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1. **Introductory Remark**

We have come to the end of our studies. In the preceding pages we have attempted to narrate the philosophy of self as found in Svāminārāyaṇism. We, now, propose to compare Svāminārāyaṇa's philosophy of self with those of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Vallabha and Plato. We shall attempt to bring out points of agreement and disagreement between Svāminārāyaṇa and these philosophers.

2. **Svāminārāyaṇa and Śaṅkara**

On reading Vacanāmṛta, in view of the vehement criticism of the so called followers of Śaṅkarācārya, one is likely to carry an impression that there can never be any agreement between Svāminārāyaṇa and Śaṅkarācārya on any point. But such an impression would be far from correct. It is true that differences between Svāminārāyaṇa and Śaṅkara are many and more striking. But that does not mean that they do not and would not agree on any point. They do agree on certain points.
We shall attempt to bring out certain points of agreement and disagreement between the two. First we shall note the points on which both Svāminārāyaṇa and Śaṅkara agree. The following are the points of their agreement.

1. Both believe in the authority of Vedas and also other orthodox scriptures like Upaniṣads, Bhāgavata, Purāṇas and Smṛti.

2. Both are opposed to Jainism.

3. According to both, selves (jīvas) and the world are beginningless.

4. According to Śaṅkara, every one is conscious of the existence of one's own self. No one thinks "I am not." But although we know that the self is, we do not know what it is. According to Śaṅkara, self is both known and unknown. Svāminārāyaṇa would completely agree with this view of Śaṅkara. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, one can have knowledge of self only about its existence and not about its metaphysical nature. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, self is, to use the words of
Dr. J.A. Yajnik, "mediately suggested rather than immediately known." This means that according to both Śvāminārāyaṇa and Śaṅkara, we can have knowledge about the existence of self, but we cannot have knowledge as to what its nature actually is. In other words, according to both, we cannot have the knowledge of onological character of self. Thus, according to both, self is both knowable and unknowable.

5. According to Śaṅkara, the superelevation of one's self on one's body is a glaring instance of one's beginningless ignorance. Śvāminārāyaṇa also regards the identification of one's own self with one's body as a case of ignorance. This ignorance can be removed by absolute knowledge by knowledge (Kevalajñāna) according to Śaṅkara and discriminatory knowledge (vivekajñāna) according to Śvāminārāyaṇa.

6. Both believe in the law of Karma.

7. Both believe in the efficacy of knowledge of effect mokṣa (liberation). Of course, Śvāminārāyaṇa's
concept of Knowledge is different from that of Śaṅkara.

8. Both believe in the interminable nature of mokṣa.
   Once liberated is liberated for ever. According to both, once the state of liberation is attained, there is no return from it.

9. Both believe in liberation while embodied (jīvamukti).

Thus, there are several points of which Svāminārāyaṇa is found to be one with Śaṅkara. In fact, if we keep aside, Śaṅkara's ultimate point of view and focus our attention only on what he has said from the empirical standpoint, we find that there is more agreement than disagreement between them. Even if we look into the individual self's empirical relation to God, Svāminārāyaṇa's view does not appear to be in conflict with that of Śaṅkara. According to both Svāminārāyaṇa and Śaṅkara, God is the highest object of worship for individual selves. According to both, God is the giver of fruits to individual selves according to their deeds.
Now, we shall attempt to bring out the salient points of disagreement between the two great philosophers. The differences between them are striking and fundamental.

1. Śaṅkara makes a distinction between jīva and Ātman.

According to Śaṅkara, Ātman is a metaphysical entity and jīva is an empirical entity. In Śaṅkara's view, when Ātman is associated with antaḥkaraṇa (internal organ) it becomes jīva. Svāminarāyaṇa does not admit any distinction between jīva and Ātman. For him, jīva, Ātman and jīva-ātman are synonyms. According to Svāminarāyaṇa jīva is the real subject of knowledge. Antaḥkaraṇa which is the outcome of matter cannot be the subject of knowledge.

2. According to Śaṅkara, Brahman alone is the supreme reality. All finite selves are nothing but appearances of Brahman. The relation between the self and Brahman is that of identity. Self and Brahman are not different. They are one. According to Śaṅkara, the individual self is nothing but Brahman
limited by the unreal adjuncts caused by Māyā.
There is no reality in such a thing as an individual soul absolutely different from Brahman. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, God (Puruṣottama) is the supreme reality. But individual selves are not appearances of God. Individual selves are as real as God. They are, according to Svāminārāyaṇa, eternally different from God. They are eternally coexistent with God.

3. According to Śaṅkara, Self is only one. There cannot be many selves. Any finite self is identical with Brahman. Plurality of selves is unreal. The appearance of plurality of selves is caused by Māyā. Svāminārāyaṇa refutes this monistic doctrine and says that selves are many. Māniness of selves is not an appearance, but a stark reality. Svāminārāyaṇa advocates the doctrine of plurality of selves. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, selves are not only different from God, but are different from one another also. Each self is distinct from the other. There is an infinite number of selves, each having
its own distinct and inalienable individuality.

4. According to Śaṅkara, self is pure consciousness only. It is not a conscious subject or a knowing subject. If self is a mere knowing subject, it will not remain immutable, because knowing will involve change. But, real self is immutable. And, therefore, self is not a conscious subject but consciousness itself. Svāminārāyaṇa repels this position of Śaṅkara and says that self is not mere consciousness. Self is a spiritual substance in which consciousness inheres as an inseparable quality. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, as the consciousness is a quality, knowing does not involve any change in the self which is the underlying substance of that quality.

