CHAPTER III

THE CONTRIBUTION OF RAMANUJA TO THE STABILITY OF INDIAN CULTURE – THEN

3.1 The causes that contributed to the Stability of Indian Culture

3.1.1 Exposure of Indian Culture and its ability to withstand The Three "A-s" and Three R-s

Indian Culture being an ancient one, it is natural that during its long years of existence stretching over many centuries, it should have been put to a lot of pressure by the other major religions and other cultures, even driving it to the point of annihilation.

In this connection, in the field of religion, Buddhism, Jainism from India and Islam and Christianity from outside India and in the case of culture, Western Culture, need special mention. What made Indian Culture survive these monstrous waves of excrescences was its spirit of ACCEPTANCE, ACCOMMODATION AND ASSIMILATION, as a result of which Indian culture today stands more enriched than what it was previously.

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1 Ramakrishnan, S.O., Dr., Presidential Address - Ethics and Social Philosophy, Session of Indian Philosophical Congress, Madurai, 1991.
Indian Culture, originally rooted in the Vedas was termed Vedic culture. Recognition of a basic spiritual element underlying the entire creation forms the fundamental characteristic of this culture. It was because of this unique character, that it was able to ACCEPT, ACCOMMODATE and finally ASSIMILATE the various ideologies of these religions. Thus by doing so Indian culture like the proverbial Swan, could absorb the cream of the ideals found in these religions and leave the bad. Thus its vision became widened, on account of which it later came to be known as Indian Culture. It is this spirit of accommodation that has made ancient vedic culture breathe the air of continuity without being eliminated by other cultures.

Following the oft-repeated statement attributed to Oliver Goldsmith that "those who came to scoff remained to pray", these various forces of influence instead of transforming the vedic culture to their fold, only remained to contribute to its enrichment.

Spiritualism thus armed with the "Three A-S" viz., ACCEPTANCE, ACCOMMODATION AND ASSIMILATION and the "Three R-S" viz., REINTERPRETATION, REORIENTATION AND REJUVENATION, saw through Indian Culture during the turbulent periods, only to be christened as "Living Culture".
3.1.2 Adaptation to changing times

It is by virtue of these Three "A-s" and "Three R-s" that Indian Culture with its quality of flexibility, is able to bend itself like the Tamil word, "இன்னு" and is able to adjust itself with the fast changing consumer oriented contemporary world.

3.1.3 The Adapters

Innumerable were the adaptors who contributed to the stability of Indian Culture.

In that long line of stabilisers who put back Indian Culture on the rails, Rāmānuja occupies a prominent place by virtue of his catholicity of outlook, born of his philosophy of Theism, otherwise metaphysically called "Organismal Non-Dualism" (Viśiṣṭādvaita).

3.1.4 The Question - The Three parts

In this context, it may be asked as to, "what necessitated Rāmānuja to enunciate a philosophy highlighting theistic metaphysics?"

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2 Avvayar is a noted Tamil Poet. Because of her age, she is often referred to as the "Grand Old Lady of Tamils". Her poems are very simple and convey a moral message. "இன்னு" (இன்னு) P Pol Valai" (Bend like Jna (இன்னு) is one such). "இன்னு" (இன்னு) is a Tamil which is full of bends. To denote flexibility it is often said that one should bend oneself like "இன்னு" (இன்னு)
Any answer that is given will be incomplete without a discussion on the condition of Indian Culture at the time of Rāmānuja.

Hence the division of this chapter into three parts.

A. The Condition of Indian Culture at the time of Rāmānuja.
B. The Theistic Metaphysics of Rāmānuja.
C. Rāmānuja's Theistic Humanism and the stability of Indian Culture.

PART A

3.2 The Condition of Indian Culture at the time of Rāmānuja

3.2.1 Rāmānuja's Place in the Vedantic Scheme

Among the "Vedantic" trinities, viz., Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva, Rāmānuja adorns the central position not only by virtue of the order of birth, but also because of his lucidity of interpretation and simplicity of exposition of the 'Prasthāna Traya'.

To grasp the importance and timeliness of his arrival in the milieu of the eleventh century A.D. in South India, knowledge of the antecedent circumstances, especially those that prevailed during and before the time of Śaṅkara, who preceded Rāmānuja, becomes very much necessary, as the Philosophy of Rāmānuja was a sharp reaction to that of Śaṅkara.
3.2.2 The destabilising tendencies

The eleventh century was a period of grave cultural unrest in Indian history. The native kingdoms and the people were faced with the grim prospect of loss of religious freedom. Disunity was rampant, destruction of temples and monasteries and forcible conversions were going on. A sense of awareness to the stark reality of the world and for the need for stabilising Dharma (righteousness), which was in quite bad shape, had to be roused among the people. In this context, a close look at the history of India covering this period reveals that the cause for the destabilising tendencies enumerated was due to a lack of understanding of the philosophy of Śaṅkara necessitating thus a study of the conditions that prevailed during and before the time of Śaṅkara.

3.2.3 Conditions before and during the time of Śaṅkara
a. Before

Before the period of Śaṅkara elaborate performance of rites and ceremonies assumed importance. Sacrifices gained such an ominous importance in methods of worship that they were given preference over rituals. People believed that the Gods would answer to the prayers only if sacrifices are elaborately and properly performed. Superstitious beliefs in
spirits, imps and witch crafts found a place in the religious rites. There are references to sacrifices lasting for years to satiate Gods. To sum up, observances and ritualistic rites became the order of the day. Ethical purity, self-restraint, kindness and such other values were all relegated to the background. Also, people blindly subscribed to the karma theory without any rationality that it automatically resulted in fatalism which brought in its wake laziness and lethargy. With the growing belief that one will get back the results of his actions, whether he liked it or not, people became lethargic resulting in fatalism. They became such a confused lot that they had no other option but to put the Indian Culture in total disarray. Thus the challenge to re-interpret re-orient and re-juvenate the Indian Culture was once again thrown open, and this time the mantle fell on Śaṅkara.

b. During

During the period of Śaṅkara, Buddhism was on the decline. In spite of that, the effect of Buddhism and its influence along with that of Jainism with a disbelief in vedas and in the conception of a God-head was still prevalent. There were inter-religious differences and conflicts even
among those who owed allegiance to vedas. People were divided in their worship of Ganapathy (Ganapathyam), Kumara (Kumaram), Siva (Sivam), Sakti (Saktam), Vishnu (Vaishnavism) and Sūrya (Sauram).

And there was also a big hiatus between precept and practice, Philosophy and religion, words and deeds. In short, during this period there prevailed in society moral and spiritual unrest where people were disgusted with the old philosophical dogmas and were looking for simple methods of worship and easier means of relief from the ills of mundane existence.

3.2.4 Śaṅkara's Solution

It was at such a critical juncture in the history Indian Culture that Sri Śaṅkara came into the picture as a messiah for reharmonising and restoring the lost balance.

His life on earth, though very brief, was full of vitality and vigour. He travelled the length and breadth of India preaching the Advaita Vedāntic doctrine to harmonise the rival feelings that prevailed among the various religious sects. To facilitate propagation he established monastries in the different corners of India.
Śaṅkara, though of a high intellectual calibre, could even dive deep down to the grass root level that even an ordinary lay man could find solace in his philosophy as an intellectual could feel at home in his commentaries to the "Prasthāna-Traya".  

In so reorienting and rejuvenating Indian Culture, he revolted and protested against the old order of things. In the process, he instead of destroying the age old dogmas substituted them with something positive. In this sense, he had a positive contribution to offer to Indian Culture.

Taking stock of situation, Śaṅkara concluded that the only way to end the conflicts was not by doing away with them but by accepting and unifying all the different methods of worship namely the different cults and different religions, accommodating and assimilating them under one roof, because different types of religion and worship were after all designed by man to uplift his own life. Śaṅkara, with the idea of harmonising various religions and infusing a sense of national unity propounded a philosophy which could reconcile different creeds. And that philosophy was Advaita.

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3 Upaniṣhads, Brahma-Sūtra and Bagawad Gītā.
Śaṅkara integrated the six different faiths relating to the worship of Ganapathi (Ganapathyam), Kumara (Kaumaram), Siva (Saivism) Sakti (Saktam), Vishnu (Vaishnavam), and Surya (Sauram) and bringing them under one all-encompassing canopy. Thus he established a puja system unifying all the six faiths called "PANCHAYATNA PUJA" which is still in vogue in many Indian homes. In this method of worship, the different Gods, such as Ganapathy, Kumara, Siva, Sakti, Vishnu and Surya are worshipped in the same altar in different pieces of stones, acquired from different parts of India. Śaṅkara felt by worshipping different Gods which were brought from different parts of India in the same altar, he could install a sense of integration among the people of India and thus he united the nation at the worship altar of every house.

His Holiness Sri Chandrasekara Saraswathi, the Paramacharya of Kanchi describes the Catholicity involved in this mode of worship established by Śaṅkara, and its significance in the following words:

4 Though Sankara integrated the six faiths he called is Panchayatana because Kaumaram and Saivam were included under the same bed.
"In this Panchayatana Scheme Siva is worshipped in Baana Linga, which is found in plenty in the Omkarakunda of the river Narmada (Central India).

Vishnu is worshipped in the Saalagrama, which can be had in the Gandaki river in the Himalayas.

Crystals, in which Surya is worshipped, are found in Vallam in Tamilnadu.

The Swarnamuki stone representing the Divine Mother (Sakti) is found in the bed of the river of that name viz., Swarnamukhi in Andhra.

The river 'son' flowing into the Ganga, abounds in the red sonabhadra stones representing Ganapathi.

