To understand the philosophy of a culture," says Potter, "we must come to the understanding of its ultimate values — of what is of paramount importance in the lives of the people of that culture, of what are the highest ideals of its wisest men."

What constitutes the consummation of human existence? This question occupies the central place in all Indian philosophical systems, and the answer suggested thereto enjoys pivotal importance. Philosophy is not merely a speculative construction of what Universe is. "Philosophy," writes Raju, "whatever words are used in the different languages, means a theory of man, of his life, of the world, by possessing which man becomes wise and can plan his life accordingly." Further, he puts the question, "Wise for what purpose?", and then writes, "While the aims of Greek philosophy is to make man wise and that of Chinese philosophy is to make him virtuous, the aim of Indian philosophy is to enable him to obtain

2. P.T. Raju, "The Concept of man",

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salvation which is communion with the Supreme Spirit or realizing of the ātman. These schools regard philosophy as ātmavidya or Adhyatma Vidya, i.e. the science of knowledge of the ātman which is the highest self in Man, wisdom or virtue not excluded; for one who is serious about the realization of the ātman has to be wise and virtuous.

Indian philosophical systems exhibit perfect unanimity so far as the ultimate aim of man is concerned. Mokṣa, a state of perfection, a state in which he is able to transcend the miseries and the limitations of the mundane life is posited as the ultimate goal. It can be called in many ways, Release, Freedom, Liberation, Salvation or emancipation.

The present chapter is intended to examine the idea of Final good, the goal of human existence as portrayed by Ramanuja in his Gitabhāṣya. In keeping with the general traditions of the philosophical systems in India, an enquiry into the goals of life forms an important aspect of Viśistadvaita. We have already noted the conception of tattva (Reality) according to Ramanuja, and we have also discussed what constitute the means to realize it, viz. the pathways to reach the goal, under the heading of Hita (The Means). In the present chapter we are to inquire into the conception of Purusārtha (the Good).

Following the general Hindu tradition, Ramanuja
adheres to the scheme of the four-fold goal of existence, (caturvidha-purusartha) consisting of dharma, artha, kama and moksa. Represents the highest goal, the parama-purusartha. Moksa is the release of the Spirit from Matter. But it is not a mere negative Ideal. It is not just freedom from Matter but it is a blissful state of Self-experience or God-communion.

The Gita condemns those who merely aim at the extinction of pain and suffering of earthly existence and aspire for heavenly pleasures. Svarga or heaven of the popular religion is no purusartha according to the Gita. Ramanuja brings out the unworthiness of such ideals while commenting on such passages of the Gita.

1. ब्रम्हापति: ... धमीरुक्ममोनसायबं पथु प्रश्नम् ...  

2. BG. III. 42-44.
3. BG. VIII.16; IX.20-21.
4. RGB. III. 42-44; VI.1; VIII.16; IX.20-21. It is interesting to note that Ramanuja renders 'स्वर्गद्वारम्' in BG.II.32 as 'निराकारवेचकोपायस्वरूपः'. Again in BG II.38, 'स्वर्ग' is rendered as 'परमनिर्धारस्वः'.  

Vedanta Desika adds:  
‘स्वर्गद्वार’ भामृत्त्वस्वः भार्याप्रलोकः परमनिर्धारस्वः कस्यनिर्मापरा वत्सभायोरोऽवात्।  
‘राज्युद्भासामपि वाकिलमयस्वः’ किलित शुद्धिशृङ्गेषुसेविनृवहिरेनन्तवक्तावामेषाय भिषित भावः।
Brahman, the ultimate Reality, or the Purusottama, is the final Abode of rest and repose for all beings according to the Gītā. Rāmaṇuja shows that the Gītā maintains that the attainment of the Purusottama is the Supreme goal, and no other goal is of any worth at all in comparison to that.\(^1\) Pursuit of lesser and temporary goal is due to the delusion on the part of the seeker, which is the basis of the non-recognition of Purusottama as the Supreme goal.\(^2\)

Failure to understand the highest God as the worthiest object of attainment, says the Gītā, is due to the 'delusion of the pairs of opposites' (dvandvamoha) and maintains that the degree of delusion on the part of each individual is determined at birth depending upon his own previous karmans.

"All beings get into confusion (even) at the birth O Arjuna, due to the delusion of the pairs of opposites caused by the desire and the aversions."

While commenting on this verse, Rāmaṇuja explains how one's previous karmans determine his likes and dislikes even at birth: "All beings at birth, even

\[\text{------------------------}\]
\[1. \text{ RGB.VIII.16}.\]
\[2. \text{ RGB.VII.23}. \text{ Sāṅkara's comment on BG.VII.23 is very significant:} \quad \text{------------------------}\]
at the very moment they are brought into existence, get into delusion through the delusion (i.e., the agency causing delusion) which is described as heat and cold and other similar pairs of opposites, and which arises from desire and aversion. What is said here amounts to this: Among the pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain, in regard to whatever thing made of the gunas, desire and aversion were practised in a series of previous births, that same thing described as the pairs of opposites, on account of its subtle impressions, comes into existence as being the object of desire and aversion, and causes delusion to all beings again at the very moment of their birth. By that delusion, (i.e., delusive force) they get into delusion. They come to be such as have by nature desire and aversion in regard to these. Their nature is not such as to feel happiness and misery (respectively) at union with or separation from Me. The man of wisdom, however, is one whose nature is to feel happiness and misery solely on account of union with or separation from Me. No being whatever is born with such a nature."

