CHAPTER FIVE

The Code of Conduct, Meditation and Knowledge in Non - Kevalādvaita Schools of Vedānta
CHAPTER FIVE

Non-Kevalādvaita Schools of Vedānta

Introduction:

In this chapter the main focus is the three aspects namely the code of conduct, meditation and intuition of human life in non-Kevalādvaita. Though the basic concept of the code of conduct may sound similar as in other systems, the other concepts such as absolute union and identification of Īva and Brahman and the concept of māyā etc., may differ from Śāṅkara. One may get an impression that Śāṅkara’s philosophy gives more importance to the jñāna than the Bhakti and may sound that it is orientated towards intellectually well-to-do aspirants. The other systems which will be dealt with here have given enough and more importance to knowledge as well as Bhakti. It may be observed while dealing with the aspects of Bhakti in different schools that they have highlighted the Saguṇa aspect of Brahman more than Nīgṛhna. The whole approach is common-man oriented. Thus, at practical level these later systems gain more appreciation due to their humble and pragmatic approach. Undeniably, both have their own uniqueness and usefulness according to different time, place, and situation. Nevertheless, among the Non-Kevalādvaita, there are differences on various issues.

Therefore, this chapter will briefly deal with the code of conduct, meditation and intuition in four systems of Vedānta called (1) Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānujācārya, (2) Bhedābheda of Nimbārkaśāṅkara, (3) Śuddhādvaita of Vallabhaśāṅkara, and (4) Sudhādvaitavāda or pure dualism of Mādhvācārya. Accordingly, this chapter has been divided into four sections. Each section will have its sub sections followed by a brief conclusion at the end. Then, there will be a general conclusion at the end of the chapter.
PART ONE

The Code of conduct, meditation and Intuition or knowledge in Viśiṣṭādvaita system of Rāmānujācārya

Introduction:

The whole philosophy of Rāmānujācārya is known as Viśiṣṭādvaita in which he tries to show that God, Jīva (cit) and the world (acit) all are neither absolutely one nor at the same time all are absolutely different. God or Brahmaṇ both are not different but one and the same supreme reality. Jīva and Jagat depend on him for their existence. Thus, there is whole and part relationship between Brahmaṇ, Jīva and Jagat. Brahmaṇ is the whole and other two are the parts of the whole. Hence, for Rāmānuja, Jīva and world are also real because there is a cause and effect relation between Brahmaṇ, Jīva and Jagat. If Brahmaṇ, who is the cause of the existence, and function of Jīva and Jagat is real, then how can they (Jīva and Jagat) be unreal? There is unity and difference. That is why the philosophy of Rāmānujā is known as Viśiṣṭādvaita which is also known as Qualified non-dualism.

Rāmānuja concentrates his attention on relation of the world to God, and argues that God is indeed real and independent; but the souls of the world are also real, though their reality is utterly dependent on that of God. He believes in a spiritual principle as the basis of the world, which is not treated as an illusion. Though the world of matter and the individual souls have a real existence of their own, neither of them is essentially the same as Brahmaṇ. Brahmaṇ is eternally free from imperfection, matter is unconscious, and the individual souls are subject to ignorance and suffering. Yet they all form unity, since matter and soul have existence only as the body of Brahmaṇ, i.e. they can exist and be what they are simply because Brahmaṇ is their sole controlling power. Apart from Brahmaṇ, matter and individual souls are nothing. The individual souls and inanimate nature are essentially different from Brahmaṇ, though they have no existence or purpose to serve apart from him or his service. Hence, Rāmānujā’s theory is called Advaita or non-dualism with a qualification (Viśeṣa), viz. that it admits plurality of forms as soul and matter. It is therefore, called Viśiṣṭādvaita or ‘qualified non-dualism’.

Though many aspects of Rāmānujā’s philosophy could be discussed at length, in
this section only the aspects of code of conduct, Meditation including Bhakti and propatti, the role of knowledge, intuition and the role of grace.

5.1.1. The Code of conduct

5.1.1.1. Introduction:

Rāmānuja emphasizes greatly on the need to cultivate moral virtue. An aspirant, according to him, can reach the desired goal of uninterrupted meditation on Īśvara with bhakti yoga (love), if and only if, he possesses excellence in character and applies himself to Karma-yoga. Karma-yoga, which includes moral virtues, is an inner need to attain liberation. Rāmānuja, does not dispense with karma at any stage of man’s life. One who is in the ascetic stage of life too must perform obligatory and occasional duties. The aspirant must develop common moral virtues known as Sādāhāraṇa dharma, and they are obligatory for all.

The code of conduct is an essential aspect of one’s spiritual journey for the attainment of final goal of life.

Ahimsā (Non-injury): This means that one should avoid causing pain to others (all species of living organism.) at the level of mind, speech and body at all times. Satya (Truthfulness): It means conveying a fact as it is for the good of others. Asteya (Non-stealing): It means abstaining from stealing others’ wealth either by use of force or without their knowledge. Śauca (Internal and external purity): The external cleanliness consists of purification of the body, and internal purity, consisting in making the mind free from all vices, through the cultivation of positive attitude such as the feeling of friendship etc. Indriya-nigraha: It is the control of the sensory knowledge and action. Dāna (Charitable donation): It is generous giving of something to others out of ones own free will. Dayā (mercy): It is giving protection to those who are in distress. In fact, the sense of compassion is included in this. Kṣantiḥ: It is patience under provocation and abstaining from seeking vengeance or revenge. In fact, the sense of forgiveness is also included in this.²

Bhakti or devotion is a broad term extending from the lowest form of worship to the highest life of realization. Bhakti is man’s reaching out towards a
fuller knowledge of God, quietly and meditatively. He elaborates preparation for bhakti which includes some practical virtues in life as follows:³

(a) Viveka: This signifies physical purity, which helps in the purification of heart. It consists in avoiding contaminated food, (naturally impure such as rotten and intoxicant (garlic, tobacco etc.) or the food offered by the morally corrupt one. From the purity of food follows the purity of heart.

(b) Vimoksha: This is withdrawal of the self from the object of enjoyment. It is freedom from all else and longing for God.

(c) Abhyasa: It is ceaseless thinking of God. It is constant remembrance of the form of Isvara even if one is not involved in formal meditation.

(d) Kriya: It is doing good to others. This denotes performance of duties, viz. studying the Veda, sacrificing to the gods, presenting oblations to ancestors, honoring guests and offering food to beasts, birds, and the like. Man of spiritual birth desires to meditate upon Isvara by study of one’s own Veda, by the performance of sacrifice and the offering of gifts, and by austerity in the form of fasting. He who performs karma in accordance with scriptural injunction is the best among those who are engaged in meditation upon Isvara.

(e) Kalyana: This means wishing well to all. This consists of six factors, viz. truthfulness (satya) conducive to the welfare of others, freedom from all traces of deception or duplicity or integrity (arjava), compassion or feeling for the suffering or distress of another (daya), munificence or charity (dana), non-injury (ahimsa), and absence of even justifiable anger (Anabhidhya). Isvara could be attained (through meditation) by truthful speech. The world of Isvara is for those who practice celibacy (Brahmacarya), action & austerity (karma & tapas), truthful speech (satya), and who are free from faithlessness in thought, in words, and in deeds (jimha), from deceit (anrita) and from outward pretense of holiness or of piety (maya).

(f) Anavasada: This is high degree of enthusiasm in pursuing the means of liberation. This implies absence of despondency, summoning of all one’s powers, firmness of mind and purpose, and determination to achieve the goal of liberation.
(g) **Anuddhāra**: *Uddhāra* connotes exuberance and lack of restraint and implies revelry of any kind and it draws one away from *Īśvara*. **Anuddhāra** is the opposite of *Uddhāra* which prescribes moral excellence such as one should cultivate control of mind and external senses, renunciation in spirit, fortitude, concentration of thought, and should meditate on *Īśvara*, the self of the *Jīva*. It emphasizes that the aspirant should be well composed, i.e. he must be free from excitement and must have concentration of the mind with resulting elimination of all distractions.⁴

### 5.1.2. Meditation

#### 5.1.2.1. Introduction:

Meditation is not a mere unemotional concentration of the mind on *Īśvara*, but an unswerving loving contemplation of Him. In fact, Rāmānuja does not make any distinction between *jāna* and *dhyāna*, knowledge and meditation. Meditation, when pursued with diligence, assiduity, and love, without being interrupted by any contrary thought, would assume the *vividness* of direct experience. It is termed as steady remembrance (*dhrūva-anusmṛti*) or *bhakti* which results from the grace of *Īśvara*.³

The school of Viśiṣṭādvaita meditation is done in the form of *bhakti*. In *bhakti* also, it is not mere love and self surrender to God but it includes the aspect of *karma* and *jāna* *yoga*. Therefore, *bhakti*, which is done as meditation, holds *karma* and *bhakti* simultaneously. The whole orientation of meditation is centralized towards God and His grace.

