CHAPTER IV: THE CONCEPT OF THE JīVA
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1. Atman And Brahman:

The doctrine of Atman or the Self is discussed elaborately in the Upaniṣads, the Gītā and the Purāṇas. The Upaniṣads generally use the term Atman as a synonym of Brahman. Surendranath Dasgupta opines that the sum and substance of the Upaniṣadic teaching is involved in the equation Atman=Brahman.1 However, in the later Upaniṣads it is seen that the word Brahman is generally used in the sense of the ultimate essence of the universe and the word Atman is used to denote the inmost essence of man. Actually the idea of Atman is capable of different interpretations. Paul Deussen has interpreted this word in three different ways. He says, “Three positions are here possible, according as by the Atman is understood (1) The corporeal self, the body; (2) The individual soul, free from the body, which as knowing subject is contrasted with and distinct from the object or (3) The supreme soul, in which subject and object are no longer distinguished from one another or which, according to the Indian conception, is the objectless knowing subject.”2

2. Paul Deussen, The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads, P. 94.
In the Chandogya Upanishad Atman is described as beyond this world of change. It is said there, “The self which is free from sin, free from decay, from death and suffering, from hunger and thirst, whose desires are true, whose Cognitions are true that is to be searched for, that is to be enquired”. The Māṇḍūkyopanishad describes the different states of the self, viz., the waking state, the dreaming state and deep sleep. These three states of the self are called vaisvānara, taijasa and praṇā respectively. But these states are only lower states. The highest state is the turiya or the fourth state. This is the transcendental state. This state is described by the negation of all attributes. This is the state where the phenomenal world is at rest; it is serene, gracious and free from duality. In the Upaniṣads it is generally seen that the references to Ṇtman begins with the individual aspect of it and then it is raised to the status of the supreme Self, which is its real nature. The transcendental state of the self is the kūṭastha or immutable aspect, which is identical with the unconditioned Brahma. This identity of the individual self with the universal self is expressed in the Mahāvākyas (great sentences) of the Upaniṣads. Four Mahāvākyas are

3. ya ātmā'pahatapāpma vijaro vimṛtyurvisoko vijighat so' pipāsaḥ so' nveṣtayaḥ
   sa vijjñāsitavyah // CU. 8.7.1.
4. Mādukyopanisad, 3-5
5. nantahrprajñāṁ na bahiḥprajñāṁ .. sansaṁ śivamadvaitaṁ caturthaṁ manyante.
   sa ātmā sa viṣṇeyah. Ibid, 7

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found. These are “tattvamasi” (That thou art), “aham brahmāsmi,” (I am Brahman) “ayamātmā brahma”. (This self is Brahman) and “prajñānaṁ brahma” (Knowledge is Brahman). Hence, the Upaniṣads look upon the objective and the subjective the Brahman and the Ātman as identical.

In the Gītā the nature of the self as eternal, immutable, timeless and self-existent is emphasized. The self is never born, nor dies; it is unborn, eternal, everlasting and primavel. It is not the body but the lord of the body. The Gītā gives eloquent descriptions of this undying element, which persists even though the body is destroyed. “Weapons cannot cut it, nor can fire burn it, water cannot wet it, nor can wind make it dry.” This self is eternal omnipresent, immovable and everlasting. In its essence it is not the doer. The Gītā declares that “He whose mind is deluded by egoism

6. CU, 6.8.7
7. BU, 1.4.10
8. Māđukyopaniṣad, 2
9. AU, 3.1.3
10. nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ / ubhayorapi dṛṣto’ntastvanayostattvadārśibhiḥ // BG, 2.16
11. Cf. na jāyate mriyate vā kadācit nāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ / ajonityah śāśvato’yam purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śārīre // Ibid, 2.20
12. naināṁ chhindanti śāstrāpi naināṁ dahati pāvakaḥ / na cainaṁ kledayantyāpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ // Ibid, 2.23
13. nityaḥ sarvagataḥ sthānuracalo ’yaṁ sanātanaḥ // Ibid, 2.24 (b)
thinks himself to be the doer of actions which are actually done by the qualities of *Prakṛti*.”

The *Gītā* regards the self as always transcendent. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā*, “Spirit, even when dwelling in this body, is really transcendent. He has been declared to be the witness, the Guide, the Sustainer, the Experiencer of pleasure and pain and the Supreme Lord.”

