

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENT VEDĀNTIC VIEWS REGARDING THE CONCEPTS OF GOD AND SELF

3.1 : An Outlook of Indian Philosophy :

Generally philosophy is an intellectual search for truth. The word 'Philosophy' has come from two Greek words, that is, 'philos' and 'sophia'. 'Philos' means 'love' and 'sophia' means 'wisdom'. So, it is said that the literal meaning of 'philosophy' is 'love of wisdom'. Philosophy is the pursuit of knowledge of life and the external world. It investigates the origin, purpose, nature, meaning and destiny of human life. So, it is true that philosophy is the explanation of life, its value and meaning. It may be defined as the knowledge to justify our experiences of super-sensuous reality.

The significance of philosophy is the natural and necessary urge in human beings to know themselves and the world in which they live and move and have their being. It is not possible for human being to live without philosophy. Western philosophy has remained more or less true to the literal meaning of philosophy. But Indian Philosophy has been spiritual and it has emphasized the need of practical realization of truth.¹

In Indian literature, the word 'philosophy' has been termed *darsāna*, which means 'the vision of truth' and also 'the instrument of vision'. The word *darsāna* is derived from the root *drś*. The meaning of *drś* is *to see*. So, in India, philosophy stands

1. Sarma, C.D. (1987): *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*; p.13.

for the direct, immediate and intuitive Vision of Reality. All systems of Indian Philosophy hold in its own way that there can be a direct realization of truth.

According to *Manu-Saṁhitā*,–

*saṁyagdarśana saṁpannaḥ karmabhirna nibadhyate;
darśanena vihinastu saṁsāraṁ pratipadyate*²

It means a man of realization becomes free; one who lacks it is entangled in the world. In other words, Indian Philosophy is an intellectual attempt to explain and illustrate the problem of the universe.

Therefore, it may be said that Indian Philosophy is spiritual in nature and it always emphasizes to know the practical realization of truth. Indian Philosophers always try to interpret and discuss the philosophical problems of life. They say that the self or spirit, mind, God etc. are the ultimate truths and in the light of these truths, the actual life in this world has led.³

Indian philosophers explain the various problems of epistemology, psychology, metaphysics, ethics and logic from the same standpoint, but the western philosophers discuss these philosophical problems separately. This nature has been called the synthetic outlook of Indian Philosophy. In India, philosophy does not mean only theoretical knowledge; in it, philosophy is a true and active method of life. Philosophical speculation may start either with the thinking self or the objects of thought.⁴

2. Sarma, Kiran (2008). *Manu-Saṁhitā*. Chap. 6.74, p.192.

3. Sannyal, Jagadishwar. (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*, p.2.

4. Ibid. p.4.

The basic foundation of Indian philosophy is the Vedas and the *Upaniṣads*. The Vedas are the earliest philosophical documents, it consists of four parts, namely – *Mantras*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣads*. So, the *Upaniṣads* are the concluding portions of the Vedas, which are also called *Vedānta*. The *Upaniṣads* are generally 112 in number; but among them, only twelve are the principal *Upaniṣads*, which are the most oldest and most authoritative. All philosophical and spiritual knowledges are found in the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads*. The *Upaniṣads* are regarded as the secret meaning or *rahasya* of the *Vedas*. So, their teachings are sometimes called *Vedopaniṣad* or the mystery of the *Vedas*. The *Upaniṣads* are also known as *rahasya* or *Guhya Vidyās*, because it signifies any secret teaching about Reality.⁵

Finally, we may say that Indian philosophy discusses the philosophical thinking of all Indian thinkers,— ancient or modern, Vedic or non-Vedic. In this respect, it is marked by a striking breadth of outlook which testifies to its unflinching devotion to the search for truth. There are various systems in Indian philosophy and all these systems are sometimes different in their views. But still each system of Indian philosophy takes care to learn the opinions of the other systems and they do not come to any conclusion before considering the views of the other systems. This feature of Indian philosophy leads to the formation of a method of philosophical discussion. Simplicity, open mindedness and the willingness of listening to other's opinion are the main causes of the greatness of Indian philosophy in the past, and it has a definite moral for the future. If it continues its great career by taking into consideration the

5. Das, Runu, Chaudhury, Sumitra, Kalita, Mamoni (2103). *Bhārotiya Darśana*, p.31

new ideas of life and reality, then these have been flowing into India from the West and the East, and other many sources.⁶

3.1.1 Various Systems of Indian Philosophy

There are nine systems of Indian Philosophy. These are - *Cārvāka* System, *Bauddha* System, *Jaina* System, *Nyāya* System, *Vaiśeṣika* System, *Sāṃkhya*, *Yoga* System, *Mīmāṃsā* System and *Vedānta* System. All these systems of Indian Philosophy deal with the soul in one form or the God in other. To have an idea of the soul and God in those systems is very necessary. These are explained below :

3.1.2. *Cārvāka* System :

In Indian Philosophy, the word *Cārvāka* means materialist. So, the *Cārvāka* system is materialistic in character. This system is also known as *Lokāyata Darśana*. It means the doctrine of the common people. It is not possible to identify the original author of the *Cārvāka* philosophy; because there has not been found any written work in which a complete account of the *Cārvāka* system is described. But still, it can be said that the *Cārvāka* philosophy is a very ancient philosophy. This philosophy does not believe in the authority of the Vedas and also does not recognize the reality of the soul and God.⁷

According to *Cārvāka* system, perception (*pratyakṣa*), is the only source or means of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*). It rejects all the indirect sources of knowledge like inference, testimony of other persons etc. These knowledges are always unreliable. According to them, all non-perceptual things are invalid. So, they point out

6.. Chatterjee, S.C. and Datta, D.M.(1984). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, pp.4-5.

7. Sannyal, Jagadishwar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*, p.41.

that man should believe only those things, which are immediately known through perception.

Perception reveals only the material world, which is composed of four elements of matter. These are – earth, water, fire and air. According to *Cārvāka*, only ‘matter’ is real and from this matter, the universe is created. All objects of this perceptible world are composed of these elements. The *Cārvākas* do not admit the existence of God, soul etc., because they say that there is no evidence that there is anything like ‘soul’ in man. According to them, man is also wholly made of matter. It means the individual is identical with the body. There is consciousness in man; but this consciousness is the quality of the living body which is also a product of matter.⁸

Concept of Self in *Cārvāka* Philosophy :

The *Cārvāka* holds that the soul is nothing but the conscious body (*caitanyaviśiṣṭaḥ kāryaḥ puruṣaḥ*).⁹ According to the *Cārvāka*, the existence of consciousness is proved by perception, because consciousness is found to exist in living organism, which is not found to exist in material objects. So, it is not necessary to postulate the existence of the self or soul as the substratum of consciousness. Therefore, the *Cārvāka* does not admit the existence of the self as any transcendental entity, since the self is not perceived; but it admits the reality of consciousness.¹⁰ So, it can be said that there is no ‘soul’ or ‘self’ independent of the body in the *Cārvāka* system.

8. Chatterjee, S.C. and Datta, D.M. (1984). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, p.25.

9. Sharma, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*; p.42.

10. Sannyal, Jagadishwar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*; p.48.

Concept of God in *Cārvāka* Philosophy :

Regarding God, the *Cārvāka* system says that, since the existence of God can not be perceived, so it can not be firmly believed that there is God. The matter and its four elements produce the whole universe, so, the supposition of a creator like ‘God’ is not necessary. In support of this view, the *Cārvāka* states that the four material elements themselves have got fixed nature by which they combine together to form this universe. So, there is no necessity for God.¹¹ Therefore, it is found that in the *Cārvāka* system, the existence of soul and God is rejected. In ethics, it regards sensual pleasure is the highest end of life. In other words, ‘eat, drink and be merry’ – is the supreme ideal of human life.¹²

3.1.3. : (ii) The *Bauddha* System :

Gautama Buddha is the founder of *Bauddha* philosophy. It rejects the authority of the Vedas. The sights of disease, old age and death impressed the young Siddhārtha or Gautama with the idea that the world was full of suffering, and the life of a care-free mendicant suggested to him a possible way of escape.¹³

Through continued meditation, Gautama unraveled the mystery of the miseries of the world. Then he became Buddha or Enlightened. *Buddha* Philosophy is mainly ethical in nature. This philosophy is realistic, humanistic and pragmatic also.

Buddha mentions ten questions as uncertain and ethically unprofitable. These questions are – (i) Is the world eternal? (ii) Is the world non-eternal? (iii) Is the world finite? (iv) Is the world infinite? (v) Is the soul identical with body? (vi) Is the soul different from body? (vii) Does one who knows the truth live after death? (viii) Does

11. Chatterjee, S.C. and Datta, D.M. (1984). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, p.63.

12. Sharma, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, p.46.

13. Chatterjee, S.C. and Datta, D.M. (1984). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, p.115.

he not live after death? (ix) Does he live and not live after death? (x) Does he neither live nor not live after death? – These metaphysical questions are known in Buddha literature as the ten indeterminable questions (*avyākātani*).¹⁴

Buddha mainly tried to discuss the most important questions regarding sorrow, its origin, its cessation and the ways of cessation of suffering, instead of the above mentioned metaphysical questions. By his spiritual experience, *Buddha* obtained the answers of these four questions, which have come to be known as Four Noble Truths (*Catvāri-ārya-satyāni*). These are - (i) There is suffering (*duḥkha*), (ii) It has a cause (*duḥkha samudaya*), (iii) It can be removed (*duḥkha nirodha*), (iv) There is a way of cessation of suffering (*duḥkha nirodha mārga*).¹⁵

(i) The first noble truth is suffering : Life is full of misery and pain. Birth, decay, disease, death, all are painful. Even the so-called-pleasures are really fraught with pain.¹⁶

(ii) There is a cause of suffering : Everything in this world is conditional, relative and limited, because everything has a cause. Suffering being a fact, it must have a cause.¹⁷ Craving or will-to-live is the cause of suffering. All pain arises from individuality, which is due to ignorance or (*avidyā*). Ignorance is due to will-to-live, which is the root cause of suffering.¹⁸

(iii) The third noble truth is suffering can be removed : Since everything in this world arises depending on some causes and conditions, so if the causes and conditions are removed, the effect must cease. The cause being removed, the effect ceases to

14. Sannyal, Jagadiswar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*; p.94.

15. Ibid : pp.94-95.

16. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p.80.

