CHAPTER SEVEN
SRI RAMANUJA'S THEISM & OTHER THEISMS.

There are many kinds of theism or philosophies about the nature of God. Thus one may believe that God exists; one may believe that every thing that is God; one may believe that God exists but is in Heaven and rules the worlds from there; one may believe that God is the Ultimate Personality but not the Ultimate existence; one may believe that God is not what man conceives Him to be but transcendent to all that he knows and is unknowable though one can not escape postulating His existence. In a general sense so far as human knowledge goes God is an inescapable reality whom man must worship and pray to for the sake of liberation, redemption and ultimate happiness.

Rama's dictionary explains theism as in general a type of religious philosophy which incorporates a conception of God as a unitary being. This is monotheism—belief in one God. There are religious philosophies which postulate the existence of many gods, or a hierarchy of gods working under one supreme God.

The speculations as to the relation of God to the world give rise to three great forms: God identified with the world is Pantheism. Rama's considers that it is emphasized that God is identical with the world rather than that the world is identical with God. The second
form is that once having created the world - the question is whether he did it with material already available or out of nothing - God became relatively disinterested in it. This is Deism. God may take interest in the world—presumably working well - when it begins to go wrong and rectify it. In which case He comes whenever there is occasion for His presence or His power.

The third form is God working in and through the world and the individuals. This is theism proper according to Ruse's dictionary. "Accordingly God either coincides with the world, is external to it, or is immanent. The more personal human-like God the more theological the theism, the more appealing to a personal adjustment in prayer, worship etc. Which presupposes either that God being like man may be swayed in His decision, having no definite plan or subsists in the very stuff man is made of." This is humanistic theism. Immanence of God entails agency in the world, His presence, revelation, involvement in the historic process. Immanence has been justified by Hindu and ascetic thinkers, Christian apologists, ancient and modern metaphysical idealists and by natural science philosophers.

The transcendency view of God removes Him from human affairs and renders fellowship and communication with Him ineffaceable, though it preserves God's majesty
and absoluteness. Transcendentists allow God to fade away even like Descartes and Spinoza, in some aspects. Rune's also suggests that 'the age-old Indian Pantheism evident in much of Vedic and most Vedic philosophy in which the personal pronoun may be the only distinguishing mark between metaphysical logic and theology. \[\ldots\] in Hegel.

The age-old Indian view can be explained in the great sentence - \textit{Sarvan Alavidaam vrbara}. All this (world - the moving and the unmoving - jagati\textbar agat) is Brahma. This does not mean that the world exhausts Brahma. Brahma is what exceeds the world - the Vedic passage says that he is ten-inches or measures beyond or above the universe. Thus Indian theism does not equate the world with Brahma or Brahma with the world.

If Pantheism means the identity between the individual and God - as expressed in the famous Upanisadic passage 'Aham Brahmam\textbar I am Brahma' or 'So \textit{ham sami}' 'He is I' this would be subjective pantheism. Both these kinds of pantheism are available.

Sri Ramana's theism is Organic Theism though it can be called a kind of pan-entheism, where the individuals and the world form bodies of God and are supported immutably and led to higher and higher levels of spiritual awareness of the Godhead beyond the world of \[\ldots\]
Sensory experiences.

Sri Narayana recognizes that the Supreme deity or God is a person, but a person not in the social sense of humanity but in the sense that He is the Ultimate Ruler—creator, sustainer and destroyer or withdrawer, of all creative manifestation. He is with Infinite transcendental attributes which are auspicious and untainted by the gunas like sattva, rajas and tamas which belong to the world of change. He is transcendent because He is not subject to the changes and modifications of nature or of the souls. He is transcendent because all seek Him for support and refuge. He is omniscient and omnipotent and above all He is beneficent. He is perfect in every sense of the term. He is qualified by the partnership of Sri. He cannot be proved by perception, and inference. He is known through Veda and realised through Upasana or Shakti as prescribed by the Vedas and Upanisads and the Bhagavad-Gita-śatra-Pāñcaratna Ānanda. Though transcendent He is easily accessible to the prapanna and Shakti in his atman.