It is but to meet in addition to these, Kumara is also included in the Pāñchayatana as He is the presiding Deity of the one remaining faith of Shan-mathas."^5

Another important idea which Śaṅkara wanted to convey through the worship of Gods in the form of stones brought from different parts of India is to impress upon the Philosophy that Reality though in its true nature, is formless,

^5 His Holiness Chandrasekara Saraswathi, 'Bhakti' (in Śaṅkara and Shanmatha), published by N. Ramaratnam on behalf of the Śaṅkara and Shanmata Conference Committee, Madras, 1969.
featureless, personalityless, nameless, etc., is worshipped with a form, in the form of stone, which once again, has no definite shape or form.

Paramacharya of Kānchī says, "this kind of formless-form worship propounded by Śaṅkara is the intermediate stage between formless and form." In the words of Paramacharya of Kānchī, "Though even the lay man in India knows the beautiful personal marks of each of these divinities, in the Pāṇchaayatana, the divinities are not usually worshipped in those forms but are worshipped in symbols. As though taking the mind of the devotee from the form to the formless, while at the same time giving full scope to his devotional feelings, certain symbols are worshipped in place of the Murtis. This is an intermediary stage between FORM AND FORMLESS because the symbols are certain kinds of rocky formations and therefore have a form, yet they are formless in that they have no parts like face, eyes, body, hands, feet, etc."

The significance of this method of worship is that "the forms may appear different the names may be different but the truth is one".

This idea of worship clearly brings to show that it has, as its backdrop, a Philosophy which while admitting differences glorifies the greatness of non-difference.
3.2.5 An Aerial view of the Philosophy of Śaṅkara

a. Śaṅkara - Teacher Par-Excellence

Śaṅkara calls his philosophy by the name as Advaita. By advaita Śaṅkara meant "NO-TWO" or "NON DUALITY". To him Reality is non-dual (Advaita) or expressed positively One Only Without a Second (Ekam Eva Advitiyam).

He was such a great teacher that he expounded his philosophy with as much ease in just half a verse as he did in thousand verses. He could expound his philosophy not only elaborately but also concisely. He summarises his philosophy in just half a verse which runs thus:

"Brahman is Real, the world is illusory and the so-called individual self is non-different from Reality" (Brahman) (Brahma Satyam, Jagan Mithya, Jivo-Brahmaiva na praha).

He taught his Philosophy in ONE VERSE (EKA ŚLOKI). He expounded his philosophy in TEN VERSES (DASO ŚLOKI).

Once again he could elaborate his philosophy in HUNDRED VERSES (ŚATA ŚLOKI).

He could also enunciate his philosophy in THOUSAND VERSES (UPADESA SAHASRI).
In addition to these, he could expound his philosophy through his commentaries on Upaniṣhads, Brahmāsūtras and the Bagawad Gītā. Since these works were highly subtle and intellectual, to cater to the needs of the common man, he wrote a number of works. To cite one, Baja Govindam.

In the Philosophy of Śaṅkara, three concepts stand out predominantly thus distinguishing other philosophies. They are (i) Reality, (ii) Māyā, (iii) Jivan Mukti.

b. His Philosophy

i. Reality

According to Śaṅkara the world undergoes many changes. Any change always implies something which underlies the changes. Had it something which underlies the change should be eternal and permanent. That permanent principle which is eternal in nature underlying this temporal world is called Brahman. Once again Śaṅkara analysing man by means of the introspective method concludes that the underlying the body, mind and intellect; which are liable to change and destruction, there is a permanent unchanging principle which gives life and sustenance to the BMI complex. That Permanent, unchanging, eternal principle is referred by the name Ātman.
As there cannot be two realities lest they should limit each other, they are identified. Reality then according to Śaṅkara, is one only without a second or non-dual.

This non-dual, second less Reality, being infinite, eternal and unlimited, cannot be referred to by way name or form or features or attributes. That means, Reality or Spirit according to Śaṅkara should be nameless, formless, personalityless and attributeless.

The mind of man is unable to comprehend Reality in its transcendental form. Thus he brought down the absolute Reality into the domain of space, time and cause by giving an empiric dress. So Reality with attributes is nothing but the attributeless Reality in an empiric dress.  

Śaṅkara thus conceives of Reality in a two-fold way, attributeless and Formless from the transcendental and with attributes and Form, from the empirical standpoint. The two are the representations of the same Reality, but from the two different perspectives. As Radhakrishnan puts it "The Absolute Attributeless Reality and God are like the obverse and reverse of the same coin." 

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According to Śaṅkara, only the Nirguṇa Brahman is the ultimate truth. The Upanishads have described Brahman both as Saguna and Nirguṇa. The former has been called the Apara Brahman while the latter has been called Para Brahman. The Para Brahman is conditional, with particularities and qualities. Existence, Consciousness and Bliss are the characteristics of Para Brahman.

According to Śaṅkara, Reality is referable by the term Ātman also, in addition to being called Brahman, As Reality is beyond the senses, the mind and the intellect from the transcendental standpoint, Reality alone is ultimately real. It is the Self of everything.

But then how does Śaṅkara account for individual self and the world? It is here that he introduces the concept of Māyā.

ii. The Concept of Māyā

Māyā is a veil that covers the reality. It conceals āvarana and acts as the screen to hide. It is of the nature of superimposition (adhyasa). It is an error (bhranti) like that of a 'rope-snake' or a 'shell-silver'.
Avidyā and Māyā are the subjective and objective forms of the same limiting concept. Avidya is in relation to the jīva. Māyā on the otherhand, is posited in relation to Reality as its creative Power (Sakti). As Vidyā dawns, Avidyā disappears.

Māyā is not only the absence of knowledge, but is also positive wrong knowledge. It is neither real nor unreal (satyanrte mithumi krtya). It is indescribable (anirvachanīya). It is not existent for the existent is only the Brahman. It is not non-existent for it is responsible for the appearance of the Brahman as the world.

To denote illusory nature of the world, Śaṅkara makes use of the term 'Mithyā', which in English is translated as illusory.

Actually the term 'Mithyā' only signifies the Fragility\(^8\) of the world.

Ignorance, in the case of Reality appearing as the world, is cosmic, which Śaṅkara refers to by the term, 'Māyā' and in the case of the individual, is personal, which Śaṅkara speaks of as 'A-Vidyā' or 'A-Jñāna'.

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\(^8\) Radhakrishnan, S., Dr., Eastern Religion and Western Thought Oxford University Press, London, 1939, p.27.
Ignorance is always compared to darkness and knowledge to light. Even as darkness is opposed to light, Ignorance as non-knowledge is opposed to knowledge. Darkness is destroyable by light. Similarly non-knowledge, that is Avidyā or māyā can be eradicated by knowledge Vidyā or Jñāna. So ignorance which is the root cause of all kinds of division and diversities can be dispelled by knowledge.

iii. Liberation

To Śaṅkara liberation consists in realising one's true nature as non-different from Reality, in one's own life. This type of realization is called Jīvan Mukti or liberation while alive in this very world where he lives. Śaṅkara's observed that we may intellectually comprehend many ideals but realising it in our own life time is more important. He reiterates that deliverance is not achieved by merely repeating the word, Brahman, but only by directly experiencing It.

According to Śaṅkara, Mokṣa does not mean cessation of the body, but the extinction of ignorance, which clearly shows that liberation can be attained even while one is alive (Jīvan Mukti). Just as the wheel of potter remains moving even after the pot is made, similarly the realised individual goes on
living even after attaining liberation, because of its Prarabdha. There is nothing to stop the earlier continuity of life. Even though he lives in the world he is not of the world. He is like a water on a lotus leaf as all his activities centre round Reality that is SELF.

3.2.6 Important Deviations from Śaṅkara's Philosophy — Post-Śaṅkara Advaita

a. Philosophical

It is well known that Śaṅkara was only a systematiser of Advaita, as he himself admits, because his system was an attempt at reconciling the divergent views found in the Upanishāads on Reality, World, individual Self and release, giving thereby a methodical treatment to these concepts. However, some of the ideas enunciated by him were so subtle and difficult to comprehend that many of his followers reinterpreted them in different ways. For instance, they could not see the difference between Māyā and Avidyā, nor between Jñāna and Bhakti as methods for release, consequent on the dichotomy, three different schools arose, called respectively as (1) the "Bhāmati" school of Vācaspathi Mishra (2) the "Vārtika" school of Sureśvara and (3) the "Vivaraṇa" school of Vidyaranya, which only led to confusion in the

9 The effect of the Karma-s performed in the previous life/lives.
understanding of the people, eventually destabilising the then Indian Culture, and necessitating its reinterpretation.

This situation reminds us of the time of Buddha. Buddha actually refused to discuss about God, Soul and such other metaphysical entities considering it a waste of time. Instead, he emphasised practical implementation of the Eight-fold path. But after the time of Buddha, ironically he himself came to be worshipped as a God. His followers discussed at great length the metaphysical questions which gave rise to four different schools, viz., Sautrantika, Vaibhāṣīka, Yogachara and Madhyamika, each one depicting a distinctly different view points.

This actually led to the destabilisation of Indian Culture and called for its rejuvenation.

Baffling Advaitic Concepts

The advaitic concepts that baffled and confounded peoples' minds, then, were:

1. Attributeless (Nirguṇa) Reality devoid of all kinds of differences.
2. Māyā as the finitising principle.
3. The world as māyā, that is, mithyā (illusory).
4. The relationship between Reality on the one hand and the world and individual self, on the other, as basically non-different (abheda).
5. Liberation while alive (Jivan mukti), and
6. Jñāna as the sole way to attain freedom.

b. Social

After Śaṅkara, the cultural history of South India records a triangular fight among the Vaishnavas, the Saivas and the Jainas and whoever succeeded in winning over, often indulged in persecuting the members of the other two sects in that territory. The social life gradually deteriorated. The caste system was gradually hardening. Great emphasis was laid on the purity of Varnas in the social orders. The Brahmanas became a well organised priestly class with special duties and privileges. In power and prestige, the Kshatriyas were closest to the Brahmanas. The social status of the Vaisyas had gradually deteriorated and wide gulf separated them from the others.