17. Sharma, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, p.71.

18. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p.81.

exist.¹⁹ So, when ignorance is dispelled by right knowledge, the succeeding links of the chain break at once one after another automatically. The process which gives rise to suffering involves a necessity; but it is not absolute.²⁰

(iv) There is a way to remove suffering: There is an ethical and spiritual path of self-discipline by following which misery may be removed and liberation can be attained. This path is eight-fold, which is known as the *Noble Eight-fold Path* or *Aṣṭāṅgika-Mārga*. It consists of eight steps, namely – (i) Right faith (*Samyag drṣṭi*), (ii) Right resolve (*Samyag Saṃkalpa*), (iii) Right speech (*Samyag Vāk*), (iv) Right action (*Samyag Karmānta*), (v) Right living (*Samyag Ājīva*), (vi) Right effort (*Samyag Vyāyāma*), (vii) Right thought (*Samyag smṛti*) and (viii) Right concentration (*Samyag Samādhi*). All these are open to the priests and the laity alike.²¹

Concept of Self in *Bauddha* Philosophy :

Regarding the self or soul, *Buddha* says that there is no permanent self. It is a stream of cognitions; it is a series of successive mental and bodily processes, which are impermanent.²² The self is an aggregate of body and four kinds of mental processes, i.e. – feeling, perception, disposition and self-consciousness.

According to *Buddha*, life is an unbroken series of states; each state depends on the condition just preceding and gives rise to the one just succeeding it. This continuity of the life series is based on a causal connection running through the different states. In other words, it may be said that the end-state of this life may cause

19. Sarma, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, p.72.

20. Hiriyanna, M. (1995). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. p.150

21. Sarma, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. p.72.

22. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. p.87-88.

the beginning of the next life. So, rebirth does not mean the migration of the same soul into another body; it is the cause of the next life by the present. This theory is known as the non-existence of soul or *Anātmavāda*, which plays an important role in the teachings of *Bauddha* philosophy.²³ This theory of *Anātmavāda* or No-soul means that this world is soulless and unsubstantial. All things, that are external are the aggregates of changing qualities.

Concept of God in *Bauddha* Philosophy :

Buddha also denies the existence of God as the creator of the world. The world has neither beginning, nor end. All phenomena in the world are caused by other phenomena, which in turn are caused by other phenomena. The variety in the world is due to *karma*. There is no room for God in *Bauddha* Philosophy. There is no conscious agent who adapts the phenomena of the world with a purpose. So, the teleological argument for the existence of God is invalid.²⁴

3.1.4. : (iii) The *Jaina* System :

The world Jainism has been derived from the word *jīna*, which again is derived from the root *ji*. *Ji* means *to conquer*. It is applied to the liberated souls who have conquered passions, desires and *karmas* and obtained liberation. The *jīnas* are also called *Tīrthāṅkaras*. In *Jaina* tradition, there are 24 *Tīrthāṅkaras*. *Ṛsabhaddeva*, the first *Tīrthāṅkara* was the founder of Jainism.²⁵ The *Jaina* system is divided into two different divisions. These are – (i) *Śvetāmbara* (white robed) and (ii) *Digambara*

23. Chatterjee, S.C. and Datta, D.M. (2001). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, p.137-138.

24. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, pp.92-93.

25. Sannyal, Jagadishwar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*. p.58.

(nude). Both agree in the fundamental tenets of Jainism. But they differ in some essential points. The former is more accommodating, while the later is rigorous and puritanic in the matter of penances and other ethical tenets.²⁶

The philosophical outlook of Jainism is common-sense realism and pluralism. The objects, which we perceive are real and many. According to Jainism, the world consists of two kinds of reality, that is, - living and non-living. Each living is also called *Jīva* though its body is imperfect. So, avoidance of all injury to life (*Ahimsā*) plays an important role in *Jaina* ethics. The *Jainas* respect to the opinion of others. This is due to its metaphysical theory of reality as 'many-ness' (*anekāntavāda*) and the logical doctrine that every judgement is subject to some conditions and limitations (*syādvāda*).²⁷

The *Jaina* Philosophy admits six substances. There are (i) Soul (*jīva*), (ii) the principle of motion (*dharma*), (iii) the principle of rest (*adharma*), (iv) Space (*ākāśa*), (v) matter (*pudgala*) and (vi) time (*kāla*). The last five substances are called non-soul or *ājīva*. In other words, the *Jaina* philosophy is dualism of the soul (*jīva*) and the non-soul (*ājīva*).²⁸

Concept of Self in *Jaina* Philosophy :

According to *Jaina* Philosophy, the soul (*jīva*) is an eternal spiritual substance. The soul is different from the body and so it is immaterial and incorporeal. The *jīva* or soul is not inactive; it is the knower, enjoyer and active agent, which possesses

26. Ibid. p.59.

27. Ibid : p.60.

28. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. P.136.

knowledge and perception. The qualities of the soul are cognition, feeling and conation; but 'consciousness' is the essence of the soul. It is united with the particle of *karma*-matter in the state of bondage and separated from *karma*-matter in the state of liberation. The destiny of each *jīva* is entirely self-determined.²⁹

Concept of God in *Jaina* Philosophy :

Regarding the concept of God, the *Jaina* philosophy says that there is no place for God in *Jaina* philosophy. There is no necessity of God for creation and destruction of this whole world. The world is self-existent and eternal. All phenomena in the world are created out of their material causes and destroyed into them; and they are governed by the law of causality subservient to the moral *Law of Karma*. In other words, it may be said that the *Jaina* philosophy does not believe in the existence of God.³⁰

Though the *Jaina* Philosophy does not believe in God, still the *Jainas* believe in the innate divinity of each soul. Every soul can realize its intrinsic divinity by self-effort. Though there is no divine creative spirit, still every soul becomes a 'supreme soul' (*Paramātmā*), when it reaches its highest perfection.³¹

According to the *Jaina* Philosophy, God is only the highest, noblest and fullest manifestation of the powers which lie latent in the soul of man. The *Jainas* worship the *Tirthānkaras* with full devotion. They are full of religious fervour in their worship of the idols of the great soul. The *Jainas* believe in faith, worship, devotion, and prayer

29. Ibid. P.136-137.

30. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*; p.158.

31. Sannyal, Jagadiswar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*, p.89.

with recite mantras. The *Jaina* Philosophy forbids killing life, causing life to be killed and approving of killing life. In fact, it is a religion of morality without God; but it believes in the law of *karma*.³²

Now, the *āstika* or orthodox systems are discussed in the following in a nutshell :

3.1.5. : (i) The *Nyāya* System :

The *Nyāya*-system was pronounced by the sage Gautama. His another name was *Akṣapāda*. The *Nyāya* philosophy is concerned primarily with epistemology and logic and secondarily with ontology. The *Nyāya* system holds that there are four sources of valid knowledge; viz. – perception, inference, testimony and comparison. It also deals with the study of the nature of God, soul and the world.³³

The main text book of *Nyāya* philosophy is *Nyāya-sūtra*, and Gautama was the author of it. The *Nyāya* is called sometimes *Tarkavidyā* or the science of debate, *Vāda-vidyā*, or the science of discussion. Discussion or *vāda* is the breath of intellectual life.³⁴

The *Nyāya* system is logically realistic in nature. Since it is a realistic philosophy, so it holds that the objects of the world have an independent existence of their own apart from all knowledge of experience. The *Nyāya* system is not only a science of reasoning; but it is also interested in the liberation of the human soul. In this respect, the *Nyāya* philosophy says that liberation can be attained through a right

32. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Guidelines of Indian Philosophy*, p.159.

33. Ibid. P.205.

34. Radhakrishnan, S.(1992). *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, P.33.

knowledge of reality. This right or true knowledge of reality presupposes an understanding of what knowledge is. In this way, the theory of reality presupposes the theory of knowledge, for which it has been described as logical realism.³⁵

It is already mentioned that perception, inference, comparison and testimony are the four kinds of valid knowledge.

According to Gautama, perception, as non-erroneous cognition which is produced by the intercourse of the sense-organs with objects, which is not associated with a name and which is well-defined.

This definition of perception excludes divine and yogic perception which is not generated by the intercourse of the sense-organs with the objects.³⁶

Inference is defined as that knowledge which presupposes some other knowledge. It is mediate and indirect and arises through a 'mark', the middle term (hetu), which is invariably connected with the major term (*Sādhya*). Invariable concomitance between the *sādhya* and the *hetu* is the nerve of inference.³⁷

Comparison (*Upamāna*) is knowledge derived from comparison and roughly corresponds to analogy. Comparison is produced by the knowledge of resemblance or similarity.³⁸

Testimony is also called *Śabda*. It is defined as the statement of a trustworthy person (*āptavākya*) and consists in understanding its meaning. Testimony is always personal. It is based on the words of a trustworthy person, human or divine.³⁹

35. Sannyal, Jagadiswar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*. P.136.

36. *Nyāya-Sūtra*, P.59.

37. Sharma, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. P.193.

38. *Ibid*. P.197.

39. *Ibid*. P.203.

Concept of Self in Nyāya Philosophy :

Regarding the concept of the self or soul, the Nyāya philosophy holds that the self or *ātman* is the knower (*jñāna*), enjoyer (*bhoktā*) and active agent (*kartā*). The self is different from the body, the senses, the mind and the stream of cognition. It is the perceiver of all, the experiencer of all pleasure and pains, and the knower of all things. The mind is not self; it is an internal sense, through which the self or soul obtains knowledge of pleasure, pain etc. According to the Nyāya philosophy, the self is not transcendental consciousness devoid of the distinction of subject and object. Consciousness is a property of the soul, but it is not an essential property. Consciousness cannot exist apart from self. It is an adventitious quality of the self. The Nyāya system believes in the plurality of the selves. The self is unique in each individual. There are on infinite number of souls, which are all-pervading.⁴⁰

Concept of God in Nyāya Philosophy :

Regarding the concept of God, the Nyāya philosophy argues that the God is a personal being. 'He' possesses existence, knowledge and bliss. According to the Nyāya system, God is endowed with such qualities as absence of demerit (*adharma*), wrong knowledge (*mithyā-jñāna*) and negligence (*pramāda*). God is also endowed with the presence of merit (*dharma*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and equanimity (*samādhisampad*). God is omnipotent in regard to his creation, though he is influenced by the results of acts done by the beings, He creates. Nyāya philosophy also says that

40. Ibid : P.204.

God is also endowed with desire; He has pure unimpeded intelligence as well as eternal bliss.⁴¹

According to the *Nyāya* philosophy, God is an eternal external reality. But still, He is always limited by the co-eternal atoms and souls and has to be guided by the law of *karma*. God is also called the moral governor of all beings (*prayojaka kartā*).⁴²

The doctrine of theism in the *Nyāya* philosophy, has been the subject of great discussion in the history of Hindu thought. According to the critics, the *Nyāya* philosophers resort to *Adṛṣṭa*, whenever natural explanation fails. Here, *Adṛṣṭa* constitutes only a limit of explanation. It is supposed to call for an intelligent controller, *Īśvara*, for the remarkable regularity with which events happen cannot be explained apart from God, who has wisdom (*jñāna*), desire (*icchā*) and volitional effort (*prayatna*). The individual souls lose their activity at the time of dissolution, and regain it at creation, and all this is inexplicable apart from divine guidance.⁴³

kāryāyojanādhṛtyādeḥ padāt pratyayataḥ śruteḥ /

vākyāt saṁkhyāviśeṣāchcha sādhyo viśvavidavyayaḥ //

– *Nyāya-Kusumāñjali*.