**(a) Jñānayoga:** Meditation on the *Jīva* after knowing its true nature through study of the scripture under a preceptor is *jñānayoga*. Its aim is to realize the true nature of the *Jīva* as different from its psycho-physical organism of an atomic size, and dependent on *Īśvara*. It is known as *ātmāvalokana*. It is a prerequisite to the pursuit of *bhakti* *yoga*. *Jñānayoga* is prescribed for those who are not distracted by external objects and who are free from all sorts of confusions and mental disturbances. *Jñānayoga*, is dependent on *karmayoga* and it involves mental effort in accomplishing
its end, viz. self realization. According to Rāmānuja, there is cause and effect
relation between *karma yoga* and *jñānayoga*. In this, preferment of one to the other
does not arise. Both must be pursued in succession.\(^6\)

(b) *Karma-yoga:* *Karma-yoga* is prescribed with reference to those whose minds
are restless and disquieted by the experience of mundane objects through the
function of their senses. When an aspirant performs *karmayoga*, he is fully
cognizant of his true nature as distinct from body, senses and so forth, and is
dependent upon *śivara*. When it is carried to fruition the intuitive knowledge of the
*Jīva* or the self realization would ensue as a matter-of-course. *Karmayoga* is not
dependent on *jñānayoga*. It leads to self-realization seemingly without effort.
Therefore, on this ground it is preferred to *jñānayoga*.\(^7\)

(c) *Bhakti yoga:* "*Bhakti* is described as knowledge of the Ultimate Reality as
one's highest treasure and the consequent excessive adoration and attachment to
Him. It is not mere feeling but conviction consequent on the knowledge of our
ultimate relationship with Him that generates love and attachment to Him.
Rāmānuja therefore equates *bhakti* with *dhyāna* and *upāsanā*. *Dhyāna* means
concentration of mind on Him and *upāsanā* continuous thought of Him."\(^8\) His
teaching on *bhakti* are addressed to both intellectuals who want such support as also
to simple souls who have naturally got unalloyed faith in God and submission to
His will.

*Bhakti* is not emotionalism, but includes the training of the will as well as
the intellect. It is knowledge of God as well as obedience to his will. *Bhakti* is to
love God with all our mind and with all our heart. It finds its culmination in the
intuitive realization of God. *Bhakti* is salvation in becoming. Through *bhakti* the
soul becomes more and vividly conscious of its relation to God, until at last it
surrenders itself to God, who is soul of its soul. Finally there is no longer self-love
or self seeking, since God has taken the place of self and the whole life is
transfigured.

In *bhakti*, every drop of one's blood, every beat of one's heart, and every
thought of one's brain are surrendered to God. It is the case of 'I not I'. *Bhakti* is
differentiated into formal (vaidhi) and supreme (mukhyā). The formal is the lower phase, where we indulge in prayer, ceremonies, and image-worship. All these help the soul onward. However, these cannot by themselves save the soul. We must worship the supreme, for nothing else, in the last analysis, can serve as the object of meditation.9

The Bhakti is the result of the higher knowledge as distinguished by the lower knowledge as a part of karma yoga. The lower knowledge is the understanding that one is the Ātman and not the body. It is based on this Ātman—knowledge, that upāsanā or continuous communion with the Divine becomes perfect. It is the emotional pattern generated by higher knowledge that expresses itself as parama-bhakti. To know is to love, and knowledge and bhakti become identical.

Rāmānuja’s system divides Bhakti into three stages of development, practice of devotional means (sādhanā bhakti), higher devotion (Parā-bhakti), and supreme devotion (parama-bhakti).10

The first requisite for an aspirant at the stage of sādhanā bhakti is strong faith in God as the highest value, and a sense of the utter transitoriness of worldly achievements. He will then have to turn to the scriptures and teachers who impart the doctrines regarding the self, nature, and God. Duties of life have to be done without attachment, and for success in this, one must have an understanding of oneself as the Ātman (ātmāvalokana). For this, karma yoga and jñānayoga have to be practiced together, as they are mutually interdependent.11

The accumulated merits and demerits of jīva are removed by the attainment of steady remembrance (dhruva-anusmṛti). No fresh merit or demerit will occur. The fructified merits and demerits will be removed by experiencing their fruits. When the body falls off, the jīva reaches the world of Īśvara through the path of Gods (devayāna). The Mundaka text states that the liberated jīva, being free from merits and demerits attains extreme likeness to Īśvara. This likeness is only to some extent and it does not imply identity between jīva and Īśvara. It only signifies that the experience of the transcendent qualities of Īśvara by the liberated jīva and by Īśvara himself is the same.12

Incarnation appears only once in an age but when they leave human bodies, what they leave for man to contemplate on is only the accounts of their lives and

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teaching. Incarnation is compared with kneeling elephant for a lame man to climb over, God also through incarnation lowers down for his devotee.

The image or symbol is of mute and inanimate, metal or stone; but the eye of faith discovers the divine presence in it. This is helpful to give the devotee a feeling of direct communion.\(^{13}\)

(d) **Prapatti**: Rāmānuja appreciated the concept and practice of Bhakti but besides that he propounds his famous doctrine of prapatti. Rāmānuja recognizes along with bhaktiyoga another means of liberation known as prapatti. Prapatti is the attitude of absolute self-surrender to the supreme, a deathless faith in the saving grace and security of God and the realization of the utter nothingness and unworthiness of finite life. It is the spiritual birth-right of every jīva irrespective of its physical birth and station in life ultimately mumukṣutva is the hunger for the absolute, whether it is due to the evolution of Bhakti or the revolution of prapatti. There is the uprush or the downpour of divine grace followed by the destruction of karma.\(^{14}\)

This school upholds the monkey-theory. A young monkey has to exert itself and stick to its mother. The other holds the cat-theory that a kitten is taken up by the mother-cat in its mouth. According this school nothing depends on man’s effort. It is the grace of God that selects an individual to be free. Thus, human efforts and the grace of God are both essential for liberation.\(^{15}\)

5.1.3. Knowledge/ Intuition

Knowledge for the jīva consists in his recognition of his being only an absolutely dependent entity whose purpose is to serve the Lord and not gain any personal enjoyment apart from it.\(^{16}\) Rāmānuja understands Jñāna in the sense of the knowledge of the essential nature of the self (Ātmavāraṇa), and vijñāna in the sense of discriminative knowledge of the self (Ātmaviveka), as different from prakrta.\(^{17}\) Faith (śraddhā) is a precondition of knowledge (Jñāna). It can be acquired by the wise who have a vision of truth, through humility and reverence (Pranipāta), investigation (paripṛśaṇa), and service (seva).\(^{18}\)

Intuition of reality, which is not the logical knowledge of reality, is possible only in meditation bearing the character of devotion. This is the highest

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knowledge, involving the exercise of the non-cognitive elements of the soul. Since, the object intuited is not directly presented, the nature of intuition is said to be indirect or representative in character yet as far as its immediacy and clearness go, it is far superior to perceptual knowledge. This knowledge arises through divine grace in response to acts of daily worship and prayer. This is religious experience or the immediate awareness of the infinite.¹⁹

Self-control is indispensable condition to acquire knowledge. Desire (kāma) and anger (krodha) are great enemies of on the path of spiritual progress. They obscure knowledge as smoke covers the fire. Knowledge is obscured by unstable desire. Unrighteous desire, which spring from rajas, hinders knowledge. They spring from external senses, manas, and buddhi. Therefore, they must be restrained in order to destroy unrighteous desire. The senses should be controlled by the mind, the mind should be controlled by the intellect; intellect should be curbed by the higher rational self. The self with complete sense-restraint and control of mind and intellect can extirpate unrighteous desires. Without absolute self-control knowledge and intuition cannot be acquired.²⁰ When all desires are directed to the self, in whom God is immanent, they are sublimated and purified. They are withdrawn from the external sense-objects and fixed on the spiritual self, untouched by the natural and physical modes of sattva, rajas, and tamas. When the mind is tranquilized by the eradication of emotion and passions, it can be fixed on the self.

In fact, Rāmānuja does not make any distinction between knowledge and meditation (jñāna and dhyāna). Meditation, when pursued with diligence, assiduity, and love, without being interrupted by any contrary thought, would assume the vividness of direct experience. It is termed as steady remembrance (dhruvanamsruti) or bhakti. This results from the grace of lōvara.

(a) Effect of intuition:

Knowledge dispels darkness of doubt and destroys ignorance and sin and brings about supreme bliss in the self. It harmonizes the spirit (Prasāda) due to equanimity of the mind, stills of emotions and desires, and finally causes complete sense-control, and fixation of mind on God; destroys egoism and brings eternal
peace. Mystic vision of God due to knowledge and intuition destroys attachment (rasa) to all sense-objects. They cease to attract the mind and the senses.

