CHAPTER - III

BRAHMAN

The word Brahman, which plays an important role in Indian Philosophy, means Supreme Being or Paramātman. It also means the eternal principle as realized in the world as a whole. Other meanings of the word Brahman are as follows – a) food, food offering, b) the chant of the sāma-singer, c) magical formula or text, d) duly completed ceremonies, e) the chant and sacrificial gift together, f) the recitation of hotṛ priest, g) great. Brahman also means the devotion which manifests itself as longing and satisfaction of the soul and reaches forth to the gods. In the ‘Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa’¹ the conception of Brahman has acquired a great significance as the Supreme principle, which is the moving force behind the gods.

The word Brahman is derived from the root brh, ‘to grow, to burst forth.’ The derivation suggests gushing forth, bubbling over, ceaseless growth, ‘brhattam.’ Śaṅkara derives the word ‘Brahman’ from the root ‘brhati’ meaning “to exceed”, i.e. atiśayana and it means eternity, purity.

The conception of Brahman had emerged in the Rgveda from the association of the sacrificial rites. The hymns of the Rgveda are composed in praises and invocations to different gods. In these praises and invocations we find some gleanings of the conceptions of Supreme Being or Absolute

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¹ Eng. Translation by J. Eggeling, 44th Kānda.
or Ultimate Reality or Brahman. Of course, in the *Rgveda-Samhitā* the Supreme Being has not been denoted by the term ‘Brahman’. The word ‘God’ or ‘Lord’ is used therein to mean Supreme Being or Brahman. The different gods are personification of the different power of nature. They are sometimes worshipped individually, sometimes in the form of two gods and sometimes in group form. The number of gods mentioned in the Vedas is indefinite and for this reason this phase of religion is known as polytheism.

At the later stage, whenever any God is worshipped, that God is treated as the highest one, for the time being. Maxmuller² calls this religion henotheism. In this context Radhakrisnan says that many attributes like moral, spiritual, justice, beneficence, righteousness etc. are ascribed to the Vedic God Varuṇa.³ Varuṇa is the God to whom man and nature, this world and the other world belong. Again⁴ in another hymn Agni is identified with many gods, and regarded as superior to them. Actually it is a step from polytheism to monotheism. Further the conception of *ṛta* harmonizes the gods with one another, and paves the way for monotheism. *ṛta* reigns everywhere, in the sky, in the sun, in the mountain, in the sacrifices and in truth.⁵ *ṛta* is the physical order and the moral order, and the gods follow the laws of *ṛta*. *ṛta* points to the existence of one Supreme God, whose

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3. ibid, p. 90.
4. tvamagne rājā varuṇo dhṛtavratastvāṁ mitro bhavasi dasma ṭdayāḥ/ tvamarthamā satpatiryasya sambhujāṁ tvamamśo vidarthe deva bhājayuḥ // RV, 2.1.4.
5. haṁsaḥ śuciyadvasurantarikṣasaddhvotā vedīsadatithi durroṇasat/ nrsadvarasadṛtahasadvyomasadavjā gojā ṛtajā adarijā ṛtain.// ibid., 4.40.5.
law is unalterable and inviolable. Gradually, there develops a clear conception of one God treated as the Supreme Lord of all beings. To this Supreme Lord even gods like Indra and Varuṇa are subordinate. In the later part of the *Rgveda*, Hiranyagarbha or Prajāpati, Viśvakarmā, Paramapuruṣa gradually take the place of one Supreme God. At the next step the Vedic seers come to realize that the Universal Self is permeating the universe and forming its ground. This Universal Self is termed in the *Rgveda* as ‘sat’ (the existent). The *Puruṣa-Sūkta, Nasadiya-Sūkta, Devi-Sūkta* of *Rgveda* gives the highest idea of Supreme Reality. In the *Atharvaveda* God Skambha is identified with Prajāpati, Puruṣa and Brahman and also with all the forms of the universe. In this Veda it is found that Prajāpati produces the whole universe with one half of His own.

Gradually Vedic seers come to realize that the tangible world is not the result of the act of some external agent like God, but as the revelation of the supersensible Ultimate Reality. Further, an essential feature of monism i.e. the identification of the individual self with Universal Self is found in the *Rgveda*, where the sage identifies himself with the gods and with everything of the world. So, it can be said that the concept of the Ultimate

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6. hiranyagarbhaḥ samavartatāgre bhūvasya jātāḥ patireka āsīt/
   sa dādhāra prthivīṁ dyāmutemāṁ kasmāi devāya haviśā vidhema/
   RV, 10.121.1

7. ibid., 10.82.3.

8. yatra tapaḥ parākramya vrataṁ dhārayatytattaram/
   āṃtram ca yatra śraddhā cāpo brahma samāhitāḥ skambhaṁ tāṁ vruhi
   katāmāḥ svideva saḥ// AV, 10.4.1.11

9. ahamindro varuṇaste mahitvovī gabhīre rajasī sumekem /
   tvasteva viśca bhuvanāni vidvāntasamairayaṁ rodasī dhārayaṁ ca //
   RV, 4.42.3.
Reality found in the pantheistic and monistic passages of the Vedic Samhitas represent the concept of Brahman. But the Ultimate Reality is not denoted by the term ‘Brahman’. It is described here simply as ‘tat’.  

In the early part of the Rgveda the individual self is regarded as different from god and in the later part of this Veda the self is identified with god and also with all the objects of the world. Similarly at the early stage or in the early hymn of the Rgveda or in the monotheistic level the world is regarded as different from god. But, it is also said that the world is controlled by the god. In the later part of the Rgveda it is said that the world is identified with Ultimate Reality, e.g. in the Puruṣa-Sūkta, Puruṣa is identified with Ultimate Reality. Again Puruṣa is identified with whatever has been and whatever will be.  

Nāsadiya-Sūkta of Rgveda holds that in the beginning there was neither ‘the existent’ nor ‘the non-existent’. Before the creation of the world, there was something, which could not be described either as ‘being’ or as ‘non-being’. This hymn clearly points out the mystery of the fact of creation. It also regards that ‘That one’ (tadekaṁ) remained concealed by the non existent and that became manifest through the majesty of tapas. Again it is said that ‘That one’ is not personal, it is neuter. It is an impersonal principle. So, these hymns (Puruṣa-Sūkta, Nāsadiya-Sūkta) clearly bring out the idea of monism of Rgveda and ‘That one’ is later identified with ‘Brahman’ in the Upaniṣad.  

10. ānīdāvātāṁ svadhāyā tadekaṁ tasmādḥānyanna paraḥ kirñcanāsa/ RV, 10.129.2  
11. puruṣa evedāṁ sarvāṁ yadbhūtāṁ yacca bhavyāṁ/ utāmṛtatvasyaśāno yadannātirohati// ibid., 10.90.2.  
12. ibid, 10.129.  
BRAHMAN IN THE UPANIŚADS

The Upanisadic literature regards Brahman as eternal, unchangeable, indestructible, unaffected, unfettered, beginningless, endless, devoid of growth and decay, immortal and fearless. It is infinite, all-pervading and all-permeating. There is nothing which lies outside the being of Brahman. The temporal causality-bound world is the manifestation of this Brahman. It is the inner controller of the universe and of all the creatures within it. The Taittirīya-Upaniṣad\textsuperscript{14} says, ‘the Brahman is of the nature of existence, knowledge and infinite’. In the Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad, Yājñavalkya says that just as a lump of salt has no inner or outer part, but consists entirely of savour, so in truth, Brahman has no inner or outer part, but consists entirely of knowledge.\textsuperscript{15} The Chāndogya-Upaniṣad identifies bliss with bhūma.\textsuperscript{16} Brahman is described as higher Brahman (Para Brahman) and lower Brahman (Apara Brahman) in Praśnōpaniṣad.\textsuperscript{17} Para is conceived as nirguṇa or devoid of all relations and definitions. It is imperceptible, inconceivable and inexpressible. It cannot be characterized in any way known to us and it can be indicated only negatively as ‘neti, neti’\textsuperscript{18} (not this, not this). Again Brahman is sometimes called non-existent.\textsuperscript{19} This

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\item[14.] satyaṁ jñānaṁ anantaṁ brahma. 2.1.1.
\item[15.] sa yathā saṁdhavaghano anantro’vāhyāḥ kṛtsno rasaghana evaiwaṁ vā arc’yaṁātmā..................................bravimiti hyuvāca yājñavalkya. 4.5.13.
\item[16.] bhūmaiva sukharim. 7.13.1.
\item[17.] etad vai paraṁca aparāṁca. 5.2.
\item[18.] sa eva neti netyātmāḥ grhyo na hi grhyate .....................ete tarāta naināṁ kṛtakṛte tapataḥ. Brh.Up., 4.4.22.
\item[19.] asad vā idaṁ agra āsīt. Tai.Up., 2.7.1.
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saying indicates that Brahman cannot be described by any positive context, which is always limited by conceptual thought.

Again there are some passages in the Upaniṣads, which regard the doctrine of qualified Brahman (Saguna Brahman). It is also called Apara Brahman (lower Brahman). The qualified Brahman is the determinate Lord or Īśvara, which is related to the empirical world and the individual selves. Brahman is described as endowed with the act of creation, sustenance and destruction of the world. All created beings spring from Him, live by Him and are absorbed in Him. All this is Brahman. He is endowed with the qualities of omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience, which are pre-requisites for the cosmic activities. In many passages of the Upaniṣads the individual self is identified with Brahman. ‘This Ātman is Brahman’, ‘All is Brahman’ – these passages clearly show the identity of the individual self with the Supreme Self or Brahman. But there are some texts, which clearly show the difference between the individual self and Brahman. The famous simile of two birds shows that though the two birds rest on the same tree, one eats the sweet fruits and experiences joys and sorrows, while the other merely looks on as an indifferent spectator. Here the first bird represents the individual self and the other the Supreme Self. The individual self and Brahman reside in the same body as darkness and light. When the individual knows that God or Īśvara is within him, it feathers all fear.

22. samāne vrkṣe puruśo nimagno’nīśayā śocati muhyamānāḥ/ 
juṣṭāṁ yadā paśyatanyamīśamasya mahimānamiti vītaśokaḥ // 
Mu.Up., 3.1.2.
Brahman, *Isvara* or *Atman* within the individual is not affected by its joys and sorrows. Brahman controls the self from within itself. He is the Lord of the individuals and the master of all the creatures. Brahman is full of bliss. When the individual self knows it by meditative trance, it is filled with bliss. In other words when the individual self purges off all its taints and knows Brahman, *Isvara* or *Atman* within it, it becomes *Atman*. Thus the *jīvātman* becomes identical with the *Paramātman*.

The *Upaniṣads* speak of two aspects of Brahman — *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa* Brahman. There are some passages in the *Upaniṣads* which speak of Brahman as *nirguṇa*23 (qualityless), *niṣkriya*24 (actionless), *akhaṇḍa* (non-difference) etc. Further Brahman25 is described as devoid of sound, touch, form and is undecaying ............... without beginning and end.

It is said that *nirguṇa* Brahman is not at all concerned with the creation, preservation and destruction of the world and also with the empirical life of the individual selves. At the same time *Upaniṣads* describe Brahman as *saguṇa* and *sakriya*. Brahman is endowed with infinite super qualities like omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence etc. It is also mentioned that *saguṇa* Brahman is endowed with creation, sustenance and dissolution of the world and favours the empirical individual selves in their spiritual journey.

On this point question arises as what is the real nature of Brahman, whether Brahman is *saguṇa* or *nirguṇa*? The Philosophers like Vaiṣṇava

25. aśabdam asparśaṁ arūpaṁ niravayaṁ..........anādyanantaṁ.
   Kau.Up., 1.35.
Vedāntins mention that the significance of the Upaniṣads lies in the *sagalna* Brahman. In this context they argue that the Upanisadic *nirgunā* passages simply speak of the essence of Brahman with the cosmic activities eliminated from it. They further mention that actually Brahman is never devoid of quality like omniscience etc. But Advaita Vedāntins express a different view from Vaiṣṇava Vedāntins. According to Advaita Vedāntins Brahman is essentially *nirgunā* and *niṣkriya* (inactive).²⁶ Brahman reveals itself as *sagalna* Brahman through the power of *maya*, the cosmic nescience. The essential definition (*svariipalaksana*) of Brahman also describes the absolute nature of the Brahman as *nirgunā* and on the other hand Brahman denoted by accidental definition (*taṭasthalakṣaṇa*) is *sagalna* Brahman. According to the Advaita Vedāntins the significance of the Upaniṣads lies in the *nirgunā* Brahman.²⁷ The Upanisadic *sagalna* passages being concerned only with the creative phase of Brahman.

