ŚRĪ JĪVĀ'S CONCEPTION OF THE
ULTIMATE REALITY
SRĪ JĪVA'S CONCEPTION OF THE ULTIMATE REALITY -
ADVAYAJÑANA-TATTVA

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The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava view as presented in the Sandarbha-works of Śrī Jīva Goswāmin, is that Brahman who is known as the final import of all the scriptures is the non-dual reality of consciousness (Advaya-jñāna), self-conscious and qualified in nature. He is the supreme Lord endowed with inconceivable powers, who modifies Himself through those powers as the universe and the jīvas by His own sweet will. By the virtue of His inconceivable powers again, He maintains His integrity and purity undisturbed. These powers of the Lord and their modifications stand in the relation of identity-in-difference with the Lord. Being the cause (stuff) of actual modifications and effects, these powers of the Lord are also real, and are not false in nature.

Though Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and Śaṅkarite advaita are both in a way monistic systems, or more precisely non-dualistic absolutisms, yet in their respective views of the Absolute Itself, and Its relation to individual souls and physical universe, and in respect of the nature of the individuals and their final liberation, etc., they differ significantly with each other.

The Gauḍīya view is more or less based on a religious and emotional approach to the problems of metaphysics, while Śaṅkarite advaita approach is out and out metaphysical. Hence, while the Gauḍīyas could not sacrifice the values of the personal life in the interest of rigorous logical consistency and of a metaphysics founded on logical rigour and analysis, the
Sāṅkarites would not care even for the highest personal values, if they do not stand the scrutiny of strict logic.

This is evident in their respective conceptions of the Absolute. For Śaṅkara the Absolute cannot be anything else than an undifferenced self-identity (Brahmātman) against which all else stands out as inscrutable appearance.

An Absolute which involves the relation of 'identity-in-difference' is, according to the Śaṅkarites, a case of glaring self-contradiction. Unity of the militating differences, and their abiding in the all-comprehensive Absolute in peace and amity is not only unthinkable, but also logically untenable. One can have unity beyond differences, but certainly not unity of differences which reciprocally exclude one another.

Therefore, according to the Śaṅkarite, there is only one conception of the Absolute that can bear logical scrutiny i.e. the conception of the Absolute as undifferenced unity or self-identity. This will necessarily mean that differences of time or space or of qualities, have no place in the Absolute as the Ultimate Reality. Hence, the absolute must necessarily be a static, immobile, unchanging one.

Śaṅkarites speak of the Absolute as Being devoid of all differences - internal and external (differences of Svagata, Svajñātīya and Vijnātīya).

Thus, the Absolute according to them is bare identity of pure consciousness; the Being-the Absolute, in other words, is
nothing but the consciousness which shines by itself. Against this conception of the Absolute as pure impersonal consciousness, the Gaudīyas inundate the conception of a personal Absolute. The Absolute, according to Gaudīya, cannot be an immobile static being. It is essentially a dynamic Absolute i.e. an ever-active personal Being who has incessant personal relations with finite individuals. Unless the Absolute be a personal Being at once eternal and everchanging in time in the aspect of the world of finite things and beings, it would not be an Absolute at all. Such conception of the Absolute made it necessary for the Gaudīyas to admit Śakti or powers in the Absolute.

The Absolute, according to Gaudīyas is what it is in the exercise of its various powers. Without the conception of such powers or energies in the Absolute, we cannot explain the facts of experience as of the world and the individual souls.

A categorical denial of the world of experience and its differences of time, space, qualities, etc., in the interest of the pre-conceived logic of pure identity, may suit some tempa-ments of Jñāna-yogins, but as an explanation of the facts of experience it is neither a complete philosophy, nor any logic that really counts in life.

Now, we shall deal in detail with the concept of the Reality according to Śrī Jīva Goswāmin who is the chief exponent of the Gauḍīya school.

