṁ nāsti". (II 17.33).

This created world, Līlāvibhūti, and Paramapadam-ñityavibhūti, with all their inhabitants, are all His Form.

## **LIS VIBHŪTIS.**

The expression Vibhūti is used in the Purāṇa and the commentary in two contexts. One is the usual usage of the word as Līlāvibhūti and Nityavibhūti, to mean the Lord's playground of the created Cosmos of Prakṛti and His Eternal Abode of prakṛta (non-material) Śuddha Sattva.



Viṣṇucitta uses the term Vibhūti, also to express the idea that everything, Cit and Acit, is part of His glory and greatness, by reason of having Him as the Inner-Controller. Brahmā and Śiva are His Vibhūtis because Creation and Dissolution are carried out by them respectively, having Him as their Indweller.

Quoting Rāmānuja, Viṣṇucitta says that Maitreya's questions seek answers regarding Brahasvarūpa, His Vibhūtibhedaprakāra, means of worshipping Him and the fruits thereof. Viṣṇucitta says that the questions regarding the dimensions and nature of the elements, the origin of the gods, the configuration of the oceans and mountains, the earth, the sun, moon and other celestial bodies, the divisions of time, the genealogy of gods and kings etc, are all related to His Vibhūti.

This leads us to the conclusion that everything other than His own Self, is His Vibhūti, because it forms His body.

#### THE FIVE STATES OF THE PARAMAPURUṢA.

Of the five states or stages of the Lord, described by pūrvācāryas - the Para, Vyūha, Antaryāmin, Vibhava and Archi, the Para and the Antaryāmin as the Supreme Being and the Inner Controller, are what are found most profusely in the Purāṇa and the commentary. The Vyūha manifestations are mentioned briefly.

"Yasya avatāra rūpāṇi samarcanti divaukasah|

apaśyantah param rupam namastasmai mahātmane ||"

Viṣṇucitta explains this as pertaining to the Vyūha avatāras of Saṅkarṣaṇa and others. Unable to perceive the Para form, the

celestials worship the Vyūha forms in the Milky Ocean. The same passage refers to the Antaryāmi state;

"Yo'ntastiṣṭhannaśeṣasya paśyatīśah śubhāśubharni"

(V.P.I.19.81).

Brahmā and the gods seek Him out at the shores of the Milky Ocean whenever they are in trouble, and pray to Him to appear before them<sup>113</sup>.

Of the ten important *Vibhava* avatāras, the *Matsya* is merely mentioned, while describing the *Varāha* avatāra, as having taken place in a previous Kalpa. The *Kūrma* is described in the narration of the episode of the churning of the Milky Ocean for Nectar. Bhagavān Hari Himself, in the form of a Tortoise, in the middle of the Milky Ocean, became the support for the revolving mountain Mandara, which formed the churning rod<sup>114</sup>. The sage speaks of three other forms, taken by Keśava at the same time, one amidst the gods, another amidst the daityas, pulling the great serpent king (who was the rope) and the third, an immense form which occupied the top of the mountain, imperceptible to both the gods and the demons.

The *Varāhāvatāra* is described in more detail. At the end of the dissolution following the *Pādmakalpa*, the incomprehensible Supreme *Nārāyaṇa* in the form of *Brahmā* awoke full of *Sattvaguna* and saw the Universe was an immense void. Knowing that the Earth was submerged in the waters, when everything was made one vast ocean at *laya*, He decided to raise her out of them. Just as on previous occasions He took the forms of *Matsya*, *Kūrma* and others, He now took the form of a Boar (*Varāha*) representing the sacrifices prescribed by the

Vedas<sup>115</sup>. This form grew, and reached the Janaloka, and praised by the sages there, entered the waters. Praised duly by the goddess Earth and prayed to be uplifted, the great Boar, with eyes like a lotus and body great like a mountain and dark blue as a lotus - leaf, made a rumbling sound which was like the SāmaVeda, and uplifted the earth with His tusk, from Rāsātala. As He arose from the waters, carrying the Earth, the water sprayed from His form purified the sages Sanandana and others; and from Rasātala, rent asunder by the stomping of His hooves, the waters rushed roaring below, into the Anḍakatāha.

He then placed the Earth upon the waters, flattened like a huge boat, so as to float upon them.

Then the Purāna describes in great detail the story of Prahlaḍa, (son of the Asura king Hiranyakaśipu) and his trials and tortures at the hands of his father; and his unswerving devotion to the Lord. But the actual appearance of the Lord to save him and destroy his father, as Nṛsimha, is dealt with in one half of a verse, thus:

"Pitari uparatim nite Narasimha svarūpiṇā". Viṣṇucitta makes no comment on this avatāra. (V.P.I.20.32).

There is a very brief mention of the Vāmana and Trivikrama avatāras.

"Manvantare atra sampṛāpte tathā vaivasvate dvija |

vāmanaḥ kāśyapād viṣṇuradityām sambabhūva ha ||

tribhiḥ kramairimān lokān jivā yena mahatmāna |

ḍurandarāya trailokyam dattam nihatakaṇṭakam ||".

[In the current manvantara of Vaivasvata, Viṣṇu was born as Vāmana, the son of Aditi by Kāśyapa. In three paces, He conquered the worlds (as Trivikrama) and restored them to Indra, freed from problems].

Viṣṇucitta makes no comment on this.

Paraśurāma is mentioned, as being shorn of his valour by Śatrūjā; "Sakalakṣatriyakṣayakāriṇaṁ aśeṣahaiḥaya kuladhūma-  
ketubhūtaṁ ca Paraśurāmaṁ apāstavīrya balāvalepaṁ cakāra".  
(V.P.IV.4.94).

[Rāma destroyed the valour and strength, and humbled the pride of Paraśurāma, who was the cause of the decline of the Kṣatriyas, and the dhūmaketu (comet, harbinger of evil) for the entire clan of the Haihayas"].

In a verse mentioning a prince of the name of Nārīkavaca, and the reason for his name, a phrase occurs "yo'sau niḥkṣatre  
bhūmātale asmin kriyamāṇe----". The Viṣṇucittiya comments here, "niḥkṣatriye kriyamāṇe, jāmadagnyena iti śeṣaḥ". [when the earth was made void of Kṣatriyas, 'by the son of Jamadagni' is to be understood"]. [V.P.IV.4.74] Yet another reference to Paraśurāma is found, relating to his parentage. Jamadagni married Reṇukā, a daughter of the Ikṣvāku race. Jamadagni begat by Reṇukā a son known as Paraśurāma, who became the destroyer of all Kṣatriyas, and was the arṇśa of Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, the guru of all the worlds<sup>116</sup>.

Mention is also made of the famous thousand armed Kārttavīryārjuna, emperor of the Yadu race, who reigned in

great glory and valour for eighty five thousand years and at the end of this period was killed by Paraśurāma, who was an arṁśa of Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa<sup>117</sup>.

The birth of Śrī Rāma and His brothers to king Daśaratha of the Ikṣvāku race forms part of the genealogy of the Ikṣvāku race. The sage says that Bhagavān Abjanābha, for the sustenance of the world, by His own Arṁśa, took the form of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughna. A condensed account of their lives and exploits follows in about twenty-five verses - comprising the story of the Rāmāvatāra. At the end of this the sage says that Rāma and His brothers reascended to their station, and that those of the kingdom who were devoted to them, accompanied them - "Sālokyamavāpuḥ". (V.P.IV.4.103). Viṣṇucitta has no comment on this either.

There is found an account of the creation of Māyāmoha from the Lord's body, in response to the prayers of the gods to save them from the Daityas. Māyāmoha is created for the purpose of deluding the Daityas and diverting them from the path of the Vedas; so that their might would be diminished, and they could be vanquished by the gods.

This could possibly be a reference to the Buddhāvatāra, as there is mention of the advice "budhyata, budhyadvar budhyata". (V.P.III.18.18to20). Viṣṇucitta comment "budhyaterāvṛtīḥ bauddhatvaniruktyarthā". (V.C.III.18.20).

The Daityas are also led to the non-vedic path of the Jain (Arhats) by Māyāmoha - "arhata etaṁ" (V.P.III.18.13). The Viṣṇucittīya enunciates here the saptabhaṅgi syādvāda of the Arhats (V.C.III.18.9-15).

In contrast to the treatment of the Avatāras mentioned above, the sage devotes an entire Arṇśa(V) to the Kṛṣṇāvatāra, right from the circumstances of His descent, up to the time of His return to Paramapada. The narration is very much like the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and could have been the source material for it. The birth, childhood exploits of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, and their prowess in overcoming the various Rākṣasas sent by Kaṛṇsa to kill them are described, as also other important incidents in their lives.

The advent of Kalki at the end of Kaliyuga is forecast -

"Vedāṛṇstu Dvāpare vyasya Kalerante punar Hariḥ|

Kalki svarūpī durvṛttān mārgē sthāpayati prabhuḥ||".

(V.P.3.2.59).

[Having arranged the Vedas in Dvāpara, Hari in the form of Kalkin appears in Kali and establishes people of evil conduct in the right path.]

Forecasting the constant and progressive decay and decline in moral values in Kali, the Purāṇā says, when the end of Kali is near, a portion of the Supreme Brahman shall descend upon this earth. He will be born as Kalkin, in the house of Viṣṇuyaśas, the chief Brahmin of the village of Śāmbaḷa, endowed with the eight qualities of Aṇimā, Laghimā-etc. He shall by his unlimited might and greatness, cause the decline of all evil-minded people, and re-establish all people in their righteous paths. And at the end of Kali, the minds of people will be clear and pure as flawless crystals. These people will be the progenitors of a race which shall follow the code of the Kṛta age. (V.P.IV.24. v.98 ff).

## ARCĀVATĀRA

Describing the configuration of the Earth, Mount Meru and the surrounding mountains are described and the valleys between them, inhabited by Siddhas, Cāraṇas and Kinnaras. These are beautiful with cities and gardens and forests, and are the sites of the Āyatanas (temples) of Lakṣmī, Viṣṇu, Agni, Sūrya and other gods.

In the episode of Kaṇḍumahaṛṣi and the Apsaras Pramloca, at the end of his dalliance with her, aghast at the long time he has spent with her, Kaṇḍu repairs to the temple of Viṣṇu known as Puruṣottama, to resume his penance. There praising Him and worshipping Him, he attained the highest goal.

Viṣṇucitta says in this context "----Saulabhyāderarcāvatāre pauskalyaṇ sūcayāñchapatharṇ karoti brahmākṣaramiti|| 'asāviti' puruṣottamākhyā adrau puraḥ sthitarṇ Puruṣotta masarṇjñāṇ Bhagavantarṇ aṅgulyā nirdīśya āha||"

[Indicating the profusion of qualities like saulabhyā etc., in arcāvatāra, he swears by the Brahman, pointing his finger at the image of Puruṣottama standing in front of him on the mountain known as Puruṣottama, saying, "this Bhagavān".

## HITA AND PURUṢĀRTHA

'Hita' is an expression used to indicate a course of conduct which will result in the spiritual welfare of the person following it. In the context of a mumkṣu, a person desirous of final emancipation, this refers to upāya or ārādhanasvarūpa (means, or methods of worshipping Bhagavān).

It is necessary to know the objectives towards which a person is striving, before considering the means to attain them. This is termed *puruṣārtha* or *upeya* and is of four kinds, as described in the Scriptures and allied literature. They are *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mokṣa* (Virtue, Wealth, Enjoyment and Liberation.) Of these, the first three are material goals, pertaining to gains in this world. The last, *Mokṣa*, is the *parama puruṣārtha*, the ultimate goal of human endeavour, which is to be attained in the hereafter.

Whatever be the desired objective, the aspirant is advised to worship Hari or Nārāyaṇa. He is capable of granting all the four *puruṣārthas*<sup>118</sup>.

The lower objectives of *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kāma* are directed towards the satisfaction of worldly desires and the gratification of the senses. The highest objective is *Mokṣa*, which is liberation from *samsāra*, and a state of association of the individual soul (finite self) with the Supreme Soul in a relationship of the Controlled and Controller. This is a relation of *Śeṣa-Śeṣi*, Servant and Master. The great wealth of *Kaiṅkarya* (service) to the Supreme Master (*Śeṣī*) is what the *jīva*, the servant (*Śeṣa*) is endowed with, in *Paramapada*, and it is in accordance with his essential nature. This is the ultimate perfection of the state of *Mokṣa*, and the goal finds its completion only in this relationship. The word "para" in the expression "*jīvaparayoḥ*" includes *Śrī* also. *Kaiṅkarya* is to the Divine Couple, and it is eternal.



