Early in the sixteenth century, a young Bengali ascetic, Sri Krishna Caitanya by name, belonging to Nadia founded a new sect which, known as Bengal Vaishnavism. He was a mystic. He taught love and devotion and impressed upon his followers that the supreme Being was the divine Person. He repeated the sweet name of the Lord till he lost all self-consciousness, and imagined himself Krishna or his beloved Radha. He and his followers sat together for hours singing hymns in praise of Krishna with instrumental accompaniment, until they were lost in ecstasy and love.

Sri Caitanya himself wrote nothing about religion with the exception of eight verses which are nothing more than an expression of his simple and passionate faith. His metaphysics seems to have approximated most nearly to Nimbarka's,\(^1\) though a modern interpreter has ranged him with Madhava.\(^2\) The significance of his teaching did not lie in his special

interpretation of the Vedānta. What gave him power over other minds was:

- his impassioned religious consciousness, his vivid sense of the presence of a personal God and his conviction that the whole world was the scene of the divine love. The philosophy which interpreted the reality as absolutely impersonal, and salvation as the absorption of all personality in the Deity was unacceptable to him. Love sought to expand itself for ever in the service of His will, and declared that even hell, where love would still rise from the midst of pain, were preferrable to extinction in the very bosom of God.\(^1\)

In its philosophy the school of Bengal Vaisnāvism lays claim to orthodoxy, because it accepts the Upaniṣads, Brahma Sūtra, Bhagavadgītā and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa as authoritative scriptures. It agrees with the Vedānta in describing the highest reality as possessing the three familiar attributes, sat, cit and ānanda. It is the interpretation of these attributes that Vaisnāvism departs from the Vedāntic position. The peculiar feature of Bengal Vaisnāvism is the conception of the Lord and His energy or sakti in the form of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā - a conception which distinguishes the followers of Caitanya from those of Rāmānuja and Madhva, who conceive the Lord in the form of Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa with Lakṣmī as His sakti or consort. The difference between the two conceptions of the divine Person is radical and deep. In the conception of the Lord and His sakti as Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, what is emphasized is the divine Person in His aspect of majesty (aśvārya), so that while one prostrate oneself before Him, one can do it only from a

\(^1\) Sir J. N. Sarkar, Caitanya's Pilgrimages and Teachings, Calcutta, 1913, p. 177.
distance never daring to come in intimate contact with Him. It is otherwise, however, in the conception of the Lord and His sakti as Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa where one has a taste of the Lord’s companionship in intimate human social relationship as friend, child or beloved. It is held by the followers of Śrī Caitanya that the conception of the Lord in His mādhurya-ṛupa or sweetness of intimate fellowship is nobler than that of the Lord in his aisvarya-ṛupa or aspect of majesty. The conception of Rādhā as the sakti of Kṛṣṇa is probably due to Tāntrika influence and Rūpa Gosvāmī goes to the extent of saying that Rādhā is already established in the Tantra as the Hladini Mahāsakti of Kṛṣṇa.

The school of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism owes a lot to the six Gosvāmins who were the disciples of Śrī Caitanya. Of the six Gosvāmins, the two brothers Rūpa and Sanātana, who were immediate disciples of Śrī Caitanya, as well as their nephew Jīva, give us an interesting exposition of the concept of divine personality in their learned Sanskrit works, which form the original authoritative sources of its fundamental tenets. Sanātana deals with the subject in his Brhad-Bhāgavatamrta, in the poetical form of an imaginary narrative, composed in the style of the Purāṇas; but Rūpa sets it forth, in his Laghu or Samksepa Bhāgavatamrta in more systematic manner of a Sāstric compendium, supported by illustrative passages from various Vaiṣṇava scriptures. Jīva, who elaborates the entire speculation of Vaiṣṇavism in his six learned Sandarbhās, mainly follows the indications of Sanātana and Rūpa, and attempts to supply a theological justification of the doctrine.

1 The six Gosvāmins are: (1) Raghunātha-dāsa, (2) Raghunātha Bhatta, (3) Gopāla Bhatta, (4) Saṅtana, (5) Rūpa and (6) Jīva.
All these three Gosvāmins derive their ideas from the Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which is the chief scriptures of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism; but in reality they treat the subject in their own way, even if the theory in its general outline is a further development of the older theories.

It is not necessary here to take into account the poetical account of Saṅātana referred to above, for its doctrinal implications are stated in a more precise form by Rūpa in his Samskāra. The latter work by its title purports to be a summary of the former, but it is also a largely original treatise, being a convenient epitome of the principal theological dogmas of the school. One of the most fundamental doctrines of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism is that Krisna as the supreme personal God of the cult is not an Avatāra, but the divine being Himself in His essential character. Rūpa, therefore, begins his work by discussing the essential self-hood or svarūpa of Krisna, which forms one of his principal themes, and in this connection he deals with the different manifestations and appearances of the Deity.

The svarūpa of Krisna, the supreme personal God, is defined and classified in three aspects: (1) Svayam-rūpa, which is not dependent on anything else (anyanyāpekṣī), i.e. self-existent (svatah-siddha). (2) Tadeukṣṭamārūpa or hypostatic manifestation which is identical in essence and existence with the Svayam-rūpa, but seems different by its appearance (akṛti), attribute (vaibhava), etc. This manifestation may be either (a) viśāsa, which is of equal power with the Svayamrūpa (prayenātmasmaḥ sāktyā) and (b) Svāmśā, which is inferior in power (nyuna-sakti). (3) Āvesā, which consists of appearance in the 'possessed forms' of inspired men and prophets, into whom the deity enters through sakti, jñāna, bhakti etc.
The Prakṛti or mere appearance is not considered in the above classification. It occurs when one and the same form appears at the same time as many, which are identical in essence (tatsvarūpa). It must be noted that these forms are not māyika or produced by illusion, but that they are real and eternal (nityarūpa). Usually the Svāmā and Āveda forms appear as Avatāras, the Svayamrūpa appearing only once as Kṛṣṇa. The raison d'etre of an Avatāra is visvākārya or work of the world. The term visvākārya is not explained by Kūpa Gosvāmī, but Baladeva Vidyābhūṣāna explains it as signifying manifold cosmic actions which consist of

(i) the process of creation by a disturbance of the equilibrium of Prakṛti, followed by the evolution of Mahat etc.,
(ii) increasing the delight of the gods and other beings by suppressing the wicked, and
(iii) propagating the bliss of divine love among the devotees.

The Vyūha doctrine of the Pāṇcarātra religion is accepted by Kūpa Gosvāmī but the exact bearing of this doctrine upon the theology of his own school is not clearly explained. It appears, however, that the school does not accept fully the older position that each of these Vyūhas is a cosmic spiritual evolute or creative emergence in successive order, parallel to the order of cosmic material evolutes of ahankāra etc.; but it would regard each of these vyūhas as independent creative manifestation of the Supreme Being, each having a distinctive character and manifestation of its own. It must be noted that the school of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism admits the reality of almost all the deities mentioned in the śāstras, as well as of all Vyūhas, Avatāras and other forms of manifestation testified to by the Purāṇas. But it denies their alleged superiority to Kṛṣṇa.
Krisna is per excellence the only supreme Deity, the most perfect Person; the other deities are there, but they are inferior to Krisna and even derive their existence from Him.

The central theme of Sri Jiva's philosophy is the idea of God as the supreme Person. Relying chiefly on the authority of the Bhagavata he has deduced his whole philosophy from a famous verse which briefly describes the nature of the ultimate reality in the following words: "The Tattva which the knowers of reality call advayajñana is expressed by the designations of Brahman, Paramatman and Bhagavan."