In the state of mukti, the self is freed from nescience, and attains its own omniscience or cosmic consciousness; enjoys the absolute beauty, bliss, and rasa of Brahman and is Brahmanized in every way, except in the matter of cosmic leadership. Viśiṣṭādvaita insists on the ideal of social solidarity and spiritual service to all beings as well as guarantees mukti to all irrespective of birth status.

5.1.4. Conclusion:

In Rāmānuja’s theory of extremes meet and Brahman is both apprehended by insight and attained by endeavour. Spiritual endeavour is the process of devotion building by means of karma yoga, jñānayoga, and bhaktiyoga. The first is a self-emptying process in which there is a gradual transition from sensuality to duty for duty’s sake, from there to the ideal of work as the worship of God. Jñānayoga is the transition from the purgative way to the way of illumination by introversion, but in seeking it alone or quietly, may bring about a lapse into quietism and subjectivity. True jñānayoga and bhaktiyoga is the transition from self-realization to God realization; the devotee blessed by his godly Guru, has an intuitive grasp of his divine origin and destiny. Thus, his whole life becomes a ceaseless practice of the presence of God.

By pure contemplation, a highly qualified aspirant can try to overcome the identification of the Atman with the body. But this is very difficult, almost impossible for the average aspirant. He has therefore to work, fulfilling the duties of life without desire for the fruits of actions, which are to be made an offering to God. There is thus no opposition between karma yoga and jñānayoga in Rāmānuja’s doctrine. They are mutually complementary.

There is no reservation of caste in bhakti. Through bhakti even śudras can attain salvation. There is no distinction among the lovers of God. There is no requirement of priests. Rāmānuja preaches equality in worship and proclaims that bhakti and prapatti transcends all caste distinctions.

Rāmānuja trusts firmly to the religious instinct, and sets forth deeply religious view which reveals God to man through creation, through the theophanies (revelation), through prophets, through incarnations.
The supreme loving devotion (para bhakti) is the means of liberation. It results from self-realization, the fruit of jhānayoga. And jhānayoga is feasible only if the mind becomes collected by the practice of Karma-yoga. If an aspirant is not able to devote himself to bhakti yoga, he must go in for jhānayoga, and if he lacks the ability to practice jhānayoga, he should engage himself in karmayoga which involves self realization in its very nature.

Bhakti yoga in the philosophy of Ramanuja gives hope of social equality by projecting god as father or mother, and we are all as children on the same footing. All men high or low, rich or poor, untouchables or others are equally precious to the parental heart.

Ramanuja gives special place for prapatti (self-surrender) in his philosophy because the grace of God, for him, is more essential for salvation than the self-effort of man. In fact, the object of self-effort is to generate this congenial mental attitude for grace to work upon the aspirant’s mind. If simple and unsophisticated people, humble by birth and upbringing, have natural sense of prapatti, it is reasonable that the grace of God lifts them up from saṁsāra.

The doctrine of Prapatti has, in a special sense, made the devotional doctrine accessible to a much larger circle beyond learned and the high-born. The transcendent being makes Himself available even to the weak. There may also be a situation where God surrenders Himself to the devotee, more than a devotee surrendering to Him.

Ramanuja gave to Indian thought a God who includes everything in Himself but transcends the world of becoming, and who, according to his Sarira Sariri-bhāva doctrine is the indweller of the cosmos as a whole and every bit of it. His thought presents God as transcendent in nature and majesty, but at the same time easily accessible to those who want Him in truth.

In fact, Ramanuja does not make any distinction between Jñāna and dhyāna, knowledge and meditation. Meditation, when pursued with diligence, assiduity, and love, without being interrupted by any contrary thought, would assume the vividness of direct experience. It termed as steady remembrance (dhruta-anusmṛti) or bhakti. This results from the grace of āvara.

In other systems meditation gives rise to intuition but here it is the other way where jñāna and bhakti lead to a better meditation. One can say that according
to this school of monkey theory and cat theory both are important because on the one hand man surrender himself to God with full faith as young monkey does. On the other hand it is like cat theory because god gives his help by bestowing the grace as cat helps the kitten by holding in her mouth.
PART TWO
The Code of conduct, meditation and Intuition or
knowledge in Bhedābheda system of Nimbārkācārya

Introduction:

Nimbārka advocates the doctrine of dualistic monism (Dwaitādvaitavāda). He
insists on difference as well as non-difference or identity (bhedābheda) between
Brahman, Individual soul, and the world. According to him there is identity in
difference among them.23 By identity here he means that the existence, activities,
etc., of the individual self are all dependent upon the Lord. In the case of the non-
conscious reality also, when it is said ‘Sarvam khalavidam Brahman’ (indeed all this
is Brahman), what it means is that the whole non-conscious reality comes out of
Him. Again several instances may be adduced in support of the above. For
example, stone like admantine, emerald, etc., are earthly modifications and as
such may be called, earthly yet in form these are quite distinct from the earth. All
the jīva, though amīna (part) of the same Lord, are not identical with one another.
With the difference of the physical organism occupied by the jīva, there is a
difference among the jīva themselves. Even at the time of liberation, the difference
and non-difference between jīva and Parmātman remain non-affected. Just as the
spider spins out of its own self its web and yet remains independent of it, so the
Brahman also has split itself up into the numberless spirits and matter but remains
in its fullness and purity.24

The soul and the world are different from Brahman, since they possess
nature and attributes different from Brahman. They are not different, since they
cannot exist by themselves and depend absolutely on Brahman… In the light of
this doctrine of ‘difference and non-difference,’ the text, ‘tat tvam asi’ is
interpreted. ‘Tat’ signifies the eternal-omniscient Brahman, ‘tvam’ refers to the
individual soul, whose existence depends on Brahman; and ‘asi’ brings out the
relation between the two, which is one of the differences compatible with non-
difference.25

God is the ultimate cause of bondage and liberation. The bondage of the jīva
is caused by avidyā, which is the same as the beginningless load of karma consisting
of merits and demerits. It is by His will that this *karma* becomes operative. *avidyā* makes the *jīva* forget his real individuality as potency of *Īsvara* and feel that he is independent, and entrenches him in the false ego generated thereby through identification with the body-mind, the products of *prakṛti*.

The *mokṣa* or emancipation of the *jīva* is the end of all spiritual striving. Here one attains the nature or qualities of God, of whom one is a part or potency but never merges completely. For example, as a bird sitting on a tree or a fish swimming in water never merges fully in the water, similarly, the *jīva* is merged in the pervasiveness of God without losing its identity. The *jīva* is always a part of His, both different and non-different, and he never ceases to be that and be one with the whole. The *Upaniṣadic* statement, ‘the knower of *Brahman* becomes *Brahman*’ does not assert an absolute identity between both, but it asserts the attainment of one’s real nature through continuous experience of Him as His part and as belonging to Him. In liberation there is no physical body, but there is a spiritual body constituted of non-material stuff (*Aprakṛta*) with which the *jīva* participates in Divine activities. Here in this section the main concern is not the complete philosophy of Nimbārka but the aspects of mode of conduct, contemplation/meditation (basically includes aspects of *Bhakti*), and role of Intuition and knowledge.

### 5.2.1. The Code of conduct

#### 5.2.1.1. Introduction:

*Mokṣa* is the final goal of life according to Nimbārka, but for the attainment of that goal or liberation one should have knowledge. Thus, knowledge is more important than the action for Nimbārka. Those who desire to have knowledge, should perform *Āśrama karma* or action pertaining to some *Āśrama* or the other. In a way, the performance of *Āśrama karma* is the necessary condition for knowledge. All these actions maintain the self-discipline, purification of mind and the self. The act of sacrifice, gift, charity, austerity and penance are all to be done for the purification of the mind. In fact, performance of them can purify his mind.
and in that purity and calmness only, he will be able to meditate well and finally through meditation he will receive the grace of supreme knowledge as well. Therefore, the code of conduct in the philosophy of Nimbārkācārya becomes very essential. There are four means of mokṣa viz. karma, vidyā, upāsanā, prapatti, and Gurūpaśātti and the entire code of conduct contains in it.

The aspects of code of conduct are seen in the entire concept of upāsanā and Gurūpaśātti. In the six limbs of upāsanā we get a clear view of good code of conduct where the aspirant is expected (Anukūlaya samkalpaḥ) to cultivate universal good will, friendship, and respect for all. Again in the second limb called Pratikūlaya varjanam one is expected to refrain from all sorts of violence, falsehood, and negative behaviour which may harm others. One is encouraged to develop true devotion and give up the ego and false pride which may cause suffering and bondage. Again while dealing with Gurūpaśātti along with devotion and obedience to Gurū, we find the involvement of eight-fold yoga in which the first two Yamas and Niyamas are nothing but a set of code of conduct. In fact, entire effort in Upāsanā, Prapatti, and Gurūpaśātti etc deal with the code of conduct at different levels.