Hence, in the spirit of the Upaniṣads the *Gītā* also identifies the two principles of the Ātman and the Brahman. As Radhakrishnan observes “Behind the fleeting senses and the body there is the Ātman; behind the fleeting objects of the world there is Brahman. The two are one being of identical nature.”

2. Different Theories about Ātman:

The Indian philosophers differ among themselves about the nature of the self. Excepting the Cārvākas and the Baudhas all the philosophical systems of India believe in the existence of a permanent self. The Cārvākas maintain that the conscious body itself is the self. Even consciousness

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14. *prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvasaḥ /
   ahaṃkārarūpamūḍhatmā kartāhamitī manyate // Ibid, 3.27
15. *upadraṣṭānumantā ca bhartā bhoktā mahēśvaraḥ /
   paramāmeti cāpyukto dehe’smin puruṣaḥ paraḥ // Ibid, 13.23
according to them, material. Among the nāstika philosophers, the Buddhists are the believers in the not self-theory. That is, they do not believe in an eternal, permanent self. In their view, there is nothing except a series of momentary consciousness, which can be termed as a self. The Jainas accept a self which is different from the body, sense organs, mind, etc. and whose chief trait is consciousness.

Among the āstika philosophers, the Sāṅkhya and Yoga philosophers regard Puruṣa as the self. It is the knower. Puruṣa is different from the body, sense organs, mind, āhāṃkāra and buddhi. Consciousness is its essence. This self is only the witness and not the doer; it is beyond time and space, beyond change and activity. The Sāṅkhyas accept plurality of the selves.

The Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika systems propound almost identical theory of the self. According to them the self is a substance; consciousness is its distinctive quality. The individual self is a real substantive being, having for its qualities desire, aversion, violation, pleasure, pain and cognition. The Naiyāyikas and the Vaiśeṣikas also regard the self as

17. tat caitnyaviśiṣṭadeha eva ātmā. Sarvadarśana Saṅgraha, P. 1
18. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, P. 884
19. tatra bodhātmako jivaḥ ....... etc. Sarvadarśana Saṅgraha, P. 72
20. SK, 17-19
21. Nyāya Sūtra, 1.2; Bhāṣāpariccheda, 47-51
distinct from the body, sense organs and mind. They also regard the self as partless, all-pervading and eternal, it has no beginning and no end. Birth and death are nothing but the connection of the self with the body and its separation from the body, respectively. These philosophers uphold the view that there are many souls, each soul having distinct spiritual unit with a distinct *manas* (mind).

The Mīmāṃsakas also believe in the existence of the self, which is different from the mind-body complex. Śabara accepts the reality of a permanent cogniser, which is known by it and cannot be seen by others. The self is one with consciousness. Like the Nyāya Vaiśeṣikas, the Mīmāṃsakas also regard the self as all-pervading (*vibhū*) and is capable of connecting itself with one body after another. The Mīmāṃsakas also adopt the theory of the plurality of the selves to account for the varieties of experience and the differences of *dharma* and *adharma* etc. Prabhākara maintains that the self is non-intelligent and is the substratum of the qualities like knowledge, activity and experience, enjoyment and suffering.

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22. *Nyāyavārtika*, 4.1.10
24. Ibid, P. 28
26. *Purvamīmāṁsā in Its Sources*, P. 26
The Advaita Vedāntins regard the self as identical with Brahman. Hence, it is ekamevādviśīya- one, without a second. The self is of the nature of sat (existence), cit (consciousness) and ānanda (bliss). It is ananta i.e., it is not limited by time, space etc. and as such it is eternal, transcendental and all-pervading. It does not undergo birth and deaths; it has neither origination nor destruction. Moreover, being of the nature of Brahman agency enjoyership etc. cannot remain in it. In the empirical level, however, this real nature of the self is not revealed. The empirical self is only a conditioned state of Brahman; it is Brahman conditioned by the psychophysical organism that appears as the empirical self.\textsuperscript{27} All the limitations of the empirical selves are caused by these upādhis (conditions or limiting adjuncts). The empirical self appears as undergoing births and deaths because of the upādhis. Births and deaths are but moments of the self’s association with and dissociation from the mind-body complex.