It is necessary to understand at the outset what is signified by the concept 'advaya-jñana', for it is the pivot round which the Vaishnava concept of the absolute reality propounded by Sri Jiva revolves. The term 'advaya-jñana' does not signify nirguna Advaitajñana of monistic idealists of the Advaita school, but an interpretation is given of the phrase. The word 'advaya', according to Sri Jiva, does not mean 'sole' or 'without a second', but it signifies that like which there is no second Reality. The ultimate reality is called 'advaya' because there is no other self-existent conscious or unconscious principle which is similar to it. It is also called 'advaya' in the sense that its own infinite saktis or energies are the only things which accompany it (śvaskatyeka-sahāyatvāt), but which cannot exist without its ultimate existence (tena vinā tāsām asiddhāyvat), for the ultimate reality as the 'advaya' is not mere consciousness, it is a unity of consciousness, existence
and bliss. In other words, the tattva or essential principle, indicating the highest good, implies by the qualification of advaya the unity of the highest knowledge or consciousness (jnana) and the highest bliss (Parama Sukha), as well as of eternal reality (nityatva). The advaya-

Following the declaration of the scriptures Sri Jiva agrees with the Advaitins that the ultimate reality is a non-dual spiritual entity. Unlike the Advaitins, however, he maintains that in its highest and most perfect form it is not an absolutely homogeneous, indivisible substance devoid of all qualities and energies, but the most perfect Person called Bhagavan who is eternally endowed with an infinite number of auspicious and perfect attributes and in whom all the divine energies find their full play. The Advaitins describe the ultimate reality as indeterminate Brahman either because they are incapable of realising the infinite variety of the inherent energy manifested in the Bhagavan or because they make no discrimination between energy and the possessor of energy. They cannot conceive of a higher and more perfect form of the Reality than the unqualified Brahman which is merely a partial or incomplete manifestation of the Bhagavan. Although the ultimate reality is one and indivisible, it does not appear to all the aspirants or seekers in the same form, there being differences in the degrees of its manifestation according to the capacity and stage of realisation of the spiritual aspirants. Bhagavan is the name of the reality in its fullest manifestation,
while the two terms, Paramātman and Brahman, represent its incomplete manifestations. The Brahman of the Advaitins represents the state of the Bhagavān, in which his diverse energies and attributes remain undifferentiated and appear only in a general manner, while Paramātman represents his aspect as controlling all beings and their movements. Although Paramātman signifies a particular conditioned state of the ultimate reality as distinguished from its indiscrete and unconditioned state called Brahman, yet it cannot be said to have manifested the reality in full, as it is concerned chiefly with the concept of the ultimate reality in relation to nature (Prakṛti) and spirit (Jīva). The essential nature of the ultimate reality is fully revealed in the more concrete form of the Bhagavān implying a total composite personality that manifests itself in and through its distinctive features, potencies, attributes, dwelling places (lokas) and associates. Brahman and Paramātman, however, are not unreal, for they also manifest the ultimate reality to a certain extent. There can be no absolute difference between them and the Bhagavān, since they represent the three gradations of one and the same reality, differing from one another only in respect of the degree of manifestation. While Brahman is absolutely indeterminate and Paramātman is partially determinate, Bhagavān is infinitely qualified by infinite number of attributes or blessed determinations. The ultimate reality is therefore identified with the Bhagavān, while Paramātman or the supreme soul as the indwelling spirit of the created world is called a part of Him, and the indeterminate Brahman is regarded as the mere lustre (tanubhā) of His inmaterial person.
In order to elucidate the concept of divine personality further Śrī Jīva proceeds to analyse the divine attributes and energies. He begins by showing that these attributes reside eternally in the Bhagavan in intimate or inner relation, which is understood in philosophical terminology as samavaya, as opposed to the mere samyoga or separable relation. In other words, the guṇas and saktis are not adventitious or āropita, but essential or svarūpabhūta. Etymologically the word Bhagavan means one who is possessed of the six attributes of majesty (aśvāryya), strength (vīrya), glory (yaśas), beauty (śrī), intelligence (jñāna) and detachment (vaiṣṭāgya) in their completeness. Majesty or aśvārya means the power to subjugate all (sarvavakāritva) and strength or vīrya implies magical potency similar to that of precious stones, magic-spells etc. The word glory or yaśas refers to the fame on account of the excellent qualities of mind, body and speech, and the word śrī or Śrī is used to mean all kinds of prosperity. The term jñāna or intelligence implies omniscience, and the term detachment is used in the sense of non-attachment to the objects of the phenomenal world. In this connection Śrī Jīva refers to the derivation of the word Bhagavan and shows on the authority of the Purāṇas, that the various syllables indicate the various attributes and saktis which go to make up the concept. Thus the syllable 'Bha' in the term Bhagavan has been taken in the sense of 'Bhārty' or 'Sambhārty' (i.e. supporter or protector) and interpreted as meaning that the Bhagavan is creator and sustainer of the devotion (Bhakti) of His devotee (Bhakta).

while the syllable *Ga* has been separately understood in the sense of 'Gamayatr' or 'Netr' (leader) and explained as signifying that He makes His devotee attain the bliss of His love. As no phenomenal attributes and powers can be predicated of the Bhagavān who is absolutely pure and infinite, the qualities and powers mentioned above are regarded as supra-mundane, and He is conceived as the embodiment of those non-phenomenal powers and attributes in their highest perfection and fullest plentitude.

Śrījiva next proceeds to analyse the nature of Śakti or divine energy upon whose degree and quality of display the distinction between Bhagavān and Brahman, as well as the distinction between Bhagavān and Paramātman ultimately rest. At the outset he points out that the saktis possess the two characteristics of acintyatva and svabhāvikatva. By acintyatva is meant that the saktis in themselves are inscrutable and beyond the reach of human thought and reason or that they are capable of bringing about impossible effects (durghataghatakata). By svabhāvikatva is meant that the saktis are natural to the Lord and constitute in their totality His very self or essence, although in His infinite power He actually transcends them. The relation between the saktis and the possessor of saktis is represented as an incomprehensible relation of sameness and difference, the whole theory thus receiving the designation of Acintya Bhedābheda vada (incomprehensible dualistic monism), a peculiar point of view which distinguishes the Bengal school from other Vaishnava schools by the qualifying word 'acintya' which brings
in a mystical attitude. The ṛaktis are non-different from the Bhagavān, inasmuch as they are parts or adhās of the divine being; but the very fact that they are parts only makes the superlatives of divine attributes inapplicable to them and there is thus an inevitable difference.

As the endless powers of the Bhagavān are not all of the same order, they have been classified under three broad heads on the authority of the Viṣṇupurāṇa which distinguishes the energies of the Lord into Para, Kṣetrajna and Avidyā. Śrīdīva styles them as Svarūpa-ākṣṭi (essential power), Tatāsthā-ākṣṭi (neutral power) and Bahirangā-ākṣti (extraneous power). Svarūpa-ākṣṭi inheres in the very nature of the Bhagavān and as such it is called His essential power. The Bhagavān is the common substratum of all these three powers. He does not exercise His Tatāsthā-ākṣṭi and Bahirangā-ākṣṭi directly, but He manifests them indirectly through His svarūpa-ākṣṭi (essential power) which, as the very name implies, constitutes His perfect self-hood. While svarūpa-ākṣṭi is directly and fully displayed in the Supreme Personality called Bhagavān, the other two ākṣṭis are displayed indirectly through the works of the Paramātman which as already indicated represents only a partial form of the Bhagavān. The highest form of the Bhagavān is never touched by the Tatāsthā-ākṣṭi (marginal power) and the Bahirangā-ākṣṭi (extraneous power) which are but two subordinate forms of His Svarūpa-ākṣṭi or essential power. In respect of its power of illumination and intelligence the Svarūpa-ākṣṭi is designated as Citsākṣti. The Tatāsthā-ākṣṭi is otherwise known as the Jīva-ākṣṭi of the Bhagavān, since it represents His power of
self-multiplication into finite selves while the Bahirangaśakti is otherwise called Māyā-śakti, since it displays His self-alienation into the insentient material world. Although rooted in and supported by the Svarupaśakti of the Bhagavān, the Māyā-śakti is quite opposed to it, for while the svarupaśakti in the form of Cītākṣi reveals the nature of the Bhagavān as the all-inclusive spiritual unity, the Māyā-śakti represents Him in the form of an insentient, inanimate, material world of plurality. The Māyā-śakti, however, is not a power of illusions as the Advaitins think, but a real power which causes the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the phenomenal world which also is relatively real.