Philosophic enquiry and study became the monopoly of a few and religion and religious worship also came under the sway of a chosen few. This rigidity in social stratification widened the gulf between people, so much that disharmony, disunity and dissension became the order of the day.

3.2.7 The need of the hour

People were thus so much confused that it required somebody to propound a Philosophy suited to their temperament. At this point of time appeared Rāmānuja who by propagating the
Philosophy of Organismal non-dualism (viśiṣṭādvaita) catered to the needs of his age and stabilised the Indian Culture.

3.2.8 The Modality of approach

Rāmānuja's Solution

As Śaṅkara's Kevala-advaita, that is, Absolutism, was difficult to comprehend to facilitate easy understanding, Rāmānuja tried to combine the Absolutism of Śaṅkara with the theism of the Upaniṣads. In this attempt, he also took into account the theism of Vaishnnavism. In the process he endowed Reality with all auspicious attributes and enhanced It to the status of an Absolute and named, It "NARAYANA" and regarded Māyā as the līlā of God. Reality being personal, the relationship between Reality and the individual also is Personal. So, to realise that Reality, one has to have an intimate personal relationship with him which is possible only through Self-surrender (Śaranāgathi) and Devotion (Bhakti).

It was felt that the duality assumed for the sake of devotion was more colourful than just a non-duality.10

Thus Sri Rāmānuja stirred and strengthened the national conscience by turning it once more towards the buoyant realism of the Vedas, the transcendental theism of the

Upaniṣhads and the emotional theism of the epics and Puranas. He wanted to give his countrymen a renewed faith. With a passionate emphasis on ethical monotheism Śrī Rāmānuja waged a righteous and an epic war on all forces of evil and unrighteousness.

To establish his position he had no other option but to put the concepts of Brahman, Māyā and mukti of Śaṅkara to a severe test.

3.2.9 Rāmānuja's Criticism of the Philosophy of Śaṅkara

a. Conception of Reality

According to Śaṅkara, Brahman in his real form is without qualities and indeterminable. Śaṅkara felt that by employing adjectives to describe Brahman or to say anything positively about Him is to limit Him. All that can be said of Brahman is "not-this not-this". But according to Rāmānuja, Reality is the treasure-house of qualities. The Upaniṣhad speak of Brahman as 'devoid of Qualities', they only mean that Brahman has no bad qualities and not that it has no qualities whatsoever. It is the abode of all good qualities and is the incarnation of all perfection.
Rāmānuja criticises by saying that Śaṅkara is wrong in propounding that Brahman is pure differenceless being. Brahman or Reality cannot be indeterminate, undifferentiated and qualityless substance. According to Rāmānuja it is determinate and Qualified (Savishesa).

b. Śaṅkara's Conception of Māyā

The problem that metaphysician face the world over is to establish a relation between the 'one' and the 'many'. And thus the relation between Brahman and the world was solved by Śaṅkara through his introduction of the concept of Māyā. The form is employed in two senses (a) as the cause and (b) as the effect. Māyā as the cause is the finitising principle, which limits the unlimited finitises the Infinite, as the world. As the effect, Māyā regards to the world. Śaṅkara argues that Brahman appears as the world even as the rope appears as the snake. Thus the world resting on Brahman is known as vivorthapadana. Thus Māyā is essentially a power of Iśwara viewed under the conditions of Spatio-temporal causal limitations. Brahman no doubt cannot be limited but the moment, it is brought under our intellect, it becomes limited and assumes name, from, qualities, personality etc. Brahman thus, though nirguṇa, becomes Saguna. By removing the veil of māyā through jñāna, Śaṅkara says that reality would be realised.
But this philosophy was criticised by many of the latter Philosophers, chief among them was Rāmānuja.

c. Views on Liberation

Self is eternally free because it is nothing but Reality. To take jiva as something different from Brahman is due to ignorance. So liberation or mukti consists in getting rid of ignorance and realising the identity of Atman (Self) with Brahman. And this realization can be achieved in this world itself, even when one is alive. This state of release is described as jivan-mukti. But, for Rāmānuja, the identity between Self and Brahman is not postulated. Hence Rāmānuja accepts four kinds of liberation. Sayujya or becoming attached withĪśwara, Sāmipya or existing in the vicinity ofĪśwara, Sannidhya or existing in the proximity ofĪśwara and the one that should have been mentioned first instead of last, Salokya or living in the valley ofĪśwara. In none of these states does the Self becomeĪśwara or Brahman.

Thus the concept of Jivan mukti is not acceptable to Rāmānuja. He advocates release only after death that is Videhamukti. So liberation is not possible as long as the soul is associated with the body. Thus the individual soul is liberated only through steadfast devotion.
PART B : THE THEISTIC METAPHYSICS OF RAMANUJA

3.3.1 Absolutism and Theism - harmonised

Rāmānuja's system is described as "ORGANISMAL NON-DUALISM" (Viśiṣṭa Advaita). His system is called Advaita in as much as it advocates a Reality which is Non-Dual (Advaita), the like of which cannot be seen anywhere. But this Reality which is non-dual (Advaita) is not 'nirguṇa' (attributeless), like that of Śaṅkara, but 'Saguna (with attributes), with a personality, a name and a form. In other words, it is not impersonal as Śaṅkara takes it to be but purely 'personal'. And this personal God is the Absolute. In this sense, Rāmānuja's system harmonises the Absolutism of Śaṅkara and the Theism of the Upaniṣhads.

The world and the individual self are the parts of Reality and the relationship that exists between Reality on the one hand and the world and the individual self on the other is like the one that exists between the body and soul. Hence organismal (Viśiṣṭa). So Rāmānuja's system is called "Organismal Non-dualism" (Viśiṣṭa Advaita).

While metaphysically, the philosophy of Rāmānuja can be termed Viśiṣṭādvaita, from the theological perspective, it may be called Srivaishnavism. Rāmānuja took upon himself the onerous task of integrating Absolutism with the personal theism of the Upaniṣhads. It may also be described as an attempt at reconciling the rival claims of reason and faith.
3.3.2 Rāmānuja's Theism and Bhakti

The redeeming feature of Rāmānuja's theism was its emphasis on "Bhakti". In him, the Bhakti movement found an outstanding exponent. As J.S.M. Hooper observes, "From Rāmānujacārya, as from a reservoir into which earlier streams had poured, the many subsequent bhakti movements branch out again, some with more of emotions, some with less; but all alike in accepting as substantially true to his theory of the relation between God and man and the Universe." 11

3.3.3 The Three Fundamental Concepts of Rāmānuja

Basically, Rāmānuja's Philosophy extols the importance of a personal God, a Reality endowed with all auspicious attributes (Saguna) which he refers to as 'Īśvara' responsible for Generation, Operation and Destruction. The two entities which stand qualified in subservient relation to Reality are the world and the individual self. The world that is referred to here is non-sentient in nature (achit) devoid of consciousness. The sentient scheme (chit) consists of living beings, plants, animals and human beings. And Philosophical knowledge is an attempt at comprehending not only the nature

11 As quoted by Thirunanasambandhan, P, in The Concept of Bhakti, Prof.L.Venkatarathnam Endowment Lectures, 1969-70, University of Madras, Madras, pp.34-35.
of the three entities viz., Íśvara, Chit and Achit, but also
in understanding the relatiionship between these three real
entities, "Tattva-Traya". The Yatindramata Dipikā, a manual
of Viśiṣṭādvaïta Vedānta succinctly explains the essence of
Viśiṣṭādvaïta in the following words:

"Infact, the Quintessence of Vedānta has as its
purport the unity of Brahman Qualified by the sentient and the
non-sentient things. With the purpose of teaching this Brahman
as the only reality qualified by chit and achit the revered
Badarayana began his enquiry into the nature of this Brahman
and explained that Brahman as having modes. Thus Narayana, the
Supreme Vasudeva known by the name of Visnu indicated by the
term 'Brahman' and qualified by chit and achit is the only
reality. This is the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaïta."12

3.3.4 Rāmānuja's conception of Íśwara or Reality

According to Rāmānuja, the Absolute or Brahman or God
is an Organic whole containing within itself individual souls
and matter as inseperable parts. The Brahman, the abode of all
auspicious qualities is the controller of the souls and the
world. Rāmānuja believes that Reality cannot be a bare

12 As quoted by Yāmunachārya, M., in Rāmānuja's Teaching in
identity or a Reality devoid of differences as It, in the words of Schelling will be like "a shot out of a pistol". "a night in which all cows are black." Reality instead of being featureless, formless, nameless, personalityless and attributeless, should be possessed of a form, name, feature, personality and attributes. It cannot be Nirguṇa but should be Saguna, a storehouse of all auspicious attributes (Samasta Kalyana gunākara). Reality in this sense in personal and is responsible for the Generation, Operation and Destruction of this world. In short, far from being impersonal, Reality is personal. And as personal, Reality is possessed of a heavenly body (aprakṛta divya mangala Vigraha), full of beauty and tenderness (Saundarya and lavanya), sweetness and charm(madhurya and gambhirya). He is easily accessible to the devotee (Saulabhya and Sausilya) and is the veritable ocean of affection to those who resort to him (asrita Vatsalyaika Jaladhi). It is the conception of such a God (Saguneśvara) that has made Rāmānuja a protagonist of a remarkable philosophy of theism in India which lent a metaphysical basis to the great Bhakti movement which stirred the hearts of multitude in India.