5. From the above point of difference between Śaṅkara and Svāminārāyaṇa, another point of difference between them emerges. According to Śaṅkara, self itself is knowledge. Knowledge is the nature of Self. There is no knowledge apart from self.
Svāmīnārāyaṇa is in total disagreement with this position of Śaṅkara. According to him, Knowledge is the quality of self. Knowledge, by itself, independent of self, does not exist. It exists only as a quality of self in the self. Knowledge by itself is never possible. Knowledge is not possible without knowing subject. As pointed out by Dr. J. A. Yajnik, "Svāmīnārāyaṇa believes that Knowledge is always of a reality, and belongs to reality, and therefore should not be regarded as a reality itself."

According to Śaṅkara, as Brahman is the only reality, the self, the object of knowledge as well as the instruments of Knowledge are unreal. And therefore, all knowledge is false, false in its very inception Svāmīnārāyaṇa is a thorough realist. According to him, self, the object of Knowledge as well as the instruments of knowledge are real. The objects are not created by perceiving mind. They are there and exist irrespective of perceiving mind. And therefore, according to Svāmīnārāyaṇa, all knowledge is real.
7. According to Śāṅkara, the self is ubiquitous (vibhu). According to Svāminārāyaṇa is not ubiquitous. It is atomic (anu). According to Śāṅkara, self cannot be of the atomic size. The position of Śāṅkara on this point, as worked out by Dr. G. N. Joshi, is that "if the self is of the atomic size, the fact of sensation extending over the whole body cannot be accounted for." The answer of Svāminārāyaṇa to the position of Śāṅkara is that the self pervades the whole body by means of its quality, namely, consciousness. He illustrates the point and explains that just as a lamp placed in the centre of the room, is seen to extend to the whole of the room, in the same way the consciousness of the self dwelling in the heart pervades the entire body. Svāminārāyaṇa has clarified that it is consciousness, and not the self, which is ubiquitous.

8. According to Śāṅkara, Brahman is non-active and the self, being Brahman itself, is also non-active. According to Śāṅkara all action is unreal and false. Brahman is the only reality, one without the second
Therefore agency cannot be attributed to Brahman.
Now, self is Brahman and therefore agency cannot
be attributed to self. According to Śaṅkara, self
is never an agent (Kartā). Svāminārāyaṇa repudiates
the Śaṅkarite doctrine of non-agency of self.
According to Svāminārāyaṇa, self is an agent.¹⁰

In his view, agency belongs to self as its inherent attribute. If agency is denied to self, then according
to Svāminārāyaṇism, endeavours for attainment of
liberation involving Bhakti and Upāsanā, would become
impossible with the result that no self in bondage
would ever be in a position to attain liberation.

9. According to Śaṅkara, the ultimate reality, Brahman,
is formless and impersonal. According to Svāminārā-
ayaṇa, the ultimate reality has a form and personality.
Svāminārāyaṇa calls his God Supreme Person (Puru-
ṣottama) who always has a two-armed and two-legged
divine personality like a human being. Svāminārāyaṇa
advances various arguments against the doctrine of
formlessness and impersonality of the ultimate
reality as advocated by Śaṅkara. With great vehemence
Svāminārāyaṇa seeks to establish that the ultimate reality possesses both form and personality. Svāminārāyaṇa says that if God formless He cannot undertake any activity. Without form no activity is possible.

10. According to Śaṅkara, Conceptual knowledge of Brahman is not possible. The moment we attempt to describe Brahman in rational terms, IT is brought down to the position of finite. According to Śaṅkara, as observed by S.R. Bhatt, "the Knowledge of Brahman is in the form of identity consciousness which means realising oneself as identical with Brahman." Svāminārāyaṇa also believes that conceptual Knowledge of God is not possible. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, God is beyond the reach of either sense or reason. But that does not mean that Knowledge of God is an impossibility. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, God can be known by intuition. One CAN have personal intuitive experience of God. As Dr. J.A. Yajnik has worked out "the released soul definitely knows God." But according to
Svāminārāyaṇa, God cannot be completely known. No one can completely know God. Greatness and glory of God are inexhaustable and unfathomable. Therefore, complete knowledge of God is an impossibility. The self attains the Knowledge of God according to its receiving capacity. Of course, Svāminārāyaṇa has admitted the growth in the receiving capacity of the soul. According to Svāminārāyaṇa the more it knows the greatness and glory of God, the more its capacity to know God increases. Thus, we can see a sharp disagreement between the views of Saṅkara and Svāminārāyaṇa or the point of Self's knowledge of God.

11. On the question of liberation both the philosophers adopt diametrically opposite attitudes. According to Saṅkara, path of knowledge is the only path of liberation and all other paths are subordinate to it. For Saṅkara ignorance of the soul that it is Brahman constitutes bondage and knowledge that it is Brahman constitutes liberation. According to Saṅkara, Knowledge itself is liberation, Svāminārāyaṇa
advocates path of devotion (Bhaktimarga). But according to Svāminārāyaṇa, devotion must be coupled with knowledge. For Svāminārāyaṇa Knowledge is essential for attaining liberation. But both interprete Knowledge in different ways. According to Śaṅkara, liberating Knowledge is the Knowledge of Self's identity with Brahman. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, liberating Knowledge is Knowledge of the essential nature of the five ultimate reals. For Svāminārāyaṇa's mere knowledge or mere devotion or devotion with Knowledge are not enought for attaining liberation. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, God's grace is SINE QUA NON for attaining liberation.