Śrī Jīva further classifies the Svarūpa śakti, on the authority of the Viṣṇupurāṇa, into Sandhīni, Samvit and Hīnādini śaktis, which correspond roughly to the Sat, Cīt and Ānanda of orthodox philosophy. Sandhīni is that aspect of Svarūpaśakti which represents the Lord's energy of existence by virtue of which the Lord, though self-existent, upholds His own existence as well as that of Jīva and Prakṛti.1 Samvit signifies that aspect of Svarūpa-śakti by means of which the Bhagavān, who is Himself knowledge, knows all and makes others possessed of knowledge.2 The most exalted aspect of the Svarūpaśakti, however, is Hīnādini or the Lord's energy of infinite bliss on account of which the Lord, who is Himself bliss, enjoys bliss and causes the enjoyment of bliss in His devotees.3 Although the three aspects of the Svarūpa śakti

1 Bhagavata Sandarbha, Section 118.
2 Ibid, Section 118.
3 Ibid, Section 118.
exist inseparably and eternally in the Bhagavān and constitutes His very self in their totality, yet they are so graded that Samvit is supposed to include and supersede Sandhini, and Hādinī is said to include and transcend both Sandhini and Samvit. This prominence given to the Hādinī Śakti explains the peculiar standpoint of Bengal Vaisnavism, for it conceives that the highest reality is especially composed of infinite bliss (bhāsa), which is His highest attribute and which necessarily involves the other attributes of knowledge and existence.

In Śrī Jīva’s philosophy there is indeed an advance upon the conception of reality as developed in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. In the Bhāgavata the term 'Brahman' means the infinite while in Śrī Jīva’s philosophy it means the indeterminate aspect of the Supreme Person, one attribute among His infinite attributes.

According to Baladeva, God, the highest reality is determinate and personal. His nature consists in pure consciousness and bliss, which may also be looked upon as His body. His spirit consists in knowledge, sovereignty and power. By virtue of his supralogical powers which are identical with His own nature He simultaneously appears in many places; and in accordance with the differences in the meditations of diverse devotees He reveals different forms which are all real.

1 S. K. De, P. 281.
3 Gobinda Bhāṣya, iii. 2.11; iii. 2.12.
conceived as possessed of supralogical powers, Baladeva finds no difficulty in ascribing contradictory qualities to Him. Although His body is not different in nature from Him, yet it is often conceived as distinct from Him by the devotees with a view to facilitating the process of devotion. The real nature of the Deity as pure consciousness and bliss beyond all gunas is not impaired in the least in the bodily form. Just as the musical forms make themselves manifest to the trained ears of the musicians, so the divine forms, reveal themselves to hearts steeped in devotion. Consciousness and bliss which constitute the nature of God may be regarded either as His substance or as His attributes. Although there is no difference between the substance and the attribute of God, yet the latter is predicted of the former in reliance upon the category of Viśeṣa. Since Viśeṣa enables one to predicate a difference where in difference exists, it is regarded as the representative of difference. And Baladeva thinks that the concepts ‘qualified’ and ‘quality’ cannot be explained without the concept of Viśeṣa.

Although Baladeva summarises the main points of the system of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism and accepts its fundamental principles, his writings are found to contain many elements which are peculiarly Madhvite. There is no doubt that he is influenced by Madhva. In one of his works he describes Madhva as his boat for crossing the ocean of samsāra. Like Madhva, he emphasises the difference between Īśvara, jīva and the world

1 Gobinda Bhāgya, iii. 2.17.
2 Prameya Satnamala.
from one another and employs the concept of Viśeṣa to introduce difference into non-difference. Although he believes in the supralogical nature of God's powers, yet to explain clearly the distinction between God and His consciousness he uses the category of Viśeṣa. In this respect he differs from Śrī Jīva. Śrī Jīva does not feel the need of this category, for according to him, the admission of supralogical nature of God's power alone can serve the purpose. Baladeva however, does not use the names Antaranga śakti and Bahiranga śakti which are quite favourite to Śrī Jīva and other Vaiṣṇavas of Bengal. He does not find them useful for the explanation of the nature of the divine Person. It is evident that Baladeva differs from Śrī Jīva because of the fact that he was much influenced by Madhva. But as regards the nature of God as the Supreme Person there is complete agreement between him and other Vaiṣṇava philosophers.

We shall now discuss the concept of divine personality as expounded in Śaivism. Śaivism is one of the most ancient religions of the world. The excavations at Mahenjo Daro and Harappa have clearly established that Śiva-worship was the most prevalent religion in India even before 5000 years. As Sir John Marshall observes: "Among the many revelations that Mahenjodaro and Harappa has had in store for us none perhaps is more remarkable than this discovery that Śaivism has a history going back to the Chalcolithic Age or perhaps even further still, and that it thus takes its place as the most ancient living faith in the world." 1 Śaivism

which primarily had its birth in India had spread to far off countries such as Cambodia, Java, Bali, in the Far East, Mexico in North America and other places where we still see the existence of Ṣiva temples and marks of Ṣiva worship. Apart from its antiquity and the extension of its influence we are familiar with Saivism as a great religion with an exalted conception of divine personality behind it.

Saivism in India may be broadly classified under three heads, viz. Kāśmirī Saivism prevalent in the North, Šaiva Siddhānta in Tamilnad and Viśa-saivism in the Deccan-Karnatak. Though there are differences as regards some of the tenets and observances of these three branches, yet we notice some fundamental principles operating as the basis in all these systems.

Kāśmirī Saivism which is a system of philosophic thought as distinct from ritualistic religion is based on the Saivagamas and tantras as well as on Logic and intuitive experiences of the elevated souls. This system is designated as Kāśmirī Saivism, because all the writers of this school belonged to Kashmir. It is called Trikaśāstra, because it refers, among other things, to the triple principle with which the system deals, viz. Śiva-Sakti-Agni or Pati-Pāśa-Pāśū. The peculiarity of the Trika consists in the fact that it is a type of idealistic monism (Advaita), and as such

3 Ibid. p. 1
differs in fundamental principles from other forms of Saiva philosophy. This system is called Pratyabhijña Darśana on the basis of the title Īśvara Pratyabhijña which Utpalācārya gave to his Kārikās. It is called Spandaśāstra because it believes that the whole universe in all its states and aspects — physical, psychic and spiritual — is the vibration of the Supreme Universal Energy. It is called Śvātantryavāda, because it accepts free-will to be the ultimate metaphysical principle. It is also called Abhāsavāda, because it maintains that all appearance is concretization of the ultimate reality.

In Kāśmirī Saivism the Supreme Being is designated as Anūttara, Parāsamvit, Cīt, Mahēśvara or Parameśvara. It is called Anūttara since there is nothing beyond it. It is everything by itself. It is ‘paripūrṇanandaghana’ — full of infinite bliss. It is called Cīt, as it is of the nature of pure consciousness which is self-luminous and unaffected by the limitations of space, time and causality. It is Śvātantra because of its freedom and power of actualisation. Abhinavagupta describes the ultimate reality as “Brahman, supreme, pure, serene, undifferentiated, equal, complete, deathless, real that is merged in His own power of essential light”. In another context he describes the same reality as “the Absolute, which is the unity of Śiva and Śakti; the unity which from its ultimate state, first of all manifests the pure ego ‘I’ and then through its will, divides its power into two; the ultimate state, which, being without any manifestation, is self-contained and is responsible for creation and dissolution through the play and suspension respectively of its power”.

