

CHAPTER - VI

THE CONCEPT OF THE SELF OR *JĪVĀTMAN* IN THE THOUGHTS OF ŚAṄKARĀDEVA

6.1 : The Concept of the Individual Self or *Jīvatman* :

In Indian philosophy, mind is regarded as an internal sense. It is through mind, that man can introspect and cognise the different states of the soul. The “self” or the “soul” is the knower, agent and the enjoyer. According to *Upaniṣads*, the existence of the self or *jīvatman* is a real spiritual entity, which is distinct from *Īśvara*. In *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣada*, there is a classic illustration of the two birds sitting on the same tree, one eating the sweet fruit and the other looking on without eating, brings out clearly the distinction between the *jīva* and *Īśvara*. It is expressed in *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* as follows—

*dvā sūparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānam vṛkṣam pariśasvajāte/
tayloranyaḥ pippalam svādvatt anaśnan anyoabhicākaśīti!*¹

Both are sentient beings (*cetanas*); but the former, caught up in bondage is subject to the experience of the fruits of *karma*, whereas the latter is untouched by it. Though both are spiritual in character, *Brahman* is infinite (*vibhu*), whereas the *jīva* is monadic substance (*aṇu*). In view of this, the *Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta* has admitted *jīva* as a separate reality (*tattva*)²

1. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*: verse-3/1/1. Guwahati: Publication Board of Assam.

2. Chari, S.M, Srinivasa. (2017). *Vaiṣṇavism - Its Philosophy, Theology and Religious Discipline*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Pvt. Ltd P. 67.

The word “*jīva*” means that which lives or sustains life. It is also known as *Ātman*, a term which is more often used in the *Upaniṣads*. The word *Ātman* means that which pervades the body. It is applicable to both *Brahman* and the individual soul and in order to distinguish between the two, the terms *Paramātmān* and *jīvātman* are used respectively. The other terms used for *jīva* are *cit* or *cetanā*, which has consciousness, that is the knower of all knowledge. That entity is denoted by “I”, which is unchanging and this unchanging “I” is called the self.³ It possesses conscious experience, controls passion, desire from birth (or before) to death (or after).

6.1.1 : The Self or *Jīvātman* is Eternal :

The self or *jīva* is an eternal spiritual entity. It is *nitya* or eternal in the sense that it is neither born nor does it die. It is described in the *Bhagavadgītā* as follows—

na jāyate mṛyate vā kadācin
nayam bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato yaṁ purāṇo
*na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*⁴

It means, for the soul, there is neither birth nor death at any time. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing and primeval.

Since the soul has no birth, so, it has no past, present or future. The soul is eternal, ever-existing and primeval – that is, there is no trace in history of its coming into being.

3. Sanyal, Jagadiswar. (2006). *Guide to General philosophy*. Kolkata: Sribhumi Publishing Company. P. 153.

4. *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*; Chapter- 2, verse 20.

In the *Kathopaniṣad* (1/2/18) also, the same verse is found, which is mentioned above from the *Bhagavadgītā*. In it, it is found that the soul is full of knowledge, or full always with consciousness. Therefore, consciousness is the symptom of the soul.⁵

So, it can be said that the birth and death of an individual is the association and dissociation respectively of a physical body with the soul. Due to bondage, caused by the beginningless *avidyā* or ignorance of the true nature of the self, *jīva* passes through the cycle of births and deaths until it attains final liberation from *karma* by means of prescribed spiritual discipline.

6.1.2 : The Self or *Jīva* is the Subject of Knowledge :

The self or *jīva* is *jñāna-svarūpa* or it is essentially of the nature of knowledge. According to the *Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta*, the individual self is not merely of the nature of knowledge; but it possesses knowledge as its essential attributes. In other words, the self is the subject of knowledge (*jñāna*). The knowledge, which is an attribute (*dharma*) of the self or *jīva* is called as *dharma bhūta jñāna* or attributive knowledge to distinguish it from the *svarūpa- jñāna* or knowledge that constitutes the very *svarūpa* of *jīva*. The basis for admission of *dharma bhūta-jñāna* is the *Upaniṣadic* text which states explicitly that the self or *jīva* is the knower (*boddhā*). In this context, the *Praśna Upaniṣad* says that—

*eṣa hi draṣṭā spraṣṭā śrotā ghrātā rasayitā;
mantā boddhā kartā vijñānātmā puruṣaḥ*⁶

5. Swami Prabhupada, A.C. Bhaktivedanta. (1986) : *Bhagavadgītā - As it is*. PP: 89, 90

6. Sarma, T. (2006); Chapter- IV; Verse-9, *Upaniṣad Astak*. Assam, P 225.

It means,— This self (Puruṣa), which is of the nature of consciousness (*viññānātmā*) is verily the seer, the toucher, the hearer, the smeller, the taster, the knower (*boddhā*) and the doer.