Among the Vedāntins, Rāmānuja upholds the view that the individual self is not one with Brahman or God, since it differs in essence from Him. In his view, the individual self is real, unique, eternal, endowed with intelligence and self-consciousness, without parts, unchanging, imperceptible and atomic in size.\textsuperscript{28} It is different from the body, the senses,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{27} Cf. BSS, 3.2.17-39
\item \textsuperscript{28} SB, 2.2.19-32; 2.3.18
\end{itemize}
organs, prāṇa and buddhi. It is the knower, the doer (kartā) and enjoyer (bhoktā).\textsuperscript{29} The self is a part of Brahman. In Rāmānuja’s view, there are many selves, which are but effects of Brahman and cannot exist apart from Him.\textsuperscript{30}

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that almost all the philosophers of India accept the existence of an eternal individual self, which is different from the mind-body complex. Śaṅkarācārya regards the self as one only and as non-different from the Absolute. Other philosophers do not conform to this view of Śaṅkara. Now let us discuss what is the view of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa regarding the real nature of the individual self.

3. The Nature of the Self in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa:

The word Ātman is used in two different senses in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa – in the sense of the individual self (jīvatman) as well as the transcendental self (paramātman). And in many places the Viṣṇu Purāṇa identifies these two Ātmans (selves)

\textsuperscript{29} Indian Philosophy, S. Radhakrishnan, Vol. II, P. 690
\textsuperscript{30} Cf. SB, 2.3.18, 42, 45
In the story of Jāda Bharata\textsuperscript{31} of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa the real nature of the self is elaborately expressed. Jāda Bharata was possessed of the knowledge of the self and he instructed the king Sauvīra this ātma - jñāna (self-knowledge). Jāda Bharata was actually the illustrious king Bharata in his previous birth. But due to previous karma-phala he was born as a Brāhmin who outwardly was as if inert. He did not perform religious rites or study the Vedas. His speech was incoherent, ungrammatical and unpolished. People thought him as a crazy fool and neglected him. The head servant of the king of Sauvīra employed him as the bearer of the palanquin carrying the king. One day when the king was going to the hermitage of Kapila, the great sage, ascending his palanquin, he felt the unevenness of the palanquin caused by the unsteady and slow gait of Bharata. The king was displeased and asked Bharat why he was lagging behind though he was an able-bodied man. In reply to the king’s question Bharata instructed the king about the real nature of the self. He says that the self is pure, imperishable (akṣara), tranquil, devoid of qualities, beyond Prakṛti and without increase or decrease. It is one in all beings.\textsuperscript{32} Bharata also points out that the body etc. is not the self. The notions of “I” and me

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{31} VP. 2.13
\textsuperscript{32} ātma suddho'ksarah śanto nirguṇah prakṛte parah // prabrddhapacayau nāsyā ekasyākhilajantuṣu // Ibid, 2.13.71
\end{quote}
are not true. The expressions “I” and “You” are used only with reference to
the collocations called bodies.\textsuperscript{33} To exemplify this Bharata said, “The feet
are on the ground, the legs are supported by feet, the thighs rest upon the
legs; the belly is situated on the thighs; the chest is placed on the belly; and
the arms and shoulders are propped up by the chest the palanquin is carried
on the shoulders.\textsuperscript{34} Hence, what is called, as ‘I’ or ‘you’ are nothing but the
body. The body is again made of elements (\textit{bhūta}). The elements are five
in number. They are earth, water, fire, air and ether. The elements are
again consisted of the three \textit{guna}s, viz., \textit{sattva}, \textit{rajas} and \textit{tamas}.\textsuperscript{35} The
\textit{guna}s are the consequence of past \textit{karman} and \textit{karman} results from \textit{avidyā}.
All the jivas are conditioned by this \textit{avidyā}.\textsuperscript{36}