Rāmānuja obviously seems to have taken the cue from the following Brhadaranyaka passage and employed it as his basic test in formulating his theism: "He who dwells in the world, and is within it, whom the world does not know, whose body is the world, and who controls the world from within, is the Self, the inner ruler, immortal."¹⁴

Rāmānuja's God is not a passive absolute transcending the space, time and cause but dwells very much in the world and activates it, decending into the world in the process. It is in this sense that Reality is considered an 'avatar' or an incarnation. The term 'Avatar' literally means that which descends from the supernatural (aprakṛta) to the natural (Prakṛta) order.

3.3.5. Rāmānuja's conception of Soul

Soul in a spiritual substance in itself and is absolutely real. It is an attribute (Prakṛta) of God. It is beyond creation and destruction. Western Philosophy has not realised yet the eternity of the self and its intrinsic value. But in Viśiṣṭādvaita the Self is construed as the base. Though it is eternal, real, uncreated and imperishable, it is

considered as atomic in size. It is subjected to the various imperfections in the worldly life. Yet they do not affect its identity. The soul is different from its body and there are innumerable individual souls like the monads of Leibnitz. In the state of creation, it is embodied according to its Karmas, while in the state of dissolution, and in the state of liberation, it remains itself. But in the state of dissolution (Pralaya), it is tinged with Karmas. The relation of the soul and Karma is said to be beginningless. But in liberation, the soul shines in its pristine purity.

According to Rāmānuja, this liberation is achievable only after death. The liberated can never descend to the mundane existence. The liberated, on liberation becomes Omniscient. In liberation, it enjoys infinite knowledge and everlasting bliss. It is self-conscious 'I', the pure Ego and should be distinguished from the empirical ego (ahaṅkāra) which is the result of the false identification of the soul with the not-soul, like body, senses, mind, vital breaths etc.

In this context, Rāmānuja's classification of souls into three classes is worth mentioning. To the first belong the ever free (nitya-miktā) souls which were never bound.
They are ever free from Karma and Prakrti and live in Vaikunțha in constant service of the Lord. They are Śesha, Garuda, Visvaksena etc.

To the second belongs the released or liberated (mukta) souls who were once bound but who obtained liberation through their action, knowledge and devotion.

To the third belong the Bound (baddha) souls who are wandering in Samsara on account of ignorance and bad karmas.

The nature of release

When an individual soul is liberated through devotion and divine grace its losses its natural body and passes through Vāyuloka, Varuṇaloka, Ādityaloka, Indraloka, Prajpatiloka, Brahma-jaloka and finally reaches the eternal abode of or Vaikunțha. It is here the liberated soul becomes completely free from the influence of body's virtuous and vicious deeds and becomes 'similar' to Brahman. When liberation is attained it gains back the qualities such as Sarvajnatva, Satyasamkalpatva etc. Thus the soul even when liberated is ontologically different from God.

Mere knowledge of God, world and Individual Self will not make anybody reach a liberated state. What is known through intellect should be realised in one's personal
experience, which can be achieved through Devotion (Bhakti) and Self-surrender (Prapatti) duly reinforced by action (Karma) and knowledge (Jñāna). This final goal of man namely liberation, occupies the last of the four human ends or "puruṣārthas".

3.3.6 Rāmānuja's Conception of World

Rāmānuja's advocacy of Satkāryavāda-parinamavāda.

According to Rāmānuja, the creation of Universe is no more than a matter of sport (līlā) of Īśwara. The world as real as the cause.

The commentary on the Vedanta Sūtra,¹⁵ Lokavattu līlā Kaivalyam (mere sport as in ordinary life) gives Rāmānuja's solution to the problem of creation.

1. Criticism of Māyā

Rāmānuja differs from Śaṅkara in his conception of Māyā. By the term māyā he understands the real power of God by which he creates this wonderful world. Though he agrees with Śaṅkara regarding the cause of bondage and that the

¹⁵ S.Bh.II. I.33. As quoted by Yāmunacharya, M., in Rāmānuja's teachings in his own words, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 1963, p.97.
immediate intuitive knowledge of God is the cause of liberation. He gives radically different explanations.

2. World not Māyā but Real

According to Rāmānuja, the world and soul are as real as God himself. They are neither created nor destroyed. Rāmānuja believes in Sat-Kāryavāda the theory which says that the effect exists in material cause itself. Therefore the creation is the explicit manifestation of the effect implicitly contained in the material cause. The world and soul are co-eternal with him. God neither creates nor destroys them.

In this connection, a brief reference to Rāmānuja's objections against Śaṅkara's conception of Māyā may not be out of place.

3. Rāmānuja's Seven Important Objections (anupapatti) against Śaṅkara's theory of Māyā

a. Objections regarding its locus (Āshrayānupapatti)

Where is Māyā located?

Not in Brahman, as Brahman is pure and self luminous nor in the individual self.
b. Objections regarding its veiling Power (Tirodham-ānupapatti)

Māyā cannot veil Brahman. If he does then Brahman is not self conscious and the self luminous subject.

c. Objections regarding the nature of māyā (Svarūpānupapatti)

To say that avidyā is both positive and negative is to embrace self contradiction.

d. Objection regarding māyā's characteristic as anirevachanīya (Anirvachanīyatvānupapatti)

Describing māyā as indescribable is a self contradiction.

e. Objections regarding the Pramanas for establishing māyā (Pramāṇānupapatti)

Māyā cannot be perceived, for perception cannot give us either an entity or a non-entity.

f. Objections against the remover of māyā (Nivartakānupapatti)

Here Rāmānuja believes there is no remover of Avidyā. According to him, pure identity is mere an abstraction. Hence identity is always qualified by difference and distinctions. Thus he refutes the advaitin belief that knowledge of the unqualified Brahman removes Avidyā.
g. Objections against the removal of māyā (Nīvṛtyanupapatti)

Here Rāmānuja argues that there is no removal of Avidyā. He denies the advaitin doctrine that Avidyā is a positive (bhāvarūpa) one. According to him, a thing which is positive cannot be removed from existence by knowledge and so the bondage of the soul is due to Karma and cannot be removed by abstract knowledge but only by Karma, Bhakti and Prasāda.16

3.3.7 Relationship between Reality and Individual Self

The crux of the philosophy of Rāmānuja was that Reality was considered to be the whole of which the individual self and the world are parts. Without the whole, the parts have no existence. To be more precise, Reality is the soul and the individual self and the world are bodies. As we cannot imagine a body without a soul, the individual self and the world cannot exist without their soul viz., Reality.

Reality being a personal one and the world and the individual being parts of Reality, Rāmānuja, in addition to conceiving of their relationship as whole (Amśi) and parts

16 These objections were once again answered by the followers of Śaṅkara.
(Amśa) and Soul (Sarirī) and body (Sarīra), speaks of ten other kinds of relationship between Reality and the individual self.

a. Rāmānuja's Preference

Even though Rāmānuja envisages different kinds of personal relationship between the Individual Self and Reality, to focus the dependence of the individual self on Reality, he actually indicates his preference for the Body-Soul relationship (Śarīra-Śarirī-Sambāndha) by laying greater emphasis on it, than on the rest.

b. Rāmānuja's Philosophy – ORGANISMAL rather than Qualified Non-Dualism (VISISTA ADVAITA)

In this Body-Soul relationship, the body, viz., the Śarīra, depends upon the Soul, viz., Śarirī for its existence.

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1. Master (or) Lord (Śeṣī) - Servant (or) Liegl (Śeṣa)
2. Fire (Tejas) - Spark (uṣṇa)
3. Lover (Nayaka) - beloved (Nayaki)
4. Substance (Prakārī) - mode (Prakāra)
5. Qualified whole (Viśiṣṭā) - Qualification (Viśeṣaṇa)
6. Controller (Niyantā) - Controlled (Niyamā)
7. Ruler (Niyanta) - Ruled (Niyojya)
8. Redeemer (Rakṣaha) - Redeemed (Rakṣya)
9. Supporter (Adhāra) - Supported (Adheya)
10. Principal (Aṅgi) - accessory (Aṅga)

Svami Tapasyananda, Sri Rāmānuja, His life, Religion and Philosophy, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, pp.38-39.
The former cannot exist without the latter. By so envisaging this type of relationship, Rāmānuja tries to point out that the relationship between the individual self and the Lord is an "ORGANIC" one, so much so, that Prof. Hiriyanna prefers to call Rāmānuja's Non-Dualism (Advaita) as "ORGANISMAL" rather than QUALIFIED (Viśiṣṭa).

C. Means to Practically orient that Relationship

In view of the personal relationship advocated between Reality and the individual self, Rāmānuja favours an unflinching devotion (Bhakti), on the part of the individual self, to the Lord coupled with absolute self-surrender (Śaraṇāgathi), as the only means to accomplish that personal relationship. In this relationship, the individual self retains its individuality even after release.

3.3.8 Relationship between Reality and World

The cosmology of Rāmānuja centres round his conception of Tatvatraya viz., Chit (Individual Self), achit (Material world) and Īśwara (God). Each is distinct from the other.

The upanishads describe the universe as having emanated from Brahman Himself. God does not create the world out of material existing externally to himself. He creates the universe out of Himself like the spider weave its own web. God according to Rāmānuja, is both the efficient (Nimitta) and the material cause (Upādana Karana) of the Universe. Rāmānuja explains, "Scripture directly states that Brahman alone is the material as well as the operative cause of world. What was the wood, what the tree from which they shaped heaven and earth? Brahman was the wood, Brahman the tree from which they shaped heaven and earth.... Here a question is asked, suggested by the ordinary worldly view as to what was the material and the instrument used by Brahman when creating and the answer declares that Brahman itself is the material and the instrument."19

The motive which prompts Brahman who is perfectly personified, according to Rāmānuja, depends on His volition which is nothing else but sport. This does not, however, prevent Rāmānuja from asking another question in this context: "what need is there of sport of a being of infinite bliss?" Sport or Leelā here must be taken to mean spontaneous joyous creative activity of Brahma.