The concept of the Absolute as he has expounded in his
writings is derived from the Bhāgavata, which according to him, is the highest authority. In the Bhāgavata the supreme Reality has been described as "Jñānam advayam" – as the non-dual principle of consciousness – which the seers speak of as the Ultimate Reality, and which is termed as Brahman, Paramātman and Bhagavat (1).

Since the Bhāgavata is the source of Śrī Jīva's philosophy, and Śrīdhara Svāmin is the most authoritative commentator of the Bhāgavata, Śrī Jīva often quotes and confirms Śrīdhara's commentary. Śrīdhara, in his interpretation of the quoted verse describing the Ultimate Reality, states that enquiry about the Reality is entirely different from the enquiry of "dharma" which involves religious rites and practices. The Ultimate Reality is the principle of knowledge or consciousness. But it is not ordinary knowledge or cognition, or the principle of momentary consciousness upheld by the Vijnānavādins as the ultimate principle.

It is the non-dual principle of consciousness which is called as Brahman by the 'āupaniṣada' or the followers of the Upaniṣada, as Paramātman by the 'Hiranyagarbha', or the worshippers of Hiranyagarbha, and as Bhagavat by the 'svātvata' or the devotees. Śrīdhara refers to bhakti as the means of realising that Ultimate Reality (2). Evidently by the term 'āupaniṣada' Śrīdhara speaks

(1) "Vādanti tat tattva-vidas-tatttām yad jñānam-advayam/ Brahmeti Paramātmeti Bhagavān iti śabdyate"//
(Bhāgavata – I. 2. 11.)

(2) Tacchraddādhānā munayo jñāna-vairāgya-yuktayā/ paśyantyātmani cātmānām bhaktyā śrutāṛhītayā/
(Ibid – I. 2. 12.)
of the jñānins who are the meditators and advocates of nirviśeṣa Brahman, or the Absolute, non-dual and attributeless. By the term Hairāṇyagarbha, he refers to the yogins who meditate on Brahman as the creator and indweller of every thing. Finally by the term svātvata, he speaks of the devotees who regard the supreme Lord with all divine powers and attributes as the highest who is realised through bhakti. Śrī Jīva in his kramasandarbha refers to the commentary of Śrīdhara and states that there is no difference of opinion regarding Tattva or the Ultimate Reality. The upholders of other views commit mistake only with regard to the ‘dharma’ or the qualifying attributes, and not with regard to the ‘dharmi’ or the substantive of the Ultimate Reality (3).

The three sects of aspirants mentioned agree also in their opinions with regard to the nature of the substantive of the Reality which is knowledge as pure consciousness (Jñānām Cidekarupam). Their difference of views concerns only the adjectival attributes. While the svātvatas or the devotees possess a complete view of the divine powers and attributes of the Supreme Reality, the Upaniṣadites and the Yogins lack in their appraisal of the full glory of the Reality — His divine powers and attributes.

This Reality is non-dual in the sense that It does not admit of any difference from any other similar or dissimilar principle independent of It (4). The expression Tattva or Reality indicates

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(3) ‘Dharmini serveśāmahbramāt, dharme eva tu bhramāditiḥ
Kramasandarbha - 1. 2. 11.
(4) Advayatvam cāsyā svayāṃsiddhādārśa-tattvāntarabhāvāt
Ibid - 1. 2. 11; Tattvasandarbha - 119 (c.R.3)
that It is the highest human-end, and so the Reality is also the
nature of eternal supreme bliss. Nothing which is not of the
nature of supreme bliss and eternity can be the highest human-end(5).

The assertion that the Tattva is ādvaya or non-dual con-
veys the idea that It is indivisible and integral, and implies
that everything being its sākti is non-different from It. It is
the ultimate substrate (parama-āśraya) with everything else as
Its powers and energies through which It functions.

Śrī Jīva also draws our attention to the fact that
Śrī Vyāsa the author of the Bhāgavata, while stating that the
Ultimate Reality is termed as Brahma, Paramātman and Bhagavat,
does not state that 'It is also called as 'Jīva'. This shows that
Vyāsa realised the essential difference of the jīva from the
Ultimate Reality.