The self is not ‘I’. Bharata points out that the word ‘I’ is applied to
the self only in error. It conceives the not-self as the self.\textsuperscript{37} If it is said that
‘I’ is the self then the question naturally arises: who is this ‘I’? Is it the
senses or the body? The senses like tongue etc. can not be called ‘I’ as

\begin{itemize}
\item[33.] Cf. Ibid, 2.3.86
\item[34.] Ibid, 2.3.62-66
\item[35.] aham tvānca tathāanye ca bhūtairuhyāma pārthivā /
guṇaprabhāhapatito bhūtavargo’pi yātyayaṁ // Ibid, 2.13.69
\item[36.] karmavaśyā guṇāścitaṁ sattvādyāḥ prthivipate /
avidyāsaṁcitam karma taccāśeṣeṣu jantuṣu // Ibid, 2.13.70
\item[37.] sabdo’hamiti doṣāya ātmanyesā tathaiva tat /
anātmanyātmavijñānāṁ śabdo vā bhrāntilakṣaṇaḥ // Ibid, 2.13.86
\end{itemize}
these are only kāraṇas (instruments) not the kartā (agents). Nobody says ‘I’ am the tongue” 38 The body consists of different parts like hands, feet, etc. To which of these parts the word “I” can be applied? So the body is also not the real self. 39 Only one self exists in all the bodies. 40 Hence, I cannot denote that self, as it is associated with the body.

There is no selfhood for the complex of not-self and the self is not a complex. Self is neither god, nor man, nor animal nor tree. 41 All distinctions such as, man, woman, cow, goat etc. are names assigned to various bodies which are the product of past karman. 42 The Viṣṇu Purāṇa also says that what is called a king, a servant etc. are but an imagination of the mind. 43 The real nature of the self according to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa is that it is one in all bodies, all-pervading, uniform, perfect and different.

38. jihvā bravītya’hamiti dantoṣṭhum tālukam nṛpa/
ete nāhaṁ yataḥ sarve vān-niśpādanaḥ/ // Ibid, 2.13.87
39. pindaḥ prthag yataḥ purūsaḥ śīraḥpānyādilakṣanah /
tato’hamiti kutraitāṁ saṃjñāṁ rājan karomyahaṁ // Ibid, 2.13.89
40. yadā samastadheṣu pumāneko vyāvasthitah / Ibid, 2.13.91(a)
41. pumānna devo na naro na paśūna ca pādapaḥ /
śarīrakṛtbhedāstu bhūpaitā karmayonayaḥ // Ibid, 2.13.98
42. pumān stri gaurajo vājī kuṇjaro’vihagastaruḥ /
dheṣu lokasūjñeyāṁ vijñeyā karmahetūsu // Ibid, 2.13.97
43. vasturajeti yalloke yacca rājabhatātmaṁ /
tathanyāccca nṛpetthāṁ tanna sat saṅkalpanāmayaṁ // Ibid, 2.13.99
It is devoid of birth, growth and decay; it is omnipresent and is of the nature of supreme knowledge. The self is not related with the unrealities of name species etc. This one self exists in one's own and in other bodies.

The real nature of the self is further elaborated in the story of Rbhu and Nidāgha of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. Rbhu, the great Yogi instructed his disciple Nidāgha about the nature of the self. Rbhu taught Nidāgha about the non-duality of the selves. The self is one. Just as the sky appears as blue or white because of the upādhi (adjuncts), similarly the one self appears as many in different persons because of the different bodies, which are its limiting adjuncts. Everything in this world is of the nature of that self which is none other than Acyuta (i.e., Viṣṇu). All the individuals are non-different from that self.

4. The Empirical Self:

The empirical self or the jīva is said to be a part of the universal self or Viṣṇu. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa this empirical self is described as the

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44. eko vyāpi samaḥ śuddho nirgunah prakṛteḥ paraḥ/ Ibid, 2.14.29
45. sitanilādibhedena yathaikah drṣyate nabhaḥ/
   bhrāntidṛṣṭibhirātmāpi tathaikam san prthak prthak//
   ekaḥ samastām yadīhasti kiṃcat tadacyuto nāsti param tato'nyat//Ibid, 2.16.22-23a
46. te sārve sarvabātāsya viṣṇuparaṁśu dvijottama/ Ibid, 1.22.15
enjoyer of the joys and sorrows, which are the result of its past *karma*. It is the receptacle of all its experiences. The *jīva* experiences different things through its five sense-organs and five motor-organs, mind and the intellect. This is the embodied self, which is bound in a body. It passes through different births, which are, but the different moments of its association with and dissociation from the bodies. The embodied selves (*jīvas*) being bewildered by the darkness of delusion (*moha*) thinks the body composed of the five elements as ‘I’ or ‘mine’.\(^{47}\) But in reality the self is distinct from the five elements, viz., ether, air, fire, water and earth. The real self is not the doer and the enjoyer of the fruits thereof. This is clear from the words of Kesidhvaja in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. Man performs all acts for the purpose of bodily enjoyment. As this body is different from the self, so the consequence of thinking that body as the self is nothing but bondage and transmigration of the *jīva*.\(^{48}\) Kesidhvaja said, “Travelling the path of the world for many thousand of births, man attains only the weariness of delusion smoothened by the dust of imagination”\(^{49}\)