Contd...
The root-cause of the material bondage and the pursuit of wrong values on the part of the embodied beings is their failure to recognize their true nature as spiritual beings and the consequent indiscretion regarding their goals. They misconceive the empirical ego particularized by their material body for their true Self. Thus they identify the pleasure and pains of the body as a particular embodiment as the pleasures and pains of their true Self. Guided by this basic misconception, they strive to materialize their ambitions, and they get caught up in a chain of births and deaths. For the nature of actions or karmas is such that not only do they produce results, but also tend to become a habit. Impelled by the force of strong habits or vasanas they tend to seek pleasures of Matter taking them as the only pleasures. They even arrogate to isolate themselves from their natural and permanent Abode of rest and repose, the Purusottama, and abusing the free will granted to them by Him, forgetting their Divine moorings, perpetuate their ego-centric and hedonistic pursuits.

Contd. ....

- RGB.VII.27
Matter, or Prakṛti is so devised, as we have already noted (p. 39), that it also provides opportunities to the jīva-s caught up within its meshes to perform righteous deeds and take to God-ward life. When the jīva-s realize the unworthiness of the material values, after being seasoned as it were, over many births, they turn toward the right values and by performing more and more righteous deeds, develop devotion to God and get to enjoy the glimpses of the Divine at the mortal plane.

"But the men of good deeds whose sins have come to an end, however, freed from the delusion of the pairs (of opposites), worship Me with enduring devotion." — says Kṛṣṇa.

According to Rāmanuja, it is these people, i.e. the people who have destroyed their past sins and consequently have achieved victory over the 'delusion of the pairs of opposites' (Dvandvamoha) that are termed sukrtinaḥ in BG.VII.16, who are classified into four types, viz. ārta, jijnāsu, arthaarthin and jñanin. The classification made here, he maintains, following Yamuna, is on

1. BG.VII.28
the basis of the objects sought by the respective devotees. The ārta is seeking to regain something he has lost, material wealth or sovereignty. ārthārthin is one who is seeking the same material wealth, but afresh. Both of them are after wealth and can be termed aīśvaryārthinas.¹

The jñānī is after pure knowledge. Knowledge is the essential nature of the Self, and a seeker of knowledge is indeed the seeker of the true nature of one's Self. He is interested in the joy of Self-realization.² The jñānī, who is extolled by Śrī Kṛṣṇa as His most precious treasure, nay, as near and dear to Him as His own Self, is the one,

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1. Jārī: प्रतिद्वारहृद्य:, शूद्रव्य:, पुनस्त्राप्तिकाम:, अभीर्यः अधित्सक्यमाल्यकाम:, तत्त्वमुक्तस्यां, अभिविख्ययेऽवां विस्त्रेक अबाधिकारः। — RGB.VII.16

2. ज्ञानी: प्रभुक्तिविश्वासलस्वापवादपीचः; शान्तेशाश्च स्वयथा-भिन्निः ज्ञानीप्रतितपुरामः। — RGB.VII.16

Posing a question, 'निसामुक्त्रे शान्तेशबिच अबिन्य न गुह्स्ते .........' Vedānta Desika explains: मज्ञ्यन्ति निसामुक्त्रे शान्तेशबिचीय निश्चितम प्राप्यमयः न गुह्स्ते। अबिन्यः निश्चितम प्राप्यपञ्चादात्मानं निश्चितम ज्ञिनं। — V.D. on RGB.VII.16
who does not rest satisfied with any other achievement until he is able to establish the rapturous communion with the All-in-All Vasudeva, the source and substratum of the entire existence.

Ramanuja's explanation of the classification of the devotees found in the Gita is based on the guidelines provided by Yamuna in his Gitārthasangraha.

The Classification of the individuals who resort to God into three groups, viz. aisvaryaarthin-s, kaivalyarthin-s and the Bhagavatpraptikama-s is a special feature of Visistādvaitic tradition. We can find the source of such a division of the aspirants into three groups in the devotional outpouring of Alvars and in the commentaries on them.

The three goals recognised, viz. Aisvarya, Kaivalya and Bhagavan, it can be seen, correspond to the three ultimate principles of Reality posited by Visistādvaita. For an aspirant seeking aisvarya, material gain is the end. He is neither interested in spiritual quest, nor in the God. His object of attainment is something within the realm of the material principle, viz. acit.

1. See Tiruppallandu - 5 with periyavācchān pillai's Commentary on it.
The *jñāṇaśu* is after the bliss of Self-experience and thus his goal is a higher one, pertaining to the realm of the Individual Self, or *cit*. The third variety of aspirants, the *jñānins* of the *Gītā*, or the ardent devotees whose sole interest and joy is God-communion, are aiming at the Substantive Principle of Reality, the *śvaratattva*.

Whereas the *aisvaryaśr̥tan-s* and the *kaivalyaśr̥tan-s* resort to God as an instrument to achieve their goals, it is the *jñānin* or the bhagavadarthin who loves and adores God for God's sake. For him God is both the *upāya* and the *upeya*. He is characterised as *nityāyuktā*, having single-minded devotion, and *ekabhaṁkṛti*. He is extolled in several ways by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as we have seen earlier, calling him by such terms as *mahātmā* and *jñānin*.

That Brahman, the Creator alone is the Supreme goal of human existence is a fundamental teaching of the *Upaniṣads*. The principal Deity of the *Gītā*, the All-in-All Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, is the Creator of the Universe. He is same as Brahman. The *Gītā* declares in no mistakable terms that the attainment of God is the worthiest goal. Ramanuja establishes that there is no higher principle than Puruṣottama of the *Gītā*, and that He alone represents the highest goal.

