CHAPTER VII:
THE VIŚṆU PURĀṆA AND THE VAISṆĀVA SECTS
1.1. The *Pāñcarātra* School:

The *Pāñcarātra* School which is also known as *Bhāgavata*, *Śāṅkhyakāra*, *Ekāntika* etc. is very old and occupies a very important position in the history of Vaiṣṇavism. For all the Vaiṣṇava sects of India the *Pāñcarātra* system may be regarded as the foundation stone. The word *Pāñcarātra* first occurs in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*.¹ In this Brāhmaṇa Nārāyaṇa is said to have conceived the idea of *Puruṣa-medha*. This *Puruṣa-medha* is also called *Pāñcarātra Satra*. Puruṣa Nārāyaṇa performed this sacrifice (sacrifice) with the purpose of attaining superiority over all beings by becoming all beings. And by performing this *Pāñcarātra* sacrifice Nārāyaṇa the human being became a transcending divinity. In the Nārāyaṇiya section of the *Mahābhārata* we find an account of the *Pāñcarātra* doctrines. It is also said there that Nārāyaṇa is the speaker and expounder of this system.² About the authenticity of this system the *Mahābhārata* says that it is a great Upaniṣad related to all the four Vedas.

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¹ *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 13.6.1
² *pañcarātrasya kṛṣnasya vettā tu bhagavānsvayaṁ / MB, Śūntimaparva, 349.68*
and built up by Sāṅkhya and Yoga. It has come out of the mouth of Nārāyaṇa and Nārada taught it again.3

According to Nārada Pāñcarātra, rātra means knowledge, and hence, Pāñcarātra deals with five kinds of knowledge, viz., Tatva (Ontology), Muktiprada (Liberation), Bhaktiprada (Devotion), Vaiṣyā (Yoga) and Vaiṣayika (Pertaining to the senses).4 However, only a few of the extant Saṁhitās conform to this scheme of the topics outlined.

According to the Īśvara Saṁhitā, the religion that was taught by the God to five Sages, Śaṅḍilya, Aupagāyana, Mauṇjāyana, Kauśika and Bharadvāja in five successive days and nights came to be known among the people as Pāñcarātra.5

The Saṁhitās of this school give different explanations of the origin of the word Pāñcarātra. However, this being not related to our study we are not going to the detail description of this problem. Suffice will it be to mention that the name Pāñcarātra came from the central dogma of the Pāñcarātra Satra of Nārāyaṇa. The Pāñcarātra sacrifice provides the

3. idam mahopaniṣadānī caturvedasamanvitaṁ /
    sāṁkhya-yogakṛtaṁ tena pāñcarātraṁ śabditaṁ /
    nārāyaṇamukhogitaṁ nārado rāvayatpūnah // Ibid, 339.111-112
4. rātraṁca jñānavacanaṁ jñānaṁ pāñcavidhāṁ smṛtaṁ /
    tenedaṁ pāñcarātraṁca pravadanti maṁśiṇaṁ // NPR, 1.44
5. pānca-yudhāṁste pānca śaṅḍilyaupagāyanaṁ /
    mauṇjāyanaṁ kauśikasca bhāradvājaścya yauginaṁ // Īśvara Saṁhitā, 21.52.582
1.2. The Philosophy of *Pāñcarātra* School:

The *Pāñcarātra* system preaches monotheism. In the *Mahābhārata*, the followers of this school is called *ekāntin*. This designation is used in the *Nārāyaṇiya* section as well as in later *Saṁhitās*. M. Matsubara observes, "the word *ekānta* signifies the exclusive, monotheistic way of worshipping God which the *ekāntins* are supposed to observe."

This school believes in one ultimate non-dual Reality that is the same as the *Upaniṣadic Brahman*. This *Brahman* is characterized by bliss and free from all undesirable qualities. It is beyond all. Out of this the first form of God called *Vāsudeva* was born. He is subtle in form. From this *Sukṛta* *Vāsudeva*, four-armed *Sthūla Vāsudeva* and *Nārāyaṇa* arose. This *Sthūla Vāsudeva* is also known as *Para Vāsudeva* from whom springs *Vyūha Vāsudeva*. From *Vyūha Vāsudeva* sprang *Saṅkarṣana* and from *Saṅkarṣana* emerged Pradyumna. Aniruddha emerged from Pradyumna. This four, *Vāsudeva*, *Saṅkarṣana*, Pradyumna and Aniruddha constitute the four

7. MB, *Saṁti Parva*, 323.26,42; 326.19, 44, 116; 336.30 etc.
8. *Pāñcarātra Saṁhitā and early Vaisnava Theology*, M. Matsubara, P. 52
9. *śanandalaksanaṁ brahma sarvaheyaśivarjitaṁ / Jayākhyā Saṁhitā*, 4.60
Vyuha and together with Para Vāsudeva they form Pañcabrahman in this system Bhagavān, Vāsudeva, Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa are regarded as one and the same Supreme Being.

