CHAPTER III

PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS
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3/1 Introduction

The Indian philosophical tradition goes far back into the past. It influenced thinkers of various disciplines and found expression in different forms. Śankardeva and Tulsidāsa might not have been philosophers in the strict sense of the term but the elements of philosophy are quite apparent in their thoughts. Śankardeva was basically inspired and influenced by the advaita of Śankarācārya, and Tulsidāsa by Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānujcārya. But they were not blind followers. They retained their individuality in their thoughts. Both of them adopted the idea of one Divine Being. Śankardeva saw it in Kṛṣṇa and Tulsidāsa in Rāma. For making a comparative study of the philosophical thoughts of Śankar and Tulsī it will suffice to depend upon what they themselves said about Brahman, Jīva, Jagata, Samsār, Māyā, Mokṣa etc.

3/2 The Brahman

A. The Divine Form :

Śankardeva and Tulsidāsa accepted Kṛṣṇa and Rāma respectively as God. But while defining the divinity they interpreted it as Pure Consciousness beyond the Sagunā rupa. For this, both of them drew upon the Vedānta, the Bhāgavata etc. Hence, similarity in their thoughts is but natural.

The Divine Being of Śankardeva is Nārāyaṇ1 and Niranjan2. He is eternal and the cause of incarnation. Tulsī has referred
to the Divine Being as omnipotent, free from illusion, unborn, unseen, desireless and the one. 3 Sankardeva has said:

Purāna Puruṣa Puratana pāpi pāvan iswara deva.
brahmā rudra ādi dikapāla yāku karata nitya seva.

- K.C.N., Bhatimā

And Tulsi conceived:

balamaprameyamanādimajamavyaktamekamgocaram
gobindam gopara dwandahara bigyāndhana dharanidharam.

- Mānas, 3/31/2

Śāṅkar and Tulsī both regard Brahman as the Progenitor of māyā. 4 The māyā acts under the direction of the Divine. The Brahman is the soul of the world. 5 He is inconceivable, glorious and everlasting. 6 He is the protector of all. He creates, sustains and destroys and is free from all attributes. 7

B. The Cosmic Form (Virāta rūpa)

Śāṅkar and Tulsī both subscribed to the idea of the cosmic form of the Brahman. For them the Brahman is omnipresent. Its instances are available in both of them. 8 For Śāṅkardeva the entire world is situate with the Brahman. 9 The world, the ocean, the mountain, the wood, the village, the town, the air, the direction, the sky, the creature, the sattva, raja, tama and the senses are in Him. The cosmic form of the Divine can be seen in their following verses:
Swarge vaila sir jär vidise sravana.
surya vaila sakṣhu jär mukha hutāśana
meghe jär vaila kukṣhi sapata sāgara.
vaila jär bāhu dikapāla Purandara.
loma vaila brikṣhaçaya vāyu Pancha prāna.
Parbata samaste asthi jāhār nirmāṇa.
ratri dine nimeśa Pradesā jaladhara
briṣṭi jale vaila vīrya birāṭa tomāra.

- Śaṅkar : ōhāg. 10/1834

pāda pātāla sīsa aja dhāmā.
apara loka anga anga biśrāmā.
bhrikuṭi bilāsa bhayankara kālā.
nayana divākara kaca ghanamālā.
jāsu ghrāna aswinikumārā.
nisi aru divasa nimeśa apārā.
sravana disā dasa veda bakhānī.
māruta svāsa nigama nija bānī.
adhara lobha jama dasana karālā.
māyā hāsa bāhu digapālā.
ānana anala ambupati jīhā.
upatati Pālana Pralaya samīhā.
roma rājī astādasa bhārā.
asthi saila saritā nasa jārā.
udara udadhi adhago jātana.
jagamay prabhu kā bahu kalpanā.
ahankāra siva buddhi aja mana sasi citta mahāna.
manuja bāsa sacarācara rupa rāma bhagawāna.
asa bicari sunu prānapati Prabhu sana bayaru bīhāī.
Prīti karahu raghubīra pada mama ahivāta na jāī.

- Tulsī : Mānas, 6/14/1-15/b

C. Virudha Dharmāśrayatwa (Contradictory attributes of the Brahman):

The contradictory attributes of the Divine have been described in Śrutis and Gītā. Śankar and Tulsī both adopted this idea in their works:

nitya niranjana sūddha ānanda swarupa.
bhakata jena isswā tene dharā rupa.