We also find a set of code of conduct somewhat similar to Śaṅkara’s concept of code of conduct such as śama. It is restraining of the manas from things other than Vedānta). Dama is turning back or withdrawal of external senses from things other than the objective of the Vedāntic study. Uparati is the continuation of abstention from what is other than such study when they are thus withdrawn. Titikṣā is the ability to bear the influence of opposite pairs, like pleasure and pain, heat and cold etc. Samādhana is bringing the mind under control for the study of Vedānta etc. Śraddhā - it is faith in the teaching of Vedānta as taught by the preceptor as subordinate to the true knowledge. Once the aspirant is well equipped with above-mentioned requirements, he would be able to concentrate well and realize the true nature of the self. For the purification of mind and better concentration even the purity of food (sāttvika food) is essential. However, if in certain circumstances life is in danger then an aspirant can have the food which he would not have taken in a normal condition in any case. In day today life, sacrifice as Āśrama duty which may lead one to heaven or help in gaining knowledge is encouraged by Nimbārka. The practice of Brahmacharya and japa of mantras,
silence, and meditation is highly recommended by Nimbārka as part of the code of conduct. In fact, in above-mentioned code of conduct, the first five practices (śāma to śraddhā) sound similar to that of the code of conduct mentioned by Śaṅkara. Here, everything sounds quite well except the concept of sacrifice. Because, the very term sacrifice itself shows some kind of violence; violence and killing are intrinsically immoral and unethical. How can it be taken as part of code of conduct then? Where there is violence, one cannot think of calmness and purity of mind. There would be guilt feeling and restlessness of mind and heart.  

We observe six phases in self-surrender, which could be seen as part of code of conduct which helps an aspirant to shape and sharpen his spiritual life. They are as follows: (a) Resolve to cherish love for all, as all animate and inanimate beings constitute His body. (b) Abstaining from hostility to Him. It means abandonment of all evil ways and enmity to others. For, indulgence in these, are really offences against Him. (c) Faith—it is the strong conviction that God, the refuge of all, will protect the devotee. Seeking His protection means maintenance of an attitude of prayerfulness for it. (d) Choosing Him as one's shelter. (e) Entrusting oneself, one's near and dear ones, possession etc., to Him and throwing one's burdens one's 'I and mine' on Him. (f) Humility—it consists in absence of pride and the conceit of agency and the readiness to submit unperturbed to misfortune or failure, accepting it as the Divine will. All the above-mentioned are requirement for complete self-surrender.  

5.2.2. Meditation (Upāsanā)  

The term upāsanā means meditation being the form of contemplation. One should meditate on one's own self on one's real and essential self free from all sins and imperfections. He should meditate on the Lord as his own self. One should meditate either on the self as it is during the stage of bondage, not on any symbol. The best kind of meditation is the meditation on the self as one with the Lord (abhedopāsanā). Whenever the Lord is meditated on, He must be meditated on as possessed of the essential qualities of truth, knowledge, bliss, being soul of all, having true desire, non-grossness, non-atomicity and the rest-which pertain to His very nature.
There are two paths to liberation and one of them is jhānayoga, the path of knowledge, in which meditation forms the important factor. It is meant for those who have knowledge of the Vedas and the power of meditation. It consists in the practice of (śravaṇa, manana, and nididhyāsana) hearing the truth as revealed in the Upaniṣads and reflecting and meditating on it for the immediate experience of Brahman through His grace.

Brahman should be meditated on as the supreme self ensouling oneself and as one’s source and inner controller. The aspirant should meditate on his inner self as part of Brahman both different from Him and as inseparable from Him. This is the real nature of the self. The experience of this real nature of the self is different from that of the self of his ignorance, which is body based.31

There are three preliminaries called śravaṇa, manana, and nididhyāsana which are essential for meditation. One should avoid all the worldly pleasures and their causes, and should hear of the Lord and His attributes, think of Him and His attributes, and meditate upon Him and His attributes. Meditation is not a casual practice but one should do it regularly and repeatedly. Meditating upon the Lord, one should always bear in mind that one thinks of Him (Lord) as one’s own self with which he is related as the amśa and amśī. The concentration and firmness of the manas is very essential in meditation. Whenever mind becomes firm one should practice meditation and there is no fixed time for it. However, it depends on calmness and firmness of mind. This practicing of meditation should continue without any break till the end of one’s own life or till the highest end is achieved. Through constant practice of meditation, one attains true knowledge, or supreme love for the Lord. He becomes unaffected by sins, accruing from the kriyamāṇa, in future, like a lotus leaf unaffected by water.32

Here, unless an aspirant comes into the shelter of God, he cannot be liberated. The moment he takes shelter in the divine, he receives His grace and grows more and more in love and devotion of divine. The more he gets attached to divine he automatically gets detached to the worldly things. It is due to deep love and strong devotion that one gets knowledge and vision of God and by assimilating goodness of God jīva gets rid of all afflictions and gets liberated. Here we find that meditation and devotion in the form of faith and love woven together which end in gracefulness and liberation.
(a) Bhakti:

Bhakti means the service of God with body, speech, and mind. An aspirant for devotion must make God the supreme end of life without any condition or desire for fruits of actions. Bhakti ends in complete self-surrender which generates knowledge by the grace of God. An important part of the practice of devotion is self-surrender. Dedication of oneself, along with one’s dependents and belongings, to God is the central feature of self-surrender. It evokes God’s grace and leads the aspirant to the Supreme Status.

There are two stages of Bhakti called preparatory and final level. The performance of one’s duties without any personal desire and as an offering to God is the principal part of preparatory Bhakti. Worship of the Divine images, visit to holy places, study of scripture and devotional literature, repetition of the Divine name, Participation in Bhajan and above all, association with holy men, are some of the means for helping the growth of the infant plant of devotion. The end phase of devotion is the passionate and undeviating love of God. In the case of one who has attained this state, the mind naturally and effortlessly engages itself with the qualities and forms of the divine. There is uninterrupted recollection and absorption, and it brings the knowledge of the spiritual nature of the self and its relation with the Divine.

(b) Prapatti:

Prapatti means complete resignation or self surrender to the Lord. Self surrender consists in dedication of oneself with one’s dependents and property to the Lord. It is one of the most effective means of liberation. Here with full śraddhā and faith one throws himself completely on the mercy of the Lord. The object of prapatti is the Lord Kṛṣṇa alone who is ever gracious to one who takes refuge in Him. He never abandons His devotee, He protects him and finally leads him to mokṣa. There are six limbs of prapatti as follows.

(a) Anukālasya samkalpah: Here one becomes convinced of the great truth that everyone and everything, (even a blade of grass) is the body of the Lord and as such deserves respect. One with this thought and emotion in mind develops good will and friendliness to all.
(b) Pratikūlasya varjanam: It is refraining from all violence, malice, backbiting, falsehood etc which is just opposite to the above mentioned spirit of good will and friendship.

(c) Rakṣisyatīviśvāsaḥ: It is strong faith in the protection of the Lord.

(d) Gotṛtvavarnam: It is praying to the Lord for protection being aware of the fact that the Lord does not release any one who does not pray to Him, on the contrary, is averse to Him. Otherwise, there would result universal release.

(e) Kārpanyam: It is discarding all false pride and sense of ego i.e. assuming an attitude of utter humility.

(f) Ātmanikṣepaḥ: It is complete entrusting of one's own self and whatever belongs to one's self to the Lord, being convinced, that such a complete resignation of the 'I' and the 'mine' to the Lord alone induces the mercy and grace of the Lord.