The Ultimate Reality in the Pāńcarātra system include two aspects viz., static and dynamic represented by Brahman and its Sakti respectively. In the Lakṣmī Tantra, Brahman is described as aparvagbhūta-Sakti. That is, Sakti is inseparable from Brahman. This Sakti of Brahman is called Lakṣmī. Lakṣmī Tantra says that Lakṣmī is ever with Brahman. She is the state of existence (bhava) and Nārāyaṇa is the existent reality. The two together constitute Brahman. Lakṣmī is known by several names, such as Sri, Padmā, Kamalā, Kundalini, Anahata, Gaurī, Gāyatrī, Śivā, Tārā, Rāj etc. In the same manner Brahman is called by different names such as Paramātman, Bhagavat, Vāsudeva, Ananta, Hiraṇyagarbha, Viṣṇu etc.

In the Pāńcarātra system, the non-personal and personal aspects of the Supreme Reality are not separate. The non-personal aspect of the Reality is revealed in the description of Brahman as attributeless. But this does not mean that Brahman is totally attributeless. Actually Brahman

10. AS, 16.83-84
11. Lakṣmī Tantra, 2.11
12. Ibid, 2.15
13. AS, 3.7-24
does not have any material attribute.15 "Attributes of Brahman thus include eternal, undecaying, changeless and without beginning and end as opposed to the finite and relative nature of the world Brahman should be infinite, without qualifications and void of all imposed properties. It cannot possess any specific forms at all."16 Brahman also possesses six qualities viz. jñāna, aśvārya, bala, virya, sakti and tejas. These six guṇas make up the body of Vāsudeva and Laksīmī.17

The Pāñcarātra Samhitās define Śakti as the subtle condition of anything that exists. Its existence is known by its affects. Laksīmī is the one, omnipotent Śakti. She is connected with God as moonlight is with the moon and sunshine with the sun. They are inseparable like being and becoming and I-ness and I.18 It is also said that without Laksīmī, the Ultimate Reality is incapable of doing anything and in the same way she cannot do anything without Him.19

According to the Pāñcarātra system, creation process starts within the first Vyūha, i.e., Vāsudeva, in whom the Śakti of Viṣṇu becomes

15. AS, 2.55
16. Pāñcarātra Samhitā and Early Vaiṣṇava Theology, P. 70
17. AS, 6.25
18. Laksīmī Tantra, 2.11, 12,17
19. Ibid, 2.18, 19
manifest. Jayaśkhyā Saṁhitā describes three kinds of creation in which the first is called Brahma-Sarga. The second creation is similar to the evolution of the Sāṁkhya categories. The third creation is the pure creation (śuddha-sarga). In this creation God Vāsudeva evolved out of Himself Acyuta, Satya and Puruṣa.\(^\text{21}\)

1.3. Pāñcarātra System and The Viṣṇu Purāṇa:

The Influence of Pāñcarātra doctrines is clearly noticed in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. Just like the Pāñcarātra system the Viṣṇu Purāṇa also upholds Brahmā as the Ultimate Reality. Viṣṇu is identified with Brahmā.\(^\text{22}\) Here also the personal and non-personal aspect of the Ultimate Reality is identified.\(^\text{23}\) The most striking influence of the Pāñcarātra is noticed in the reference of the four Vyūhas of Viṣṇu. Akrūra eulogises Kṛṣṇa as Vāsudeva, Sañkarṣana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.\(^\text{24}\) Individual descriptions of Sañkarṣana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are also found in the context of Kṛṣṇalīlā (Story of Kṛṣṇa) which is described in Book 20.

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20. AS, 3.26-29
22. VP, 1.2.10-14; Ibid, 6.4.38-39
23. brahma prabhurbrahma sa sarvabhum brahma prajānāṁ patiracyuto' sau / 
   brahmākṣaraṁ nityamajāṁ sa viṣṇurapakṣayādyairakhilairasaṁi // VP, 1 15.57
24. Ibid, 5.18.58
Saṅkarṣana is said to born of Rohini being extracted from Devaki's womb and as such he got the name Saṅkarṣana.25 There is also a reference of Pradyumna in the 26th chapter of the same book of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. Pradyumna was the son of Rukmini and Kṛṣṇa and was a partial incarnation of the deity of love i.e., Kāmadeva.26 The reference of the last Vyūha i.e., Aniruddha is also found in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa in the 28th chapter. There it is said that Pradyumna married the daughter of the king Rukmini and as a result Aniruddha was born.27 In the context of explaining the word ‘Bhagavat’ the Viṣṇu Purāṇa mentioned that Vāsudeva alone possesses the six ideal guṇas or qualities viz., jñāna, bala, virya, aisvarya, sakti and tejas. It is also said that Vāsudeva is devoid of all defects.28