- Śankar, Bhāg, 10/1149

jo rahe gādurā āsane.
so hari gopini bāhane.

- Śankar, K.G.N., p.9

jāheri caraṇa surāsura sevata
so hari gopīka piu.

- Śankar, Ibid, p.16

sunata lagata śruti nayana binu, resanā binu rasa leta.
bāsa nāsikā binu lahai, Parasai binā niketa.

- Tulsī, V.S., 3
In their descriptions of the contradictory attributes of the Divine and in their praise of the manlike acts of the Divine, both of them have drawn the attention of the readers towards the eternal in the temporal:

"āhe bhāisaba dekho dekho, wahi nanda-nandana mānūṣa nohe."

- Śāṅkar, K.D.N. p. 11

"soi rāmu vyāpaka brahman bhuvana nikāya pati māyā dhanī."

- Tulsī, Mānas, 1/50

D. Advaita Nirguṇa Brahman:

Besides the cosmic form of Brahman, Śāṅkar and Tulsī both accepted the idea of Advaita Nirguṇa Brahman. The Brahman of Śāṅkardeva, no doubt, remains Nirguṇa and he has used the idea of Saguṇa only as the medium of singing his praises. Tulsīdāsa
on the other hand remains the devotee of the Saguna but Nirguna Brahman too is acceptable to him.

Śankardeva has expressed the Brahman as the Nirguna, the Sanatana, the eternal god, the Niranjana, the Jñānamaya ānanda, the eternal truth, the blemishless, the Sadānanda Niranjana, the Purāṇa Puruṣa, the cause of causes, the Brahman nirankusa, the Puruṣa Puruṣottama, the Eternal Divinity etc.:

śekesūre ācho āmi ādi niranjana
āmi maha caitanya Puruṣa niranjana.

- Śankar, Bhāg, 3/41-42

In the words of Mādhabdeva it can be said that Śankardeva preached the attributes of Nirguna krṣna.

Accepting the Brahman as Nirguna, Nirlepā etc., Tulsīdāsa has declared:

sarbakṛṭa sarbabhūta sarbajita sarbhitā satyasankalpa
Kalpāntakāri,

nitya nirmoha nirguna niranjana nijānanda nirbāṇa
nirbāṇadātā,

anagha adhita anabadya abhayakta aja amita abikāra
ānandasindho

acala aniketa abirala anāmaya anārambha ambodanā-
daghnabandho

- Tulsī, V.P., 56
Its similarity with Sankardeva is obvious:

\[
\text{tumisi nirguna hari ananda swarupa.}
\]
\[
\text{nedekohon mai atapare ana rupa.}
\]
- Sankar, B.R., 13, p. 42

To them the origin of the world is traceable to the Brahman, although His Nirguna form is inexplicable. The assumptions of Sankar and Tulsī regarding Nirguna Brahman are almost similar. However, Sankardeva accepts only the nirguna form of Brahman as such and Tulsī both the Saguna and the Nirguna:

\[
\text{aguna saguna dui brahman swarupa akatha}
\]
\[
\text{agadha anadi anupā.}
\]
- Tulsī, Mānas, 1/22/1

E. Saguna Brahman as the Bliss:

Basically Sankardeva believes in the Nirguna. But while dealing upon the acts of his Lord Kṛṣṇa, he appears as a devotee of the Saguna. Tulsidāsa on the contrary is a devotee of Saguna, but he does not believe in any difference between the Nirguna and Saguna. He used the Saguna form of worship as a matter of practical convenience. He however gave priority to the Saguna over the Nirguna:

\[
\text{bibidha bhānti mohi mana samujhāvā.}
\]
\[
\text{nirguna mata mama hridanya na āwā.}
\]
\[
\text{Puni mein kaheun nāī pada sīsā.}
\]
Saguna upāsana kahau munisea,
- Tulsī, Māhas, 7/118/4

He repeatedly propounded the importance of Saguna worship and Saguna Brahman. Sānkardeva too realised the significance of the Saguna Brahman as the means of worships:

Miścāla mirmala sūkṣhma rupa jīto swāmī.
deve majānanta tānka kene jāno āmi.
apara tomhāra rūpa jāta bhūja cāri
Pītabaste sōbhai sānka cakra gadāhāri.
Pindhi āchā ratmara mukutāra hāḍa.
hiyāta ēribatsa gale banamālā jāra.
sehise mūrtiko āradhanta devaganes.
tākese bhakatajane cinte sarbakṣhame.