(c) Gurūpasatti: It means offering one's self together with whatever belongs to one's self to the Lord through the Gurū. Gurūpasatti, as the name implies, means complete self surrender to a Gurū or spiritual preceptor, thus, to the Lord Himself. The Gurū is the intermediary between the jīva and the Lord. Gurūpasatti is the best of all sādhanās, involving, as it does, every other means, - karma, vidyā, and upāsanā. Thus, obeying the commands of the Gurū is following the path of karma (karmayoga); knowing one's self as having the Gurū for his essence (tadātmaka) is following the path of knowledge (jñānayoga), and being devoted to the Gurū is following the path of devotion (Bhaktiyoga). Gurūpasatti, further, involves the eight-fold yoga (Āṣṭāṅgyoga) which is regarded as a means to a direct vision of the Lord, viz. Yama, niyama, asana, Prāṇayāma, pratyāhārā, dhāraṇā, dhyāna, and Samādhi.
5.2.3. Knowledge

In the system of Nimbārka vidyā means not mere ‘knowledge’ but ‘meditative knowledge’, i.e. knowledge ending in meditation. In fact knowledge and meditation are interconnected: knowledge ends in meditation while meditation is based on knowledge.37

According to Nimbārka the performance of actions of various Āśramas, mantra japa, and sacrifice etc. are very helpful in attaining true knowledge by the purification of one’s inner self. For example, the necessity of having a horse is for going to some other place, but when one has reached that place, then he does not require the horse any more but he continues to keep the horse. Similarly, acts of sacrifice, gift, and penance should not be given up. They should be continued because they purify the mind and inner self.38

When meditation matures, the supreme devotion in the form of constant recollection of Brahman, dawns on the self. In the state of ignorance, the attributive knowledge of the jīva is in a shrunken state due to the load of karma adhering to the jīva. When by the Lord’s grace the jīva’s identification with prakṛti is destroyed, the jīva develops its intrinsic knowledge as both one and different from Brahman. This is the state of liberation.

(a) Effect of Knowledge or Jñāna:

The attainment of true knowledge leads to liberation. The person who has attained the true knowledge, his prārabdha -karma gets exhausted by the attainment of knowledge. He is liberated by the very fall of his body.39 “Just as soft fibres of the Isika reed would burn when thrown into fire, in the same manner, are burnt the evils of one who has attained true knowledge.”40 ‘The affect of all the past actions perish, when He who is the Highest is seen’.41 Just as, the past and future effects of evil deeds done, several births are made ineffective by vidyā, in the same manner, the future births do not cling to the one who has attained vidyā or knowledge. One who has realized the true knowledge goes across both the merit and the demerit. He shakes off both merit and demerit. Both these are equally opposed to liberation. Hence, when one becomes free from these and body falls down as dead, one gets liberation.42
5.2.4. Conclusion:

The concept of bhedabheda in the philosophy of Nimbarka where he has shown the similarity as well as difference between jiva, Jagat, and Brahman are well appreciated. In fact, there is always difference at practical level between cause and effect. However, when we deal at the metaphysical level and from paramarthika point of view then Brahman and the real self is one and the same.

Nimbarka has put forward his thoughts in a very practical way and has given place to knowledge and Bhakti both in his philosophy. It is faith, devotion, and the grace of God, which have been highlighted for the attainment of final goal of an aspirant. His philosophy in relation to the code of conduct, meditation, and knowledge etc. are social, spiritual, and down to earth where he brings together the people of various strata without any distinction and shows assurance of liberation for all through Bhakti or upasana and there is no distinction of any sort here.

Nimbarka deals and emphasizes on Aśrama karma but what about the person who does not belong to any Aśrama such as widower and those who became life long Brahmachāryas. Is there any special scheme in the philosophy of Nimbarka? Nimbarka while dealing with Bhakti gives a very unique place for Gurū in the process of Gurūpāsati. It is very practical approach in spiritual progress of a person especially one who is weak and intellectually not so well to do.

We see in the philosophy of Nimbarka that though the ignorance is the cause of bondage, finally it is God Himself who is the cause of bondage and liberation. If it is so then where is human freedom and responsibility? Again there can be question raised on the very concept of code of conduct and ethics and morality etc. If God Himself is responsible for everything then what is the use of ethics and morality? Though this sort of question could come up. We do need code of conduct, ethics, and morality from practical point of view to deal in this conventional world. Nimbarka has given room for jñāna, Bhakti, and karma in his philosophy making the system open for all in all circumstances.
PART THREE

The Code of conduct, meditation and Intuition or Knowledge in Šudhādvaita system of Vallabhācārya

Introduction:

Vallabha offers a theistic interpretation of Vedānta. It differs from Śankara and Rāmānuja. His view is known as Šudhādvaita or pure non-dualism. For him whole world is real and is subtly Brahman. The individual souls and the inanimate world are in essence one with Brahman. God is the creator and controller of everything and nothing is māyā but real. God is Saguna with qualities of Sat, Cit, and Ananda. When the ānanda of Brahman is obscured, we have the jīva. Though, its production is only a manifestation, it is real and eternal as Brahman.

When the soul attains release, it rediscovers its suppressed qualities and becomes one with God. The inanimate world too is filled with Brahman. In it the two qualities of Brahman, knowledge and bliss, are obscured, and what remains is pure sattva existence. The world is eternal because it comes from and goes back to Brahman. The creation and destruction of the world is due to the power or śakti of Brahman. Vallabha looks upon God as the whole and an individual as part of that whole. As the individual is of identical essence with God, there is no real difference between the two. The individual soul is not the supreme, clouded by the force of avidyā, but is itself Brahman, with one attribute rendered imperceptible. The soul is both, a doer and enjoyer. It is atomic in size, though pervading the whole body by its quality of intelligence, even as sandal-wood makes its presence felt where it does not exist, by scent.41

5.3.1. The Code of Conduct

The aspirants are free to perform their actions and with full freedom they are expected to conduct themselves according to teachings of Vedas. Finally, God checks the freedom of human person. Vallabha deprecated all kinds of self mortification. The body is the temple of God and there is no meaning in attempting to destroy it. Karma precedes knowledge of the supreme, and is present even when this knowledge is gained. The liberated performs all karmas.44
Avoidance of evil, performance of good deeds and practice of spiritual discipline are there. But, the devotee accepts the idea that even the performance of good and evil deeds is dependent on the wish of the Lord. In fact, it does not mean moral indifference and spiritual lethargy but it wants man to understand that the attainment of the infinite Puruṣottama is not the fruit of man's moral and spiritual efforts. These can help one to attain Him only partially. Here, good and bad, everything depends on God. He alone decides everything for all. It creates some confusion in relation to human freedom of will and ethical responsibility. If everything is decided by God, even bondage and liberation depends on Him then where is the place for code of conduct and ethical behaviour? I feel man is used like any other object without any serious reasoning and responsibility.

### 5.3.2. Meditation or Bhakti (Pustimarga)

Vallabhaçārya preaches two devotional courses: course of śarana (refuge) and course of samarpana (dedication or complete surrender). Whether one follows the course of śarana or the course of samarpana, he necessarily requires attributes of viveka, dhairya, and staunch Āśraya.

The spontaneous expression of Bhakti is the service of the Lord with the feeling that one is His Dāsa or servant, and the purpose of one’s existence is His service. This service has to be done at the three levels of mind (feeling that one is the servant of the Lord), body and speech. Mental service could be attitude of intimate relationship, continuous remembrance, self dedication and the extension of devotion to service with body and wealth is very significant. Dāsyā or service is the expression of love, and that word may be used to indicate the role of love in all forms.

The practice of seva, both in its physical and mental aspects, brings devotion to maturity when it takes the form of āsakti or intense attachment to God. It creates proportionate detachment from worldly objects and worldly relations. When āsakti reaches to its climax, the soul develops an attitude of seeing God in everything. As a result, devotee experiences God’s own delight in Himself and in all things.
The soul is now one with God, not in the sense of losing his individuality in *Brahman* as in Śaṅkara’s school, but in which a lover becomes absolutely united with the beloved without losing his identity.

*Bhakti* is the chief means of liberation, though *jñāna* is also useful. The *jīva* in bondage cannot attain liberation except through the grace of God. All sins are put away if we have true faith in God. Vallabha considers the body as the temple of God and stresses that there is no meaning in attempting to destroy it. Therefore, he denounces all kinds of self-mortification. *Karma* precedes knowledge of the Supreme and remains present even when this knowledge is gained. The liberated performs all *karmas*. The highest goal is not *mukti* or liberation, but rather eternal service ofKrṣṇā. Vallabha emphasizes on life of unqualified love and devotion to God.\(^{48}\) Here meditation and *Bhakti* go hand in hand in philosophy of Vallabha.

In *bhakti*, there is also place for image worship but it is not *pūjā* as in temple but *seva* or non-ritualistic service of the real presence manifest in the image. It is accepted that the faith and loving adoration offered for generations, adds to the Divine presence in the image. Thus the *śrīmārti* is in Himself Divine and not a mere symbol of God, and worship offered is not a symbolic worship but the loving reception and care of a most honoured and beloved one.\(^{49}\)

5.3.2.1. **Types of bhakti:** There are two types of *Bhakti* according to Vallabha.\(^{50}\)

(i) *Maryādābhakti*: In *maryādābhakti* an aspirant desires and hopes for the fruit or result of *bhakti*. Here, *karma*, *jñāna*, and *bhakti* all three are included in practice for the sake of liberation. By *maryādābhakti* one experiences the closeness of God.