The two terms – *viññānātmā* and *boddhā*– used in this statement signify that the individual self is not merely of the nature of consciousness, but it is also the knower or subject of knowledge. There is also a logical justification for admitting knowledge as a quality of the self. The self is immutable and if the functions such as knowing, feeling and willing pertain directly to the self, it would be subject to modification. In order to uphold the unchanging character of *ātmā*, the *dharmabhūta-jñāna* is to be necessarily admitted. The modifications take place only in respect of the attributive knowledge, while its essence remains unaffected by them.⁷

The self or *jīva* reveals itself and the attributive knowledge reveals the objects. As both reveal something, the term *jñāna* is applicable to both. Nevertheless, it is possible to conceive two entities of the same nature as substance and attribute. For instance, the flame of a lamp (*dīpa*) is of the same character as its luminosity (*prabhā*) in so far as brightness (*tejas*) is common to both, but the two are never-the-less distinct as substance and attribute. They are also different functionally; the flame illumines itself, whereas its luminosity (*prabhā*) illumines itself as well as other objects. In the same way, *jīva* and its attributive knowledge, though may have a common characteristic feature are distinct as substance and attributes. *Jīva* is constituted of knowledge, which is known as *dharmī-jñāna* or substantive. Knowledge reveals itself and not the..... objects; it knows what is revealed to it. On the other hand, knowledge

7. Chari, S M. Srinivasa (2017) : *Vaiṣṇavism - its Philosophy, Theology and Religious Discipline*, P. 68.

as the essential attribute of the self, known as *dharma bhūta-jñāna* or attributive knowledge reveals itself as well as the external objects to the self and does not know them. In other words, the self (*ātman*) knows what is revealed to it by knowledge, whereas knowledge only shows but cannot know.⁸

6.1.3 : The Self or *Jīva* is Self-luminous :

The self or *jīva* by virtue of its being of the nature of knowledge is self-luminous or *svayamprakāśa*. According to *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, the term self-luminosity means that which reveals itself without the aid of knowledge. The self or *ātman* is regarded as self-luminous, because it does not require another knowledge for its manifestation. It is known by itself and is not in need of another knowledge to know it. It manifests always as “I” (*aham ātmā iti svenaiya sidhyati*). According to the *Viśiṣṭadvaitavādins*, the entity denoted by “I” (*ahamartha*) is the true self. It is not the same as *ahamkāra* or the psychological ego which is caused by the delusion that the physical body itself is the soul. That the self is self-luminous. It is also upheld by the scriptural text. In *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, it is expressed as–

*yam puruṣaḥ svayamjyotirbhavati*⁹

It means – The self or *jīva*, in the state of dreamless sleep, becomes self-luminous.

6.1.4 : The Self or *Jīva* is an Integral Part of *Brahman* :

The self or *jīva*, as an eternal spiritual entity is distinct from *Brahman*. According to *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, the self or *jīva* is caught in bondage, whereas *Īśvara*

8. Ibid; P. 69

9. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*; VI; 3,9,

is free from it. The famous statement of the *Antaryāmī Brahman* referring to *Paramātman* as the indweller of the self or *jīvātman*, is a clear proof of the distinction between two real entities. The ontological position of *Brahman* as the primary source of all sentient beings and non-sentient material entities in the universe brings out the distinction between the two as the independent and dependent.

The *Antaryāmī Brahmana* of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* states repeatedly that *Brahman* abides as the inner controller in all the sentient and non-sentient entities in the universe. The latter are described as *śarīra* or body for *Paramātman*, whereas the former is the universal self (*śarīri*) controlling them from within. This relation which is organic in nature is analogous to the relation of the soul to the physical body. It is also comparable to the logical relation of substance and attribute. The substance, cannot be conceived except in terms of the essential attributes. The two are inseparable because the two exist together and also are apprehended together. Because of this inseparable character of the two relativity, the substance as qualified with the attribute is taken as one entity. In other words, as substance and quality, they are distinct, but as substance is qualified by the attribute, it constitutes a single entity. Thus, wherever two entities are found inseparable, it is possible to speak of difference as well as non-difference.¹⁰ In this context, we have to understand the relation of *jīva* to *Paramātman* or *Brahman*.

The self or *jīva* is regarded as an integral part of *Brahman*. There is a relationship between *Brahman* and *jīva* as *śarīri* and *śarīra* and therefore, it is justified to treat *jīva* as an integral part of *Brahman* in the ontological sense. On the basis of the

10. Chari, S.M. Srinivasa(2017) : *Vaiṣṇavism - Its Philosophy, Theology and Religious Discipline*, P. 78

logical concept of substance and attribute, it is justified to speak of the difference between *Paramātman* and *jīvatman* by virtue of their different intrinsic character and also of non-difference as a *viśiṣṭa* entity or *Brahman* as integrally related to the *jīvātman*. *Jīva* is *adheya* or the one who is controlled by *Paramātman*. From the philosophical point of view, *jīva* is an integral part of *Brahman*, and it is different, but inseparable from it.¹¹

6.2 : The Concept of The Individual Self or *Jīvātman* in The Thoughts of Śaṅkaradeva:

