CHAPTER-VII

VALLABHA ON MOKSA
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In the previous chapter we have already discussed Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja and Madhva's theory of mokṣa. In this chapter I shall take up the theory of another important Vedāntin, Vallabha. In his works Anubhāṣya, Siddhāntarahasya and Bhāgavata tīkāsubodhini, he offers a theistic interpretation of the Vedānta, which differs from those of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja. He prefers to call his interpretation Suddhādvaita or pure non-dualism, and declares that the whole world is real. The individual souls and the inanimate world are in essence one with Brahmaṇ. At the same time Vallabha admits that the Brahmaṇ is pure (Suddha) - devoid of māyā. In his system God is personified as kṛṣṇa. And from the religious point of view, the school is known as puṣṭi-mārga, which means the path of Divine grace. In this school of thought Divine grace is the only safe means of mokṣa and mokṣa granted by God as a gift (grace) is far superior to the mokṣa which is attained by a jīva by its own effort by means of the path provided by Vedas (Maryadāmārga).
I THE NATURE OF THE WORLD.

The Vallabhites (Suddhādvaitins) reject māyāvāda and the Śaṅkarite view of the falsity of the world-appearance. The Absolute unity, according to the Vallabhite, comprises the world and the plurality within it, and the relation between the Absolute and the world is the relation between a whole and a part. Thus the relation is neither the relation of a real substratum to a floating appearance, nor the relation of a substantive to an adjective qualifying the substantive. On the contrary, it is the relation of the unlimited to the limited, of the totality to a fragment of the totality. The part is not an adjective of the whole; it is the whole itself under a limit, one amongst other possibilities in which the whole realises itself. Hence it is consubstantial with the whole and not a mere attribute of it as Rāmānujists thinks.

But from such a conception of the world and the nature of the soul it may follow that there is no need for mokṣa on the part of the Soul. In other words, is there any urge for mokṣa if individual soul is a part of Brahmān?
Like other Vedāntins Vaiśānava would say - ignorance is the cause of bandage. Due to ignorance jīva forgets the real relation between himself and God and takes himself to be intellect (buddhi), breath (prāṇa), senses (indriyas) or body, etc.. This is called bondage which causes his movement in the cycle of life and death.

According to Vaiśānava this insentient world is real and is only a form of Brahman, so it cannot be taken to be unreal. Brahman's two qualities, viz. Consciousness and bliss, are unmanifested in the world; only existence is manifested. The creation and dissolution of the world are only the appearance and disappearance of the ultimate reality. Brahman itself, when takes the form of the created matter, appears as creation. At the time of delusion, the world returns to its original form and hence does not become the object of perception.

Thus the world is as real as Brahman itself. The origin and destruction of the world is due to the power of Brahman, but Brahman is not only the creator of the world,
it is itself of the nature of the world.¹ The cause-effect relation is a thorough identity-relation. Brahmān is thus both an efficient and material cause of the world.² Following, Brhadāranyaka, says that Brahmān desired to be many and appeared as transformed into many individual souls and the world.³

Vallabha differentiates between the world (jagat) and the saṃsāra (life-death cycle). The world, according to Vallabha is a creation of Brahmān and hence real, but saṃsāra i.e. the life-death-cycle comes into existence due to the ignorance of the jīva and hence is unreal. This unreal creation comes to an end by the knowledge of Brahmān. According to Dr. Rādhākrishnan "The world is true, though our experience (pratīti) of it is wrong. We do not realise that the world is but a form of Brahmān. The jīva is thus infected with a wrong view of the nature of the world. To those who have attained the truth, the world

¹. Anu-bhāṣya, 1.1.4.
². Vallabha-bhāṣya on Brahma-sūtra, 1.1.4.
³. Ibid. 1.4.3.
appears as *Brahman* commenting on the knowledge of those who have not realized the truth by themselves and those who are completely ignorant, Dr. Radhākrishnan says: "To those who have learnt the truth from the scriptures, it appears as both *Brahman* and *māyā* i.e. something other than *Brahman*, though they know that the former is real and the latter not. The ignorant makes no distinction between the reality of *Brahman* and the unreality of the plural appearance which set themselves forth as objective and independent. *Avidyā* is located in the mind of man. Vallabha thus does not accept the view of the unreality of the world as such.*^5