Another important feature of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, which closely resembles the Pāncarātra doctrine, is the conception of Sakti. Just like the Pāncarātra Saṁhitās the Viṣṇu Purāṇa also conceives Viṣṇu’s Sakti as Lakṣmī who is inseparable from Him. The different names of Lakṣmī also correspond to those found in the Pāncarātra Saṁhitās. Thus Lakṣmī is

25. garbhasaṅkarṣanat so’ttha loke saṅkarṣanet vai/
saṁjñāmanavāṁpsyate vīraḥ śvetādriśikharopamaḥ // Ibid, 5.1.75
26. tasyāḥm jajñe’ttha pradyumna madanāṁśaḥ sa vīryyavān // Ibid, 5.26.15
27. yasyāṁmasyāḥbhavat putro mahābalaparākramah/
aniruddho raṇe kruddho vīryyodadhiraṁdamaḥ // Ibid, 5.28.7
28. jñānaśaktibalaiśvaryya vīryatejāṁśyasāśataḥ/
    bhagavacchabdavācyāni vinā heyaṁguṇādibhiḥ// Ibid, 6.5.79

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also called Svāhā, Padmā, Śrī, Gaurī, Rati etc. Viśṇu is also said to be always associated with Lakṣmī who is the mother of the world. Just like the Pāñcarātra system the Viśṇu Purāṇa also stresses the point that Viśṇu is never without Śrī and whenever Nārāyaṇa incarnates Himself, Lakṣmī also incarnates Herself as His wife.29 All that is masculine is described as Viṣṇu while all that is feminine is Lakṣmī.30 These ideas of Viṣṇu’s Śrī are very much like the Pāñcarātra system. Thus, there is a close relation between the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and Pāñcarātra from the viewpoint of most of the subject matter discussed in both the scriptures.

2.1 Vaiṣṇava Philosophy of Rāmānuja:

Rāmānuja (11th century A.D.) was the chief propounder of the doctrine of Viśiṣṭādvaitava (qualified monism). Rāmānuja is said to be the true rival of Saṅkarācārya and preached his philosophical views with the aim of refuting the non-dualistic philosophy of Saṅkarācārya. He was associated with the theistic and devotional schools of Vaiṣṇava sects. Hence, his God is a personified God.

29. Ibid, 2.9.140
30. VP, 1.8.32
According to Rāmān̄jua, Brahman the Ultimate Reality is identified with Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa.\(^{31}\) He is the receptacle of all the noble qualities. He is Puruṣottama, the Supreme Person. Rāmān̄jua does not conform to Saṅkarācārya’s view that nirguṇa Brahman is the Ultimate Reality. For him, God or qualified Brahman is the absolute. He says that the etymology of the word Brahman suggests that He is the Highest Person, who is by nature, devoid of all evils and is possessed of hosts of auspicious qualities which are innumerable and unsurpassed in excellence.\(^{32}\) Brahman is devoid of vijātiya (heterogeneous) and sajātiya (homogeneous) distinctions, but has its internal distinctions. So it is said that Brahman is an organic whole with self (cit) and matter (acit) forming the part of the whole. Hence, Rāmān̄jua’s Brahman is non-dual (advaita) but is qualified (visiṣṭa) by matter and self.\(^{33}\) That is why his view is called Viṣiṣṭādvaita.

Rāmān̄jua describes God as self-luminous, everfree and as of the nature of consciousness. He is both saguṇa and nirguṇa. He is saguṇa because He possesses innumerable auspicious qualities. He is omniscient, omnipotent and all-powerful. Supporting the Upaniṣadic view Rāmān̄jua

\(^{31}\) SB, 1.1.1

\(^{32}\) brahmasabdena svabhāvato nirastanikhiladoso‘nabadhikāitiśayāsāṅkhyeyat
kalyāṇagunah puruṣottamobhidhiyate. arvatrabhrattvagunayogena hi
brahmasabdah. Ibid. 17

\(^{33}\) Ibid, 2.1.9
says that Brahman is satya (real), jñāna (conscious) and ananta (infinite).\textsuperscript{34} Brahman is also nirguṇa. But according to him, nirguṇa does not mean devoid of all qualities; it only means that Brahman is devoid of all defects and inauspicious qualities.\textsuperscript{35} Thought God is one, He manifests Himself in five forms, viz., Antaryāmin, Para, Vyūha, Viśeṣa and Arcāvatāra. Brahman is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. For this purpose He reveals Himself through four Vyūhas, viz., Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. The different incarnations of God is called Viṣṇuva.