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1 Madhavacarya, Sarvadarśanasangraha; Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 731
5 Paramartha Sura, verse 43.
6 Isvara-Pratyabhijña Vimarsini, 1.1.
Mo terminology however, can give a complete description of this reality. It is indefinable in terms of ordinary everyday life. It cannot be spoken of as 'this' or 'that' nor as 'not this' or 'not that'. It is 'all' but not in the sense in which 'all' is apprehended by the limited human mind. It is not a thing to be perceived or conceived but simply to be realised. Whatever word or words we may use to indicate it, we fail to carry the idea of its real nature, because the words stand for a definite idea but the reality is much more than is signified by some words. The ideas of unity and multiplicity, time and space, name and form are based upon certain ways and forms in which the ultimate appears. It is, therefore, as unreasonable to apply these ideas to the reality as such, as it would be to apply the ideas formed by each blind man separately to an elephant.

Like Advaitins, the Saiva Philosophers of Kashmir admit that no definition of the ultimate can be perfect and still they attempt to define it in words, which according to them, express the reality in the best way possible. The ultimate reality has two aspects, transcendent and immanent. It is beyond the universe (visvottlma) and yet permeates it (visvamitka). It is not only self-luminous but also self-conscious and free. It is, in short, 'prakāśa-vimāraśamaya'. 'Prakāsa' is self-luminosity while 'vimāraśa' is self-consciousness. Prakāśa and vimāraśa are inseparable.  

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1 Isvara-Pratyabhijnā Vimarsini 19 - Na vidyate uttara-prasānapratīvacorupam
2 Ibid 21
There is no self-luminosity without self-consciousness and vice versa. The two expressions simply present an analytical view of the same reality. This reality, because it is self-luminous and self-conscious, is spoken of as the Universal Mind or Self. In the context of metaphysics, to put the idea metaphorically, the reality is like a mirror, capable of producing the multiplicity of its own affections. Just as a mirror remains really unaffected by the reflections which are cast in it by external objects, so the reality remains unaffected by the appearances, the ābhāsas, which proceed from it as do the thoughts or ideas or mental images from an individual mind. But the distinction of the reality, the Universal Mirror and an ordinary looking-glass is that while the latter is not aware of its ‘being’, not self-conscious, the former is so; and while the latter depends for its affections on the external object, the former is perfectly independent of everything external. Its affections spring from it as do the ideas from the individual mind. It means that the reality is the Universal Mind and the universe is nothing, but the thought of the Universal Mind. The universe is a reflection on the Universal Mirror. The Prakāśa is the mirror and the power of awareness of the ‘Being’ is Vīmaṇa.

In the context of epistemology, it means that the Reality is self-shining and self-conscious. It means that the Reality is the Universal self-consciousness and that it is the presupposition of every experience. The Kāśmīra Śāivism admits that the aspect of the individual that receives the affections of the external object, wherein the external objects are reflected is the Prakāśa and is identical with the ‘Universal Prakāśa’; and that the aspect of the individual, that determinately reacts on what is
reflected on it is the Vimarsa and is identical with the 'Universal Vimarsa'. The universal and the individual are essentially identical. This is an assertion that the Kasmira Saivism makes in common with the Advaita Vedanta.

From the mystical point of view also the Reality is 'prakāśa-vimarsamaya'. The Saiva admits that in the state of perfect emancipation there is no negation of self-consciousness, for that would mean reduction to the state of insentience.

Recognition of Vimarsa, self-consciousness in the Absolute is the point of distinction between the Saivite conception of the Ultimate Reality and that of Advaita Vedanta. The latter holds that Brahman is Śrāva, without any activity. It is static and not dynamic. It is self-shining but not self-conscious. It is absolutely indeterminate (nirvikalpa). Thinking that admission of self-consciousness would mean admission of determinancy, the Advaitin holds Brahman to be self-shining only (cinmātrā). ¹

The Saiva, on the other hand, maintains that the Absolute is not only self-shining but also self-conscious, and at the same time holds that it is indeterminate. He explains his position thus: Determinacy, Vikalpa implies (a) unification of a multiplicity into unity, (b) contradistinguishing the object of cognition "this" from 'not-this', (c) interpretation of a stimulus in a variety ways and acceptance of one interpretation as correct and rejection of others as incorrect. In the case of transcendental self-consciousness there is nothing to be contradistinguished from self as there

1 Bhakari 10
2 Bhakari 302-4
is no 'not-being' from which 'being' is to be distinguished. Hence it cannot be regarded as determinate.

The conception of the Ultimate Reality as Prakāśa-Vimarsāmaya is not only what the metaphysical reasoning leads to but also what the mystic experience in the nirvikalpa samādhi reveals. It is also the presupposition of all volitional, cognitive and conscious-physical acts at the empirical level. In metaphysical context it is Universal Free Will (svastra icchā). This Free Will is the same as vimarsa but with the difference that while vimarsa does not involve the antithesis of subject and object, Free Will does. The Śaiva conception of the Reality as Free Will is similar to what the German Voluntarists, like Schopenhauer, admit. The Svātantryavāda of Kāśmīra Śaivism agrees with the German Voluntarism on the ground that the thing-in-itself is the Will and that what is known at the empirical level is only an ābhāsa (phenomenon). But it differs from the Voluntarism of Schopenhauer, inasmuch as he holds the Will to be unconscious.

It is important to note here that Kāśmīra Śaivism draws a line of distinction, though subtle, between Śiva as a category and Parama Śiva or Maheśvara as the Absolute Reality.1 Bhāskara, the celebrated commentator of Abhinavagupta’s Vimarśinī has observed that Śiva is nothing but Parama Śiva conditioned by the shining capacity.2 Sivatattva is "pure caitanya in its general but conditional form, free from all vikalpas and is to be

1 N. Rastogi, "Concept of Śiva as a Category in Kashmir Śaivism" in Indian Philosophy and Culture Vol.9, 1964, p.9.
2 Ābhāsayitṛtvāvacchinnasya Paramaśivasya eva Śivatvāpatat.
distinguished from the Absolute proper. \(^1\) "Even the highest category Śiva or Universal Being is an ābhāsa, because it has limitation inasmuch as it represents a disturbance in the absolute Unity of the Absolute. It represents coming into predominance of one aspect." \(^2\) It is not only free from the impurities of Karma and mayā but also from that impurity is technically called mānavasāla. Really speaking it is the "element of imperfection that makes Śiva a Category." \(^3\) Bhāskara explains this in a lucid manner. He equates perfect cit, the locus of reflection with the Absolute, Parama Śiva. Since the question of receiving reflections does not arise here at all. But the moment the Absolute is capable of tolerating reflections, loses its perfection and as imperfect cit it emerges as Śiva tattva.

Like other schools of Indian Philosophy, Kāśmīra Saivism enumerates various powers of the Lord. These are: Cit Śakti (power of consciousness), Ānanda Śakti (power of bliss), Icchā Śakti (power of will), Jñāna Śakti (power of knowledge) and Kriyā Śakti (power of action). These powers are in a dormant state, calm as the waters of a waveless ocean (Prasānta Sāgara), in the transcendental stage of Parama Śiva. When the Lord desires to create the world the Śaktis assume the dynamic form. Out of the five Śaktis three of them, viz. Icchā, Jñāna and Kriyā manifest themselves in various forms. The other two remain in their original form and have a limited scope in the phenomenal world. The entire world is,

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1 Gopinath kaviraj (Radhakrishnan, History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western, p. 408).
2 K. C. Pandey, Bhāskari Rastogi, p. 10.
therefore, the manifestation of saktis which are inseparable from the Supreme Being. In this connection it is necessary to keep in mind that the Śaiva philosophers differ from the Naiyāyikas in their conception of the Power (śakti). According to the latter, it is a quality which cannot exist without a substratum, and, therefore, presupposes a possessor distinct from itself. The talk of power necessarily means dualism. The knower is different from the power to know and so is the doer from the power to act. But the former holds that the power is non-different from the possessor (śaktisaktimotorabhedat). It is the very being of the possessor, the distinction between the power and its possessor is as imaginary as between the fire and its power to burn. Similar is the case with the difference of one power from another. It is assumed because of the variety of effects.