19 As quoted by Yāmunacharya, M., in Rāmānuja's teachings in his own words, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1963, p.96.
The Leela of Brhamna, when viewed from the point of individual soul, is said to be having a definite purpose in as much as that it helps in the release of individual souls. In this sense, the world in a place which helps in the redemption of individual souls.

Towards achieving this end, Ramanuja suggest Devotion (Bakti) as the sole means with its necessary corollaries - 'Saranāgathi' and 'Prapatti'.

3.3.9 Saranāgathi

According to Ramanuja, Bhakti is the contemplation of God, accompanied by love. In short, it is the constant remembrance of the jiva's total subservience to God.

The practice of Bhakti presupposes certain disciplines known as the "Sadhana Saptaka". They are:

1. Viveka (Purification of the body by Sattvic food)
2. Vimoka (continuous practice of the presence of indwelling self)
3. Abhyāsa (freeness of mind)
4. Kriyā (Work)
5. Kalyāṇa (Virtuous conduct)
6. Anavasāda (freedom from dejection)
7. Anuddharga (Absence of exultation)
Rāmānuja's Gospel of Self-surrender finds expression in his prose-poem entitled "Śaraṇāgathi Gadhyam".

The devotional attitudes that enter into the act of taking Refuge (Prapatti) are as follows:

1. Resolve to subordinate one's will always to the Divine will.
2. Avoidance of all that are contrary to His will.
3. Firm faiths that God is the savior of all.
4. Acceptance that God's protective grace is always with everyone.
5. A feeling of one's pitiable state owing to a realisation of the insufficiency of all self-effort made for one's salvation.
6. Resigning oneself absolutely to His care and protection.

In Śaraṇāgathi Gadya, Rāmānuja pays homage to God and His glory, and prays to him to accept him as the one who has surrendered himself to his service. Further, he says that one must commence the worship of God by submitting himself whole and entire to the Lord. In the words of Rāmānuja, "Surrender yourself to Him. This leads to the blossoming of your soul under the benign influence of His grace. Consider Him as the

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20 Tapasyananda, Swami, Sri Rāmānuja, (His life, Religion and Philosophy), Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, p.80.
God of Gods and your loving Lord. Your great affection for Him will bring Him before your mind's eye in the clearest of the clear visions of His immediate presence Sit awhile in tranquility contemplating His sweet presence. This ineffable experience engenders in you a deep affection for the Lord which must then take the form of overt worship which is His real service. Nothing could, to Rāmānuja equal the pure joy of self-forgetting service (Kaiṅkarya) of which the daily ritual of worship was an external symbol. No religion can altogether dispense with such ceremonial expression. 21

Thus Rāmānuja's act of worship is a blend of Dhyāna, Upasana and Bhakti emanating from an attitude of service to God.

3.3.10 The Nature of Hita (The Way)

The entire Philosophy of life may be said to comprise, according to Rāmānuja, of Tattva, Hita and Purusārtha the truth, the way and the goal.

Four ways are considered to lead one to Vaikunta or Heaven. They are jñāna, or the way of knowledge, Karma or the way of action, Bhakti or the way of devotion and prapatti or the way of self-surrender. These are not exclusive of one another. One has to lead on to another. To use the language

21 As quoted by Yāmunachārya, M., Op.Cit., p.132
of Rāmānuja, jñāna must assume the form of Bhakti (Bhaktirūpāpanna jñāna) and the fusion of these two must finally result in Kaiṅkarya or consecrated service. The relation between these however is not one of succession but of simultaneity. The whole process is consummated quickly by the way known as prapatti which is the way of absolute unqualified self-surrender to God.

Karma or ritualistic duties are according to Rāmānuja but means to the end which is the obtaining of the blissful vision of the Deity. He writes with reference to Vedānta Sūtra (III.4.256) of such steady rememberance sacrifice and so on are means' and sacrifices and similar works being performed day after day have the effect of purifying the mind, and owing to this knowledge arises in the mind with ever increasing brightness (III.435). Hence in order that knowledge may arise evil works have to be got rid of and this is achieved by the performance of acts of religious duty not aiming at some immediate results (such as the heavenly world and the like).

To Rāmānuja Bhakti or God-Love is intense and one pointed and is preceded by a true knowledge of the Blessed Lord, and His glory: The Lord is the aspirant's summun bonum.
Eventhough Rāmānuja recognises that Karma-yoga and jñāna-yoga are each capable of conducting one to self-realization so long as one firmly adopts any one of them, he points out that he who has chosen the path of Jñāna-yoga has to walk that path with extreme difficulty whilst Karma-yoga pursued as a path of action consecrated to God would be easier. Easier still is the path of Bhakti which is the path of affection (āneha) transmuted into love (Prema) of God.

Rāmānuja envisages a very simple way of reaching the Lord, the way of unqualified and absolute self-surrender known as Prapatti. It is also called Šaraṇaṅgati.

3.3.11 Nature of Puruṣārtha (The Goal)

Puruṣārtha is a term that refers to the objectives of human life or the goal of man's endeavour. These goals are said to be four in character (Cahturvidha Puruṣārtha). This is an integral part of the teaching of Hinduism. They are Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣha. In this conception of Puruṣārtha, the Hindu Philosophy of value is summed up. Dharma is the ethical value, Artha is the politico-economic value, Kāma is desire for sensuous pleasure and Mokṣha is liberation, emancipation or final release. Dharma, Artha and Kāma are
values which are only means to an end. They are not ends in themselves. Mokṣa is an intrinsic value or is an end in itself. The three other values must be pursued in such a way that they would subserve the final end in view, viz., Mokṣa.

Speaking about the relation of the instrumental values of Artha, Kāma and Dharma to Mokṣa, Prof. Hiriyanna says in consonance with the teaching of ancient Indian thinkers: What is discountenanced by them is only their pursuit for their own sake and not as means to a higher value. When they are made to subserve the latter, they become totally transformed. There is a world of difference, for example, between wealth sought as a means to self-indulgence and as a means to some beneficent purpose."²²

The desire for Release is implanted in the mind of man. It is this that impels him to initiate an inquiry into Ultimate Truth. He becomes Mumuksu or an aspirant for Mokṣa. If the final release for Mokṣa is stated to consist in 'the annihilation of the I' as some do', Rāmānuja would say: 'were it a settled matter that release consists in the annihilation of the I, man would move away as soon as release is even

²² Hiriyanna, M, Popular Essays in Indian Philosophy, p.67.
hinted at. He would ask as to what value such a release would have for him when he himself had perished. No sensible person exerts himself under the influence of the idea that after he himself has perished there will remain some entity termed pure light.\(^{23}\) (S.Bh.) Rāmānuja is convinced that "thus everything is settled to satisfaction" (iti sarvam samanjasam). Born out of this deep conviction of the truth (Tattva) and of the way leading to it (Hita) and of the goal (Puruṣārtha) to be reached, Rāmānuja enters on a phase of mystic experience (niratiṣaya akhandānubhava) in which he finds himself face to face with God and enters into a dialogue (samvāda) with him.

This is the theme of Śaraṇāgati Gadya, one of his three prose-poems known as Gadyatraya.

His devotee the attainment of this mokṣa, which is no other than Kāṅkarya or service.

3.3.12 Humanism of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja — A Comparative assessment

A cursory glance at the philosophies of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja clearly man from the shackles of limitations, though the modalities they adopted in achieving their ends appeared to be different. In other words, both were essentially

\(^{23}\) As quoted by Yāmunacharya, M. Op.Cit., p.121.
'HUMANISTIC' in their design. May be, they differed among themselves in working out the details. Focusing on the details however, have led many scholars to debate on the relative merits of the Philosophies of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja. Some say that Śaṅkara alone has the true insight while others assert that Rāmānuja is the true exponent of Vedānta. However, a careful observation of the Philosophies of these two thinkers clearly suggest that both propounded a philosophy, suited to the needs of the age, through which they could stabilise the then Indian Culture. Both applied their 'Humanism' to many of the problems they faced relating to culture. They however, differed in formulating a base for their "Humanism". While Śaṅkara centered his Humanism on the SELF and called it "SELF-CENTRIC". Rāmānuja based his Humanism on Reality or 'God', referable as 'Theo-Centric'. One redeeming feature was that both desisted centering Humanism on the "Ego", and the "body".
3.4 - RAMANUJA'S THEISTIC HUMANISM AND THE STABILITY OF INDIAN CULTURE

3.4.1 Theistic Humanism

Humanism

a. Humanism and Indian Philosophy

The distinguishing feature of Indian Philosophy is its commitment for "Self-Realisation", leading to Individual freedom. Even the avowed disbelievers in the Vedas, otherwise referred to 'avaidika-s' baring the 'Cārvaka-s' subscribe to this concept of 'Self-Realisation'. This clearly indicates the importance assigned to man and his 'ultimate' freedom which form the fulcrum and starting point of Indian Philosophic systems, lending a 'Humanistic' touch to the entire scheme. In short, Indian Philosophic systems commence with and culminate in man. In this sense, Humanism forms the backdrop of Indian Philosophic systems.

b. Basis of Humanism

It is in this context that Indian Philosophy, like their existentialist counter parts in the West, of course long after them, proclaim with one voice that every individual BASICALLY is a free being and that Freedom is his birth right.
But, while the western protagonists of freedom do not feel the necessity to stem Humanism on any other concept, the Indian Philosophers opine that unless Humanism is rooted in something eternal, it will not carry any lasting significance.