1. BG.VII.18
2. Ch.Up. 7-24-1.
3. RGB.VI.47, VII.23, VIII.15,16, X.10,12,42.
4. RGB.VI.7, VIII.15. Also see Śrībhāṣya - 1.3.7.
The Gītā upholds the attainment of God as the highest goal no doubt, but it also maintains Self-realization as an ideal of spiritual life. For Śāṅkara, and other Advaitic interpreters of the Gītā, the attainment of the highest God and the recovery of the Self being one and the same, both the types of passages in the Gītā that refer to the concept of liberation, viz. (i) those which maintain that Self-realization is the goal, and (ii) those which proclaim God attainment as the Ideal, mean one and the same thing. But for Rāmanuja, to whom God-realization alone is the Ideal of all beings, the passages upholding Self-realization as the goal need proper interpretation consistent with the philosophy of Visīṣṭadvaita.

The division of the eighteen chapters of the Bhagavadgītā into three groups of six chapters each, based on the subject matter dealt with in them, imposes certain expository restrictions on Rāmanuja. Since he adheres to the context very strictly in all his interpretations, every passage he interprets must conform to (i) the over-ruling topic of the  satkā in which the passage appears, and (ii) the particular context in which it appears. Thus in the first  satkā, wherever the text speaks of the goal, it is taken to refer to the immediate goal, viz. the realization of the true nature of the Self, which happens to be the ruling subject matter of the first  satkā. Rāmanuja prefers
to honour the restriction of scope imposed by the overall structural analysis of the text. When the interpretations of certain passages are examined individually, without taking into account its context and the claims of internal harmony, they may seem laboured and strained. But when they are studied in the background of the structural analysis of the poem as worked out by the commentator, (This is true with all well-established commentators) they are perfectly intelligible. On the contrary, if the commentator fails to outline the co-ordinating plan of the work as a whole and overlooks to conform with the suggested plan, it amounts to prove that the text is only an ill-assorted cabinet of ideas.

A list of passages that deal with the goals, or the stages of attainments in the path of spiritual perfection, in the Gita is provided here, noting at the same time Ramanuja's interpretation of the passages as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BG.</th>
<th>RGB.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 'अमृत्तायु कल्ले' (II.15)</td>
<td>अमृत्तायु साम्यनमि</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. 'वृणान्तिकेषुन्मृत्युः' (II.72)</td>
<td>वृणान्तिकेषुमृत्युः, सुसंहि-तानामात्मानमात्मनोत्तरीत्वः।</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. 'परमात्मेना यूर्यत्' (III.19)</td>
<td>आत्मां प्राप्तेदिव्यः।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 'सैंसारिकात्मकः' (III.20)</td>
<td>आत्मां प्राप्तवः।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 'पुनर्बन्म नैति, मामेति' (IV.9)</td>
<td>पुनर्बन्म नैति, मामेति प्राप्ते।</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. 'भूतसरस्वतः' (IV.10)</td>
<td>अर्घं संभृतः (पा प्राप्तकुलः।</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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7. 'कृप्या केन गन्तव्यम्' (IV.24)

8. 'आदित्य कृप्या स्नातकम्' (IV.31)

9. 'तुम शाल्या विमोहसि' (IV.32)

10. 'परं शालिमाधिरेणाध्यायम्' (IV.39)

11. 'निशावकरुपो' (V.2)

12. 'कृप्या न चिरेनाध्यायम्' (V.6)

13. 'शालिमाधिरेण नैदिष्ट्यः' (V.12)

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15. 'कृप्या ते मित्यतः' (V.19)

16. 'स्थिररुच्चिद्वृत्तस्तंगो ब्रह्मविद्या कृपातिः' (V.20)

17. 'ब्रह्मनिन्द्रां कृपाद्वीरोधिद्वृत्तिः' (V.24)

18. 'रमस्ते ब्रह्मनिन्द्राः' (V.25)

19. 'अभिज्ञो ब्रह्मनिन्द्राः कविष्मात्माम्' (V.26)
20. 'सार्नितमृत्तिकति' (V.29)
21. 'सार्नित्र निर्वीणयमा मकस्यं मथिति ' (VI.19)
22. 'अन्तर्मुख भविष्यति' (VI.27)
23. 'सुलभं भ्रमवशंस्यं नुवस्यमते' (VI.28)
24. 'भावति पर्यं विश्वम्' (VI.45)
25. 'मूक्षकार मानित मानवस्य' (VII.23)
26. 'ज्ञातमकोभाषाव' (VII.29)
27. 'मदुरावन याति' (VIII.5)
28. 'मामेश्वरसिद्धि' (VIII.7)
29. 'परं पुत्रं रायो याति' (VIII.8)
30. 'परं पुत्रःपुरीति दिश्यमयै' (VIII.9-10)

1. 'सुखः here is comfort or felicity in karmayoga
2. V.D. remarks; परं पालिम्ब जियति येग केः वा तत्साध्यंत्मङ्गित्यादि -
   ब्रह्मआपि।
3. तद्भवने कारकविशेषाः मकस्यं मथिति वि। VD. on RGB.VIII.5
4. BG VIII.7-10 refer to the goals of aisvararthin- according to Ramanuja-
31. 'क्षेत्र यादव' (VIII.11)

32. 'स याति परमा ज्यादिभ' (VIII.13)

33. 'संसीधित् परमा मन्ता' (VIII.15)

34. 'न्यायतागाय जित्युक।
तमादुं परमा ज्यादिभ।
गृहायं न निक्तियते
तत्त्वाय मर्म मम॥' (VIII.21)

35. 'व्यक्ता श्रवण ज्यादिभो न्याय।' (VIII.24)

36. 'परस्पर स्मावसीति वाच्यं' (VIII.28)

RGB.