The commentary says "jīva-parayoḥ sambandhe niyāmaḥ niyantrī-varūpe mokṣasya puruṣārthatā siddhyati. Sa sambandhaḥ śeṣaśeṣitvātmā. śeṣabhūtasya jīvasya śeṣinaḥ para-pratiśrūyamāṇa samāhitaiva hi svarūpānurūpa Kainkaryā sampattiḥ, saiva khalu mokṣasya kāṣṭhā ||"<sup>119</sup>

The daily performance of the pañcamahāyājñas<sup>120</sup> is essential. It is service to mankind and expiates the sins of those who perform them. It is necessary even for a prapanna to continue to do them.

Those among the four castes who follow the duties and course of conduct prescribed for them for their respective station and stage of life (Varṇāśrama dharma) attain the worlds destined for them.

The world of the prajāpatis like Bhṛgu and others is attained by the Brāhmaṇas. Indraloka by the Kṣatriyas, the Māruta (region of the windgods) by the Vaiśyas, and Gāndharvaloka by the Śūdras. The region of the seven sages is reached by those in Vānaprasthāśrama; and saṁnyāsins attain Brahmhaloka known as Satyaloka, reached by the path of the gods (devayāna).

Those yogins who (among those in their respective āśramas) do pratikōpāsana (meditate using symbols) on the real nature of their own souls, reach the immortal region (amṛtamsthāna) known as 'Viṣṇupada'. Viṣṇucitta comments that this Viṣṇupada is beyond Dhruvasthāna, from where the Gaṅgā flows.

"Yogināmaṁṛtaḥ sthānaḥ svātmasantoṣa karinām ||".

[That is the eternal world of those yogins who are satisfied with the bliss of their own souls]. (V.P.1.6.38).

But for those yogins who constantly meditate upon the Supreme Brahman alone, (ekāntīns) is reserved that Supreme Abode of His where the nityasūris perpetually perceive and enjoy Him.

"ekāntinaḥ sadā brahmadhyāyino yoginaśca ye |

teṣāṁ tatparaṁ sthānaṁ yadvai paśyanti sūrayaḥ ||"

V.P.I.6.39.

Parāśara Bhatta, in his commentary on the Śrī Viṣṇusahasra nāma", known as "Bhagavadguṇa darpaṇa" quotes these verses while explaining the name "muktānāṁ paramā gatiḥ". He seems to regard 'amṛtaṁ sthānaṁ' as the inferior kind of Mukti (emancipation) known as Kaivalya. Kaivalya is a state of enjoyment of the blissful nature of his own ātmā, by a mukta, without the experience of the highest state of bliss, the company of and service to the Lord. This is because, he says, the use of the expression Paramāgatiḥ (highest destination) in the next verse, indicates that there is a lower state of mukti for some. This state results for those souls who pray to the Lord for freedom from old age, death, etc., without the aspiration for attaining Bhagavadanubhava. They also enjoy bliss - the bliss of the essential nature of jñāna and ānanda of their own souls, and this is also eternal. This is what is known as Kaivalya, and according to Parāśara Bhaṭṭa, their station is between this material world and Paramapada<sup>121</sup>.

But Viṣṇucitta does not call this Kaivalya. He says "āśramaṣu eva ye pratīkopāsakā yoginasteṣāṁ amṛtam - Viṣṇupadākhyāṁ dhṛvādūparisthānaṁ yato gaṅgā pravahati iti vakṣyamānam".

In another context, (V.P., V.C.,II.8.98-100) Viṣṇucitta says - To the north and beyond the saptaṛṣis and where Dhruva is, is

situated the Viṣṇupada, that radiant region of Viṣṇu, contemplated by yogins. This is considered the heart-region of the Virāṭpuruṣa and Viṣṇu resides here. This is the third celestial abode of Viṣṇu from the Earth, below Satyaloka. Yogins, who, bereft of worldly passions, meditating on the Paramātmā have shed all good and bad karma, reach this station, which is superior to Svarga in pleasure. By its proximity to Satyaloka and their own spiritual development they attain release in due course (Kramamukti) along with Brahmā. This Viṣṇupada is not the same as the station attained by Muktas. "Na tu tanmuktāḥ labhyaṁ sthānaṁ ityarthah".<sup>122</sup> (V.C.I.6.38).

Those who worship Bhagavān by the Dvādaśākṣara and other mantras are the only souls who have no return to birth (apunarāvṛti) All the rest have to return as and when their time comes. The Sun, Moon, even Brahmā, all lose their positions at the time of dissolution and are absorbed in Him. They are created again at Sṛṣṭi.

Cf. "dvādaśākṣarādīna mantreṇa bhagavad - upāsakāḥ rājanīva nivartante - na ca punarāvartante, etadvyatiriktaḥ serve aṁśaḥ nivartanta eva". (V.C.I.6.40)

In the section describing the celestial regions, is found a statement that says that those who reach Satyaloka do not return to Saṁsāra.<sup>123</sup> At the end of the para, at prākṛtapralaya, they enter the Creator. But the commentator adds here that even for them there is no final cessation from birth in saṁsāra maṇḍalā (lilāvibhūti); those who die in Brahmālokālaya are born there again when it is created again.

The path of deeds (Karma), the sacrifices, the desire for Svarga, resulting in the prescribed acts, have for their reward enjoyment of the various worlds. And the doer migrates from one region to the other endlessly. But he who realises the impermanence of such enjoyment, and the eternal bliss of reaching Vāsudeva, should apply himself to worshipping Him in order to attain Him.

Hari is the 'yāgas' and other means of attaining Him, and the performance of them. He is also the reward.

The path taken by souls bound for Paramapada, the devayāna arcirādimārga; and that taken by souls bound for other regions-the pitṛyāna or dhūmādimārga, are described.

The 'arcirādi' or the path of the gods lies north of Nāgavīthī and south of the Saptarṣis. It goes first to the region of the Sun and passes through a series of regions-the day, the pakṣas, the month, year and so on through the āditya, the moon and lightning; beyond the region of lightning is the Viraja, from where the "amānava puruṣa" leads them to the Brahman<sup>124</sup>. This is the utara mārga taken by those who have realised the Brahman, and for them who travel by this route, there is no return.

The pitṛyāna or dakṣiṇamārga travelled by those who do works out of desire for worldly gains, is all that region that lies north of Agastya Vīthī and south of the Ajavīthī. This is also known as the Dhūmādimārga. They reach the moon through the regions of the night, the pitṛs, etc. and return along the same route in the fullness of time. Varṇāśrama dharmas have to be performed. If it is asked how can these, which are worship

meant for devatās, be considered as Bhagavadārādhana, the answer is, they who worship ancestors, gods and brāhmaṇas with the sacrificial fire, worship Viṣṇu Himself Who is the Indweller of all. These duties performed as worship to Bhagavān leads to freedom from Yama's bondage.

Prārabdha Karma is a foe to the dawn of knowledge (vidyā). This is to be destroyed by the performance of Karmas (avidyā) of varṇa and āśrama.<sup>125</sup>

The darkness of illusion - mohatamaḥ which envelops the ignorant is because of pūrvakarmavāsana. It makes them believe that the material body composed of the five elements, which is different from, and other than the Self, is itself the Ātmā. They are also under the delusion that property, possessions and wife, children, etc., which serve to sustain and give pleasure only to the body, belong to them. This erroneous knowledge that the body is the entity cognised as I (Ahaṁ) and the sense of possession (as mine) in what is not his; and the performance of Kāmyakarma for material rather than spiritual gain is the seed of the tree of Saṁsāra<sup>126</sup>.

Thus deluded by these two forms of ignorance (anātmanī ātmabuddhi and asve svaṁ iti) he performs deeds for the enjoyment of the body, and not for the good of the soul and that becomes the reason for bondage and rebirth.

The body composed of the five elements, is fostered by the enjoyment of pleasures obtained by objects composed of the five elements. It is like an earthen house being plastered with clay, a mixture of earth and water. The consequence of this is a series of rebirths. The definition here of the body as composed

of the five elements is to show the difference of opinion from the Advaitins, who consider it an illusion.

The Soul, then, subject to thousands of births and deaths, is like a weary traveller, covered with the dust of ignorance and karma. As the dust and suffering caused by this wearisome journey is washed away by warm water, so also the suffering and misery experienced by the soul on the endless path of Saṁsāra, is washed away by the warm water of jñāna.

When the suffering caused by moha is alleviated, with his mind clear and firm, he attains the supreme felicity, beyond compare, of Nirvāṇa-eternal bliss. This is the essential nature of the ātmā, unlike the sukha and duḥkha caused by karma, which pertain to the body. The soul is nirvāṇamaya, jñānamaya and amala, (full of eternal felicity, knowledge and without blemish)<sup>127</sup>. Suffering and ignorance belong to the body and not the soul. Viṣṇucitta quotes the Viṣṇu Dharma-"Yathā na kriyate jyotsnā malaprakṣālanāt maṇeḥ| doṣaprahāṇat na jñānam ātmanaḥ kriyate tathā". (Ch.104.55-56).

The point is illustrated by the example of water, by nature cool, devoid of noise and froth though not directly in contact with fire, by being associated with the vessel in contact with fire, acquires heat and noise, and boils. Here ātmā is by nature pure, has infinite knowledge and bliss; Prakṛti, as the body, is the vessel, in contact with the fire of the tāpatraya (the three classes of afflictions affecting the body). The ātmā thus considers hunger, thirst etc., as pertaining to itself and so endures suffering.

Attaining the Bhagavān is the only remedy for the tāpatray of saṁsāra. The wise man, realising this, and desiring to be free of these miseries, has to acquire knowledge of the Self and the Supreme Being, and cultivate detachment. He must endeavour towards Bhagavadprāpti. And the means to attain Him is a combination of works and knowledge, Karma and Jñāna, the former being an ancillary of the latter.

Even in Svarga, there is no satisfaction in the enjoyment of his puṇyakarma, for the fear of falling back to Earth, once his puṇya is exhausted. Therefore for those scorched by the heat of the blazing sun of Saṁsāra, there is no relief except the shade of the tree of Mokṣa.

There is no sukha comparable to that of reaching the Lord. It is not merely the removal of duḥkha, but a positive bhāva, which is its main characteristic. Therefore, efforts should be made for their welfare, by ignorant people, in the most auspicious way, by the attainment of ātmavidyā (knowledge of the self).

Learning, in disciplines like the arthasāstra and such, because of their meagre and impermanent results, cannot be considered as Vidyā. That learning which leads to liberation, is Vidyā. Knowledge of other sciences are mere skill in crafts and worldly knowledge. That action which does not bind but leads to liberation is Action; Other acts are only worldly deeds, causing āyāsa (effort and fatigue).<sup>128</sup>

Knowledge is of two kinds, śabdabrahman and parabrahman

"dve brahmaṇī veditavye śabdabrahma param ca yat |

Śabdabrahmaṇi niṣṇātaḥ parambrahma adhigaccati ||"

The commentator attributes these words to Manu<sup>129</sup>.

Śabdabrahman is the knowledge arising out of study of the Śāstras (āgamas). It is like a light, which disperses the pitch darkness of ajñāna (ignorance). The knowledge arising out of Viveka (yoga) is much more illuminating, like the Sun, destroying all traces of ignorance. This is known as Parabrahman.

The difference between the two kinds of knowledge, regarding Brahman is explained to refute Kudṛṣṭis, (those with perverted views). Ajñāna, which is the pitch darkness, and screens the true nature of the soul, as different from the body; and the difference between the ātmā and the paramātmā, is illuminated to a certain extent by knowledge acquired by listening to the Śrutis and Śāstras. This ajñāna thus exists before the arising of the Śāstrajnāna, or Śabdabrahman, which is like a lamp, dispelling some of the darkness of ignorance. On the other hand, the knowledge resulting from Viveka or Yoga (meditation) is brilliant like the Sun, dispelling all traces of darkness, and results in an almost perceptible vision of the true nature of ātmā and the Brahman.

The sage quotes the Ātharvaṇī Śruti, "dve vidye veditavye". (Mund. up.I.1.4) which is the source for Manu's words.

The goal of Mokṣa is achieved by Vidyā and not by deeds alone. He who is well-versed in knowledge derived from the Śāstras and Yoga, gets the immediate and perceptible knowledge of the Brahman. This knowledge itself is known as the Parambrahman.