According to Śaṅkaradeva, the individual self or *jīvatmā* is not different from *Paramātmā* or the Absolute. Because of the ignorance or *avidyā*, the individual self does not know this.¹² Though the individual self is identical with the Absolute, still, the individual self or *jīvatmā* is not independent from the Absolute; it is completely dependent on the Absolute. From the empirical point of view, there is a difference between the self or *jīva* and the God or *Brahman*. In *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā*, it is found that God has divided Himself into many selves or *jīvas* and thus the object of worship becomes the worshipper. Śaṅkaradeva also describes that the individual self or *jīva* is a part or *aṁśa* of God or *Paramātmā*. It is expressed in the *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* as follows—

jīva aṁśe tumi praveśilā gāve gāve /
āve āmi toḥmāka bhajoho sarvvabhāve //
toḥmārese aṁśa āmi yata jīva jāka /
toḥmāra māyāye prabhu bāndhile āhmāka //¹³

11. Ibid; P. 79.

12. *Bhaktiratnākara* by Śaṅkaradeva; Chap- XXII, verse- 20.

13. Saikia, Punananda (2005) : *Śrīmanṭa Śaṅkaradeva's The Kīrttama-Ghoṣā: Vedastuti*; verses- 1655, 1656.

In Śaṅkaradeva's theology, it is found that the self or *ātmā* is one, eternal and self-illuminating; but due to *māyā*, it appears as many. *Māyā* is under the control of God, and the individual self is within the clutches of *māyā*. From the practical point of view, the individual self or *jīva* is different from God, even from one individual to another. God is eternally free, which is *nitya*, *mukta* and infinite and the individual self or *jīva* is limited or finite, which is *baddhā*. The individual self or *jīva* is always doer or *kartā* while the Absolute Self or *Paramātmā* is non-doer or *akartā*. The *jīva* or the individual self enjoys or suffers according to its activities. The *Paramātmā* has neither sufferings nor enjoyment. The mind or *manas*, which is the product of *avidyā* or *māyā*, catches the reflection or *pratibimba* of God, and the former falsely identifies itself with the latter. For this reason, the individual self or *jīvatmā* becomes entangled with the *guṇas* and this appears to be limited.¹⁴

In fact, the individual self or *jīvātmā* is always free; but appears as limited or chained due to *avidyā* or ignorance. The finite self or *jīvātmā* along with the sense organs or *indriya* enjoys or suffers in the world and thinks the body to be the self or *jīvātmā*. Thus, being ignorant, the *jīva* acts with attachment and such actions accrue *pāpa* or vice and the *puṇya* or virtue, according to the nature of action. To reap the fruits of action, one is to come to this world for innumerable times till one is finally released.¹⁵

14. *Bhaktiratnākara* by Śaṅkaradeva. vs. 768-769.

15. Chetia, Bipin (1999) : *Advaitavāda in Śaṅkaradeva's Theology*; 1999, P. 37

According to Śaṅkaradeva, bondage, due to *karma* (deed) is the erroneous identification of the soul with the body. Śaṅkaradeva expresses it in his *Nimi-Navasiddha-Saṁvāda* as follows-

śarīrara saṅge jīva bhuñje biṣayaka /
ātmā buli māne māyāmaya śarīraka //
dhare mahāmohe ati hove jñānaśuṅya /
sakāme aneka karma kare pāpa-puṅya //
sehi karmaphale bhuñji bhrame saṁsārata /
*nāhi anta jīvara yātanā-dukha yata //*¹⁶

It means, the *jīva* enjoys the worldly pleasures by the sense and identifies the soul with the unreal body. It becomes very much infatuated and devoid of knowledge. Full of desires, it performs sinful and virtuous deeds. As a result, it suffers and moves in this world. There is no end of its sufferings.

In the above verse, Śaṅkaradeva has specifically mentioned that the *karma* is the result of ignorance. So, whether the *jīva* performs the *karma* or not, there is bondage as long as there is ignorance.

According to Śaṅkaradeva, the individual self or *jīvātmā* has neither birth nor death. Birth and death are the characteristics of the body. The self resides in the body as fire in the wood, yet both are not one and the same. After liberation, the self or *jīvātmā* becomes one with the Absolute or *Paramātmā*. Ignorance is the root cause of individual's birth and death. The body, mind and actions appear as the individual so

16. *Nimi-Navasiddha-Saṁvāda* : vs. 110-111.

long it is connected with the self or *ātmā*. So, the birth and death of a body does not anyway affect the self or *jīvātmā*.¹⁷

According to Śaṅkaradeva, the individual self or *jīvatmā* is unchangeable, all pervasive and full of calm, nothing apart from the highest self. Being enveloped by misapprehension and ignorance, the self doesnot realise its own nature and suffers misery. Thus, the self or *jīvatmā* is mortified under the *māyāśakti* of *Īśvara*. But Śaṅkaradeva's philosophy shows optimism and gives value to human life. Though under *māyā*, the world is a place of misery; but liberation from it is possible; not only after cessation of life; but in this very life.

Śaṅkaradeva expresses it in his *Bhaktiratnākara* as follows –

avikārī vibhuḥ śāntaḥ abhinnaḥ parameśvarāt /
*bhrāntijñānavṛto bhūtvā nātmānaṁ vetti tattvataḥ //*¹⁸

It means, the individual self is basically changeless, all pervading, blissful and not different from the supreme Lord; but being enveloped in false knowledge, the individual self does not know itself in its true nature.