The above discussion does not mean that the passages of Upaniṣads, which are discussed about *sagalna* Brahman, are meaningless or they don’t expose the nature of Brahman. Because, if those passages are thoroughly analyzed, ultimately they also signify the *nirgunā* Brahman through implication. This means that the cosmic activities like creation, preservation and dissolution cannot exist in any other reality except Brahman. Brahman endowed with the power of the *maya* performs the activities like creation etc. That is why; the Upanisadic *sagalna* passages ultimately imply the *nirgunā* Brahman.

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²⁶ *samastaviśesarāhitāni nirvikalpakaṁ eva brahma pratipattyavyāṁ na tadviparītaṁ.* BSS, 3.1.14.
²⁷ *arupavadeva hi tatpradhānatvāt.* ibid., 3.2.14.
Brahman is not both the *nirguna* and *saguna* i.e. *nirguna* and *saguna* are not two different entities. It cannot assume different form. The same Brahman is *saguna* and *nirguna* viewed from two different standpoints. From the transcendental point of view Brahman is *nirguna* while from the empirical view point Brahman is *saguna*. Actually Brahman endowed with *māyā* acts as the creator, preserver and destructor of the world. The difference between *saguna* and *nirguna* Brahman are due to adjunct of *avidyā*. The difference is from different viewpoint. There is no actual difference between them. The Advaita Vedāntins express that the *saguna* Brahman is the only object of worship, because *nirguna* Brahman is beyond actor and activity, acceptance and rejection. *Saguna* Brahman is postulated to facilitate the worshipper to attain *nirguna* Brahman through the meditation. When the worshipper’s mind is controlled, the Brahma knowledge is obtained, which is devoid of all limitations, i.e. the Brahman is realized by the worshipper.

The concept of Brahman is described by different schools of Indian philosophy according to their own ways. Some discussions about the concept of Brahman given by different schools are described below:—

**BRAHMAN ACCORDING TO SĀṆKHYA:**

In the history of Sāṁkhya philosophy it is found that the original Sāṁkhya was monistic and theistic. But the Classical Sāṁkhya, perhaps under the influence of materialism, Jainism and Early Buddhism, became atheistic. The history of Sāṁkhya philosophy has been divided into three stages, namely the Epic Sāṁkhya, the Transitional Sāṁkhya and the Classical Sāṁkhya. The Epic Sāṁkhya is evidenced in the *Mahābhārata*,
the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa, the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa, the Ahirbudhnya- Saṁhitā and the Śaṣṭi-Tantra of Kapila. The Transitional Śaṁkhya is found in the teachings of Pañcaśikha as recorded in the Mahābhārata, in the Cāraka-Saṁhitā. The Classical Śaṁkhya is explained in Saṁkhya-Kārikā of Īśvarakṛṣṇa and Saṁkhya-Sūtra of Kapila.

The Epic Śaṁkhya accepts Īśvara as the Ultimate Reality, besides prakṛti and puruṣa controlling and governing the evolution process of the universe. In this context it is worthwhile to mention that Śaṁkhyas do not use the term Brahman as the Ultimate Reality. The philosophers of the Transitional Śaṁkhya do not accept Brahman as the Ultimate Reality, behind prakṛti and puruṣa.

The general view of the Classical Śaṁkhya is atheistic. In the Saṁkhya-Kārikā of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, Īśvara has neither been established nor been denied. In the Saṁkhya-Sūtra of Kapila, there are few sūtras, which deny the existence of God.28 Actually, Śaṁkhya holds that the reality of God cannot be established by logical proofs. There is no sensible evidence or inferential knowledge or scriptural testimony of Īśvara. Śaṁkhya only shows that prakṛti and puruṣa are sufficient to explain this universe. Śaṁkhya argues that the world of object evolves when prakṛti and puruṣa come in contact to each other and is dissolved when they are separated. When the puruṣa required that there should be world of their enjoyment, the creation process start and when prakṛti and puruṣa jointly demand some rest, dissolution comes.29 Thus, God as the creator, sustainer and

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28. Īśvarāsiddeḥ. SS, 1.92
   baddha muktayur anyatarābhāvānna tattsiddhiḥ. ibid, 1.93
29. karmavaicitryāt srṣṭivaicitryāṁ. ibid., 6.41.
destroyer of the universe has no place in the Sāṁkhya, explained by Īśvarakṛṣṇa, Vācaspati Miśra and others.

It is well mentioned that the later Sāṁkhya philosophers like Vijñānabhadra have tried to revive the necessity for admitting God. He holds that, though Īśvara as possessed of activity is not admissible, Īśvara or Brahman as the eternally perfect spirit witnessing the world is certainly acceptable. According to him, mere presence of Īśvara induces prakṛti to act and create the world; just as a piece of magnet moves a piece of iron. He admits the reality of a Universal Spirit as the ground of the prakṛti and puruṣa. The denial of Īśvara found in the Sāṁkhya-Sūtra is interpreted by Bhikṣu as follows – the denial of Īśvara mentioned in Sāṁkhya-Sūtra is only the denial of the phenomenal Īśvara, i.e. of Īśvara as ordinarily conceived whereas the transcendental Īśvara is not denied.

**BRAHMAN ACCORDING TO YOGA:**

According to the Yoga śāstras in general, Īśvara is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent and is the doer of everything. All the Yoga Upaniṣads describe the nature of Īśvara or Brahman in the same way as follows: Īśvara is the highest reality. He is pure, unlimited, all pervasive, indeterminate, eternal, and stainless. He is the Lord of all beings. He is the mass of knowledge and bliss and is saccidānanda i.e., of the nature of existence, knowledge and bliss. Again though the Lord of all He is devoid of actions and though endowed with unbounded qualities He is without any quality.

In the Yoga-Sūtra of Patañjali Īśvara is said to be a special kind of puruṣa, who is always free from pains, actions, effects and impressions.30

30. kleśakarmavipākaśayair aparāmṛṣṭaḥ puruṣaviśeṣa īśvaraḥ. YS, 1.24.
In Yoga system, God is accepted as eternally free and was never bound nor has any possibility of being bound. He lies above the law of *karman* and for that reason He is untouched by the fruits of *karman*. Accordingly He is free from the cycle of birth and death and also from the joys and sorrows acquiring from it. He is never influenced by the three *guna* of *prakṛti*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and never entangled in the empirical life.

He is merciful to the devotees who get the fruits of their endeavour in the form of *samādhi* by His grace. He is called a special *puruṣa* as the powers of knowledge, power and action culminate in Him and as there is none equal to or higher than Him in knowledge and power. Being endowed with endless power, He creates and annihilates the world. Being endowed with endless knowledge He is omniscient i.e., everything is revealed to Him at all time. He is eternal, all-pervasive, all-powerful and all-knowing. He performs the cosmic activities and helps the devotees out of mercy for them. It is however added that *Īśvara* performs all these functions, cosmic activities and merciful assistance to the devotees—not by transcendental nature but by adopting a *nirmāṇa-citta* or divine body through which He acts. In elucidating this position, it is said that *Īśvara*, being eternally free, performs the said functions not directly but in the form of *Aksarabrahman* or Hiraṇyagarbha, who is a totality of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara and is endowed with *guna* or qualities. It is this Hiraṇyagarbha who performs all the said activities directly through the *nirmāṇa-citta* produced during annihilation.\(^{31}\)

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31. *Vyāsa bhasya*, *Tattva vaisārādi* and Hariharananda’s *Bhāsvati* on *Yogasūtra*, 1.25.
This shows that the Yoga-sūtra also accepts two aspects of Īśvara – saguṇa and nirguṇa. Saguṇa Īśvara means Hiranyagarbha or Akṣarabrahman engaged in cosmic activities. He is the kārya or janya Īśvara of Sāṁkhya and is similar to the creator-God of Advaita-Vedānta. Nirguṇa Īśvara means that form of Īśvara which is eternally free, which is of the nature of cit or consciousness and which is free from cosmic activities. This nirguṇa form of Īśvara considered theologically, represents Śrīkrṣṇa of the Vaisnavites and Śiva of Śaivites both of whom in their essence are said to be lying beyond the cosmic activities. Considered philosophically, this nirguṇa Īśvara stands for the nirguṇa Brahman of the Advaita Vedāntins.\(^{32}\)

Now the concept of nirguṇa Brahman necessarily brings the idea of identity between the individual self and the universal self. Samādhi the aim of Yoga is said in Yoga to be the union between the jīvātman and paramātman. In other words, in samādhi the self being merged in Brahman becomes Brahman itself. The real self realised in samādhi is of the nature of both consciousness and bliss. Patañjali is also of the view that the self in samādhi realises its nature as pure consciousness and bliss and as identical with the qualityless and actionless Brahman.

**BRAHMAN ACCORDING TO NYĀYA-VAIṢEṢIKA:**

The Nyāya and Vaiṣeṣika are the allied systems and regarding the conception of God, both Nyāya and Vaiṣeṣika philosophy express the same view. According to this system, Īśvara, the selves and matter are distinct from each other. However though Īśvara is quite distinct from the selves

and matter, He is the Ultimate Reality in the sense that all the selves and material objects are under His control.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika have divided all the substances into nine kinds, viz, prthivī(earth), ap(water), tejas(fire), vāyu air), ākāśa(space), kāla(time), dik(direction), ātman(self), and manas(mind). Ātman is divided by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika into two types, namely, jīvātman and paramātman. The jīvātman is infinite in number and is different in every individual, while paramātman is only one.

According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Īśvara is suguṇa or qualified. They deny the existence of nirguṇa Brahman. Īśvara is endowed with the attributes of existence, knowledge and bliss. He is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. With His all-surpassing power, Īśvara creates, sustains and destroys the universe, and guides the selves in all their states of existence, whether in bondage or in liberation.

In the early Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika works there is no clear reference to the attributes of Īśvara. According to later Naiyāyikas, Īśvara is endowed with the eight attributes, such as animā (minuteness), laghimā(lightness) etc. The later Vaiśeṣikas also say that Īśvara is endowed with six qualities like saṁkhyā(number), parimāṇa (magnitude), prthakatva (separateness), saṁyoga (conjunction), viyoga (disjunction) and jñāna (knowledge), of which the first five qualities are general, while the last is a special one. The later Naiyāyikas further hold that Īśvara is possessed of the qualities of number, knowledge, desire,

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33. sa dvividhaḥ, jīvātma paramātmā ceti. tatra īśvaraḥ sarvajñāḥ
paramātmā eko eva, jīvastu pratiśārīram bhinnah. TSam, Ch-1.
volition and bliss\textsuperscript{34} and all these qualities are eternal and exist in Him through the relation of inherence. Though the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas ascribe some personal qualities like desire, volition, bliss etc. to \textit{Īśvara}, they do not accept any physical organism for Him. But regarding this view, Udayana and Śrīdhara say that the atoms (\textit{paramāṇus}) may be regarded as the body of \textit{Īśvara}. But this argument is not accepted by the other Nyāya and Vaiṣeṣika philosophers. Actually Śrīdhara and Udayana want to show that a physical organism is not essential for \textit{Īśvara}.

According to Naiyāyaikas, \textit{Īśvara} is the author of the creation, preservation and dissolution of the world. Further, they say that the creative urge of \textit{Īśvara} is without any motive. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika holds that \textit{Īśvara} is one and He alone can bring about the world-order. \textit{Īśvara} is not the material cause of the world. He is only the efficient cause of it. Like a potter, He creates the world out of the eternal atoms, sustains it after creation and annihilates it after sustenance. \textit{Īśvara} rules over the selves in all their activities, associates them with the fruits of their actions and finally leads them to the state of liberation in harmony with their spiritual practices. In reality, the self is quite distinct from Him under all circumstances. In liberation also, the self retains its individuality as distinct from \textit{Īśvara}.

\textit{Īśvara} is quite distinct from the world also. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the world is material and non-eternal, while \textit{Īśvara} is spiritual and eternal. The world is under the full control of \textit{Īśvara}. They hold that, the world is neither a manifestation of \textit{Īśvara}, nor is it a part or attribute of Him, it is different from Him under all circumstances.