Rāmānuja accepts three realities: cit, acit and Īśvara. But thought equality real, the first two are absolutely dependent upon God, who is the controller (niyāmaka).\textsuperscript{36} In Rāmānuja’s view, cit and acit form the body of God; He is the self. Matter and selves are the parts of Īśvara.\textsuperscript{37} The relation of cit and acit with Īśvara is inseparable (apṛthaksiddhi).\textsuperscript{38} Rāmānuja says that just as the material body does not affect the self, in the same way God

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, 1.2.19
\textsuperscript{35} heyagunam pratisidhya .......... / Ibid, P. 195
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, P. 135
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, 2.1.9
\textsuperscript{38} A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, C.D. Sharma, P. 346
is not touched by the imperfections of the world consisting of matter and spirit.\(^{39}\)

God is the cause of the universe. He is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. According to Rāmānuja, Brahman is not only the cause; He is also the effect itself. The world remains in a subtle form in Brahman. This is His Kāraṇavasthā, i.e., the causal state. At the time of creation this subtle world becomes manifested as nāma (name) and rūpa (form). This is His Kāryavasthā or the effect state.\(^{40}\) This universe between creation of God cannot be false. Again, Rāmānuja holds that like Brahman, the individual selves are also eternal. The jīva is not identical with Brahman, but a part thereof. They are like sparks of fire, which come out of Brahman. The jīva is the agent and enjoyer.

Liberation, according to Rāmānuja, is the release of the self from the limiting barriers. The released self attains the nature of Brahman. It does not become identical with God, but maintains its difference from Him. It attains all the perfections of the supreme self except in two points, viz., it has no power over creation process and it is of atomic size. In liberation the jīva realizes itself as the body of Brahman.\(^{41}\)

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40. SB, 1.4.23
41. Ibid, 1.1.1
Rāmānuja is a votary of bhakti or devotion. He maintains that liberation is attained not by jñāna (knowledge) and karma (action), but by bhakti (devotion) and prasāda (grace). He concedes that karma and jñāna lead to bhakti. According to Rāmānuja bhakti is of two types vādhu and mukhyā. The former is lower and is identified with upāsanā. The higher or mukhyā bhakti is actually a special kind of knowledge, which can be attained only by the grace (prasāda) of God. Rāmānuja gives emphasis on prapatti also as a means of liberation. It means complete self-surrender to God. Prapatti is the easiest means of liberation and is open to all, irrespective of caste of creed.

2.2. Rāmānuja and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa:

Rāmānuja has been much influenced by the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. He has profusely referred to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa in order to prove his philosophical views. According to him, as the Purāṇas are the upabhyāhāna of the Vedas, so their authority must be accepted. As such he has quoted from the Purāṇas, especially the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa whenever he gets the scope. He holds that this Purāṇa being a Sāttvika one is an authority for his Viśiṣṭadvaita philosophy. In order to prove the nature of

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42. A Comparative Study of the Concept of Liberation in Indian Philosophy, P. 140
43. Indian Philosophy, S. Radhakrishnan, Vol. II, P. 705
Brahman as saguna and possessing all good qualities Rāmānuja has quoted of few verses from the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. These are –

\begin{verbatim}
ātītasarvāvaraṇo 'khilātmā tenāśītānī yadbhuvanāntarūle //
samastakalyāṇagunātmako hi svasāktilesāvṛtahūtavargal //
ticchaṃgrhiḥbhimatorudehaḥ samsādhitāsēṣa jagaddhito 'sau //
śuddhe mahāvibhūtyākhye pare brahmaṇi varttate /
maityey bhagavacchabdah sarvakāraṇakārane //
evameṣa mahāsābdo bhagavānī sattama /
paramabrahmabhūtasya vāsudevasya nānyataḥ //
\end{verbatim}

Again the verses like –

\begin{verbatim}
parah purāṇāṁ paramah paramātmāmasaṁsthitaḥ //
rūpavarṇādīnimirddesāviṣeṣaṇavivarjitaḥ //
apaksayā vināśābhyaṁ pariṇāmarddhijamabhibh //
varjitaḥ sākyate vaktuṁ yah sadāstiṁ kevalāṁ // etc. which appear
\end{verbatim}
as preaching qualitylessness of Brahman are interpreted by Rāmānuja as establishing the fact that Brahman is devoid of all bad or inauspicious

\begin{verbatim}
44. 6.5.83(b)-84
45. 6.5.72
46. 6.5.76
47. 1.2.10
48. 1.2.11
\end{verbatim}
qualities. He has also quoted the following verses from the Purāṇa-

\[
\text{sarvatrasau samastaṇca vasatyatreti vai yataḥ} \\
tataḥ sa vāsudeveti vidvadbhiḥ paripāthya teḥ \\
tadbrahma paramāṁ nityamajamāksayamāvayaṁ \\
ekasvarūpaṇca sadā heyābhāvācca nīrmanīṁ \\
tadetat sarvamevāsiḥ vyaktāvyaktasvarūpavat \\
tathā puruṣarūpeṇa kālarūpeṇa ca sthitāṁ \\
dve rūpe brahmaṇastasya mūrtiṇcāmūrttameva ca \\
kyārākṣarasvarūpe te sarvabhaṅgeṣvavasthite \\
viṣṇu śaktiḥ parā proktā kyetrajñākhyā tathāparā \\
avidvā karmmasainjñānyā tyāyā śaktirīṣyate \\
yayā kyetrajñāsaktiḥ sā veṣṭitā nrpa sarvagā \\
saṁsāratāpānakhilāṇavānapnotyanusantaṁ \\
tayā tirohitatvācca śaktiḥ kyetrajñasainjñitā \\
sarvabhaṅgeṣu bhūpāla tāratamyaṇa lakṣyate
\]