With great vehemence Svāminārāyaṇa criticises the Advaita doctrine that Jīva (self) is Brahman (God). He openly shows his dislike for this Advaita doctrine. According to Śaṅkara, the attainment of Knowledge that "I am Brahman" is liberation (mokṣa). Till this saving Knowledge is gained, Jīva remains tied upt with the chain of birth and death. Now, if jīva is Brahman, Brahman will
also become subject to the cycle of birth and death. This will make Brahman subject to periodical births and deaths. By saying that jīva is Brahman, Advaita Vedāntins falsify their own doctrine of liberation.

12. According to Śaṅkara, the self in the state of liberation merges in Brahman and loses its individuality. On liberation the self becomes one with Brahman. Śvāminārāyaṇa strongly repredicates this Advaita doctrine. He vehemently opposes this theory of Śaṅkara which entails obliteration of individual self as the ultimate goal of life. According to Śvāminārāyaṇism, self effacement can never be the goal of life. In very clear terms Śvāminārāyaṇa explains his doctrine of liberation and says that self is eternally distinct and different from God and retains its unique individuality in the state of liberation. Even in the state of liberation self remains distinct and different from God. Not only this. In the state of liberation the self attains similarity (sādharmya) with God. In the state of
liberation the self attains a divine body (bhagavati tanu) similar to that of God and with that divine body it enjoys divine communion with God and eternally remains in the blissful service of God. Thus we find resemblance and difference between the views of Śaṅkara and Svāminārāyaṇa. By and large Indian thinkers have attempted to formulate doctrines regarding the relation of finite self with infinite Brahman (God) either in terms of identity or in terms of difference. Śaṅkara, as is well known, is the propounder of the ultimate identity between self and Brahman, while Svāminārāyaṇa is the advocate of eternal difference between them. It is worth nothing that when Svāminārāyaṇa criticises the Advaita doctrine of Śaṅkara in severe terms, he appears to be an ordent propounder of Dwaita Philosophy, a Philosophy of eternal difference. But when he interprets the monistic doctrines of scriptures, he appears to be a staunch advocate of monism. As pointed out by Dr. J. A. Yajnik, Svāminārāyaṇa systematically avaides the extremes of Abstract Monism and
unqualified Pluralism, and yet retains in its synthetic system the elements of truth contained in both of these extreme positions. In other words, Svēminārāyaṇaism stands for reconciling the truth of both Monism and Pluralism.

3. Svēminārāyaṇa and Rāmānuja

It is well known that philosophy of Rāmānuja is Visīṣṭādvaita. Svēminārāyaṇa also calls his philosophy Visīṣṭādvaita. After detailed analysis of the doctrines of Rāmānuja and Svēminārāyaṇa, Dr. J.A. Yajnik has pointed out that "Svēminārāyaṇaism in essence is Visīṣṭādvaitism." In certain philosophical circles Svēminārāyaṇa's Philosophy is described as Neo-Visīṣṭādvaita. S.G. Mudgal prefers to call it Aksara Visīṣṭādvaita. Of whatever variety it may be, the fact remains that the philosophy of Svēminārāyaṇa is Visīṣṭādvaita.

P.B. Vidyarthi has observed that "in the religious history of India, Rāmānuja seems to have made a strong case for a true conception of self." On a proper
study of Vacanāmrta one would definitely feel that this observation of P.B. Vidyarthi would be equally applicable to Svāminārāyaṇa also. A very strong case, possibly stronger than that of Rāmānuja, has been made out by Svāminārāyaṇa for a true conception of self. The reason why Svāminārāyaṇa's case for self is stronger is this that certain significant points of Madhavācārya's philosophy of self, which are lacking in Rāmānuja's philosophy, have found place in Svāminārāyaṇa's philosophy.

It will be interesting to compare Rāmānuja's philosophy of self with that of Svāminārāyaṇa and attempt to bring out salient points of similarities between them. First we shall attempt to bring out some similarities between them. They are as follows:

1. Both believe that selves are infinite in number.
2. Both believe that selves are finite.
3. Both believe that selves are eternal.
4. Both believe that self is atomic in size.
5. Both believe that self is subtle and resides in the heart.
6. According to both self is of the nature of bliss.
7. Both believe that the self is doer (Karta).
8. Both believe that the self is enjoyer (bhokta).
9. Both believe that the self is the knower (jñātā).
10. Both believe that the self pervades the entire body.
11. Both believe that God resides in Jīva as antaryāmi.
12. Jīvas in themselves are pure but are bound on account of their beginningless association with Prakṛti in Rāmānuja and Māyā in Svāminārāyaṇa.
13. Both believe in sarīrātmabhāva. That is, both believe that Jīva is the body of God and God is the soul of Jīva.
14. For both God is the Lord of Karmas, that is, He dispenses the fruits of actions to Jīvas according to their desert.
15. Both believe that Jīva should attain Knowledge which discriminates between body and self.
16. According to both, Jīva can attain liberation.
17. Both lay stress on devotion as a means of liberation. Both believe that liberation can be made possible by Upāsanā.
18. Both believe that for attaining liberation mercy (Kṛpa) of God is necessary.