\textsuperscript{34} samkhyādo pañca buddhir icchā yatno'api ceśvare. \textit{Kv}, 34.
BRAHMAN ACCORDING TO MĪMĀ́_MSBĀ:

According to the Mīmā́/msakas the significance of all the Vedas lies in the performance of actions and not in Brahmān. In the Mīmā́/msā-Śūtra, Jaimini does not refer to God. Prabhākara and Kumärila deny the existence of God. The Mīmā́/msakas do not believe in the existence of God as the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. But they do posit a number of deities in order that offerings may be made to them while performing sacrifices. The deities are taken as possessing some sort of reality and varying super-natural powers by the Mīmā́/msakas. But the Mīmā́/msakas refuse to go beyond these deities to a Supreme power, that is God.

BRAHMAN IN VEDĀNTA SCHOOLS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

BRAHMAN ACCORDING TO ŚAṂKARA:

According to Śaṃkara, Brahmān is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. Brahmān is one, non-dual, without a second. It is pure transcendental, transempirical being. It is non-spatial, non-temporal, non-causal and trans-empirical existence. Though it exists at all time and in all space, it is not conditional by space and time.

Brahmān is existence in its essence. Existence itself is consciousness and being of the nature of consciousness. Brahmān manifests not only itself but also all other objects. Again, Brahmān is infinite, because there is nothing besides it. The idea of infiniteness brings with it the idea of bliss. It is found in the Śrūti that infinite is the supreme bliss. The three aspects of Brahmān i.e. existence (sat), consciousness (cit) and bliss (ānanda) are not different from one other. These three aspects or
saccidanada is the essential definition of Brahman. This is called the svarūpa lakṣaṇa or the essential definition, since it points to the very svarūpa or essence of Brahman. Existence, consciousness and bliss form the very essence of Brahman. They are neither the parts nor the attributes of Brahman because Brahman is akhaṇḍa or partless and nirguna or attributeless. The accidental definition or tatāsthala lakṣaṇa of Brahman is that which does not co-exist with thing for all time and yet distinguished it from other things.³⁵ The accidental definition of Brahman is that ‘it is the cause of the birth etc³⁶ of the world’. It means that Brahman is the cause of the origination, preservation and destruction of the world. The passage – ‘janmādyasya yataḥ’ is the tatāsthala lakṣaṇa of Brahman and this definition is supported by the Śruti text like the following:– ‘from which these beings are born, through which they like after birth to which they return and become merged.’³⁷ The tatāsthala lakṣaṇa of Brahman is also meant for distinguishing it from all other entities other than Brahman. Here other entities mean paramāṇu, prakṛti, kāla etc. from which Brahman is distinguished.

Brahman is one without a second and is indivisible. It is free from all bhedas or differences – internal or external. Bheda may be of three kinds, namely, i) Sajāṭīya i.e., distinction between two things belonging to the same community as between an oak tree and a pine tree. ii) Viḍāṭīya i.e., distinction between two things belonging to different communities as

³⁵. tatāsthala lakṣaṇaṁ nāma yāvallakṣyakālamanaṁavasthitatvē sati yadvya-vartakaṁ tadeva. VP, p. 230.
³⁶. prakṛte ca jagajjanmādaṇīkānatavaṁ. ibid., p.233.
between a tree and a stone and iii) *Svagata* i.e., distinction between two parts of an individual entity as between the branches and the leaves of a pine tree. But Brahman being the only and indivisible reality is free from all these differences.

Śaṅkara speaks of the two stages of Brahman, namely the higher or *para* Brahman and lower or *apara* Brahman. The unconditioned, indeterminate and attributeless Brahman is the *para* Brahman and the Brahman endowed with qualities, actions and concerned with world process is the *apara* Brahman, the Brahman otherwise known as *Īśvara*. Brahman endowed with *māyā*, manifests itself as *Īśvara* the cause of the world. *Īśvara* is not the highest reality; He is a lower manifestation of Brahman. Śaṅkara holds that *Īśvara* is postulated for those who are at a lower spiritual level. Brahman endowed with the illusory power of *māyā* is the efficient cause of the world i.e. Brahman is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. Brahman is also regarded as the material cause of the world in the sense that the world appearance has its ground on Brahman. Thus Brahman is both the efficient cause and the material cause of the world.38

In case of the relation between Brahman and the individual self, Śaṅkara clearly says that the individual self is identical with the Absolute under all circumstances.39 There is no ontological difference between them. Their difference is empirical due to the limiting adjuncts of body, senses, *manas* and *buddhi* composed of empirical names and form constructed by *avidyā*. The Śruti text ‘*tat tvam asi*’ clearly shows it. The individual self

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38. *cetāṇāṁ brahma jagataḥ kāraṇāṁ prakṛtiśca*. BSS, 2.1.11.
cannot be a part of Brahman, since Brahman is partless. The difference between them is not real. Actually non-difference of the individual self from Brahman is primary, while their difference is secondary.\footnote{Samkara- \textit{Bhāṣya} on \textit{Māṇḍukya-Kārikā}, 3.13.14.}

In explaining the relation between Brahman and the individual self Śaṅkara accepts both the theory of limitation (\textit{avaccedavāda}) and the theory of reflection (\textit{pratibimbavāda}). He says that the individual self is Brahman limited by internal organ, like the ākāśa limited by a jar or a house.\footnote{yathā ghatakārakādyupādhiṣṭhādaparicchinnamapi nabhaḥ paricchinnavadabhāṣate tadvad. BSS, 1.2.6.} Again he says that the individual self as a reflection of Brahman in nescience, like the reflection of sun in water.\footnote{ābhāsa eva caiṣa jīva parasyātmano jalaśūryakādivatpratipattavyaḥ. ibid., 2.3.50} Śaṅkara also says that the individual self as it revealed to us is false, while the real self is nothing but Brahman.

**BRAHMAN ACCORDING TO RĀMĀNUJA:**

Rāmānuja’s philosophy is known as qualified non-dualism (Viśiṣṭādvaīta), because he accepts Brahman as the only fundamental reality. He attempts a harmonious combination of absolutism with personal theism. Rāmānuja accepts three categories namely Brahman or \textit{Īśvara}, \textit{cit} or the self, and \textit{acit} or matter. Of them Brahman is the ultimate and all inducive reality. The selves and the matter are related to Brahman as attributes. They have got distinct characteristics of their own and are different from the essential nature of Brahman. But, yet they are non-different from Brahman, because they have no separate existence apart from Brahman. In other words it can be said that, Brahman is always qualified by the selves and matter.
According to Rāmānuja, there is no difference between the nirguṇa
(characterless) Brahman and the saguṇa (qualified) Brahman i.e. Īśvara.
He holds that characterless and differenceless Brahman is only a fiction.
Rāmānuja says that saguṇa Brahman or Īśvara endowed with best qualities
is the Ultimate. He further argues that, the existence of characterless entity
cannot be proved by the scriptural testimony also, because the scripture,
being collections of words cannot denote anything characterless.

According to Rāmānuja, Brahman is identical with Īśvara or God.
In the view of Rāmānuja, the terms ‘Brahman’, ‘Īśvara’, ‘Viṣṇu’, ‘Nārāyaṇa’
and ‘Śrīkṛṣṇa’ indicate the same Ultimate Reality. According to Rāmānuja
Īśvara is endowed with infinite auspicious qualities like existence,
consciousness, bliss, infinite and purity. He is omnipotent, omniscient and
omnipresent. Space, time or any other object of the world does not limit
Him. Knowledge, power and love are the most prominent qualities of Īśvara.
All these qualities are natural to Him.

Rāmānuja opines that Īśvara is not an impersonal principle like the
law of karman, but is a person. The qualities of power, knowledge and
love make Him reveal Himself as person. Again in the view of Rāmānuja
Īśvara is called Puruṣottama or Highest Personality, because He is the
resort of all the perfect qualities.43 Again Puruṣottama is identified with
Śrīkṛṣṇa who in His supernatural form, beauty and glory resides in His
divine abode Vaikuṇṭha, lying beyond the empirical world. The person
who acquire the real knowledge through sincere devotion, live in close
association with the Lord in His divine abode.

43. brahmaśabdena........................puruṣottamo’bhidhīyate. BSR, 1.1.1.
According to Rāmānuja, Īśvara is not only the efficient cause but also the material cause and the assisting cause of the world. Īśvara associated with the subtle forms of the individual selves and matter is the material cause; Īśvara endowed with the desire of being many is the efficient cause and possessed of the qualities of knowledge, power etc. is the assisting cause. Further Īśvara is also the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world.

Regarding the relation between, Brahman and the self, Rāmānuja says that Brahman and the self are not identical. The self is a part of Brahman. Though co-eternal with Brahman, the self has no separate existence. The self is related to Brahman in both the causal state (karaṇāvasthā) and the effect state (kāryāvasthā) in the sense that the former is a qualification of the latter. The relation between Brahman and the self cannot be called one of identity or of difference or of identity in difference.

Regarding the relation between Brahman and the world Rāmānuja holds that the world is a part of Brahman. The world forms the outer body of Brahman and is inseparably related to Brahman as its qualification in both the causal state and the effect state. Thus Brahman and the world are both different and non-different from each other in the causal state and the effect state.

**BRAHMAN ACCORDING TO MADHVA:**

According to Madhva, Brahman otherwise called Paramātman or Īśvara is the Ultimate Reality. Madhva accepts three kinds of entities, namely, Brahman, the selves and the world, which are eternal and absolutely real. The individual selves and matter are dependent on Brahman. Brahman

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44. na nimittakāraṇamātraṁ brahman, upādānakāraṇaṁ ca brahmaiva. BSR, 1.4.23.
is the only independent reality. According to Madhva, Brahman, the selves and matter are quite distinct from each other. The selves and material world are neither identical with Brahman nor they related to it as its parts or attributes. Actually Madhva has surpassed all other Indian thinkers in emphasizing the absolute independence and unfathomable majesty of Brahman. Madhva’s philosophy is known as Dualism or Dvaitavāda.

According to Madhva, Brahman is always endowed with attributes which are natural to His very being. Brahman is endowed with the qualities of truth, knowledge and infinity. He further says that, though in some scriptural passages Brahman is described as ‘nirguna’, yet it cannot be explained without any reference to the other terms applied to Brahman. According to Madhva ‘nirguna’ means one free from the empirical qualities like impurity, grossness etc. He holds that Brahman as a creator of the world must be endowed with some power or quality, because a powerless Brahman cannot create the world. Madhva holds Brahman as pervading all time and space, transcending the selves and matter, and having infinite power, infinite bliss and infinite knowledge. Thus Brahman is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent.

In the view of Madhva, the Lord or Isvara manifests Himself in four different divine forms for governing the selves in their different states. These four divine manifestations are called catur-vyuhas. They are: Vāsudeva, Śaṅkarśaṇa, Pradyumna and Anirudha. According to Madhva, Isvara creates the world out of His sportive mood or lilā, just as person in a ecstatic mood express his joy through dancing, playing
etc. After creation, Isvara maintains the whole universe in all its spheres and at the time of dissolution, causes all the effects to dissolution, causes all the effects to dissolve into their respective causes and finally into prakṛti. In the view of Madhva, Isvara transcends the selves and the material world, because He is completely independent of them. He regulates the selves in all their activities both in bondage and in liberation and the material world in every step of its progress. But He is not immanent in them, for He controls them from outside. Madhva regards Isvara as a person. In the conventional sense ‘person’ means a spiritual being having a psycho-physical organism. He also says that, though Isvara is a person, He is devoid of any form, gross or subtle. His body is of the nature of pure knowledge and bliss.

Regarding the relation between Brahman and the self, Madhva says that the selves are distinct from and co-existent with Brahman. The selves are metaphysically dependent on Brahman for their very being. Regarding the relation between Brahman and the world, Madhva says that Brahman is the efficient cause of the world and prakṛti equilibrium of the three guṇas or sattva, rajas and tamas is the material cause. In all its activities, prakṛti is under the full control of Brahman. It is the will of Brahman that is ultimately responsible for the evolution of prakṛti into the world. Thus, the world and prakṛti are wholly dependent upon and regulated by Brahman.

45. yathā loke mattasya sukhoḍrekāt eva nṛtyagānādi līlā.......evaṁ Isvarasya. BSM, 2.1.34.
46. nirdoṣa caitanya sukhāṁ nityāṁ svakaṁ tānuṁ. Bhāgavata Tātparya Nirṇaya, p. 42.
   cf. The Absolute in Indian Philosophy, p.163
BRAHMAN ACCORDING TO VALLABHA:

According to Vallabha, Brahman is identical with Isvara (saguna Brahman) the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. According to Vallabha, Brahman transforms itself into the selves and matter, though, in its real nature it remains ever-perfect and is never affected by any condition. They are non-different from Brahman. Accordingly, Madhva's philosophy is known as pure Non-Dualism or Suddhadvaitavāda.