No comment.
37. 'नायकेश्वरुपाते' (IX.1)

38. 'मार्मिक मध्यविनयोपि मामु' (IX.25)

39. 'मायुरयासिति' (IX.28)

40. 'भमदार्शित्विनिफलति'  

41. 'मार्मिक परा गतिः' (IX.32)

42. 'मायुरयासिति' (IX.34)

43. 'मायुरयासिति ते' (IX.10)

44. शारु द्रव्यु च तत्वेन प्रत्रेत्तु च (अः समः) (XI.54)

45. 'मायुरयासिति' (XI.55)

46. 'ते प्राप्तविनित्वाथास'  (XII.4)

47. 'सिद्दिन्तकार्यापिकि'  

(RGB.

मल्याधित्वविरोधिकान्ति कर्मनादव-  
जुर्ग-नार्थसे।

मध्यविनयिनः मायुरयासिति शार्कः  
सत्त्वः तः द्वादशाविन्यासाष्टीकाय-  
कल्याणुगुणम्त्र विद्यमानं अनविधाति-  
व्यायामेनुत्र ग्राम्यं न निवर्तते।  

मायुरयासिति

शार्कत्वावसरविनिति मल्याधित्व-  
विरोधविवर्णिन्ति गति।

परं गतिः मार्मिक।

मायुरयासिति।

मायुरयासिति।

कल्याणः शार्कत्वावसरविनिति वासलानहनः  
इत्यादी तत्तत् यासदाखनः  
च अद्वितिस्त्र च ज्ञात्व (कार्यात्मकाः  
भुगो) समः।

मा कार्यविनित्वाधिकान्ति  
कल्याणाः सुधारत्वसंन्यस्तः।  
मो प्राप्तविनित्ता  
कल्याणानादात्मानः प्राप्तविनित्ताः-  
विकारः।

मल्याधित्वाधिकान्ति विविधविनित्ताः।
48. "मृत्युमयु" (XIII.12) जन्मरामसाधारितकृत्य्रूपहितः
मृत्युमयुमार्गमान प्राप्तोऽर्थः।

49. "मद्यावायोपवष्टे" (XIII.18) मम गो भावः ख्वाभः
असतार्थेऽमुः असतार्थेऽमुः
कु ञ्यनो भवतीत्वः।

50. "न स शुभेऽभिवासे" (XIII.23) न मृत्युः प्रकृत्या सङ्केताणि
अपरिभिम्बन्धान्धनकाव्यांनान्
मायमां वर्तंवाकाणसम्ये
प्राप्तावीतः।

51. "पृष्णु विक्षिप्तः" (XIII.25) आलमभिनेन मृत्युपकृतिरः
रंगशी विस्तितः।

52. "परो विश्व वाति" (XIII.28) परं
विद्वः आत्मविद्वताः प्राप्तोऽर्थः।

53. "अदृश्यं वेदांतं तदा" (XIII.30) अस्तिविश्वं वातात्वानमान{}
प्राप्तावीतः।

54. "परं वाति" (XIII.34) निम्जुक्तकथं आत्मानं प्राप्तविद्ति
स्वन सुप्रेमार्थःमार्थक्यायम्
वातात्वानमानं प्राप्तविद्तित्वः।

55. "परो विचित्रधिमो भसः" (XIV.1) परिख्यत्वमार्थःमार्थक्यायम्
सिद्धान्ताः।

56. "मम सत्यमयात्मकः" (XIV.2) मृत्युमयु प्राप्तः।
57. दृढ़मार्ग सेरियकदलिति (XIV.19)
58. 'अमृतसुन्दर' (XIV.20)
59. दृढ़मुखयक कप्तें (XIV.26)

60. 'कूट पदम' (XV.4)
61. 'दृढ़मुखयक न निखरते तददान परम भव' (XV.6)
62. 'याति परार गतिम्' (XVI.22)
63. 'सिद्धि चौक्ती' (XVIII.30)
64. 'सिद्धि विनिधि' (XVIII.46)
65. 'सिद्धि प्राप्ति' (XVIII.50)
66. 'दृढ़मुखयक कप्तें' 'निल्लित शानस्य या परा' (XVIII.50)

1. सिद्धि in BG.XIII.30 is also rendered as परम्प्राप्तिः in RGB.
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<td>67. 'श्रुण्मायाम कपलो' (XVII.53)</td>
<td>श्रुण्मायाम कपलो। स्वधिनविविमुक्तमामायामस्थितमातमायाममुखसति।</td>
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<td>68. 'श्रुण्मुक्तः' (XVII.54)</td>
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<td>69. '(भो कल्पो शापवा) विस्ते' (XVII.55)</td>
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<td>70. 'सार्ध्या पदम्यस्य' (XVII.56)</td>
<td>पथप बिषित पदमः। मो प्राणोत्तित्तिः।</td>
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<td>71. 'पठो शावित स्थान प्राप्तिः क्षत्तरिः' (XVII.62)</td>
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1. रामन्यa-कोट्स 44. 1, 12, 20; Text. Sambhā. 4, 17, 13, 1; Rā. 4, 14, 50.
2. 10, 12, 7; & Ch. 48, 3, 13, 7.
We can arrive at the following conclusions on the basis of the above interpretations and Ramanuja's comments in connection with them:

1. Ramanuja strictly adheres to the doctrine of three-fold Purusartha consisting of Aisvarya, Kaivalya and Bhagavatprapti.

2. Throughout the first satka, atmaprapti or atmayatmya-jnaha in the sense of understanding of the true nature of the Self intuitively is consistently maintained as the goal.

3. Understanding of the true nature of the Self is propaedeutic in nature, as we have already seen, to further pursuit of bhaktiyoga, leading to bhagavadanubhava, which is the ultimate goal.

4. In the second satka, majority of passages are interpreted as pertaining to God-realization, while the others refer to Kaivalya also.

5. Kaivalya is a state of liberation in which, according to the aspirations of those who meditate on the Self as the mode of Brahman, the Self comes to attain its natural state of Self-hood with its eight-fold characteristics.