Now, let us discuss the significance and import of 'Advaya-
jñāna' which is upheld by Śrī Jīva as the Ultimate Reality, as
contrasted with the Śaṅkara's view of 'Advaya-jñāna'.

According to Śaṅkara Brahman is absolutely a homogeneous
unity. There is no internal (svagata) or external (Śvajātiya,
Vijātiya) difference in Brahman. The description of Brahman as
"ekamevādvitiyam" in the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad clearly asserts the
differenceless character of Brahman.

The words "ekameva" exclude svajātiya and svagatabheda,

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(5) Tattvamiti parama-puruṣārthatādyotanāya
paramasukharūpam tasya jñānasya bodhyate/
Kramasandarbha - 1. 2. 11.
while the word 'advitiyam' excludes vijatiyabheda in Brahman. Thus, according to Śaṅkara the Ultimate Reality Brahman is pure consciousness which admits of no difference whatsoever.

The absence of svajātiyabheda in the ultimate principle of consciousness makes it quite different from the principle of consciousness upheld by the Vijñānavādins who hold consciousness to be a series of similar momentary cognitions. Again, absence of Vijātiyabheda in Brahman, or in the unitary principle of consciousness, excludes the dualistic and pluralistic views of consciousness as held by Sāmkhya and Nyāya. Absence of svagatabheda in the consciousness excludes the views of the Rāmānujists and also of the Śrīcaitanyaśtas with regard to the nature of Advayajñāna or the Ultimate Reality. But, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin presents an entirely different account of the absence of the three kinds of bheda which he also admits in the Ultimate Reality of Advayajñāna. According to him, the Ultimate Reality is non-dual not in the sense of being exclusive of all differences, but in the sense of having nothing else like or unlike itself except as dependent on it.

It also follows that this tattva of Advayajñāna is the only self-established (svayam-siddha) independent principle.

Śrī Jīva, though he accepts the absence of svajātiya, Vijātiya and Svagatabheda in the Paratattva just as Śaṅkara does, differs widely from Śaṅkara's view by adding an adjective "svayam-siddha" or 'self-existent' to the three kinds of bhedas or differences.
It means that what is absent in the Paratattva is each of these three kinds of differences as 'svayam-siddha' or self-established (self-existent) independent differences. But, according to Śrī Jīva there exist in the Paratattva all those kinds of differences which are dependent on or subservient to the Reality for their existence. While Śrī Jīva speaks of the Paratattva as Advaya-jñāna, or Cidekarūpa – as pure consciousness, he at the same time speaks of many others both like and unlike the Tattva or Reality as being dependent on the Reality as Its various śakti or powers.

Therefore, the conclusion is that the Ultimate Reality is advaya or non-dual because there is no other self-existent independent conscious or unconscious principle in the Reality. (śvayam-siddha-tādṛśatādṛśa-tattvāntarābhāvāt), though there are in the Reality such conscious and unconscious principles which are dependent on and subservient to the Reality.

The Jīva or the individual self is no doubt a conscious principle similar to It; but jīva is not self-existent in much as much as it is dependent on and subservient to Paramātman as His śakti. Nor is there any other self-existent unconscious or material principle (atādṛśatattva) in the Reality, for all such material objects as the phenomenal world, space, time, etc., are also not independent, but are entirely dependent on and subservient to the Ultimate Reality. In the same way, Rāma, Nārāyaṇa, etc. who are regarded as similar divine forms or manifestations of
Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is regarded as the highest manifestation of the ultimate Reality, do not disturb the non-duality of the Paratattva as having svajātiya bheda or similar difference. Rāma, Mārāyaṇa, etc., though different forms of manifestation of the supreme divinity are no independent conscious principles like Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. They owe their existence to and are dependent on the Lord Kṛṣṇa who assumes different forms of divinity remaining at the same time in His essential form as Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

But it should be understood that these different forms, though one in essential nature, are as real as that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Again, the Advayajñānatattva, a principle of consciousness, is also an all-inclusive personal God. It possesses a body or form constituted of Sat, Cit, and Ānanda (6).