In his *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā*, Śaṅkaradeva expresses about liberation as follows –

viṣṇumaya dekhai yiṭo samaste jagata /
*jīvante mukuta hovai acira kālata //*¹⁹

It means, on His departure to *Vaikuṅṭha*, Kṛṣṇa said to Uddhava one who realizes that the entire world is permeated by Viṣṇu gets liberated in no time while one is living.

17. *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* by Śaṅkaradeva; Part, XII; vs. 204-209.

18. *Bhaktiratnākara*: chap. 22; v.10.

19. *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā* : *Śrī Kṛṣṇara Vaikuṅṭh Prayāṇa*; verse-1824.

Again, it is stated in other verse as –

*bhakatira bale jñāna labhilā nirguṇa /
jīvante mukuta hui rahilā arjjuna //*²⁰

It means, Arjuna attained supreme knowledge by virtue of devotion and got liberated still embodied.

The self or *jīvamā* is completely changeless. In the living bodies, it is existing as *Prāṇa*. There are changes of the sense organs as the result of which the *jīvas* have to take birth repeatedly. The body basically passes through three stages, viz - childhood, youth and old age. But, though the *Prāṇa* remains in the body, yet it is not polluted by the changes. It is possible for *jīvas* to realise the *Ātman*. At the time of deep sleep, the sense organs along with the *ahaṁkāra* are absorbed into the *Ātman*. According to Śaṅkaradeva, at that time, the *Ātman* remains as the witness and the *jīva* experiences the soul. But even at that time, the *jīvas* cannot get rid of *avidyā*; and for this reason, they are born in this world. The self or *jīvatmā* attains complete freedom only after the destruction of the *liṅgadeha*. According to Śaṅkaradeva, by listening to the names and glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa, this *liṅgadeha* will be broken. Then the mind will be pure and the result will be the knowledge of the self. In this way, the supreme knowledge arises and is possible to get rid of the world.²¹

6.2.1 : Mind, Intellect and the Soul :

According to Śaṅkaradeva, the mind which is an internal sense organ, is different from the soul. In the Vaiṣṇavite tradition, although the mind stands lower

20. Ibid; verse- 1959

21. Śaṅkaradeva, *Nimi-Navasiddha-Saṁvāda*; vs. 192, 193, 194, 196-204.

than the soul, yet it is equalised with *buddhi* with the power of discrimination between truth and falsity, animacy and inanimacy etc. One attains that which one seeks to attain through the power of the mind. It is said by Mādhavadeva in his *Nāma-Ghoṣā* as follows –

satya asatyara jaḍa caityanara
mājata yiṭo prakāśe /
tāke buli mana sehi siṭo pāve
yijjane yāka upāse//²²

Śaṅkaradeva seems to ascribe mind the supreme power as within it, the whole universe is there, as he says, *manara kalpanā iṭo samaste saṁsāra*. The whole universe is nothing but, the imagination of mind. The mind imagines so and therefore there is the universe. Again it is said that mind creates the bodies and their qualities and actions of the beings; but of course mind itself is created by *māyā*. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* explains this in the following way–

mane srajai jīvara śarīra guṇakarmma
manako māyāye srajai jānā sare sāra²³

The locus of the mind is the heart of every being and in it, God is reflected. In *Anādi Pātana* Śaṅkaradeva says this as follows –

āche mana samaste prāṇīra hṛdayata
īśvarara pratibimba lāgiche manata²⁴

As minds are many, so there are many reflected images of God and therefore, general people think that there are many gods.

22. *Nāma-Ghoṣā* by Mādhavadeva; v. 204.

23. *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* by Śaṅkaradeva; Part 12; 206.

24. *Anādi-Pātan* by Śaṅkaradeva; v. 66.

As the mind is an evolute of *prakṛti*, so it belongs to the material plane. On the other hand, the soul belongs to the spiritual plane. But due to ignorance, man often confuses the soul with the mind. It is said that one who refers the work of mind to the soul, he is bound to the chain of *karma*. It is expressed in Śaṅkaradeva's *Anādi-Pātana* as follows–

manar karmmaka yiṭo mora buli māne
*karmma pāśe bandī jīva ehise nidāne*²⁵

The mind is generally fickle. So, it cannot go into the core of experience. The intellect also cannot go, because it can work on the materials supplied by the senses. So they cannot reveal the true nature of reality. Mind, intellect and the other things are the products of *māyā*; and so the knowledge obtained through them is bound to be false. Therefore, it is said that the intellect and the ego-sense cover up our soul; so the man becomes foolish.

According to the Vaiṣṇavite philosophy, man has a soul. When men think of the soul in terms of the self, it acquires a universal import. Generally, the term 'soul' is used in the meaning of the individual. It comprises a unit in the psycho-physical sphere. The individual soul exists with the help of the body. When the "self" comes into the contact with the body, it becomes the soul and then it exists in the sphere of the world. The body belongs to the sphere of non-self and therefore, it opposes the self. With this opposition, it forces the self to become the soul. The soul cannot become the self unless it dissociates itself from the body, or unless it can discriminate between the self and the body.