By the *paravidyā* arising from *Viveka* (*Vivekajanya*) which is higher than the *aparavidyā* (*āgamotthajñāna*) one reaches the *Akṣara*, the *Param Brahman*. *Āgamottha* or *Śāstrajanya* is the knowledge by which He is known to be; *Vivekaja*, that by which He is perceived and *Bhakti*, that by which He is reached.

The contention that *Mokṣa* can be obtained by the knowledge of the syntactic meaning of the words, or by deeds, is thus refuted<sup>130</sup>. This claim, "*Vākyaṛtha jñānāt mokṣam*" goes contradictory to the *Sūtra* "*tacchāstrair vipratīṣiddham buddhe cet kṣemaprāṇamihaiva na dukhamupalabheta*". It also contradicts the evidence of the senses (*pratyakṣa*).

Those who desire the highest felicity (*mahatīm śriyam*) should strive to see everything as equal, being ensouled by *Bhagavān*. Once it is realised that He is present as *Antaryāmin* in everything, bearing the form of the Universe, He is pleased. He appears only in the pure hearts of devotees and not in the impure hearts of others.

The sage instructs *Maitreya* about the efficacy of *Svādhyāya* and *Yoga*, and in connection with that relates the story of *Khāṇḍikya* and *Keśidhvaja*.

Study of the sacred scriptures - the *Upaniṣads*, the *Dvādaśakṣara mantra* and the *Praṇava*, etc., along with the *mīmāṃsās* dealing with the Reality, combined with yoga, reveals the *Paramātmā*. Such knowledge generated by a combination of study and meditation not merely confers *darśana* (vision), but actually serves to reach Him. He cannot be perceived

by mortal eyes. This Puruṣottama, thus revealed, is qualified by Guṇa, Vibhūti and Vighraha.

Understanding clearly what is stated in the scriptures, yoga should be undertaken. Performing yoga, the truth revealed in the Scriptures should be kept in mind. The mind, being subject to the guṇas, may otherwise, due to wrong knowledge, be drawn to worship others.

The followers of Kapila (Sāṅkhyas) because of their practice of only yoga, without study, believe that the cause of the world is merely Pradhāna or the paramāṇu, and do not accept Īśvara as the cause.

Followers of the Vedic school realise Brahman as the Cause, and that He is the Ātmā of the world. He is capable of perception by

"bhaktirūpa āpanna jñāna". Performance of sacrifices is equally important, along with jñāna. Keśidhvaja, having jñāna, knowing the nature of his soul, and engaging himself in Brahmavidyā (seeking the Brahman) still conducted numerous sacrifices, to destroy avidyā caused by his old karma, which is a foe to the rise of paravidyā.

"iyāja so'pi subahūn yajñān jñānavyapāśrayaḥ |

brahmavidyāmadhiṣṭhāya tarttuṁ mṛtyumavidyayā||"

(V.P.VI.6.12).

Sage Bharata's story illustrates the obstacles to jñāna yoga and the remedies for such obstacles<sup>131</sup>. Some of the nine types of bhakti commonly described<sup>132</sup> are illustrated in the Purāṇa

Speaking of the advent of the Kaliyuga, the merits of Kali are enumerated by Vedavyāsa to a group of sages: A person acquires in Kali, with little effort and by easy means like singing His Names, great merit, equal to that which a person in Kṛtayuga may acquire by doing penance<sup>133</sup>. Whatever position a man may attain by his merits, his wife also obtains it, without effort.

Even daily duties done with Vāsudeva in his mind and heart, will lead a person to Mokṣa. For him, even positions of Devendra etc., will only be an obstacle to his attaining Mokṣa, because the former is impermanent and the pleasure is limited. There is no comparison between acts leading to impermanent pleasures and the japa of Vāsudeva, Harikīrtana, which gives the permanent and unlimited bliss of Mokṣa.

Singing His Names once absolves a person from sinful acts already committed. Repeated chanting brings about a sarṅskāra (a refinement of the mind) which removes the mental attitude that causes the committing of sins. Chanting (Kīrtana) includes listening (Śravaṇa) also. Though the effects of Śravaṇa done once are not immediately apparent, as the pounding of paddy is (Vṛīhi avaghātavat), (V.C.II.6.45), it is not right to say that it has to be done repeatedly. Just as a light can dispel the timeless darkness of the interior of a cave in the mountains, so can sakṛtśravaṇa (hearing once) destroy accumulated sin and hold darkness at bay till knowledge of the Brahman arises, like the dawn of the sun. But to prevent the committing of further sin till he achieves realisation of the Brahman, it is necessary for repeated chanting or listening, just as the light is necessary till the rising of the sun.

The Praṇava or Omkāra, regarded as Śabda Brahman, merits worship as a means of attaining the Eternal Truth, the Parattava.

Yama, instructing his Kiṅkara (servant) tells him in a whisper (kaṃamūle), that he, Yama, has no authority over those who have taken refuge in Madhusūdana (devotees of Viṣṇu). He whispers because uttering the name of Viṣṇu loudly, will cause those inhabitants of Naraka who hear it, to be released from there.

He further states that he who worships Hari with true devotion is freed from all bondage; and he and his associates should be avoided (by his servant) as one would avoid fire fed by ghee<sup>134</sup>.

Those sinless people who pray to Him to be their refuge, chanting His Names - Kamalanayana, Vāsudeva, Viṣṇu and so on, are not in Yama's jurisdiction. The mere uttering of the names even without knowing their meanings, is enough to destroy Sin. Hari's discus (cakra) whirls to the limits of vision of him in whose heart Hari resides. Yama or his servant has no authority over him. "He belongs to another world, not ours"(Yama)<sup>135</sup>.

The use of various names, Hari, Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa and so on is to show that not only the name Vāsudeva but all names effect the removal of sin, and the granting of Mokṣa. The mantra invoking the family deity worshipped by one's ancestors fructifies soon.

Like Śravaṇa and Kīrtana, Smaraṇa or Anusmaraṇa (constant remembrance) of Viṣṇu and His Names destroys sins and

leads to liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. This smaraṇa may be in love or hate. This is illustrated by the instance of a gopī, referred to as Cintayantī, who had a deep devotion to Kṛṣṇa. On one occasion, desiring to join Kṛṣṇa, but unable to leave the house, she closed her eyes and was immersed in thoughts of Him, becoming one with Him. She shed all her puṇyakarma in the exultation of her blissful experience and all her pāpakarma in the great sorrow of not being able to go to Him. Thus having spent all her karma, she attained Sāyujya.

Śiśupāla, on the other hand, had an abiding animosity towards and hatred of Kṛṣṇa. But he gained Mokṣa when he was finally killed by Kṛṣṇa. This was because he was always abusing Kṛṣṇa referring to Him by one name or the other (Sāṅkīrtana). And because of his growing hatred of Kṛṣṇa, he was always seeing His divine beautiful form, His lotus eyes, dazzling pītāmbaram etc., while walking, eating, bathing, or whatever he was doing. Thus constantly thinking of Him, even in hatred, and uttering His names, he was redeemed.

Sage Parāśara says, He thus rewards even an enemy who hates Him, who utters His names and thinks about Him, what more needs to be said about a true devotee? Kāliya submits to not being capable of worship or praise and prays for mercy from Him, Kṛṣṇa, who is full of compassion. Śravaṇa, Kīrtana, etc., are efficient as prāyaścittas even when done without devotion.

Cf: "Harirharati pāpāni duṣṭacittairapi smṛtaḥ". V.C.II.6.45.

But the most effective, the most excellent prāyaścitta for any sin is contemplating on Lord Kṛṣṇa, with a sense of the sinner's śeṣatva (servitude) to Him. This will expiate any sin, big or

small, and keep the offender from repeating the offence; and if done with a proper sense of repentance may even lead to Mokṣa. "Ātmadāsyam Haressvāmyam svabhāvam ca sadāsmara" iti. (V.C.II.6.39).

"prāyascittānyaśeṣāṇi tapaḥ karmātmakāni vai |

Yāni teṣāmaśeṣāṇām kṣṇānusmaraṇam param||".

(V.P.II.6.39).

The commentary explains anusmaraṇam: "anurhīnār svasya śeṣatva anusandhāna pūrvakam smaraṇam|".

This "anusmaraṇam" includes kīrtanam also. Such contemplation of Hari at any time, at all times, morning, noon and night, reaches Him and the devotee's sins are destroyed at once.

Repentance (Anutāpa) is not an aṅga (part) of Anusmaraṇa which is capable of destroying sin by itself, as a ray of sunlight destroys darkness. It is a qualification of the sinner seeking expiation.

### Śreyas and Paramārtha

Jaḍabharata explains the difference between Śreyas - the best, most excellent, denoting sources of worldly happiness, such as wealth etc., and Paramārtha - the ultimate goal - the true Reality. There is extreme difference between the two.

Seven different kinds of śreyas or worldly gains for which gods are propitiated are shown. These are designated as aparamārtha and are wealth, prosperity, sons, kingdom, karma, yajña, and meditation on the self which leads to saṁyoga (union) with the Paramātmā; each more excellent than the preceding. Obtaining these is Śreyas. The communion of the soul with

god in yoga is the most excellent of them all. But none of these is the principal aim or Paramārtha. They are all expended for gaining something else, as wealth is expended for objects desired or for charity.

The supreme good, Paramārtha, is something which is sought after for its own sake and for which everything else is used. It is not used to gain anything else.

"Yadarthaṁ sarvaṁ yacca na anyārthaṁ sa paramaḥ; sa ātmaiva iti bhāvaḥ||". (V.C.II.4.17)

And that is the ātmā. There is no difference in this due to modification in different states. It is not bhaṅgura (destructible). The union of the ātmā and the Paramātmā, in the sense of aikya (numerical identity) is not paramārtha either, as claimed by some. The notion that one *dravya* becomes another is false. So that cannot be paramārtha. Yoga can only be as having Paramātmā for its soul, 'tādātmya' as the latter half of the verse says.

"paramātmnātmanoryogaḥ paramārtha itīṣyate |  
mithyaitad anyaddravyaṁ hi naiti taddravyataṁ yataḥ||"

(V.C.II.4.27).

Therefore all these are only Śreyas. The Paramārtha then is only the individual soul, with the qualities as described under Cit. The realisation of this essential nature of bliss and knowledge of the self is the paramārtha.<sup>136</sup>

The Yoga of Patañjali with its eight ancillaries - aṣṭāṅgayoga is prescribed for those aspirants with the eligibility and the capa-

bility to perform it. Instruction in this yoga, is given to Dhruva by the seven sages, when they are approached by the boy, asking them for advice on how to attain his goal of the highest station. All of them advise him to worship Viṣṇu who will give him whatever he wants. They also instruct him in the various stages of yoga<sup>137</sup>, how to perform it, and give him the Vāsudeva mantra which was practised by his ancestors. This is the *Sādhana* for achieving the *Sādhya*, the Supreme Being.

Prahlāda, the asura prince and son of Hiranyaśipu, was born a devotee of Viṣṇu. He carried Him in his heart always and chanted his Names, in spite of contrary instruction. Because of his unshakeable faith in Hari, he survived all the tortures his father devised to kill him. Finally, when he was thrown into the ocean, and huge rocks were piled on him, he continued to meditate on Hari. This intense meditation culminated in bhāvanaprakarṣa, (intensity of thought), the ultimate experience of oneness with Him, Who is his Soul. Since body and soul are inseparable, he felt that he was the Paramātmā himself "Sa eva ahaṁ avasthitaḥ" (V.P.I.19.85). Knowing Viṣṇu as the *kāraṇa* and himself the *kārya*, being full of Him, he forgot himself as Prahlāda, and was one with Acyuta. His sins destroyed by this intense experience, his mind became pure and clear and Acyuta's presence in Him was even more pronounced than before.

"tanmayatvamavāpāgryaṁ mene cātmānaṁ Acyutam||"

(V.P.I.20.1.)-

At this stage, he stirred and his "uragabandha" (serpent ties) snapped. The ocean was in tumultuous agitation and the earth



trembled. Prahlāda came to himself and praised the Lord, Who pleased by his fidelity and devotion, appeared before him and granted him the boons he asked for.

It is interesting to note here that Prahlāda asked for unswerving devotion to the Lord in whatever births he took; and pardon for his father for the greatest apacāra (offence) a man can do Bhāgavatāpacāra, which the Lord considers an even worse than Bhagavadapacāra--offence to Himself.

The marvellous powers that Prahlāda possessed were neither due to magical rites, nor natural to him. It was no more than those possessed by people in whose hearts Acyuta resides.