According to Vallabha, Brahman is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. It is a pure unity and free from māyā. In the view of Vallabha Brahman is both qualified (saguna) and devoid of quality (nirguna). According to Madhva the term 'saguna' means 'endowed with divine qualities' and the term 'nirguna' means 'devoid of empirical attributes'. Brahman, in the view of Madhva is identical with Śrīkṛṣṇa, who is endowed with a luminous body having hands, feet etc. Further, Madhva holds that Brahman has three aspects, namely cause, effect and the essence. Brahman is the first or ultimate cause of the world. As the effect Brahman manifests itself as the multiple forms of the world for the sake of mere sport.

In the essential aspect, Brahman is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss and is eternal, infinite and so on. In the philosophy of Vallabha, the attributes of Brahman are seem to be contradicted i.e. Brahman is devoid of quality, yet it is endowed with divine qualities; it is infinite, yet it is finite itself in the form of the world etc. In this regard Vallabha says that these contradictions are to be regarded not as the defects of Brahman, but as its ornaments.

47. nirguṇātvena ananta-guṇātvena sarvaviruddha dharmena rūpena vyapadesāt. BSV, 3.2.27.
48. virudhamārjatvāṁ tu brahmāṇo bhūṣaṇāya. ibid., 1.1.3.
In the view of Vallabha, Brahman is both immanent and transcendental of the world. It is immanent, because all the beings are nothing but the manifestation of one or more of its essential aspects. It is transcendental, because in its form of divinity, it is devoid of all distinction i.e., sajātiya, vijātiya and svagata. According to Vallabha, Brahman is both the efficient cause and the material cause of the world. Vallabha views that Brahman is the efficient cause, because by the knowledge, desire and action of the Brahman the material world is manifested. Again it is the material cause, because the material world is nothing but its modification.

Regarding the relation between Brahman and the self, Vallabha views that Brahman and the self are non-different from each other, yet they are like the sparks to the blazing fire. It means that the relation between Brahman and the self is neither absolute difference nor absolute non-difference but both difference and non-difference. In liberation also, the self does not become identical with Brahman, but remains in perpetual association with it.49

According to Vallabha, the world is only a form of Brahman, where the sat aspect is manifested, while the aspect of cit and ānanda are concealed. Brahman manifests itself as the world with its multi-various attributes. Brahman creates the world with its power of māyā, but yet remains untouched by the limitations of māyā. Vallabha says that, in reality the world in its essence is real, but the world as it appears to the ordinary jīvas is unreal, because it is a product of ignorance (avidyā).

49. jīva nāma brahmaṇaḥ anśaḥ. BSV, 2.3.43.
BRAHMAN ACCORDING TO NIMBĀRKA:

The philosophy of Nimbārka is a type of Bhedābheda or difference cum non-difference, because according to him Brahman is both different and identical with selves and matter. According to Nimbārka the realities of the world are of two kinds, namely, independent (svatantra) and dependent (paratantra). The Universal self or Brahman is the only independent reality and the selves and matter are the dependent realities. In the view of Nimbārka, Brahman is identical with Śrīkṛṣṇa.

According to Nimbārka, there is no distinction between Brahman and Īśvara. For him, Brahman is identical with Īśvara. In the view of Nimbārka, Brahman or Īśvara is a person endowed with form (rūpa). The body of Brahman is eternal. It is not the product of the elements of matter. Nimbārka holds that this body is composed of infinite bliss and consciousness and it is self-luminous and pure. The devotees meditate on this body. The abode of Īśvara or Śrīkṛṣṇa lies beyond physical world.

According to Nimbārka, Brahman is both transcendent of and immanent in the world. Brahman is the material cause of the world and it modifies itself in to the world. Again, during dissolution the world are dissolved into Brahman, but does not make any change of it. In the view of Nimbārka, Brahman is not only the material cause but also the efficient cause of the universe.

Regarding the relation between Brahman and the self Nimbārka holds that the self is potency (śakti) of Brahman. The self is also a part of Brahman.

50. 'aśabdam asparśam' ityādi vākyasya ca prakṛtasabdādinisedha paratvāt. Vedāntaśūbha, 1.2.21.

cf. K.P. Sinha, The Absolute in Indian Philosophy.
In the view of Nimbārka, the self and Brahman are both identical and different from each other, they are neither only identical nor only different. Here identity means not absolute oneness, but non-cognition of difference. Nimbārka says that the difference-cum-non-difference is natural and it is true both in bondage and liberation. Regarding the relation between Brahman and the world, Nimbārka says that the world is both the effect and the attribute of Brahman. The relation between Brahman and world is termed as difference-cum-non-difference. Though in the effect state, the world exhibits some characteristics different from those of Brahman, it is not totally different from Brahman. Hence the objects of the world are different and non-different from each other.

BRAHMAN IN VĪRĀṢAIVISM:

Vīrāṣaivism follows the authority of twenty-eight Śaiva Āgamic literature and Vacana-Śastras. In these literatures Śiva is represented as the Supreme Power, one and without a second. But, it is noteworthy that the term ‘Brahman’ is not used to denote the Supreme Power. Like all other Śaiva sects the Vīrāṣaivism also uses the term Pati to denote the Supreme Power and this Pati is Śiva or Para-Śiva. According to Āgamic literatures Śiva creates and protects all beings including god Brahmā. According to KauṇḍinyaŚŚ Śiva is designated as Pati as He creates and protects paśus (beings). He is one eternal. It is due to His grace that beings can attain mokṣa. Similar description is found in Katha-UpaniṣadŚŚ which declares that realization of the self (ātman) depends solely on His grace.

51. āpti pā paśun iti atāḥ patir bhavati. PS, p. 5.
52. yamevasa vṛnute tena labhya/
tasyaśa ātmā vīvṛnute tanum svāṁ// 1.2.23
Dr. S.C. Nandimath, the author of 'A Hand book of Vīraśaivism' uses the word 'God' to denote the Supreme Reality i.e. Śiva. There are many other terms like - Liṅga, Sthala, Sahaja, Śunya etc. which are used in Vacana-Śāstra to denote Para-Śiva.

According to Vīraśaivism, Śiva in his real nature is beyond the stage of any form. He cannot be addressed by any name. God, has neither form, nor no-form, but has both form and no-form. He is indescribable, invisible, unimaginable etc. It is not possible for human being to understand or to realize the depth of Śiva, the infinite. He is described in Vacana-Śāstras as the glorious essence of luster in all lusters. He is beginningless. Being eternal he is beyond the empirical world which is subject to creation, sustenation and destruction. Śiva is Caitanya-Svarūpa, and as Caitanya resides in all things, including individual beings, Śiva is infinite and all-pervasive and also all-transcending. He is in the universe, pervades the universe completely without leaving any space, is of the form of the universe, and is beyond the universe. Though god pervades in all things and is seen in all things, but all things are not god. In this context it is mentioned in the Vacana-Śāstra53 that though all beings spring from Śiva, all of them cannot be called Śiva, just like the farmer who sows seeds cannot be called crops or the potter who makes pots can not be called pot.

Vīraśaivism, which is called Viśeśādvaita is also known as Śaktiviśiśītvādvaita philosophy. It means Śiva is endowed with śakti (power of Śiva). This power is designated as Parā-Śakti or Cidāmbara. According to Vīraśaivism śakti is an eternal adjunct of Śiva and is inseparable from

53. Vacanas of Vasavanna, p.20.
Him, just as the burning power is inseparable from fire. Śiva performs all cosmic functions (creation, sustenance, dissolution, bondage and liberation), through this śakti or power. Vīraśaivism traces the origin of matter to māyā. This māyā is a phase of śakti or power.

Vīraśaiva philosophy is also termed as Śaṭsthala-Siddhānta. The Śaṭsthala doctrine is regarded as the most important feature of Vīraśaivism. The progress of Vīraśaiva devotee towards pilgrimage through this life is marked out by six different stages called ‘śaṭsthala’. These are bhaktisthala, maheśasthala, prasādisthala, prāṇaliṅgisthala, śaraṇasthala and aikyasthala.54 But, in this connection it may be mentioned that the interpretation of śaṭsthala is rather different in different works. Śivayogi Śivācārya in his Siddhānta-Śikhāmaṇi mentions 101 sthalas. On the other hand Vīraśaiva philosophers like Śripati, Mayideva, Bhimakavi etc. mention six sthalas only. Further, the concepts of these sthalas are used to denote different meanings. In some works it is used to denote the six centers from which the power of God is manifested in different ways; sometimes the sthalas are used to denote the six fold majestic powers of God and sometimes to denote the important natural elements, such as earth, fire, air etc. In this matter R.G. Bhandarkar55 opines that the whole idea seems to be that the macrocosm and microcosm being the same identical entity. It is possible to control the dissipate forces of any centre and pass on to a more

54. bhakto maheśvaraścaiva prasādi prāṇaliṅgakah/
śaraṇah śivaliṅgaikyah sthalasatkaṁ mamapriyāṁ//
Parameśvarāgamā, 6.8.
concentrated point of manifestation of the energy. This process is regarded as the upward process from one stage to another.

In Vīraśaivism the sthala again represent the Supreme Reality, i.e. Parama-Śiva, because the whole world is founded (stha) on Him and dissolves (la) into Him. All phenomena are grounded on Śiva and are dependent on Him in all the states of creation, sustenance and destruction. When Śiva wants to play within Himself, there arises a slight vibration in His calm bosom because of His innate power. As a result of this He assumes two forms – Liṅga-Sthala or Śiva, the worshipped and the Aṅga-Sthala or self, the worshipper. Liṅga-Sthala or Śiva in His divine nature is first divided into three liṅgas, namely – bhāvaliṅga, prānaliṅga and iṣṭaliṅga. Actually these divisions are the three ways through which Śiva manifests Himself. Bhāvaliṅga is the manifestation of Śiva’s being. It is the infinite aspect of Śiva, i.e. it is the highest principle. Prānaliṅga is the manifestation of Śiva’s consciousness. It is the universal aspect of Śiva. Iṣṭaliṅga is the manifestation of Śiva’s bliss. It is the individual form of Śiva. The first principle is without any parts and it can be perceived by only faith. It is not conditioned by space or time, and is higher than the highest. The second has parts but it cannot be perceived. It can be apprehended by mind. The third has parts and is apprehensible by the eye. It can be worshipped with care and it confers all desired objects.

Each of these three principles i.e. bhāvaliṅga, prānaliṅga and iṣṭaliṅga is again subdivided into two groups, i.e. the mahāliṅga and prasādaliṅga, the caraliṅga and Śivaliṅga; and the guruliṅga and ācāraliṅga respectively. These liṅgas are operated by six kinds of saktis
and give rise to the six forms, such as – *cit-śakti*, *parā-śakti*, *ādi-śakti*, *icchā-śakti*, *jñāna-śakti* and *kriyā-śakti* respectively. These śaktis are the power of Śiva. The power of Śiva is of two kinds – *kala-śakti* and *bhakti-śakti*. *Kalā* abides in *Līṅga* or Śiva and *bhakti* in *Aṅga* or the self. *Kalā* is the original śakti which is all-pervading and identical with Śiva. *Kalā* makes the formless and homogeneous Śiva to manifest Himself in infinite forms and *bhakti* makes the infinite forms to turn into the Primal Unity. From *kalā-śakti*, etc. spring six sub-śaktis, namely, *cit-śakti* etc. mentioned earlier.