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1. Except in BG IV.4-9 which is a digression.

cf: "पूज्यज्ञान स्मायथविते "
- YG.S.8
fully unfolded. In this state it is similar to God in every respect, sharing all His glories except the power of creation, sustenance and dissolution of the Universe.

6. After the attainment of kaivalya, the aspirant of kaivalya also is entitled for Brahmanubhava. Though he aspired for kaivalya, the nature of the Self, his object of contemplation, is essentially an adjectival mode of Brahman. Thus since the ultimate goal and the final resting place of the Self is Brahman, kaivalyarthin also attains that highest beatitude.

7. Some aspirants resort to God seeking sovereignty of various types. They too are the cherished devotees of God, and they get their wishes fulfilled by the grace of God.

1. अपूर्वार्थपन्तः, चिन्तामण, विपृष्टवत्त, विजीकार्वत, विनिमित्तवत्, विभिन्नार्थतः राेमनुजा मंत्सवत्त, गणकार्वत्ति and संवचकर्वत्ति are the eight natural characteristics of the Self in itself according to Br.Up.


3. cf.: RGB.XIV.27.
8. Whereas the kaivalyarthin-a and the Bhagavad-arthin-a travel by devayana, after leaving the body, aiyaryarthin-a have to travel to their destinations by pitryana.

9. Those who reach their goals by devayana do not return back to the mundane world. Their liberation is permanent. Those who are lead by pitryana have to take birth again in the world of mortals. That means, the seekers after God and the kaivalyarthin-a attain enduring salvation whereas the seekers after sovereignty enjoy only temporary pleasures according to their wishes.

10. The fundamental factor that determines the destiny of an embodied being is his own free will. Man gets what he seeks. Whatever is sought earnestly by the devotee is bestowed upon by God. God will never abrogate the free-will of man, which is indeed His own gift.

The place and significance of kaivalya in the philosophy of Visistadvaita is not very specific. The followers of Ramanuja are divided in the conception of the state of kaivalya. While both the schools of Visistadvaitins recognize that there is a distinct state called kaivalya where the Individual Self, after getting emancipated completely from the bonds of Prakrti, will
enjoy the unadulterated bliss of Self-experience, they are divided with regard to the worthiness and value of such a state in itself. In his commentary on the Brahma-sutras, Ramanuja maintains that the Upaniṣads declare that both kaivalyarthin-ś and the seekers of God proceed to their destination after leaving their bodies through devayana, never to enter again into the mundane world. It is also very clear that according to Ramanuja, God attainment is the only Supreme goal. Thus it is hard to reconcile to a state of liberation which results only in Self-realization and which is also enduring. One school of Visistadvaita however sticks to this point of view. Kaivalya is a permanent state of isolation from Prakṛti as well as from God. This school represents the followers of Pillai Lokāchārya.

The followers of Vedanta Desika, however, maintain that though kaivalya is a state of isolation, and though there are certain aspirants who are after it, it is only a temporary phase just before the state of Divine-communion. It is not a permanent state of liberation, devoid of Brahmanubhava.

It is interesting to note that the followers of Pillai Lokāchārya, though they recognize the state of kaivalya as a state of permanent isolation from God, they

1. Śrībhāṣya, 4.3.14.
advise against such an ideal very severely. It is a state to be abhorred, since it is doubly dangerous. It is deprived of the highest beatitude of God-communion on the one hand, and on the other, since there is no return to Prakrti, even the chance of achieving God-communion in future is set aside once and for all.

Vedanta Desika and his followers, however, do not admit of such a possibility at all. According to him, kaivalya is certainly a state of liberation beyond the taints of Prakrti, but an aspirant after kaivalya is not destined to remain there for ever in the state of kaivalya. According to him, an aspirant seeking kaivalya is fully aware of the infinite glories of the Lord as well and thus he cannot rest content with the revelation of the true nature of the Self only. He meditates on the Individual Self only as a part of Brahman, and therefore even for an aspirant after kaivalya, God-communion is the ultimate goal. He achieves God-realization through Self-realization.

One of the statements of Ramanuja in his Gitabhasya is very significant here. In his introductory remarks on the section of the Gita describing the devayana and pitryana, (VIII.23-27), he observes:

1. of Tiruppallandu - 4, for instance.
"Then He (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) teaches the path which is described by epithets beginning with light and which is common to the knower of the true nature of the Self and to him who is devoted to the Supreme Person. In the scriptures, the path described by epithets beginning with light (arciñāmārga) is mentioned as common to both of these. It is characterised by non-return to birth. Accordingly, in regard to one travelling through the path described by
the epithets beginning with light, \textit{\textit{arci\textsuperscript{r}adim\textsuperscript{a}r\textsuperscript{a}}\textit{}} as set out in passages in the science of the five fires like the following: "Those who know it (i.e., the essential nature of the individual Self) thus (i.e., as set out in the \textit{vidy\textsuperscript{a}} of the five fires) and those who in the forest worship with faith \textit{Tapas} (or the \textit{Brahman}) go to (the deity ruling over) rays of light, and from (the deity ruling over the) rays of light to (the deity of) the day" (Ch. Up.5.10.1) - (in regard to such a self), attainment of the Supreme \textit{Brahman} and non-return to \textit{samsara} are declared in the scripture thus: "He (the supernatural person of the \textit{lightning}) leads them to the Brahman ... Those who are led by this path do not get into this human whirlpool" (Ibid. IV.15,6).

"Those who know it thus" is a scriptural text defining the goal: this is not indeed with reference to the attainment of the Self as a part of the science of the \textit{Brahman}, which is taught in the teaching of Prajapati and other such contexts. For there will then be no significance to the separate text referring to the science of the Supreme \textit{Brahman}: "Those who in the forest worship with faith \textit{Tapas}" (Ibid. 5.10.1).