"na mantrādikṛtastāta na ca naisargiko mama |  
prabhāva eṣa sāmānyo yasya yasyācyuto hṛdi ||"

(V.P.I.194)

The instruction given to Khāṇḍikya by Keśidhvaṅga "adhyātma vidyā" and that action which is capable of alleviating suffering, is given followed by a detailed description of aṣṭāṅgayoga; its nature, performance, object and rewards.

There is no means known other than Bhagavadyoga (association with the Lord) for cessation of suffering. The nature of this Bhagavadyoga or Brahmalya is described as the highest form of meditation which makes him one with Brahma or Brahmabhāva. Such a yogin, who, steadfast in meditation reaches Brahmalya, has no return to samsāra.

The mind alone is the cause of bondage or release inasmuch as attachment to worldly affairs causes bondage, a detached mind leads to emancipation.

"mana eva manuṣyānāṁ kāraṇaṁ bandhamokṣayoḥ |  
bandhāya viṣayāsaṅgi muktyai nirviṣayaṁ manaḥ ||"

(V.P.VI.7.28.)

The yogin who has acquired true knowledge of Matter, Soul and the Ruler, withdrawing his mind from worldly concerns, should meditate on the Supreme Ruler, for Mukti. This mental contemplation is yoga or upāsana.

The phala, reward obtained by this is Brahma-bhāva or 'avyantika laya' (the final dissolution). This is Mokṣa. This state is one of Brahātma-bhāva, where the Mukta becomes similar to Brahman in the qualities of Satyakāma etc.<sup>138</sup>

The mukta acquires the qualities and activities of the Supreme Being, who draws him to Himself, as a magnet draws iron to itself. He imparts to the released finite self His own qualities, as the magnet does-being still, moving forward or backward, spinning etc., it causes the piece of iron to do exactly what it does, "ākarṣakohi lohamātmabhāvaṁ nayati - svasmin tiṣṭhati sthāpayati, gacchati gamayati bhramati bhrāmayati" (V.C.VI.7.30). Viṣṇucitta quotes the Śrutivākya "Vatso vā mātaraṁ chāyā vā satvam". This is anusaṅcāra, like a calf following its mother; like a shadow its object.

Ākarṣaṇa is also explained as taking away faults (doṣa) as fire purifies gold. The distressed mind is purified in the same way by Vāsudeva. He destroys all sin, as fire destroys drywood, or grass (iṣikātūlam), the feathery portion of broom grass.

As gold, its lustre masked by impurity, is purified by fire, and given its own colour, so also Bhagavān, removing the dross

from the mind of his devotee meditating on Him, purifies him restores him to his natural brilliance and imparts His own qualities to him.

This kind of intense one pointed devotion to Bhagavān, with no other thought intervening, is yoga which gives almost direct perception of Him, known as Sarhyoga. Sarhyoga is only conjunction of ātmā and Paramātmā, and not transformation of the former into the latter.

Such a mumukṣu is known as a yogin. The means (mokṣa sādhana) is this kind of yoga and not mere knowledge of the meaning of words.

But Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa is the Ultimate Upāya (means). Only He has to grant Mokṣa, whatever forms of worship an aspirant may practise.

This final release of the soul, on reaching the Supreme Brahman is the third kind of *pratisañcara* (dissolution) known as Ātyantika laya. From this there is no return.

Though the concept of Śaraṇāgati is known and present in the Purāṇa and the commentary, it is treated by Viṣṇucitta m as an aṅga of bhakti and not as an aṅgin. He follows his ācārya Rāmānuja's footsteps in this. Rāmānuja also laid emphasis on Bhakti in his major canonical works, which were meant for a wider audience. But in his Rahasya literature, the "Gadyatrahe" he gave more importance to prapatti. This was meant for a group of antaraṅga śiṣyas (intimate disciples) because the concept had to be taught in secret.

A few instances of Śaraṇāgati or prapatti, are seen in the Purāṇa for purposes other than Mokṣa also. To mention a

1. Brahmā advises the gods to do śaraṇāgati to the Supreme Ruler, when they approach him for help, after Durvāsa's curse on Indra.

"Parāvareśaṁ śaraṇaṁ vrajadhvaṁ asurārdanam||"

(V.P.I.9.35).

2. When Bhagavān appeared before Dhruva pleased with his penance, Dhruva praises Him and says "prapadye śaraṇaṁ śuddhaṁ tvadrūpaṁ Parameśvara||" (V.P.I.1.2.54).

3. The gods, greatly agitated by the intensity of Dhruva's penance, went to Hari to ask Him to put an end to it.

"te sametya jagadyonirṅ anādinidhanaṁ Harim|  
śaraṇyaṁ śaraṇaṁ yātāḥ tapasā tasya tāpitāḥ||" (V.P.I.12.32).

4. Yama tells his slave to avoid those who take refuge in Viṣṇu:

"कमलनयन वासुदेव विष्णो धरणिधराच्युत शङ्खचक्रपाणे ।  
भव शरणमितीरयन्ति ये वै त्यज भट दूरतरेण तानपापान् ॥"

"Kamalanayana Vāsudeva, Viṣṇo

Dharaṇidhara Acyuta Śaṅkhacakrapāṇe|

Bhava śaraṇamitīrayanti ye vai

tyaja bhaṭa dūratareṇa tānapāpān||".

(V.P.III.7.33)

The commentary here says the verb "īrayanti" denotes that mere uttering of the names, even without knowing their meanings, will remove sins. This includes "śravaṇa" etc., also.

5. Yama goes on to say that neither he himself or any of his agents or implements, can do anything to him whose soul has sought refuge in Keśava.

The commentary remarks that *ālam̐bana* is *ātmanivedana*, the last mentioned in the nine types of bhakti, and is regarded as an aṅga of prapatti.

"Kimkarāḥ pāśadaṇḍāśca na yamo na ca yātanāḥ |  
Samarthāstasya yasyātmā Keśavālam̐banassadā||".

(V.P.III.7.38).

6. Khaṭvāṅga, reaching Earth, in the one hour left of his life declares" – ātmānamparamātmāni Vāsudevākhye yuyoja tatraiva ca layamavā pa ||" Viṣṇucitta explains this as ātmasamarpaṇa, a part of prapatti and quotes Śruti Vākyas here:

"Yatpuruṣeṇa haviṣā"<sup>139</sup>. "ahamevāhaṁ mām juhomi svāhā"<sup>140</sup> iti ca.

7. Mucukunda prays to Kṛṣṇa:

"Samsārapatitasyaiko jantostvaṁ śaraṇaṁ param |  
Prasīda tvaṁ prapannārtihara nāśaya me'śubham ||".

(V.P.V.13.31).

The **carama kāṣṭhā** (the final limit) of Bhakti, Acāryaniṣṭhā or Ācāryabhakti, devotion and reverence to the ācārya and other Bhāgavatas, is deemed even more efficacious in pleasing the Lord than devotion to Himself (Bhagavadbhakti), because of the Lord's great love for his devotees; devotion and service to them gives Him more pleasure than the same done to Him. This idea is expressed more by practice than precept, in the way Maitreya approaches Parāśara, and behaves towards him. It is also reflected in the king's reverence for Jaḍabharata, when he realises his greatness as a teacher.

The nature of Mokṣa or Paramapada is not described much, in contrast to the exhaustive treatment of yoga, the means to attain it. Paramapada is referred to as "yadvai paśyanti sūrayaḥ" or "sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ". The liberated soul, reaching Paramapada enjoys incomparable bliss in the company of, and doing intimate service to, the Divine Couple. Bhagavān is devoid of anything undesirable and full of all auspicious qualities. Hence reaching Him confers on the ātmā the Supernatural bliss which is exclusive to Him, and is beyond comparison with any other kind of happiness. He attains Brahmabhāva, and Sāyujya, as mentioned earlier, with regard to enjoyment only. He does not share Cosmic Functions. And there is no return to Saṁsāra.

Describing the last stage of Khāṇḍikya's, life, the sage describes how he went to the forest with his thoughts fixed on Govinda. There, with one pointed concentration on Him, and practising yama, niyama etc., he attained laya in Viṣṇu, the pure Brahman. Viṣṇucitta here describes ātyāntika laya (V.C.VI.7.104), and gives a detailed account.

Laya stands for ultimate destruction of name, form and activities. This has been mentioned so in passages like "Even as rivers merge in the ocean, losing their name and form"; "Shaking off sin as a horse would shake off the hairs"; "the knot of the heart is loosened"; "taintless, he attains utmost similarity (with the Lord) etc. Laya is not identity in essence, as is demonstrated in the nitya, naimittika and prākṛta layas. If that is so, the Lord will have defects like partiality and cruelty. The jīvas also will have the defects called "acquiring results of actions which

they have not performed", and "destruction of the results of works already done". Absence of association with a body again is the special feature of *Ātyantika laya*".

An attempt has thus been made to present the concepts *Tattva*, *Hita* and *Puruṣārtha* in this chapter, drawing material from the commentary of *Viṣṇucitta*. It has also been noticed that some of the ideas are adumbrated in the *Śrī Bhāṣya* of *Rāmānuja*.

What follows is the conclusion of this Thesis, drawing to a finale all the ideas dealt with in the four chapters, in a cogent manner.

## NOTES

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1. "Atra *Bhagavatā Bhāṣyakāreṇa Brahmasvarūpaviśeṣa tadvibhūti-bheda prakārāḥ tadārāadhanarūpahalaviśeṣāśca pṛṣṭā iti praṣṭavyārtha viśeṣa uktāḥ*" V.C.I.1.4.
2. Vide *Śrī Bhāṣya* with *Śrutaprakāśikā*, Vol.I. p.231.  
"So'ham icchāmi dharmajña śrotuṃ tvatto yathā jagat|  
bahūva bhūyaśca yathā mahābhāga bhaviṣyati||  
yanmayam ca jagadbrahman yataścaitaccarācaram|  
līnamāsīt yathā yatra layameṣyati yatra ca||"
3. *Sāmānya vacanasya viśeṣe paryavasānamiti "Sāmānya Viśeṣa Nyāyaḥ"*. It is also called "*Chāga paśunyāya*". Cf. *Jaimini's Pūrvamimamsā* VI. 8.31. "*Chāgo vā mantravarṇāt*".
4. Vide *Śr. Bh.* Vol.I p.225, for definition of "*Upabṛṃhaṇam*" M.R. translates this term as "to amplify and support."
5. See *Mahā Bhāṣya*, "*Bhinnapravṛttinimittānām śabdānām ekasminnarthe vṛttiḥ sāmānādhikaranyam*."
6. "*Tat prakṛta vacane mayat*" iti mayat -*Śr. Bh.*, Vol .I.p.233. "The affix mayat is (to be employed) wherever an abundance of a thing has to be expressed" (*Pāṇini*, V 4.21) MR *Śr. Bh.* Vol.I.p.137.
7. Ref.V.C I.1.5 "*kṛtsnam jagattadātmakatayā tat pracurameval tasmādyanmayamityasya prativacanam jagacca sa iti sāmānādhikaranyam śarīrātmabhāvanibandhanam*".
8. Cf. *Śr.Bh.* Vol. I., p.232-233. " yanmayamiti mayatatra na vikārthaḥ;pṛthakpraśna- vaiyarthyaṭ. nāpi prānamayādivat

- svārthikah." "ataḥ prācūryārtha eva, tatprakṛtavacane mayaḥ" iti mayaḥ Kṛtsnaḥ ca jagat taccharīratayā tatpracurameva." "jagaccasa iti Sāmānadhikaraṇyaḥ jagad brahmaṇoḥ śarīrātma bhāva nibandhanaḥ"
9. V.P. I.1.31; See also Ibid 2.7.40  
 "viṣṇoḥ sakāśādubhūtaḥ jagat tatraiva ca sthitaḥ|  
 sthiti sarhyama kartā'sau jagato'sya jagacca saḥ||"  
 Cf. Śr. Bh. Vol II. p.,257. "itihāsa purāṇānyapi puruṣottamameva paramakāraṇamabhidadhāti  
 viṣṇoḥ sakāśādubhūtaḥ jagat tatraiva ca sthitaḥ" ityādiṣu.
10. H.H. Wilson V.P. (p.5 fn. 16)  
 "These are, in fact, brief replies to Maiteya's six questions, "How was the world created? By Viṣṇu. How will it be? At the periods of dissolution it will be in Viṣṇu. Whence proceeded animate and inanimate things? From Viṣṇu. Of what is the substance of the World? Viṣṇu. Into what has it been and will again be resolved? Viṣṇu, He is therefore both the instrumental and material cause of the Universe.
11. V.P, I. 2.20.  
 "Akṣayaḥ nānyadādhāramameyam ajaram dhruvaḥ|  
 Śabdasparsāvihīnaḥ tadrūpādhibhīrasaḥ hitaḥ||
12. V.C., I.2.19. "Dāruṇyagniriti vakṣyati"
13. The description of Pradhāna confirms generally to the Sāṅkhya version, but they do not agree that it is not independent but completely under the control of the Supreme Brahman.
14. V.P. I.2.23. "nāho na rātrīma nabho na bhūmir nāsīt tamo jyotirabhūcca nānyat|  
 śrotrādi buddhya' nupalabhyamekaḥ prādhānikaḥ brahma pumānstadāsīt||"  
 see also V.C. I.2.23.
15. "Tamaḥ pare deva ekībhavati" ityadi śruteḥ.
16. Viṣṇucitta says here- "pradhānameva prādhānikaḥ - svārthe ṭhak pratyayaḥ".
17. In Pradhāna or Vyaya which is mutable, the agitation takes the form of disturbance of the equilibrium of the guṇas. In the avyaya or Puruṣa (Jīva) which is immutable, the agitation causes the awakening of the Saṁskāras and the flowering of jñāna.
18. The evolutes are Prakṛti, Mahat, Ahaṅkāra in the three forms of Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmasa; ten organs of sense and action from the first ahaṅkāra, with manas; and five elements with their tanmātras from the last, known as Bhūtādi. The Rājasāhaṅkāra is a catalyst and has no products of its own. The Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmasa ahaṅkāras are known as Vaikārika, Taijasa and Bhūtādi respectively.