When the Śiva essence is operated on by the power of intelligence (*citśakti*) *mahālīṅga* is produced of which attributes are the absence of birth and death, free from taint, unfathomableness etc. When the Śiva essence gets permeated with its highest power (*parāśakti*) *prasādālīṅga* is produced which is light, eternal, indivisible, imperceptible to the senses, apprehensible by reason, indestructible etc. When the Śiva essence is operated on by its primeval power, it forms the *caralīṅga*, which is infinite, all-pervading, full of light, is a *puruṣa* (person). It can be contemplated by the mind alone. When the Śiva essence gets permeated by the will power (*icchāśakti*) it produces *Śivalīṅga*, which is a finite principle with a sense of egoism, possessed of knowledge and power. When permeated with the power of knowledge (*jñānaśakti*), it forms *guruliṅga* which possesses agency, have presiding power over every system. It is full of light, a boundless ocean of joy, which dwells in human intelligence. When Śiva essence is operated by the power of action (*kriyāśakti*) it forms *ācāralīṅga*, which serves as the support for the existence of all things and it leads to life of renunciation.
LINGA IN VIRAŚAIVISM:

The Vīraśaiva philosophy is also known as *Liṅgāyata Darśana* which means that the followers of this system wear *liṅga* on the body. According to tradition one of the most important features of this system is the introduction of the *Liṅga*, the emblem of Śiva. In Vīraśaivism *Liṅga* is regarded as the Ultimate Reality, i.e., the Parama-Śiva or Śiva. *Liṅga* and Śiva are synonymous terms in Śaiva-gamas to denote the Ultimate Reality.\(^5\)

The Śivānubhava-Sūtra of Maggeya Mayideva defines *Liṅga* as that in which all mobiles and immobiles enter, i.e., get dissolved, and that from which the universe goes out, i.e. created, is called a *Liṅga*.\(^6\) The *Candrajñānāgama* says that the creation and dissolution of the universe which takes place in the Brahman is called *Liṅga*.\(^7\) The term *Liṅga*\(^8\) is derived from two Sanskrit roots ‘*li*’ to absorb, the object in which all things ultimately merge and ‘*gam*’ to go, to issue forth, the resort or source of creation. Thus it means the source (*gam*) and goal (*li*), respectively of the evolution and involution of the universe. A cryptic formula ‘*tajjālan*’ which is exactly similar to the concept of the *Liṅga*, is described in

\(^{56}\) bhargam vareṇyam yadraipain talliṅgamiti kīrtitam/
tasmāliṅgaṁ parambrahma sadā dhyāyanti yogīnāḥ//
TNS, Kriyāpāda, patala VI, p. 80.


\(^{58}\) jathare liyate sarvam jagat sthāvarajāṅgamaṁ/
punar utpādyate yasmāt tad brahma liṅga-saṁjñānākām//
*Candrajñāgama*, Kriyāpāda, 3.8.

\(^{59}\) (a) liyate gamyate yatra yena sarvaṁ carācaraṁ/
tadeva liṅgāmyuktāṁ lingatattvaparāyaṇāṁ// SAS, 3.3. p.33.
(b) ityādivacanapramāṇāliṅgāśesane gamtrgataviti
dhatudvayān尼斯panno’yaṁ lingaśabdaḥ// *VSVC*, prakarna. 4. p. 91.
Chândogyopaniṣad. Śaṅkara explains this term as follows – ‘Tajja’ is that from which all elements such as earth, water, fire etc. are emanated. ‘La’ is that in which the universe is dissolved, ‘an’ is ‘to breathe’ that in which the universe breathes, exists and makes movement. Thus the term Liṅga of the Vīraśaiva School is exactly similar with that of the concept of Brahman. The term Liṅga which is derived from root ‘gam’ also means to penetrate, to comprehend, as in the case of ‘adhirâga’. Thus the Liṅga has become an object of meditation of the Yogins.61

According to Vīraśaivism, Liṅga is not merely the upper protruding part but includes its base (pitha). These are called as Śiva and śakti respectively, nāda and bindu, prakāśa and vimâra (Śiva’s inherent power of knowledge and action). It is well known fact that all the Śaivāgamas agree that Śiva is inseparably associated with śakti, as moonlight with the moon.

According to Vīraśaivism Liṅga is regarded as responsible for the threefold function i.e. creation, protection and involution. In this context Cennabasavanna, a well-known exponent of Vîraśaivism, interprets the term Liṅga as follows – ‘li’ stands for ‘śunya’, the Ultimate Reality, the bindu or ‘anusvāra’ for divine sport and ‘ga’ for the conscious energy of the Lord. The secret of the Liṅga lies in this threefold aspect. Here the aspect which is emphasised is that God has created the world for his own sport (līlā).63

This view is also stated in Sukṣmāgama,64 Mahopaniṣad and

60. liṅgaṁ gamakamityahurapare liṅgavittamāḥ/
    gamate yogibhirdhâtorgamejñâthadarśanāt// VSVC, p. 96.
61. tasmälliṅgaṁ parambrahma sada dhyânti yoginaṁ. TNS, p. 80.
62. binduḥ śaktiḥ śivo nādāḥ śivaśaktyātmakaṁ jagat.
   Candrajñānâgama, Kriyāpāda, patala 3.13.
63. lokabattu līlākâivalyaṁ. BS, 2.1.3.
64. evam rūpaḥ parātmāhi.......svaeechāyā’cintayacchivāḥ//
   Sukṣmāgama. patala–I, st. 18-19.
Taittirīyopaniṣad. In Vīraśaivism Liṅga is termed as ‘balayu’ also, because words are unable to manifest it. The term ‘balayu’ expresses the same idea of “neti, neti”, the utterance of the Upanisadic seer to describe the Parambrahman. Liṅga is also termed as ‘śūnya’, because according to Vīraśaivism it is beyond all positive and negative attributes. It is noteworthy that the concept of ‘śūnya’ is not ‘emptiness’. It is also equivalent to Upanisadic Parambrahman. Liṅga is again termed as ‘Niṣkalaliṅga’ because it has no form and is beyond the range of words and even thought. The Ultimate Reality (Liṅga), in the beginning is formless, one without a second, existent, conscious, blissful and eternal and perfect in all respects. But to help the devotee He assumed form according to His own will. In this context it should be well-mentioned that the Śaivāgamas speak of two aspects of Liṅga or the Absolute. One is nirākāra (formless) and the other sākāra (the form). In the same Āgama literature some passages are found which describe Liṅga or Paraśiva as nirākāra and some passages are found which describe Liṅga as sākāra. Regarding the relation between sākāra and nirākāra Liṅga and the real nature of Liṅga, the Niśvāsaṇaṇiṇīkā
dhyanapujanimittaya niṣkalam sakalam bhavat// Vatulāgama, patala– 2, st. 28.

65. yogināṁ ca yatāṁ ca jñānāṁ ca mantrināṁ rathā/
dhwānapūjanimittāya niṣkalaṁ sakalaṁ bhavat// Vatulāgama,
patala– 2, st. 28.

66. esa te niṣkalo devaḥ sakalena samanvitaḥ/
anudhyāyena tannityam smaranti manasā dhiyāḥ//
Nisvāṣaṇaṇiṇīkā, p. 562. cf Essentials of Viṣṇaśaivism .

67. dehi nirguṇa ityukto dehaḥ sāguṇa ucyate/
evameva vijnāniyādvayorbheda na vidyate// Sukṣmāgama.,
patala– I, stanza. 30
and says that there is no absolute distinction between them. In fact, the form and formless aspects depend upon the will of Absolute.

Liṅga is very minutely classified according to its spiritual significance. In this connection different views are expressed by different Viraśaiva writers. The Anādivīraśaivasārasamgraha describes three stages of Liṅga, namely, Sarvaśünyañirālambasthala, Śūnya-liṅga or Niśkalaliṅga and Mahāliṅga. The first stage i.e. the concept of Sarvaśünyañirālambasthala may be compared to that of Parabrahman of the Upaniṣads and the Nirguṇa Brahman of Śaṅkara. The Śūnya-liṅga or Niśkalaliṅga is formless, beyond thought, free from blemish, beyond the range of words. It is also termed as Mūlaliṅga. The Mahāliṅga is the next stage of development of the Divine after the Niśkalaliṅga. In this stage conscious energy has developed. The Mahāliṅga which is also termed as Śivaliṅga, is interpreted in another way also. From Niśkalaliṅga emanates knowledge consciousness (jñāna-cittu) and from this come out the three letters- viz, a, u, and ma which stands for nāda, bindu and kalā respectively. The association of these four, namely, cittu, a,u, and ma gave rise to omkāra praṇava and this omkāra praṇava is nothing but Mahāliṅga. This Liṅga is three fold, viz,- bhāvaliṅga, praṇaliṅga and iṣṭaliṅga.

The Liṅga is endowed with the characteristics of existence, consciousness, bliss, eternity and perfection. It is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest. In short it can be said that Liṅga is the abode of all auspicious attributes. It is well-mentioned that though some of the Śaivāgamas describe the idea of polytheism and proclaim only one God without a second, Basava and his followers clearly express the idea of
Absolute Monism. The *Liṅga* is immanent and transcendent. Though it is immanent it is unaffected by the events in the universe. The *Liṅga* pervades everything, yet it is not visible.

From the above description it is clear that the Ultimate Reality or Śiva or *Liṅga*, which is beyond all attributes and formless, is to be realized through the form. According to Vīraśaivism an individual can realize the Ultimate Reality through the process of *dikṣā* enjoined with the worship of *Iṣṭaliṅga*, which is granted by *Guru*. This *Iṣṭaliṅga* is a symbol of Śiva. This *Liṅga* serves as a boat to cross the ocean of worldliness (*samsāra*).  

**BRAHMAN IN ŚRĪPATI’S PHILOSOPHY:**

Śrīpati, a systematic exponent of Vīraśaiva philosophy, wrote a commentary on *Brahma-Sūtra*, known as Śrīkarabhāṣya from the Vīraśaiva point of view. Actually Vīraśaivism recognizes 28 *Śaivāgamas* and mystic sayings of Basava, Cennabasava, Ākkamahādevī etc as the authoritative works. But Śrīpati tries to show that Āgamic Śaivism has the firm support of the *Brahma-Sūtra* and it has the Upanisadic basis. He also claims that *Brahma-Sūtra* advocates the philosophy of *Śaktiviṣṭādvaita*. He further gives other ephithets of this system, such as – *Dvaitādvaita*, *Viśeṣādvaita*, *Bhedabheda* etc. Śrīpati uses the term *Pati* in the sense of Upanisadic Brahman and this *Pati* is nothing but Śiva or Para-Śiva. The term *Pati* is characterized by five functions viz, creation, maintenance and annihilation of the universe, concealment and grace. Through some *Śruti* text, Śrīpati establishes that Śiva is the Parambrahman.  

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69. eka eva rudrona dvitīyāya tathurya imāllokaṁiśata īśānibhiḥ.
   Sv.Up, 3.2.
said that the Brahman is Para-Śiva or Para-Brahman. Jaimini, Kumārila Bhatta, Bhāskarācārya and other, who are well versed in the Vedas have laid down that Parabrahman is none other than Śiva alone. In the Suta-Samhitā, it is also found that only Śiva is Para-Brahman, in whom complete Brahmalaksana, such as creation, protection and destruction are combined.

Para-Śiva in his real nature is beyond the stage of form. He is partless and changeless and his nature is not contradicted in any point of time. He is eternal and being eternal He is beyond the empirical world which is subject to creation etc. Even a devotee in his spiritual journey towards Paraśiva, is required to think upon Him in any form he likes. He is not compelled to meditate to Paraśiva in the conventional forms that are generally worshipped in temples. In the journey towards Paraśiva, a devotee, from the very first stage, investigates the real nature and the form or personality of Śiva. During this journey for the discovery of real truth a devotee comes to know that Paraśiva cannot be denoted by any name and form. At the highest stage of spiritual journey or realization, a devotee realizes Paraśiva just as balayu or void. He finds no name appropriate to Paraśiva. This stage can be compared with the Upanisadic description of Brahman as ‘neti, neti’.

In Śrīkarabhāṣya, Paraśiva is described as benevolent, He has boundless love for all beings. He is infinite and all pervasive and He pervades everything of the world, and is present in all beings as the inner soul. Paraśiva is endowed

70. parosi nārāyaṇayeṇa nānyathā. Udyoga-Parva.
72. kalyāṇagunakārataṁ divyamāṅgalavighrataṁ nirastva nikhiladoṣakalāṅkatvaṁ sarvāntaryāmitanca darśayanti. ibid., Vol. – II, 3.2.17.
with unlimited power by which He creates, sustains and destroys the world. He is independent. Further, He is of the nature of consciousness and exists in all the objects and the individual selves as consciousness. He is the real essence of everything; the luster of all lusteres.