- Śankar, Kīr., 2102-3

Sānkardeva was attracted by the Divine playfulness of the Brahman. Enchanted by it he sings:

dekhā kena bipārita līlā mādhavara.
jīto brahma mūhikanta jnanar gocara.
jīto antaryāmī yajñabhoktā bhagavanta.
hena hari gopa śīśu lagata bhunjanta.

- Śankar, Bhāg., 10/409

However, the aim of Sānkardeva is not just to describe the sportive acts of God. We, in fact, uses it as a means of expressing the existence of the Brahman. The use of the means by Sānkardeva can be divided into three stages—Dvātia, Līlābhāva and Advaita.
From the above it is apparent that Sankar and Tulsi both described the Saguna drahman along with the Nirguna. Tulсидаса has clearly declared:

sagunahi agunahi nahin kachu bhedā.
gāwahin muni purāṇa budha bedā 
aguna arupa alakha aja joi 
bhagata prema basa saguna so hoi.

- Tulси, Мānas. 1/115/1

Sанкардева, however, has not made such clear statement. He describes both the forms of Brahman in his plays:

āhe samajika loka! je jagataka parama guru, jāheri srajanā sakala samsāra, brahmā maheśā bandita pādappāma, parama puruṣa puruṣottama, Śrī Kṛṣṇa ohi rukmiṇī satyabhāmā sahita sabhā-madhyey, Prabesa kayo Narakāśura badha pārijātaḥaraṇa līlā yātrā koutuke karaba.

- Sankar, P.H.N., p. 2

Thus it can be said that there is not much difference in the conceptions of Sankar and Tulси regarding the Saguna Brahman.

F. The Idea of Incarnation:

Sанкардева and Tulсидаса both have described incarnations of the Brahman. Their conceptions in this regard are similar. On the lines of the Gitā, both of them attribute the incarnations of Brahma to the protection of the saints,¹⁴ the destruction of
the evil, the establishment of religion, the good of the world etc. Many examples of it are scattered in their writings. The Brahman assumes the human form but remains unattached to the illusory world. Both of them describe their God as incarnation and also its cause:

bhakta kāmada hari Parama ānanda kari.
āpuno bhunjilā bhagawanta.
ehmate devahari līlā naratanu dhari.
manusyara dekhāyā cestāka.

- Śankar, Bhāg, 10/983

ati udāra avatāra manuja bapu dhare brahma aja avināsī.

- Tulsī, G.V., 7/38

vyāpaka bramha niranjana nirguna bigata vinoda.
so aja prema bhagati basa, kausāiyā ke goda.

- Tulsī, Mānas 1/198

They maintained that it is not easy to absorb the idea of the incarnation of Brahman, i.e., Kṛṣṇa, Rāma etc. embodied in human form. The idea of the Caturvyuha theory of incarnation is not acceptable to them.

They have mentioned the different incarnations of Brahman and related them to the good of the people. It will be quite pertinent to point out that Śankardeva has referred to twenty-four incarnations according to the Bhāgavata. But Tulsidāsa
mentions twelve incarnations including those of Kapila and Nārāyaṇa.  

G. Brahman as Viṣṇu : Viṣṇu as Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu as Rāma :  

Both Śankar and Tulsī have taken Kṛṣṇa and Rāma respectively as incarnations of Brahman or Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu. But Kṛṣṇa and Rāma are also accepted as the cause of incarnation. Kṛṣṇa and Rāma are also depicted as viṣṇu :  

\[ \text{namoh kṛṣṇa viṣṇo Paranāntaśakte.} \]  
- Śankar, P.H.N., first hymn  
\[ \text{āti aprābandhe gaḍurara scandhe thailā deva cakrapāṇi.} \]  
- Śankar, Bhāg, 8/133  
\[ \text{bhupa rupa taba rāma durāwā.} \]  
hrīdāyān caturbhuja rupa dekhāwā.  
- Tulsī, Mānas, 3/9/9  
\[ \text{paya payodhi taji avadhā bihāī.} \]  
janha siya lakhanu rāmu rahe āī.  
- Ibid, 2/138/3  
\[ \text{uraga nāyaka sayana, taruna pankaja nayana,} \]  
kṣīrā sāgara ayana, sārabāsi.  
- Tulsī, V.P. 55  

In fact, Kṛṣṇa of Śankardeva and Rāma of Tulsidāsa are viṣṇu. But several instances are found where they have considered
their deities as the Absolute Brahman and greater than Viṣṇu too.