49. SB, 1.1.1
50. 1.2.12
51. 1.2.13
52. 1.2.14
53. 1.22.5
54. 6.7.61-63

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In Rāmānuja's view all these verses of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa contribute to his view that God is the substratum of all auspicious qualities. He creates, sustains, destroys, enters into and regulates the world without any effort. All the jīvas i.e., cit and the world i.e., acit actually constitute the body of God. Cit is nothing but the Svarūpa-śakti (natural power) of God which when associated with acit gets the name kṣetrajña and is endowed with good and bad actions. Thus, in his view, all these verses establish the fact that Supreme Brahman is endowed with adjectives and the world, being His power, cannot be false.⁵⁵ Rāmānuja interprets the verses, which can be taken as preaching non-dualism, in such way so that these also point to his Qualified Non-dualism. Thus, the verse ‘jñānasvarūpaṁ’ etc.⁵⁶ of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa does not establish nirviśeṣa Brahman, rather this verse describes the nature of Paramātman which exists as kṣetrajña etc.⁵⁷ Other such verses are referred to by us in Chapter-IV and V of the present dissertation and explained in accordance to Rāmānuja’s view. Hence, these are not repeated here.

⁵⁵. SB, 1.1.1, P. 221
⁵⁶. VP, 1.5.38
⁵⁷. SB, 1.1.1, P. 237
3.1. Nimbärka and His Philosophy:

Nimbärka or Nimbāditya or Niyamānada was one of the famous Vaiṣṇava Vedāntin, who flourished about 11th Century A.D. after Rāmānuja, but prior to Maddhva.\(^{58}\) The doctrine propagated by Nimbärka is known as Dvaita-dvaita, i.e., Dualism-cum-non-dualism or difference-cum-non-difference. Nimbärka wrote a short but famous commentary on the Brahmasūtra entitled Vedānta-Pārijāta-Saurabha. The other works attributed to Nimbärka are Vedānta Kāmadhenu or Dasā-sloki, Śrīkṛṣṇa-stavarāja, Prapannakalpāvali, Mantrarahasyaṣodāsi, Prapatti-cintamani, Gitāvākyārtha, Sadācāraprakāśā, Rādhāṣṭaka, Kṛṣṇāṣṭaka etc. Nimbārka’s philosophy is explained and expanded by his disciple Śrīnivasā. He wrote Vedāntakaustubha, a commentary on the Brahmasūtra. He also wrote commentaries on the Gītā, the Taittirīya Upaniṣad, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa etc.

According to Nimbārka and his followers, Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa or Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Ultimate Reality. Nimbārka says that the word Brahma means Ramākanta Puruṣottama, i.e., Viṣṇu, the Supreme Person who is the husband of Laksñī.\(^{59}\) In Vedānta Kauṣṭubha also we find that Vāsudeva is the Ultimate Reality. This Ultimate Reality is

\[ \text{Sakṣajñā,} \]

\[ \text{Sakṣajñā,} \]

\[ \text{Sakṣajñā,} \]

\[ \text{Sakṣajñā,} \]

59. ramākantaḥ puruṣottamo brahmabādhidhayah. VPS, 1.1.1
(qualified) and *saviseṣa* (endowed with adjectives). His qualities and powers are natural and unthinkable. In the view of Nimbārka, the Upaniṣadic passages where *Brahman* is described as *nirguṇa* and *nirviṣeṣa* do not mean that *Brahman* is qualityless; rather these passages mean that *Brahman* is devoid of all inferior and material qualities.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *saccidānandarūpa* (i.e., of the nature of existence-consciousness and bliss). He is both bliss and blissful. He is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. These qualities of *Brahman* are all natural and eternal. He is the repository of all auspicious qualities and is devoid of all defects like *avidyā* (ignorance) etc. He is cause of all. He is the cause of the origination, sustenance and destruction of the world. According to Nimbārka, the world is the *parināma* (modification) of *Brahman*. But though the world is a *parināma* of *Brahman*, yet *Brahman* remains changeless and does not lose its fullness and purity. Just as a spider spins out its web out of its own self and yet remains changeless, so is the case with *Brahman*. Just as a tortoise manifests its limbs and again

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60. acintyasābhāvikasvarūpaganasaśāktyādibhirbhṛhattamaḥ, Ibid.
61. satyādimmartvan brahmalaksanaṁ, VK, 1.1.2
62. VPS, 1.1.2
63. Daśāśloki, 4
64. visvasya srṣṭi sthiti laya yasmāt ......... tadeva brahma. VPS, 1.1.2
conceals them in his body, so also Brahman manifests and conceals the world and the selves from and in itself.\(^{65}\)