According to Śrīpati, the Ultimate Reality is one, in which the substance and its power are in a state of unaffected equilibrium. The aspect of substance is called Parama-Śiva and the aspect of power is called Parā-Śakti. Śakti is two-fold namely — cit-śakti or conscious power and acit-śakti or unconscious power. These two forms of śakti are not different from each other. Paraśiva performs all His action (creation, sustenance, dissolution, bondage and liberation) with His śakti or power. Regarding the five fold creation of Paraśiva, Śrīpati explains the sutra “janmadyasya yataḥ” as follows — the word janmadi embodies the five-fold creative acts of srṣṭi, sthiti, laya, tirodhāna and anugraha (i.e. creation, production, destruction, disappearance and rewarding). Asya indicates Him who sports in bringing into play the acit (the material world) and cit (the world of perceptions) worlds. Yataḥ indicates Brahman, from whom arises out of His infinite powers, never ending manifestations in a natural way. The word yataḥ denotes Brahman as the chief cause of the five fold acts of creation etc. Brahman is the chief cause of everything; the doing, undoing and doing otherwise, and these are all within His powers. Vīraśaivism advocates that the Nirguṇa Brahman cannot create a world of savayava. Again it is not possible to create formless space (niravayava ākāśa) for Brahman, who has a body.
Srīpati holds that Brahman or Paraśiva is both the efficient cause and the material cause of the world. He says that the Śruti texts describing Brahman as the creator, indicate that Paraśiva is the efficient cause and while other Śruti texts which describe Brahman as the substratum into which everything merges in dissolution, denotes that Paraśiva is the material cause of the world.73 Sometimes māyā which is a phase of śakti is described as the material cause. But māyā, like śakti is also inseparable from Śiva and māyā as material casualty ultimately rests on Śiva Himself.74 Paraśiva is the support of all the living beings and the material bodies and also of all the śaktis that are playing in the universe. In reality, Viṣṇuism traces the origin of matter to māyā, which is a phase of śakti. The world is nothing but a form of Śiva. Śiva and the world are related as the cause and the effect and therefore, both are identical.

In the philosophy of Srīpati Brahman is also termed as sthala, because the whole world is founded (sthā) on Him, and dissolved (la) in Him. He is divided into two forms, namely, Liṅga-sthala or Śiva or worshipped and Āṅga-sthala or the self or the worshipper.75 Liṅga-sthala in his divine nature is first divided into three liṅgas, namely, bhāvaliṅga, prāṇaliṅga and iṣṭaliṅga. Through these stages Śiva manifests himself as different aspects.

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73. 'yoto vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante’ ityanena śivasya brahmaṇaḥ nimittakāraṇaṭvam, ‘yatprayanti’ ityanena upādāna kāraṇaṭvam ca upadiśyate. BSSR(C.H.Rao), Vol.— II, 1.1.2.
74. māyāṁ to prakṛtiṁ vidyāt ityādi śrutisu māyāḥ jagadupādāṇaṭvam paramesvarasya nimittaṭvam ca upadiśyate. ibid., Vol. – II, 1.1.2.
75. liṅgam śivo bhavet kṣetram aṅgam samyoga āśrayaḥ. ibid., Vol. – II, 1.1.1.
The bhāvaliṅga is the manifestation of Śiva's being, which is the infinite aspect of Śiva. Prāṇaliṅga is the manifestation of Śiva's consciousness and is the individual aspect of Śiva. Each of these three liṅgas is again subdivided into two parts, such as—mahāliṅga (the great, without beginning and end, graspable by intuition of the heart), prasāda-liṅga (the gracious, beyond the sense perception), caraliṅga (the dynamic, without inside and outside and formless); Śivaliṅga (the auspicious), guruliṅga (the perceptive, by its own knowledge and powers function as a guru) and ācāra-liṅga (the practical).\textsuperscript{76} These six liṅgas are called ṣaṭsthala. The power of Śiva energised by these liṅgas becomes power of consciousness (cit-śakti), transcendent power (parāśakti), original power (ādiśakti), power of volition (icchāśakti), power of knowledge (jñānaśakti) and power of action (kriyāśakti) respectively.

Śrīpati holds that the self is a part of Brahman, and is both different from and identical with it. The Śruti text declares that all creatures are but one quarter of the Lord. In the Bhagavadgītā it is also found that, “the selves are eternal parts of the Lord.” The two positions of difference and non-difference between the self and the Brahman are explained by Śrīpati as follows—difference refers to the state of self’s bondage, non-difference, to the state of liberation. Brahman is the source of the self and the self is nothing but Śiva under the limitation of avidyā. Śiva influenced by avidyā becomes the individual selves.\textsuperscript{77} Actually the difference between Brahman

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{76} sivasya sadvidhaliṅgātmakatvaṁ pūrvatra, prasādhya.
BSSR(C.H.Rao), Vol. – II, 1.1.11.
\item \textsuperscript{77} siva śakti saṁkoca vikāśātmakatyā brahma kārya karaṇonhayā vasthitam. ibid., Vol.- II,  2.3.16
\end{itemize}
and the self is real only in empirical state. As the self makes progress in its spiritual journey, this idea of difference gradually vanishes. In the final stage of this journey, the complete identity between the self and Śiva is realized. In this stage the self merges in the Supreme Reality and ceases to exist separately. This state is a state of complete and unqualified identity without any difference. The self becomes omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient and is endowed with infinite knowledge and bliss. Like the relation between Brahman and the self the relation between Brahman and the world is also having difference and non-difference between them. But according to Śrīpati this difference is only relative and not absolute, for it is true only in the lower state of existence. When the self rises in its spiritual journey it realizes that the world is not different from the Absolute and in this state the whole world reveals as identical with Śiva the Supreme Reality.

**COMPARISON OF ŚRĪPATI’S CONCEPT OF BRAHMAN WITH OTHER SCHOOLS OF ŚAIVISM**

**ŚRĪPATI’S CONCEPT OF BRAHMAN WITH THAT OF PĀṢUPATA-ŚAIVISM:**

The earlier philosophers of Pāṣupata-Śaivism do not refer to metaphysical topics like law of karman, the theory of transmigration, worship of the Śivalinga etc. But, Kaundinya, the author of Pañcarthabhasya, the principal expositor of this system, deals with some philosophical problems, such as the attainment of union with Śiva, the nature of union between the self and Śiva, the nature of the cause and the effect and so on. Pāṣupata-Śaivism postulates Śiva as the Supreme Reality. The term ‘Brahman’ is used in Pāṣupata-Śaivism along with other terms to denote the Supreme Reality. Śiva is termed by different names corresponding to the different aspects of
His nature. The terms are—Śankara, Pati, Īśvara, Paśupati, Mahādeva, Bhagavat etc. On the other hand Śripati uses the terms—Pati, Paraśiva, Liṅga, Sthala etc. to denote Supreme Reality.

The nature of Brahman is almost same in both the systems. Like Śripati Pāśupata-Śaivism also advocates Śiva as eternal, self-complete, self-fulfilled etc. He is absolutely free from all desires and devoid of all kinds of evils and pain. He is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. Śiva cannot be described by words, nor can He be known by the mind. He is quite distinct from all the effects—the selves, matter and all the attributes relating to them. In case of Śiva’s power, there is a slight difference between the two systems. According to Pāśupata-Śaivism Śiva is eternally endowed with unlimited powers of knowledge, action and lordship, by which He commands and controls everything of the whole universe. On the other hand Śripati advocates another principle namely sakti or power, which is an eternal adjunct of Śiva and is inseparable from Śiva. Through this sakti or power, Śiva performs all His actions viz, creation, sustenance etc. Pāśupata-Śaivism regards Śiva as the only and the supreme cause of the universe, all other entities being His effects. The effects of Pāśupata-Śaivism are of three kinds, namely, (i) vidyā or right knowledge, (ii) kālā or non-conscious and dependent entities and (iii) paśu or the bound selves. All these effects are modifications of Śiva’s powers and exist in Him at all time, just as a seed exists in the earth. On the other hand, according to Śripati the whole world is an effect of Śiva. This system traces the origin

78. sarva kṣetrajñānāṁ abhyadhikāḥ utkṛṣṭāḥ vyatiriktas ca bhavatīti abhyadhikāḥ..........vidyā kālā paśu sañjākaṁ trīvidāṁ api kāryān utpādayanti anugṛññāti tirobhāvayati ca ....PAB, 1.9.
of matter to māyā which is a phase of śakti or power of Śiva. Through śakti, Śiva creates the whole world and thus Śiva and the world are related as the cause and effect and are therefore identical. But Pāśupata-Śaivism regards that the effects are different from Śiva and are not intermixed with Him, because the effects are mutable while Śiva is immutable.79

According to Pāśupata-Śaivism Śiva is only the efficient cause of the universe and not the material cause. Śiva creates all the categories of the universe, regulates them and destroys them at the time of dissolution. On the other hand Śrīpati advocates that Paraśiva is both the efficient cause and the material cause of the world. The scriptural texts describing Brahman as the creator indicate that it is the efficient cause and the texts which describe Brahman as the substratum into which everything merges in dissolution, indicate that it is the material cause.

In case of the relation between the self and Brahman, both the systems are different in their views. Śrīpati recognizes the self as a part of Brahman and is both different from and identical with it. He argues that the difference refers to the state of the self’s bondage, non-difference to the state of liberation. Brahman is the source of the self and the self is nothing but Śiva under the limitation of nescience (avidyā). When the self makes progress in its spiritual journey, the idea of distinction gradually vanishes. In the final stage, the complete identity between the self and Paraśiva is realized. In this state the self merges in the Supreme Reality. Śrīpati says that this state is not a state of inseparable union with the Supreme, but one of complete and unqualified identity without any difference. The self

79. vyāpakaṁ maheśvaratattvaṁ vyāpyaṁ puruṣādipaṇcaviṁśaṁ. PAB, 2.5.
becomes omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient and is endowed with infinite knowledge and bliss. On the other hand, according to Pāśupata-Śaivism, Śiva is the substratum and the lord of the self. By His unbounded powers of knowledge, action and lordship, Śiva controls the individual selves in all their states. Accordingly in this system, Śiva is said to be the ultimate cause of both bondage and liberation of the individual selves. Śiva associates them with their requisite bodies, sense-organs, places and objects of their enjoyments, virtues, vices, knowledge, ignorance etc. and releases them from all these and leads them to the state of liberation. The liberated self acquires all the excellent qualities, such as omniscience, omnipotence, lordship etc.80 Like Vīraśaivism, Pāśupata-Śaivism does not mention any spiritual journey of the individual selves for realizing the identity between Paraśiva and the self. Pāśupata-Śaivism says that the liberated self is not quite similar to Śiva, because all the qualities pertaining to the self are ‘acquired’ while they are natural to Śiva. The liberated self cannot perform cosmic activities, like creation, sustenance and dissolution while Śiva can do it. In case of the relation between the world and Brahman both the systems are different in their views. Śrīpāti recognizes the relation of both difference and identity between Brahman and the world. Further he advocates that the difference is only relative and not absolute. It is true in the lower plane of existence and it is not different from Brahman in the highest stage of realization. On the other hand Pāśupata-Śaivism says that Brahman is not identical with the world, since He is the cause, while the

80. eka jñāna śaktih aparimitena jñeyena anekena anekadhā upacaryate PAB, 1.2.
world is the effect. Again, Śiva or Brahman, being immutable, is not intermixed with the mutable effects. Thus they are different from each other, though they are inseparably related.

ŚRĪPATI'S CONCEPT OF BRAHMAN WITH THAT OF ŚAIWA-SIDDHĀNTA:

The South Indian school of Śaivism is called the Śaiva-Siddhānta. They admit the authority of twenty-eight Śaivāgamas. Bhojadeva’s Tattaprakāśa, Nārāyaṇa Kanṭha’s Mrgendraṭantra-vṛtti, a commentary on Mrgendra-Āgama are also some important authoritative works on this system. They admit three primary categories and thirty-six dependent categories. Pati is the Ultimate Reality, being the very source and ground of the other two primary categories, namely paśu and pāśa and is identical with Śiva.81

In case of the nature of Brahman both the systems are different in their views. According to Śaiva-Siddhānta Brahman or Pati is neither pure identity nor pure difference but comprised of both. In this context they argue that even the scriptural texts cannot prove that Brahman is a pure identity, for the acceptance of the scriptural text as a means of valid knowledge implies difference. On the other hand, in Vīraśaivism, Śrīpati advocates both difference and non-difference between Brahman and the individual selves and Brahman or Pati’s nature is knowable from the testimony of Veda alone. Both the systems advocates Pati as one, eternal, self-existent, cause of the world, the bestower or grace on all beings etc. Both the systems advocate Pati as corporeal and incorporeal. Both the systems also recognize that there is no difference between the two. The

81. śaivāgamaṇa mukhyāṁ pati-paśu- pāśa iti kramāṁ tritayaṁ. tatra patiḥ śiva uktaḥ pāśavo hi anavo’ṛtha pañcakarāṁ pāśaḥ. TP, 5.
Śaiva-Siddhānta gives two definitions of Pati – general definition (tātastha lakṣaṇa) and essential definition (svarūpa lakṣaṇa). The general definition says that Pati is the governor of the world and is endowed with five cosmic activities namely, creation, preservation, dissolution, bondage and liberation.⁸² The essential definition says that Pati is being, consciousness and bliss (saccidānanda). According to this system all other attributes of Pati, like omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, infinity, eternity etc. are included in the concept of saccidānanda.⁸³ On the other hand Śrīpati does not mention separately the two definitions, although he advocates that Pati is endowed with the attributes like omnipotence and so on. Both the systems recognize Brahman as endowed with unlimited power, by which He creates, sustains and destroys the world and governs all beings. He is infinite and all pervasive. He pervades everything of the world, and is present in all beings as the inner soul. He is benevolent and He has boundless love for all-beings. In this context Śaiva-Siddhānta says that “the five cosmic operations of Śiva are nothing but the manifestations of His love and grace. They further say that through these five cosmic actions Śiva gives the individual selves opportunities to make progress in their spiritual journey and finally leads them to liberation”.