From the above analysis it appears that the conception of the Divine as expounded in Kāśmīra Śaivism is both impersonal and personal, formless and with form. The conception of the Ultimate Reality as Amūttara implies that it is formless and impersonal. It is very much similar to the Nirguṇa Brahman of the Advaita Vedānta. Like the Advaita Vedāntin, the Śaivas of Kāśmīr maintain that the Absolute is indeterminate and beyond the categories of human thought and language. Hence some philosophers are of opinion that Kāśmīra Śaivism has "a distinct leaning to Advaitism". But we must note here that Kāśmīra Śaivism is not wholly Advaitic in its conception of God and His relation to man and the Universe. In several places it maintains that the Reality is personal and endowed with various

1 Na Śivah Śaktirahito na Śaktiḥ Śivarjita
Tādātmyamayornityam vahmidākāyoriva.
2 Dr. K.C.Penley, Abhinavagupta - An Historical and Philosophical Study, p.193
powers and attributes. The conception of God as vimarsamaya definitely indicates that He is the divine Person with the attribute of self-consciousness. Vimarsha or self-consciousness does not belong to an impersonal being and it has meaning only in reference to a person. Further, Reality in Kāśmira Śaivism is designated as Free will. This suggests that it must be personal, for will, as we have already indicated, is one of the fundamental characteristics of personality. In contrast to Advaita Vedanta, Kāśmira Śaivism maintains that creation of the Universe is real. The conception creation presupposes God as the creator, and God as a creator must be the divine Person. The Absolute being impersonal cannot create. While the Advaitin reduces the universe to mere illusion and preaches the doctrine of Vivarta, the Śaiva philosophers of Kashmir maintain the doctrine of abhāsa and explain the universe as the manifestation and experience of the Supreme Being, Parama Śiva. The theistic element of the system is further brought out by the fact that the final step of liberation, according to this school, is attained by the grace of the Lord and not by the unaided effort of the spiritual aspirant.

The concept of divine personality as expounded in Kāśmira Śaivism is further developed in Śaiva Siddhānta. Śaiva Siddhānta is the name by which Tamil Śaivism is known. It may be regarded as the representative of the Southern Śaivism just as Pratyabhijñā or Kāśmira Śaivism is the.

1 Arabinda Basu, Kasmira Saivism - The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. iv, p. 97.
representative of the Northern Saivism. While there are striking similarities between the Siddhânta and the Saivism of Kashmir, we cannot say that the former owes its general structure or essential doctrines to the latter. Dr. Pope who gave much thought to Saiva Siddhânta considers it "the most elaborate, influential, and undoubtedly the most intrinsically valuable of all the religions of India". According to the Rev. W. Condie, "As a system of religious thought, as an expression of faith and life, the Saiva Siddhânta is by far the best that South India possesses". One of its special features is that it approaches all the other schools of thought with respect, and recognises the elements of truth in each of them. It finds a place for all of them in a comprehensive system, and is thus universal in its outlook on other religions.

God, in Saiva Siddhânta, as in every other Theistic School, is the supreme personality around which all other entities revolve. The main categories of this system are: Pati, Paśu and Paśa. God is called Pati or Lord, because He is the president of souls (Paśu) and their bonds (Paśa). Śiva-jñānabodham, the first systematic work of the school describes the nature of God thus: "That which is perceived by the senses is asat (changeable). That which is not so perceived do not exist. God is neither the one nor the other, and hence called Śiva Sat or Cit Sat by the wise; Cit or Śiva when not understood by the human intelligence and Sat when perceived with divine wisdom". This is indeed the shortest

2 Tiruvatzeram, p. lxiv.
3 Christian College Magazine, xx. 9.
definition of God as we find in Śaiva Siddhānta. It brings out two fundamental characteristics of divine personality namely, being and consciousness. As Sat, Śiva is the plentitude of being, and is incomprehensible. As Cit or intelligence we can know Him. From these two characteristics the other attributes may be derived.

Emerson, a great Western philosopher says that personality signifies true being (Sat) both concrete and spiritual. Another Western writer (Rev. J. Iverach) points out that the concept of the absolute and unconditioned being as personal is not a contradiction in terms. As he observes: "when we speak of the absolute, we speak of it as a Personal predicate of pure being; we simply mean that the Absolute Personal Being is and must be self-conscious, rational and ethical, must answer to the idea of spirit. Why may not the Absolute Being be self-conscious?

To deny this to Him would be to deny to Him one of the perfections which even finite beings can possess. St. Meyakanda, the author of Śivajñāna-bodham had stated the same truth long ago. According to him, personality implies Sat and Cit; it is opposed to acit or matter. God is the divine Person in the sense that He is the absolute, unconditioned and self-conscious being who transcends the limitation of matter or guṇa.

Like the Advaitin, the Siddhāntin calls the Supreme Being 'Nirguna'. But the word 'Nirguna' is not used in the Advaitic sense. When the Lord is called 'Nirguna', it simply means that He has none of the three gunas of māyā (sattva, rajas and tamas) which are of the nature of limitations. While in Advaita Vedānta the word 'Nirguna' means 'devoid of attributes', in Śaiva Siddhānta it means 'Gunatīta', 'beyond guṇa or matter'.

God is Nirguna in the sense that He is wholly pure and spiritual. If He were devoid of attributes He would be a non-entity.

The Lord is regarded as possessing eight attributes or qualities viz. independence, purity, self-knowledge, omniscience, freedom from defilement (māla), boundless benevolence, omnipotence and infinite bliss. Śiva, in fact, is the home of all auspicious qualities. There is no limit to His greatness. He is the sea of inexhaustible goodness, is undefiled and without the slightest taint or imperfection. He is embodiment of every perfection and the object of devotion. He is called Harā because He removes all the impurities of the soul and redeems it from saṃsāra.

Although the masculine form is generally used to indicate the Deity, God is not male and the distinction of sex do not apply to Him. He is Śivaḥ (m), Śivā (f) and Śivam (n). "He is the male, female and neuter."¹

As Pure Jñāna the Lord is called Śivam; as Pure Kriyā He is called Śakti. When Jñāna and Kriyā are equally balanced He is called Sadāśiva. When Kriyā predominates He is called Mahēśvara. When Jñāna predominates He is called Śuddha Vidhyā. As these tattvas are in existence prior to the generation of time (kāla), they are said to be eternal. Therefore, the order indicated here is not order in time, but order in manifestation.²

¹ Māṇikhyācakara
² Sivajñāna-siddhiyar 1,3,66
Like other theistic systems, Saiva Siddhānta maintains that God as the divine Person is immanent in the universe as well as transcendent to it. He is viśvamaya (of the form of the universe) and also viśvadhika (more than the universe). As God is immanent in the universe, He is called Āstamūrti, the eight-bodied Lord. He dwells in earth, water, air, fire, ether, sun, moon and atman. These constitute the eight-fold form of the Lord. A famous passage of the Brhadāranyaka Upanisad describes more forms than these as the sārīra of Brahman, but in the Āgamas and Purāṇas, these are reduced to eight, as comprising all other forms. This view of God is not, however, to be confused with pantheism, for God, according to the Siddhāntin, transcends the universe while being its ground. As thus transcending He cannot be perceived and cannot be comprehended by thought. The author of Śivajñāna-bodham declares that Siva is beyond perception and thought.