19. Both believe in personal communion with God in the state of liberation - Rāmānuja in Vaikuntha and Svāminārāyaṇa in Akṣaradhāman.

20. For both of them God is the object of worship. God is the ultimate goal of our religious aspiration, according to both.


22. Both are critical of the view of Sāṅkara pertaining to self.

23. Both keep One and Many.

So the above-mentioned are some of the similarities between the views of Svāminārāyaṇa and Rāmānuja on self. Now we shall attempt to bring out important differences between them in their views on self. It should be noted that the differences between them on this point are very important.
1. Although Rāmānuja accepts the reality of Jīvas (cit), he does not regard them as altogether different from Brahman, the ultimate reality. He rather believes Jīva as constituting part (anāsa) of Brahman in the form of Its body. Svāminārāyaṇa regards self as absolutely and eternally different from God. He, in clear terms, says that Jīva is not a part of God's body, Jīva is a distinct entity eternally co-existing with God.

2. According to Rāmānuja, Jīva, Prakṛti and God form a unity. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, it is not so. According to him, realities are distinct and different.

3. According to Rāmānuja God is an absolute reality possessed of both matter (acit) and consciousness (cit) as His inseparable qualities. Svāminārāyaṇa does not believe in the material aspect of God. For him, God is altogether spiritual and divine.

4. According to Rāmānuja, individual self is an attribute or mode of Brahman and at the same time has an individuality of its own. Svāminārāyaṇa does not accept
such a dual position. Svāminārāyaṇa is very clear in his standpoint that the self is neither an attribute nor a mode of God. It is eternally distinct and different from God. According to Svāminārāyaṇa self is co-existent with God in its own unique individuality.

5. Rāmānuja does not believe in the Jīvanamukti of Jīva, because he maintains that the very association of the self with the body constitutes bondage. Svāminārāyaṇa believes in the Jīvanamukti, because he maintains that when discriminatory Knowledge is attained by Jīva, it becomes free from the consequences of its past actions (Prārabdha Karma).

6. Rāmānuja does not admit any distinction between selves in the state of liberation. For him in the state of liberation all selves are alike. Svāminārāyaṇa posits distinction between selves even in the state of liberation. According to Svāminārāyaṇa there are eternal differences between selves in the state of liberation. According to Svāminārāyaṇa no one can completely know God. As Dr. J.A. Yajnik
has pointed out "infinite wealth of God's nature makes room for infinite differences in the degrees of His Knowledge possessed by different souls." 

According to Svāminārāyaṇa the intrinsic differences between selves continue even in the state of release. As worked out by Dr. J.A. Yajnik, "even in the state of release self retains its distinct individuality and owns distinct experiences which are organised by it into a unity."  

4. Svāminārāyaṇa and Madhva  

Philosophy of Madhva cārya is known as Dvaita. In this section we shall attempt to bring out some important points of agreement and disagreement between Svāminārāyaṇa and Madhva cārya. First we shall note some points of agreement between them.  

1. Both are philosophers of difference (bheda).  
2. Both are strongly opposed to Śaṅkara.  
3. Both believe in independent (Svatantra) and dependent (Paratantra) realities.  
4. For both of them an eternal reality can be eternally dependent on another eternal reality.
5. Both believe in plurality of selves. According to both, souls are infinite in number.

6. Both believe that souls are as eternal as God.

7. According to both eternal souls are eternally dependent on God for their existence and activity.

8. According to both God is the only independent reality.

9. According to both souls are of three kinds: Nitya Mukta (eternally liberated), Mukta (liberated) and Baddha (bound).

10. According to both devotion to God is the most essential condition of soul's release from bondage.

11. Both believe that grace of God is necessary for attaining liberation.

12. According to both, grace of God can be won only through intense devotion and complete surrender to Him.

13. Both believe that a soul's liberation is possible only by liberating knowledge of real difference between the soul and God through His grace.

14. Both believe that the state of liberation is an
everlasting state. Once liberation is attained there is no return from it.

15. According to both in the state of liberation soul is not merged in God but retains its individuality.

16. According to both even in the state of liberation souls remain distinct and different from God and also from one another.

17. According to both state of liberation is the state of blissful fellowship with God.

18. Both believe that when souls are released from bondage, neither ignorance nor misery exist for them.


20. Both believe that in the state of release souls attain similarity with God.

21. Both believe that no two souls are alike as regards their enjoyment of bliss. According to them not two souls are alike in any manner.

22. Both are against the position which describes God as formless (nirākāra) or attributeless (nirguṇa).
23. Both believe that God is Knowable. But they also believe that God can never be completely Known.

24. Both believe in the concept of tāratamya. Both believes that there are gradations based on varying degrees of knowledge and bliss since beginningless time. This gradation, according to both, persists even in the state of liberation.