While the soul is bound, the self is free. But even though the soul is not free, it is immortal. While the body is mortal, the soul is immortal. It also remains identical

25. Ibid; v. 69

through all the changing states of the mind. It is so because it is the part and parcel of the self. While the self can exist in its own right, the soul cannot. The soul becomes entangled in psycho-physical activities like willing, feeling etc. So, while in bondage, the soul does not know that it is identical with the Absolute. It is so because it is inclined towards the sensuous world. The soul is a fallen entity. While the soul feels pleasure (*sukha*), the self feels blissfulness (*ānanda*). While the soul is the empirical subject, the self is the transcendental subject.²⁶

Śaṅkaradeva explains the nature of absolute oneness of the soul with the Supreme Self as follows-

*ahaṅkāra gucile brahmaka jīve dekhe /
māyā eri āpuni buddhira gucāi bhrama //
nirmala hṛdaye jīve dekhe parambrahma /
yikālate jñāna-astre chiṅḍe ahaṅkāra //
chiṅḍe karma bandha jīve teve āponāra /
hṛdayate parama ānanda hove jāta //
paripūrṇa ātmā hove manata sākṣāta /
dehako nedekhe jīve hove brahmamaya //
ehāka buliba rājā ātyantika laya /²⁷*

It means, when the ego is removed, the individual soul sees Brahman and *māyā* disappears and the intellect becomes free from illusory knowledge. Thus, the pure hearted soul sees *Brahman*. When the individual soul breaks the cover of egotism by the instrument of knowledge, he also tears off his bondage of *karma*. The soul experiences bliss in his heart and sees the *Ātmā* or Self in its eternity. The soul does not see the body and becomes *Brahman* himself.

26. Baruah, Girish : *Śaṅkaradeva - A critical Appraisal of His philosophy and Religion*; 2014, P. 268

27. *Śri Śaṅkara Vākyāmṛta* (1985) : Part -1; P.929.

At liberation, when the souls reach God, they maintain their individuality. The difference of this life from their mundane life is that here they feel that they are part and parcel of God. They acquire their divinity. But they are still away from their real source, the self or the Absolute. When they will reach the sphere of the self, only then they will realise that they are not only the part of God, but are identical with ultimate reality characterised by *Brahman* or *Ātman*. Then there would be no difference between the soul and the self.

The *Brahman* is really the self, this fact is not known to the ignorant man. It is expressed in the *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā* as follows—

tomārese māyāye mohita sarvakṣaṇe /
*tumi ātmā tomāka najāne ekojane //*²⁸

God is also the self, when we understand Him in the sense of *Brahman*. The one *Brahman* is there everywhere. It is there in each of the body as the soul. It seems to be different in different souls. In other words, *Brahman* is seen differently in different beings. It is expressed in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇs* as the following —

eke brahma āchā sarvva dehaka prakāṣe /
yena eka ākāśa pratyake ghaṭe ghaṭe //
jalata sūryaka yena dekhi bhinna bhinna /
*sehimate jānibā brahmaro bheda hīna //*²⁹

When Śaṅkaradava says that the soul is a part of God, he does not refer to *Brahman*. The self is identical with Brahman. God had entered into the body of every man. The body is created by *māyā*; but the self is not created by *māyā*. The body is made of the five gross elements like earth, water, fire, air and ether. When these gross

28. *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā*: Haramohana; v. -521.

29. *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, Book 12; v. 174.

elements are dissipated, the body is destroyed. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* says this as follows–

pañcabhūti deha ise naṣṭa hui
*ātmāra maraṇa nāi //*³⁰

The soul has no death. But when it comes into contact with the body, it suffers.

Non-discrimination between the body and the soul is the cause of plight. It is expressed in the *Nimi-Navasiddha-Saṁvāda* as follows–

indriyara saṅge jīva bhuñje viṣayaka
*ātmā buli māne māyāmaya śarīraka //*³¹

6.2.2 : The Individual Soul and The Universal Self :

Advaita Vedānta admits only the universal self. According to it, the individual soul is unreal. But the individual soul cannot be regarded as wholly unreal, because it exists by the energy of the universal self. The abode of the individual soul is the phenomenal world, yet it does not disconnect itself from the universal self. The individual soul that has failed to raise itself above the ordinary level of humanity is reborn into a body. It may also go into an animal and a plant body. Whatever the body it takes, it is external to its existence. Due to its contact with the body, the individual soul deems itself to be separate from the universal self. Its complete identity with the universal self takes place when it abandons its individuality. Although it maintains individuality while in the phenomenal world, yet it is not independent of the universal self.³²

30. Ibid; part 10/1/122

31. *Nimi-Navasiddha- Saṁvāda* by Śaṅkaradeva; pada 110.