It is to stress the transcendent nature of Śiva that He is regarded in the Śiddhānta as the efficient cause of the world. Doctrinally, Saiva Siddhānta has many things in common with the other schools of Indian theism. It has also certain unique features. In this system God is only the efficient cause of the Universe, and not the material cause, as in some schools of Vedānta. Māyā is the material cause of the world. It is from māyā that the world evolves, and the souls are provided with locations, instruments and objects of experience. The Siddhānta is not, therefore,

1 "Earth, Water, Air, Fire, Sky and the Moon, The sentient man - these eight forms He pervades" - Manikkavacakar.
2 Brhad. Up. iii.7.
Brahma-parināmavāda; it is Prakṛti-parināmavāda, and in this respect it resembles the Sāṁkhya doctrine. But māyā is inert and, therefore, requires an intelligent guide and director. The guidance and direction come from Śiva. Here Śaiva Siddhānta differs from the classical Sāṁkhya which does not posit God as the supervisor of the unconscious Prakṛti. In order to safeguard the immutability of Śiva, the Siddhāntin says that Śiva does not act on māyā directly but through His sakti, the instrumental cause. Śiva remains unaffected even when evolution takes place. Just as the wind causes disturbance only to a part of the sea, evolution relates but to a position of Śiva’s sakti. Just as the sun is impartial and the same to all things, although these things derive their sustenance in diverse ways from it, so also is Śiva in relation to other evolutes and souls.

In regard to the question of form (ākārā) or without form (nirākāra), Śaiva Siddhānta maintains that the divine Person is neither rūpī nor arūpī, nor rūparūpī: “God is neither rūpī nor arūpī, neither soul nor matter.” It recognises that all rūpa and arūpa are forms only of matter which is objective to our senses, and God can never be objective to us, and cannot possess any of these material forms or bodies. The nature of matter is to limit, and God is illimitable. Some would say that God is formless, not realising that matter is also formless as air, and nothing is gained by calling Him arūpī.

It is pointed out that the Siddhānta recognises various forms of the divine Person and His appearances and acts in the phenomenal world, it is answered that these forms are not material, but are purely spiritual
forms assumed by God out of his boundless love for mankind. As Śivaśāna-
ndhiyar says: "All these forms of His are assumed out of His supreme
grace for destroying our evil bodies." And how this is possible is
indicated in the following verse: "As He does not possess the defect as
an object of perception, and as He is possessed of absolute intelligence
and power as He is not possessed of likes and dislikes, God can assume
any form out of His grace". And these forms are further described in
another verse thus: "His form is Love; His attributes and Knowledge are
Love; His five functions are Love. These things are assumed by God,
not for His own benefit but for the benefit of mankind". This verse
reminds us a famous passage of the Taittirīya Upanishad: "His head is
surely Love; joy is His right wing; delight is His left, Bliss is His
Self; Brahman whereon He rests".

As Śiva is Nirguna and Turiya, it follows that God cannot
be born as an avatar or incarnation. Śiva has no incarnations, for
without Karman there can be no incarnation and Śiva has no Karman.

This is "the greatest distinction" between the ancient Hindu Philosophy
and the Saiva Siddhānta. But this absolute nature of God does not
prevent Him from being personal at the same time and appearing as
Guru and Saviour in the form of a man, out of His great Love and compassion
for the sin and sorrow of mankind, and helping them to get rid of their

1 Śivajñana-Siddhiyar, i.2.55. 5 Śivajñana-Siddhiyar, ii.2.25
2 Ibid. i.2.45 6 J.N. Nallaswamy Pillai,
3 Ibid. i.2.57. Studies in Saiva Siddhānta,
bondage. And this is the reason as indicated in the first sutra of Śivajñānabodhah, why God creates the universe and resolves it for the purpose of making the souls enjoy the fruits of actions and attain salvation.

Another special feature of the Siddhanta conception of the Supreme Being is that God as the divine Person should not be confounded with the Hindu Trinity. God is superior to the Hindu Trinity, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, though He is often identified with the last. Even when He is thus identified with the Destroyer, Śiva, it may well be shown how He is superior to the other two. For, at the time of cosmic dissolution, it is Śiva alone that stands unaffected while Brahmā, the Creator, and Viṣṇu, the Preserver are resolved into Him. As Śivajñāna-siddhiyār says: "At the end Brahma alone remains. If more than one remained then it cannot be called Samhāra. Hence from Him alone do the world originate and evolve again." In the words of Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad, "Śiva is one God; there is no second to Him. He rules all the world with His ruling forms. He creates all beings, protects them, and merges them together, at the end of time."1

Thus Śaiva Siddhānta presents a noble and lofty conception of the divine personality. God in whom it believes is at once the Absolute of Philosophy and the supreme personality whom we adore and worship. This view of God is described by the Siddhāntin as Suddhādvaitavāda, the name

1 Śivajñana-siddhiyār, i.2.35. Vide Sālasubramanium, Special Lectures on Saiva Siddhanta, The Annamalai University, 1959, p. 26.
2 Śvet. Up. iiii.2
which Vallabha's school bears. But the word 'Advaita' is used here in a different sense. What is denied by the negative particle 'a' in this expression (advaita) is not the existence of two, but the duality of two. It means that though matter and souls are real yet they are not opposed to Siva but are inseparably united with Him who is the supreme Reality.

Whereas Ramanuja makes matter and souls only the attributes of God, Saiva Siddhanta agrees with Siva in giving them substantive existence.

Another important school of Southern Saivism is known as Viyasalivism. A critical examination of the theology and metaphysics of the sect suggests that it is very ancient. In some essential points its dogmas seem to resemble those of a Saiva school called the Pasupata sect in the Mahabharata.

The school of Viyasalivism is called Lingayata religion because its followers wear linga, the symbol of the supreme reality, on their person. European scholars, 1 mixing up the phallic worship found elsewhere with the Linga-worship in India have made unfair and sweeping remarks about the creed of Lingayatism. This is due to their gross ignorance of its doctrines and creed. If they had studied the literature of the religion carefully, they would never have said so. "Much harm has therefore been done to many of the Saiva schools of thought by well-known European writers in whose mind the idea of Lingam, somehow or other, is so closely associated with the phallus that they cannot but see some hidden trace of 'phallic obscenity' even in the

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1 "In passing from this system (i.e., Pratyabhijna system) which we know only in its learned form to the sect of Lingayatas, which known to us as a popular religion, we descend from the heights of the Timseels down to the level of the grossest superstition" - Barth, Religions of India, p. 207; cf. Hopkins, Religions of India, p. 482."
highest philosophical interpretation of Lingam by some of the masterly writers of this (Lingayat) school. Some scholars, however, advance the view that the Linga is a miniature stupa adopted by the Saivas in imitation of the Mahabodhi stupa consisting of the relic of Buddha. As Dr. Kumarswami observes: "It (Lingam) is probably not of phallic origin, but derived from the stupa". Against this view it may be maintained that the antiquity of the Linga-worship goes further back than the period in which the Buddhists began to honour stupas; hence it is difficult to trace the Buddha influence on this matter.

To a Lingayat, Linga is the symbol of all that is high and holy and Lingayata religion is a pursuit that is characterised by a distinctive faith, path and philosophy. Naishanacarya, the author of Vedantasara Vigasaiwa Cintamani points out that the word 'Linga' occurs in many Upanisadic passages and it means Para Brahman, the Absolute. According to him, Linga is Brahman, from which all beings are born, by which those that are born live, and in which they enter after death; therefore it is the cause of creation and absorption. He thus derives the word Linga from two roots 'Gam' to go (out), to issue out, from which the idea of creation is developed and 'Li' to 'absorb', from which the idea of absorption is developed. Sivayogi Srivacarya, the author of Siddhanta Siksamani also

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1 S.K. Bas, Shakti or Divine Power, p. 214.
3 Dr. A.K. Kumarswami, Art of Indian Art, Camden, 1909.
4 Nandimath, A Handbook of Bisacalvism p. 96.
5 Sakhare, History and Philosophy of Lingayat Religion; also History of Philosophy Eastern and Western, Vol. I, p. 396.
6 Vide Nilakantha's Kriyasara; also Anubhava Sutra, p. 4. 

Liyate gamyate yatra yena sarva caracaram 
Tadetat lingadmacyuktam lingatatvaparayanan 
Lagatagraythaghyah hetubhatvat sarvadehinam 
Lingadmacyate saksat sivasakalaniskalah.
holds the same view regarding the derivation as well as interpretation. Again, Nārāyanacārya derived the word Linga from the root 'Gam' alone, meaning to go (deep), to penetrate, to understand; hence Linga means the object sought by Yoga. He condemns the views of others who identify the Linga with Āvyakta and Prakṛti.