19. "Tadaikṣata bahu syāṁ prajāyea" (Chānd.up.VI.2.3).
20. Cf. Śr. Bh. I.4.1.3, Vol. II. p.105  
 "paramakāraṇabhūta parama puruṣādhīnatvāt prayojanavat  
 bhūtasūkṣmaṁ"-----  
 tadātmakatvenaiva hi prakṛtyādayaḥ svaprayojanaṁ sādhayanti.  
 anyathā  
 svarūpa sthiti pravṛtti bhedaḥ teṣāṁ na syuḥ".
21. V.P. VI.4.39.  
 "prakṛtiryā mayā ākhyātā vyaktāvyakta svarūpiṇī  
 puruṣaścāpyubhāvetau liyete Paramātmani||"  
 This verse is quoted by Śrī Rāmānuja; Śr.Bh., Vol. II,I.4.1.3, p.106.
22. V.P. I.2.52. "Nānāviryāḥ pṛthagbhūtāḥtataste samhatim vinā  
 Nāśaknuvan prajāḥ sraṣṭum asamāgamyā kṛtsnaśaḥ||  
 Sametya anyonyasaṁyogaṁ paraspara samāśrayāḥ||"  
 Cf. Śr.Bh. (I.1.1.1. Vol. I. Saṁp.2, p.29) "Tāsāṁ trivṛtamekaikāṁ" iti  
 śrutyaiḥ coditam.
23. The seven nether regions - are Atala, Vitala, Nitala, Gabhastimat,  
 Mahātala, Sutala and Pātāla. (V.P.II.5.2).
24. The four categories of souls are deva, manuṣya, tiryak and sthāvara  
 (Gods, men, lower order of creatures like animals, birds and lower life  
 forms, and the stationary - trees, shrubs, mountains etc).
25. The Commentary on these verses closely follows the Śr. Bh. For  
 comparison, see extracts from the commentaries.(Chap.v)
26. V.P. II.12.42.  
 "Mahī ghaṭatvaṁ ghaṭataḥ kapālikā kapālikā cūrṇarajastato aṇuḥ|  
 janaiḥ svakarmastimitātmaniścayairālakṣyate brūhi kimatra vastu||"
27. V.P. I.2.26.  
 "anādhirbhagavān kālo nānto'sya dvija vidyate|  
 avyucchināstatastvete sargasthityantasamyamāḥ||"
28. V.C. I.2.26. "Prakṛtipuruṣarūpavat kālarūpamapi parasminnantarhitāṁ"
29. V.P. I.2.23.  
 "nāho na rātrirī na nabho na bhūmir nāsittamo jyotirabhūcca nānyaḥ|  
 śrotrādibuddhyā'nupalabhyamekaṁ prādhānikaṁ brahmapumārṇstad  
 āsīt||"  
 V.C. "nāho na rātrirī sthūla kāla upādhibhūta jyotirādi niṣedhe 'pi  
 tadāsīditi nirdeśāt sūkṣmaḥ kālo āsīti garhyate||"
30. "Kālaḥ pacati bhūtāni sarvāṅyeva sahātmanā| Kālaḥ pakvo yamanveti  
 yastaṁ veda sa vedavit||"  
 "Kalāmuhūrtādīmayaśca kālo na yadvibhūteḥ pariṇāmahetuḥ||"
31. V.P. I.2.26.  
 "avyucchināstatastvete sargasthityanta samyamāḥ||"
32. For a more detailed account of the divisions of Time, see V.P. I.3.8.22

- I.3.22. Also H.H. Wilson, V.P. pp 20,21.
33. For a detailed account of the various worlds, see V.P. (chapters 2-12 of Ar̥ṣa II known as Bhuvana Koṣa.
34. V.P. 1.2.55,  
 "Prākṛtaṁ brahmarūpasya Viṣṇoh sthānaṁ uttamaṁ||"  
 Here V.C.says "Brahmarūpasya, prākṛtamiti viśeṣaṇābhyām sva asādhāraṇaṁ divyarūpam- aprākṛtaṁ sthānaṁ ca asti iti sūcitam".
35. Nitya praṇaya is also explained as the daily repose in the Brahman of the Jīvas in deep sleep- (Suṣupti).
36. Cf. Śr. Bh. I.1.1.1, Vol. I. p.224.  
 "jñāna svarūpaṁ ityatrāpi jñāna vyatirikṭasya arthajāṭasya kṛtsnasya na mithyātvaṁ pratipādyate; jñāna svarūpasya ātmano deva manuṣyādi arthākāreṇa avabhāṣo bhr̥ntiriti etāvāt mātravacanāt."
37. V.P., 1.4.51-52.  
 "Nimitta mātramevāsau sṛjyānāṁ sarga karmaṇi  
 pradhāna kāraṇībhūtā yato vai sṛjya śaktayaḥ||"  
 "Nimittamātraṁ muktvaīnaṁ nānyat kiñcidāpekṣate|  
 Niyate tapatāṁ śreṣṭha svaśaktiyā vastu vastutām||"
38. Cf Śr. Bh. II.1.10.34 (Vol II p.272).  
 "Bhagavatā Parāśareṇāpi devādi vaicitryahetuḥ sṛjyamānānāṁ kṣetrajñānāṁ prācīna karma śaktireva ityuktaṁ"-----"Svaśaktiyā svakarmanaiḥ devādivastutā prāptiriti"  
 See also V.P. and V.C. I.5.66 "Sisṛksāsaktiyuktaḥ-sṛṣṭiśaktibhyaṁ yuktaḥ| Sṛjya śaktiḥ - karma".
39. "yadyanyosti paraḥ ko'pi mattaḥ pārthivasattama|  
 tadaiṣo'hamayaṁ cānyo vaktumevamapiṣyate||"  
 "yadā samastadeheṣu pumāneko vyavasthitaḥ!  
 tadāhi ko bhavān so'hamityetad viphalāṁ vacaḥ||" V.P. II.13.90-91.
40. See V.P. II. 14.27 . "paramātmātmanor yogaḥ paramārtha itīṣyate|  
 mithyaitad anyaddravyaṁ hi naiti taddravyatāṁ yataḥ||"
41. Cf. Śr.Bh. I.1.1.1; (Vol. I. p.247)  
 nāpi sādhanānuṣṭhānena nirmuktāvidyasya pareṇa  
 svarūpaikyāsambhavaḥ, avidyāśrayatva  
 योग्याया तदानरहतवसम्भवात्| यथोक्ताम्  
 "paramātmātmanoryogaḥ -----||"iti  
 [For jīva who has been released from avidyā by performing sādhanas, there cannot be essential unity with the Supreme Self, which can never be the seat of avidyā. So that which is capable of being the seat of avidya can never become that which is by its nature, never the seat of avidyā].
42. The changes occurring in the six stages of life, viz., asitva, janma, vṛddhi, pariṇāma, apakṣaya and vināśa.

43. See also V.P., II 15.24 "pumān sarvagato vyāpī ākāśavadayam yataḥ||"
44. Cf. Bh.G. II. V.23  
"nainarṁchindanti śāstrāṇi nainarṁ dahati pāvakaḥ".
45. See also V.C., II .15.35. The etymology (nirvacana) of the term Vāsudeva:  
"vāsanāt Vāsudevasya vāsitarṁ te jagattrayam| Sarvbhūta nivāso'si Vāsudeva nam'ostu te||"  
"tāni sarvāṇi tadvapuḥ." "tatsarvaṁ vai Harestanuḥ."
46. See Rāmānuja's description of Śarīra: -Śr.Bh.II.1.3.9. (Vol.II. p.222,223)  
"yasya cetanasya yaddravyaṁ sarvātmanā svārthe niyanturṁ dhārayiturṁ ca śakyaṁ taccheṣātaika svarūpaṁ ca tattasyaśarīramiti śarīralakṣaṇaṁ āstheyam"  
[That substance, which in regard to all things as can be accomplished by it, is completely (and always) capable of being controlled and supported by an intelligent soul and which has its essential nature solely subservient unto the glory of that (intelligent soul)] (M.R. Śr.Bh. Vol.II. p.326).
47. See V.C. V.30.15.  
"asve svamitibhāvotra yat pumsāmupajāyate| ahaṁ mametibhāvo yat prāyeṇaivābhijāyate||"
48. See V.P. I.8.17. "Nityaivaiṣā jaganmātā Viṣṇośśrīranapayini| yathā sarvagato Viṣṇustathaveyaṁ dvijottama||"
49. The sage Durvāsas is considered to be an arṁśa of Śaṅkara and quick to anger and pronouncing curses. "Durvāsaś śaṅkarasyāṁśaḥ cacāra pṛthivīmimāḥ" - V.P. I 9.2.
50. V.P. I 9.14. "~~Mayā dattāṁ~~ imāṁmālāṁ yasmāna bahumanyase| Trailokyāśrīnato mūḍha vināśaṁ upayāsyati||"  
V.P., 1.9.16 (p.41) "Maddattā bhavatā yasmātkṣiptā mālāmahītale| Tasmātpranaṣṭalakṣmikaṁ trailokyāṁ te bhaviṣyati||"
51. a. Śrī Venkaṭeśvara Steam press, Bombay, 1910.  
b. Ed. by P.B. Anṇagarachar Swamy of Kāncī, 1972.  
c. Ed. by Nāg Publishers, Delhi, 1995.
52. V.P. I.8.18 to 33.
53. V.P. I.8.35.  
"devatiryāṁmanuṣyeṣu punnāmā Bhagavān Hariḥ| strīnāmnī Śrīśca vijñeyā nānayoṛ vidyate param||"
54. V.P. I.9.16.
55. Cf. Catuśśloki, v.3  
"Iṣattvatkaruṇānirīkṣaṇasudhā sandhukṣaṇādrakṣyate| Naṣṭaṁ prāk tadalābhatastrībhuvanaṁ sarṁpratyantodayam||"
56. V.P.I.9.131.

