CHAPTER V

JÍVÁTMAN AND GOD

The way our thinking goes today it would be natural to speak of man's relation to God, once we have considered man in himself, man in his relation to his body, the world and other men. But our ancients in India did not feel as we do. Misery in this life, as they saw it, far outweighed happiness, and their prime concern was how to escape from its shackles. It is with this end in view that they offered solutions, and they would do so with or without God. Generally it was without. And even where a place was given to Him, it was by no means the central one. Thus, for instance, we could, if we so prefer, dispense with the idea of God in the yoga or even in the Nyāya system and be none the worse for it where our sādhanas and mokṣa are concerned. What is common to all the old Hindu dārśanas is the Yoga technique of asceticism. It may be modified according to the needs of each system, but substantially it remains the same. The ascetical practices of the Buddhists and the Jainas also, while refusing to subscribe to Yoga prescriptions have little use for God. It was only later on with the ascendancy of Bhakti movement that a personal God came to occupy the nodical point of a system and became the cynosure for all religious sentiment—in none better than Mādhva dārśana.

While the Buddhists in general are satisfied with professing a sort of agnosticism where the existence and nature of God are concerned the Jainas make no secret of their anti-theistic stance. Their attack is directed in the main against the arguments put forth by the Naiyāyikas, but at times it has a wider implication. Thus they question the claim that the world is an effect which presupposes an intelligent Creator. The world
is not an effect in the sense it has been regarded, namely as having been made, for even a man who digs the ground thinks that he has made space; nor is it an effect meaning that which is liable to change. For God himself, in that he acts as the creator would be subject to change, implying another creator, and this another—so ad infinitum. An effect may further be taken to mean what happens at times and does not at other times. But the world as a whole has always existed. The trees, plants etc. found in the world cannot make it an effect any more than God's thoughts, will etc. as changing elements make Him by nature contingent.

What if the whole world were conceded to be an effect? How is one to prove that its cause is intelligent by nature? If the analogy of human causation is pressed into service to justify such a conclusion we could argue with equal justification in favour of the imperfect nature of the divine as that of the human. If on the other hand a distinctive nature is claimed for divine causation, then the two causalities being disparate, the inference will no more be sound.

Let us suppose for the sake of the argument that God did create the world. Was it a whim that prompted Him to it? In that case there would be little order in the world. If, however, the moral acts of men guided Him to it, He would become subject to them; if it was mercy, then the world should have been a place of unalloyed happiness; if mere sport, then God would be no more purposeful than a child; if difference among men were due to His zeal for chastizing the wrong-doers and rewarding the righteous, He would be blamed for favouritism and vindictiveness. If the creation were to be claimed as merely due to His nature then we could as well admit that the world came into existence out of its own nature. How, in fine, could God, bodiless that He is, effect anything, since
in our experience body is required for any production?\(^1\)

As against the Jaina view that production and decay in the world do not imply that the world itself is an effect, the Naiyāyikas maintain that the catastrophic upheavals in the world—say for instance, geological—do represent that the world is not eternal, but that it has been produced. Then there is the order and arrangement in the universe, which in analogy with human causation calls for a creation if it is to be adequately explained. There certainly is a difference between the human production and divine causation, but the difference is merely adventitious to causation itself. After all there is a difference also between the fire in the kitchen and the one in the forest. Moreover the potter knows the purposes of the jug he makes; so does God know the purposes of the entire universe. He is therefore, omniscient. His bodyless state is no handicap for him in creating the universe any more than the self is handicapped in acting in the body, and through it in the external world.\(^2\)

On their own the Naiyāyikas enjoy the distinction in India of presenting us logical proofs for the existence of God. At the outset they deny that the Revelation could be adduced as a proof for God, since Revelation is something created and hence non-eternal. Syllogistically they would argue thus: A blade of grass exists; therefore God exists. Teleologically we saw the argument from order. From the moral point of view, too, God is needed to couple happiness with virtue, and misery with vice.\(^3\)

The Sāṅkhya rejects the existence of God de facto, although, the system as it stands would seem to call for its