It means, we reap the fruits of our own actions. Merit and demerits accrue from our actions and the stock of merit and demerit is called *Adṛṣṭa*, the Unseen Power. But this Unseen Power, being unintelligent, needs the guidance of a supremely intelligent God (*Adṛṣṭa*).⁴⁴

41. Sannyal, Jagadishwar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*. Pp.160-161.

42. Radhakrishnan, Dr. S. (1992). *Indian Philosophy*. Vol. II, P.168-169.

43. Sharma, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. P.208.

44. Radhakrishnan, S. (1992). *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, P.170.

3.1.6. : (ii) The *Vaiśeṣika* System :

The *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy is founded by *Kaṇāda*, a great sage. The word *Vaiśeṣika* is derived from the word *viśeṣa*. It means particularity, which insists that it is in the particulars of the world, pre-eminently in the particular imperceptible souls and atoms that true individuality is to be found.⁴⁵

The *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy is realistic and also pluralistic in nature. According to this philosophy ether, souls, internal organs, space, time and the atoms of earth, water, fire and air are eternal. Each of them has a particularity which is its distinctive feature. The *Vaiśeṣika* system emphasizes the plurality and distinctness of physical things and individual souls. Its special feature is the doctrine of atomism.⁴⁶

According to the *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy, there are four kinds of valid knowledge. These are – perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), remembrance (*smṛti*) and intuitive knowledge (*āṛśajñāna*). On the other hand, the *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy brings comparison (*Upamāna*) tradition (*aitihya*) and verbal knowledge (*śabda*) under inference. The *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy also mentions four types of invalid knowledge, viz. – doubt (*saṁśaya*), misconception (*viparyaya*), indefinite cognition (*anadhyavasāya*) and dream (*svapna*). But Śivāditya reduces these four into two, that is, doubt and error.⁴⁷

The *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy brings the whole universe under seven categories (*padārthas*). *Padārtha* literally means the meaning of a word. It is an object of valid

45. Sharma, C.D.(1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, P.209-210.

46. Radhakrishnan, S. (1992). *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, P.176.

47. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p.160.

knowledge, which is capable of being named.⁴⁸ In other words, it is knowable and nameable. *Kaṇāda* brings all objects of valid knowledge under six categories. But the later *Vaiśeṣikas* add another category, that is seventh category. These seven categories of *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy are –

- (i) Substance (*dravya*), (ii) Quality (*guṇa*), (iii) Action or motion (*karma*),
- (iv) Generality (*sāmānya*), (v) Particularity (*Viśeṣa*), (vi) Inherence (*Samavāya*),
- (vii) Non-existence (*abhāva*)

The first six are positive categories, while the last one is negative. Substance is the main category, on which all other categories are dependent. Substance is the substratum of quality, action, community, particularity and inherence.⁴⁹

Concept of Self in *Vaiśeṣika* Philosophy :

Regarding the concept of the self, *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy says that the self is an object of inference; it can not be perceived through the external sense-organs. Ego-consciousness refers to the self, which has apprehension, recollection, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion and volition. According to the *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy, the self is the substratum of all these qualities. The self remembers an object, which it perceived in the past, and retained it in the form of an impression. Recollection proves the unity and identity of an individual self. Recognition also proves the permanence and identity of the self.⁵⁰

48. Radhakrishnan, S.(1992). *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p.182-183.

49. Sinha, J. (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p.164.

50.Ibid. p.165.

A self has knowledge of good and evil. It consciously and voluntarily directs its body to execute the movements, which are conducive to the realization of the good and the avoidance of evil. The voluntary movements for the achievement of a good and the avoidance of an evil are the outward expressions of the volitions of a self. The *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy recognizes the plurality of individual souls, which is inferred from the variety of experiences and conditions of different souls. Knowledge, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion, volition, merit, demerit and disposition or impressions are the special qualities of the individual self. Number, magnitude, distinctness, conjunction and disjunction are the generic qualities of the self. Consciousness is not an essential quality of the self. It is its adventitious quality acquired from its conjunction with manas.⁵¹

Concept of God in *Vaiśeṣika* Philosophy :

Regarding the concept of God, it is found that Kaṇāda himself does not openly refer to God. But Praśastapāda, Śrīdhara, and Udayana discuss the theistic proofs, the nature of God and His creation of the world out of the atoms and dissolution of it into them. Praśastapāda regards God as the efficient cause of the world and atoms as its material cause. According to him, God is not the creator of the atoms, the individual souls, time, space, manes and ether, which are external to Him. God creates the world out of the atoms according to the *Law of Karma*, and adapts it to the merits and demerits of the individual souls.⁵²

51. Ibid. p.190.

52. Ibid. Pp.191-193.

In *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy, God is the promulgator of the Moral Law. The command of God is the standard of right and wrong; because whatever is enjoined by God is right and whatever is prohibited by God is wrong. This argument is regarded as the moral argument for the existence of God. God is omniscient. He knows all things with their distinctive characters. His desire is one but becomes manifold owing to limiting conditions. His will to create is subject to the *Law of Karma*.⁵³

3.1.7. : (iii) The *Sāṃkhya* System :

Sāṃkhya philosophy was founded by Kapila. The word *Sāṃkhya* is taken from the word *Sāṃkhya*. The meaning of *Sāṃkhya* is right knowledge as well as number. *Sāṃkhya* philosophy is dualistic in character. It admits two ultimate realities, that is, - *Puruṣa* which is the conscious soul and *Prakṛti*, which is the primary matter of this universe. It is constituted of three *guṇas*, viz., - *sattva*, *raja* and *tama*. *Prakṛti* has no independent existence apart from these *guṇas*. Among these three *guṇas* of *Prakṛti* *Sattva* is of the nature of pleasure. *Raja* is the source of all activity, and produces pain and *Tamas* resists activity, which produces the state of apathy or indifference. It leads to ignorance and sloth.⁵⁴

The *Sāṃkhya* philosophy recognizes an another ultimate reality, and this reality is called *Puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* is the self, the soul, the spirit, the subject and the knower. It is neither body, nor senses, nor brain, nor mind or manas, nor ego or *ahamkāra*, nor intellect or buddhi. 'Consciousness' is the essence of this *Puruṣa*. It is itself pure and

53. Ibid. p.195.

54. Ibid. Pp.197-198.

transcendental consciousness, which is self-luminous and self-proved.⁵⁵ According to the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy, *puruṣas* are subject to qualitative monism and quantitative pluralism. In other words, the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy believes in the plurality of the *Puruṣas*.⁵⁶

According to the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy, the evolution of the world starts with the contact between the *Puruṣa* (self) and *Prakṛti*. The evolution serves the most fundamental ends of the normal and spiritual life. The evolution of *Prakṛti* into the world of objects makes it possible for the *Puruṣas* to enjoy or suffer according to their merits or demerits. But the ultimate end of the evolution is to help the spirits to realize their true nature and thus attain liberation.⁵⁷

In *Sāṃkhya* philosophy, valid knowledge or *pramā* is that which is a definite and unerring knowledge of some object through the modification of *buddhi*, and it reflects the consciousness of the self in it. There are three sources or means of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*). These are perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*) and scriptural testimony (*śabda*).⁵⁸

Concept of the Self in *Sāṃkhya* Philosophy :

Regarding the concept of individual self or *jīva*, the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy says that the *jīva* or the individual self is the self, determined by the body and the sense-organs, endowed with the powers of enjoyment and action. The transcendental self or *Puruṣa* is different from the empirical self or *jīva*. *Puruṣa* or the transcendental self is

55. Sannyal, Jagadiswar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*, Pp.197-198.

56. Sharma, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Pp.155-156.

57. Ibid. P.157.

58. Sannyal, Jagadiswar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*. Pp.203-207.

neither an agent, nor an enjoyer. It is beyond space and time and is devoid of *guṇas*, which has no cognitions, feelings and volitions. It is of the nature of consciousness. But the *jīva* or the empirical self is the agent and enjoyer. The *Puruṣa*, as determined by the body and the sense-organ is the *jīva*. The difference between the *jīva* and the *Puruṣa* is that the *jīva* is limited by the adjuncts of the internal organ, while the *Puruṣa* is pure self free from all determinations. The *Puruṣa* wrongly thinks itself to be active. The false appropriation of activity belongs to the *jīva*, that is, the self reflected in *buddhi*, and not to the Self or *Puruṣa*. The transcendental self or *Puruṣa*, reflected in *buddhi* is the individual self or *jīva*.⁵⁹

Sāṃkhya philosophy admits three kinds of sufferings. These are – (i) *Ādhyātmika*, (ii) *Ādhibhautika* and (iii) *Ādhidaivika*.