Śankardeva describes his deity as the cause of causes, the God of gods and the highest among the Trinity. He is not only 'manmatha-koti-mathana mana' (K.G.N., p. 12) but also 'koti madanamanamohana' (Ibid, p. 1), besides being 'tribhuvanamohana'. His glory is even beyond the reach of Brahman and Śāṅkar. Similarly Tulsi’s deity Rāma is Lord of lords, God of gods, the Soul of souls, the Death of deaths, the Instructor of the Trinity, the Creator of numerous Sambhu and Viranchi worshipped by the Trinity, the source of power of the Trinity etc. It is thus seen that the deities of Śāṅkar and Tulsi are not only incarnation of Viṣṇu but also the highest reality.

It is to this deity that they address their prayers:

namāgonho sukhabhoga, nalāgoi mukuti.
tomāhara carane mātra thākoka bhakati

- Śāṅkar, Kīr., 523

kāmīhi nāri Piyāri jimi lobhihi priya jimi dāsa.
timi raghunātha nirantara priya lāgahu mohi rāma

- Tulsi, Mānas., 7/130/b

H. Bhakta- Vatsal Bhagawān:

The glory of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma as saguna rupa. Brahman finds practical manifestation in their kindness to the devotee as
child, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, inspite of their eternity and omnipotence, are humble before their devotees. Out of that kindness towards the devotees they have to appear as incarnations. The kindness of the deity has been described by Śānkara and Tulsi in many ways in their works.

For illustrating the kindness of Kṛṣṇa Śānkardeva has taken instances of Prahlād, Gajendra and Gopies. It is His kindness that makes Kṛṣṇa accept the bondage of rustic and simple woman.

śeke stri vanacari āro vyābhicāri
 tāhāro adhīna vailā eswara murāri
 nacawāi ajāti jāti pāpi puṇyavanta,
 bhakatite vasya kino Prabhu bhagawanta.

- Śānkar, Bhāg, 10/1502

In several of his verses Śānkardeva has presented himself as an humble creature in the face of the unlimited kindness of the deity. God's mercy is evident in the fact that the remembrance of His Name purifies even the Cāndāla. Arjuna was informed by Kṛṣṇa that one who is solely devoted to Him is acceptable as 'Parama sādhu' and Pure Soul, however evil he may. He gives speech to the dumb, and cripple the power to ascend inaccessible mountains. The chanting of His Name redeems one from the sin of matricide and patricide; mlech, cāndāl etc. are liberated from their evil deeds and attain
salvation. As Yamadutas were informed by Viṣṇudutas, God forgives the sins like murder of a brāhman, patricide, drinking, evil doing, killing of innocent animals, robbery, treachery to the friend etc., if one chants His Name. Lord Kṛṣṇa is ever anxious to shower kindness on His devotees:

bhakatara arthe mai āpuna ākula.
- Śankar, Bhāg, 8/329
bhakatara puro manoratha, dion kāma mokṣa dharma artha.
- Śankar, Kīr., 449

Tulsī's Rāma incarnates himself for the good of His devotees. The kindness and grace of Rāma has been described by Tulsī at several places. Devotees like Ajāmila, jaṭāyū, ganikā, sadan etc. become the object of Rāma's kindness. It is in a challenging mood that Tulsī describes Rāma's kindness:

Rāma saris ko dina hitakārī.
kīnhe mukuta nīsācara jhārī.
- Tulsī, Mānas, 6/113/5

The following is a good portrayal of this aspect of Rāma:

prabhu tarutara, kapi dāra para, te kiye āpu samāna.
Tulsī kahun na Rāma so sāhiba silanidhana.
- Tulsī, Dohā, 50

Sometimes it is presented in the words of Rāma himself:
The above shows that the deities of Śāṅkar and Tulsi are equally kind to their devotees. This kindness has been more stated than represented. That is why their descriptions become imposed and didactic.