(ii) *Puṣṭibhakti*\(^{51}\) *Puṣti* or *Poṣana* does not refer to literal sense of the nourishment of the body. It indicates the special spiritual nourishment that the *jīva* receives in the form of the grace of God. There is no condition for the grace of God. The *jīva* on whom the choice of god falls is called *Puṣti* or the divinely nourished soul. He is the one accepted by the Lord as His own. The sign of such *jīva* is that which is innately and unconditionally in love and attached to the Lord. The love is not something stimulated by external
conditions, but a reflection from the soul of the light of divine favor that has fallen on him.

In Puṣṭibhakti aspirant does not desire or hope for the fruit or result of bhakti. It is purely oriented towards the love and devotion towards God. There is no desire other than being united with God. One attains liberation and union with Purusottama or God by the grace of God he receives through true devotion. By the practice of Puṣṭibhakti, one frees oneself of all the affliction (kleśa) of the world. This is the easiest path to liberation. In Puṣṭibhakti, there is no distinction based on varṇa, gender and region etc. Anyone who is devoted will be liberated.⁵²

There are mainly three rewards of Bhakti and worship. They are Alaukikasamartha (transcendent power), sāyujya (absorption), and sevopayogi-deha Vaikunthadīśu (a body fit for worship in vaikuntha). An aspirant also rids himself of three types of hindrances such as udvega (anxiety), pratibandha (obstacle), and bhoga (gratification) in this world.⁵³

5.3.3. Conclusion:

Here, the philosophical approach of Vallabha is endearing for the spiritual well being of all. Due to the aspects of faith, devotion and the grace it wins the devotees.

Vallabha’s position of Śūdhādvaitavāda could be appreciated at a practical level. The universe of souls and matter (jāda jīva prapañca) is as real as Brahmaṇa. If it is contended that the whole universe is unreal, the creator of such a universe will not be a master mind, but will be like a magician. The unreality of the universe militates against the omnipotence of the Lord.

When he shows the attitude of non-difference between Brahmaṇa, jīva and Jagat, there lies the real problem. One need not deny closeness but cannot accept real non-difference or union between Brahmaṇa and jīva. If one accepts this view then where is the difference between the cause and effect? He shows full dependency on God for the existence of jīva and Jagat. Here cause (creator-god) and effect (creation- jīva and Jagat) cannot be one and the same. On the contrary, one sees that the effect cannot be different from the cause. Therefore, there has to be a real existence in relation to reality, which is the cause. For example, if a mango is the cause of another mango then the effect would be another mango and not an

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apple. Thus, one can undoubtedly say that there can be similarity between the cause and effect. However, absolute oneness cannot be accepted in any case. For example, one may be the cause of one’s shadow, and shadow may be real because it depends on his existence. But, the reality here is not one and the same. Here there is closeness as well as similarity also, but far from absolute oneness in any case.

It is expressed while dealing with Bhakti that the faith and loving adoration offered for generations adds to the Divine presence in the image. Thus, the Śrīmārti is in itself Divine and not a mere symbol of God, and worship offered is not a symbolic worship but the loving reception and care of a most honoured and beloved one. But how can image itself be real and divine? If it is so then any devotee can multiply or create his own god through constant practice. Here another question arises. Can a finite human create infinite and supreme divinity? Here one may agree with devotion, but it goes beyond human finitude. It seems to be dogmatic and over emotional than rational.

The Puruşottama, the full Sat-Cit-Ānanda, is attained only by the one whom God lifts up. It depends on His choice, and He is absolutely free. The recipient of grace may sometimes be a saint or a sinner. Here the aspect of faith is predominant. God has the upper hand in liberation, whereas secondary place is given to the human effort in the form of morality and ethics. Even if God is gracious, from a sinner he will expect certain amount of perfection or a desire to give up his evil ways by practicing certain code of conduct. This amounts to show that liberation is not one way traffic. However, Vallabha seems advocate one-way traffic by highlighting will and grace of God.

The way of grace, is symbolized by a ceremony called Brahmaṣaṁbandha, by which the jīva surrenders himself completely to God, gets absolution for all his past sins, and starts new life of complete dependence on Divine grace. For example, “Just as the dirty waters of drains and small streams become one with the holy river Ganges, on their mingling with it the dirt disappear, so do the sins of those who surrender themselves to God get washed away when they get united with God.”54
PART FOUR

The Code of conduct, meditation and Intuition or knowledge in Unqualified Dualism of Madhvācārya

Introduction:

Madhva stands for unqualified dualism and insists on the five great distinction of God and the individual soul, God and matter, the individual soul and matter, one soul and another, and one part of matter and another. Madhva rejects all attempts to the world of souls and nature to a mere illusion or an emanation of God, and sets forth an absolute dualism. Here God is original and jīva is His reflection. Here characterization of Reality as a duality of one independent Being and of being Dependent but coexisting with Him. (Here reflection is an upādhi (adjunct) as the medium) With the destruction of the upādhi, the jīva, which is a reflection in it, will be destroyed.

The expression pratibimba (reflection) is used in a symbolic and metaphysical sense. It shows only that jīvas are absolutely dependent entities sharing some of the characteristics of their originalĪśvara. A reflection has no existence apart from its original. Jīva being consciousness of Supreme and as an experiencer of misery-marked and turbid drop of joy, he is also sharer of the overflowing Bliss of Brahman. It is due to influence of karma the blissful nature is shrunked. The capacity develops in liberation but even in liberation there is no equality with Brahman. An aspirant can have knowledge and bliss only according to his inherent capacity, and therefore every Jīva retains his difference from every other Jīva and Īśvara.

Madhva regards the distinction between Brahman and Jīva as real. According to him it is wrong to think that the jīva and Brahman are non-different in release and different in saṃsāra, since two different things cannot at any time become non-different or vice versa. The individual soul is dependent (paratantra) on God, since it is unable to exist without the energizing support of the universal spirit. Though, dependent on Brahman, the jīvas are essentially active agents and have responsibilities to bear. Since, it is of limited power, depending, as it does, on the guidance of the Lord, the soul is not an absolute agent. The jīva is said to be of
atomic size as distinct from Brahman who is all pervading. The soul is by nature blissful, though it is subject to pain and suffering, on account of its connection with material bodies due to its past karma. So long as it is not freed from its impurities, it wanders about in changing forms of existence. The qualities like bliss become manifest at the time of release. According to Madhva, even at the time of liberation, there is no perfect union or identity between Brahman and individual soul. It only gains some similar qualities of God.

5.4.1. The Code of conduct

A sound moral life is prerequisite for liberation. The moral rules are to be obeyed and obligations fulfilled without any desire or claim for fruit. Our conduct cannot by itself lead us to freedom. God must co-operate. The supreme is non-manifested cannot be made manifest by the force of our efforts.

Dispassion or Vairāgya is the first step or primary requisite of a true aspirant. The spirit of detachment and freedom from passions is indeed the most valuable discipline and preparation for a life of genuine goodness and spirituality. It contains the essence of spiritual life. Attachment to sensuous life is the greatest impediment for devotion to God. One cannot serve two masters at a time. One must choose sooner or later either of the two. Attachment to the flesh includes the misplaced notion of possession and independence. Madhva demands a higher degree of moral perfection from the true devotee of god. There can not be true development in spiritual life of an aspirant without a real sense of moral purity, sincerity of purpose and detachment to worldly pleasures. True devotion to God would be impossible without the cultivation of natural distaste for the pleasure of the world. Madhva, as the pre-requisite to devotion and knowledge emphasizes a complete control of the passions of the flesh, calmness of mind, impartiality of conduct and love of God.

The special features of Madhva's scheme of ethics relate to the following points: (a) vicāra or reasoned thought and philosophic inquiry in the scheme of sādhanā. (b) reasoned thought of karma in the triple scheme of karma, Bhakti, and Jñāna mārga. (c) The nature and importance of Bhakti and upāsanā. (d) The importance of Aparokṣanjñāna as the final means of liberation. (e) The ethical responsibilities of the Aparokṣanjñānins.
Madhva maintains that the future is unpredictable. The diversity of human nature is such that we cannot shut our eyes to it, or squeeze everyone into the same mould. An ethical system would be of no use if people are indifferent to it or are not prepared to abide by it. Some are bound to look askance at the most perfect system of ethics or scoff at it. The existence of professional liars does not invalidate the noble commandment of Christ and the Upanisads, to speak truth. Each one is rewarded according to his own diserving. As a man and woman are not machine-made they will and must differ from one another in most minute respects. Difference of character and temperament is the law of nature. Experience shows that all men are not moved by the same considerations or values of ethical conduct. According to Madhva, there is no need for the philosopher to be a moral Alchemist and seek to convert base metals into gold. As a practical philosopher, Madhva refuses to agree with the idea of sarvamukti. Man will be served according to his desert, neither more, no less. Mukti is not a prize for good conduct to be conferred from without. It is nothing but realization of our being by each one of us. Any thorough going theory of man’s spiritual destiny must therefore take note of the irreducible distinctions of human nature and formulate a theory that would cover the diverse aspects of its character as a whole.