Ādhyātmika is that suffering which is due to bodily disorders and mental agitation caused by emotions and passions. *Ādhibhautika* is that suffering which is caused by men, beasts, birds, reptiles and the like. *Ādhidaivika* is that suffering which is caused by supernatural agencies, planets, ghosts, demons etc.⁶⁰

Concept of God in *Sāṃkhya* Philosophy :

Regarding the concept of God, it can be said that the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy denies the existence of God; but it accepts the authority of the Vedas. In the *Sāṃkhya-Kārikā*, there is no mention of God. But the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy believes in future life. It believes that God is not the creator of the world. According to *Sāṃkhya* philosophy, *Prakṛti* is the material cause of the world. The efficient cause of the world

59. Ibid; pp.215-216.

60. Ibid. Pp.209-210.

is the merits and demerits of the souls. According to the *Sāṃkhya Sūtra*, there is no proof for the existence of God (*Īśvarāśiddheh*). God is neither perceived, nor inferred, nor proved by Vedic testimony.⁶¹

Sāṃkhya philosophy shows that *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣas* are sufficient to explain the universe and hence there is no reason for postulating a hypothesis of God. Since, God is pure knowledge, so the material world cannot spring from Him. The effects are implicitly contained in their cause and the material world requires an unintelligent and ever-changing cause and not a spiritual and immutable God. The eternal existence of the *Puruṣas* is inconsistent with God. If these *Puruṣas* or these transcendental selves are the parts of God, they must have some divine power. So, there is no God.⁶²

3.1.8. : (iv) The *Yoga* System :

Yoga philosophy was founded by the great sage *Patañjali*. The word *Yoga* means *union*. In other words, it means spiritual union of the *Jīvātmā* with the *Paramātmā*. But according to *Patañjali*, *Yoga* is the spiritual effort to control our mind, body and senses. The most important doctrines of *Yoga* Philosophy are – five kinds of sufferings (*kleśa*), five levels of mental life (*chittabhūmi*), modification of *citta* and *Aṣṭāṅga–Yoga*. *Yoga* philosophy is the great system of spiritual discipline, purification, self-control to realize the true nature of man. *Yoga–Sūtra* of *Patañjali* is the main text of this philosophy.⁶³

According to the *Yoga* system, all the objects of the world are tinged with pain. This pain arises and has its source in the *citta* or *buddhi*. *Citta* takes the form of the

61. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. Pp.281-282.

62. Sannyal, Jagadishwar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*. Pp.225.

63. Sharna, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. P.165.

object, when the object comes in contact with *citta*. *Citta* is undergoing constant modification. These mental modifications are called knowledge. Pain is also a mode of *citta*. The cessation of pain requires the cessation of the modifications of *citta*. For this reason, *Yoga* has been defined as the complete suppression of the modifications of *citta*.⁶⁴

The *Yoga* philosophy advocates control over the mind, the senses and the body. They must be conquered. To overcome them, the *Yoga* system gives us the Eight fold Path of Discipline or *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*.⁶⁵

These are as follows –

1. **Yama:** *Yama* means abstention, which consists of non-violence (*ahimsā*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), sexual restraint (*brahmacarya*) and non-acceptance of unnecessary gifts (*aparigraha*).
2. **Niyama:** It includes internal and external purification (*Śauca*), contentment (*santoṣa*), austerity (*tapas*), study of the scriptures (*svādhyāya*), and devotion of God (*Īśvara-praṇidhāna*).
3. **Āsana:** It is the discipline of the body, which means steady and comfortable posture.
4. **Prāṇāyāma:** It is beneficial to health. It means control of breath and deals with regulation of inhalation, retention and exhalation of breath.
5. **Pratyāhāra:** It is control of the senses and consists in withdrawing the senses from their objects. This is the process of introversion.

64. Ibid; p.169, 171.

65. Sannyal, Jagadiswar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*, Pp.231-232.

6. **Dhāraṇā**: Dhāraṇā means fixing the mind on a particular object of meditation. The mind must be steadfast like the un-flickering flame of a lamp.

7. **Dhyāna**: It means meditation and consists in the undisturbed flow of thought round the object of meditation.

8. **Samādhi**: It means concentration, which is the final step in Yoga.⁶⁶

Concept of the Self in Yoga Philosophy :

Regarding the concept of the self, the *Yoga* system says that the self is in its own nature, pure consciousness, which is free from the limitations of the body and *citta*. The self confuses itself with *citta* due to ignorance or *avidyā*. The self really undergoes no change or modification. Because of its reflection in the changing states of *citta*, the self appears to have changes.⁶⁷

Concept of God in Yoga Philosophy :

Regarding the concept of God, the *Yoga* system says that God is the Supreme lord. God is omnipotent, omniscient. He is the non-empirical or noumenal self. God's omniscience is eternal and is beyond any modification. So, omniscience does not attribute any empirical mode to God's consciousness. God assumes pure *sattva* (*prakṛṣṭa-Sattva*) and so He is forever endowed with supreme power, wisdom and goodness.⁶⁸

3.1.9. : (v) The Mīmāṃsā System :

Jamini founded the *Mīmāṃsā* philosophy. It is based on vedic ritualism, that is, *Karmakāṇḍa* of the Vedas. The authority of the Vedas is the basis of ritualism. The

66. Sharma, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, P.171-172.

67. Ibid. P.172.

68. Sannyal, Jagadishwar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*. Pp.234.

word *Mīmāṃsā* means ‘solution of some problems by reflection and critical examination’. The main aim of this philosophy is to help and support Vedic ritualism by supplying a philosophical justification of the beliefs on which ritualism depends.

According to Jaimini, there are three sources of valid knowledge, namely perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*) and testimony (*śabda*). But Prabhākara adds two more, i.e. comparison (*upamāna*) and implication (*arthāpatti*). Kumārila also adds non-apprehension (*anupalabdhi*). *Mīmāṃsā* philosophy is pluralistic realism.⁶⁹

Concept of the Self in *Mīmāṃsā* Philosophy :

Regarding the concept of the self, Kumārila regards that the self is eternal, incorporeal, immaterial and transmigrating, which is different from the body, the sense-organs and cognitions. According to Kumārila, the self is the knower, enjoyer and also active agent. It is the substrate of cognition, pleasure, pain, desire, volition, impression, merit and demerit. These all are its modes. The self undergoes modifications, and so it is eternal. The self is of the nature of potency of cognition. Kumārila sometimes says that the self is self-illuminated; so it is cognized by itself; not by others. Again he sometimes says that the self is an object of ‘I’-consciousness. When it is said that the self is imperceptible, it means that it is apprehended by itself; which cannot be perceived by others. So, Kumārila says that the self is both self-illuminated and an object of I-consciousness and it always points to the existence of the self. This self is of the nature of pure consciousness.⁷⁰

69. Ibid. Pp.244-245.

70. Sharma, C.D.(1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. P.218.

Like Kumāṛila, Prabhākara also says that the self is eternal, which is distinct from the body, the sense-organs and cognitions. According to him, the self has nine special qualities; these are – cognition (*buddhi*), pleasure (*sukha*), pain (*duḥkha*), desire (*icchā*), aversion (*dveṣa*), volition (*prayatna*), merit (*dharma*), demerit (*adharma*) and impression (*saṃskāra*). These qualities are produced by its conjunction with *manas* (mind), which is the internal organ. But Prabhākara regards that these qualities of the soul are not perceived apart from the body, which is animated by it. The body is capable of movement, but the soul or the self is motionless. The self comes into contact with all things without movement and so it is all-pervading. Prabhākara also says that the self can have experience only through its own body and sense-organs; it cannot have experience through others' bodies and sense-organs. There are many selves and so, their experiences are also different. One soul cannot be perceived by another soul.⁷¹

According to Prabhākara, the self is neither produced nor destroyed, which is devoid of origin and end. The self is uncaused and indestructible. It achieves its non-empirical, pure and transcendental condition by exhausting its merits and demerits, which is the state of liberation. This self is apprehended as the knower of objects, and manifested as the subject in all cognitions of objects. It cannot be an object of mental perception as Kumāṛila regards. The self is never known as an object; it is always manifested as the subject or knower of object-cognitions.⁷²

71. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. P.343.

72. Ibid. Pp.345-348.

Concept of God in *Mīmāṃsā* Philosophy:

Regarding the concept of God, it is found that Jaimini does not refer to God. Both Prabhākara and Kumārila also deny the existence of God as the creator of the world or as the author of the Vedas. The Vedas are eternal and self-revealing.

According to Kumārila, God certainly does not possess a material body. If that is so, He cannot have any desire towards creation. If God has a material body, it cannot be due to Himself, and so we require another creator for it. On the other hand, Prabhākara argues that there is no evidence for the creation and destruction of the world at a particular moment. All finite things, composed of parts are created by the conjunction of parts, and destroyed by their disjunction. All effects are due to their natural causes. So, no supernal cause is necessary. For this reason, it can be clearly said that the *Mīmāṃsā* philosophy is atheistic. Rejection of a creator-God by the *Mīmāṃsā* is on the ground that God in that case would be liable to the charges of partiality, cruelty etc. But rejection of God as the creator of the world does not necessarily mean the rejection of God. In the *Mīmāṃsā* system, the Vedas occupy the supremacy-position, and in its great anxiety to maintain the supremacy of the Vedas, the *Mīmāṃsā* philosophy has allowed God to be ignored.⁷³

3.1.10. : (vi) *Vedānta* System :

Vedānta philosophy is based on the *Upaniṣads*, the most philosophical and speculative texts of the Vedic literature. The main aim of *Vedānta* Philosophy is to understand the nature of *Brahman*. *Vedānta* indicates the doctrines, which are set forth

73. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*; p.348-349.

in the closing chapter of the *Vedas*. These are the *Upaniṣads*. The views of the *Upaniṣads* also constitute the final aim of the *Veda* or the essence of the *Vedas*. The *Vedānta-Sūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa is also called *Brahma-Sūtra*, because it is an exposition of the doctrine of *Brahman*. It is also called *Śārīraka Sūtra*, because it deals with the embodiment of the unconditioned self.⁷⁴ The *Vedānta* philosophy established the view that the Supreme Self or *Brahma* is non-dual. The main scriptures of *Vedānta* philosophy are – The *Upaniṣads*, the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* and the *Brahma-Sūtra*. These three are together known as *Prasthāna-traya* or the triple foundation of the *Vedānta*.⁷⁵

In the *Upaniṣads*, the Reality is sometimes called *Brahman* (God); and sometimes it is called *Ātman* (self) and sometimes it is called simply as *Sat* (Being). If *Brahman* or the self (*ātman*) is the Reality underlying the whole universe, then the question may arise as to the precise relation between *Brahman* and the world. There is unanimity of opinion that the self (*ātman*) or *Brahman* or Being (*Sat*) is both the creator and the material cause of the world. According to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣads*, there was at first the self. On the other hand, it is also mentioned in the *Upaniṣads* that the creation is real and God or *Brahman* is the real creator. In all objects, there is the same Reality, and the differences of the objects are only verbal.⁷⁶

The *Sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa are very brief and naturally the real import of the *Sūtras* are not easily intelligible. These are liable to different interpretations. There are many commentators, who have written their commentaries (*bhāṣyas*) on the *Brahma*

74. Sannyal, Jagadishwar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*, pp.272-273.

75. Radhakrishnan, S. (1992). *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p.430.

76. Hiriyanna, M.(2005). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, P.336.

Sūtras to explain and elaborate the doctrine of the *Vedānta* in their own light. Among these commentators, Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Ballava and Nimbārka are the chief commentators. Everyone of these authors became the founder of a particular division of *Vedānta* philosophy. These commentaries have also their sub-commentaries and in such a way the *Vedānta* literature became very large, though only a small fraction of it has been printed as yet.⁷⁷

Different views of various *Vedāntic* philosophers regarding the concept of God (*Brahman*), Self (*Jīva*), World (*Jagata*) and the relation between the *Brahman* (God) and *Jīva* (Self) will be discussed and explained in the next points.