3/3. Jīva

The advaita philosophy ultimately rejects the difference between Brahman and Jīva. It is said in Gītā, 'mamaivaṁśo jivaloke jīvabhutah sanātanah', similarly Śāṅkar and Tulsi traced the origin of jīva to the Brahman's attribute of consciousness:

brahman amśa jīvaka tathāpi āvāmya.
- Śāṅkar, Bhāg, 12/176

tomhārese amśa āmi jata jīva jāka.
- Śāṅkar, Kīr., 1656

hāmu jata jīva śiva terī amśa.
- Śāṅkar, Bar., 7
eswara amsa jīva abinas ā cetana amala sahaja sukharasī.
- Tulsī, Mānas, 7/116/1

jīva nitya kehi lāgi tumha rowā.
- Tulsī, Ibid., 4/10/3

jiya jaba tein hari tein bilgānyo.
taba tein deha geha nija jānyo.
- Tulsī, V P. 136

To Śankardeva the jīva is eternal and immortal. The relation of Brahma and jīva is conceived in term of avasādavāda and Prativimbaavāda to express the idea of Brahma as the whole and the jīva as the part. It is expressed through parallel symbolism of the fire and the spark, the cloth and the thread, the clay and the pot, the gold and the ornament etc. Further the relation of the Brahma and the jīva is shown in Anādipātan in the example of the fire and the burning iron.

Tulsidāsa has described the nature of jīva comparatively in greater detail and more explicitly. He has accepted jīva as part of the deity and at the same time has often described it as unconscious or inanimate. He describes its virtu :

māyah īsā na āpu kahun jāna kahio so jīva.
- Tulsī, Mānas, 3/15

To experience the sorrow and happiness, delight and suffering is the nature of jīva :

The jīva is eternal and the death is the nature of the body. Embodied self passes through the different worldly experiences. The sufferings of the embodied self are caused by ignorance and lack of knowledge as accepted by Śankar and Tulsi. This self is engrossed in māyā and forgets its progenitor. It leads to the cycle of life and death of the self. There is a similarity in their differentiation between the Brahman and the jīva under the spell of māyā. They have accepted the idea of jīva dependent on deeds; the end of the jīva is determined by the deed.

To them the jīva is of many kinds with different levels and states of existence. In relation to the body the jīva has four states - jāgrata, swapna, susupti and turiya. The first three states are clearly described in Śankar's Anādiratana and Tulsi's 'Dohāvali'. Tulsi has described the four states but not Śankardeva.

The three levels of jīva in Śankardeva (sthula, Sukshma and Kṛṣṇamaya) are the three forms of body in Tulsidāsa (kāraṇa sarīra, sukshma sarīra and antahkarana). Both of them subscribe to the idea of three categories of jīva - eternal, emancipated and imprisoned.
It is in the context of jīva that Śāṅkaradeva has discussed mind, consciousness, ego, inner self, intellect etc. in 'Andipātana' and 'Bhāgavata'. Tulsī has also discussed these things.

Thus it is evident that their ideas relating to jīva are in conformity with the advaitic philosophy. It is the grace of the deity that can release the jīva from his sufferings under the domination of māyā. A single minded devotion is essential for it:

bine bhakati gati nāī.
- Śāṅkar, Bar., 13

dekhī bhagati jo choroī tāhī
- Tulsī, Mānas, 1/201/2

3/4. Jagata and Samsār

There is no clear distinction between jagata and samsār in Śāṅkar and Tulsī of the kind found in Suddhādvaita. They have used 'jagata' and 'samsār' mostly as synonyms. Broadly speaking, both of them appear to be believers in Śāṅkarācārya's theory of the world as illusion. To Śāṅkar and Tulsī Brahman is the only reality and the sensory world is unreal. But it appears as real because of its origin from the Brahman:

asanta jagatakhāna tohmāta udbhava vaila,
santa hena prakāśoi sadāya.
- Śāṅkar, Kīr., 1669
A study of Śāṅkaradeva's thought relating to the jagata has led several scholars to the same conclusion. But Dr. N.V.S. Murthy is of the view that Śāṅkara deva's thoughts were inspired by viśiṣṭādvaita. In this perspective it is found that there is not much difference between the thoughts of Śāṅkar and Tulsi relating to the jagata.