Brahman is adī-vidśa and is known as Nārāyaṇa—the refuge and support and goal of all souls (narsa). He is not other than God. In Advaita there is a difference between Brahma and God. God is Brahma as qualified by Māyā and is then known as creator etc., of
the world which is a product of Ṛgveda. For Śaṅkara Śrīmad in his subtle condition of the modes of old and acid in the causal state, brahman old and acid in their gross condition are the effect or created condition. The inner ruler of both is God. Thus both transcendent and immanent God is the goal of all, He, everywhere all and so such is known as Viṣṇudeva. He is at, cit and āguna and awanta. So the theism of Śaṅkara includes God's tr transcendence and immanence.

The element of Deism—that God is outside the world and watches like the clock maker how the whole world works—is also present in the general conception of Śaṅkara's appraisal of the descent of God whenever there is increase of sinfulness and decrease of righteous behaviour as the Lord Kṛṣṇa puts it. It does not mean absentee landlordism rather it is a watchful spectatorship over his creation, which is naturally correct and law-abiding except in that area of individual behaviour where he had granted freedom or rather responsibility. Nature abides by the Laws of God. It is man who has been given laws by which he could act in order to be happy. This freedom to do or not to do is what makes for the set back of law and for the Divine descent (avatāra). This is a kind of occasionalism which the thinkers of the 17th and 18th century in Europe entertained. As a religious concept there is an element of this very necessary to explain the birth of avatāras of messiahs and prophets who are 'occasioned by the need of the hour.'
The Deism of Islam reveals a transcendent One God who alone is God ruling the world. Man's relation to Him is one of absolute obedience. His mode of approach is prayer and fasting. There is no question of absentee-lordism for as Browning puts it "God's in His Heaven and all's right with the world". Prophets alone come as messengers of God and restore the order and rule of God, if it deteriorates. Direct descent of God is not accepted for it would be the acceptance of the impotence of God.

The Deism of Madhva, the great Vaishnava Teacher does not accept the absentee landlordism. It is different from the Cartesian according to which God is known by an innate idea clearly and distinctly. The proof for the existence of God is ultimately the scripture, but the inference based on causality can also suggest the existence of God. The creation of the world does require a creator and this creator is God. God is however transcendent to the world though he can be known in the hearts of the saints. The relationship between God and the souls is one of complete dependence and distinctions. Madhva considers that pluralism is the truth and there are innumerable souls each distinct from the others. God is only and the only independent being; all the rest are dependent on Him.
God, souls and nature are the triple entities and external relations. None exist between them. God cannot be considered to be immanent in nature but He does impel all elements and nature from within to strive for their liberation and service of God. He energises all but is not in all. Dr. J. Krishnamurti Sarma holds the view that in Dvaita the entry of God into matter is to render possible the modifications of matter at each and every stage, since matter in itself has no such power to transform itself from one stage to other without His energisation.

This idea is expressed in the Taittiriya Upanised (Valli 2) when it speaks of Brahman as creating all this and entering into them and becoming known by all those names. The supreme being possessed of infinite powers, enters into various stages of evolution of matter and beings about each and every stage of such manifestation of things Himself. The presence of God is felt everywhere and in everything that exists. Creation means liability to change into various kinds. This

1. Tat sarvāḥ ta evāṃ prāvīsat, tadānā prāvīśya senaṁ tyaceṁ khasvat,

2. Tatāra tatāra sthitī vispañcacakto prabodhakāḥ abh eva māmākākhaṁ kavate svarvaṁ anjasāḥ || B.8.8. 11, 3, 11
This applies to prakrti, kāla, nāmat etc. In the case of the jīvas the association with the bodily or other psycho-physical changes of state is all that is intended by 'creation' for there is no birth of jīva as spirit (cit). Passing from one state of dependence to another state is itself a new birth for the jīva.