In Viṣṇuism, the Primal Reality is designated by the word 'Sthala'. Sthala is defined as the one brahman identically same with Sat, Cit and ānanda, which is called the ultimate category of Śiva—the ground of the manifestation of the world and dissolution. He is also the category from which the different categories of mahat etc. have sprung forth. 'Sthā' means 'sthāna' and 'la' means laya. It is the source of all energies and all beings have come from it and shall return into it.

Through the agitation of its power (sakti) the Primal Reality (Sthala) becomes divided into two, Lingasthala and Angathstala. Lingasthala is Śiva and is to be worshipped, while the Angasthala is the individual soul, the worshipper. Like sthala, Sakti too becomes twofold during manifestation. As residing in the Linga it is known as Kalā and as residing in Anga it is called Bhakti. The former is pravṛtti and is the cause of the origin of the world while the latter is nivṛtti and is the cause of their dissolution. It is the mysterious virtue of Sakti as Kalā which makes what is absolutely formless and homogeneous take on an infinite number of forms; and through an equally mysterious virtue inherent in Bhakti all varieties of forms return into the Primal Unity.

1 Vide Sripati Pandit's Commentary on Brahma-Upaniṣad, Srikara.
Linga which is identical with Śiva assumes three forms: Bhāvalinga, Prāṇalinga and Īstalinga. The first is described as pure being, partless or indivisible (nīśkāla), and accessible to intuition alone. It is the sat aspect of the Divine and the Highest Tattva (paratattva). The second is above all division and yet infinitely divided (sakalaniśkāla) and is reached by the mind. It forms the cit aspect of the Divine and the subtle Tattva (sukṣma-tattva). The third has parts and is apprehensible by the eye. It confers all desired objects and removes afflictions. It is the ānanda aspect of the Divine and forms the gross Tattva (sthūla-tattva). Each of these is again divided into two: first into Mahālinga and Prasādalinga, the second into Caralinga and Śivalinga, and the third into Gurulinga and Ācāralinga.

Corresponding to the six forms of God there are six kinds of sākti namely, Cit, Parā, Ādi, Ichā, or Vidyā, Jñāna or Pratiṣṭhā and Kriyā or Nivṛtti. (i) When the highest reality is operated on by the power of intelligence (Cit) it assumes the form of Mahālinga. It is known as Śivatattva, the ultimate unity, full, subtle, immeasurable, without beginning or end. It is accessible to Bhāva or intuition. (ii) When the same reality is operated on by the Parāsakti it is known as Prasādalinga. It is devoid of all limitations, bright, supersensuous, and contains within itself the seed of the universe. It is open to Jñāna and is called Śadākhya Tattva. (iii) When the same reality is influenced by the Ādiśakti, it assumes the form of Caralinga. It is infinite and pervades the internal and external world, which is full of light; it is Puruṣa as distinct from Prakṛti,
and is realised in mental concentration (mānasadhyāna). (iv) When permeated by the will power (Icchāsakti), it is called Śivalinga which is a finite principle with a sense of egoism, one faced (ekamukha), luminous and shining with vidyākalās. (v) When operated on by the power of Knowledge (Jñānāsakti) it is designated as Gurulinga, the great Teacher from whom the Śāstras come forth spontaneously. (vi) Lastly, when permeated by the power of action (Kriyāsakti), it is termed Ācāralinga, which is the shape of action serves as the support for the existence of all things and leads to a life of renunciation.

These six forms are not, however, quite distinct from one another. They are various ways of describing the same reality. The first form is the infinite Being considered independently. The second is the form in which we conceive of Him as developing or creating. The third is the form in which He is conceived as distinct from the material world. The fourth is a bodily form, the body, however, not being made up of ordinary matter, but celestial like the body attributed to Nārāyaṇa or Krisna by the Vaishnavas. The fifth is the form in which He instructs mankind. And the sixth involves the idea of His guiding the individual soul in his actions until he is delivered. In this form God is the Redeemer.

From the above analysis of the Viṣṇuṣaiva conception of God it is clear that according to this school of religion God is not formless, absolutely indeterminate and impersonal. He is the divine Person and possessed of various forms, attributes and powers. He is all-pervading and
all-transcending'. He is in the universe, pervades the universe completely without leaving any space, and is beyond the universe. Though God pervades all things, all things are not God: "Though all spring from Śiva, can they be Śiva? The former sows seeds; can they crop be a farmer? The potter makes pots; can the pot be a potmaker?" This is quite in agreement with the Śaiva Siddhānta where Śiva as the divine Person pervades everything and unaffected by the effects in the Universe.

Some², however, contend that according to Viśisṭha-Vaiṣṇavaism, God in His essential nature is impersonal and devoid of all determination. There are indeed some passages in Viśisṭha-Vaiṣṇava literature that cause such interpretation. It is argued that at the final stage of realisation the Viśisṭha-Vaiṣṇava saint addresses the Supreme Being not with any name, as he realises that no name is appropriate to the Divine but only as Bāyālu ( void ). It is Bāyālu that has neither beginning nor end, that is neither śūnyā nor niḥśūnya, that is neither without support nor with support, neither with parts ( sāvayāva ) nor without parts ( niravayāva ).³ Again in another place it is said: "There is nothing to say what; there is nothing to speak, so that it may be heard ... It is not in itself. The void ( Bāyālu ) about which there is nothing to say what, does not search anything, nor is to be found after a search".⁴

¹ Vacana Sastra Sara, p. 20.
³ Vacanasastrasara p.6.
⁴ Ibid. p. 571.
From these passages it appears that the views of Vījñānavaisiva coincide almost exactly with those of Śankara regarding his Nirguṇa Brahman for which doctrine he has been accused of being a disguised Buddhist (Pracchana Brahmada). The use of the word Bāyula in describing God takes us back to the doctrine of void (sūnyavāda) of the Buddhist Nāgārjuna. But the Void of the Vījñānavaisiva is not the same as the void of Buddhism. It is something which cannot be named, seen, measured etc., and hence it corresponds to the Upaniṣadic Absolute which is described as 'Neti Neti', 'not that, not that'.

The above-mentioned view is, however, partial and defective inasmuch as it does not represent the teachings of the Vīraśaiva school considered as a whole. In almost all the texts of this school the Supreme Being is posited as the divine Person with infinite attributes. After analysing the fundamental principles of this system majority of Indian writers have come to the conclusion that Vījñānavaisiva is a kind of monistic theism and it differs from the Advaita Vedānta of Śankara in many respects. In its conception of God and His relation to the soul and the world it resembles the Viśiṣṭadvaitavāda of Śrikantha and Śāṅkara.2

It does not teach perfect identity between the supreme and individual souls in the state of liberation or realisation. The method of redemption taught by this school is that of Bhakti or love of

1 Śankara, History and Philosophy of Lingayat Religion; Copinath Kaviraj Aspects of Indian Thought; Sri Ramarasanwami, The Vījñānabhaiva Philoso-phy and Mysticism.
3 Bhandarkar, Vaishnavism, Saivism and Minor Religions Systems, p.137.
God and a course of moral and spiritual discipline up to the attainment of sāmarasya with Śiva. It also rejects Śankara’s doctrine of mâyā and holds that the Lord’s creation is real and not an illusion. If an Absolute is that which is out of and beyond all relations, there can be no creation; for a creation if it implies anything implies relations.

A creator cannot be an Absolute, Impersonal Being, for He must at least be related to that which He creates. Creation is the result of Śiva’s vimarsa sakti — the power of doing, undoing and doing otherwise. Sakti qualifies the Supreme Being as His eternal adjunant and is never separable from Him. Hence this doctrine of God is designated as Saktiviśistādvaitavāda. The school of Kashmir Śaivism also implies the Śaktiviśistatva of Śiva but it does not express it in so many words. Though adopted from and improved upon Kashmir Śaivism it is given the distinct name Saktiviśistadvaita to give prominence to Sakti, the power of the Lord Parama Śiva, living in intimate union with Him.