5.4.1.1. Sadhana: karma and jhana

Though God’s grace is the ultimate cause of liberation, the Jiva has to make himself eligible for it by strong aspiration and prolonged and assiduous sadhana or spiritual practice. The first stage of sadhana is the performance of one’s duties and other noble works without any desire and as offering to God. Such discipline of work is called niskama-karma. The spiritual effort is strengthened by unselfish action, as it makes the person less self-centered and more established in non-attachment. Karma of the Gitā type is integral with jhāna and very potent spiritual discipline. However, it is not an end in itself.

5.4.2. Meditation/ contemplation

In the philosophy of Madhva, there is a great importance of meditation and contemplation. In fact, meditation is not seen separately from Bhakti in Madhva’s
philosophy. The code of conduct, knowledge, Meditation/dhyāna, and Bhakti all go hand in hand in this particular system of philosophy.

The dawn of pakva-bhakti or ripe devotion enables the aspirant to practice nididhyāsana or continuous meditation on his being only a reflection (pratibimba) of God (bīnba), having no independent existence or power apart from Him.

The meditation can be done in three ways according to the competency of the aspirant. The very ordinary person can meditate on Him externally, in an image. The aspirant of middle type can meditate within himself whereas, the best aspirants everywhere. The continuous meditation attenuates the ignorance, but the enlightenment he gets is still a mental construct. It is only when God finally bestows His grace that avidya is entirely dissipated and even the mental construct is replaced by the real presence of God. The aspirant is face to face with God, His bīnba. He realizes himself as an entirely dependent existence (pratibimba), participating in a modicum of His nature as existence, consciousness and bliss. Such attainment is called aparokṣa or immediate experience.\(^1\)

There are three preliminaries to contemplation such as śravana, manana, and nididhyāsana. Śravana - it is defined as the acquisition of the sense of the sacred text under the instruction of competent teacher. It dispels ignorance about the subject-matter. Manana- is the systematic employment of the canon of textual interpretation and logical examination with a view to arriving at a firm conviction that the final interpretation of the śastra thus arrived at, is alone the correct and unimpeachable one. Manana removes doubts (saṁśaya), and misapprehension (viparyaya) and confirms the true import of the śastra (Parokṣattvaniścaya). Finally nididhyāsana or dhyāna (continuous meditation) leads to direct realization.\(^2\) These three, according to Madhva, represent the authoritarian, critical and contemplative approach to philosophical truth. Madhva places nididhyāsana higher than the śravana and manana, because they just help to establish the nature of the philosophical truth. Then comes prolonged meditation of particular attributes of divinity, which is known as upāsanā.

In fact, in meditation of Madhva there is no place for symbol or pratikopāsanā because he feels that it will be a visual sanction of idolatry. Therefore, he proposes the meditation on Brahmān and its attributes. A devotee may meditate
on Brahman and concentrate on one or more attributes of divinity (infinitude, bliss etc) according to his spiritual fitness and capacity.  

5.4.2.1. Bhakti:

Bhakti is defined a kind of attachment to the Lord based on a complete understanding of the supremacy of the Lord, which transcends the love of one’s own self and possessions. Moreover, it remains unshaken in death and in difficulty. Such devotion is not born out of ignorance but through detachment and jñāna.

Spiritual fulfillment is ultimately reached through Bhakti, which alone can attract to oneself the grace of God the proximate cause of salvation. “Bhakti is that continuous flow of the heart that has been liquefied by love towards God, which is preceded by a deep understanding of the majesty, omnipotence and omniscience of the one Independent Entity on whom all the universe depends and has its being, which is unshakably rooted in the object of love, and which cherishes Him as the most supreme value.”

Madhva’s conception of Bhakti avoids emotional excesses and identifications and remains at its exalted intellectual and spiritual level of firm philosophic devotion to supreme Lord of the universe who is to be worshipped with loving attachment as the bimba of all pratibimba (jivas). According to Madhva, Bhakti is in the essence an ineffable blending of the emotion and the intellect.

So in proper Bhakti there is combination of love and knowledge. The final stage of Bhakti is the direct realization (Aparokṣajñāna) which wins the absolute grace of God and the devotee experiences the bliss by establishing true and close relationship with God. Bhakti is nothing but it is strong sense of love of God at all costs. It is only such love that is capable of revealing to the soul his true relation to God, as His pratibimba. The grace of the Lord and the merit of the soul both are essential for liberation. On the part of the soul he has to strive hard and achieve the jñāna, for that performance of scripture oriented duties and intense devotion to the Lord are prescribed.

Madhva has given an important place of Incarnation in his Bhakti. According to Madhva all incarnation is the expression of God’s entire nature. In some, more divine attitudes are manifested and in some less. The Supreme Being
can be adored in and through them. They are, therefore, objects of meditation (upāsanā) for all time."

5.4.3. Intuition/ Aparokṣa- jñāna

A virtuous life helps us to win insight into truth. We can gain true knowledge from a study of the Vedas, which must be carried out under the guidance of a proper teacher, because each individual has in him the capacity for the perception of a particular aspect of Brahman.

This is the highest stage, in which the yogi or sādhaka is face to face with the object of his meditation and intuits the Divine form which is his archetype (bimba). This is technically termed Bimbaparokṣa, Which is highest form of spiritual perception, without which no one can hope to be released. It is the fulfillment of all sādhanā. It is what is known as Aparokṣajñāna, the penultimate state of final release.

The final stage of Bhakti is Aparokṣajñāna reveals the absolute dependence of the Jīva, who is the pratibimba or reflection of God, the bimba or the Original. It removes the avidyā of the Jīva in both its aspects – Svarūpacchadikā or what hides the Jīva’s intrinsic nature as consciousness and bliss, and Paramacchadikā or what hides from him his real relationship to Brahman as one of dependence.

Aparokṣajñāna, is something which, by its very nature, defies any more explicit description. It is to be experienced and felt. Words are inadequate to describe it. It is a flash like revelation of the supreme, at the fruition of a long and arduous process of sravana, manana and nididhyāsana, in the fullness of absolute self surrendering devotion to God, as our bimba. It is He, that must choose to reveal Himself pleased by the hungering love of the soul. The pratibimba (soul) must turn in and seek and see his bimba in himself. Such direct perception of God is attainable only when the mind is specially attuned to the supreme by full discipline of śravana, manana and nididhyāsana.

In the act of meditation the soul can by divine grace arrive at a direct intuitive realization of God (Aparokṣajñāna). When the soul has this vision, as steady as the sun and not merely as swift as lightening, its fetters fall off and it is said to be redeemed. It is not possible without the grace of God. It is admitted that
the grace of the Lord is in proportion to the intensity of one’s devotion. God reveals Himself when pleased with our devotion. The grace of God responds to the faith of worshipper. As the part of devotion rites and sacrifice as well as pilgrimage, are recommended. Animal sacrifice are forbidden, and those who undertake sacrifice are called upon to substitute animals made of flour for the living ones.

The one who has the vision of the truth but not the grace of God necessary to effect freedom, continues to live in the flesh. This is jivanmukti, but complete freedom can be achieved only through the grace of God. At the time of liberation there is fellowship with God and not identification with him. In the state of freedom, we have the absence of pain as well as the presence of positive enjoyment but soul is not capable of rising into equality with God. Soul is entitled only to serve him. After immediate experience and the end of prārabdha, there is karma-nāśa or the destruction of the effects of karma. It is followed by Utkranti, which means death of the gross body, prepared for the abandonment of the subtle body, which has been the subtle medium clothed in which the Jīva has been passing through the transmigratory cycles.

5.4.4. Conclusion:

Madhva is keen on establishing the Reality of the Universe. It is his infinite faith in an all powerful Lord that makes him undertake the dialectical warfare against the Vedāntin’s doctrine of māyā. Madhva believes in the grace of God. According to him, the grace of God is more important than the knowledge for the final liberation of the self. Even when he talks about the liberation, he strongly reiterates that even after release there cannot be real identity or union between self and God but could only be the closeness between the two.

Madhva like some other Vedāntins gives much importance to the code of conduct for the purification of mind and self, for better concentration in contemplation. He gives importance to śravaṇa, manana, and nididhyāsana in meditation like Śaṅkara but he rejects the symbolic meditation and absolute union with Brahman or God. He gives due importance to knowledge, but emphasizes on the grace of God for final liberation.
According to comprehensive scheme, the spiritual discipline is the very foundation of all spiritual progress and attainment of higher good. A complete theory of the universe must necessarily include ethical judgments on the value or worthlessness of objects and thereby secure an influence over our conduct.