The conception of parādhina-visesa distinguishes the manifestations of the Supreme Being from its various forms of embodiment to which the jīvas are subject. In the case of God the manifestations of the Supreme Being are voluntary and independent manifestations by His own free will - i.e., not parādhina, whereas the position of the individual soul is entirely different and every psycho-physical change of his state is dependent on some other factors. It is dependent origination.

Madhava's philosophy gives equal importance to the transcendent and immanent characteristics of God in respect of the universe.

Madhava's explanation of the omni-energising nature of God is expressed in his commentary on the Gītā. Madhava points out that all powers of nature, in whatever form or shape they are manifested, are ultimately His and vest in Him. When it is used in specific terms 'I am the 'taste' in the waters etc., it is emphasised that God Himself is the determining cause of the
distinctive natures of the various tattvas, their essences and their characteristics themselves in a special sense. It is not to be understood that those special characteristics and essences are determined by the intrinsic natures of the substances themselves. Not only the substances but their respective essences and characteristics themselves are all derived from His immanent power and presence in them. This is how Bodhisattva explains the immanence of God in the world.  

The deism that explains the presence of God by the pervasive power of the Divine and His activity by the energizing activity of the Divine power within each and every one is acceptable in so far as it does not involve the Divine in the imperfections of these material elements and so on. A theism which does not put God out of the world for fear of involving Him in the processes of the material world and beings does not really accept the omnipotence of God. But His perfection could yet be maintained if the world were going all righteously which it does not, unless we hold that all these are illusory imperfections. Externality of God speaks for Deism, but immanent energizing of all things and beings speaks for omnipotence.
One way of resolving the contradiction between immanence that entails involvement and transcendence that avoids this involvement in nature's changes and souls' imperfections is to accept the coexistence of God to all that is impossible. The question of disobedience that results in sinfulness has to be solved by all theisms. Is sinfulness something also made possible by God if God does all without exception? Religions are forced to explain how sin became possible at all and if it rests on the freedom of the individual is this freedom compatible with God's immanence and control? Perfect dependence on God for all activities and essences and characteristics could leave no place for the occurrence of sin or disobedience. This world would be perfect and is to use Leibniz's expression 'this is the best of all possible worlds'.

4. Purusah prakritih kaila zabah ityadisu kramat vihara eva jananam purusa tadvetosam paratantavissessho hi vihara iti kirtitah ( S.S.B. Madhava II, 3.9 )

Tathapi rasadi svabhavam sarasam ca svabhavatva sarvatra ca vishayotapi sa eva nityamakah. Na tvabhadi-
niyamahubaddho rasadih tat sarvatvadisa iti sarayati agsu rasam iti vishayasadaha. (SB - bhā, VII, 8)
Imperfection would be illusory and the conclusion of Advaita that all this is illusory would have been arrived at through Dvaita.

The omnipotence of God does not so well with the freedom of the individual soul even if it be a restricted freedom or dependent freedom, for which an explanation has to be given. But it is precisely on this restricted or dependent freedom that the possibility of free worship and love and service of God becomes possible.

Ramanuja holds that the individual soul is finite and distinct from Ahriman or God who is infinite. But the dharma-bhūta-jñāna of the individual soul is capable of being infinite in the sense that it can pervade infinitely even like God's dharma-bhūta-jñāna. God is God is infinite in respect of dharma-bhūta-jñāna as well. The individual is dependent on God, it is His seen and God is the semi, the independent on which the dependents depend. Whereas Mādava stops with this aspect of dependence of the soul and nature on God who is the independent, Ramanuja reveals that the individual souls are the body (sārīras) of God, so too Nature is the body of God. This explains the immanence of God who works within the individual and his psycho-physical organism, sustaining, supporting, controlling and enjoying.
Dhakti relationship in Madhva's view is one of service (ān-
satva); in Ramanuja's view it is one of tattvastva (His
belongingness) which is that of being full of God being pos-
sessed by Him as Self (śarīri or ātma or aham). The tran-
scendent nature of God is not annulled but maintained by the
conception of the mukti which means attaining Him in the Para-
tattva or Vaikuntha. God's stātuses are fully recognized.
He is the Para the transcendent, who had become the vyūha
in four fold forms of Yāsudava, Saṃkarṣana, Pradyumna and
Aniruddha, or the creator, sustainer and destroyer etc., He
is the Viṣṇu - the historical avatāras for redeeming the
souls and the world. He is the inner self (antaryāmin) of
all souls and nature. He is the worshippable Idol in the
sacred temples. Thus Ramanuja's conception of God is inte-
gral and all these are but one only and should not be consi-
dered to be different. This is the doctrine of Oneness in
Fiveness or multiplicity, distinguished only by function or
personality.