Like all other vedāntins he accepts that *Brahman* as the highest Reality. But unlike Śaṅkara it is not *nirguṇa* (non-qualified) in nature. He identifies *Brahman* with *Kṛṣṇa* and thus follows the path by other *vaishnava* vedāntins. Thus *kṛṣṇa* is the highest reality, *Brahman*. He is *Sat* (existence), *cit* (knowledge or consciousness) and

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5. Ibid.
Ānanda (bliss). He is Puruṣottama (the supreme person). Vallabha holds that Brahmān has three aspects, viz, (i) Parā Brahmān or Puruṣottama (ii) Antaryāmin and (iii) Akṣara Brahmān. Kṛṣṇa or Puruṣottama is the embodiment of all divine qualities. He can be said to be nirguna (devoid of qualities) only in the sense that He cannot be associated with the sāttvika, rājasika and tāmasika qualities of Prakṛti, as the jīva can be. Even as it is not possible to count the sand particles lying on the shore of an ocean, it is not possible to count the divine qualities of puruṣottama. He dwells in the souls in the form of Antaryāmin (inner controller). Lower than Parā Brahmān is Akṣara Brahmān. He possesses Sat, Cit and limited Ānanda (as against the infinite Ānanda of puruṣottama).

According to Vallabha, the individual souls have come out of Brahmān. They are not the product of nescience.

So, they are not merely phenomenal and false as Śaṅkara holds. Souls are of the nature of intelligence, infinite in number, eternal, atomic in size and parts of
Brahman. They are real agents and enjoyers of the fruits of actions. The relation between the soul and Brahman is not that of a pure identity as Śaṅkara emphasises. The famous mahāvākyā 'Tat tvam asi' does not convey the pure identity of soul and Brahman. It simply means that the soul depends on Brahman as a ring of Gold depends on gold. Both are of the same nature (svarūpa) intrinsically.

There are three types of souls. They are as follows:-

1. Pure :-

Those who have come out of the 'Śri-anga' of the Lord.

They do not come to the world. Hence, ignorance etc. do not touch them.

2. Mundane:-

Those who are moving in the Cycle of birth and death.

Mundane souls are again of three kinds:-

(i) Daivi:- Those who are eligible for liberation.

(ii) Madhyama:- Those who are eligible for moving in the circuit of birth and death.
(iii) Dānava—Those who are thrown to hell due to some curse or sin.

3. Liberated :-

Those who have attained liberation by their efforts and the grace of God.

Here we find that this type of classification is similar to the classification made by Madhva, which we have already seen.

From another stand point, the souls are classified in to three:-

1. Pravāhi:- Those who do not even think of liberation. They are indulged in the sensuous worldly enjoyments. They are doomed to move in the saṁsāra-çakra for ever.

2. Maryāda:- Those who study the vedas and attain liberation by the Jñāna-mārga laid down in them. In them, the ñit aspect of the Lord
predominates. They worship the Lord for the sake of Liberation.

3. Puṣṭi:- These are 'chosen soul' of the Lord. They worship the Lord out of a boundless love for Him. In them, the ānand aspect of the Lord predominates.

Among the puṣṭi souls there are gradations. They are as follows:

(i) Pravāha Puṣṭi:- Those who are happy in performing the duties of the station for the sake of Loka-Saṁgraha only.

(ii) Maryādā Puṣṭi:- Those who have got the specific knowledge of the Daivi glories of the Lord.

(iii) Puṣṭi-Puṣṭi:- Those who are eligible for the special grace of the Lord. In order to understand the Bhagvat-svarūpa, they are
eligible for omniscience.