Now we shall note some important poitns of disagreement between Svāminārāyaṇa and Madhvācārya,

1. Svāminārāyaṇa explains the absolute metaphysical dependence of self on God by the analogy of Sarīra-Sarīri Bhava. As Dr. J.A. Yajnik has pointed out "Madhvācārya has abandoned the analogy of Sarīra-Sarīri Bhaya and restorted to the analogy of Bimba-Pratibimbavāda,  

2. According to Madhvācārya, the bound (baddha) souls are of two kinds: Muktiyogya (eligible for liberation) and tamoyogya (ineligible for liberation). Tamoyogya souls will never be eligible for liberation. They are eternally damned to remain in bondage. For Svāminārāyaṇa all souls are eligible for liberation.
No soul is ineligible for liberation. As C.D. Sharma has observed, "the doctrine of eternal damnation is peculiar to Madhva alone in the whole field of Indian Philosophy."²


4. Madhvacārya does not make any distinction between the body and soul of God. Svāminārāyaṇa makes such a distinction. According to Svāminārāyaṇa Aksarabrahmap, physical universe (Māyā), Īśvaras (demigods) and individual selves constitute God's body. R. Balasubramanian, in this context, has said that "It hasto be borne in mind that when the jīva and the physical universe are viewed as the body of Brahman, the term "body" (Śarīra) has been used in a special sense with implications of far-reaching character."³ R. Balasubramanian has explained the position like this: "When the absolute is viewed in the context of the soul-body relation as the support and controller not only of the physical universe, but also of all sentient beings, we get a
new insight into God-man relation in which following points emerge:

first, the relation between God and man is very intimate; second, man does not exist in isolation from God, third, he does not exist independently of God; and fourth, the purpose of life envisaged by man cannot and should not be opposed to divine purpose.

This insight would enable man to work with hope and strength, individually as well as collectively as a community, for the higher purpose of life as willed by the Supreme Being. The implications worked out by Balasubramanian are acceptable to Śvāminarāyaṇa whereas Madhvācārya would not fully accept them because he does not believe in this type of body-soul relationship.

5. ŚVĀMINĀRĀYANA AND VALLABHA

The philosophy associated with the name of Vallabhācārya is called Shuddhādvaita. The philosophical system of Vallabha is popularly known as Puṣṭi Mārga. Here we propose to indicate some important points of agreements and disagreements between Śvāminārāyaṇa and Vallabha.
First we shall try to see some points of similarities between them.

1. Both believe in the authority of Vedas.
2. Both have similar conception of God. Both believe God as a Supreme Person.
3. Both emphasise Saguna and Sakara aspects of God.
4. Both believe that the Upanishadic texts which speak of God as attributeless do not deny all attributes ascribed to Him.
5. Both are expounders of Bhakti Cult.
6. Both accept Bhagavata as expounding Bhakti Cult.
7. Both regard love of Gopis of Vrndavana as the highest kind of devotion. According to both Gopis are the ideal devotees of God.
8. Both are opposed to Advaita (non-dualist) philosophy of Sa\-\textit{n}kara.
9. Both believe in the concept of Aksara. But their concepts have different connotations.
10. According to both selves are infinite in number.
11. According to both self is eternal.
12. According to both self is real and not appearance of God.

13. According to both self is atomic in size.

14. According to both although self is of atomic size, it pervades the entire body through its consciousness.

15. According to both, the self is self-luminous.

16. Both believe that souls are eternally different from one another.

17. Both believe that God resides in selves as antaryāmi (indweller).

18. Both believe that self is a free agent, but its free activity is dependent on God.

19. According to both there are two states of existence for selves: One, state of mundane existence and state of liberation.

20. According to both state of liberation is a permanent state from which there is no return.

21. For both of them means of attaining liberation are the same.
22. Both believe that grace of God is absolutely necessary for attaining liberation.

23. Both believe that by intense love of God it is possible to have a vision of God.

24. Both do not advocate self-mortification; but that does not mean they advocate self-indulgence.

Now we shall attempt to point out the salient points of disagreement between Svāминārāयण and Vallabha.

1. Vallabha calls his philosophy Suddhādvaita, whereas Svāминārāयण calls his philosophy Visistādvaita.

2. For Vallabha self is a part of God. According to Vallabha there is a real identity between the whole (God) and the part (self). Vallabha believes that self is identical with God in its essential nature. Svāминārāयण does not believe in the doctrine of identity between self and God. Nor does Svāминāрāயṇ believe that self is a part of God. According to Svāминārāयण, self has a unique individuality and is eternally different from God.

3. To put the above point differently, according to Vallabha, the selves are real manifestations of
of God. And therefore, God and self are essentially identical. Svāminārāyaṇa does not agree with this view of Vallabha. Svāminārāyaṇa is an expounder of the philosophy of difference (bheda). According to him, self is not a manifestation of God, but an eternally existing spiritual entity having a distinct individuality of its own. According to Svāminārāyaṇa self is eternally co-existing with God.

4. According to Vallabha, unlike Alexander, God conceals His bliss and becomes soul. He conceals His consciousness and becomes matter. Svāminārāyaṇa does not agree with this position of Vallabha. According to Svāminārāyaṇa God neither becomes soul nor becomes matter. In his view God, self and matter are eternally different from one another.

5. According to Vallabha, there are three kinds of souls: One, Pravāhi; two, Maryāda; and three, Puṣṭi. Pravāhi souls are those that do not think of liberation. Maryāda souls are those that study vedas and attain liberation by Jñāna Mārga laid down in them. Puṣṭi souls are the chosen souls of
God. They worship God out of intense love for Him. Svāminārāyaṇa does not accept this classification of Vallabha. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, also, souls are of three kinds. But the kinds of Svāminārāyaṇa are different from those of Vallabha. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, the three kinds of souls are like this: One, Nitya Mukta (eternally liberated); two, Mukta (liberated); and three, Baddha (bound).