- "Sa ślāghyassa guṇī dhanyaḥsa kulīnassabuddhimān|  
Sa sūrassa vikrānto yaṁ tvarṇ devī nirṅkṣase||"
57. See V.P. I. 9.120 . "yajñavidyā mahāvidyā guhyavidyā ca śobhane|  
ātmaavidyā ca devitvarṇ vimuktiphaladāyini||"
58. "Rāghavatve'bhavat sītā rukmiṇī kṛiṣṇajanmani|  
anyeṣu cāvatāreṣu Viṣṇoreṣā'napāyini||  
Devatve devadeheyarṇ manuṣyatve ca mānuṣi|  
Viṣṇordehānurūpāṁ vai karotyeṣā ātmanastanum||" V.P.I.9.142.
59. V.P.I.2.1. "Avikārāya Śuddhāya Nityāya Paramātmane|  
Sadaikarūparūpāya Viṣṇave Sarvajīṣṇave||
60. V.C. I.2.1.  
"Pāro yasmānāstīti sa paramaḥ"  
See also (V.P; V.C. I.2.10 ) "Svarūparūpaḡuṇaiśvaryādibhiḡ  
utkrṣṭebhyo'pi utkrṣṭaḡ|  
Paramātmā - svayamātmāntararahitaḡ."  
[There is no other ātmā indwelling Him].
61. See also V.P.II.1.13; Ibid IV.1.85.
62. V.P. I.4.12.  
Ibid I.9.66-68; V.C.I.9.67.
63. See also V.P. IV.1.86. "Madrūpamāsthāya Sṛjatyajo yaḡ sthitaḡ ca yo  
asau Puruṣasvarūpi|  
Rudrasvarūpeṇa ca yo atti viśvarṇ dhatte tathā anantavapussamastam||"
64. Viṣṇuchitta quotes Śruti and Smṛti passages to support his statement:  
"Nānyaḡ panthā vidyate ayanāya", "Māmeva ye prapadyante  
māyāmetāṁ taranti te"  
"Brahmāṇarṇ Śitikaṇṭharṇ ca yāścānyā devatā smṛtāḡ|  
pratibuddhā na sevante yasmātparimitarṇ phalarṇ||"
65. "Na hi pālana sāmartyarṇṛte sarveśvararṇ Harim"
66. See also V.P.I.2.14 ; Ibid, I.4.14 ; I.12.51-54; II.7.42.
67. See also V.P. I.2.13 . "heyābhāvācca nirmalam".  
"heya" - faults like avidyā(ignorance) and asmita(egotism). mala- the  
eight impurities of the mind viz ..,"Kāmaḡ krodhāśca mohaśca harṣo  
māno mado matih|  
Viṣādaśca aṣṭamaḡ proktaḡ iti ete mānasā malāḡ||"
68. See also V.P. 1.20 .9. Prahlāda's stuti .  
Ibid V.30.7-9 Aditi's stuti.
69. "Ṣaḍbhāva Vikāras", These are according to Yāska "jāyate, asti.  
vardhate, pariṇamate, apakṣiyate, naśyati" [is conceived, is born,  
grows, changes, decays and is destroyed]
70. V.C. I.2.11 "Sadā asti itī vacanāt kādācitka astitiva vikāro nirastah"
71. V.P.I.2.12. This is the etymology of the name 'Vāsudeva'  
"Sarvatṛāsau samastarṇ ca vasatyatreṇi vai yataḡ|

tatassa Vāsudeveti vidvadbhiḥ paripaṭhyate||"

See also V.C. II.16.23.

72. See also V.P. II.7.41

73. See also V.C. I.1.5, V.30.11-13 (Aditi); V.C. I.2.17; Cf. Śr.Bh. Vol .I pp. 232,233.

74. V.C. I.2.16

"Paramaṁ padaṁ - padyata iti padaṁ parapṛāpyatva rūpaṁ -----  
Paramaṁ--jñānādātibhiḥ sarvotkṛṣṭaṁ" - See also V.P. , V.C.II.7.41.

75. V.P.; V.C. I.2.18 , "Kṛiḍato bālakasyeva".

Cf. Śr. Bh. Vol. II.I.4.1.3 (p.106); I.4.7.27 (p.171) II.1.10.33 (p.272).

76. See under Acit. V.P. I.2.23 "nāho narātriḥ---"

77. V.P. I.2.70 "Sa eva srjyaḥ sa ca sargakartā pātyatti ca pālyate ca"  
See also Ibid IV.1.89,90.

78. See V.C. I.3.2.

"Paramārthatastu divyamaṅgaḷa vighrahatvaṁ astyeva||"

79. V.C. I.2.47.

From the Vaikārikāhankāra (Sāttvika), with the aid of the five tanmātras, the five organs of sense, and of action, were produced in due order. Manas was created from Vaikārikāhankāra, without aid.

80. See V.P. I.5.63.

"Nāma rūpaṁ bhūtānāṁ kṛtyānāṁ ca prapañcanaṁ|  
Veda śabdebhya evādau devādīnāṁ cakāra saḥ||"

Cf. Śr.Bh. II.4.8.17 (Vol . II., p.402).

81. V.C. I.4.6 .

"narājjātāni tattvāni nārāṇīti tato vidhuḥ| tānyeva cāyanaṁ tena  
nārāyaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ||"ityādi darśanāt". Cf. also "yadambu vaiśṇavaḥ  
kāyaḥ----" V.P.II.12.37.

82. Cf. "tvanmayāhaṁ" etc., V.P. I 4.13. and "yanmayaṁ jagat" - V.P. I  
1.5.

also Ibid I.4-24 (pṛthivī stuti) with Ibid I.2.1 ff. (Parāśara Stotra).

83. See also V.P. I.4.15-16

Ibid I.7.46.

Ibid I.9.36.

Ibid V 30.26-28. Aditi's Stuti.

84. See V.C. I.9.53.

"-----tasya amśe sthita meroriva aṇuḥ| pādo'syetyādiḥ viśvaśaktiḥ  
jaganmayi||"

Cf. St.R. of Yāmuna (v.12).

"kasyāyutāyuta śataika kalāmsākāmśe viśvamvicitra  
cidacitpravibhāgavṛttam||"

85. See V.P. I.2.23. "nahonarātrir ----brahma pumānstadāsī||"

86. See also V.P. III.3.22 .

"Dhruvaṃ ekākṣaraṃ brahma omītyeva vyavasthitaṃ |  
Bṛhatvāt bṛhhaṇatvāt tadbrahmetyabhidhīyate||" Cf. Śr. Bh. ,Vol I  
(Samp. 2. p.110).

87. V.C.I.15.55. athavā pālānāṃ pālaḥ, rālayorabhedah; iti. "na hi pālānasāmarthyamṛte sarvesvaraṃ Hārim". iti ca.  
"eṣa hi idaṃ sarvaṃ gōpāyati"
88. See also V.P. II.7.40.
89. V.C. 1.19.77. "Viṣṇuśaktiḥ parāproktā" ityādina vakṣyate.
90. V.C.I 19.78.  
"Om ityādi mantrasyāsrthaḥ tṛtīyaśaṣṭyorvakṣyate |  
vyatiriktaṃ na yasyāsti, vyatirikto'khilasya yaḥ||"
91. V.C. 1.19.85.  
"-----saccidānanda svarūpaḥ sa evāhamavasthita ityatra anantasya sarvagatavāṃ hetuḥ||" Ref. also V.C. I. 20.2,3; Cf. Śr. Bh. I.1.11.31.Vol. I. samp.2, p.279. "śāstradrstīyā tūpadeśo vāmādevavat" Vāmādeva and Prahlāda regard ātmā as śārīra, one with Brahman. Prahlāda says, "Since the Infinite one exists in all things, I am also none other than He". "mattaḥ sarvaṃ ahaṃ sarvaṃ mayi sarvaṃ sanātane||". Vāmādeva identifies himself with Manu and others, and through them, with the Inner Controller.
92. V.C. I 22.56  
"Bhāṣyakareṇa - prakāśādivattuḥ naivaṃ paraḥ" ityasmin sūtre prabhāprabhāvator arthāntaratvam samarthitaṃ" Cf. Śr. Bh. 2.3.7.45,46. Vol. II. p.382,383.
93. See Astrabhūṣaṇa adhyāya - V.P. I.22 vv. 68-74
94. See under Kāla
95. For details, see V.P., V.C., VI. 5.73 to 79.
96. Cf. Śr. Bh., Śr. Pr. I.1.1.1(p,212)  
"yena śāstrajanya jñānena vijñāyate, yena upāsanātmakena samdṛśyate, yena paramabhaktirūpeṇa anubhava rūpeṇa ca prāpyate."  
"----ajñānaṃ - mokṣopāya-jñānādanyat tadvirodhi vā".
97. V.P, V.C; I.1.24 (also 25,26) "Viṣṇoḥ svarūpāditi. ----atra svarūpa śabda rūpa vacanaḥ."
98. V.C. I.14.24 "jyotiḥ - aprākṛta jyotirmayarūpaṃ"  
See also V.C. I.9.67; Ibid I.12.45; I.12.55,56.  
Ibid I.15.55; Ibid I.19.64  
Ibid I.19.74.
99. See V.P. 1.22.68 -74 (p.110) ; These weapons and ornaments are the adhidevatās for the various elements that make up the world. They are as follows: ātmā-kaustubaḥ; pradhāna śrīvatsa; buddhi-gadā; ahaṅkāra as elements (bhūtādi) and organs of sense - śaṅkha-(conch) and śārngā-bow; manas-cakra(discus) ; vaijayantimālā - composed of

the five colours of five precious gems - stands for the five tanmātras; all organs and the functions of the intellect - the arrows; vidyā-wisdom- is the sword, concealed by avidyā, the scabbard (sheath), [Brahmavidyā- the knowledge of Brahman is capable of cutting off samsāra, like the sword].

100. V.C. I.1.5 "idaṁ tādātmyamantaryāmīrūpeṇa ātmatayā avasthānakṛtaṁ na tu vastvaikyakṛtam".
101. Ibid I.1.5. "Jagacca sa iti sāmānādhikaraṇyaṁ śarīrātmabhāvanibandhanaṁ".
102. V.C. I.1.5.  
"tasmādātmaśarīrabhāva evedaṁ sāmānādhikaraṇyaṁ mukhyamiti vakṣyāmaḥ"  
Cf. Śr.Bh. I.1.1.1 Vol. I (p.232).
103. See also V.C. I.2.5 ; Ibid I.2.18 Ibid I.2.68; I.2.69.
104. "paramārthāstvamevaiko nānyo'sti jagataḥ pate|  
tavaiva mahimā yena vyāptametaccarācaraṁ||"
105. Cf. V.C. I.4.38,39 with Śr.Bh. Vol. I (pp238-39).
106. See V.C. I.12.57; and V.C.I.12.69,70.
107. See V.P. V.1.30  
"ahaṁ bhavo bhavantaśca sarve Nārāyaṇātmakāḥ"
108. See V.C. I.12.87  
"ahaṁ Haririti ahamarthaḥ pratyagātmā, so'pi Hariḥ - taccharīraka ityarthāḥ.
109. See under Acit.
110. See V.C. II.12.37; 38.  
Cf Śr. Bh I.1.1.1, Vol.I.Samp.2, (pp,43,44); Ibid II.1.3.9 Vol. II.,p.221.
111. See V.C. II.14.27.
112. See V.P.I.9.38 ; also Ibid.V.1.32,33; Ibid. V.1.52; Ibid III.18.34-36.
113. See V.P. I.9.88. "Kṣīrodamadhye bhagavān kūrmarūpī svayaṁ Hariḥ|  
ma(ndaṛā) ntānādreradhiṣṭhānaṁ bhramato'bhūtmaḥāmune||"
114. The commentary says here that the idea is that the Earth is supported by the dharma of the Vedas and Vedic injunctions , "vedavaidikadharmaiḥ bhūdhāryata iti".....V.C.I 4.9.
115. See V.P. IV 7.35,36.
116. See V.P.IV. 11.20.
117. V.P., I.14.16.  
"Dharmamarthaṁ ca kāmaṁ ca mokṣaṁ cānviccatāṁ sadā|  
ārādhanīyo Bhagavān anādiḥ puruṣottamaḥ||"
118. Cf. VC, I.1.31.
119. The pañcamahāyajnas are - Brahmajajña, Pitṛyajña, Daivyajña,

Bhūtayajña and Narayajña.