And in the science of five fires it is declared: "In this manner, indeed, the waters sacrificed in the fifth oblation become those who are called \textit{purus\textsuperscript{a}s}" (Ch. Up. V.9.1.), and "Those with a (balance of) good \textit{karm\textsuperscript{a}s} ... those with (a balance of) bad \textit{karm\textsuperscript{a}s}" (Ibid. V.10.7.).
It is to be understood that it is taught here that the state of existence as men and other beings which has its roots in good and evil deeds refers only to the waters alone which are mixed with other elements and that to the self there is only contact with them. Thus the distinction between the intelligent soul and non-intelligent matter is set out. Then through the statements, "Those who know it thus" (Ibid. V.10.1). "They reach the light" (Ibid), and "They do not return again to this human cycle" (Ibid. IV.15.6), it is taught that those who know thus about the distinct intelligent and non-intelligent things - (the one) as deserving rejection and (the other) as being a goal to be realised (they)- travel along the path described by epithets beginning with light (arciradimarga) and do not return (to samsara). Because there is the text, "He (the supernatural person of lightning) leads them to the Brahman" (Ibid), which declares that the Brahman is attained by both the knower of the real nature of the self and the devotees of the Supreme Person, and because of the principle that what is attained (through worship) should be in accordance with the worship - (because of these reasons) the antahkaraṇa self, in a state of separation from inanimate matter, should be continuously meditated upon as having its sole delight in complete subservience to the Brahman through its having the Brahman as its Self. And the (self's)
quality of finding sole delight in complete subservience to the Supreme Being is established from \textit{Sruti} texts like "He who dwelling within the self... whose body is the self" (Madh. Br. Up. III.7.22)."

Here Ramanuja speaks of two types of aspirants who are entitled to traverse along devayana, viz:

(i) The \textit{atmayathatmyavid} (one who has realized the true nature of the Self)

(ii) The \textit{paramapurusanistha} (One who is exclusively devoted to God).

Both of them are released from the bondage of transmigration. Further, the \textit{atmayathatmyavit} who is referred to here, who is entitled for release from transmigration, should not be confused for one who has understood the nature of one's Self, about whom the first \textit{satka} of the \textit{Gita} speaks. The understanding of the true nature of one's Self which is the goal aimed at in the first \textit{satka} and for which \textit{karmayoga} is the means is only a propaedeutic attainment conferring the requisite eligibility to pursue the way to reach God, viz. \textit{Bhaktiyoga}. Understanding the true nature of the self by means of steadfast \textit{karmayoga} is thus to be clearly discriminated from attaining \textit{Kaivalya}. The former is a preparatory achievement and a qualification for further spiritual pursuits, whereas the latter is an actual state of Release. The former is a fruition of \textit{karmayoga} while the latter is
the fruition of bhaktiyoga. It is only in the state of kaivalya that the Self regains its original glories such as its eight characteristics, and attains similarity to Brahman.

A careful scrutiny of the above observations would make it clear, we may say, that kaivalya as a state of mere Self-experience to the exclusion of God-realization is not posited as an ideal by Ramanuja. Kaivalya as isolation from Prakriti is a Sankhya concept in origin. The concept is retained with different shades of meaning in different Vedantic writings as well. Naturally the individual interpreters of Vedanta have also to make room for this concept in their systems of thought. Thus Ramanuja also makes room for kaivalya in Visistadvaita. But kaivalya no more retains its original nature. It is the experiencing of atman as an adjectival mode of Brahman. Ultimately it is Brahmanubhava, or communion with God that represents the final Goal. Afterall, Self attainment is never an autonomous process in the philosophy of Ramanuja. It can only occur as a part of the attainment of the Supreme Reality. Reaching the permanent Abode of the Creator-God is the only Goal that can be the highest consummation of human life.

Ramanuja's emphasis on the importance of man's free will in the moral Government of God perfectly tallies with the catholicity of outlook entertained by the Gita
with regard to the various conceptions of the Godhead and
the different modes of faith and worship adopted by men
of varied temperaments. He holds that a man's mode of
life is determined by the values he seeks and that the
values he seeks are in proportion to the conception of
the Godhead he cherishes.¹

The Gita makes room for every form of worship
and every conception of the Deity.² Even among those who
are devoted to the highest God, there are different classes
of devotees with different conceptions of their own, each
interested as they are, in seeking and securing the
fulfilment of the objects of their desire.

According to Ramanuja, the eight chapter of the
Gita prescribes different forms of meditation for different
men seeking different objects of desire. The meditation
here pertains to the last hour of death. The importance of
the state of mind at the moment of death in determining
the destiny of the soul is emphasised in the Gita. Thoughts
at the hour of death do not occur casually, but they are
determined by the predominant aspirations of the individual

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1. "We realize the results we seek, for the Supreme is
patient with our imperfect vision. He accepts our
prayers and answers them at the level at which we
approach Him" - S. Radhakrishnan, op.cit.P.222.
2. BG IV.11; VII.21, and 22.
and his persistent endeavour to realize them in his life.¹

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

"Thinking of whatever state (of being) he at the end gives up his body, to that being does he attain, O son of Kuntī, being ever absorbed in the thought thereof."²

One's final convictions determine his future destiny. Whatever idea of God he entertains, the same state of godhood he attains.³ Even so, maintains Rāmānuja, that the mode of meditation at the moment of death on God is different for different aspirants depending upon the objects they seek. According to him the content of the knowledge of God at the time of death varies according to the end for which the devotee aspires.