While those like Śaṅkara, who hold on to Absolutism, based their Humanism on 'SELF' (Ātman), Philosophers like Rāmānuja professing and proclaiming the reality of a personal God, centre Humanism on a personal 'God', lending thereby a theistic touch to it.

c. Rāmānuja's Theistic Humanism

1. Theism defined

Eversince man attained the power of reflection, he has been trying to unravel mysteries regarding himself and his relationship with the world around him. His reflection has led him to posit a Reality or Being, responsible for Generation, Operation and Destruction of the World. He chose to call this Reality by the name 'God', repository of all auspicious attributes such as Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence and Omnifelicity worthy of being worshipped. Man conceived of different kinds of relationship with that Supreme Person, all purely personal in nature, such as the one that exists between a Master (Śesi) and Servant (Śeṣa), a lover (Nayaka) and beloved (Nayaki), a soul (Śarīri) and body (Śarīra), a fire (Tejas) and spark (Uṣṇa) etc. In later
years, the theory in regard to the worship of a personal God as well as the relationship of this that God with man came to be philosophically called 'Theism'.

2. Its different kinds

As his reflection grew in stature, different kinds of theism came to the fore, such as polytheism, Henotheism, Pantheism, Monotheism, etc., depending upon the nature of God conceived of. For example, worship of many Gods signified Poly Theism, of equating God with nature as Pan Theism and of one only God as Mono Theism.

Theism, thus, came to assume an "umbrella usage", bringing under its canopy all forms of theism.

In the words of Heroz-Schaff Encyclopaedia, "Theism in its etymological and widest acceptation is a generic term for all systems of belief in the existence of the Divine. Thus understood, it includes only atheism, but this acceptance of the term is rare. Common usage has determined that theism must be identified with monotheism, and consequently opposed to Poly Theism and Pan Theism, as well as to atheism." 24

3. Theism integrated with Humanism

By so postulating a personal God with all auspicious attributes, a personal relationship between God and man, as the one that exists between a Master and Servant, a lover and beloved, a soul and body brings God and man was conceived of. This he does to avoid alienation of theism from Humanism. So, falling in line with the general Philosophic trend, Rāmānuja instead of divorcing theism from Humanism, attempted to integrate both, to give both a sense of interdependence.

His Philosophy therefore is a blend of Theism with Humanism, theism inalienably mixed with humanism.

3.4.2 Stability of Indian Culture

a. In what respects, did Rāmānuja's Theistic Humanism contribute to the stability of the then Indian Culture?

Before entering into a discussion as to how Rāmānuja stabilised Indian Culture, with the help of his 'Theistic Humanism' it is necessary that a recapitulation of the conditions that prevailed in India at the time of Rāmānuja becomes necessary.

b. Rāmānuja's time - a recapitulation

Buddhism was on the decline, Nevertheless its effect and influence, along with that of Jainism with its disbelief in the Vedas and in the conception of a God-head, were still holding sway.
There were inter-religious feuds even among those who professed allegiance to the Vedas, claiming supremacy over the other. There were caste feuds of the worst order. In short, the time in which Rāmānuja lived, was full of conflicts, shaking the very roots of the then Indian Culture. All these were due to the wide gulf between theory and practice, Philosophy and Religion.

c. Rāmānuja’s solution

Taking stock of the situation, Rāmānuja concluded that the only way to end the strifes and conflicts was not by demolishing and destroying but by accepting, accommodating and assimilating the different cults and Religions in the main stream of national culture. For, these different forms of worship and religions were after all designed by man to elevate, ennable and enrich his life. He was interested in infusing a sense of national unity and a common outlook. This could be achieved only by propounding a philosophy which could do justice to the basic truth of the conflicting creeds and integrating them. Such a Philosophy according to Rāmānuja could be only Viśisṭādvaita or the organismal non-dualism of Reality, advocating the principle of unity in diversity.
d. The Philosophy of Organismal Non-dualism—expressed in Indian Culture

The basic philosophy of Rāmānuja is that Reality though non-dual is personal, known by the name Nārāyaṇa, of whom the world and individual self are expressions. The latter two, viz., the world and the individual self, life the body, cannot exist without the former, viz, the Reality which is their soul. So, the relationship that exists between the two is one sided in that while the latter viz., the world and the individual self depend on the former viz., the Reality for their existence, as in an organism, the former is not so.

Applying this principle of non-dualism though organismal, Rāmānuja stabilised the then Indian Culture on a rational footing.

e. Organismal Non-dualism applied

That the Individual Self (chit) and the world (achit) are parts or sparks of that non-dual Divinity and that the individual self and the world depend upon the Reality for their existence as the body depends upon the soul for its existence, form the fulcrum of Rāmānuja's philosophy. Reality being personal, the relationship that exists between Reality and the individual self also remains personal. This kind of
personal relationship between Reality and the individual self lends a rational touch to the oft repeated slogan 'Love thy neighbour as thyself'. As sparks of the same divine fire, one should be able to love one's neighbour as one's own self. Keeping this rationale in the background, Rāmānuja tried to infuse unity in the otherwise perverted atmosphere prevailed then.

Towards achieving this, he first insisted on an integration of theory and practice at various levels, of which the social and religious, are very important.

f. Integration of theory and practice

Indian Philosophy insists that any truth, worth the name, should be capable of being translated into practical experience. In other words, what is theoretically conceived should be practically realised in one's experience.

At the time of Rāmānuja, there had been a such a clearcut dichotomy between precept and practice that idealism was considered to be purely theoretical, which was not meant to be practised. Practical life is entirely different from theoretical beliefs.

This is not so for Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja advocated, like Vivekananda long after him, that one may intellectually comprehend many ideals but if one realizes atleast one of them
and practices it in his life time, then he should consider himself lucky to have achieved the purpose of his life. Culture in this sense, for Rāmānuja, is not a mere intellectual pursuit but a practical guide. In short, Rāmānuja, insisted on an absolute integration of and coordination between thought, word and deed. Any culture, if it should survive should necessarily possess this characteristic.

How he practised in his own life what he had preached could be substantiated with the help of an incident reported to have occurred.

One day Rāmānuja earnestly begged Kāṇchīpurṇa an outcaste to take him as his disciple, for which Kāṇchīpurṇa replied that he was an unworthy entity. This only showed Kāṇchīpurṇa's hesitation. Rāmānuja then cited the Bharadwāja Samhitā which stated "Yogis or spiritual men are born among all castes: and so caste difference shall not hold in their cases, for they have seen their soul's Lord."²⁵

Rāmānuja felt that caste ought to be disregarded. He firmly believed that Yogis or spiritually great men are born

among all castes. He therefore took Kānchīpurna as his Guru though he was an outcaste.

Actually it was through Kānchīpurna or Mahāpurna as he was called, that Lord Varadaraja of Kānchī revealed the six great truths to Rāmānuja:

i. 'I am the Supreme Truth'
   (Ahameva param Tatvam)

ii. My view is distinction
   (Darśanam bhedamevaca)

iii. Men shall attain me by 'faith'
   (Upāyesu Prapattissyaät)

iv. Remembering Me at the time of death is not mandatory.
   (Antim a Smriti Varjanam)

v. Freedom from bondage follows only and immediately after the body perishes.
   (Dehāvasāne Mokṣhaṅca) and

vi. Make Mahāpūrna (Kānchīpurna) thine preceptor.
   (Mahāpūrnam Samas rayā).\textsuperscript{26}

This prompted Rāmānuja to hold the view that religion is open to all transcending man-made barriers, caste, sex, faith etc. He was the very embodiment of compassion and was ready to condemn himself to hell if only it would redeem millions earn their salvation.

\textsuperscript{26} As quoted by Yāmunachārya, M. Op.Cit.,p.11.
There is an incident which will tell us how he wanted to curb this untouchability.

Mahāpūrṇa revealed to Rāmānuja the hidden truths of Tirumantra or the Mantra of the Aṣṭākṣara Upanishad, the eight syllabled and three worded Mantra.

"Prāṇava the first; Nāmas the middle and Nārāyana the last" eight syllabled Mantra is used in prayer by seekers after God, the mantra which all our saints and sages constantly recited and pondered over.

When Rāmānuja learnt this he wanted to divulge this secret mantra to everyone so that everybody might be benefited.

"Why are such truths so jealously guarded from all mortals? If God is not for the sincere, for whom is He? And therefore is not the holy word a message for all? Why should mortals of lower caste be denied of its saying power."

Next day he climbed up the tower of the temple and invited everyone to assemble there.

Mahāpūrṇa revealed Tirumantra to Rāmānuja on the condition that he should not divulge this truth to others.

Although Rāmānuja had promised to his guru that he would not publicize the Mantra, he found the Mantra to be so efficacious that he could not contain himself; He called
and lower strata of the society was so vast that he, instead bringing down the upper strata to the lower, raised the latter to the level of the upper thereby giving everyone an opportunity to uplift himself.

h. National Integration - at the social level

In addition to promoting National Integration by means of Religion, he also attempted at National Integration at the social level NOT BE MERE PRECEPT BUT ALSO BY PRACTICE. Not only did he cross the ocean of differences, but also he helped others in their attempt at achieving this goal. Towards achieving this objective, he far, from retiring to seclusion, came out into the open world and by travelling the length and breadth of the country, from the North to South, from the West to the East, and by establishing monastic orders in the different parts of the country, created an awareness in their minds. In so doing, he opened the door of his philosophical sanctuary to everyone who was capable of entering it. He laid down certain codes of discipline for the prospective seeker of Truth, and any one who fulfilled these conditions was free to enter the sanctuary.

The religious war among the Vaishnavas, the Saivas, the Jainas was going on during the period of Rāmānuja. They went to the extent of persecuting the members of other
religions. The social life gradually deteriorated. The caste system was gradually hardening. The privilege of performing sanctifying sacraments was deprived to the lower castes.

Rāmānuja purged all these social blemishes, and remained as a champion of the down trodden for the years to come. He even admitted the lower castes to his sect. He had the forth rightness, the fearlessness and the guts to accept ANY SELF REALISED PERSON AS HIS GURU (PRECEPTOR) EVEN IF HE IS OF A LOW CASTE.