So in this connection there may be another objection whether this Advaya-jñānatattva involves any svagata-bheda or internal difference between His essence and form. The answer is, in the case of an individual being there is indeed an internal difference or Svagatabheda, but in the case of the Ultimate Reality of Advaya-jñāna, or Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is not so. In His case there is no difference whatsoever between His essence and form both being constituted of pure consciousness and bliss. His essence and form being identical, svagatabheda or internal difference is totally

(6) Bhagavat-sandarbha - Page 73; Brahmāsamhitā - 1.
denied in His Divine form.

This homogenity in His Being — of His essence and form—is vindicated by the Brhadārānyaka-texts where it is stated that a lump of salt is nothing but salt inside and outside, so Brahman or Ātman also is nothing but the cream of intelligence and delight. Brahman has neither an inner or an outer region, is condensed experience of all that is (7), and is of the nature of delight. This identity of essence and form both being constituted of saccidānanda condensed has been emphasised in Laghu Bhāgavatāmṛta of Rūpa Gosvāmin where it is stated that the difference conceived in His essence and form is aupacārika or figurative (8).

The Brahma-sūtras (9) also indicate that He is form, and the form is He. Therefore, there is no difference in form and essence within the Absolute. The remarks like — (the form of Kṛṣṇa) may seem to imply some difference between His essence and form; but in fact this type of remark is only a concession to linguistic uses like 'Rāhuḥ śīraḥ' (the head of the Rāhu, the Rāhu being itself only a head). The Kūrma Purāṇa (10) also suggests that there is no difference between essence and form in God.

(7) Sa Yathā saīndhavaghano'nantaro'bāhyah kṛtsna- rasaghana evaivam vā arc'yaṁātmā mantaro'bāhyah kṛtsnāḥ prajāśānanaghana eva/ Bhādārānyaka-U.4. 5. 13.

(8) Saccidānanda-sāndratvāt dvayorevāvidēgataḥ/ Aupacārika evātra bhedōyaṁ deha-dehinah/ Laghu Bhāgavatāmṛta - 341.


(10) Kūrma-Purāṇa, quoted in Caitanyacaritāmṛtār bhumikā - Page 82.
And because of the absence of any real difference between
the essence and the form in which He reveals Himself, it follows
that in the case of the Lord every part of His body or sense-
organs can function vicariously for one another.

Therefore, the objection of svagatabheda or internal diff-
ference in His body between different organs and limbs do not
arise at all, because of their being essentially identical. It
may be mentioned in this connection that Baladeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa
the other renowned later exponent of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and who
is credited with the authorship of a commentary on the Brahma-
sūtras, differs in some respects from Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin. He
solves this problem of svagatabheda in a different way. While
Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin introduces acintya-svarūpaśakti or supralogical
intrinsic power of the Lord to explain the internal differences
in the essence or form of the Lord, Baladeva introduces 'Viśeṣa'
or some peculiar characteristic in Brahman to explain all usage
of difference in the essence or form of the Lord (11). This
viśeṣa is depicted as "bheda-pratinidhi", which means that it is
that which accounts for all usage of difference in spite of essen-
tial identity. It is due to this viśeṣa that the same essence
manifests differently as Sat, Cit and Ānanda, and the same form
of the Lord constituted of the same Sat, Cit, Ānanda manifests as
different limbs like the hands and feet, face and eyes, etc. It
is due to this viśeṣa that there is the display of dharmadharmi-
bhāva or the relation of substantive and attribute in the same