BG VII.29 prescribes the particulars to be known and those to be followed by the kaivalyarthin-ś:

\[ \text{गर्भाशयं मायाविद्यन्ति ते।} \\
\text{ते क्रमं तत्तवं कुल्लम्बर्यते कम्भ बाक्षिकं।} \]

"Those who resort to Me and endeavour for

\[ \text{1. गर्भस्युत्तमं गुरुभगविदिविषयं केव नायके- HGB.VIII.6} \\
\text{2. BG. VIII.6} \\
\text{3. ‘तदानीं मया मामस्यको न्याविद्यवायारे क्षति’—} \\
\text{Rāmānuja's interpretation of ‘मद्यमव्याति’ in BG.VIII.5:V.D. remarks: तत्तताविद्या किंतु विशेषतः—प्राणितत्त्वकि। साम्य व स्वच्छते ज्ञेयते कल्पिते न द्वारे।'} \]
liberation from old age and death, they know that brahman, all about adhyatma and the whole of karman" 

BG VII.30 prescribes what is to be known by the seekers after wealth.

'And those who know me as being associated with adhibhuta and adhidaiva, as associated with adhiyajna, they too, with their minds engaged in contemplation, know me even at the time of death'.

The following points are to be noted as the special features of Ramanuja's interpretation of the above two stanzas:

1. These two stanzas prescribe different aspects of God to contemplate upon for different types of aspirants.

2. 'Those who strive for emancipation from death and old age' (jaramaranamokṣaya mamāritya yatanti ye) signifies kaivalyarthins. They are to know God as brahman (aksara), adhyatma (svabhava) and adhidaiva.

3. aisvaryarthins should know God as adhibhuta and adhidaiva.

4. Jñanin or the seeker of God-realization should
know God as *adhiṣṭhaṇa*. This knowledge is common to all the three varieties of aspirants.

5. For all the three varieties of aspirants, contemplation on God at the final hour of death is an essential requisite to attain their respective objects of desire. The content of knowledge of God may however, very in each case.

The six terms used at the end of the seventh chapter, viz. *brahma, adhyātma, karma, adhibhūta, adhaiva* and *adhiṣṭhaṇa* receive further explanation in the eighth chapter:

> 'महाते ब्रह्म परम स्वभावेऽव्यात्ममुक्ते।
> पुनःवा विपर्यया: कामस्वलः।।
> अधधूथ सारे नामः पुनःवा विपर्यया॥
> अधधूथोऽद्वः हृदेऽद्वः देहूथा कर॥ (VIII. 3 & 4)

'The brahman is the supreme, indestructible (self). One's own (material) nature is spoken of as that which dwells with the self. The outgoing creative force which causes the rise of material entities is known as *karma*. The superior material entities (*adhibhūta*) are perishable things. And what is superior to the Gods (*adhaiva*) is the Purusā. O best of embodied beings, I am myself here in this body the essence of the sacrifice (*adhiṣṭhaṇa*).'
Ramanuja offers an original interpretation of these stanzas:

'That Brahman' (tadbrahma) is the supreme aksara, the totality of the ksetrajnas, the proper form of the atman separated from prakrti; this the aspirants to kaivalya should attain. Adhyatma is svabhava or prakrti; that which is not the atman but is conjoined with the atman, the subtle elements, their vasa etc., this the aspirants to kaivalya should relinquish. Bhuta is human being etc. Karm is the procreative act connected with a woman which causes a human being etc. to originate. An aspirant to kaivalya should know that all this and all that is connected with it is to be feared and avoided. Adhibhuta is the transitoriness of the elements, ether etc. A particular development of these elements, naturally transient and individually different are sound, touch etc. with their bases. The aspirants to aiśvarya should know that they must obtain these individually different objects, sound etc. and their bases. Adhidaivata connotes the purusa; it means 'being beyond the pantheon of Indra, Prajapati etc.' The purusa beyond the entire pantheon cognizes objects - sound etc - which are different from the objects cognized by the gods. The aspirants to aiśvarya must know that they are to
cognize these objects".¹

On the strength of BG VII.5-7, Ramanuja interprets the mode of meditation at the final hour of death as pertaining to the three groups of aspirants. BG VIII. 8-10, according to him, pertain to the mode of meditation of the ajayayarthin-s, VIII.11-13 pertain to that of kaivalyarthin-s and VIII.14 pertains to that of Bhagavatpraptikama-s. Though such a division of the stanzas corresponding to the three types of aspirants may look artificial and intended to vindicate his teacher's

¹ RGB.VIII.3-4.
understanding of the chapter on the part of Ramanuja, on a closer observation, it can be seen, the meaning is not very far-fetched. We may note the following points in this regard:

1. 'tadbrahma' in BG VII.28 and VIII.1 is defined as 'aksara' in BG VIII.3. According to Ramanuja, aksara means ātman in its true nature, free from prakṛti. As we have already noted, Ramanuja consistently maintains this meaning ( ). That Śrīkṛṣṇa chooses to describe 'tad brahma' as aksara while He identified Himself with adhiyajna is sufficient to indicate that 'tadbrahma' is not the highest Brahman. Since Kṛṣṇa and the highest Brahman are one and the same in the Gita, and since aksara is differentiated from Kṛṣṇa, it is right that Ramanuja takes paramam aksaram as 'prakṛtivivaktam ātma-svarupam'.

2. 'adhyaatma' is defined as svabhava in VIII.3. Both these terms are equally complicated in

1. Yamuna summarises the VIII ch. of the Gita as follows:

   कृष्णोदभाषायातंस्मात्मश्चतुष्टिस्तुतार्यस्य

   वेषापादेयामानसकमे मैत्रेयः कुञ्जे प्रसन्नी YGS 12.