To elevate the untouchables socially Rāmānuja gave them the name "Tirukulattar", which means people of high or noble descent. He opened the door of religious instruction to all those classes. Rāmānuja's great aim was to abolish the word 'Pariah' and thus to put a stop to the degradation of a section of the people of this country. The hallowed name of Tirukkulattar carries us back to those good old days when the practice and the preaching of religion meant really the elevation of men, and saints considered it a part of their duty to teach even to the lowest classes of people.

Thus he admitted all people into his fold with the appropriate rites and kept the door open for all. His great love for the hunter, villi, and his wife needs special
mention. His own discipleship under the Vaisya Tirukkachinambi and the instruction of Tirumantram to all-are instances.

The harijans of Melkote (Tirunarayanapuram) saved him from being caught by the Delhi Sultan's soldiers. Out of gratitude, he permitted them to enter the temple and worship and bathe in the temple tank on certain occasions. He permitted them to learn the vedas and to have the initiation of Panchasamkara.

It is chronicled that there was a disciple who is said to have been of low caste. He lived away from the sacred town of Srirangam, in an out of the way hut and used to drown himself in the joy of singing the Psalms of the holy Alvars. One day he was returning from his bath accompanied as usual by a large number of his followers. He stopped short at the hut, and spent the time with the disciple as long as it pleased him, in the sweet ecstasy listening to one hymnal song.

Such incidents as these are filled with great significance and important issues affecting and moulding the character of a new community which was at the time taking definite shape. The new community was catholic and entertained in its fold every man and woman regardless of caste and colour. The community was growing fast and counted millions.
This shows that the religion was not a criteria to gain God's grace. Even Muslims were allowed to pray and worship Lord Renganatha. This shows that Rāmānuja promoted the secularism and unity of human beings irrespective of castes, religion and creed.

Thus Rāmānuja had all his band of disciples and devotees remain by his side and gave them the Quintessence of his teachings.

In fact, in the process of unifying India at the second level, he destroyed many an old dogma.

Rāmānuja destroyed the old dogmas not by violently attacking them but by quiteley suggesting something feasible too.

To him, 'Good Brahmin' stands for the teacher or Guru who mediates between God and man and brings the two together or shows the way by which this re-union could be accomplished. In the Vaishnavism of Rāmānuja the role of the Guru or Āchārya as an intermediary is extremely important for the redemption of man. Teachers of the right mind are described are those who are entirely free from egotism (nirahankari), those who are always desirous of the welfare of others(Para. samriddhipriyah) and those who are not swayed by love of fame or profit (Khyati labha nirapeksanam). The goal of man is to reach God
(Bhagavat Prapati) and the compassionate Guru leads him by the hand to his goal, and takes upon himself the responsibility of commending him to God.

Bhāgavata Kaiṅkarya which means service of God or the service of those who belong to God. This is the highest end conceivable to man. This is the key-word in Rāmānuja's Vaishnava Philosophy.

i. Integration laid on an emotional footing

Rāmānuja's Humanism was Theo-centric. He provided an emotional basis for the integration or the oneness or solidarity of the human race.

Once again, it was only by the employment of the Philosophy of Bhakti that Rāmānuja could furnish a rational, stable and solid foundation for such virtues and values as Tolerance, Recognition, Acceptance etc. by means of which he could forge the much needed integration and which had been helping Indian Culture to regain stability, whenever its very foundation started shaking.
CHAPTER IV

THE RELEVANCE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RAMANUJA TO INDIAN CULTURAL SITUATION, NOW

4.1 Contemporary Indian Cultural Situation

4.1.1 Repetition of History

"History repeats itself" so goes the old adage. In more ways than one, this bears relevance to the Indian Culture. Indian Culture is now running through same trials, tribulations and 'turmoils' as it did at the time of Rāmānuja. 'Dissension' and 'Disintegration' is spreading its wily nest once again threatening the destruction of the very foundation of Indian Culture.

The Scientific advancement undoubtedly has brought mankind closer together, as never before, but unfortunately, only Externally. Internally human beings stand apart not only among themselves but also from the other forms of creation; hence the deadly deforestation and the unscrupulous, pernicious poaching of animals also. Barriers among men in the name of religion, caste, creed, language and even material wealth, have been erected.

Everybody says India is passing through a building phase. A leaning towards machines and fastness are the strongest developing traits in the Indian character. With this
reflection has set in various vital parts of our life. Is it our coming out of an age-old darkness? Or is it a step towards another kind of darkness? Or is it simply the imbalanced expression of a long suppressed urge to have our own way and destiny? There is no doubt that whatever is being done, has its source in an urge for advancement. The main and troubling question is whether this is really an advancement or a mere drift in the contemporary current.

As in the past, India has started giving priority to the Physical conditions of life. It is held that material advancement is not only essential but the only way to survive in the present day world. There is a growing feeling that India the water level in the reservoir of spirituality is quite sufficient and that material advancement will take us to the very acme of civilization.

The modern youth, the torch bearers of Indian Culture, born and bred in this vicious atmosphere of separation, segregation and uncertainty, with no noble human values to inspire them, with no ennobling ideals to emulate and consequently with no absolute, universal, permanent, certain standards for deciding his course of action as to its "Right" and "Wrong" is tossed life a dry leaf in a summer
breeze, a boy in the mouth of crocodile, a wooden log caught in the whirling of the roaring sea waves, between different pressure groups, developing in the end a sceptical, cynical attitude towards everything, which ultimately finds its expression in destructive and nefarious activities.

So taking up the cudgels against this trend is not an easy task. Firstly, because we are fallen into the track of sectarianism, though ancient culture has always taught us to be more discrete in integrating the different strands of civilization. Despite all our talk of economic boom and development if we just look at Punjab, Kashmir, Jharkand it appears to us we have generally lost our hold on what Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja have prescribed for a peaceful life. The happenings at Punjab and elsewhere are not just separatism at political level. It is an attempt at division where the popular culture is slowly losing its foothold in the main stream. There are no easy explanations for this. Riots with religious tinge are now an everyday occurrence in India. We have failed miserably because we are moulding ourselves on western models. We have allowed frequently terrorism to speak the language of religion and ethnicity.
Is there a cultural sanction for doing such things? The answer is 'No.'

What we witness presently is that the religious passions of common man are taken for personal advantage. In the name of religion, Emotions are running riot, dividing mankind into many sectors, religions and otherwise.

Presently Indian Culture is in a sad state of affairs. People go after material wealth only in order to enjoy. Dharma is totally neglected. People are ready to do anything to get money. So presently what we have in India is only money culture. Since people are prepared to indulge in violence to get money, the culture in India can be described as Violence or Gun-Culture.

4.1.2 The Main Question

With such a rich culture and heritage at the background why do people go after money and violence?

The present cultural situation in India is such that people give more importance to acquisition of material wealth than to anything else and they are prepared to do anything to acquire that. It is because of this situation that the above question has arisen.
4.2 Reasons for the present condition

The following are the reasons for the present condition.

a. Religion diverted from Life

The term religion is that which binds man back to his original nature. Religion therefore is the instrument which helps man to realise his true nature. Religion in this sense is a way of life. It lays down certain rules and regulations for man to be followed in life. It teaches man the methods to lead one's life. It tells us how we ought to lead our life.

It is only in the sense that Mahatma Gandhi tells us that, Religion should form the basis of our daily activities in life. He even tells us that politics should be based on Religion. But what he means by this is that not his Religion or that Religion but Religion as a way of life.

But presently in Indian Religion is totally divorced from life. That is to say, a Religion has not place in life.

b. No integration between thought, word and Deed

Religion teaches us the method to lead our life. It tells us that we should integrate our thought, word and deed.
What we think should be expressed in words and what we speak should be put into action. But the present conditions in India is that there is absolutely no co-ordination between thought, word and deed.

**c. Efficacy of Values, not taught**

Values are aspirations or ideals which everyone of us aim at realising in one's life time in and through the society.

In this scheme of values, certain values aims at the promotion of one's own well being. These values are quite selfish. There are certain other values which aim at promotion of well being of others. These values are called Human values. Truth speaking, non-violence, helping others are some of the Human Values.

**d. Everyone of us is aware of the Human Values but not its significance**

For instance, even a child knows full well speaking falsehood is wrong. But the problem is that no one knows the benefits of speaking the truth. That means no one knows the value of a values. That means, we are not taught the value of a value. In the absence of a clear knowledge of human value, people keep following the opposite values.
e. Indian Cultural tradition - not taught

Indian cultural tradition stands for certain fundamental Human values. When is said that we are not taught the values it only means that we are not taught about our Cultural Tradition. It is quite clear that our knowledge of Indian Cultural Tradition is very poor.

f. Faulty Educational Pattern

According to Swami Vivekananda, Education should aim at bringing out the excellence in man. In other words, Education should aim at bringing out human excellence.

But presently the Educational pattern is such that it does not aim at bringing out Human excellence. It does not make a person fit to face the challenges in Life. It has made men able quill drivers.

g. Education - Nothing to do with Life

Indian Philosophy practically states that precepts and practice or words and deeds should always go together. There should be absolute integration between theory and practice or between word and deed. So, the Indian Philosophy of Education says what we say we should do. But presently there is no integration between words and deeds. That is because our educational system has taught us no value. What
little has been taught is not incorporated or translated into action. That means we have not bothered to put into practice what we have learnt.

4.3 Remedy

From a glance at the causes of the present situation, the suggestion for remedies become clear.

1. The first and the foremost cause for the present situation is that the Religion is totally divorced from Life.

Religion, aims at enabling man to realise his true nature. Religion suggests certain codes of conduct to be followed by everybody. This only shows that Religion is a way of Life. That means, Religion should form part and parcel of one's life. In other words, Religion should play an active role in a man's life. So, the remedy lies in integrating Religion with one's Life.