(11) Viśeṣastu avaśyem svākāryaḥ/ sa ca bheda-pratinidhih,
bhedabhuṣaṇe ānta-kāryasya dharma-dharmāvanyavahāra-
asya satyādiśabdāparyāyatāyāsca nirvartakāh/
Siddhānta-ratna - Page 19 (Svaraswati Bhavana texts).
identical essence, and the words Sat, Cit and Ānanda are not synonymous in spite of referring to the same Brahman. Even in ordinary language when we say 'sattā asti' – there is existence – it is due to this viśeṣa that such difference of the subject and verb is introduced in the same existence. It is also to be understood that this viśeṣa is to be admitted only where there is bhedavyavahāra, or where usages of difference are observed though there is no difference. But the differences of prakṛti and jīva and Isvara which are established through other pramāṇas, are not due to viśeṣa (12). It should also be mentioned that Baladeva borrowed this idea of viśeṣa from Madhava (13) by whom he was influenced in many respects. Following the Śruti Sri Jīva has described the ultimate Reality as Saccidananda-svarūpa. But this view is also in perfect agreement with human psychology. The principle of the supreme Reality from which the world of souls and material objects spring forth, and for the realisation of which the earth-bound individuals have to endeavour so much, can neither be 'sūnya' or void, nor mere being or existence (Sat), nor mere consciousness (Cit). No body is supposed to direct His efforts towards the realisation of sūnya; nor does any one prefer 'being' (existence) to conscious being; Nay, even consciousness is not desired if it is not conducive to bliss.


(13) A history of Indian Philosophy (Dr.S.N.Das Gupta) Vol. IV. Page 447.
Therefore, the Ultimate Reality which is the final end must be 'Being', 'Intelligence' and 'Bliss'. It cannot be merely a 'being' without intelligence like that of the emancipated soul of the vaisēśikas who regard it as an unconscious substance. It will also be erroneous to suppose that it is a 'being' with pure intelligence devoid of bliss as is held by the Sāmkhyaites. The Ultimate Reality of Sat, Cit, Ānanda is personal in nature and has bliss as its intrinsic attribute in addition to being and consciousness. This excludes the view of the Advaitins who hold the Reality to be 'being', 'consciousness' and 'bliss'—unknowable and impersonal.

Therefore, Advayajñāṇa or Paratattva must be of the nature of supreme bliss (14). According to Śrī Jīva the Advayajñāṇa-tattva is not only Itself being, consciousness and bliss, but It possesses also the attributes of existence, consciousness, and bliss. It is an accepted fact that the existence is attributed with existence (sattavān). Since it is self-conscious consciousness, the nature of consciousness is also attributed with consciousness or knowledge (jñānavān). The paratattva knows Himself and others as well. Being self-conscious the paratattva is conscious of the self-bliss also, and is thus endowed with the attribute of bliss (ānandavān). Thus, the Paratattva which is of the nature of Sat, Cit and Ānanda is also sattavat, jñānavat and ānandavat, i.e. attributed with existence, knowledge and bliss.

(14) Tattvamiti paramapuruṣārthatādyotanāya paramasukharūpataṃ tasya jñānasya bodhyate/ Krama-sandarbhā—1. 2. 11.
Again, this Paratattva of the nature of saccidānanda is not only Himself attributed with sattā, jñāna and ānanda, but He imparts sattā, jñāna and ānanda or existence, consciousness and bliss to all creatures for which they also have their existence, knowledge and bliss.

It should be understood in this connection that all these three aspects of the supreme Reality — the aspect of being of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss, the aspect of being attributed with existence, knowledge and bliss, and the aspect of imparting existence, knowledge and bliss to all other creatures — are all due to the glory of His svarūpa-śakti which is said to be constituted of sandhinī, samvit and hlādinī.

This Śakti is called svarūpa-śakti because it is almost identical with svarūpa or essence, and because it assumes the character of Śakti loosing its identity with the essence.

It is also due to this svarūpa-śakti that the difference as essence and form, and the difference of different limbs in the same form manifest in the same essential identity of the supreme Reality or Paratatta. Therefore, the objection of svagata-bheda or internal difference does not in any way arise due to those differences. Thus, there being no internal difference in the Lord — the Paratatta, and the external differences of svajātīya-bheda with Rāma, Nārāyaṇa, etc. and Vijātīya-bheda with the world being not svayam-siddha or independent of Him, the Ultimate personal Reality who is the supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa is advaya or non-dual.
As already said, Baladeva's view of Tattva or Ultimate Reality differs from that of Śrī Jīva in some respects. The cause of difference is perhaps due to the former's long allegiance to the school of Mādhva by which he was influenced in his early days. It was quite later in his life that he became interested in Śrī Jīva's philosophy.