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47. paṁcabhūtātmaka dehe dehī mohatamoṁtaḥ
   ahametadityuccaiḥ kurute kumatirmatiṁ // Ibid, 6.7.12
48. sarvāṁ dehopabhogāya kurute karma māṇavaḥ
   dehascānya yadā puṁsastadā vandhāya tatparaṁ // Ibid, 6.7.16
49. anekajannasāhasrīṁ saṁsārapadāvīṁ vrajan
   mohasramāṁ prayāto’sau vāsanāreṇuṅgūṇṭhitah // Ibid, 6.7.19
But the *jīva* in its real nature is never bound. It is pure and is composed of happiness and wisdom. The properties of pain, ignorance and impurity actually belong to *Prakṛti* and not to the Self.\(^{50}\) It is because of the superimposition of the properties of the *Prakṛti* on the self that the *jīva* is vitiated by egotism (*ahamkāra*) and assumes the qualities of *Prakṛti*. Keśidhvaja clarifies this with the help of the example of fire and water. There is no relation between water and fire. But when water is placed over fire in a caldron it bubbles and boils and exhibits the properties of fire. Similar is the case with the *jīvas*.\(^{51}\)

The nature of the self is described in the story of Prahlāda also. Prahlāda says that all creatures are born in this world and then attain infancy, youth, and decay in course of time. All the beings ultimately attain death. But this is not the end. They are born again.\(^{52}\) This chain of births and deaths goes on. This leads to suffering alone.\(^{53}\)

Prahlāda also points out that three types of afflictions afflict the worldly beings, viz., *ādhyātmika*, *ādhibhautika* and *ādhidaivika*. *Ādhyātmika* pain is the bodily or mental distress caused by diseases and

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50. nirvāṇamaya evāyamātmā jīnānamayo’malah /

   duḥkhaḥānāmalai dharmām prakṛteste tu naṁtmanah // Ibid, 6.7.22
51. Ibid, 6.7.23-24
52. Ibid, 1.17.56-58
53. samastāvāsthaḥāṁ tāvat duḥkhamevāvagamyatāṁ // Ibid, 1.17.59

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anger, greed, non-fulfillment of desires etc. Adhibhautika pain is caused by the injuries afflicted by men, animals etc. Adhidaivika pain is caused by gods, demons etc. All these three types of pains are actually related to the body. It is generally accepted that the ājīva is consisted of three bodies, viz., gross, subtle and causal. The gross body is composed of flesh, blood, matter, ordure, urine, membranes, marrow and bones. The subtle body consists of seventeen parts these are the five organs of knowledge, five motor organs, five elements, buddhi (intellect) and mind. The causal body is nothing but ignorance.

5. The Relation between the Individual Self and Supreme Self:

Following the Upaniṣads the Viṣṇu Purāṇa also propounds the non-difference (advaita) between the individual Self and the Supreme Self. The Advaitic tenor of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa is obvious in several contexts. It is said here that Prahlāda meditated upon Viṣṇu as identical with his own self. Prahlāda conceived of himself as non-different from that all-pervading God, who is un-decaying, imperishable and is the cause of all. Viṣṇu is all and in him all things exist. Prahlāda also realized that as he is non-different

54. Cf. Ibid, 6.5.2-8; SK, 2
55. māṁsā śṛṣṭiṣyaśūningūtsūnāyumājaśthisaṁhatau /
   deha cet prījāṁ madho narake bhavitāpi saḥ // Ibid, 1.17.63
from Viṣṇu, so he is all things and all things are in him; he is everlasting, eternal and the receptacle of all the selves. He is Brahmaṇ, he himself exists in the beginning and at the end of all. Prahlāda forgot his individuality and was conscious of nothing other than his being the inexhaustible, eternal and supreme self. Through this meditation he became free from sin his heart was rendered pure. In this way the identity of the individual self and Viṣṇu is declared in this Purāṇa.