Nitya Mukta souls are those that never were bound. They were eternally in the liberated state. Mukta souls are those that once were bound, but attained liberation by their intense love for and grace of God. Baddha souls are those that have yet to attain their liberation. Thus, the basis of classification of souls in Svāminārāyaṇa's philosophy is different from the one found in Vallabha's philosophy. Both the philosophers have different basis for their classification of souls.

6. According to Vallabha, God has created the world for His sport (Līlā). Svāminārāyaṇa, does not accept the doctrine of Līlā. According to him, the world
is created by God out of twenty four elements so that the souls may experience the objects of the world and ultimately turn away from them and endeavour to be worthy of the grace of God for attaining liberation. In other words, according to Svaominrāyaṇa, God has "created" the world to help the bound souls in their attainment of liberation.

7. Vallabha admits Rasika Mārga as the means of liberation. Svaominrāyaṇa is highly critical about it. According to Svaominrāyaṇa, Rasika Mārga tends to divert its follower into degeneration and depravity.

8. According to Vallabha, liberation is due to true Knowledge of non-difference (abhedā) of the world and gīvas from Brahman (God). Vallabha agrees with Śaṅkara on this point. Svaominrāyaṇa does not accept this position of Vallabha. According to Svaominrāyaṇa, knowledge of the essential nature of eternal realities is the true and saving Knowledge.

9. According to Vallabha, there are two kinds of Mokṣa (liberation) suited to the followers of two different
paths: Maryāda Mārga and Puṣṭi Mārga. The followers of Maryāda Mārga who regard Akṣarabrahman as the highest reality get gradual release. The followers of Puṣṭi Mārga get immediate release. According to Vallabha, the followers of Maryāda Mārga, after departing from the body, travel by the path of gods and reach Brahmāloka. The followers of Puṣṭi Mārga are first merged in Purva Purusottam, without travelling by the path of Gods. Then God out of Sheer grace brings them out and gives them a divine form and allows them to participate in His eternal sport (Nitya Rasa Līlā or Rasa Līlā). To participate in the Rasalīlā of God with Him and enjoy Bhajnānanda is the highest stage of Mokṣa. For Svāminārāyaṇa, Mokṣa is of one kind only. He does not admit the classification of Mokṣa made by Vallabha. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, the devotee of God after leaving the body, goes to Akṣara-dhāma where he gains a divine body and with that divine body he eternally enjoys the blissful communion and servitude of God.
10. According to Vallabha Jīvanamukti is impossible. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, the self, while embodied can attain liberation. According to him Jīvanamukti is possible.

6. Svāminārāyaṇa And Plato

Plato was a Greek Philosopher. In many aspects Philosophy of Plato resembles that of Svāminārāyaṇa. Herein we shall attempt to bring out the points of agreement and disagreement between these two philosophers in respect of their philosophies of Self. First we shall note the points of agreement between them.

1. Both Plato and Svāminārāyaṇa believe that self is a real entity.

2. Both believe that soul is imperishable. According to both, soul is immortal and it never perishes. Plato says that since the soul does not come into being, it must be imperishable. According to Plato, it is as impossible that it should be destroyed as that it should come into being. Svāminārāyaṇa would completely agree with Plato.
3. Both believe in the plurality of Souls. Both believe that souls are infinite in number.

4. According to both Plato and Svāminārāyaṇa, the number of souls in existence always remains the same. No soul ever perishes and therefore, their number cannot grow less. Nor does their number increase. Plato says that the increase in immortal souls must come from the mortal. But, from mortal immortal cannot come. Therefore, the number of souls remain constant.

5. Plato believes that indestructible soul must reap the consequences of its deed, good or bad. This is what is called Law of Karma in Indian Philosophy. Svāminārāyaṇa would completely agree with Plato on this point. Svāminārāyaṇa believes in Law of Karma. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, man attains happiness or unhappiness in accordance with his past deeds.

6. According to Plato, as pointed out by Dr. J.A. Yajnik, the first principles are derived not from sense perception or logical reasoning, but from intuitive experience. Svāminārāyaṇa completely agrees with
Plato on this point. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, as put by Dr. J. A. Yajnik, "Knowledge is rooted in the very being of self." 11

7. According to Plato, man cannot have knowledge of metaphysical nature of his self. As observed by Dr. J. A. Yajnik, "Plato has shown in Phædrus that Socrates remained to himself an unfathomable mystery, inspite of the fact that he devoted the whole of his life for understanding himself". 12 Svāminārāyaṇa is one with Plato on this point. Svāminārāyaṇa has clearly said that man cannot know the metaphysical nature of his self. 13 He has further said that man can know about beauty and ugliness, about childhood, youth and old age, and about imnumerable other things, but he cannot know anything about his own self. 14

8. Both Plato and Svāminārāyaṇa believe in the reincarnation (rebirth) of soul. According to Plato, death is nothing but separation of the soul from the body. For establishing reincarnation of soul, Plato argues like this. If the soul at death perishes and if there is no return journey, then the stock of souls
must finally be exhausted and life on earth must ultimately come to an end. Creation of new souls is impossible. Since life on earth goes on forever, it is apparent that soul incarnates.\textsuperscript{15} Svāminārāyaṇa would completely endorse this view of Plato.