32. Baruah, Girish (2014) : *Śaṅkaradeva – A Critical Appraisal of His Philosophy and Religion*, P.272

Śaṅkaradeva upholds the principle of “oneness” – one soul, Supreme Being – the Reality – the Ultimate Reality. This Ultimate reality is *Lord Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu, Rāma* and *Brahman* pervading the whole Universe. Śaṅkaradeva expresses it in his *Kīrtana Ghoṣa* as follows –

*daśa dīgapāla same jagata samasta /
tohmātese upaje tohmāte yāya aṣṭa //
āpuni sraṅgilā carācara dehā yata /
samasta aiśvaryaabhāve āchā samastata //
jīva amśe tumi praveśilā gāve gāve /
āve āmi tohmāke bhajoho sarvabhāve //*³³

It means, the whole universe with its ten deities emanates from God, which is the Universal self and dissipates into God. This God or *Brahman* created all forms – moving, non-moving, Who is present in everything. The Universal self entered as souls into all bodied forms. So, people worship *Brahman* by all means.

Śaṅkaradeva again said in another verse that –

*tumi satya brahma tohmāta prakāse
jagata iṭo asanta /
jagatate sadā tumio prakāśā
antaryāmī bhagavanta //*³⁴

It means, God is the Supreme Reality, in which this phenomenal world is manifested. God is the inner controller of the whole Universe in which God is expressed itself.

Thus, Śaṅkaradeva develops the concept of God as the Supreme Universal self – Who is the soul of all souls.

33. *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā* : Vedastuti; verses-1651-1655.

34. Ibid. verses-1662.

6.2.3 : The Soul or *Ātman* and the God or *Brahman* :

According to *Vedānta* philosophy, *Brahman* is regarded as the metaphysical ground of the universe. At the same time, it is also regarded as the inner soul of man. So, the human soul is not independent of *Brahman*; as nothing can be regarded as independent of *Brahman*. As *Brahman* and *Ātman* are identical, so the individual soul belongs to the both as an integral part of them.

As the philosophy of Śāṅkaradava is not metaphysical; but religious, so he has not discussed these problems. Śāṅkaradava simply emphasizes the relation between the individual soul and God and regards the former to be a part of God without assigning any reason for it.

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is very clear on the relation between the soul and God. It says that the individual soul is not different from God. Thus, it is not independent of God. It is expressed in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as follows –

yadyāpi toḥmāta kari jīva nuhe bhinna /
*tathāpito bhailā prabhu tohmāra adhīna //*³⁵

So, it cannot be thought of the independent existence of the soul apart from God. If the individual souls are not independent, then they must be subordinate to God. *Advaita Vedānta* is very clear as to the relation between *Ātman* and *Brahman*. If so, then the individual soul also must be identical with *Brahman*. To be identical with *Brahman* means to be identical with *Ātman*, because *Ātman* and *Brahman* are the same thing. But unless the soul maintains its individuality, it cannot be united with *Brahman*. So, to be united with *Brahman*, the individual soul has to negate itself. But

35. *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* Book-X; verse- 1696.

this negation does not mean absolute negation. Actually, the soul has to negate simply its individuality; not itself. Actually, *Brahman* is not independent of the individual souls. It may be above the bodies, but not above the souls. The soul can be a soul, when it bears the spiritual nature, and this spiritual nature belongs to *Brahman* or *Ātman*. So, the soul and *Brahman* are identical with reference to their essential nature (*svarūpa lakṣaṇa*). They are different only in respect of inessential or accidental characteristics (*tatastha lakṣaṇa*). In essence, they are the same. So, outwardly, there is no identity between the two, but inwardly there is.

The individual life is a chance phenomenon; it is a distorted picture of ultimate reality. What lies behind the individual life is the universal one, and this universal existence is signified by either *Ātman* or *Brahman*. Even in the individual body, the universal essence of *prakṛti*, i.e., matter is there. So, materially also the individual life has the universal essence.³⁶

6.3. : Three levels of Consciousness :

According to Śaṅkaradava, there are three different levels of consciousness.

These are—

- (i) *Jāgarana* or waking
- (ii) *Svapna* or dream and
- (iii) *Nidrā* or dreamless sleep.³⁷

The self or *jīvatmā* in its true nature can be realised in *gabhīra nidrā* or deep sleep. In such a state, the self or *jīvatmā* remains as *sākṣī* or witness. Though one

36. Baruah, Girish (2014): *Śaṅkaradeva A Critical Appraisal of His Philosophy and Religion*; P. 274.

37. *Anādi-Pātan*; V. 66 and *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*; Part-XII; v. 2189.

experiences the self in deep sleep, it does not lead to liberation or *mukti*. Even in deep sleep, *avidyā* is present because of its attachment to the *liṅgaśarīra* or the subtle body.³⁸

Further, in the walking state, the physical body is treated as the self or *ātmā*.³⁹ In dream, the sense organs do not function, yet men perceive things. In this state, the psychological state of the mind is treated as the self. In dream-less sleep, one experiences the bliss of the pure self. But this does not mean liberation.

The cause of bondage is ignorance or *avidyā*. If the ignorance is removed, the individual is liberated. This liberation is to be achieved through realisation. Mere theoretical knowledge is not enough; realisation of the true nature of reality or self in a process.