The Advaitic character of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa is also established by Parāśara as he says, “I am Hari. All that I behold is Janārddana; cause and effect are none other than Him. The man who knows these truths shall never again experience the afflictions of worldly existence.”

While teaching the king of Sauvīra about the nature of the self, Jāna Bharata also established the non-duality of the self. Bharata argues that the self is one, without a second; there is no difference between the individual self and the Supreme Self. He points out that even the union of the self

56. sarvagatvādanantasya sa evāhamavasthitāḥ /
   mattah sarvamahāṁ sarvaṁ mayi sarvaṁ sanātane //
   ahamevākṣayo nityah paramātmātmasaṁśrayah/
   brahmasanjjñāḥ hamevāgre tathānte ca paraḥ pumān// Ibid, 1.19.85-86

57. viśmara tathātmānam nānyat kiścidajñanata /
   ahamevāvyayo’nantah paramātmetyacintayat // Ibid, 1.20.2

58. aham hariḥ sarvamidaṁ janārdano nānyat tataḥ kāraṇakāryajātāṁ /
   ādṛṭmano yasya na tasya bhūyo bhavodbhavā dvandvagadā bhavanti // Ibid, 1.22.86
with the Supreme Spirit is false.\textsuperscript{59} This implies that it is absurd to talk of affecting a union between the individual self and the Supreme Self, because if they are essentially distinct, it is not possible to bring about a union between them. Again, if they are already one and the same, it is useless to talk of accomplishing their union. The truth is not to affect the union of two things, or two parts of one thing, but to know that all is unity.\textsuperscript{60} Bharata also emphatically says that the knowledge of the spirit, which is essentially one, exists in ones own and in all other bodies, is the true wisdom. The duelists do not possess the real knowledge of the self, there knowledge is erroneous knowledge.\textsuperscript{61} Just as one, non-different in passing through the perforations of a flute is distinguished as different notes like śadja, ṛṣabha etc. similarly that Supreme Self is one only, though appears as many because of the adjuncts of the bodies.\textsuperscript{62} The difference of forms of the Self is the consequence of the karman (action) of the bodies.

\textsuperscript{59} paramāṭmātmanoryogah paramārtha itiṛyyate / mithyaitadanyad dravyāṁ hi naiti taddravyatāṁ yataḥ // Ibid, 2.14.27

\textsuperscript{60} Cf. Sridhara’s Commentary on Ibid; The Vishnu Purāṇa, H.H. Wilson, P. 204

\textsuperscript{61} tasyātmaparadeheṣu satopyekamayaṁ hi yat / vijñānaṁ paramārtho’sau dvaitino’tattvadarśinaḥ // VP, 2.14.31

\textsuperscript{62} venurandhradibhedena bhedaḥ sadjaśdisamjñitaḥ / abhedavyāpino vāyostathā tasya mahātmanaḥ // Ibid, 2.14.32

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which are different from the self. When this difference of the bodies is destroyed, then there is no distinction.\textsuperscript{63}

In the story of Ŗbhu also the advaitic tenor of the \textit{Viṣṇu Purāṇa} is clearly stated. The story of Ŗbhu is actually introduced here as being a tale illustrative of the doctrine of non-difference (advaitāntargātāṁ kathāṁ).\textsuperscript{63} Ŗbhu’s pupil was Nidāgha who was well-versed in every knowledge, but he had not achieved the knowledge of advaita. Hence, Ŗbhu, the teacher endeavored to teach him the Advaitic doctrine. By different arguments Ŗbhu showed to Nidāgha that the Self is one in all bodies and that it is non-dual.\textsuperscript{65} Nidāgha also then realized the essence of truth, which is Advaita. He, realized that all beings are the same with him.\textsuperscript{66} Even as the same sky is apparently diversified as white or blue, so the Self, which is one in reality, appears as distinct in different persons of erroneous vision. That one Self is Acyuta (Viṣṇu). Hence, the \textit{Viṣṇu Purāṇa} declares this ultimate truth as \textit{so ‘haṁ} (i.e., ‘He is I’) and \textit{sa tvāṁ} (i.e., ‘He is thou’) or \textit{tattvamasi}, i.e., That art thou). This universe is his form; difference is caused by error.