9. Plato says that so long as soul is not purified, it has to be incarnated in a cycle of birth and death as a penalty for the sins of previous lives.\textsuperscript{16} But, according to Plato, if the soul is purified, it can escape the wheel of birth and death.\textsuperscript{17} According to Plato, there would be final deliverance for the purified soul.\textsuperscript{18} Svāminārāyaṇa also says the same thing. He says that so long as the soul does not attain liberation, it remains tied up with the wheel of birth and death.\textsuperscript{19} According to Svāminārāyaṇa, when the soul becomes free from the entanglements of avidyā, it attains liberation.\textsuperscript{20} What is becoming free from avidyā in Svāminārāyaṇism is the same as one becoming purified in Platonism. What Plato calls FINAL DELIVERANCE Svāminārāyaṇa calls ĀTYANTIKA MOKṢA.\textsuperscript{21} The similarity between the two expressions is very
10. According to Plato, as pointed out by Radhakrishnan, the wise man turns away from the world of senses and keeps his inward and spiritual eye ever directed to the world of eternal idea. Such a wise man becomes freed from the bonds of sensualism and after death his released spirit slowly mounts up higher and higher until at last its finds its way to the home of eternal light. Švāminarāyaṇa would completely agree with Plato on this point. One whom Plato calls WISE Švāminarāyaṇa calls Jñāni (man of metaphysical knowledge) According to Švāminarāyaṇa, a man of knowledge turns away from the objects of the world. He turns inward and realises his self as extreme effulgence and in that effulgence beholds the divine personality of God.

11. What Plato calls GOOD Švāminarāyaṇa calls GOD. According to Plato, the vision of Good is possible. A purified soul can have a vision of Good. According to Švāminarāyaṇa also vision of God is possible. According to both, the experience of ultimate reality is
possible. In the words of Radhakrishnan, "the experience is felt as profoundly as possible, where darkness is turned into light, sadness into joy, despair into assurance." However much we may quarrel about the implications of this kind of experience, we cannot question the actuality of the experience itself. According to Svāmināraṇaṇa, experience of God is not an experience in imagination. It is an experience in reality. Experience of God is as vivid as experience of any other object. Svāmināraṇaṇa declares the truth of such experience on both.

12. According to Plato, when the soul is liberated and when it reaches the home of eternal light, it dwells with the True Being for ever. In other words, on liberation the soul eternally enjoys the blissful communion with God. According to Svāmināraṇaṇa, the devotee of God, after leaving the body, goes to Aksaradhaman which is eternal abode of God. There he enjoys the bliss of eternal communion with God.

13. As Radhakrishnan has pointed out "In SIMPOSIUM Plato
gives us the doctrine of timeless existence attainable here and now by an escape from time and form. This doctrine of Plato is akin Svāminārāyaṇa’s doctrine of Jīvanamukti (liberation while embodied). According to the doctrine of Jīvanamukti, the true devotee of God attains the state of liberation here and now in the embodied existence.

Now we shall attempt to bring out a few points of disagreement between the two philosophers. They are as under:

1. According to Plato, the soul has three parts. These parts are Knowledge (wisdom), honour (spirit) and appetite. Svāminārāyaṇa would not and does not agree with the doctrine of parts in the soul. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, soul has no parts. In his view soul is partless (akhaṇḍa). Svāminārāyaṇa would argue that if the soul had parts, it would be like a composite thing. And a composite thing can hardly be said to be everlasting. Parts would disintegrate and the soul would perish. So, Svāminārāyaṇa would contend that soul having parts cannot be an eternal, imperishable soul. To this
argument of Svāminārāyaṇa, Plato would reply that parts were not like material parts. Parts are nothing more, so would Plato say, than three forms of desire. Each part has its own pleasure and desire. Svāminārāyaṇa would not be satisfied with this reply of Plato. It should be noted that such division of soul is not found either in Svāminārāyaṇism or in Indian Philosophy. Svāminārāyaṇa cannot conceive of any idea of soul having parts. For him soul is a whole.

2. According to Plato, all souls are alike. He says that we must not think of the soul, in her truest nature, as full of diversity and unlikeness and perpetually at variance with itself. Svāminārāyaṇa would not agree with this doctrine of Plato. According to Svāminārāyaṇa souls are not alike. No soul is similar to another. In his view souls are different from one another. Each soul is intrinsically different from the rest. And this difference continues even in the state of liberation. Not only this, Svāminārāyaṇa has admitted the possibility of progress of soul in the knowledge of God and in the enjoyment of bliss of communion with God.
3. According to Plato, the ultimate reality, the True Being, has neither colour nor shape. It cannot be touched. Reason alone can behold it, and all knowledge is knowledge thereof. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, God, the supreme reality, has a two-armed and a two-legged personality like a human being. And soul can have vision of such a personality of God.

4. According to Plato, the vision of the GOOD is possible for those who are prepared for it by intellectual discipline and hard thinking. For Svāminārāyaṇa intellectual discipline is not enough for attaining vision of God. According to Svāminārāyaṇa, intense love for God along with the Knowledge of His greatness and glory are essential for having a vision of God.
1. **Introductory Remark**:

2. **Swaminārayana and Śaṅkara**

   1. समान हि भात्माभिस्थत्वं प्रत्ययं न नाहि अस्योतिः।
      
      Ś. S. B. 1.1.1

   2. अतिनिध्यायीचर्याः अविकस्य।
      Śaṅkara Bhāṣya, Kena Upaniṣad 1.3
      
      तैहि विवाक्षक्येः।
      Śaṅkara Tattvopadesā 25.
      