1. Dasgupta I, pp.203ss; Vedanta, pp.62ss.
2. Dasgupta I, pp.363ss.
3. Vedanta, pp.63ss.
admission. The order and design is certainly admitted in the system's doctrine of the reals, which in infinite number, go to produce this variegated world, set in its order—say the order of cause and effect. The Sāṅkhya attempts to explain it by attributing definite tendencies to the reals themselves. Thanks to these tendencies also the prakṛti is disturbed in its equilibrium, and the movements of the reals take place for the service of the puruṣes—purusārthatā—either for his enjoyment or for working out his salvation. The Yoga, however, finds the Sāṅkhya explanation much too bland in that the blind tendency of the non-intelligent prakṛti could bring about order and harmony in the universe or assure that the best service is rendered to the puruṣas. How does it, moreover, enforce and sanction the moral order with rewards for the righteous and punishment for the wicked? Hence, argues the Yoga, there must be an intelligent being who alone could be the final and satisfactory explanation, and whom we call God.4

Unlike the Buddhists who refused to go beyond the ever-changing things of this world, Śaṅkara posits a transcendental Reality that remains untouched by any change. It is also the real and immutable basis of all imagination that is the empirical world, according to Śaṅkara—sarvakalpanāmūladvat. But for it the entire world of change would be devoid of all sense. This might be regarded as Śaṅkara's argument from reason for the existence of the Absolute. We might also find the logical proof in his argument of proceeding from the particular to the universal. We come across in the world many sāmānyas with their viśeṣas, whether conscious or unconscious. These sāmānyas in a series come to be included and comprehended in the one great sāmānya, which of course is Brahman as Intelligence.5

4. Dasgupta I, pp.258s; Vedanta, pp.65s.
5. Aneka hi vilakṣaṇās cetenaḥcetanarūpāḥ sāmānyaviśeṣāḥ/
Since any spatial relations would introduce limitations into it, Brahman must be regarded as non-spatial. Nevertheless it may be said to be everywhere, as also nowhere. Because all causality implies time by nature, Brahman cannot be a cause, either. In point of fact, as defining is another form of tying a thing up with relations, Brahman is strictly indefinable. It has no genus, no qualities; it does not act. And hence It cannot be related to anything else. Nothing is like It or unlike It whether within It or without. It is neither being nor non-being, if by being is meant what comes under our experience. It is not nothing. While the Upaniṣads regard it as Nirguṇa in that It transcends all gunas or qualities, they call the same Brahman nirguṇo guṇin. Hence it is safer to describe It negatively as sat-cit-ānanda: sat or being in the sense that it is not asat; cit or consciousness in the sense that it is not acit; and ānanda or bliss in the sense that by nature it is free from sorrow. Thus we may term it as the unique or secondless Reality (Advaita). With all these negative arguments, it is only the slow of mind who are led to believe that supreme Reality to be next to nothing.

While we cannot define Brahman adequately, the description sat-cit-ānanda could be regarded as practically the best attempt in bringing out Its essential characteristics or svarūpa-lakṣāṇas. There may be, however, accidental characterization or tātasthālakṣāṇas like creatorship etc. which we find

7. Sajatiyavijatiasvagatabhedarahitam.—Ibid. Footnote 5
scattered throughout the Scriptures. It is like pointing out a particular house to a stranger by indicating the crow perching on it. The Brahman thus secondarily indicated in the Scriptures is Īśvara or apara (lower), or saguna (qualified), while the Absolute is the Para-brahman or the higher. It is needless to point out that the appearance of the Absolute as the Īśvara is a concession to our human mind, to the laws of our thinking and to the needs of our religious feelings, however exalted they may be in the path of devotion. One can well understand Madhva's indignation at such a para-apara dichotomy in that it tears asunder not Brahman alone, but it rips through the entire Bhakti movement, denigrating that part of devotion which is most dear to the devotee.⁹