These are the main systems of Indian philosophy, which occupy a vast area of the philosophical literature with their different views and explanations of human life and the whole universe.

3.2. Origin and growth of *Vedānta* Philosophy :

The literal meaning of the term *Vedānta* is the end of the *Vedas*, or the doctrines, that are found in the closing part of the *Vedas*, which are also known as *Upaniṣads*. So, it may be said that the *Vedānta* philosophy is built upon the teachings of the *Upaniṣads*. In other words, all the thoughts that developed out of the *Upaniṣads* are found in *Vedānta* philosophy. All philosophical teachings, speculations, found in the *Vedas* are discussed in the *Vedānta* philosophy.

The *Vedānta* tradition has a great significance in the intellectual history of India, and it is the representative philosophy which forms the principal current of thought in the country. The philosophy of *Vedānta* has been handed down through the

77. Sannyal, Jagadiswar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*, Pp.277-278.

ages in the blood of the Indian people. It may be said that the leading and principal tradition in the history of Indian philosophy has been *Vedānta* philosophy.⁷⁸

Almost nothing is known of the actual circumstances of the *Vedānta* school prior to the composition of the *Brahma-Sūtra*. The state of affairs in the *Vedānta* school for a period of nearly 300 years, from the composition of the *Brahma-Sūtra* (400-450) to the appearance of Śaṅkara (first half of 8th century), is likewise unclear. Of writings of the *Vedānta* school during this period, there are now extant only the *Māṇḍukya-Kārikā*, traditionally said to be a work by *Gauḍapāda* and the *Vākyapadīya* written by Bhaṭṭhari. So, the thoughts of the great number of *Vedānta* philosophers belonging to this period are not known in more detail.⁷⁹

The names of the important thinkers of this period have been listed in the *Siddhitraya*, a work by Yānūnācārya, as well as in the *Vedārthasaṁgraha*, written by Rāmānuja, and in the *Yatin-dramatadīpikā* by Śrīnivāsa-dāsa. From these writings, the names of nine men as thinkers belonging to the period of early *Vedānta* philosophers prior to Śaṅkara are found. These are as follows –

1. Bādarāyaṇa (i.e. Vyāsa), 2. Bodhāyana, 3. Tanka (Brahmanandin), 4. Dramida (the commentator, Bhāṣyakṛt), 5. Bhaṭṭaprapaṇca, 6. Bhaṭṭamitra, 7. Bhaṭṭhari, 8. Brahmadatta, 9. Śrīvatsāṅka

It can be supposed that Guhadeva was perhaps earlier than Śaṅkara, and that Bhāruci lived around the same time as Sureśvara, but the exact chronological relationship with Śaṅkara is uncertain.⁸⁰

78. Ibid. p.275.

79. Nakamura, Hajime (2004). *A History of early Vedānta Philosophy*, Pp.1-2.

80. Ibid. Part Two, Pp.3.

The above names of the early *Vedānta* thinkers appear in the work of the religious system of the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava school and in the philosophical system of ‘Qualified Non-dualism’ (*Viśiṣṭādvaita*) of Rāmānuja. But in addition, there are the names of some other philosophers which have been handed down in other sources (the works of the Non-dualistic school, the Buddhist Canon etc.). Combining all these together, the following are the names of fourteen thinkers, lived between the time of composition of the *Brahma-Sūtra* and the appearance of Śaṅkara. These are –

1. Bhartṛhari, 2. Upavarṣa, 3. Bodhāyana, 4. Taṅka (Brahmānandin), 5. Dravida,
6. Bhaṭṭaprapaṇca, 7. Śabarasvāmin, 8. Bhaṭṭamitra, 9. Śrīvatsvānka, 10. Sundarapāṇḍya,
11. Brahmadatta, 12. Gauḍapāda, 13. Govinda, 14. Maṇḍanamiśra

These names are listed in the general order of date.⁸¹

Generally, the *Vedānta* philosophy is well known since the time of Śaṅkarācārya. The main foundation of the *Vedānta* philosophy was the *Samhitā*, containing the *Vedic-hymns*. *Vedānta* philosophy also include the metaphysical concepts such as *Ātman*, or *Brahman*, self-discipline, abstract spirituality and meditation rather than ritualism.

There are three stages or periods in the development of *Vedānta* philosophy. These periods are the first in the creative stage represented by the revealed texts, which are also called śrutis and the vedic literature, chiefly consisting the *Upaniṣads*. The ideas of the *Vedānta* take shape mostly in the poetic visions and mystic intuitions of the enlightened seers. The second period is the stage of systematization, represented by the *Brahma-Sūtra*, which gather, arrange and justify the ideas of the previous stage.

81. Ibid. P.6.

The third period of development of the *Vedānta* philosophy is the stage of elaboration, represented by all works beginning from the chief commentaries downwards in which the ideas and arguments are cast into the proper philosophical forms, appeal being made not simply to earlier authority but also independent reasoning. Orthodox Indian writers themselves look upon the entire current of thought, spread over the successive stages, inseparable at source, but developing and ramifying in its onward course.⁸²

These are the stages through which *Vedānta* philosophy is developed. Man occupies a central place in the *Vedānta* philosophy. It is for the enlightenment and salvation of man that the *Vedānta* undertakes various philosophical discussions. But it is an important question that – what is the real nature of man? According to the *Upaniṣads*, man has no existence independent of God. The chief commentators of the *Brahma-Sūtra*, that is, Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja both accept the above view of the *Upaniṣads*. But they interpret the self's dependence on God in different ways in their own light.⁸³ These will be discussed briefly later.

3.3. : Various Schools of *Vedānta* Philosophy :

It has been said above that the main basis of the *Vedānta* philosophy is Bādarāyaṇa's *Brahma-Sūtra*. As these *Sūtras* are very brief, they are not easily intelligible. So, these *Sūtra* have been explained by different commentators in their own way. From these several writings or explanations, given by various commentators, there grew up different schools of *Vedānta* philosophy. Śaṅkarācārya, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Nimbārka and Ballabha are the chief commentators of *Brahma-Sūtra*, which are mentioned before. These philosophers became the founders of

⁸² Ibid. Pp.6-7.

⁸³ Chatterjee, S.C. and Datta, D.M. (1984). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. P.350.

different Vedāntic schools later on according to their own views and opinions. Each sect of *Vedānta* philosophy discusses three main problems. These are the God, the World and the Soul. The most common problem on which the different Vedāntic schools are divided is that, what is the nature of the relation between the self or *Jīva* and God or *Brahman*? In respect of this question, different Vedāntic philosophers have given different answers in accordance with their own tenets, showing their opinions based on ancient tradition.⁸⁴

The various Vedāntic schools, which have tried to establish the theories of their own are as follows –

- (i) *Advaita-vāda* or unqualified monism or Non-dualism of Śaṅkarācārya.
- (ii) *Viśiṣṭādvaitavāda* or qualified monism of Rāmānuja.
- (iii) *Dvaita-vāda* or strict dualism of Madhva.
- (iv) *Dvaitādvaitavāda* or identity-in-difference of Nimbārka.
- (v) *Śuddhādvaitavāda* or pure monism of Vallabha.

All these schools of *Vedānta* philosophy have some general characteristics, which can be called the Vedāntic core. Some of them are –

- (i) *Brahman* or Reality is the supreme cause of the whole universe and this *Brahman* or Reality is all- pervading and eternal.
- (ii) Bondage of the soul or *jīva* is subjection to *Samsāra*, the cycle of death and rebirth.
- (iii) Liberation is deliverance from this cycle and it is pure intuition of Brahman-integral experience of identity.⁸⁵

84. Ibid : p.368.

85. Sannyal, Jagadishwar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*. pp.275.

All these schools of *Vedānta* philosophy are different or dissimilar only in their attempts at discovering and establishing the truths regarding the concepts of *Brahman* or Reality, *Jīva* or self and the relation between the *Brahman* and the *Jīva*.

Each particular school of *Vedānta* philosophy is discussed and explained briefly in the following.

3.4. : *Advaita Vedānta* or Non-dualism of Śaṅkarācārya :

The literal meaning of the word *Advaita* is non-dual. It is the oldest school of *Vedānta* philosophy, which is found as an independent school of spiritual philosophy. The *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads* are the main base of Advaitism or monism. The first systematic expounder of the *Advaita Vedānta* school was Gauḍapāda. The philosophy of Gauḍapāda is essentially based on the *Upaniṣads*, particularly on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. He has also drawn upon the *Brahma-Sūtra* and the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*. Tradition says that Gauḍapāda was the teacher of Govinda-pāda, who was the teacher of Śaṅkarācārya.⁸⁶ So, finally the Advaitism or Non-dualism is mainly spoken of in connection with Śaṅkarācārya's philosophy, who is the most renowned of all Indian thinkers. Śaṅkarācārya was born in 788 A.D. and he died in 820 A.D. He belonged to a *Brāhmin* family and by birth he was *Śākta*. His preceptor Govindapāda taught Śaṅkarācārya the main principles of the *Advaita* philosophy.⁸⁷

Śaṅkarācārya wrote all his works with the purpose of helping the individual being to realize the identity of his soul with *Brahma*, which is the means of liberation

86. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. p.365.