The concept of Brahma as śeṣa and as śarīri is of
profound religious and mystical import. Brahma is both the
upāya and upāya, the means and the goal. The five stātuses
of God beyond the creation and within the creation and the
individual are all for the purpose of illustrating the two
fold nature of Brahma as upāya (para) and upāya (the vyūha,
vibhava, antaryāmi or hṛdda and āraṇa).
according to Śāmī Viśnunātha theolo. ia. The bijāvad Gītā fully explains the manyfold nātu. on brahman taken up for the purpose of bōm, the brahman to the li-
beration of the individual souls.

Matter serves as a medium for the self-realisation of the individuals, but self-realisation does not mean self-satisfaction of the individuals but for the delight or satisfaction of God. While both the cit (conscient souls) and acit (inconscient nature) are bodies of God and depend on His will for every function of theirs and their existence, cit alone is conscious of this sustenance and depend on God. Thus the motive of conduct is shifted from satisfaction of itself to the satisfaction of God, and every act becomes an act of mainsarya or loving service. Freedom in the fullest and meaningful sense of that term is obtained when it completely devotes every action to the Divine Lord within and everywhere. In this sense the relation of šeṣa and šesi or śarīra and śarīri is in the context of action translated into that of dāsa and svāmi. Dāsatva enhances the service—love. Thus though real dāsatva is said to be possible only in Dvaita which holds the eternal distinctions between God and soul and eternal externality, it is seen that Rama-
uja reveals how an intimate dāsatva develops out of the śarīra—śarīri bhava which is mediated by the
The place of bhakti is such that it must lead to surrender or śāradāyati in the relation between God and the soul. The intimate association that results from the surrender is called mystically tāman-yatvā. In Dvaita the direct vision of God (up rūkṣa-jñāna) is the only method by which the individual soul can obtain the grace of God. It is true that the Hari-dassas of Dvaita have revealed the dvaita-bhakti which affirms the nitya-dāsatva of the souls. Dvaita emphasises that this aparākṣa-jñāna may be attained by a life of complete renunciation and meditation or by gradual attainment of knowledge (jñāna) through the performance of karma onjoined by the sāstras according to one's station. A few highly specialised souls like Īṣanaka (adopt) the first method. The rest have to adopt the second method of karma. Karma when done disinterestedly can lead to jñāna or aparākṣa jñāna. Not the abandonment of action but the performance of them as indicated by the sāstras as duties to be performed leads to aparākṣa jñāna. The only motive in prescribing sacrifices like agnistoma etc., is to induce men to perform them in the true spirit of niśāma and thus prepare one for aparākṣa. Nādiya looks upon the greatness and majesty of God's auspiciousness of form as the central thesis of the Bhagavad Gītā. The transcendental aspect of God is emphasized.
in the Visvarūpādhyāya and the Amushottama Yuga, while God's immanent aspect is elucidated in Gita's chapters 7 and 8. The non-physical concept of satibimba - śākīva or dependence of the ķīva on God is the basis on which ķēdhva interprets the contradictions between activism and asorption. There can be no question of śamya or māpu equality between God and the ķīva.