120. Cf. "Bhagavadguṇadarpaṇa" p.130  
 "paramā iti viśeṣaṇena muktānāmeva keśāñcit arvācināgatiḥ gaṁyate. gīyate ca nirmuktajarā maraṇātmikā kaivalya lakṣaṇā- "jarāmaraṇa mokṣāya māmāśritya yatanti ye|" iti (Bh.G. 7.29).  
 sarṁsāraparamapadayoḥ madhye teṣāṁ sthānaṁca. "yogināṁ arṁtām sthānaṁ svātma santoṣa kariṇāṁ|" iti evaṁ muktanāṁ paramāgatiḥ|"
121. The permanence of Kailvalya and its location is a controversial issue, even today among the Teṅgalais and Vaḍagalais.
122. V.P;V.C., (II.7.15).  
 V.P., "apunarmārakā yatra brahmaloko hi sarṁsmṛtaḥ".
123. "-----devayānaḥ--arcirādiḥ, muktimārgaparvatvāt|chāndogyete'rciṣamevābhisambhavanti, arciṣo'haḥ ahnā āpūryamāṇapakṣamāpūryamāṇapakṣādyān ṣadudaṁḥeti māsāṁstān māsebhyaṣarṁvatsaraṁ sarṁvatsarādādityam ādityāccandramasaṁ candramaso vidyutaṁ tatpuruṣo mānavaḥ sa enān brahma gamayati eṣa vai devayānaḥ panthāḥ\* iti". (V.C. II.8.11).
124. Keśidhvaja says "ahaṁ avidyayāmṛtyuṁ tartukāmaḥ karomi vai, rājyaṁyāgāṁś ca---" The commentary explains avidyā as varṇāśrama vihita karma; and mṛtyu as vidyotpatti virodhi prārabdhakarma V.C. VI.7.9.
125. See V.P; V.C: VI.7.11.  
 Cf Śr.Bh. I.1.1.1 Vol I. p.173.
26. vide V.P. VI.7.22. "Nirvāṇamaya evāyamātmā jñānamayo amalaḥ|"
27. V.P; V.C. I.19.41  
 "Tat karma yannabandhāya sā vidyā yā vimuktaye| āyāsāya aparāṁ karma vidyā anyā śilpanaipuṇam|"
28. This quotaion is not found in the printed editon. It is however noticed in the M.Bh. Śāntiparva, Ch.276.v.2.
29. This view is ascribed to the Advaitins. See the Śrī Bhāṣya under I.1.1.1.
30. See V.P. II.13,14 and 15. Cf. Saubhari's Story Ib.IV.2.
31. "Śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ Viṣṇoḥ smarāṇaṁ pāda sevanaṁ| arcanāṁ vandanāṁ dāsyāṁ sakhyāṁ ātmanivedanam|". (Bhāgavata. VII.5.23)
32. V.P.VI.2.17 "Dhyāyankṛte yajan yajñaistretāyāṁ dvāpare arcayan|  
 Yadāpnoti tadāpnoti kalau sarṁkīrtya keśavam|"  
 See also V.C.VI.2.17.
133. See V.P. III.7.vv.14-34 - "Yamakiṅkarayor sarṁvādaḥ".
134. "na khalu bhāgavataḥ yama viṣayaṁ gacchanti" V.C.III.7.34.



135. For a more detailed account of "paramārtha" refer to "Bharatopākhyāna" (V.P. II.14;12-33) and (V.C.II.15.35) V.C; V.P.II.14.32;  
 "veṅurandhra vibhedena bhedaḥ śaḍjādi samjñitaḥ|  
 abheda vyāpino vāyostathā'sya paramātmaṇaḥ||
136. Cf. Śr.Bh.; Śr.Pr. (Vol I. p.242).
137. These are yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhyāna, dhāraṇa and samādhi.  
 For more details see Dhruvopākhyāna V.P.I.11 and 12.
138. See V.C. VI.7.30.  
 "ātmano bhāvassvabhāvaḥ - ātmabhāvaḥ- satyakāmatvādi.  
 \*jākṣatkriḍannityādi vyāpārāśca.\*"
139. Puruṣasūktam - 6.
140. Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad 6.7.

### CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters, a detailed exposition of the Viṣṇucittīya has been attempted, preceded by other relevant information about the author of the commentary, Śrī Viṣṇucitta and his times, other works, contemporaries etc. Śrī Viṣṇucitta was a younger contemporary of the great Rāmānuja. He was tutored first by Rāmānuja and then by Piḷḷān in the nuances of the Śrīvaiṣṇava religion and philosophy. It is quite well known that Piḷḷān's Ārāyirappaḍi is the first ever commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḷi* of Nammāḷvār. Therefore Eṅgaḷāḷvān must also have been taught the Divya Prabandha by Piḷḷān. According to the "Ācārya Vaibhava Mañjarī", Eṅgaḷāḷvān was nominated by Śrī Rāmānuja as a Simhāsanādhipati<sup>1</sup>, probably in charge of the Śrī Bhāṣya. The main duty of such a Simhāsanādhipati is of course the propagation of the Śrī Bhāṣya among the people, including the refutation of other schools of thought like Advaita and Bhedābheda. Naḍadūr Ammaḷ (Vātsya Varadācārya) was himself a student of Śrī Bhāṣya under Viṣṇucitta.

The following verse quoted earlier confirms this point.

"Śrī Viṣṇucitta padapaṅkaja saṅgamāya  
ceto mama sprhayate kimataḥ pareṇa |  
No cenmamāpi yatiśekhara bhāratīnām

Bhāvaḥ katham bhavitumarhati vāgvidheyah" ||

[My mind, heart and soul yearn to be united with the Lotus Feet of Śrī Viṣṇucitta (my preceptor). Of what avail is anything else? If such an union did not take place, how could such a person as I, (of poor intellect), be able to understand (and put

into words) the inner meaning of the divine utterances of that best among *yatis* (i.e. Rāmānuja?).

Śrī Viṣṇucitta's admiration and reverence for his great master Śrī Rāmānuja is evident from a few colophons found in his commentary. He refers to himself as the bee in relation to the lotus feet of Śrī Rāmānuja, in different beautiful phrases, eg:

a. "iti Śrībhagavadrāmānuja padābjabhṛṅgāyamāṇa Śrī Viṣṇucittāryaviracite Viṣṇupurāṇavyākhyāne Śrīviṣṇucittīye prathamemśe prathamodhyāyaḥ".

b. "iti Śrībhagavadrāmānujapādāravindabhṛṅgāyamāṇa Śrī Viṣṇucitta viracite Śrīviṣṇupurāṇavyākhyāne Viṣṇucittīye prathamemśe tṛtīyodhyāyaḥ."

c. "iti Śrībhagavadrāmānujacaraṇanalīnacañcarīka Śrīviṣṇucittaviracite Śrīviṣṇupurāṇavyākhyāne Viṣṇucittīye prathamemśe caturthodhyāyaḥ."

d. "iti Śrībhagavadrāmānujayatīśvaracaraṇasarojacañcarīka Śrī Viṣṇucittāryaprasādite Śrīviṣṇupurāṇavyākhyāne ṣaṣthemśe'ṣtamo 'dhyāyaḥ."<sup>2</sup>

In three other colophons he describes himself as one of the inner circle of disciples of the great master.<sup>3</sup>

a. "iti Śrībhagavadbhāṣyakāracaraṇanalīnāntaraṅga Śrī viṣṇu- cittaviracite Śrīviṣṇupurāṇavyākhyāne prathamāmśe dvitīyodhyāyaḥ."

b. "iti Śrībhagavadrāmānujapadāntaraṅga Śrīviṣṇucitta viracite Śrīviṣṇupurāṇavyākhyāne Śrīviṣṇucittīye prathamemśe pañcamo'dhyāyaḥ."

c. Same as above "iti Śrī Bhagavadrāmānujapadāntaraṅga Śrī viṣṇucittaviracite Śrīviṣṇupurāṇavyākhyāne Śrīviṣṇucittīye prathamernśe ṣaṣtho'dhyāyaḥ".

When we think in terms of assessing the contribution of Śrī Viṣṇucitta to the Śrīvaiṣṇava religion and philosophy, he impresses us by his two-fold contribution-through original works and through commentaries and allied works. In so far as his original works are concerned, it is a pity that both the "the Saṅgatimāla" and the "Prameya Saṅgraha" are lost to posterity. Among his lost works, his Gadyavyākhyāna and Upaniṣadvyākhyāna are by way of commentaries. His *magnum opus* the Viṣṇucittīya is a commentary on the Viṣṇupurāṇa. One can assess the contribution of the author, even through his commentaries. We have to content ourselves with this particular aspect of assessing his contribution to the tradition.

As has already been stated the Viṣṇupurāṇa is glorified in this tradition as the Purāṇaratna. Śrī Yāmuna's verse on the greatness of this Purāṇa has already been cited.<sup>4</sup> According to him, this Purāṇa deals with the Tattvatraya, Cit, Acit and Īśvara, their peculiar natures, the enjoyment (bhoga) of Sukha and duḥkha by the jīvas, the nature of their liberation and the means thereof. This last aspect is explained in this tradition as Bhakti and Prapatti. Any commentator coming in the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition cannot afford to ignore this classification of topics given by Yāmuna. True to his tradition, Śrī Viṣṇucitta has dealt with all these topics in a masterly way in his commentary. In doing so, he faithfully followed the interpretation of several passages

of the Viṣṇupurāṇa given by Śrī Rāmānuja in his Śrī Bhāṣya, mainly in the jijnāsādhikaraṇa". To illustrate this point, a few examples may be cited eg:

a) V.P. I.1.5

"Yanmayarṇ ca jagad brahman yataścaitaccarācararṇ |

linamāsīdyathā yatra layameṣyati yatra ca ||

Śr. Bh. I.1.1.1. Vol. I. pp. 232, 233, 234.

"idarṇ ca tādātmyarṇ antaryāmirūpeṇa ātmatayā vyāptikṛtarṇ; natu vyāpyavyāpakayorvastvaikyakṛtarṇ." "Kṛtsnarṇ ca jagat taccharīratayā tatpracurameva| tasmāt yanmayamityasya prati vacanarṇ 'jagacca sa' iti sāmānādhikaraṇyarṇ jagadbrahmaṇoḥ śarīratmabhāvani bandhanarṇ iti niscīyate".

"...ātmaśarīrabhava evedarṇ sāmānādhikaraṇyarṇ mukhya vṛttamiti sthāpyate".

V.C. I.1.5.

"idam tādātmyarṇ antaryāmirūpeṇa ātmatayā avasthānakṛtarṇ, natu vastvaikyakṛtarṇ"; "kṛtsnarṇ jagat tadātmakatayā tat pracurameva." "Jagacca sa iti sāmānādhikaraṇyarṇ śarīratmabhāva nibandhanarṇ" "tasmāt ātmaśarīrabhāva evedarṇ sāmānādhikaraṇyam mukhyamiti vakṣyāmaḥ".

b) V.P. II.12.37.

"Yadambu Vaiṣṇavaḥ kāyaḥ tato vipra vasundharā |"

Śr. Bh. I.1.1.1.1. Vol. I. (S.2) p.43; II.1.3.9; Vol. II. p.221.

"ambuno Viṣṇoḥ śarīratvena ambupariṇāmabhūtarṇ brahmāṇḍamapi Viṣṇoḥ kāyaḥ tasya ca Viṣṇurātmeti

sakalaśrutigata tādātmyopadeśa upabṛhhaṇarūpasya  
sāmānādhikaraṇyasya śarīratma bhāva eva  
nibandhanamityāha|."

V.C. II.12.37.

"ambuno Viṣṇoḥ kāyatvena tatpariṇāmabhūtaṁ  
brahmāṇḍamapi tasya kāyaḥ, tasya ca Viṣṇurātmeti, sakala  
śrutigata tādātmyopadeśa- upabṛhhaṇarūpasya \*jyōtīmṣītyādinā  
vakṣyamāṇasya sāmānādhī- karaṇyasya śarīrātmbhāva eva  
nibandhanamityāha|".

c) V.P. I.2.18

"Vyaktaṁ Viṣṇustathā avyaktaṁ puruṣaḥ kāla eva ca |  
krīdato bālakasyeva ceṣṭāṁ tasya niśamaya||".

Śr.Bh. I.4.7.27, Vol.II. p.171.

Krīdato bālakasyeva-"sarvāni cidacidvastūni parasya  
brahmaṇo līlopakaraṇāni| sṛṣṭyādayaśca līlā iti  
bhagavaddvaipāyanaparāśaradi- bhiruktaṁ| vakṣyati ca  
"lokavattulīlākaivalyaṁ" (Br.S.II.1.33.) "avāptasamasta  
kāmasya paripūṁsya...jagatsarge līlaiva kevala prayojanaṁ|"

V.C. I.2.18.

"nanu avāptasamastakāmasya prayojanābhāvāt  
sṛṣṭyādirnopa- padyate ityatra āha - "krīdata" iti. krīḍaiva  
prayojanamityarthah|"

d) The commentary on the V.P. verses II.12.37 to 47, are  
practically in the same words as in the Śr.Bh. One verse is quoted  
here:

V.P.II.12.47.

"Yaccaitadh bhuvanagataṁ mayā tavoktaṁ  
sarvatra vrajati hi tatra karmavaśyaḥ |  
jñātva evaṁ dhruvamacalaṁ sadaikarūpaṁ  
tatkuryādviśati hi yena Vāsudevaṁ ||"

Śr.Bh. I.1.1.1. Vol.I.(S.2) p.50.