Both the systems accept another aspect of Pati or Brahman which is known as śakti or power. According to Śrīpati, śakti is an eternal adjunct of Śiva and is inseparable from Him, just as burning power is inseparable

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⁸² pañcabidham tat kṛtyaṁ srṣṭi-sthitī-saṁhṛti tirobhāvaḥ, tadvad anugraha karaṇaṁ. TP, 7.

⁸³ saccidānandarūpī yah sadasad vyaktivajitaḥ sa śivassarvajña. K.Śivaraman, Saivism In Philosophical Perpespective, p. 487.
from fire. Śrīpati recognize two phases of śakti, namely citśakti or conscious power and acitśakti or non-conscious power. Conscious power abides in Śiva directly as light, while non-conscious power resides in Him as the reflection of light. These two forms of śakti are not distinct from each other; they are but two sides of the same fundamental śakti. The Śaiva-Siddhānta is of the view that Śiva and śakti are related in a mysterious way, they are neither one nor not one, but neutral to both one and not-one. Śakti or power is cit or consciousness; it is the dynamic aspect of Śiva.

Both the systems accept that Pati or Brahman is both the material cause and the essential cause of world. They regard that as the efficient cause, Pati is the creator, governor and destroyer of the world, while as the material cause it becomes the multi-various objects of the world. He is the ultimate material cause wherefrom everything is derived and where to everything is resolved. It is noteworthy that both the systems sometimes accept Pati as the efficient cause of the world and His power māyā as the material cause. Both the systems recognize that Śiva or Pati is both transcendent of and immanent in the world. As the efficient cause, He transcends the world. The world comes into existence and dissolves again due to His transcendental will. He is immanent, because as the material cause He pervades the whole universe with His being.

The views about the relation between Brahman and the self in both the systems are almost the same. Both the systems advocate that Śiva and the self are different and non-different. These two positions refer to two different states: in the state of self’s bondage, they are different, while in the state of liberation, they are non-different. According to Śrīpati this
difference is real only in the empirical state. As the self makes progress in its spiritual journey, the idea of distinction gradually vanishes and the identity between the self and Brahman is realized. But, according to Śrīpati this is not a state of inseparable union, but one of complete and unqualified identity without any difference. According to the Śaiva Siddhāntins the relation between the self and Śiva in liberation is termed as ‘advaita’. The term ‘advaita’ means non-duality but not oneness. The Śaiva-Siddhānta implies this relation between Śiva and the self as neither totally different nor totally non-different, but is partially different and partially non-different. On the other hand according to Śrīpati Śiva and the self are different in the beginning but non-different at the end.

ŚRĪPATI’S CONCEPT OF BRAHMAN WITH THAT OF ŚRĪKAṆṬHA’S PHILOSOPHY:

It is noteworthy that both the philosophers, Śrīpati and Śrīkaṇṭha adopted Brahma-Sūtra, as the authoritative text to establish their Śaiva theory. Their commentaries on Brahma-Sūtra are known as Śrīkarabhāṣya and Śrīkaṇṭhabhāṣya respectively. Śrīkaṇṭhabhāṣya is also known as Brahmanīmāṁsābhāṣya. Śrīkaṇṭha’s philosophy is known as Śaiva Viśiṣṭādvaita. Like other Śaiva schools, Śrīkaṇṭha builds his system on the three main categories namely (i) Pati, (ii) Paśu and (iii) Pāśa. According to this system Pati (Brahman) is the Ultimate Reality and identical with Śiva.

In case of the nature of Brahman or Pati the views of Śrīpati and Śrīkaṇṭha are something different. Śrīkaṇṭha clearly says that, Pati or Śiva, in essential nature is saguna or endowed with attributes. It is termed as nirguṇa, but not in the sense of attributeless like Advaita theory of Śaṅkara.
Here *nirguṇa* means ‘*Pati* is devoid of bad attributes’ and *saguna* means ‘it is full of auspicious qualities’. *Pati* is, therefore denoted by the term *ubhayaliṅga* (bisexual), i.e. endowed with double mark.\(^8^4\) Śrīkanṭha says that the term ‘Śiva’ indicates that eternal and infinite auspiciousness is the essence (*svarūpa*) of the Lord. Śiva is endowed with innumerable and infinitely noble attributes. The *sarvajñatva* (omniscience), *nityatrptatva* (being ever-satisfied), *anādibodhatva* (possessing beginning less knowledge), *svatantratva* (independence), *aluptasaktimattva* (non-hidden powers) and *anantaśaktimattva* (innumberable and infinite powers) are regarded as the noblest qualities of Śiva. Śrīkanṭha holds that the *Pati* or Śiva characterized by subtle-cum-gross cause-effect of the universe is the Brahman.\(^8^5\) Śrīkanṭha mentions various names for *Pati* in his *bhasya*, namely Bhava, Śarva, Śiva, Paśupati, Rudra, Mahādeva etc. Actually Śrīkanṭha shows that the Āgamic concepts of Śiva are the same as those of Upanisadic Brahman. On the other hand according to Śrīpati, Śiva in His real nature, is beyond the stage of form. At the same time He says that *nirguṇa* is used in connection with Brahman which means ‘devoid of *sattva* and the rest of the three *guṇas*’ and should not be taken as denoting ‘without attributes’. Brahman is to be discussed always in two forms, corporeal and incorporeal (*mūrtāmūrtam*). Śrīpati uses the term ‘Parāśiva’ to denote *Pati* or Brahman. He also adopts *Liṅga* as the highest principle.

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85. sthūla suksma cidācid prapañca viśistāḥ paramēśvarḥ kārya kāraṇa rūpaḥ ibid., 1.1.5.
According to Śrīkānta the best description of Brahmān is ‘saccidānanda’ i.e. existence, consciousness and bliss. Existence here means, ‘Brahman is without origination and destruction’. Śrīkānta says that consciousness is both the essence and the attribute of Brahmān. Brahmān is not only of the nature of knowledge, but also knower. Brahmān has ānanda as its essence. In this connection he says that, real, eternal and perfect ānanda is possible only in Brahmān. On the other hand Śrīpati does not mention any definition to the Supreme Reality. Both the philosophers, Śrīpati and Śrīkānta are agreeing in this view that, Śiva is endowed with five acts, namely – creation, sustenance, dissolution, bondage and liberation.

Regarding the power (śakti) of Brahmān both the philosophers accept different views. According to Śrīkānta among the innumerable powers of Brahmān, the greatest and highest one is māyā which is called parā-śakti or parā-prakṛti or cidāmbara. This śakti is above the spirits and matter. It is not touched by any limitation, temporal. According to Śrīkānta this parā-śakti is not only the power or quality but also the very essence of Śiva. Śrīpati also holds the aspect of power of Śiva as parā-śakti or cidāmbara. Śakti is an eternal adjunct of Śiva and is inseparable from Him. But māyā is only a phase of śakti or power. It is not the parā-śakti. Again both the philosophers agree in the views that Śiva performs all His actions, such as creation, sustenance etc. through His śakti or power. As Śiva without parā-śakti is powerless, so as parā-śakti is also powerless without Brahmān. Both are mutually dependent. Śrīpati mentions that śakti is two-fold – cit-śakti or conscious power and acit-śakti or non-conscious power. Conscious power abides in Śiva directly as light and non-conscious
power abides in Him indirectly as the reflection of light. On the other hand Śrīkaṇṭha mentions that parā-śakti is not merely cit or not merely acit, but it is the ultimate essence of the individual self and the world.\textsuperscript{86} Like Brahman śakti is of the nature of existence, knowledge and bliss. He accepts the relation between Brahman and śakti as one of identity in difference. But Śrīpati mentions that śakti is inseparable from Śiva, but not indetical with Him.

Both Śrīpati and Śrīkaṇṭha accept that Brahman is immutable (nirvikāra). In this context they hold that though Brahman is said to be transformed into the world it does not become mutable by the act, because the world is within the being of Brahman. Actually all the changes of Brahman occur within its own being, its essence remain the same. Regarding the concepts of transformation and immutability, Śrīkaṇṭha takes his stand on the authority of the scriptures which declare that Brahman reveals itself as the universe, though it remains unchanged in its essence.\textsuperscript{87}

Śrīkaṇṭha describes Śiva as person – doer, knower and enjoyer. As a doer He performs all His actions, viz, creation etc. As a knower He always knows everything and as enjoyer, He enjoys bliss eternally. Accordingly, Śiva is regarded as a person and being the highest reality, He is called the highest person. On the other hand no such descriptions are found in the philosophy of Śrīpati. Further, Śrīkaṇṭha describes Brahman as ever-pure (nitya-suddha), infinite (bhūman), tranquil (śānta) and regulated (ṛta). Regarding the merciful aspects of Śiva, both Śrīpati and Śrīkaṇṭha expresses

\textsuperscript{86} sakala cidācid prapañca mahāvibhutirūpa........paramaśaktīḥ śivasya svarūpaṁ ca guṇaśca bhavati. BSSK, 1.2.1.
\textsuperscript{87} brahmaṇo jagat pariṇāmo yukta eva, tacchruteḥ śrutirevātra na praṁāṇāntaraṁ. ibid., 2.1.27.
the same view. They hold that Śiva is benevolent and He has boundless love for all beings. Because of His mercifulness, He grants the fruits (phala) of actions to the performers.

Both the philosophers, Śripati and Śrīkaṇṭha accept that Brahman is both the efficient cause and the material cause of the world. Śripati and Śrīkaṇṭha further hold that Brahman is the substratum of all and is the cause of all other realities – conscious and non-conscious. Śiva or Brahman, at the time of creation, separates all the realities from its being and manifests them along with their names and forms during the succeeding dissolution, Śiva dissolves everything into itself. 88 Both Śrīkaṇṭha and Śripati advocate that Brahman is both immanent and transcendent of the world. Being omnipresent and universal, Brahman embraces everything into its bosom and being the material cause of the world He pervades the whole universe, which is the effect. Śrīkaṇṭha also says that Brahman is immanent in all the selves as their inner controller and permeates them under all circumstances. 89 Brahman is also transcendent in the world of matter, for though Brahman transforms itself into the spirits and matter, it is never affected by their impurities and imperfections. Actually He exists in the things of the universe, just as the universal ākāśa existing in all things like cloth, jar, etc.

In case of the relation between the self and Brahman, both Śripati and Śrīkaṇṭha express that the self is a part of Brahman and is different from and identical with it. According to Śripati, the self is nothing but Śiva, under the limitation of avidyā. In its real nature the self is ever-pure, ever-free and

88. svetaram akhilam carācaram cidacit prapañcam svātmanī samhrtya yadā vartate parameśvarah. BSSK, 1.2.9.
89. atāśca sakalātma parameśvarah. ibid, 1.2.24
ever-perfect like Śiva. The distinction between Śiva and the self is only real in the empirical state, from the transcendental point of view, they are non-different from each other. Similarly both the philosophers recognise that, Brahman and the world are both different and non-different from each other. But, this difference is real from the empirical point of view but from the transcendental point of view the world is non-different from Brahman.

ŚRĪPATI'S CONCEPT OF BRAHMAN WITH THAT OF PRATYABHIJṆĀ-SAIVISM:

Pratyabhijñā-Śaivism, popularly known as Kasmīra-Śaivism is non-dualistic school of Śaivism. The Ultimate Reality accepted by this system is Śiva or Parama-Śiva or Parameśvara. The term ‘Pati’ or ‘Brahman’ is not found in this system to denote Ultimate Reality. Abhinavagupta, the author of ‘Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarṣini’ uses the term ‘Anuttara’ to denote Ultimate Reality.90 In this system Ultimate Reality is also called ‘Para’ or ‘Pūrṇa-Saṁvit’ i.e. ‘supreme’or ‘perfect consciousness’. Again, the individual selves and the multivarious objects, which are the manifestations of Parama-Śiva, are known as ābhāsas.