There is an affinity between Śaivism and Tāntricism so far as the conception of God as the divine Person is concerned. But there is an important point of difference. In Śaivism, Śiva is the highest Deity and Sakti is subordinate to Him and is inseparably connected with Him, while in Tāntricism Sakti predominates over Śiva, who is considered quite inactive unless engoused by Sakti.

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The cult of ṣakti is traced back to the Devīśūkta, a hymn of the RgVeda, where Vāk, the enlightened daughter of the seer Ambīrṇa, speaks out in the fullness and enthusiasm of her knowledge, identifying herself with the Primal Energy of Life. In the Mārāyana Upaniṣad (belonging to the Taittiriya Āranyaka) we find a mention in the form of a Gāyatri addressed to this Divine Energy. She has been called here Kanyakūśī and Durgā. In another passage of the same work, she has been addressed as a 'flaming goodness', associated with the Universal Self, and worshipped by the devotees for the sake of material gain here and hereafter. She also delivers the aspirants after their liberation from the cycle of existences. In the Kena Upaniṣad, we find her as a Divine Female, Umā Haimavati, appearing before the minor gods to impart to them the esoteric knowledge of the Supreme Being. Coming to the Epic period, we find mention of the ṣakti worship in several places of the Mahābhārata. In the Purāṇas, especially in the Mārkan-deya Purāṇa, she is represented as the Supreme Godhead and the embodiment of the Cosmic Energy.

Tantricism represents an aspect of Indian theism which at some pre-Christian period arose out of a ferment of philosophico-religious ideas and practices, Aryan and non-Aryan. It is a religion which was built upon the conception or realization of the Supreme Being as both transcendent and immanent. The Tantric conception of the Supreme effects of synthesis of the Absolute and that of the World-creator. In this

1 R.V. x. 125 2 T.A. 10.1 3 Nar. Up. ii.2
4 Kena Up. iii.2 5 Vena Purva, Ch. 39, verses 4, 72, Virat Ch. 6; Bhima Ch. 23 etc.
scheme the Supreme Being is a dynamic spiritual personality with an impersonal aspect called Siva, the personal aspect being Kali. There is novelty in Tantricism, for it conceives the Supreme Being in the form of Mother, though strictly there is no sex in reality. "God is worshipped as the Great Mother", Woodroffe says, "because in this aspect God is active, and produces, nourishes and maintains all. But this is for worship. God is no more female than male or neuter. God is beyond sex .... the Power or active aspect of God the immanent is called Sakti. In her static transcendent aspect the Mother, or Sakti is Siva or the Good. That is philosophically speaking, Siva is the unchanging consciousness and Sakti is its changing Power appearing as mind and matter." Using the terminology of Vedanta we may say that Siva is the indeterminate, impersonal Brahman in a state of quintessence, while Sakti is determinate saguna Brahman endowed with icchā (will), jñāna (knowledge) and kriya (action).

The precise nature of the identity of Siva-Sakti has been a matter of considerable metaphysical speculation. The opening verse of the Sāndaryalahārī reads: "Siva when he is united with Sakti is able to create; otherwise he is unable even to move." Sakti is distinguishable from Siva only in theoretical and conventional analysis, but in realisation She is identical with Siva. Siva and Sakti are related as Prakāśa and Vimarśa. Bhaskaracārya, in his Commentary on Lelitasahasranāma defines Vimarśa as the spontaneous vibration of the ultimate reality. The first touch of relation in the Absolute is

1 Sakti and Sakta, 2nd ed, Luzac, 1920, p. 8f.
2 śivaḥ saktyaḥ yktō yadi bhavati saktaḥ prabhuvitum ma ca eva devo na khalu kāśalaḥ spanditam api. p. 546.
vimarśa, which gives rise to the world of distinctions. Vimarśa or Sakti is the power latent in the Absolute or Pure Consciousness. It is the Absolute personified, consciousness become a subject and it passes over into its opposite, the not-self or the object. If Śiva is consciousness (Cit) Sakti is the formative energy of consciousness, cidrūpinī. In the perfect experience of ānanda Śiva and Sakti are indistinguishable.

The nature of Sakti has been revealed in numerous Tantric texts. The Yoganīhrdaya Tantra describes her thus: “Obsciance be to Her who is pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss, as Power, who exists in the form of Time and Space and all that is therein, and who is the radiant Illuminatrix in all beings.” The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra says that She is the great progenitor of the gross and subtle things in the universe — both animate and inanimate. The Mahākāli Stotra says that though formless She assumes various forms: “Though without feet, thou movest more quickly than air. Though without ears, Thou doest hear. Though without nostrils, Thou doest smell. Though without eyes, Thou dost see. Though without tongue, Thou dost taste all tastes.” Though without beginning, She is the beginning of all. As the Lord of Māyā She is Mahāmāyā. She is a-vidyā (nescience) because She binds, and Vidyā (knowledge) because She liberates and destroys the samsāra. She is Prakṛti, and as existing before creation is the Māyā (primordial) Sakti. She is the vaćcaka-śakti, ‘the manifestation of Cit in Prakṛti’ and the vācya-śakti or ‘cit itself’. Sakti or Debi is thus Brahma revealed in Its Mother

aspect as Creator and Saviour of the worlds.¹ The Śātaćakranirupana
says that the Divine Mother lies in the Mulādhāra lotus like a sleeping
serpent at the base of the Susumna in the spiritual cord. Residing in
the Mulādhāra lotus she is called Kūndalinī. Residing in the Anāhata
lotus she is called Maśa. Residing in the lotus called Ājñā she is
designated as Sindu. Residing in the Brahmarandhra she is called
formless, transcendental consciousness.² She ought to be meditated
on as non-different from Śiva, roused from her sleep, made to pierce
the higher lotuses, and united with Parama Śiva in the Sahasrāra, and
brought down to the Mulādhāra lotus.³

As the Tāntrikas conceive the Divine Mother as the divine
Person they enumerate her various forms. There is first the Supreme
(para) form, of which as the Vinyāmala says, "none-know". There is
next her subtle (sūkṣma) form, which consists of mantra. But as the
mind cannot easily settle itself up on that which is formless, she
appears as the subject of contemplation in her third or gross (sthūla)
or physical form with hands and feet as celebrated in the Purāṇas and
Tantras. The World Mother reveals herself to her devotees in many
spiritual forms, the chief among which are: Kāli, Tārā, Sodoṣī,
Bhuvanesvari, Bhairavi, Chinnamastā, Dhūmavatī, Vagalāmukhi, Nātangi
and Kamalā. The Cāmuṇḍā Tantra says: "Kāli and Tārā are Mahāvidyās;
Sodoṣī, Bhuvanesvari, Bhairavi, Chinnamastā and Dhūmavatī are Vidyās;"

¹ J. Woodroffe, Introduction to Tantra Sāstra, p. 13.
² Yoginihrdaya-śekhanda, i. 42, p. 59.
Vagalā, Mātangi and Kamalā are Siddhavidyās. These ten forms of the Mother centre round the formless core of Her being and a devotee may realise Her in any of these forms.

It is important to note in this connection that the Sākta conception of the Great Goddess in the transcendent aspect (para) broadly corresponds to that of the Impersonal Brahman of the Upaniṣads. But in the entire literature of the Sākta Tantras, very little stress has been laid on the static transcendent aspect of the Reality. It is the dynamic aspect of the Godhead — the active manifestation of a personal Deity in the form of Divine Energy, with which the Tantras are directly concerned. The abstractions of the Upaniṣads have failed to satisfy the devoted Sāktas; and accordingly they have found it necessary to transform the impersonal Absolute into a personal Divinity — the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient Śakti. To the Śaktas, no idea can be more sublime than the conception of the personal God as the Divine Mother — the source, support and end of the entire empirical universe. And from the point of view of religion, support for it is not wanting even in the Upaniṣads.