87. Sharma, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. P.239.

from this Saṁsāra. The most famous and important commentary of Śaṅkarācārya, which was written on the *Brahma-Sūtra* is the *Vedānta Sūtra*. In it, Śaṅkarācārya established his own doctrine of *Vivartavāda*, according to which God or *Brahman* does not become, but really transformed into the world produced by Him, and remains identically the same, while we may wrongly think that He undergoes change and becomes the world. According to Śaṅkarācārya, the world is only the appearance of *Brahman*. The *Brahman* is the only reality and the individual soul is identical with *Brahman*, and not something different from it. The world is an illusion.⁸⁸

3.4.1. : (i) Śaṅkara's Concept of the Nature of *Brahman* :

According to Śaṅkara, Ultimate Reality is *Ātman* or *Brahman*. It is Pure Consciousness (*jñāna-svarūpa*) or consciousness of the Pure Self (*svarūpa- jñāna*). This *Ātman* or *Brahman* is devoid of all attributes (*nirguṇa*), and all categories of the intellect (*nirviśeṣa*). When this *Brahman* is associated with its potency (*śakti*) *māyā*, then it appears as the qualified *Brahman*, that is *saguṇa* or *saviśeṣa* or *apara Brahman* or the Lord or *Īśvara*, who is the creator, preserver and destroyer of this world, which is His appearance.⁸⁹

Śaṅkara derives the word *Brahman* from the root *bṛhati*, 'to exceed' (*atiśayana*); and it is eternity, purity and intelligent.

In the *Ṛg Veda*, *Brahman* is used in the sense of sacred knowledge or utterance, a hymn or incarnation, the concrete expression of spiritual wisdom.⁹⁰ But

88. Sannyal, Jagadiswar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*. P.279.

89. Ibid. P.280.

90. Sharma, C.D. (1987): *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, P.252.

Śaṅkara holds that *Brahman* is the only Reality, which is absolutely indeterminate and non-dual. In other words, *Brahman* is one, eternal, pure and transcendental consciousness. It transcends the duality of subject and object, and the empirical categories of space, time, substance, causality, change and the like. According to Śaṅkara, the world is an appearance of *Brahman*, which is non-different from it. Śaṅkara admits the empirical reality of God, the individual selves, and the world-appearance. But he admits the ontological reality of *Brahman* only.⁹¹

The *Brahman* or *Ātman* is one and so it is without a second. *Brahman* has no genus, nor is there any reality co-eval with *Brahman*, Śaṅkara holds that *Brahman* is pure identity, which is absolutely undifferentiated. *Brahman* is devoid of all differences, that is— homogeneous (*Sajātiya bheda*), heterogeneous (*Vijātiya bheda*) and internal difference (*Svagata bheda*). So, the pure identity of *Brahman* cannot be explained in terms of empirical descriptions. *Brahman* is attributeless (*nirguṇa*) and indeterminate (*nirviśeṣa*). According to Śaṅkara, *Brahman* is of the nature of existence (*sat*), consciousness (*cit*) and bliss (*ānanda*). *Brahman* is ‘*sat*’ or real means that it is not ‘*asat*’ or unreal. *Brahman* is *cit* or consciousness means that it is not *acit* or unconscious. *Brahman* is *ānanda* or bliss means that it is not the nature of pain. So, it can be said that *Brahman* is *Saccidānanda*. *Brahman* is devoid of activity. It is unchangeable and eternal.⁹²

Thus, it is found that according to Śaṅkara, *Brahman* or *Ātman* is one, non-dual, attributeless, indeterminate changeless and inactive.

91. Dasgupta, Surendra Nath.(1975). *A History of Indian Philosophy*; Vol. IV; P. 111)

92. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. p.365.

3.4.2. : Śaṅkara's concept of the God or *Īśvara* :

In *Upaniṣads*, there are the higher *Brahman* or *Parabrahma* and the lower *Brahman* or *Aparabrahma*. The higher or *para Brahman* is unconditioned (*nirupādhik*), indeterminate (*nirviśeṣa*) and attributeless (*nirguṇa*), while the lower or *apara Brahman* is conditioned (*sopādhik*), determinate (*saviśeṣa*) and qualified by attributes (*saguṇa*). According to Śaṅkara, the higher or *para Brahman*, which is indeterminate does not create the world. When *Brahman* is conditioned by *māyā*, then it is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the empirical world. So, it can be said that *Brahman*, conditioned by *māyā* is the personal God or *Īśvara*, which is lower or *apara Brahman* (determinate *Brahman*). In this aspect, *Brahman* is called *saguṇa Brahman* or *Īśvara* or Personal God in Śaṅkara's philosophy.⁹³

According to Śaṅkara, *Īśvara* or God is all-comprehensive and contains within Himself all that exists, potentially in *pralaya* and actually in creation. The whole phenomenal world is the appearance of *Brahman*. This *Brahman*, on which all rests, becomes *Īśvara*, when it is shaped by the phenomenal forms. In the conception of *Īśvara*, besides the absolute *Brahman*, there is an element of objectivity or *prakṛti*, self-expression or *māyā*. The changing or becoming of the world can not be due to *Brahman*, which is immutable. If *Brahman* itself changes, it ceases to be *Brahman*. If it never ceases to be itself; i.e., never changes, the change we come across remains unexplained. The changing universe cannot be traced to *prakṛti*, which is unintelligible. While *Brahman* stands for being, *prakṛti* stands for becoming. But to posit *prakṛti* by the side of *Brahman* as an ultimate category would be to limit the

93. Sannyal, Jagadishwar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*. Pp.281-283.

nature of *Brahman*, which has no second, nothing outside; but if no second is posited, then the explanation of the world becomes difficult. The only way is through the recognition of a *saguṇa Brahman* or changing *Brahman*, an *Īśvara*, who combines within Himself, the natures of both being and becoming, the unattached *Brahman* and the unconscious *prakṛti*. The pure, simple, self-subsistent Absolute becomes the personal God, the principle of being in the Universe binding all things to Himself.⁹⁴

So, it can be said that in Śaṅkara's philosophy, *Īśvara* or God combines the two principles of *Brahman* and *prakṛti*. He is not pure consciousness (*caitanya*); but he is a self-conscious personality. Omniscience (*sarvajñtva*) characterizes God, though its possibility is explained in different ways.⁹⁵

3.4.3. : Śaṅkara's Concept of *Jīva* or Self :

According to Śaṅkara, only *Brahman* is real, the world is false or illusion and the *jīva* or individual self is the *Brahman* and nothing else. In other words, there is ontologically no difference between the *jīva* or individual self and the *Brahman*. When qualified *Brahman* is personified, then it becomes the God or *Īśvara* and this God may also be represented as the cosmic parallel to the finite individual self or *jīvā*; the distinction between them being entirely one of adjuncts.⁹⁶

According to Śaṅkara, one and the same *Brahman* appears both as the world and as the *jīva* or individual self. The world is illusory, as the rope appears as the snake; but the individual self (*jīva*) is not illusory in this sense. The *jīva* or the

94. Ibid. P.294.

95. Radhakrishnan, S. (1992). *Indian Philosophy*. Vol.-II, pp.554-556.

96. Ibid. p.556.

individual self is *Brahman* or *Ātman* appearing through the limiting adjuncts (*upādhi*), such as the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*). The *Ātman* is supreme, universal self, which is non-dual or one. When this *Ātman* or *Brahman* is individuated or limited by the adjuncts of the body, the sense organs, mind or *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahamkāra*, it is called *jīva* or the individual self, which is the psycho-physical organism. It is the empirical self or ego. The one *Ātman* appears to be many individual selves (*jīvas*) owing to its limiting adjuncts (*upādhi*). There are six adjuncts (*upādhis*), which are material products of the individual self or *jīva*. These are – the gross body (*sthūla śarīra*), the senses (*indriya*), the vital forces (*prāṇa*), mind or internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*), intellect (*buddhi*) and the subtle body (*sukṣma śarīra*). So, the *jīva* is subject-object, self and not-self, reality and appearance. The *Ātman*, clothed in these *upādhis* is the *jīva*; and then it enjoys, suffers and acts. But from these conditions, the Supreme Self or *Brahman* is free. *Brahman* or *Ātman* is the original (*bimba*) and the individual self or *jīva* is the reflection (*pratibimba*) of it.⁹⁷

3.5. : *Viśiṣṭādvaitavāda* or Qualified Monism of Rāmānuja :

Rāmānuja was the founder of the doctrine of qualified non-dualism or *Viśiṣṭādvaitavāda*. Rāmānuja was born in the year 1027 in India. He was a worshipper of *Viṣṇu*. Rāmānuja wrote a commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra*, which is known as the *Śribhāṣya*.

Rāmānuja's doctrine is known as 'non-dualism qualified by difference' or *Viśiṣṭādvaitavāda*. According to him, the Absolute is an organic unity, an identity which is qualified by diversity. God or the Absolute is the organic whole. He is the

97. Hiriyanna, M. (1995). *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, P.164.

immanent inner controller and the Supreme Real who holds together in units, the dependent matter and individual souls as His body. Rāmānuja recognizes three things as ultimate and real (*tattva-traya*). These are – (i) matter (*acit*), (ii) souls (*cit*) and God (*Īśvara*). Though all these three are equally real, the matter and the souls are absolutely dependent on God. These two are the attributes of God. God is the soul of souls, nature etc. In Rāmānuja's philosophy, God is qualified by matter and souls. They form His body and are inseparable from and utterly dependent on Him.⁹⁸

Rāmānuja concentrates his attention on the relation of the world to God. He argues that God is real and independent. The souls are also real; but their reality is utterly dependent on the reality of God or *Brahman*. Though the world of matter and the individual selves have a real existence of their own, still they are not essentially the same as *Brahman*. *Brahman* is eternally free from imperfections, but individual selves are subject to ignorance and suffering. They all form a unity, because matter and souls have existence only within *Brahman*. Apart from *Brahman*, they are nothing. Rāmānuja also pronounced *bhakti* or devotion to God, which is the path of liberation or *mukti*.⁹⁹

3.5.1. : Rāmānuja's concept of the nature of God (*Brahman*) :

According to Rāmānuja, God is the Absolute Reality, possessed of two integral parts, viz. – matter and the finite spirit. In Rāmānuja's philosophy, *Brahman* is the only reality in the universe in the sense that, outside or independent of God, there is no other reality. But God contains within Himself, the material objects as well as the

98. Sannyal, Jagadiswar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*. Pp.296-297.

99. Sharma, C.D.(1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. Pp.346-347.

finite souls which are real. The Absolute One contains the many. Therefore, this monism of Rāmānuja is known as qualified Non-dualism or *Viśiṣṭādvaita* which means the Unity (*advaita*) of *Brahman* possessed (*viśiṣṭa*) of real parts (the conscious and the unconscious). It is not a distinctionless unity. In other words, *Brahman* or God is a synthetic whole with souls and matter as His moments (*cidācid viśiṣṭa*).¹⁰⁰ These matter and souls are the attributes of God.