(iv) Suddha Puṣṭi:- Those in whom the love for the Lord is over-flowing. The Lord also grants them grace whole heartedly.

Here we find that like Madhva, for Vallabha also, there are only a few souls who are eligible for liberation. Rest are doomed either to the saṁsāra čakra or hell.

II THE NATURE OF MOKṢA:

According to Vallabha there are two kinds of mokṣa - the maryāda mokṣa and Puṣṭi mokṣa. The liberation which is attained mainly by the human efforts, by the study of the Scriptures, is maryadā mokṣa. The Lord, while granting this kind of mokṣa, takes into consideration the human efforts. But, when the Lord Himself grants liberation, without taking into consideration the efforts of a jīva, it is puṣṭi mokṣa. Of the two kinds of mokṣa, attained by the two different paths, it is said that the mokṣa attained by the puṣṭi mārga is far richer than
the *mokṣa* attained by the *maryādā-mārga*. It is even said that the liberation attained by the *maryādā-mārga* is only *saṁsāra* in comparison to the *mokṣa* attained by the *puṣti-mārga*. The reason for this is that the joy of worshipping the Lord (*Sevā*) is absent in the *mokṣa* of *maryādā-mārga*.

Vallabha in his book *Tattvārtha-dīpa-nibandha* prescribes the following means of *mokṣa* for a seeker of *mokṣa*:-

(1) *Vairāgya* (detachment) - First of all the seeker of *mokṣa* should be detached from the worldly things.

(2) *Śāmkhya* (knowledge) - Thereafter the seeker should acquire knowledge leading to the distinction between eternal and non-eternal in this world.

(3) *Yoga* - The seeker should practise the various steps (angas) prescribed by *yoga*.

(4) *Tapas* (Penance) - The seeker should also practise hard penance and should think that the soul is merging into
(5) Bhakti (devotion) - The seeker should have devotion for God. Devotion, according to Vallabha, is the strong and great love for God, produced by the knowledge of the greatness of God. God is subserved by devotion and helps the jīva to attain mokṣa by destroying his ignorance. There is no other way but devotion for subserving God.

Devotion, according to Vallabha, is gradually strengthened by the nine stages of devotion such as Śravaṇa (hearing), kirtana (singing) etc. as stated in Śrimadbhāgavatam. In his book Bhakti-Vardhini, explaining the origin and development of devotion, he says that just as a tree cannot grow without the seed so unless there is a seed of devotion in the form of the grace of God in jīva, the devotion cannot sprout. Only when there is in jīva a seed of devotion in the form of the grace of God, it grows by the means of devotion such as Śravaṇa (hearing), kirtana (singing) etc.
Vallabha Classifies devotion into two kinds:

(1) *Maryādā-bhakti* - The devotion which arises as a result of the study of scriptures about the greatness of God, is called *Maryāda bhakti*. The devotee, here, performs all functions according to *veda*, for attaining *mokṣa*. Those who follow the path of *maryādā bhakti* acquire the knowledge of *aksara brahman* and attain liberation in stages (*kramika*).

(2) *Puṣti-bhakti* - The devotion attained only by the grace of God, without the study of scriptures, is called *puṣti bhakti*. This is the best devotion. But God’s grace is obtained only by those who have purified their heart and mind completely. Vallabha describes the various means of the purification of mind also.

Like Rāmānuja and other Vedāntins, Vallabha has also described the five stages of *mokṣa* viz. *Sālokya, Sāषṭi, Sāṃpya, Sārupya* and *Sāyujya*. But, according to Vallabha,
mokṣa in stages is meant for the seekers adopting the path of maryādā. Those adopting the path of puṣṭi are entirely different from them. The souls of those adopting the path of puṣṭi get immediate mokṣa after coming out of the body; they do not require going through the path of gods and getting a mokṣa in stages; they immediately merge into Brahma.

Thus we find that religious elements which were incorporated into the notion of mokṣa by Rāmānuja finds its explicit manifestation in the writings of Vallabha. This religious element becomes a salient feature of the subsequent Vedāntins.