However, we see that Baladeva in his enumeration of the main principles has laid much emphasis on the five Tattvas or principles of Isvara, Jīva, Prakṛti, Kāla and Karma (15). But Śrī Jīva lays more emphasis on the advaya or non-dual principle and brings in jīva, prakṛti, etc. as manifestations of sakti of that non-dual one principle.

Of course, Baladeva has also held Brahman as advaya or non-dual since the other four principles like jīva, prakṛti, kāla and karma are included in Brahman as His sakti or powers. According to him, Isvara is 'niyantā' or the controller, while the other four principles of jīva, etc. are 'niyantrita' or controlled (16).

In all other respects he has followed Śrī Jīva in his conception of Isvara as svarūpa-saktimān and bhaktivyāgaṇya, i.e. He is endowed with His specific intrinsic power, and He is attainable through bhakti. The other points of difference will be pointed in proper places.

(15) Isvara - jīva - prakṛti - kāla - karmāni pañca tattvāni śrūyante/ Introduction to Govindabhāsya, Sūtra - 1. 1. 1.

(16) Tatra Isvarāḥ svatantrāḥ ... Jīvādayastu tadvadyāśca/ Ibid - 1. 1.
It has been already said that Advaya-jnāna or the non-dual Absolute Reality includes differences though entirely dependent on It. It is also mentioned that the Lord possesses svarūpa-sakti by which He manifests as various similar divine forms. In fact, it is through this Svarūpa-sakti or His supreme power that the Absolute Advaya-jnāna reveals Itself as Brahman, Paramātman and Bhagavat. These three aspects of the Advaya-jnāna is mentioned in a Bhāgavata śloka (17) as already referred to. The first half of the verse speaks of the Ultimate Reality as Advaya-jnāna, while the second portion speaks of these three aspects or manifestations of the Absolute.

The Advaya-jnāna as the Ultimate Reality is by nature both transcendent and immanent. It may be broadly said that in the aspect of Brahman who is realised by the Jñānins as nirviśeṣa, the nature of abstract transcendence is predominant.

In the aspect of Paramātman, who is the indweller in all His creations, the nature of immanence is predominant. But, in Bhagavat the most glorious manifestation of the Reality, both the nature of transcendent and immanence are equally manifest.

Śrī Jīva considers these three concepts of the Absolute as three gradations or graded aspects of one and the same Reality. Bhagavat occupies the highest and most glorious position in the gradations of the Absolute. Paramātman or the Antaryāmin comes

(17) Vadanti tat tākhvatādam yajjñānamadvayam/ Brahmeti Paramātmeti Bhagavāniti sabdyate//
Bhāgavata - 1. 2. 11.
next in the order, while Brahman occupies the lowest rank in the gradations. Though distinguished as the highest manifestation or aspect, Bhagavat is, in fact the central Reality of whom Paramātman is a part (18) and the nirviśeṣa Brahman is the substrate with powers completely unmanifested.

The other differences conceived in the Absolute as the Jīva and the world are also due to His diverse inconceivable powers. All finite beings and objects as the jīvas and the world derive their finite existences from Him, more precisely from Paramātman through His unthinkable powers called as taṭastha-sākti or the marginal power, and vahiranga-sākti or the external power.

But, in spite of those three manifestations as Brahman, Paramātman and Bhagavat, and in spite of His including the manifestations of Paramātman as the jīvas and the world, He maintains His svarūpa or essential nature all through by the virtue of His inconceivable power which is called, for that very reason, as svarūpa-sākti (19). It is also His antaraṅga svarūpa-sākti, contrasted with taṭastha and vahiranga-sākti, which imparts his essential nature as existence, consciousness and bliss.