The world and the individual selves (jīva) are the parts of the Supreme Reality. These are the modifications of the powers of Brahman. Hence, the jīvas and the world are real and not imaginary. But though Brahman manifests itself into the jīvas and the world, yet it never loses its independence. The relation between the jīva and the world on the one hand and Brahman on the other is that of difference-cum-non-difference (bhedābheda).\(^{66}\) Brahman being the material cause of the world is non-different from it. Again Brahman controls this world remaining beyond it. Thus the Lord and the world are different being the controller and the controlled.\(^{67}\) The jīva also as part of Brahman is both different and non-different from it. The relation between the part and the whole is both difference and non-difference. The part belongs completely to the whole and as such is non-different from it. Again the whole remains beyond the parts. Nimbārka also asserts that this difference and non-difference

\(^{65}\) Ibid, 1.4.26 and VK, 1.4.26
\(^{66}\) VK, 1.1.1
\(^{67}\) VPS, 2.3.42 and VK, 2.3.42
between Brahman and the \textit{jīva} and \textit{jagat} are both real and natural like the sun and the sunbeam or fire and sparkle etc.\textsuperscript{68}

Like other Indian philosophers Nimbārka also holds that liberation is the highest goal of life. This liberation, according to him, is the attainment of the nature of God – \textit{bhagavatdīvāpattī}.\textsuperscript{69} In liberation the \textit{jīva} does not become identical with \textit{Brahman}, it never loses its separate existence also. The \textit{jīva} only attains similarity with the \textit{guṇas} (qualities) and \textit{svarūpa} (nature) of God.\textsuperscript{70} The liberated persons attain all the qualities and powers of \textit{Brahman} except the power of creation etc. of the world.\textsuperscript{71}

Nimbārka is a follower of \textit{bhakti-mārga}, i.e., the path of devotion. For attaining liberation Nimbārka gives stress on the grace (\textit{krpa}) of God. But God bestows His grace to those devotees only who please Him with unflinching devotion and self surrender.\textsuperscript{72} The means of liberation, according to Nimbārka are five-fold, viz., \textit{karman} (action), \textit{guru} \textit{saranagati} (taking refuge to the guru), \textit{jñāna} (knowledge), \textit{bhakti} and \textit{dhyāna} (devotion and meditation) and lastly \textit{prapatti} (self-surrender). But

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{68} VK, 2.3.42
  \item \textsuperscript{69} tadbhāvāpatti lakṣanam sreyaḥ prayojanaṁ / Mantrarahasyaṭyāgaśā, 14
  \item \textsuperscript{70} VPS, 4.4.5 & VK, 3.2.26
  \item \textsuperscript{71} Cf. jagatvēyāpāravarjaṁ prakaranādasanihitatvacca. Brahma Śūtra, 4.4.17
  \item \textsuperscript{72} Daśaśītiki, 9,10
\end{itemize}
even then devotion is the most important means of liberation. Devotion is necessary in all these stage of the journey towards liberation.\textsuperscript{73} Nimbārka also points out that the way of knowledge is difficult and is not practicable by embodied persons. On the other hand, the way of devotion where saguṇa and sākara Ṣvara is worshipped is easier and one can attain liberation by means of devotion very soon and very easily.

3.2. Nimbārka and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa:

Nimbārka himself has not referred to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa in his works. Like Saṅkarācāraya he also always sticks to the Sruti and Smṛti passages for reference. References of Purāṇas are not found in his works. But in some cases his views are similar to those of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. His followers have actually shown this similarity by quoting verses from the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. As such we can presume that Nimbārka was also influenced by the Viṣṇu Purāṇa as regards his philosophical views.

Discussing about the nature of Brahman Santadāsa Bābā, a great follower of Nimbārka wrote that it is clear from the Brahmaṣūtra that though Brahman is without form (arūpa), yet He is Viśvarūpa. In this context he quotes the following verses from the Viṣṇu Purāṇa –

\textsuperscript{73} bhaktiyoge dhyane to vyajyate brahma. VPS, 3.2.24
asrayascetaso brahma dvidhã tace sa svabhãvatah ī
bhuµpa mûrttamanmûrttaµca paraµcûparameva ca //
samastãh saktayaãscaitã ypa yatra pratiãsthitãh ī
 tadviãvarûparûparûparûparûparûparûparûparû̄∥
samastā-saktirûpāṇī tāt karoti janesvara ∥
deva-tiryyaµ-manûsyâdicestāvanti svâñlayā //

He has also established here with the help of the commentary of Śrîdhara that Brahman is both nirguna and saguna. In His saguna aspect He is Īśvara endowed with six special qualities (ṣudaiśvarya). That Brahman is endowed with these six qualities and is void of all defects is clearly stated in the Viṣṇu Purâṇa. The Viṣṇu Purâṇa also denotes the Supreme Brahman as Bhagavat who is the cause of all. This idea is expressed by Nimbārka in Daśāloki thus “svabhãvato'pasta samastadosamaśeṣa-kalyāṇa-guṇaika-râśῑṁ”.