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{63} ekatvāṁ rūpabhedaśca vāhyakarmaprayṛttijāḥ / 
        devādibhede‘padhvaste nāstyevāvarāṇe hi saḥ // Ibīd, 2.14.33
    \item \textsuperscript{64} Ibīd, 2.15.1
    \item \textsuperscript{65} paramārthaśārabhūtaṁ yadadvaitamasēṣataḥ / Ibīd, 2.16.18
    \item \textsuperscript{66} nidāgho’pyupadesēna tenādvaitaparo‘bhavat / Ibīd, 2.16.19
\end{itemize}
In part VI of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* also the knowledge of identity of the individual self with the universal self is declared as means of attaining liberation. It is said here,

\[
tadbhāvabhāvanāpannastato 'sau paramātmanā /
\]

\[
ḥavaṭyabhēdī bhedaśca tasyājñānākṛto bhavet //67
\]

This means “when the *jīva* is engrossed in the meditation of that *Paramātman*, then there is non difference between it and the Supreme Spirit. Difference is the consequence of *ajñāna* or ignorance” when this ignorance which is the cause of the difference between the individual and Universal Spirit is destroyed finally and forever, there will be no distinction between them.68

Thus, it is clear from our forgoing discussions that the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* is actually Advaitic in nature. It declares the non-duality of the *jīva* and *Brahman* in transcendental level. According to it, only the knowledge of identity can lead one to liberation, as knowledge of difference is caused by *avidyā*.

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67. Ibid, 6.7.93
68. vibhedajanake jñāne nāsāṃtyantikam gate/
ātmano brahmaṇo bhedamasantarāṃ kah karisyati// Ibid, 6.7.94
Rāmānuja’s View:

But Rāmānuja does not conform to this view. In his view, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, which is a Sāttvika Purāṇa, is an authority for his Viśiṣṭādvaśta philosophy. Rāmānuja has dealt with the different portions of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa in his Sribhāṣya (1.1.1) to show that the Purāṇa does not propound the theory of Advaita. He maintains that the Viṣṇu Purāṇa clearly upholds the qualified Brahman as the ultimate reality. Brahman is endowed with all the auspicious qualities. cit (i.e., self) and acit (i.e., matter) constitute the body of Brahman. The very verses, which are cited as referring to the identity of the jīva and Ṣvāra, are explained by Rāmānuja to show that their meanings are quite different.

The Advaitins refer to the verse “tasyāṁmaparadeheḥ sato ‘pyekamayaḥ” etc. of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa in support of the non-duality of the self. It is said here that the self is essentially one residing in one’s own and in all other bodies. Those who see difference or duality do not possess real knowledge their knowledge is erroneous. Explaining this verse Rāmānuja says that this does not point out the identity of the jīva and Brahman. It simply means that though all the selves are identical as being of the form of knowledge, even then to perceive these selves as different is

69. Supra, P. 124
the form of gods, men etc. is erroneous. According to Rāmānuja here "ekamaya’ does not mean complete unity, but it means similarity or sameness of the selves. The duality of the selves in different bodies is not contradicted here. The different selves residing in different bodies of gods, men, etc. is similar in nature. Thus the self is one in the sense of (universality) while it is many in the sense of (individuality). In this context Rāmānuja refers to the verse “sūni caīva śvāpāke ca paṇḍitaḥ sama darśinah” etc. (i.e., The wise knows that a dog and a cāṇḍāla are similar). Again, the verse “yadyanyo’sti paraḥ ko’pi” etc., of the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇa also, according to Rāmānuja, does not denote oneness of the self. In his view, the two words anya (other) and para (different) cannot be used in the same sense. Accordingly, the word ‘para’ denotes the self other than one’s own self and the word ‘anya’ is used to show that the self is not different from the nature of knowledge. Hence, the real meaning of the verse is that if there is any other self which is not of the nature of knowledge, then it can be said that ‘I am like this’, ‘He is different’, but