This is a very important doctrine of śādha's theology. Real bhakti is possible only when one acts as a ķāsa of God where all work is worshipful service of the Divine Infinite Only independent God. This view is not justified for the scripture states that thec will be 'Paramam śamya upaiti'

Vishistadvaita accepts that bhakti can be of the form of śāsa-svāmi relationships. In fact in ordinary parlance one speaks of oneself as śāsa or bhrtya of God. However it recognizes other kinds of bhakti that are denoted by the sakhya-bhāva, or sakhya-bhāva, nāyaka-nāyaki-bhāva, Mātrā-putra-bhāva, pitru-putra-bhāva, ācarya-sisya-bhāva, and even sakti-sakte-bhāva also. In samayatva there happens paramam śamya. This is shown to the compatible with the finiteness of the sit where the dharma-bhūta jñāna becomes equally omnipervading as that of the śvaras'.
Advaïta holds that God is less than the Brahman, because one must attain that primal condition of Brahman whereas Íśvara is the causal pūrṇa nātu with nāya. Íśvara īśyujya could lead to transcendence of Íśvara and union with Brahman—which is the non-causal condition. Bhakti is only till one attains Íśvara after that jñāna that one is Brahman alone will prevail. Viśiṣṭādvaita by its acceptance of the Para-rūpa of Íśvara and the identity between Brahman and Íśvara without any differentiation or conditionality shows that jñāna itself becomes bhakti or rather bhakti is a higher form of jñāna when it becomes an aspiration for union with the Para-form. Viśiṣṭādvaita by recognizing the Para-bhakti, ara-jñāna and para-bhakti as three stages of bhakti has given a true and integral form of bhakti.

II.

While the criticisms of bhakti are pre-eminently philosophical the practical approach to the Ultimate is not in dispute between the different schools of Bhakti. The organic approach of Viśiṣṭādvaita reveals more possibilities of experiencing God's cosmic transcendence as well as human immensity and societal harmony. The Acaintya bhedābheda approach is a logical formulation of the inner experience of the Divine who reveals two poises of being different and identical with the individual soul. The later formulations of bhakti are of
the "social value which try to train the ears and eyes and some organs to practice divine name and form and are more useful to the culture. They become almost rituals, however artistic and beautiful and are forms of shakti but not shakti it all.

shakti in its deepest form is adhyatmic experience of being enjoyed by God rather than enjoying God— it is a complete giving up of oneself to the Divine for His own sake. This giving up of oneself is like the unbroken viscous flow of oil— tāladāna— nischnñavat. Playing on the word dāra— dāra; one arrives at the word Pa-dāra who is represented as the finest personification of shakti. Some have indeed, given this interpretation to shakti— the upward moving love of man is adhara, the downward flowing grace of God is dāra.

III.
Professor Rudolf Otto in his book on Christianity and the Religion of Grace has explained the fundamental difference between Christianity and Shakti religion.

Professor Otto is well known as an earnest student of Ramanuja's philosophy and had translated the Sri Bhāṣya into German. He is eminently qualified to draw the parallels and distinguishing features that differentiate shakti from christianity.
The Lord's prayer is the prayer of all. Does it read just like a Brahma's prayer to God? It is stated that the adherents of all theistic religions refer to the Christian Lord's prayer as a sort of universal prayer. It could seem that it is not a prayer of the differentiations of theological schools. But, even then, the Lord's prayer is capable of being recited by one and all. Rudolf Otto points out that this cannot be. For the very address 'Our Father which art in Heaven' would be doing violence to its true sense and character if the attempt was made to fit into the Upanishad \textit{Gita}. He goes on to say that 'when we come to the prayer "Thy Kingdom come" it would be entirely out of place in such surroundings'.

Dr Otto forgets that the \textit{Upanishad Gita} emphasizes that one of God's triple aims in his advent is the re-establishment of God's righteous kingdom on earth. Christianity it is said emphasizes the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth as it is in Heaven as its differentia from other religions. However this is the special purpose of the Advent or Avatar of God as stated again and again in \textit{Upanishad Gita} and the Agamas. Unless it is held that there is only descent in that of Jesus Christ and no further advent is necessary to establish the Kingdom of God on Earth, it is not a distinguishing feature
at all. There is however no reason to think that there can be further advents of God or of Christ and there have been many who are looking forward to the second coming. Dr. Watson's statement like that of other Christian theologians is an over-statement. The raison d'être for the advent in an important element - the fulfillment of man. Indian thought also talks about the increase of sinful behaviour on the part of the people or some section of the people. The removal of these and the restoration of righteous rule or dharma seem to be the most important criteria for taking an avatar. The advent of Christ is for the taking upon oneself the sin or making and thus remove the sin of man. But this gives more place for sin in the conception of man rather than the establishing of the Kingdom of God. Modern thinking considers that the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth whatever this may mean is more the reason than the removal or ransoming or retribution of sin of man, especially vicariously. shakti schools emphasise the sinfulness of man which consists in his being finite, ignorant and 'knowing the right but following the wrong' and knowing the wrong yet following it helplessly'.