Moreover, Nimbārka accepts three material on non-conscious objects (tattvas) which are: aprâkṛta (i.e. not derived from the primordial

74. 6.7.47
75. 6.7.69-74
76. Vedâniya Darśâna, Dvaitâdvaita Siddhânta, Santadâsa, P.P. 146-147
77. VP, 6.5.73
78. Ibid, 6.5.72
79. Daśāloki, 4
Prakṛti), prākṛta (i.e., derived from the Prakṛti) and kāla (Time). These three material things Kāla is, according to Nimbārka, a power of God. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa also regards Kāla as a form of Viṣṇu, the Supreme Reality. In this respect Puruṣottama Acarya in Vedānta-rāsa Mañjuśrī quotes the following verses from the Viṣṇu Purāṇa—

"anadirbhagavān kālo nānto 'syā dvija vidyate /
na so 'ṣṭi prayayo loke yatra kālo na bhāsote /"

The concept of liberation in Nimbārka's philosophy also corresponds to some extent to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. The grace of God, which is regarded by Nimbārka as the most important means of liberation, is also stressed in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa thus—

"yo yajñapuruso yajñe yoges yah paramah pumān /
tasmiṁistuṣṭe yadaprāpyam kim tadasti janārdane /"

4.1. The Philosophy of Śrī Caitanya:

Śrī Caitanya flourished in Bengal in 1485 A.D. He was a great religious reformer who preached Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal. His philosophical

80. Ibid, 3
81. Cf. Nimbārka 3, Dvaitadvaitadarśan, P. 128
82. Vide, Ibid.
83. 1.11.46
view is called Acintyabhedābhedavāda. As a matter of fact Śrī Caitanya did not leave behind any written document of his philosophical views. All that we can know of his views is from the writings of his followers. Among his followers Rupa Goswami wrote Bhaktirasāṃptaśindhu, Jiva Goswami, Śaśāndarbha and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana, Govinda-bhāṣya, which may be treated as the pillars of Caitanya’s philosophy. Baladeva's Govinda-bhāṣya is a detailed commentary on the Brahma-sūtra, which he wrote according to the philosophy of acintya-bhedā-bheda.

The ultimate reality in this view is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is Bhagavān who is the substance (viśeṣya) and is ānanda or pure bliss. All other powers are the attributes (viśeṣana) in association with which the God is called bhagavān. Brahma is not the Highest Reality. Brahma is only the partial manifestation of the total personality denoted by the word Bhagavān. According to them, Brahma is the undifferentiated (nirviśeṣya) state of Bhagavān; Brahma is qualityless, but Bhagavān is infinitely qualified by infinite perfect attributes. In Bhagavān all the Saktis are energized, while in Brahma they remain in a potential states. He is again called Paramātman in His aspect of controller of all beings. The three names Brahma, Bhagavān and Paramātman are used in accordance

84. ānandamātraṁ viśeṣyaṁ samastāḥ sāktayeḥ viśeṣanādi viśeṣīśto bhagavān / SS, P
85. CC, Madhyalilā, P. 352
with the emphasis that is put on the different aspects of the total composite meaning; thus, as any one of the special aspects of God appears to the mind of the devotee, he associates it with the name of *Brahman, Bhagavan* or *Paramātmā.* According to Śrī Caitanya, Vāsudeva, Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Śiva and other deities, who are described in the religious scriptures, are only so many manifestations of Kṛṣṇa. All of them are eternal, infinite and all pervading like Kṛṣṇa, but less perfect in respect of powers and attributes.

The powers of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are infinite in number. Of these three are principal. These are: *svarūpa-sākti, māyā-sākti* and *jīva-sākti.* Jayadeva Goswami says in the *Śaṭsandarbha* that the essential power or *svarūpa-sākti* and *māyā-sākti* are mutually antagonistic. But they are both supported in God. The power of God is natural (*svabhāvika*) and unthinkable (*acintya*).

The *svarūpa-sākti* of God is also called *cit-sākti.* The *līlās* (divine sport) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are possible only because of this *svarūpa-sākti.* This *svarūpa-sākti* also called *Viṣṇu-sākti* of the Lord may further be considered from three other aspects, viz., *sandhini* (power of pure being), *samādhi* and *prākāśa* (power of creation).}

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88. SS, P. 61
(power of pure consciousness) and hladini (power of pure bliss). These three aspects actually correspond to the three aspects of sat, cit and ananta of the Absolute.\(^89\)

The māyā-sakti is that power of God by which there is an appearance of duality. It is insentient and is composed of three guṇas: sattva, rajas and tamas.\(^90\) “The māyā is again described as two-fold: the guṇa-māyā which represents the material force (jaḍatmikā) and the ātma māyā, which is the will of God. There is also the concept of jīva-māyā which is again, three fold – creative (Bhu), protective (Śrī) and destructive (Durgā).”\(^91\) Baladeva identifies māyā with Prakṛti, which is activated by the mere sight (ikṣyata) of God.\(^92\) According to these philosophers, creation of the world is within the purview of the māyā-sakti of Kṛṣṇa, which are His extrinsic powers.