"jagadyāthātmya jñānaprayojanaṁ mokṣopāyayataṁ  
ityāha 'yaccaitad' iti".

V.C. II.12.47.

"jagadyāthātmya jñāna prayojanaṁ mokṣopāye  
yatanamityāha -'yaccaitad' iti".

e) V.P.VI.7.30.

"ātmabhāvaṁ nayatyenaṁ tadbrahmadyāninaṁ munim|  
vikāryaṁ ātmanaśśaktyā lohamākarṣako yathā ||"

Śr.Bh. I.1.1.1. Vol.I.pp.248.249.

"muktasya tu taddharmatāpattireveti...ihāpi. ātmabhāvaṁ  
...'ākarṣako yathā' iti. ātmabhāvaṁ - ātmanaḥ svabhāvaṁ, na hi  
ākarṣakasvarūpāpattirākṣyamāṇasya. vakṣyati ca  
"jagadvyāpāra- varjaṁ prakaraṇāḍasamnihitavācca".  
"bhogamātrasāmya- liṅgācca".

V.C. VI.7.30.

"...anādyavidyākarmavāsanādehairbaddhasyātmano  
Bhagavajjñānena tadavasthānāśassarvabhāvanāśaśca  
ātyantikālaya-śabdavācyāṁ...vikāryatvam|  
tadbrahmātmabhāvaṁ nayati. ātmanobhāvaḥ - svabhāvaḥ -

ātmabhāvaḥ satyakāmatvādi, \*jakṣat kṛīḍannityādivyāpāraśca  
...ākaraśako hi lohaṁ ātmabhāvaṁ nayati -muktasya brahmaṇaḥ  
kṛīḍādīnāmāvīrbhāva uktaḥ|

f) V.P.VI.7.95.

"Tadbhāva bhāvamāpannaḥ tato asau Paramātmanā|  
bhavatyabhedī bhedaśca tasya ajñānakṛto bhavet ||"

Śr.Bh. I.1.1.1. Vol.I.p.254.

"muktasya svarūpaṁ āha - tadbhāvaḥ - brahmaṇo bhāvaḥ,  
svabhāvaḥ; na tu svarūpaikyāṁ; 'tadbhāvabhāvamāpannaḥ' iti  
dviṭīya bhāva śabda ananvayāt. pūrvokta artha virodhāt ca -----  
tadā asau paramātmanā abhedībhavati - bhedarahito bhavati. Jñ  
ānaikākāratayā paramātmanaikaprakārasyaśya tasmādbhedo  
devādirūpaḥ; tadanvayo asya karmarūpa ajñānamūlaḥ, na  
svarūpakṛtaḥ ----".

V.C. VI.7.95.

"muktisvarūpaṁ āha.---- tadbhāvabhāvamāpannaḥ - tasya  
parasya brahmaṇo bhāvaḥ apahatapāpmatvādayodharmāḥ;  
teṣāṁ bhāvaṁ - āvīrbhāvaṁ, āpannaḥ - prāptaḥ, tadā asau  
paramātmanā abhedī bhavati - jñānānandādi ākārairekaprakāro  
bhavatiṭyarthāḥ| bhedaḥ - devādirūpaḥ, tadanvayo asya  
karmarūpājñānakṛtaḥ --- svarūpaikyā pakṣe tu dviṭīyo  
bhāvaśabdo nirarthakaḥ. abhedī bhavati ityasya ca punaruktiḥ.  
"anyaddravyāṁ hi naiti taddravyatāṁ yataḥ" iti cokta virodhāt|

g) V.P.VI.7.96

"vibhedajanake ajñāne nāśamātyantikāṁ gate |  
ātmano brahmaṇo bhedamasantaṁ kaḥ kariṣyati ||"



Śr.Bh.I.1.1.1. Vol.I. p.255.

"etadeva vivṛṇoti, 'vibheda janake ajñāne ----kariṣyati ||" iti. vibhedaḥ - vividho bhedaḥ, devatiryānmanuṣya sthāvarātmakeḥ. yathoktaṁ śaunakenāpi "caturvidhopi bhedo'yaṁ mithyā jñānanibandhanaḥ" iti. ātmani jñānarūpe devādirūpavividhabheda-hetubhūtakarmākhyājñāne parabrahmadhyānena ātyantikanāśaṁ gate sati hetvabhāvāt asantaṁ parasmāt brahmaṇaḥ ātmano devādirūpabhedaṁ kaḥ kariṣyati ityarthah!"

V.C. VI.7.96.

"etadeva vivṛṇoti--vibhedaḥ-devamanuṣyādirūpaḥ| ātmani jñānaikarūpe devādivividharūpa vividhabhedahetu bhūtakarmākhyā- jñāne parabrahma darśanena ātyantikanāśaṁ gate sati. parasmād brahmaṇaḥ ātmano bhedaṁ--devādirūpaṁ bhedaṁ kaḥ kariṣyati - na ko'pi kariṣyatityarthah| yathā'ha śaunakaḥ: "caturvidho hi bhedo'yaṁ mithyājñānanibandhanaḥ" iti ||

Since Advaita was looming large on the horizon, and since the interpretation of several passages in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa was given by Śaṅkara in the light of Advaita, the need was felt for a systematic and significant regular commentary on this important Purāṇa, from the viewpoint of Viśiṣṭādvaita. The commentator had to take stock of the material available - Śaṅkara's interpretation and Rāmānuja's interpretation, and the views of other schools of thought. For instance, refutation of the Cārvāka system may be seen in V.C.I.17.58; that of Sāṅkhya under I.17.83; the Upādhi theory of Bhāskara's Bhedābheda in I.1.31 and that of the Arhats (Jains) in III.18.9-15. Advaita is refuted time and again throughout the Commentary.

In all probability the interpretation of the Viṣṇupurāṇa passages given by Rāmānuja had the sanction of tradition behind it. In the case of the Brahmasūtra Vyākhyāna he had referred to the Pūrvācāryas headed by Bodhāyana. In the case of the Viṣṇupurāṇa also., there must have been a traditional way of understanding it, although Śrī Rāmānuja has not made any specific reference to it anywhere in his works. Thus the task of Eṅgaḷaḷvān to provide a traditional, and at the same time, scholastic interpretation of the Viṣṇupurāṇa became all the more imperative. In fact, he has referred to Rāmānuja as Bhāṣyakāra in several places and quoted from his Śrī Bhāṣya. His regard for the Viṣṇupurāṇa is of a very high order, as is evident from the following verse found in the introductory portion of his commentary:

"arṣaiṣṣaḍbhissamākīrṇamaṅgairvedaṁ ivāparam |  
purāṇām vaiṣṇavaṁ cakre yastaṁ vande parāśaram ||"

The Viṣṇupurāṇa is compared to the Veda. The six *aṁśas* comprising it, are compared to the six aṅgas of the Veda. This is a glorious tribute paid by Viṣṇucitta to this particular Purāṇa. This compliment assumes greater significance when we think of the general position of the Purāṇas in relation to the Vedas, for eg., Mahābhārata declares that the Itihāsas and Purāṇas have to be pressed into service when interpreting the Vedas; Cf. "itihāsa purāṇābhyām vedaṁ samupabṛmhayet". (M. Bh. Ādiparvam).

But Viṣṇucitta considers this Purāṇa itself as the Veda, making the rest of literature auxiliary to it. In fact, in the introduc-

tory portion of his commentary, Viṣṇucitta has quoted the verse of Yāmuna "tattvena" etc., We are therefore in a position to conclude that what Viṣṇucitta has given in his commentary is the traditional interpretation of the Purāṇa as he received it from his great ācāryas, in conformity with the contents outlined by Yāmuna.

Of all the disciples of Rāmānuja, it was given to Viṣṇucitta alone to provide the first and possibly the only Viśiṣṭādvaitic commentary on the prestigious Purāṇa<sup>5</sup>. The other well-known commentary is the one by Śrīdharaswamin, (1350-1450 A.D.), known as the "Śrīdharīya", and which he calls "Ātmaprakāśa". Śrīdhara, inspite of his Advaitic views, describes himself in his coloption at the end of the Purāṇa as "Śrīmadviṣṇubhakta śīroratna Śrīdharasvāmin".

It is also worthwhile to give a brief note about the style of Viṣṇucitta. It is simple, compact and crisp. Sometimes he skips over a few verses which, in his opinion, can be easily followed - for eg., he dispenses with six or seven verses (I.9.vv.113-119), with a brief note on the most important word<sup>6</sup>.

At times his commentary is very suggestive and expressive; for instance, explaining the following verse:

"tataḥ śītāṁśurabhavajjagr̥he taṁ maheśvaraḥ |  
jagr̥huśca viṣaṁ nāgāḥ kṣīrodābdhi samutthitam||"

(V.P.1.9.97).

he makes the following statement - "nāgāśca iti ca śabdāt maheśvaro'pi viṣaṁ jagrāha".

His commentary is very helpful in that it explains passages without ambiguity. eg., explaining the last verse of the Purāṇa.

"iti vividhamajasya yasya rūparṁ  
 prakṛtiparātmamayaṁ sanātanasya |  
 pradiśatu Bhagavānaśeṣa puruṣārṁ Hariḥ  
 apajanmajāradhikārṁ ca siddhim || (V.P.VI.8.64).

The expression "prakṛtiparātmamayaṁ" has been interpreted thus: "prakṛtiḥ - vyaktāvyaktātmikā, tasyāḥ param aprākṛta divyaśarīraṁ, ātmā puruṣaḥ |". 'Prakṛti' stands for material nature in her manifest and unmanifest conditions. The word 'Para' denotes the Celestial Body of the Lord, which is non-material (aprākṛta). The word 'ātmā' stands for the jīva. Thus the Tattvatraya is said to comprise the rūpa of the Lord.

Thus the interpretation given by Viṣṇucitta, on this important Purāṇa, carries the fragrance of tradition and profundity of scholarship.

It is also worthwhile to note in this connection, that there is vast scope for future researchers in the Viśiṣṭādvaita tradition, particularly in relation to Śrī Viṣṇucitta and his works. Some of his works which have not come down to us may still be discovered in some of the personal libraries of traditional scholars, or they may be located in the public libraries themselves, under a wrong caption. Further, according to the publishers of the Śrī Venkaṭeśvara Steam Press edition, the extant text of the Viṣṇupurāṇa consisting of six aṁśas comprises only the first part of a larger Purāṇa. According to them the second part is awaiting publication. Since this edition was published in A.D.1910, it is not known whether the book was published, or if not, why not, or what exactly has happened to the text. All these are topics interesting enough for a younger scholar to take up for further research.

## NOTES

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1. Ācārya Vaibhava Mañjarī., Vol.I.p.277.
2. See V.C. a. I.1; b. I.3; c.I.4; d.VI.8.
3. See V.C. I.2; I.5 and I.6.
4. Cf. Stotraratna, v.4.,  
 "Tattvena yaścidacidīśvara tatsvabhāva  
 bhogāpavargatadupāyagatīrudāraḥ|  
 Sandarśayanniramimīta purāṇaratnath  
 tasmai namo munivarāya Parāśarāya||"
5. Wilson mentions another commentator Ratna-garbha Bhaṭṭa,  
 disciple of Vidyā Vācaspati, and son of Hiranyagarbha.  
 Ratnagarbha entitles his commentary "Vaiṣṇavākūṣa candrikā."  
 Śrīdhara mentions the work of Śrīvidvatsukhayogin, whose work he  
 says he has followed.
6. See also V.P.I.12.vv.88-99.

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At the age of eighteen, she was married into the **Mandayam Anandampillai** family, descendants of Anandalvan, disciple of Ramanuja; and began life as the partner of handsome young Captain M.A. Ramaswamy. Life as an army doctor's wife was a far cry from the sheltered world she grew up in, and gave Ranganayaki a world view that was at once broad, mature and sympathetic. Through all her years of being a home-maker and bringing up three children (and being grandmother to five), one thing never changed - her constant thirst for knowledge, and her openness to learning anything from anybody.

At the age of 65, after the demise of her husband, Ranganayaki turned back to academics, and to Srivaisnavism in particular, for renewal and sustenance. It was the beginning of a 9 year period of intense and enjoyable study, from certificate to doctorate, and the study that has resulted in this work.

In addition to Srivaisnavism, Ranganayaki's many interests include reading, painting, crafts, music and friends.



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