Regarding the nature of Śiva both the systems express the same view. According to Pratyabhijñā-Śaivism, Parama-Śiva is free from all limitations. It cannot be described by ordinary human language and it cannot be grasped by the mind also. In this system Parama-Śiva is described as self-conscious91 and the experiencer of bliss. These two aspects are not only the essence of Parama-Śiva but also His essential powers. Being of

90. anuttaranta na vidyate uttarat adhikat va atah. p–321
91. caitanyam sarvadā svaprakāśaṁ. Si.V., 1.1.
the nature of consciousness, Śiva is self-luminous or svābhāsa. He is one, indivisible, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite, eternal and formless. Śrīpati also expresses the same view in his Śrīkarabhāṣya. But Śrīpati uses the term Pati or Paraśiva to denote the Ultimate Reality.

Both the systems, Viṣṇaśaivism and Pratyabhijñā-Śaivism recognize that Śiva is endowed with śakti. But in this connection their views are something different. According to Śrīpati the aspect of power of Para-Śiva is desiggnated as parā-śakti. It is an eternal adjunct of Śiva and is inseparable from Him. Śiva performs his actions, such as creation etc. through his power or śakti. According to Pratyabhijñā-Śaivism, Parama-Śiva is endowed with infinite powers. The powers of Śiva are inseparable from and identical with Him. In this context Somānanda says that, ‘Śiva is never devoid of śakti, and śakti or divine power can never exist apart from Śiva.’92 They do not recognize any difference between Śiva and His power. Therefore, it can be said that according to this system, the Ultimate Reality is ‘Śiva-Śakti-Sāmarasya’ or ‘unity of Śiva-Śakti’. Parama-Śiva performs the actions such as creation, sustenance, dissolution, bondage and grace, through the instrumentality of His powers. This parā-śakti is theologically called Umā. Like Parama-Śiva, parā-śakti is also subtle, all-pervasive, spotless and divine and is of the nature of infinite bliss and knowledge. It is noteworthy that, according to Pratyabhijñā-Śaivism, creation and destruction of the world are nothing but the manifestations of the sportive activity of śakti or power. Somānanda says that śakti is non-different from Śiva, since power is non-different from powerful. Again Śiva is not devoid

92. na śivaḥ śakti-rahito na śaktir vyatirikiṇi, SDr, 1.1.
of śakti and śakti is not independent of Śiva.\textsuperscript{93} In other words Śiva without śakti is actionless and is not concerned with His five divine acts, while in His aspects of śakti, is the performer of all these acts.

Both Pratyabhijñā-Śaivism and Vīraśaivism express different views in case of Śiva as the world cause. According to Śrīpati, Para-Śiva is both the efficient cause and the material cause of the world. Para-Śiva as the creator indicates that it is the efficient cause and as the substratum of all into which everything merges in dissolution indicate that it is the material cause. But according to Pratyabhijñā-Śaivism, Para-Śiva Himself becomes three kinds of causes of the world – efficient cause (nimitta-kāraṇa), the inherent cause (samavāyi-kāraṇa) and the non-inherent cause (asamavāyi-kāraṇa). As the efficient cause Śiva creates the world by His volition, knowledge and action. Māyā a power of Śiva is modified into prakṛti (an equilibrium of three guṇas – sattva, rajas and tamas), which in its turn evolve into the material world. Thus He is the material cause or inherent cause of the world. Again the conjunction of the parts of the world is affected by Śiva’s power of volition. Thus He is non-inherent cause of the world.\textsuperscript{94}

In case of the relation between the self and Śiva both the systems recognize the same view. They opine that the self is a part of Brahman and is both different from and identical with Brahman. But, the aspect of the self of Pratyabhijñā-Śaivism is something different from Vīraśaivism. According to Śrīpati the self is nothing but Śiva under the limitation of avidyā. These individual selves are bound in the empirical world and are different from Śiva. But, when the self makes progress in its spiritual

\textsuperscript{93} sakti saktimātorbhedaḥ śaiva jātu na varṇyate. SDr, 3.3.

\textsuperscript{94} nimitta samavāyyādi vaicitryaṁ tad vicitratā, ibid, 3.80.
journey, the idea of distinction gradually vanishes. In the final stage of its 
spiritual journey the complete identity between the self and Śiva is realized. 
Therefore, between the self and Śiva, there is difference in the beginning 
and identity at the end. On the other hand according to Pratyabhijñā-
Saivism, the self is nothing but Parama-Śiva, limited by the six coverings, 
namely, māyā, kāla, vidyā, rāga, kalā and niyati. When Parama-Śiva 
assumes the power of māyā, His original nature is limited by taints – ānava-
mala and karma-mala. This limited and tainted state of Śiva is called 
individual self. Again Śiva, by dint of His free will assumes a self-luminous, 
infinite consciousness, bliss and freedom and becomes the individual self 
possessed of infinite knowledge, action and bliss. Such an individual self 
realizes the identity between itself and Śiva. So, the difference is only in 
the empirical level, while in the transcendental point of view the individual 
self is identical with Parama-Śiva.

Regarding the relation between Śiva and the world, both the systems 
opine the same view. According to Pratyabhijñā-Śaivism, the world is a form 
of Śiva. Śiva assumes different forms through His powers. This system accepts 
thirty-six tattvas or principles. These principles are nothing but the different 
forms of Śiva or the manifestations of His powers. Śiva creates the material 
world from His own power of consciousness. Accordingly the world is non-
different from consciousness, which is an essential power of Śiva. All the 
entities of the world consist of the nature of consciousness and are identical 
with Śiva. So, in reality, the world is non-different from Śiva, it seems to be 
different, only because of its identity with Śiva is not apprehended by us.

95. evavāh sarva padārthānāṁ samaiva śivatā sthitā. SDr, 1.48.
COMPARISON OF ŚRĪPATI'S CONCEPT OF BRAHMAN WITH THAT OF ADVAITA-VEDĀNTA:

Both Śrīpāti and Śāṅkara are the great Indian philosophers and their philosophy is based on Brahmasūtra of Bādarāyaṇa. Śrīpāti composes his book Śrīkara-bhāṣya on the basis of Agastyasūtravr̥tti, a commentary of Brahmasūtra, from the Vīraśaiva point of view, while Śāṅkara writes his Sārīrakara-bhāṣya on Brahmasūtra from the Advaita point of view. But it is noteworthy that though their philosophical thought is based on Brahmasūtra but there are some differences of opinions on different aspects.

The Supreme Reality, which is known as Brahman in most of the Indian philosophical system, is termed as 'Pati' in Vīraśaivism. Vīraśaivism regards Pati or Śiva or Parasīva as the same as the Upanisadic Brahman. But the word Brahman is not used to denote Supreme Reality.

Śrīpāti says that Parasīva in His real nature is beyond the stage of form. He is partless and changeless and His nature is not contradicted at any point of time. In the highest stage of the spiritual journey a devotee realizes Parasīva just as balayu or void. He finds no name appropriate to Parasīva. According to Śrīpāti this stage of Parasīva can be compared with the Upanisadic description of Brahman as 'neti, neti.' Śrīpāti further says that though Parasīva is described as nirguṇa, it is not always attributeless. Śrīpāti does not describe Brahman as 'without attributes'. He clearly says that Brahman is to be discussed always in two forms, corporeal and incorporeal. In short Śrīpāti says that Brahman is identical with Īśvara who is determinate and qualified and is the real creator of the world. On the other hand Śāṅkara speaks of the stages of Brahman, namely nirguṇa Brahman and saṅguṇa Brahman. They are not identical with each other.
According to Advaita-Vedānta, Brahman is unqualified, undifferentiated and indeterminate. It cannot be described by positive qualifications. It is *nirguna* or devoid of quality. Śaṅkara describes it not as one but as ‘non-dual’ or Advaita. But according to Śrīpati Brahman is one without a second. He argues that indeterminate Brahman cannot exist. If it exists, it makes Brahman as determinate. Indeterminate Brahman cannot be proved by scriptural testimony also. The Śruti texts which describe Brahman as *nirguna*, they also include Brahman possessing of all qualities. On the other hand Śaṅkara says that though some positive descriptions about Brahmam are found in Śruti texts but in reality all these positive descriptions indicate the negative description of Brahman. Regarding the positive descriptions of Brahman, described in the Upanisadic texts, Śaṅkara is of the view that it described positively to convey some ideas about Brahman, so that it can be an object of worship which is essential for the ordinary people for their spiritual upliftment.

It is noteworthy that according to Śrīpati, Ultimate Reality or the Paraśiva is the creator, sustainer of the world, but according to Advaita the Supreme Reality or *nirguna* Brahman is not the creator, sustainer of the world. According to Advaita *saguṇa* or lower Brahman or Īśvara is the creator of the world. Brahman endowed with māyā manifests itself as Īśvara. Advaita Vedantins regard Īśvara as the lower manifestation of Brahman. On the other hand Śrīpati regards that Paraśiva is the Supreme Reality and He performs all His actions through His śakti or power. This śakti is an eternal adjunct of Śiva and is inseparable from Śiva. Śrīpati also traces the origin of matter to māyā, which is a phase of śakti. Like Advaita-Vedānta,
Viraśaivism does not consider māya as cosmic nescience. Śrīpati does not regard māya as false appearance. Māya is a phase of śakti or power. Śrīpati says that as śakti itself originates from Paraśiva, the world in the final analysis is nothing but a form of Paraśiva. Regarding the relation between Brahman and the world, Śrīpati recognizes the relation of both difference and identify. In reality the world is not different from Brahman. Śrīpati accepts a gradation of truth. He adds that the difference between Brahman and the world is only relative and not absolute. The difference is true in lower plane of existence. When the self rises to the highest stage of its spiritual journey, it realizes that the world is not different from the Supreme Reality. In other words, in the lower plane of reality, the world is different from Brahman, while in the highest plane of realisation, the whole world reveals as identical with Śiva. Śrīpati also says that the world is not a false appearance, but it is real. The Advaita-Vedānta also says that to an ordinary man the world is real, while to a man, who has realized Brahman, the world is totally non-existent, because he perceives everywhere the non-dual Brahman shining in its own radiance. According to Śaṅkara the world in its real nature, is identical with Brahman and compares this position with jars, plates etc which are identical with clay or gold ornaments which are identical with gold and so on.

Both the systems of Viraśaivism and Advaita-Vedānta regard that Brahman is both the efficient cause and the material cause of the world.

96. sarvā prapañcasya śivātma katvopadeśāt. BSSR(C.H.Rao), Vol. – II, 1.1.4
97. suvārajñāyamanasya suvarṇatvaṁ ca śaśvataṁ.
    Aparoksānubhuti 51.
Though Brahman is the material cause of the world, it is not subject to any change. Advaita-Vedānta advocates the unchanging material cause (vivartavāda) of the world. According to them the changing material of the world is, however, not Brahman, but māyā, because it is māyā that is modified into the world. In this context Śrīpati says that Brahman is not subject to changes. Actually Para-Śiva performs all His actions through His śakti.

In case of relation between Brahman and the self both the systems differ in some points. Śrīpati says that the self is a part of Brahman and is both different from and identical with it. He argues that these two positions between the self and Brahman refer two different states – difference refers to the state of the self’s bondage and where as non-difference refers to the state of liberation. Brahman is the source of the self and the self is nothing but Śiva under the limitation of avidyā. Actually the distinction is real only in the empirical state. In the highest state of spiritual journey, the complete identity between the self and Brahman is realized. In this stage the self becomes omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient and is endowed with infinite knowledge and bliss. According to Advaita-Vedanta Brahman appears as the individual self because of the indefinable entity, called māyā. The individual self is an empirical reality and not an ultimate one. In case of relation between Brahman and the self Śaṅkara says that the self is identical with Brahman under all circumstances.\(^98\) In this context he argues that the identity between the individual self and Brahman is established by negating the individual self. That means, the individual self as it is revealed

to us is false, while the real self is nothing but Brahman. Further, Śaṅkara in this context uses two sets of expressions – the theory of reflection, i.e. the individual self is a reflection of Brahman in nescience and the theory of limitation, i.e. the individual self is Brahman limited by the internal organ. In other word the individual self (jīva) is merely an appearance and the self is identical with Brahman.

It is noteworthy that in Vīraśaivism, other terms are used to denote Ultimate Reality. They use the term Liṅga as the highest reality and this system is also known as Liṅgāyata. Again the Ultimate Reality or Para-Śiva is called also Sthala because the whole world is established (stha) on Him and dissolves (la) into Him.

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