The jīva is a power of God, which is called jīva-sakti or tattastha-sakti. Jīva is a part of the Bhagavat as the ground or the substratum of the tattastha jīva-sakti, and not of the svarūpa-sakti of the bhagavat.\(^93\)

\(^{89}\) CC, Madhyalīlā, Ch.8 and SS, PP. 59, 69
\(^{90}\) SS, PP. 71, 73
\(^{91}\) S.N. Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. IV, P. 400
\(^{92}\) Ibid, P. 410
\(^{93}\) CC, Madhyalīlā, PP. 348, 351
śakti is called *tatastha* because it does not belong to the category of *mīrūśakti* or *cau-śakti*. “The individual souls share both the *hlādini* and the *samvit-śakti* of God, and the *māyā-śakti* typified in matter. Standing between these two groups of power the individual souls are called the *tatastha-śakti*. A soul is impelled on one side by material forces and attraction and urged upwards by the *hlādini-śakti* of God.”

Caitanya and his followers are *Acintya-bhedā-bheda-vādin*, the relation between God and the *jīva* is that of *bheda-bheda* (difference-common-non-difference). In explaining the conception of *bhedābheda*, Sanatana Goswami takes the sea and its waves as an example. The wave is identical with the sea so far as its wateriness is concerned, but is different from the sea in respect of the depth, nature etc. of the sea. Similarly the liberated selves are said to have become identical with *Brahman* when they attain the *tejas* of *Kāraṇa*-*Brahma* but there remains difference also due to the natural limitation of the individual selves. Jiva Goswami has relied on Rāmānuja’s interpretation in this respect. In Rāmānuja’s view the individual self is not absolutely different from *Brahman*, but stands to it in the relation of *bhedābheda* as it is a part of *Brahman*.

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95. Vide, *Caitanya: His Life And Doctrine*, A K. Majumdar, P. 272
96. *Sarvasainvādini*, P. 21
According to Caitanya, bhakti or devotion is the best way of liberation. He lays great stress on the grace of God for liberation. Caitanya was a great propagator of bhakti-vāda. In his view, bhakti is superior to even mukti or liberation. Though there are four Puruṣārthas recognized by the Indian philosophers, yet Caitanya adds with it a fifth, which is premabhakti. Mukti cannot be attained by jñāna or karman. The superiority of bhakti is that with the germination of it in one’s heart, the four Puruṣārthas appear to be insignificant. The followers of Śrī Caitanya have dealt in great detail about the concept of bhakti. But as this does not come to the purview of our-study we desist from the discussion of it here.

4.2. Śrī Caitanya and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa:

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa is very much revered in the school of Śrī Caitanya. Śrī Caitanya himself referred to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa as authority. His followers also accepted the authority of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa in many cases. The philosophers of this school hold the powers of God as acintya. Jiva Goswami has explained in this context the term acintya found in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Maitreya asked Parāśara: How can creative agency be attributed to Brahman, who is unqualified, unknowable.

97. C C, Madhyālīlā, P. 349
98. Ibid, P. 350
pure and free from imperfections. In reply Parāśāra said that the powers of all beings, which are incomprehensible to thought (acintya) belong to Brahman just like heat to fire.\(^9\) Jiva Goswami has interpreted the word acintya in this context as that which cannot be comprehended as different or non-different and which can be known by arthāpatti pramāṇa only.\(^9\) Śrī Caitanya himself says that the jīva-tattva is śakti and Kṛṣṇa-tattva is śaktimāt of which the proof is found in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa.\(^1\) He refers to the verses “ekadesāsthisatyāgnerjyotṣṇā” and “viṣṇusākti parā pravartī” etc.\(^2\) of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa where the jīva is stated as a power (kṣetrajña) of God. That the parā-sākti or svarūpa-sākti has three aspects, viz. Sandhini etc. is also established on the authority of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa.\(^3\)

However, Śrī Caitanya does not accept the view of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa as regards the status of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. According to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is only a part of Viṣṇu. But according to Śrī Caitanya Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Ultimate Reality. In this respect he accepts the view of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Actually the Bhāgavata is accepted as the most important work a

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99. VP. 1.3.2
100. Bhāgavata Sandarbha, 16; Vide, Caitanya and his life and doctrine, P. 270
101. CC, Madhyālā, P. 348
102. VP, 1.22.54(b); 6.7.61
103. 6.7.62-63

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this system where we find a much more developed doctrine of devotion. However, Śrī Caitanya and his followers have referred to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa whenever necessary.