But in Brahman all these powers lie dormant and indiscrete. In this aspect there is no manifestation or exercise of any of these powers whatsoever.

(19) Svarūpameva kāryonnukhaṁ sakti-śabāṇoktam /
(19) Sarva-sambādini - Page 36.
The difference of sakti and saktimat - the powers and their substrate in this aspect of Brahman is so much unmanifest that it is almost incapable of being apprehended (20). Moreover, the powers which manifest the attributes in the Reality remaining dormant, there is no manifestation of any specific attributes in this aspect of Brahman. In other words, in this aspect of the Absolute, Its citisakti or power of consciousness is at a minimum and does not function beyond what is indispensable for maintaining Itself as a bare substantive of Sat, Cit and Ananda or being, consciousness and bliss. For this reason there is no experience of any perceptible quality in It; and thus it is known as nirvisēṣa Brahman or undifferentiated Absolute. Thus, this aspect is not without qualities, but the qualities in It are in a potential, indeterminate, and indiscrete state only. Therefore, to the jñānins the Absolute passes as nirvisēṣa or nirguna Brahman due to their lack of thorough understanding. Though in this aspect of Brahman there are the powers, which underlie His various attributes, in an inactive latent state, the jñānins perceive this Brahman as completely nirvisēṣa - devoid of all powers and attributes. It is for this reason that Śrī Jīva remarks in his Kramasandarbha that though they are not incorrect in the ascertainment of the substantive (dharmān), their mistake lies in the ascertainment of the attributes (dharma eva tu bhramāt) (21).

Thus, the transcendent abstract character of the Absolute is

(21) Kramasandarbha - I. 2. 11.
predominant in this aspect of Brahman, while in Paramātman and Bhagavat the immanent all-inclusive glorious character of the Absolute is more and more prominent respectively.

Śrī Jīva definitely states that the same Reality of Advaya- jñāna reveals Itself differently to different worshippers according to their fitness or capacity. Therefore, the same Tattva or Reality which is of the nature of indivisible existence and bliss, is realised by the Paramahāmsas or the Jñānis according to their way of worship, as identical with themselves. They cannot apprehend the Reality as possessing the various glories of Its various śaktis. When the Reality is thus revealed in their mind in Its general undifferentiated character (sāmānyatōlakṣitam) due to their incapability of understanding, or when the Reality is realised or described as possessing no difference of śakti and śaktimat, that undiscriminated, undifferentiated aspect of the Reality is Brahman. Therefore, this manifestation or aspect of the Reality is called incomplete manifestation (asamyag āvirbhāva) of the all complete Reality.

Again, the same Reality possessing the full glories of the manifestation of svarūpa-śakti when realised by the devoted Paramahāmsas through the best method of devotion as possessing the discriminated difference of His substrate and His powers, then the Reality thus realised or revealed completely in Its fullness is called Bhagavat. It is therefore that this manifestation as Bhagavat is called perfect or complete manifestation (samya-g āvirbhāva).
Śrī Jīva also draws our attention to the fact that the order of the words Brahman, Paramātman, and Bhagavat in the Bhāgavata text also indicates the superiority of the succeeding ones to the previous one in respect of the manifestation of powers and excellence (22).

So, in the Kramasandarbha also, Śrī Jīva states that pure knowledge as distinct from all its characteristics as various powers, is Brahman. When the same is endowed with a part of Citsakti, and with abundance of māyāsakti rendering Him the characteristic of antaryāmitva (the nature of indwelling controller) is Paramātman. Again, when He is endowed with the complete manifestation of all His powers, He is Bhagavat. In this way we find that the Ultimate Reality according to the Gauḍīyas is definitely a personal God with the three aspects as mentioned in the Bhāgavata.

(22) Mule tu kramādvaiśīṣṭyadyotanāya tathā vinyāsah/
Bhagavat-sandarbha - Page 2.