At the time of death, the gross body is destroyed and that, which survives death, is the subtle body. The subtle body is the cause of future life. An individual, who is under the chain of *karma*, is subject to rebirth because his subtle body is never destroyed. Such an individual self, leaves aside one body and enters another like a leech leaving one blade of grass, when it gets a new one.⁴⁰ Not to speak of men even gods like *Brahman* are not free from bondage and are subject to rebirth.⁴¹ An individual must break the chain so that he can be one with the Absolute and consequently free from birth and death. This is known as *ātyantika laya* or absolute union. The instrument, which cuts the chain of *karma* is knowledge or *jñāna*.⁴²

38. *Nimi-Navasiddha-Saṁvāda*; vs. 196-198.

39. *Ibid.* v.110

40. *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* : Chap. XV; verse-29.

41. *Nimi-Navasiddha-Saṁvāda*; v. 118.

42. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*; Book-XII; vs. 178-179.

A *baddha jīva*, which is not liberated may assume any form of living being, according to the nature of his past actions. Prior to the human, a *jīva* has to assume many and varied lives.

Human body has two forms, namely –

- (i) *Sthūla* or gross and
- (ii) *Sūkṣma* or subtle.

This subtle body is also called “*liṅgaśarīra*”. It is composed of the five cognitive senses, the five cognitive senses, are *vāyus*, *buddhi* and *manas*, along with the five subtle elements or *tanmātras*.⁴³ So long, the *liṅgaśarīra* is associated with the self, the self is never free.⁴⁴ It is the *liṅgaśarīra*, which survives death and is the cause of new life till absolute liberation.

6.4 : Comparison Between Śaṅkaradeva and Śaṅkarācārya with Other Vedāntic Philosophers Regarding the Individual Self :

According to Śaṅkarācārya, *Brahman* and *jīvas* are absolutely identical. Man is composed of the body and the self or soul. The body is a material object — an illusory appearance. The soul is in reality identical with *Brahman*. The apparent difference between *Brahman* and *jīvas* is removed when the *jīvas* overcome *avidyā*.

Like Śaṅkarācārya, Śaṅkaradeva also holds that *Brahman* and *jīva* are essentially identical. Śaṅkaradeva expresses it in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* as follows – *The same Brahman is manifested in all the bodies - as the same space is confined in different pots. The same sun is seen to have different forms or images in different receptacles of*

43. Dasgupta; S.N. (1975) : *A History of Indian Philosophy*; Vol. : II; Pp. 74-75.

44. *Nimi-Navasiddha-Saṁvāda*; vs. 197-198.

water. Thus, *Brahman* is non different from the *jīvas*.⁴⁵ Śaṅkaradeva also says that the apparent difference between *Brahman* and *jīva* is due to *māyā* or *avidyā*.

According to Rāmānuja, the self or *jīva* is not identical with God. The self or *jīva* is said to be a part (*aṁśa*) of God or *Brahman*, though it cannot be a part, cut out of the whole, since *Brahman* admits of no divisions. Rāmānuja says that souls or *jīvas* are parts in the sense of qualified forms or modes. The *jīvas* as parts cannot exist apart from *Brahman*. The souls or *jīvas* are real and permanent though subject to the control of one *Brahman* in all their modifications and evolutions.

Like Rāmānuja, Śaṅkaradeva also holds that the relation between the self or *jīva* and *Īśvara* is of the relation that exists between fire and its sparks, a whole and its parts. Just as a spark is a part of fire, similarly, *jīva* or the self is the part of the Lord or *Brahman* and just as sparks emanate from fire, similarly, the *jīvas* emanate from the *Paramātmān*.

This idea that the *jīvas* are regarded as parts of Supreme Lord is clearly presented in the *Brahma-Sūtra* (ii. 3/43) and in the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* (xv - 7) also.

Like Rāmānuja, the one important aspect on which Śaṅkaradeva lays emphasis is that the *jīvas* as parts not only emanate from God, but also are controlled by Him. In other words God is the inner controller. The doctrine of inner controller upheld by Rāmānuja and Śaṅkaradeva has its root in the *Upaniṣads*. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (iii, 7, 3), it is written as, —

he who controls the earth from within, he is yourself, the inner controller, the immortal.⁴⁶

45. *Śrīmad Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*; Part - 12, 174.

46. Radhakrishnan, S.(1992) : *The Principal Upaniṣads*; P. 225.

The relation between the *jīva* and the *Īśvara* is spoken of by Rāmānuja and Śāṅkaradeva in another term, that is , as master and servant. Śāṅkaradeva always speaks himself as a servant and *Lord Kṛṣṇa* as his master.

According to Madhvācārya, the individual self or the *jīva* is not identical with God or Brahman. Śāṅkaradeva is found in his *Bhakti Ratnākara*, to maintain difference between the self or *jīva* and *Īśvara*. *Īśvara* is the controller of *māyā* through His power of consciousness and *jīva* or the self is ever mortified under the pressure of *māyā*. *Jīva* can be released only when it attains knowledge through love of God. While Madhvācārya does not admit the unity of *Brahman* and *jīva* even partly, Śāṅkaradeva shows that both *Brahman* or *Īśvara* and *jīva* are not different from each other.