      उपनिषत् अश्च विवैष्यः।
      Śaṅkara Bhāṣya,

3. अनुपाधिकरणें जनापदे है पणं बालात्मक नको भवे।
   
   V. K. S. 1
   
   J. A. Yajnik, The Philosophy of Śri Śaṭmānārayana, p. 108
   
   V. G. F. S. 2
   
   Śaṅkara, Commentary on Vedānta Sūtras, Translated by Thibaut, Volume II, 3.2.7, p. 174
   
   Dr. J. A. Yajnik, The Philosophy of Śri Śaṭmānārayana, p. 82
   
   Dr. G. N. Joshi, Âtman and Mokṣa (1965), p. 168
   
   See above V. G. L. S. 4 (610)
   
   See above V. G. L. S. 4 (610)
   
   V. G. F. S. 2 57
   
   S. R. Bhatt, Studies in Rāmānuja Vedānta (1975), p. 16
   
   V. P. S. 4
3. **Śvāminārāyaṇa and Rāmānuja**:

6. S. P. 121

7. Dr. J. A. Yajnik, The Philosophy of Śrī Śvāminārāyaṇa, p. 123


4. Dr. J. A. Yajnik, The Philosophy of Śrī Śvāminārāyaṇa, p. 114

6. Dr. J. A. Yajnik, Ibid., p. 114
4. **Svēminārāyaṇa and Madhva**:

1. Dr. J. A. Yajnik, *The Philosophy of Sri Svēminārāyaṇa*, p. 126


3. R. Balasubramanian, *The Absolute as the Basis for a Moral Community (Svēminārāyaṇa lecture)*, p. 5.


5. **Svēminārāyaṇa and Vallabha**:


4. मधवन वैद्य ज्ञानो उत्पत्ति, स्थिति वैन प्रत्येता करी है
   V. P. S. 1

5. मधवन बैद्य ज्ञान प्रवृत्ती मायार्थ कारण संग्रह लोक्य है के
   कीव वैद्य उत्पत्ति कार्य विद्या, मन की प्राप्त है है
   तो शान्ति की वापसी है
   V. P. S. 1

6. V. G. M. S. 2 Quoted earlier
6. Svaminarayana and Plato:


2. F. M. Cornford, Ibid., p. 335

3. See also V. G. F. S. 13 and V. G. L. S. 39

4. F. M. Cornford, Ibid., p. 336
7. F. M. Comford, Ibid., p. 336
8. V. G. L. S. 10
9. F. M. Cornford, Ibid., p. 340
10. जीव जीव कैसे है सुख के दुख भी है वे तौ पौताए करने की आवाह
11. V. G. F. S. 34
13. J. A. Yajnik, Ibid., p. 25
15. अजुमाने करो मनोय सत्ता के पुण सरप्रस्तावना निश्चित जनानी
16. V. K. S. 1
17. जीव है ते रूपने बुहे है को कुँडने बुहे है तथा बाल, श्वीवन के कुँडनाने बुहे है, जैसा अंत पदाणो हुहे है पुण जीनारो पीते पौतने बौधी निवी.
18. V. G. F. S. 20
20. F. M. Cornford, Ibid., p. 340
21. F. M. Comford, Ibid., p. 337
22. F. M. Cornford, Ibid., p. 341
23. ज्वारिश मौशन न त्वात त्वाते जन्म-प्रण तथा ते मटे नहि.
24. V. G. M. S. 10
25. अविधि की है तेनां कार्य यथा है चौहेव तत्व तेनां कर्मन नयी मृत्यु नहि.
26. V. G. F. S. 12
26. V. E. S. 7
27. Radhakrishnan, An Idealist View of Life (1947), p. 122
28. जैक्विच्यूट की है ते तो पोलाना स्वबंधने अविश्वास उज्ज्वल प्रकाशम्मण दुःख है जो ते प्रकाशने मध्ये प्रक्षेपण अंग्रे जे पुहणाके जम मार्गान तेनों पूंजी दुःख है.
V. G. M. S. 20
29. Plato, Republic, III
30. V. G. M. S. 13
31. Radhakrishnan, An Idealist View of Life, p. 93
32. Radhakrishnan, Ibid., p. 93
33. V. G. M. S. 13
34. F. M. Conford, The Republic of Plato, p. 204 337
35. Radhakrishnan, An Idealist View of Life, p. 304
36. अन्तः मेदे परमहम्म पाप्या अंतः सुद्ध मैग्ये
V. G. M. S. 45
37. मार्ग जैने परमहम्म कहीं, मौजा कहीं, मौजा कहीं जैने बी जे पाप्यो है.
V. G. L. S. 2
38. F. M. Conford, The Republic of Plato, p. 126
39. F. M. Conford, Ibid., p. 127
40. बीज तौ अंड है.
V. G. F. S. 13
41. F. M. Conford, The Republic of Plato, p. 337
36. Arthur Smullyan and Others, Introduction to Philosophy, p. 39
37. Plato, Republic VII