Rāmānuja argues that God is free from all external differences – homogenous (*sajātiya*) as well as heterogeneous (*vijātiya*), since there is nothing either similar or dissimilar which is external to or other than Him. But God possesses internal differences (*svāgata bheda*) as His organic body is made of real and diverse elements like matter and souls. His relation with them is natural and eternal. God is the immanent as well as the transcendent ground of the world.¹⁰¹

God is possessed of an infinite number of infinitely good qualities such as omnipotence, omniscience, benevolence. So, it can be said that God is not characterless (*nirguṇa*), nor indeterminate; but possessed of qualities (*saguṇa*). God really creates the world, sustains it and withdraws it.¹⁰² God is the material cause as well as the efficient cause of the world. He really creates the individual selves (*jīvas*) out of cit and the physical world, out of acit.

According to Rāmānuja, God or *Brahman* is the Supreme Person, who is also called '*Puruṣottama*'. He is also the supreme personality. In Rāmānuja's philosophy, *Brahman* and God (*Īśvara*) are non-different. Rāmānuja's *Brahman* or God is the same as the *Īśvara* or personal God in Śāṅkara's Advaitism. According to Śāṅkara, God is a

100. Sannyal, Jagadiswar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*. Pp.308-309.

101. Chatterjee, S.C. and Datta, D.M.(1984). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. P.417.

102. Sharma, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. P. 347.

reality from the standpoint of the world; but God has no ontological reality. But according to Rāmānuja, God or *Brahman* is the absolute or ontological reality; and *Viṣṇu* is the Supreme God or *Brahman*.¹⁰³

3.5.2.: Rāmānuja's Concept of the Individual Self :

According to Rāmānuja, the *jīva* is the individual self. It is different from the body, life, the sense-organs, mind and intellect; it is also different from the psychological organism. The *jīva* or the self is self-luminous and manifests itself without the aid of knowledge. It is the knower, enjoyer and active agent. The *jīva* or the self is unborn, immortal and not affected by birth and death, which is eternal and persists in all times. Birth is the union of the self with the body; and death is its disjunction from the body. The self is atomic or monadic, which resides in the heart and pervades the world with its knowledge. The self or *jīva* cannot be perceived through the sense-organs. It is an ego, and cannot be thought as a non-ego. It is a simple and an immaterial spirit, which is not composed of parts. The body changes, but the self does not change. It remains identical with itself without undergoing modifications. This self is controlled by God; its freedom is subject to the divine will. The self or *jīva* is grounded in God and sustained by Him. The self cannot exist apart from God, for it is His attribute or mode and inseparably related to Him.¹⁰⁴

The birth of the self is due to *avidyā* or ignorance, which is false identification of the self with the body. Ignorance is beginningless; it generates merits and demerits, which obscures the essential nature of the self and its affinity with God. When it is

103. Chatterjee, S.C. and Datta, D.M. (1984). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. P.418.

104. Sannyal, Jagadiswar (2001). *Guide to Indian Philosophy*. P.311.

destroyed by meditation on God, its essential nature is manifested and it experiences the infinite bliss of God. Rāmānuja recognizes *avidyā* or ignorance in the selves; which veils their essential nature and kinship with God.

This self or the *jīva* acquires *avidyā*, actions, dispositions and desires in connection with unconscious matter. If the connection of the self with the body is destroyed, then *avidyā* and its products are also destroyed. The self experiences pleasure and pain owing to its actions. Its pleasures and pains are not due to its connection with the body. But God is devoid of them; and so it does not experience pleasures and pains. The self is actually of the nature of bliss. Knowledge in its manifest condition is pleasant. All objects partake of the nature of God. So, they are essentially agreeable. Their disagreeable nature is due to false identification of the self with the body.¹⁰⁵

In the philosophy of Rāmānuja, it is found that there are three types of selves. These three selves are –

- (i) Eternal self (*Nitya*). These selves are eternally free; and have never been in bondage.
- (ii) Free self (*Mukta*). These selves were once subject to *saṁsāra*; but later they have attained liberation or *mukti*.
- (iii) Bound self (*Baddha*). These selves are caught up in the meshes of *saṁsāra* and they are striving to be released. They wander from life to life till they are redeemed.¹⁰⁶

105. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. Pp.417-418.

106. Ibid. P.419.

3.6.: *Dvaitavāda* or unqualified dualism of Madhvācārya :

Madhva is the founder of *Dvaitavāda* or unqualified dualism. He is regarded as an incarnation of *Vāyu*. He is also known as Ānandatīrtha or Pūrṇaprajñā. He has written the commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra*, which is called *Madhva-bhāṣya*, *Aṇuvyākhyāna*. Madhva's philosophy is the doctrine of absolute distinctions. He advocates the reality of five-fold distinctions.¹⁰⁷ These distinction are as follows –

- (i) The distinction between the individual soul and God.
- (ii) The distinction between the one soul and the another soul.
- (iii) The distinction between the soul and the matter.
- (iv) The distinction between the God and the matter.
- (v) The distinction between matter and matter.

This is the central teaching of Madhva's dualism. It is realism, and looks upon the world as real.¹⁰⁸ According to Madhva, God is completely identified with *Brahman*. He believes in God, souls and matter as the three entities, which are eternal and absolutely real, though souls and matter are absolutely dependent on God, 'Who' alone is independent. In his philosophy, it is found that God, individual souls and matter – all are eternal and mutually separate entities. So, Madhva's Philosophy is known as *dvaitavāda* or dualism.

3.6.1. : Madhva's Concept of the Nature of God :

According to Madhva, God and *Brahman* are completely identified, who alone is independent. According to Madhva, there are two kinds of reality. One is

107. Hiriyanna, M. (1995). *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*. P.406.

108. Sharma, C.D. (1987): *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. P.372.

independent (*svatantra*) and the other is dependent (*paratantra*). God is the independent reality. Individual souls and the world are dependent realities. In this respect, Madhva's philosophy is dualism. God is free from all imperfections. He possesses infinitely good qualities. Existence, knowledge and bliss constitute His essence. (God is the creator, preserver and destroyer of this universe. He is immanent as the inner ruler of all souls.) In other words, God has being (*sat*), consciousness (*cit*) and bliss (*ānanda*). God has six qualities of Lordship. These six qualities are – infinite knowledge, infinite power, infinite strength, infinite rulership, infinite vigour and infinite glory.¹⁰⁹ There is no mutual difference among the qualities of God.

God is the efficient cause (*nimitta-kāraṇa*) of the world. The highest and perfect Lord is *Viṣṇu*. He is called the Absolute or *Brahman*, the Supreme Self (*Paramātmān*), and *Bhagavān* (Lord). He is the Inner Ruler (*Antaryāmin*) of all. God is the Supreme Person (*Puruṣottama*). He is omniscient, omnipotent, perfect, eternal, extremely subtle and immutable. God is the cause of all beings, and dwells in them. 'He' impels men in their activities. 'He' is the object of knowledge. He is the goal of attainment. He has extra-ordinary and inconceivable powers. God is the controller of all, Who is devoid of body and sense-organs. 'He' is not subject to *prakṛti*. He is both immanent and transcendent, who is the abode of contrary qualities.¹¹⁰

God is also the Lord of *Karma*. He is pleased only by *bhakti*. He manifests Himself in the various *Vyūhas* and in incarnations and is present in sacred images.

109. Sinha, Jadunath (2006): *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p.437.

110. Ibid. P.440.

Lakṣmī is His consort. She is ever-liberated and possesses a divine body. She is the Power of God.¹¹¹

3.6.2. : Madhva's Concept of the Nature of Self or *Jīva* :

According to Madhva, the individual self or the *jīva* is the knower, enjoyer, and doer, who is partless and eternal. The *jīva* or the self dwells in the body and the senses. It is subject to happiness and misery. The soul is atomic in size and it can experience sensations in its entire body. The soul is by nature conscious and blissful. It becomes subject to pains and imperfections on account of its connection with the material body, sense-organs, minds etc. which connection is due to its past karmas.¹¹²

The individual souls or the *jīvas* are different from God. There can be no absolute identity between them. The self has finite knowledge, limited power and is absolutely dependent on God, who dwells in the soul. But God does not experience its joys and sorrows. God is real; the soul is real; and their difference is also real. In other words, the *jīva* and God are always different from each other.¹¹³

According to Madhva, there are three kinds of conscious soul. These are –

- (i) The souls, who are eternally free (*nitya mukta*).
- (ii) The souls, who have freed themselves from *saṁsāra* (*mukta*), and
- (iii) The souls, who are bound (*baddha*). This type of souls includes both those who are eligible for release (*muktiyogya*) and those, who are not eligible for it.

111. Ibid. Pp.440-441.

112. Sharma, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. P.373.

113. Ibid : p.373.

Though God controls the soul from within, yet it is a real agent and a real enjoyer, who is responsible for its own acts. The threefold classification of the soul is based on the three *guṇas*. The *sāttvika* soul goes to heaven, the *rājasa* soul revolves in *samsāra*, while the *tāmasa* soul falls into hell. The living beings are divided into a number of classes, - gods (*devas*), men, animals and plants. A fixed gradation, dependent on distinctions (*tāratamya*) of souls is worked out on an elaborate scale. Vāyu is the mediator between God and the souls. He helps the souls to gain saving knowledge and obtain release. The soul gets release through the grace of God. Release is the original state of purity.¹¹⁴

3.7. : *Dvaitādvaita* philosophy of Nimbārka :

Nimbārka was a Telegu *Brāhmin* of the *Vaiṣṇava* faith. He wrote a short commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra*, which is known as *Vedānta pārijātasaurabha*. Nimbārka advocates the doctrine of *dvaitādvaitavāda* or dualistic non-dualism. He insists on difference as well as non-difference or identity (*bhedābheda*) between *Brahman* and the individual souls and the world. He advocates the relation of identity-in-difference between them. He also advocates the doctrine of transformation of *Brahma* into the world (*brahmapariṇāmvāda*).