Śāṅkara deva is no doubt, close to Śāṅkarācārya but there are some differences in his ideas about jagata and samsār. There are many instances in Śāṅkara deva in which jagata is seen as a portion of Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu and hence real:

kṛṣṇarese aṁsa sabe jagata niścaya.

- Śāṅkar, Bhāg, 2/1293

Viṣṇumaya dekhoi jiṭo samaste jagate.

- Śāṅkar, Kīr., 1824

samaste jagata hari jānibā niścaya kari gucāyo buddhira ito bhrama.

- Śāṅkar, Ibid., 1815
Corresponding instances of this kind are found in Tulsi, Manasa. 

Palluata phulata navala nita samsār bitapa namāme.

- Tulsi, Manasa, 7/12/5

Thus it can be maintained that the jagata of Sankara and Tulsi is manifestation of Viṣṇu or Rāma which can't be treated as mere illusion or unreal. However, at many places we come across statements in Sankar and Tulsi about jagata as unreal or illusory. Such statements are mostly in relation to self-analysis. Sometimes Tulsi, V.P. 111

Regarding the samsār Sankar and Tulsi both referred to it as false, meaningless, perishable, illusory etc.
athira dhana jana jeewana yauvana
athira ehu samsāra.
- Śankar, Bar., 17

ito cāra samārata, nāhin kichu sāra tatwa,
mahājñāni loke hena kai.
- Śankar, R.H.K., 447

mein tohin aba jānyo samsāra
- Tulsi, V.P. 188

naswara rupa jagata saba dekahan hridayan bicāri.
- Tulsi, Mānas, 6/77

For expressing the relation of Brahman and jagata Śankar and Tulsi used symbols of the cloth and the thread, the fire and the wood, the clay and the pot, the fire and the spark, and the serpent and the rope. 49

In their description of the origin and the end of the jagata they accept the philosophy of Sāmkhya. Śankardeva has described it more vividly and in greater detail than Tulsidāsa. Śankardeva refers to the dissolution of jagata and not to its end.

Tulsidāsa has taken Śankarācārya's 'Prakriti and referred to it as 'māyā'. This māyā is presented as involved in creation under the control and guidance of the Brahman. 50 Tulsi has referred in somewhat greater detail:
Thus it can be said that Sankardeva and Tulsidasa's ideas of jagata are in slight variation with Sankaracarya's Maya Vada. Moreover, no clear distinction between jagata and samsar is available in Sankar and Tulsî and they often used them as synonyms.

3/5. Maya:
Sankardeva and Tulsîdasa have described the form, kind, activity of the maya in their own ways. Sankardeva's conception of maya, although close to Sankaracarya's, is sufficiently different.51 His approach to maya is Parinamvâdi and not Vivartanvâdi.52 Tulsî's approach to maya is guided by Viśistadvaita. That is why we find the ideas of Sankar and Tulsî having more similarity than difference. Sankardeva finds everything that is in opposition to bhakti as maya.53 The following description of maya by Sankardeva:

udara mājha sunu andaja rāyā. 
dekheun bahu brāhmānda nikāyā. 
ati bicitra tanha loka anekā. 
racanā adhika eka te ekā. 
kotinha caturānana gourīsā. 
aganita udagana rabi rajanīsā. 
aganita lokapāla jama kālā. 
aganita bhūdhara bhūmi bisala. 
sagar sari sara bipina aparā. 
nana bhanti sristi bistara.

- Tulsî, Manas, 7/79/b
avastuka dekhaya vastuka avari.

shise mohar māyā jānā nistha kari.

- Śāṅkar, Bhāg, 2/1446

compares with that of Tulsidāsa:

jīva carācara basa kai rākhe.

- Tulsī, Mānas, 1/199/2

mein aru mora tora tein māyā

- Tulsī, Ibid, 3/14/1

go gocara janha lagi man jāī
so saba māyā jānehu bhāī.