According to Nimbārka, the individual self or the *jīva* and the world are the parts of *Brahman*; these are the modifications of the powers of *Brahman*. So, the individual self or *jīva* and the world are real; and not imaginary. *Saccidānanda Brahman* enters into each and every part of the endless world in its essential *cit* aspect. These *cit*-parts are called the *jīvas* or the individual selves. Śāṅkaradeva's view in this respect corresponds to some extent to the view of Nimbārka. Śāṅkaradeva also maintains that the individual self or the *jīva* and the *jagat* are the parts of *Brahman*. But in the case of the *jīva*, Śāṅkaradeva holds that the *jīvas* are like the reflections of God in the mind. Again like Nimbārka, Śāṅkaradeva also contends that God enters into the embodied creatures as individual selves.

According to Vallabha, just as the world is the manifestation of the *sat* aspect of *Brahman*, similarly, the individual self or *jīva* is the manifestation of *His cit* aspect. In

the individual selves or the *jīvas*, the ‘sat’ and the ‘cit’ are manifested, while the ‘*ānanda*’ remains concealed. The *jīvas* are the parts of *Brahman*, just as the sparks are the parts of fire.⁴⁷ Hence, Vallabha maintains that the individual selves or the *jīvas* are not different from *Brahman* in quality; but they are different in quantity only. The *jīvas* are atomic in size, while *Brahman* is infinite. Being the parts and manifestations of *Brahman*, the *jīvas* are also real.

According to Śaṅkaradeva also, the *jīvas* are the parts of Brahman. They belong to the body of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*.⁴⁸ However, Śaṅkaradeva sometimes shows that the *jīvas* are like the reflection of God in the mind. Śaṅkaradeva also admits some differences between the *jīva* and *Brahman*. According to Śaṅkaradeva, *Parameśvara* is the controller of *māyā*, while the *jīvas* are controlled by *māyā*. *Īśvara* is supreme bliss while the *jīvas* experience happiness, sorrow etc. *Īśvara* is connected with knowledge and “He” is *saccidānandarūpa*; but the *jīvas* are enveloped by ignorance or *avidyā*. *Īśvara* is eternally free; on the other hand, *jīvas* attain liberation by worshipping Him. In this way, Śaṅkaradeva has shown the difference between the *jīvas* and *Parameśvara*.⁴⁹ Actually, this difference is not ultimate. That is why, according to Śaṅkaradeva, though the *jīvas* are not really different from Him, they are dependent on Him.⁵⁰ The difference is only like the difference between the parts and the whole of a thing. The parts are not totally different from the whole though these are not completely non-different also. Similar is the case with the *jīva* and *Īśvara*. According to Śaṅkaradeva, this difference is caused by *māyā* or *avidyā* only. Thus, the view of

47. *Tatvārthadīpa*; 1/28

48. *Amṛtamanthana*; 28

49. *Bhakti-Ratnākara*, 22; 1-10

50. *Śrīmad Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*; Book-X; verse- 1695.

Śaṅkaradeva in this respect does not agree with the view of Vallabha excepting the fact that the individual selves or the *jīvas* are parts of *Brahman*.

According to Śaṅkaradeva, the individual self or the *jīva* is eternal and immortal. Regarding the individual self or *jīva*, Śaṅkaradeva says as follows –

(i) “The individual self, which is the part of the *Brahman* is encircled by ego”. It is expressed in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* as–

brahma amśa jīvaka tathāpi āvaraya /⁵¹

(ii) “We, all creatures, constitute a part of thine.” It is expressed in *Kīrtana Ghōṣā* as–

tomārese amśa āmi yata jīva jāka //⁵²

(iii) “We all *jīvas* are the part of you //” It is expressed in *Bargīta* as–

hāmu yata jīva śiva teri amśa //⁵³

The relation of the Absolute self or *Brahman* and the individual self or *jīva* is conceived in term of *avacchedavāda* or *prativimbavāda* to express the idea of *Brahman* as the whole and the *jīva* as the part. It is expressed through parallel symbolism of the fire and the spark, the clay and the pot, the gold and the ornament etc.⁵⁴

Finally, the difference between the Absolute self and the individual self is finely brought out by Śaṅkaradeva in his noted treatise *Bhakti Ratnākara*. The individual self or *jīva*, which is under illusion is controlled by the Absolute self or *Brahman*. The individual self or *jīva* can only shake off *māyā* only through devotion to *Hari* or *Lord*

51. Ibid; Part-12/176

52. *Kīrtana-Ghōṣā. Vedastuti*; pada- 1656.

53. *Bargīta*, by Śaṅkaradeva; 7

54. *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*; Part- 12; verses- 174-75.

Kṛṣṇa. The causes of *māyābandha* are many. In enjoying worldly pleasures and doing all *karmas*, the individual self or the *jīva* gets tied up with the world and enjoys pleasure and pain accordingly. In doing this process, the individual self or the *jīva* forgets that he is a part of the Absolute Self and does not perform any action.⁵⁵

55. Darbari Janice (1998). *Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva*; p. 145.