2. If religion does not have any relevance to man's life, it means that we are not taught the value of values.

If values not being taught is given as one of the reasons, the remedy lies in values being taught. It is well known that even a child knows that speaking falsehood is wrong. But the problem is that nobody knows value of speaking the truth. So, what is required is that we should be taught the value of values.
3. Values determine the culture of a Society

From the values that the people of a society practice, we can very easily conclude the culture or the way of life for that society. If the people of a society practice Human values such as Truth speaking non-violence, helping others etc. than that society can be seen to have a noble culture.

On the other hand the people of a society practice violence to get their things then we call that culture is violence culture.

This is just to show how values determine the culture of a society. If Human values are taught, then the culture is called a Human Culture. That means a nature of a culture of a society clearly reveals the nature of value taught in that society. In the case of India the present condition is new to the non-teaching of the values. If the values are not taught it automatically follows that tradition is also not taught.

So one of the remedies suggested is that each one of us should be made aware of our cultural tradition.

What is the Way out?

There are two ways by means of which we can set right the present condition.
a. Importance of Values

Values and Cultural Tradition cannot be taught to the individual overnight. Values should become a part and parcel of an individual's life. It is not as if we practice values such as truth speaking, non-violence etc., for practicing it once again after non-violence are to be practiced and has to be practiced from childhood onwards. This becomes possible only when they are taught from childhood onwards and Education is the only media which can achieve this objective. So the education pattern in India should be so restructured in such a way that values form a part and parcel of the curriculum.

b. Interpretation of Philosophical Concepts

Culture is a way of life. Every way of life should have a view of life. Philosophy is the view of life. Culture, as a way of life, therefore is closely connected with Philosophy, the view of life.

Philosophy in its turn is based on the values that the people of a society holds and practice. If the values that the people of a society are purely material then it goes without that the philosophy is also material.
If on the otherhand, the values that the people of a society hold and practice are spiritual, then the philosophy of the people of the society is spiritual.

We thus find that culture, Philosophy and values are an integration of both the material and the spiritual value. Indian culture is never devoid of material property. But material property should be firmly based on spiritualism. Keeping this integration in mind Indian Philosophy defines human ends into four kinds. They are: Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa.

This Philosophy of Integration of material and spiritual values found their expression in the way of life of the people of this country. That is why Indian Culture is able to survive till now.

It is because of the basic spiritualism, that Indian Culture is able to accept, accommodate, assimilate the good element from other cultures and forces for influences. Presently, Indian culture is passing through critical time.

To change the present condition, Indian Culture should once again be firmly rooted in spiritualism and Philosophy. That means the Philosophic concepts on which Indian culture is based should be reinterpreted to suit modern condition.
4.4 The Application of Rāmānuja's Theo-Centric Humanism to the then Indian Culture

The Theo-Centric Humanism of Rāmānuja as was observed earlier, by virtue of its width of vision, has played a vital role in preserving the unity, Integrity and stability of the then Indian Culture and in enabling Indian Culture overcome the challenges of time, to earn the name 'Mārkandeya'¹ among world cultures.

At the theistic level, he stressed the importance of devotion. At the humanistic level, he while admitting differences emphasised the basic unity of human beings.

i. Theistic Level

Man is said to possess three guṇas, Sāttva, Rājas and Tāmas, Sāttva denotes calmness, Rājas means activity and Tāmas indolence and inactivity. This shows that men possess three qualities, Calmness, activity and indolence. For those who are calm, the path of Sāttva is suggested, for those who are alive and emotional by temperament, Bhakti or devotion is suggested.

¹ According to Hindi mythology, a young boy of sixteen years old was destined to die at the age of sixteen. It is said that when Yama appeared before him to take him away, he found the young boy hugging the idol of Lord Siva with a deep devotion. So he could not take him along with idol. Pleased with the boys devotion Lord Siva blessed him immortality. Thus Markandeya is ever sixteen. To denote the continuity of Indian culture it figuratively described as "MĀRKANDEYA".
True happiness lies in forging and maintaining a natural harmony of Spirit, mind and body. A Philosophy is to be valued by the way it has discovered the right key to this harmony and organised its experience, motives and movements. Judged by these standards, Rāmānuja's Philosophy can be considered to be the right type of Philosophy on which the contemporary Indian Culture can be based. Actually his Philosophy formulates the aspiration of men to attain spiritual consciousness by harmonising the inner and outer side of man:

There is no ethical idea which has not been stressed by him through his teachings, injunctions. Egs. Truth, honour, loyalty, hospitality, courage, chastity, self sacrifice, harmlessness, forgiveness are his common theme, which formed very stuff of right human life. Morality to him is not mostly a thing of outward conduct. But a conduct of souls state. Non-injuring is one of the very highest of his teaching. The question before us, is whether Rāmānuja's Philosophy has a sufficient power to strengthen the present destabilised culture. The answer is 'Yes'. Apart from its transcendental aims it has pragmatic ideas, a power to control life.
The entire Philosophy of life according to Rāmānuja may be said to comprise of Tattva, Hita and Puruṣārtha. The truth, the way and the goal. He stresses virtuous conduct (Kalyana) freedom from rejection (Anavasada), absence of exultation (Anuddharsa) according to feasibility and scripture statement.

Rāmānuja's Philosophy can free one from clutches of temptations where he is no longer attracted to earthly pleasures and he is carried far away from the tumults of life. He will be made to be aware of his own insignificance. He will be made to think that he is a human being, first and foremost.

Rāmānuja sought the harmony of individual efforts and social aims not in a make shift way but within the frame work of a moral order.

Rāmānuja was not a mere Philosopher a weaver of logical thought systems in the western sense. He thought in terms of the whole of human life as opportunity for man to realize the ultimate Truth. Thus what he attempted was harmony in thought, word and deed based on the inner realization of the spirit. This may also be expressed in another way. His Philosophy was an attempt at translating the spiritual
experience within the realm of social conditions, to express the whole experience into concrete actions. We could not dismiss Rāmānuja as mere interpreter with nothing new to add, because in the very process of understanding the depth of the sacred texts, he has discovered new horizons which give freshness and new vigour to seemingly the old truths.

The importance he gave to daily discipline and the principles of dedication of every act to God had enriched truly religious life and made it easier for the common man to tread the path of devotion.

Thus Rāmānuja reshaped India's cultural forms to express more powerfully intimately and perfectly its ancient ideals.

According to Rāmānuja, Life is a whole. It is not divided into individuals and nations nor into past, present and future. All these divisions are but creations of the mind.

Rāmānuja stressed that we should arrive at this intrinsic oneness, by breaking the false barriers of beliefs, prejudices and races.

4.5. Modality of its application, for contemporary Problems

a. Application at the micro levels

At the micro level, Rāmānuja tried to solve the Identity crisis that arose out of Birth, by stating that all men are parts of the Reality.
b. Application at the macro level

Society being an enlarged form of individual, that is individual writ-large, each individual is equally important for the well-being of society. That being so, the question one man claiming superiority over the other on any ground does not arise at all. Rāmānuja would suggest, in the words of T.S.Eliot, the noted English poet, long after him, that "what is important is a structure of society, in which there will be from 'top' to 'bottom' a continuous gradation of cultural levels. It is important to remember that we should not consider the upper levels as possessing more culture than the lower, but as representing a more conscious culture and a greater specialisation of culture."\(^2\) This suggestion, would pave the way for societal integration.

c. Application at the level of Religion

Religion per-se a way of life

Eversince man started to think has been confronted with certain basic problems regarding himself, his relationship with his fellow human beings, with his nature and his ultimate purpose of his existence. It is in answer the

last question in regard to the quest of man for uplifting himself that he suggested 'Devotion' (bhakti) as a tool.

d. Applicability of Devotion as a Panacea for the contemporary emotional instability

Presently, we witness how the religious passions of common man are taken for personal advantage. In the name of religion, emotions are running riot, dividing mankind into many sectors, each group vying with the other for supremacy.

What is presently required is that these emotions which are on the destructive side, need to be harnessed and utilised constructively. Towards this end an awareness in regard to the basic identity of human beings need to be created and their commitment to a common ideal. As sparks of the same divine fire, each one has a definite duty towards the other human beings. Also each one has to realise one's true relationship with Reality viz., divinity and in relation to that realization reassesses one's association with other human beings.

This brings us to the concept of Devotion, the only instrument which can bring one close to the Divinity. Devotion is an expression of emotion but on the right side. If the emotion of human beings now routed on the wrong side, are
properly channelised what wonders it cannot do? It is here that Rāmānuja's Philosophy can play an active and vital role in stabilising Indian Culture.

4.6 Modality of Application - Awareness Inducement through Bhakti and Education

a. Awareness Inducement and Integration

The only way to achieve this objective of forging the much needed and much sought after 'Integration' in Indian culture is by inducing an awareness in the minds of everyone for the recognition of

a. A basic spiritual element underlying all creations.
b. The organismal Non-Dualism of Reality.
c. Individual Self to be considered as the part of Reality as Sparks are of fire,
d. His consideration of Organic relation between individual self and Reality.
e. The need to unearth and harness, emotional potentiality to constructive purposes for building an integrated social order through Bhakti, and above all the necessity to translate theoretical knowledge into practical action integrating thought, word and deed with Bhakti and emotion as instruments for the cause of liberation.
b. From small seeds tall Oaks grow

And education with Bhakti as its backdrop is the only medium through which this "Awareness Inducement" can be effected. Towards this end, the present educational pattern should be so restructurised as to highlight, emphasise and integrate this essential spiritual aspect of Indian Culture with everyone of the disciplines being offered in schools, colleges and universities, to be taught from the primary school level onwards.

After all, it is only "From small seeds that tall Oaks grow".