- Tulsī, Ibid, 3/14/2

The entire animate and inanimate world is infused with māyā and the sensory world is its result.\(^{54}\) Following Śāṅkaraśārya Śāṅkar and Tulsī have used rajju-sarpa technique to describe māyā.\(^{55}\) The wealth, the youth, the wife, the son are all creations of māyā.\(^{56}\) Desire, anger, greed etc. are its agents which have encircled the world and plunged it in darkness of misery.\(^{57}\) The māyā is difficult to tackle and it is not easy to get rid of it. The entire world is under its spell.\(^{58}\) Māyā is the instrument (dāśī) of the Brahman and the Brahman is therefore called māyā-puruṣa or māyādhīs:

taju māyā puruṣa tāhāra māyā aṁśa.

- Śāṅkar, Bhāg, 10/523
māyādhīsa gyaṇa gūna dhāmū.
- Tulsi, Mānas, 1/116/4

To Tulsi the māyā is unconscious and impotent in itself.\textsuperscript{59} It is powerless before the Lord and His devotees.\textsuperscript{60} It is a playmaid, capricious and waylays the jīva.\textsuperscript{61} The attraction for woman\textsuperscript{62} is considered by both as its most powerful form:

mahā siddha muniro kaṭākṣhe mohe cita.
- Śāṅkar, Bhāg, 8/658

mṛgalocani ke nainā sar ko asa lāga na jāhi.
- Tulsi, Mānas, 7/70/b

They have brought the desire, greed and infatuation under it. Nobody is free from it. Śāṅkar and Tulsi have described it mostly in a similar way.\textsuperscript{63}

Both of them accept two forms of māyā-vidyā and avidyā. The vidyā māyā creates the world under the guidance of the drahman and assists the devotees. It is referred to by Śāṅkardeva as 'Swātika'.\textsuperscript{64} He presents the Brahman as saying:

tomāre āmāre kicho nāhi bhinnāḥhinna.
moto jāto līna jāhā ehi mātra hīna.
- Śāṅkar, A.P., 50

Tulsi's vidyā māyā creates the world\textsuperscript{65} and is guided by his Lord. He presents Sītā as part of Rāma's power. Tulsi has depicted the
vidyā and avidyā forms of Sītā parallel to the form of māyā. The vidyā-Sītā is presented as the emancipator of the creation and its creatures.  

The avidyā māyā is portrayed in detail by Śankardeva. Tulsidāsa has included desire etc. and pride, deceit, hypocrisy etc. in the category of avidyā māyā. It exercises its force not only on the jīvas but also on Śiva and Brahma:

Vyāpi raheu saṁsāra mahun māyā kaṭaka pracanda, senāpati kāmādi bhata dambha kapaṭa pāśanda.

- Tulsī, Mānas, 7/71/a

Śiva caturānana jāhi derāhin. aparā jīva kehi lekhe māhīn.

- Ibid, 7/70/4

Tulsī is conscious that it is not easy to get rid of it:

chuta na rāma kṛpā binu nātha kahaun pada ropi.

- Ibid, 7/71/b

Śankardeva’s prayer is for liberation from this avidyā māyā:

tuwā hari lāgo goda mora māyāpāśa choda Śāṅkara karaya kākuti.

- Śāṅkar, Bar., 16

Thus it is seen that the māyā of Śankar and Tulsī is different from Śāṅkarācārya’s māyā as unreal, Madhvacārya’s as
real and Nimbarkacarya's real-unreal. It is in many ways closer to Ramanuja's idea. The māyā of Śankar and Tulsī, originate from Brahman, it is controlled by Him; it is the motive principle and instrument of creation. In its avidyā form it deludes and affects men and gods. All states of the world follow the māyā. The single minded devotion to God is the only way to emancipation.

3/6. Mokṣa:

Freedom from suffering and attainment of bliss is mokṣa of the jīva. It can be achieved within and outside the bodily existence. Hence, mokṣa is of two types - Videh mukti and Jeewan mukti. The devotees have preferred the latter.