It is the grace of God which makes one speedily righteous even when he is one addicted to evil-doing or an asura. The Shagavad Gītā emphasizes that God removes all sins from the individual who has sought his shelter in Him.
alone. The concept of win is the radically differentiating, point not conishing and Christianity.

The Christian theologian all too often makes a mistake when he compares his God with the God of his own or Viśiṣṭādvaita, for he compares him with the God of Advaita Vedānta who is the second worst. In fairness he should compare his God with his trinity with the quintinity of the Agama, he is twice worst.

Further the hope of the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth is much ridiculed with the utopian dreams even of the saints. They have come to the conclusion that the kingdom of God is not of the earth. So the establishment of the rule of Christianity over the peoples of the world through conquest and conversion alone remains as a possibility. The Hindu conception on the other hand is the feasible kingdom of God in the heart of man through love and devotion, and the experience of Him in all. It is not the political kingdom, even a Rama-Rajya, but the supreme transcendence over the fear of samsāra and transmigration that is being sought in the Viśiṣṭādvaita. Where Viśiṣṭādvaita emphasises the personal or individual salvation through union with God through devotion, Christianity adheres to the overwhelming conception of a Kingdom of God which must be realised if there should be peace on
faith. The idea comes from a universal church or universal idea based on human lofty ideals. The ancient view of Viśisṭādvaita as a is said by its Ālvar or Tamil mystics also proclaim the rival of the Kingdom of God when the Adi-Bīṣṭ or Avatar descends.

The idea of creation in Viśisṭādvaita gives an entirely different meaning from what it has in Christianity. Creation is a process that is going on along with sustenance and destruction—it is a temporal process. It is a field within which the individual souls have the opportunity of experiencing and attaining the Ultimate Godhead. This world is for the exclusive play of God in one sense, but it is the play of grace wherein he lifts up those who cling to Him or have surrendered to Him.

Christianity holds that creation arises out of its teleology and its eschatology. God will realise His glory in the world; therefore it must be His creation. From the biblical point of view creation became God's 'first advent'. Bhakti can hardly play any important part in this scheme. Bhakti is integral to the nature and function of the individual whose dependence on God becomes more and more a dependence for God and not for himself. The Viśisṭādvaitic teleology shows that creation is for the individual souls rather than for God. The
The love of God for the world seems to be more intimate than what Christian theology can grant.

Professor Otto Schmidt says that Hindu religion lacks 'historical sense', and that the drwaad has some connect on with its religion. Arahma is said to be indifferent and inactive, but this is in man of Advaita not the Arahman of Viistadvaita. Secondly, the historical is all for the Christian. The history of religion appears to him as a wonderful preparator for the progress of the gospel through the world and for the coming of the Christian pattern of God. The Hindu puranas especially the Bhagavata with a full historical sense reveals the several manifestations or descents of God in so many forms resplendent with auspicious attributes heightened by love. All of them in a sense revealing the greater and greater influx of Godliness in the world. If historical means that Jesus was the historically dated person who has revealed his god-like nature and Hinduism did not furnish this - the legends of Krsna are also historical in a similar sense. The world is a Illai or historical play, vibhuti not a meaningless illusion.