2. BG.VII.7; VII.13; X.42.

3. BG.XII.1.
their connotation. Svabhava is however consistently rendered as Prakṛti by Ramanuja in his Gitabhasya.

Further, Ramanuja has the benefit of the correspondence with the famous pancagnividya of Chandogya Upanisad. 'karma' in this context (BG.VIII.3) is understood in a technical sense: bhutabhavodbhavakarah visargah karmasam-jñitah. Thus karma means visarga. Ramanuja understands visarga in a peculiar sense. It is 'emission' that procreates living beings. Ramanuja bases his interpretation on the Ch. Up. 5,4-10.

The Gita defines 'adhibhūtā' as ksaro bhavah, and adhidaiva as purusa. Both of these are explained in quite an unusual sense by Ramanuja. They pertain to a particular state of enjoyment and the special objects of enjoyment. Thus adhibhūtā commotes some superior material, though impermanent (ksara) in so far as they are particular developments of elements like ether etc., which consist of sound, taste, touch form and smell and their bases.

1. BG. XIII. 4. See Buitenen, op. cit. p. 31.

2. See Buitenen, Loc. cit.

karma is the sacrificial act according to Śankara, and it is the grand work of creation according to Madhva.

3. Śankara takes tad brāhma to mean the Supreme Self, and adhyatma to be the empirical individual self. According to Madhva, tadbrahman means Lord's all pervading form and by adhyatma he means body and other things controlled by the self.
Adhidaiva is purusa. Since the purusa referred to here is the object of contemplation of the aisvaryarthin, Ramanuja points out that a particular state of enjoyment even surpassing the those of Indra, Prajapati etc. is what is suggested here.

5. Adhiyajña is Kṛṣṇa Himself. Ramanuja maintains that Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate Deity to whom all sacrificial acts are offered, and He is the real bestower of fruits, though Indra Prajapati and others are propitiated and they are held to be the bestowers of fruits. For, in actuality those gods are also part and parcel of the highest Deity, viz. Kṛṣṇa.

The correlative pronouns 'ya' and 'te' in VII.29 and VII.30 indicate that these two pertain to different sets of aspirants. Similarly the correlative pronouns yah and sah in BG.VIII.9-10, VIII.13 and 14 bear testimony to the same fact. Thus Ramanuja's interpretation that different modes of meditation are prescribed for different types of aspirants is not totally unfounded. That a man contemplates on those aspects which he desires most is a fundamental fact.

It should be noted that Ramanuja interprets 'madbhavam yati' in BG.VIII.5 as 'mama yo bhavah tam yati.' Further he makes it clear that in whatever manner the

1. Adhidaiva is Hiranyagarbha according to Śankara, and Brahma, the creator, according to Madhva.
2. See RGB.III.10.
devotee meditates on God, the corresponding state does the devotee attain. He quotes the instance of Adhibhāraṭa (Bhagavata V.7-15) who, though a sage, became attached to a deer to such an extent that he died thinking of that animal only, and who, consequently, became a deer in his next birth.

8. BG.VIII.8 says, 'paramāṁ purusāṁ yati'. BG. VIII.10 says 'tam param purusam eti'. BG. VIII.11 declares another 'state' of (padaṁ) of liberation, sought by self-controlled sages. BG.VIII.13 refers to 'parama gati', which is explained in BG.VIII.21 as a permanent state which is His 'parama dhāma'. Finally VIII.15 says God-attainment is the highest Goal, parama sāmsiddhi' (double superlatives to be noted), which is reiterated in VIII.16. Thus it can be seen that the different states of liberation mentioned at different contexts do not necessarily refer to one and the same state.

9. Again, BG.VIII.10 requires the aspirant to fix the prāna between the eyebrows at the time of death, while BG.VIII.12 requires the aspirant to fix his prāna at the head. Naturally, the

1. RGB.VIII.6
goals attained by the two aspirants referred to above must be different, for, scriptural passages such as Ch. Up. 8.3.6 declares different results following the fixing of āsya at different places at the time of death.

10. Moreover, at the very beginning (upakrama) of the portion dealing with bhakti and upasana, in BG.VII.16, the Gītā actually distinguishes four different varieties of aspirants. Thus it is not altogether wrong to identify the particular ends and the particular modes of meditation based on the particular class of aspirants to which one belongs.

Thus we see that Ramanuja ably integrates the diverse goals of human life portrayed in the Gītā within the compass of the three purusarthas, viz. aisvarya, kaivalya and Bhagavatprapti. Seeking such ideals as dharma, artha and Kama is not bad in itself. Man seeks what he values most. God is the ultimate bestower of the rewards irrespective of the rewards sought and the source from which they are sought.¹ No attainment can complete the compass of human possibility except God-

1. RGB.VII.21-22; Il.23-24.
attainment according to Ramanuja, and this formulation
receives ample inspiration and support from the Gita.
'Soul emancipation' or the attainment of kaivalya is
recognized as a purusartha, but it falls short of man's
ultimate possibility. As suggested by Vedanta Desika, 
each goal and every attainment along the spiritual line
has its place in the hierarchy of attainments, the
realization of each of them pointing to the supremacy of
the next, until the highest goal of reaching the All-
comprehensive Supreme Being is reached. God, the All-
encompassing Infinite Being, alone can be the source
of supreme bliss and therefore the worthiest object of
attainment.

1. 'तत्र प्रविधिः प्राधिकृतस्वभाष्यप्रतिपाद्यता यथाप्रयत्नम्
प्राधिकृतप्रधानत्तत्त्वस्वभाष्य पारम्परिकांतां
श्रीपाल्लके 'प्रत्ययाम् व पेशस्य तिमयं
सूचतिताः - जिति ।'
- V.J in G.S.R.32.