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70. SB, 1.1.1, P. 240-41
71. devamānuṣyādividhaviciraptiṇḍesu vartamānaṁ sarvamātmavastu
   samamityarthah.
   Ibid, P. 241
72. BG, 5.18 (b)
73. VP, 2.1390
this cannot be said, since all the selves are similar being of the form of knowledge. Further it is said that as one diffusive air, passing through the perforations of a flute, is distinguished as the sadja etc., so the nature of the self is single, though its forms are manifold arising from the consequences of action. Here also Rāmānuja differs from the Advaitavādins and explains the verse in a different sense. In his view, the difference of the forms of the selves is not due to their nature but because of entering into the bodies of gods etc. The self is not singular. The example makes this clear. For the parts of air, which pass through the different perforations, are one as air ness, but are different perforations, similarly the selves get different denotations as god etc. In the similar vein Rāmānuja has shown that the verse, ‘so’ham sa ca tvāṁ’ etc. also does not denote the identity of the self. It simply means that all the selves are of the form of knowledge.

74. tatra parasābdah sva-vyatiriktatmavacanah, anyaśabdastasyāpi jñānaikakāratvād anyākāratvapratisedhārtah. sarvesāṁ jñānaikākāratvena samanatvadeva
SB, 1.1.1, P. 242
75. VP, 2.14.32-33
76. vāpurandhravibhedena ityatāpi ākāravaiśamanyamātmanāṁ na svarūpaktaṁ, api tāṁ devādipindapraveṣākrtamityupadisyate; natmaikyāṁ sarvasatmanāṁ
devādisamśajñā bhedāḥ. SB, P. 242
77. VP, 2.16.23
78. sarvatmanāṁ purvoktam jñānaikāratvaṁ. SB. P. 243
Rāmānuja concludes that there is neither identity of the selves, nor there is identity between the individual self and Universal Self, just as there is no identity between the self and the body. To emphasize his point he refers to the Upaniṣads. Thus, the Śrūtis, “dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhiṇī samānāṁ vrksāṁ pariśasvajāte. tayoranyah pippahāṁ sādvatyanaśnannayo abhicākaśī”, “ṛtam pivantau sukrītasya loke guhāṁ ..... triṇāciketāḥ”, “antarāpraviṣṭāḥ sastā ī ṇānaṁ sarvātmā” etc. clearly show the difference between the jīva and Brahman. Similarly in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa also the difference between the jīva and Īśvara is declared e.g., “samastakalyāṇa-guṇāṃ kahitāḥ samśādhitāśesajagadhitō’sau” “parāḥ paraṇāṁ ........ parāvareśe” “avidyā karmasamjñāṅyā ........... sarvagā” etc.

In the context of mukti also it is said in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa thus:

\[ tadbhāvbhāvanāpannastato ‘sau paramātmanā / bhavatyabhṛdhi bhedāśca tasyājñānākṛto bhavet \]
But Rāmānuja has adopted a different reading here and reads the verse as ‘tadbhāvabhāvamāpanna’ etc.\textsuperscript{87} He says that the word ‘tadbhāva’ means the essential property (svabhāva) of Brahman and not the identical nature thereof.\textsuperscript{88} If this meaning is not accepted then the use of the word ‘bhāva’ a second time will be redundant. Hence, in Rāmānujas view, here the meaning is that when one attains the svabhāva of Brahman, which is devoid of all the three kinds of apprehensions, then he becomes differenceless with Brahman.\textsuperscript{89} The jīva is of the same nature as of Brahman as both are of the form of knowledge. But its difference in the form of gods etc. is due to ajñāna or karman. When this ajñāna is destroyed by dhyāna etc. there remains no distinction between the nature of self and Brahman. In liberation the selves are all of the same type, there are no distinctions there of gods, men, animals and plants.\textsuperscript{90}

In this way Rāmānuja has endeavoured to show the Viṣṇūdvaitic character of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa by refuting the Advaitic explanations of the Purāṇa.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[87] SB, P. 254
\item[88] tatbhāvaḥ brahmano bhāvaḥ; svabhāvaḥ; na tu svarupaikyaṁ. Ibid
\item[89] yadaivamāpannaḥ, taddā'sau paramatmanā abhedī bhavati-bhedarahito bhavati. Ibid
\item[90] Cf. Ibid
\end{footnotes}