The Shakti religion speaks of liberation by grace, but it would be improper to say that it is identical with
the Lutheran formula 'justification by faith alone'.
A Christian may say 'where there is sin, life and holiness'. The same idea is expressed by Krishna in the Gita union with: "I renounce all dharma; take refuge in me alone; I will free you from all sins. Do not grieve". Liberation from all sins however is a much lower level than the liberation from all rebirths or returns to the earth or earth-consciousness or pasa and samsara or bandha. From the point of view of the history of religion bhakti has passed through several phases firstly of prayer for daily existence and from fear; it was then a transmigration or contract; then alone it has become a matter of love of God for God's sake. This last has been for theological and philosophical reality, and meant an attainment of perfect knowledge (para-jiśāna). Though there exists external similarity between the bhakti religion and Christianity the former reaches a higher form of God by way of direct union made possible by love than the latter which reaches the historical person alone. Mystics of Christianity like Boehme have reached the higher Para levels of Para-Brahma bhakti through Para-jiśāna.

Freedom from Samsāra is the first realisation through Bhakti the attainment of Blessedness and Bliss or immortality is the second step. Both are through the
offices of God and as such divine men... Both the results are divine effects of God's grace. In the parable of the lost prince who returns to his estate, which is similar to the parable of the prodigal son, it is not merely a God who gives release from samsara but a God who seeks and calls his lost one out of divine compassion.

In Christianity the doctrine of justification has been evolved out of the simple proclamation of the God of the Gospel who rejects the self-righteousness of the pharisees and seeks sinners. This could be an unwarranted extension of the spirit of compassion according to the Bhakti schools which emphasize that karma will take its course but its sting would be taken away and would be borne in the spirit of spiritual resignation. Sinners would be speedily made into followers of righteousness and one would no longer harp on his sinnership as an eligibility for salvation.

It is clear that the function of Isvara as redeemer and saviour are high-lighted by Christianity and God becomes the Lord of the inner conscience which remembers its guilt and disobedience. But that is not the all about Isvara. The prophet of Christianity or rather its God becomes Himself the atoner of the karmic...
result of guilt or guilt-consciousness which came to be most important element for seeking Christ even as the Harpya of the Ṛṣas. Vicarious suffering by God is indeed a fascinating doctrine about the depth of God's love for man. This is of course unique doctrine but it does not appear that it is necessarily an attribute of God.

Ramas's dictionary explains that atonement is a religious act of expressing the consciousness of one's own sins by penitence, reconciliation, giving satisfaction to him against whom the sin has been committed. It is specifically a theological dogma meaning the reconciliation between God and man who had sinned against God, hence given offence to Him. This was affected by Jesus Christ according to Christian theology. This function was envisaged in a different way by the Śrī or Divine Mother in Śrī Vaishnavism. Śīlā devī, an aspect of Śrī, shields the sinner from the wrath of God and makes Him take a favourable view and save him. This mediator or reconciling principle is inherent in God as an inseparable personality within or with Him. This does not entail the vicariousness in suffering which the Divine Śrī has to take. However the mystics or Śrī Vaishnavism had sung about the great labour of love expressed by the Divine Fair in their incarnation or
descents. The question of vicariousness would arise only when the Divine demands somebody to suffer for others or another as the price of reconciliation or atonement. But where love is alone the principle, the fascination exercised by the principle of vicarious-suffering appears to be a dramatic expression for the conversion of man towards love of Jesus rather than God Himself.

The idea which Dr Otto has in his mind that as regards Bhakti religion, it is enough if God merely has power to draw the individual soul up from the stream of unblessedness and gather them to Himself in his net of grace. But then the view that he really criticizes is that of Advaita not of Visistadvaita. Almost all the criticisms of Dr Otto proceed from his non-acquaintance with the traditions of Bhakti religion. The Upanisads themselves and the shagavad Gitā and the Vedānta Sūtras have been commented upon by Sri Ramanuja. The Mystics of South India, the Alvar approaches to God—Union are shown to be philosophically at union or at one with the Upanisads and the prastāhātrasūtra. The pāñcarātra Agama clearly states the principles underlying the Nature of God in His fivefold nature. These concepts have been woven into an integral fabric making bhakti and
prapatti, the dynamics of divine living and liberation after death and entering into the Kingdom of God (Paramapada or Vaikuntam).