Nimbārka's doctrine is called dualistic non-dualism or *dvaitādvaitavāda*, because it stresses identity-in-difference (*bhedābheda*) between God and the soul and the world. According to him, the world and the souls are different from *Brahman* because they have real and distinct existence dependent upon Him. They are non-different from *Brahman*, because they cannot exist apart from Him. There is non-

114. Sinha, Jadunath (2006): *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, pp.444-445.

difference or identity between them in their essential nature. There is difference between them because they are related to each other as part and whole, the controlled and the controller, and the worshipper and the worshipped.¹¹⁵

So, it is found that like Rāmānuja, Nimbārka also admits that there are three realities; these are – God, souls and matter. Souls and matter are dependent on God. The individual soul is essentially of the nature of knowledge (*jñānasvarupa*). But it is also the substratum of knowledge. The relation between the substantive and the attributive knowledge is that between the qualified and the qualification (*dharmi-dharma-bhāva*).¹¹⁶

3.7.1. : Nimbārka's Concept of the Nature of God :

According to Nimbārka, God is the highest *Brahman*; and by His very nature, He is free from all defects. He is the greatest, Supreme Person or *Puruṣottama*, possessed of infinite, inconceivable, natural essences, qualities and powers. God is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. He is the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the world of conscious souls (*cit*) and unconscious matter (*acit*). He is absolutely free and independent controller of all finite agent and dispenser of the fruits of their actions.¹¹⁷ God manifests Himself in incarnations, and He is identified with Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā is His consort. This omnipotent Supreme Lord can create the world out of Himself, and yet remain transcendent. The inconceivable creative power in God is the cause of this universe. In other words, God is both the efficient and the material cause of this universe. He is the efficient cause, because as the Lord of *Karma* and as the

115. Radhakrishnan, S. (1992). *Indian Philosophy*. Vol.-II, P.744.

116. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. Pp.452-453.

117. Sharma, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. P.376.

inner ruler of the souls, He brings about creation in order to enable the souls to reap the fruits of their *Karma*. And He is also the material cause of the world, because creation means manifestation of His powers of ‘*cit*’ and ‘*acit*’; it is a real transformation (*pariṇāma*) of His powers. The relation between the universe and God is one of identity and difference; and it is quite natural.¹¹⁸ If the universe is absolutely identical with God, then God will suffer all its imperfections, miseries and pains and then He would lose His pure nature. On the other hand, if the universe is absolutely different from God, then it would constitute a limit to God and He would not be its all-pervading inner ruler and controller. The souls and matter have no independent existence and therefore are not different from God. And yet because they have dependent existence and are limited, therefore, they are different from God, Who is independent and unlimited ruler.¹¹⁹

3.7.2 : Nimbārka’s Concept of the Individual Self or *Jīva* :

According to Nimbārka, the soul or the *jīva* is a real knower, agent and enjoyer. The souls are atomic in size and they are many in number. A soul is eternal and yet it suffers births and deaths on account of its embodiment, which is due to *karma* and *avidyā*. In other words, the pure nature of the soul is obscured by its *karma*, which is the result of *avidyā*. It is beginningless; and through the grace of God, it can be terminated.¹²⁰

In Nimbārka’s philosophy, it is found that the soul feels pleasure and pain, which are the fruitions of merits and demerits. It has the power of doing right and wrong actions. Its activity is controlled by God. It strives to share in the infinite bliss

118. Sinha, Jadunath (2006). *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. Pp.449-450.

119. Sharma, C.D. (1987). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, pp.376-377.

120. Ibid. p.377.

of God. The soul can experience pleasure and pain through its entire body. It rests in the heart. It is a part of *Brahman*; and it is both different and non-different from Him, in essence and also in attributes. The soul is subject to joys and sorrow (*bhoktr*). It experiences the fruits of its actions. But *Brahman* or God does not experience fruits of action (*abhoktr*). God is the worshipped, while the soul is the worshipper.¹²¹

Bhakti involves a knowledge of the supreme reality, the nature of the individual soul, the fruits of divine grace or *mokṣa*. *Bhakti* is love and devotion to God. The grace of God is ever ready to lift up the souls and make them see the truth of things. For the soul, *karma* is said to be the means for acquisition of *brahmajñāna*, carrying with it devotion.¹²²

3.8. : Śuddhādvaitavāda or Pure Non-dualism of Vallabha :

Vallabha was the founder of the doctrine of *Śuddhādvaitavāda* or pure-non-dualism. He was a Telegu *Brāhmin* of South India, who migrated to the north and developed the views of Viṣṇusvāmin, who belonged to the 13th century. Vallabha has written a commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtra*, which is called *Aṇubhāṣya* and also on *Bhāgavata*, called *Subodhini*. Vallabha declares that the whole world is real and is subtly *Brahman*. The individual souls and the inanimate world, in essence, are one with *Brahman*. Vallabha admits that *jīva*, *kāla* or time and *prakṛti* or *māyā*, are eternal existence; they are referred to the being of *Brahman* and have no separate existence. According to Vallabha, *Brahman* can create the world without any connection with any principle, such as *māyā*. Vallabha looks upon God as the whole

121. Radhakrishnan, S. (1992). *Indian Philosophy*, Vol.-II, p.755.

122. Sinha, J. (2006): *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p.451.

and the individual soul is a part of it; but, as the individual soul is of identical essence with God, there is no real difference between the two. The individual soul is not the Supreme, clouded by the force of *avidyā*; but is itself *Brahman*, with one attribute rendered imperceptible.¹²³

Vallabha's doctrine is known as *Śuddhādvaitavāda* or pure-non-dualism, because according to him, *Brahman* is the independent reality; and the soul, as a part of *Brahman* (God) is identical with Him. It appears as different on account of the limited manifestation of some divine aspects and obscuration of others.

3.8.1. : Vallabha's Concept of the Nature of God :

In Vallabha's philosophy, *Brahman* is God, who is the Supreme Person (*puruṣottama*). Pure *Brahman* or God is the only reality. His essence is Existence (*sat*), knowledge (*cit*) and Bliss (*ānanda*). Souls and matter are His real manifestations. They are His parts. God is the abode of all good qualities. God is smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest. He is one as well as many. It is by His will that He manifests Himself as matter and as souls revealing His tripartite nature of Existence, knowledge and Bliss in different proportions. *Māyā* or *Avidyā* is His power through which He manifests Himself as many.¹²⁴ This manifestation is neither an error nor an illusion. It is a real manifestation.

According to Vallabha, God is both material and efficient cause of this universe. He really manifests Himself as this universe, without undergoing any change. The universe is not a *Vivarta*, because it is a real manifestation, not an unreal

123. Radhakrishnan, S.(1992) : *Indian Philosophy*, Vol.-II, p.755.

124. Ibid. Vol.-II, p.756-758.

appearance. But it is also not a *pariṇāma*, because this manifestation does not involve any change or transformation. The universe is a natural emanation from God which does not involve any notion of change. So, it is called *Avikṛtapariṇāma*, which is advocated by Vallabha.¹²⁵

According to Vallabha, God is the one supreme *Antaryāmīn*, the inner ruler of the universe. In the *Antaryāmīns*, all the aspects are manifested. *Jagat*, *jīva* and *Antaryāmī* – all are essentially identical with God. *Jagat* is dissimilar to Him (*viṣṭīya*); *jīvas* are similar to Him (*sajātiya*) and *Antaryāmīns* are inside Him (*svagata*). He runs through all the three forms, which are non-different from Him. There is no difference either homogeneous or heterogeneous or internal in God. When God is pleased by devotion, then He takes the devotee within Himself. Again, when He is highly pleased, then He keeps the devotee near Himself to enjoy the sweetness of service.¹²⁶

3.8.2. : Vallabha's Concept of the Nature of Self or *Jīvā* :

According to Vallabha, the selves or the *jīvas* are the parts of God. They are monāds (*aṇu*). They are eternal and devoid of the *guṇas* of *Prakṛti*. The selves are superior to *Prakṛti*. They are conscious souls and they are also self-luminous. They control their bodies, sense-organs, life and internal organs. They are apprehended by self-consciousness (*ahamvṛtti*). They are not generated by God; but they are His parts. They are spiritual atoms (*aṇu*) or monāds, which possess the quality of consciousness. The souls are different from one another. They are different parts of *Brahman*.¹²⁷

125. Sharma, C.D. (1987): *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, p. 378.

126. Ibid : p.378.

127. Ibid : pp.379-380.

Samsāra is due to the soul's ignorance or *avidyā* of its non-difference from *Brahman*. *Avidyā* is due to egotism (*ahaṅkāra*) or a false sense of individuality. According to Vallabha, liberation is due to true knowledge of the non-difference (*abheda*) of the world and *jīvas* from *Brahman*. *Avidyā* is destroyed by the true knowledge of *Brahman*. The liberated soul is divested of its adventitious qualities of *Prakṛti*, and it acquires its intrinsic purity. It acquires affinity with God. It does not lose its identity in Him. It does not become God. The means (*sādhana*) can never be the end (*sādhya*). God, by His infinite grace, makes His own dependent soul attain affinity with Him, and liberates it.

There are three kinds of souls; and these are – pure, bound and liberated. A pure soul or *jīva* is devoid of any relation to *avidyā*. The bound soul acquires, through the grace of God, fivefold *vidyā*, i.e., dispassion, discrimination, yoga, austerities and devotion; it attains liberation. Liberated souls acquire affinity with God. They are either *jīvanmukta* or *mukta*. The former two are liberated in embodied life and the later enjoys disembodied liberation.¹²⁸

Regarding the relation between the self and God, the views of different *Vedāntic* philosophy are as follows –

According to Śaṅkara, their relation is one of identity (*abheda*). He says that the world including the souls is non-different from its cause, *Brahman*.

According to Rāmānuja, the soul and matter are the integral parts of *Brahman*; and hence there is difference (*bheda*) as well as non-difference (*abheda*) between them. There is both difference and identity (*bedhābheda*) between the parts and the

128. Sinha, Jadunath (2006): *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p.461-463.

whole. So, it can be said that Rāmānuja believes in identity-in-difference (*bhedābheda*).

According to Madhva, this relation is unqualified dualism. For him, the soul, though a dependent part of God, is essentially different from Him.

According to Nimbārka, the soul as limited and dependent, is different from God, though as the power of God, it is identical with Him.

According to Vallabha, the soul as a part of God is identical with Him and appears as different on account of the limited manifestation of some divine aspect and obscuration of others.