The way he presents his path of devotion is praiseworthy in which he projects a kind of sense of equality through devotion. As we know that the path of knowledge was not fitting elsewhere for all because of the caste and gender distinction. There is no such distinction in the path of devotion. What is essential is the true faith and with that faith and devotion, one can attain liberation.

Madhva's scheme of bhakti is a well balanced complex of emotional and intellectual love. He therefore, holds that love of God should be preceded by a knowledge of His cosmic majesty and excellence, and by instruction from a competent teacher of the doctrine of the Jīva’s nature as a reflection (Pratibimba) of God, who is his Originator. This does not however rule out, an intimate and ecstatic love of Him. Only that such love should not degenerate into rabid sentimentalism or respectably clothed-eroticism.

The grace of the Lord and the merit of the soul both are essential for liberation. The soul has to strive hard and achieve the jñāna, by performing prescribed scripture oriented duties and offering intense devotion to the Lord.

5.4.5. Role of the Code of Conduct, Meditation and Knowledge/

Intuition:

Purity (internal and external) is the precondition for meditation and intuition. The code of conduct is essential for the maintenance of self discipline and purification of mind by the control of senses etc. Here, the Āśrama karma has been highlighted basically to maintain the self discipline at various stages of life. Once mind and body along with the senses are calmed then one can easily concentrate and meditate well. In fact, meditation and code of conduct both contribute very much towards the attainment of jñāna and final goal of life i.e. liberation.

Above mentioned four systems include karma, bhakti, and jñāna at different stages of meditation. Hence, it is not only reflection or mental concentration but meditation consists of contemplation as well as action. When it deals with Bhakti,
it is not blind devotion, but a devotion with a vision of knowledge. Therefore, all three aspects called karma, jñāna and bhakti are woven together in meditation.

With the long and continued practice of moral discipline, practice of detachment through discriminative knowledge combined with work, and with practice of dhyāna (concentration) and upāsanā (continuous thought of God), the mind of the aspirant gets purified and develops the power to perceive Divine as his inner self. In fact, all the three aspects (code of conduct, meditation, and intuition) taken separately, their contribution remains partial. However, when all three are combined, it leads to the absolute fulfillment of one’s final goal of life.

It is not karma and jñāna but the grace of God receives unique and important place. It can convince an ordinary man of faith. One can observe that the whole aspect of spiritual growth and liberation is not one sided, but a combination of human effort as well as the redemptive grace of God. One can even site in the above-mentioned systems a combination of monkey-way and cat-way concept of spiritual growth and liberation.

This system is practical and simple where the code of conduct, meditation and knowledge gain their importance according to time, place, people and situation. Therefore, all are equally important from practical point of view where one is incomplete without the other.

One needs to see the similarities and differences between meditation and devotion and their applications according to time and situation. The code of conduct is the regulation of human actions. Meditation is the regulation of emotive faculty, and knowledge or insight is the regulation of the cognitive, intellectual, and spiritual faculty. Since, Bhakti/devotion is related to emotions, it is comparable mainly with meditation. In both of them there is a regulation of emotions. But in meditation, the goal is purification of mind through detached concentration, and reduction of attachment as a part of it. In devotion, there is no reduction of attachment, but channelization of attachment through love and surrender to God. Concentration is important in both of them; the concentration in devotion is God-centred attachment; but in meditation, detachment from the world is the centre and not necessarily God. Therefore, devotion is more suitable for a common man, who cannot control his emotions.
All the above explanation is important but finally here the grace of God becomes essential in the process of liberation. Knowledge or insight is instrumental that may help one to distinguish between good and evil and live ones life accordingly. Finally, it is the grace of God which is unconditional is essential for liberation.

5.4.6. General conclusion:

When we see all the above mentioned philosophers in the light of kevalādvaita of Śaṅkara, we find that all have emphasized on Saguna Brahman (Brahman with attributes) and somehow refuted the concept of māyā in their philosophy. All Non-kevalādvaitins have given increased importance to the code of conduct for the purity of self without which one can neither concentrate nor can he attain jñāna and grace of God essential for liberation.

All have raised Bhakti to a higher level than the knowledge. In fact, when they deal with Bhakti, they do bring in the aspects of jñāna or knowledge and karma or action but seem to refuse to dwell upon them in detail. Here due to the combination of all three aspects (jñānamārga, karmamārga, and Bhaktimārga) the whole philosophy sounds quite down to earth which can be practiced by all without any distinction of being intellectually dull or clever, physically strong or weak, and socially low or high. Here the concepts of devotion, prapatti etc. have given a new hope for the people who were rejected due to caste and gender distinctions. From social and spiritual point of view, the practice of devotion and especially, prapatti brings every one on equal footing.

In view of this writer, though all Non-kevalādvaitins slightly differ in their thoughts and practice however, all accept that the complete or absolute union between God/Brahman and individual soul is not possible and it cannot be.

At psychological level these philosophers have contributed quite a lot compared to Śaṅkara. The mind set and emotions are related to the spiritual life of a person. One may agree with the intellectual well being of personality, but life of an individual is not intellect and knowledge alone. There has to be some harmony between intellect, reasoning and practical life.

Many people might have suffered psychologically due to inferiority complex seeing the attitude of other systems where knowledge and caste were
dominating. There could not be any other suffering and even punishment greater than psychological one where people felt dishonoured, rejected, unwanted, isolated, and guilty. The above philosophers gave a psychological strength to all by bringing out the hidden Saguna God, Bhakti, and the grace of God.

Bhaktimarga is reasonable because the goal which one aspires to attain through jñānamarga or knowledge can be attained through Bhakti. In jñānamarga, through the attainment of jñāna one establishes oneself with purity, and when one follows and repeatedly engrosses in divine meditation through devotion then he meets the final goal by gaining the grace and closeness to the divine for which he aspires. By the practice of spiritual method (Bhakti) the form of external objects gradually disappears from the mind, so that eventually the form of divine and its attributes being reflected on a pure mind eradicates completely the forms of external objects. Thus, the goal which one aspires to attain through jñāna can be attained through Bhakti too.

However, knowledge is good and accepted as means to liberation but it is limited to some due to intellectual and social influence. When we look at devotion, though there is involvement of intellect and reasoning, there is some fear of the domination of emotion. This in turn may lead to blind faith and devotion. Therefore, we need to have balance of both. Some of the above-mentioned schools are even ready to accept symbols and images as divine, which seem like the influence of over-emotionalism.

The practice of karmayoga consisting of the performance of nitya and naimittika karmans may bring about ruci or śraddhā. Karmayoga can lead to both the paths of knowledge and the path of devotion. Those aspirant whose mind becomes melted, follow the path of devotion while others develop detachment and follow the path of knowledge.70

This is very common in all above-mentioned schools that there is no possibility of jivanmukti. An aspirant may have Bhakti and jñāna of the highest order, but he is not liberated yet. When the body of such devotee dies, he attains liberation; this writer too holds the similar view, because as long as a person lives, he may have some faulty nature due to his human body, mind, and tendency. In such a condition, how can he be fully liberated? Though, some of them hold the view of oneness with God but still they make difference between Brahma and
liberated soul. Such a view is appreciable, because one cannot be absolutely one with the Brahman (at least at practical level) who is infinite.
End notes:

5 Veerzhinathan,(2009), pp.343-344.
6 ibid, pp.342-343.
7 ibid, pp.342-343.
8 Swami Tapasyānanda, Śrī Ramānuja His Life, Religion &Philosophy,(2000),p.76.
11 ibid, p.77.
12 Veerzhinathan, (2009), p.344.
17 Gitābhāṣya,III.41.; VI.8.
21 Gitābhāṣya, ii.55-61,64-71.
22 ibid, ii.59.
26 Acarya Lalitkrishna Goswami, Śrī Nimbārka Vedānta with explanation of vedāntaparijātasaūrabha, (Samvat 2020), p.11.
28 Madan Mohan Agrawal, Essence of vaisnavism Philosophy of Bhedābheda (1992), pp.54-55.
29 Goswami, (Samvat 2020), pp.176-177.
31 Agrawal,(1992),pp.52-53.
32 Mahamahopadhyaya,(1940,1966), pp.72-75.
34 ibid.
36 ibid, p.55.
37 ibid, p.47.
40 Chāndogya Upaniṣad, v.xxiv.3.
41 Mun Up, ii.ii.8.
42 Brahmaśūtra, iv.i.14.
48 Radhakrishnan, (1923), pp.759-760.
56 ibid, (1923), p. 743.
58 ibid, p. 281.
59 ibid, pp. 271-272.
61 ibid, p. 83.
64 Rao, (1943), p. 89.
66 ibid, p. 85.