In Bhāgavata the mukti is of five kinds. There is neither a theoretical analysis of mukti nor its presentation in five forms of Bhāgavata in Śankar and Tulsī. Sānkardeva has referred to mokṣa as supreme bliss or līna mukti. The sāyujya-mukti of Bhāgavata is recognisable here. The seeker perceives the form of the deity and gains mukti according to his ability. Sānkardeva holds the spiritual achievements of three types - līna-mukti, vaikūṭha-lābh and sapremabhakti. The līna-mukti is the realisation of the consciousness - existence - bliss of the deity through pure monastic knowledge. It is for Sānkardeva the highest form of achievement:
There is no theoretical analysis of the different forms of mukti in Tulsidāsa, but he accepts the sāyujya, sālokya and sārupya muktis. Sabari, 69 kumbha-karna70 and Rāvana71 received sāyujya mukti; Bali72, Vibhīṣaṇa73 sālokya mukti74 and Jaṭāyu mukti75 from Tulsī's Rāma. Tulsī did accept the various forms of mokṣa but gave highest importance to bhakti. Śāṅkar and Tulsi in fact are not so much after mukti because they do not distinguish mukti and bhakti:

jahē bhakati tāhe mukuti, bhakate tatwa jānā.
- Śāṅkar, Bar., 10

Rāma bhajata soi mukuti gosāi, anaissita āwai bariāi.
- Tulsī, Mānas, 7/118/b

The indifference to mukti is the distinguishing quality of the bhakti dharma. Śāṅkar and Tulsī both prefer bhakti to mukti, although they also accept bhakti as a means of mokṣa:
namāgonho sukhabhoga nalāgoi mukuti.
tomhāra carane mātra thākoka ohakati.

- Sānkar, Kīr., 523

mokṣato abhilāśa nāhi hari.
tomhāra caraṇa reṇuka eri.

- Sānkar, Ibid, 792

raghupati bimukha jatana kara koṁī.
kavāna sakai bhava bandhana chori.

- Tulsī, Mānas, 1/199/2

dharma tein birati joga tein gyānā.
gyāna mochapradra beda bakhānā.
jātein begi dravaun mein bhāī.
sō mama bhagati bhagata sukhadāī.

- Tulsī, Ibid, 3/15/1

Besides bhakti, karma and jñāna are also taken as means of mokṣa. In bhakti Sāṅkardeva has emphasised the nāma-smarāṇa (chanting of the names) the most. Tulsī has also recognised its importance. The way of knowledge is given greater significance in Sāṅkardeva than in Tulsī. Tulsī has taken the way of devotion as all important and relegated the way of knowledge under it.⁷⁶ To Sāṅkardeva the chanting of the Name is in the root of all other means. Thus, we find that both of them look upon bhakti as the supreme means of mokṣa.
Thus it is seen that both Śāṅkara and Tulsī are followers of the advaita philosophy and subscribe to the idea of two forms of the Brahman. The Nirguna Brahman remains beyond the triple tendencies of Prakriti-sattwa, raja and tama. However, He is the object of devotion as kindness, love etc. emanate from Him. Herein lies the secret of Śāṅkaradeva’s nirguna bhakti. The other form of the Brahman is that of incarnation in which He assumes human attributes and acts as such. But the saguna is essentially nirguna because the Brahman retains the pure form and is not subject to māyā. Śāṅkara and Tulsī both do not make any categorical distinction between the saguna and nirguna but Śāṅkara’s deity is nirguna- nirākāra and that of Tulsī saguna- sākāra.

The jīva is regarded by them as part of the consciousness of the Brahman. It appears different from the Brahman due to the māyā. Hence, the goal of the jīva is for both Śāṅkara and Tulsī to transcend the māyā and reach the Brahman.

There is similarity in their attitudes towards the Jagata and Samsār. Like the Jīva, Jagata is part of the Brahman and hence real. The Samsār denotes worldly relation and it is unreal and perishable. However, we also come across instances where the Jagata is used in the sense of Samsār i.e., unreal and perishable.
The māyā as the playmaid of the Brahman has two forms—vidyā and avidyā—to Śankar and Tulsī. Vidyā-māyā is the creator of the world and helps the devotees in their goal. The avidyā māyā on the contrary waylays the jīva away from the Brahman. Deception, concealment, infatuation, illusion etc. are its different forms.

Freedom from the worldly prision and the achievement of the Divinity are accepted as mokṣa by Śankar and Tulsī. Of the two forms of mokṣa, jeevan mukti is taken as superior to videh mukti. Various forms of videh mukti are referred to by them. However, bhakti is accorded greater significance than mukti.

It is thus seen that the philosophical thoughts of Śankardeva and Tulsidāsa are close to each other. There is very little dissimilarity between their thoughts which ultimately culminates in the establishment of the superiority of devotion to all other forms of spiritual pursuit.
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