Taking his stand on the Upaniṣads, Rāmānuja opposes Śaṅkara both as a philosopher and as theologian. The nirguna-brahman can meet the demands of neither the intellect nor the heart. In truth it is nothing more than a void, however skilfully one may dress it up and conceal its vacuity. As Rāmānuja sees it, the true Absolute is a supreme, adorable, personal and loving God. The negative statements we come across in the Upaniṣads emphasize our own limitations and their absence in Brahman. Thus the statement 'neither the mind nor speech can describe Brahman' means that our finite intellect cannot have comprehensive knowledge of God, and not that Brahman is unknowable. He is nirguna in the sense that no undesirable quality is to be found in Him.¹⁰

Madhva, as we may expect, is even more relentless in his anti-monistic attacks, and in his defence of the personal God of Bhakti movement. However, in true Vedic tradition he refuses to accord unaided reason any power of proving apodicti-

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⁹. Iph., pp.533ss; Vedanta, pp.114ss.
¹⁰. Vedanta, pp.165ss; Iph., pp.682ss.
cally either the existence or the nature of Brahman. The Naiyāyikas, we remember, had contended that we can attain to the existence of God, arguing through inference from human causation to divine. Madhva feels, however, that the transition would be unwarranted. What for instance, could we conclude from the fact that the forests have been produced? It may be that they have a maker. But it would be certainly illegitimate to infer that their author is much more than human or that he is an omniscient God. One who makes the tree (grow) cannot be expected to know everything of the tree or of all trees. Even a humble gardener grows plants and trees without any claim to omniscience.

The powers of reason, then, are actually limited where the existence and nature of God are in question. And the realism in Madhva does win a concession or two from his unquestioned faith in the Āgama. All cognition to be effectively produced by Scripture in a precise fashion must be preceded by a global knowledge due to experience. Or else the exact meaning of the words would be lost on us. It is true, the role of experience in general, which by extension includes that of reason, is severely restricted to that of a handmaiden of the Āgama whenever supra-sensible realities are in question. But what little Madhva has conceded could become a powerful weapon in the hands of a ruthless critic.

11. tarko jñāpayitum śakto nesitāram kathaṅcana/—A.V. I, 1, 115b.
12. vanakrtvādirūpeṇa pakṣabhūtasya cesituh/ kiṣṇījñānam hi pumṣṭvena śakyam sādhayitum sukham/ vrksakrnmśākilam vrksam vetti pumstvādgh caītvrat/—Ibid. 116b. Madhva apparently refers to the Śaiva custom of addressing Śiva as the 'author of forests' or the 'bearer of mountains'. It would be without justification to conclude from this that Śiva is omniscient or worse, that he is the only God.
13. Āgamo'pi hi sāmānye siddhe pratyakṣataḥ punah/ viśesam gamayed eva kathām śaktigraho'nyathā/—A.V. III 2, 69.
14. Cf. infra pp.108

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It is only through Scriptures, that the Supreme could be known. Sentences like 'ato visnos sarvottamatvameva mahātātparyām sarvāgamānām/'\textsuperscript{15} are of frequent occurrence in Madhva's writings. They are a pointer to the convictions of Madhva the philosopher, as also the devotee. One need not wonder then that Madhva musters up a considerable amount of his energies and learning now to establish the absolute validity of Scriptures, now to set down rules for interpretation, now to refute what he regards as an erroneous exegesis, now to set forth the only right one in his eyes.

We have seen how the Ācārya establishes the absolute validity of Āgama, basing it on the fact of apauruseyatva. Like perception in its own sphere Āgama is intrinsically valid in its own.\textsuperscript{16} We have also seen the Mādhva theory of sāmānyānvitābhidhāna.\textsuperscript{17} We may apply it to the language of the Vedas now, provided that we take care to remove the limitations which are the necessary concomitants of ordinary speech, such as, for instance, space, time and causality. The negation of these limitations is made necessary by the nature of the object dealt with in the Vedas, as well as by the procedure the Veda itself adopts in describing the Infinite, Ageless and the Independent One. We may add also that in the Veda there is the unique blending of the general sense (sāmānyātā) with the particular one (viśeṣātā), the former losing none of its extension and the latter none of its comprehension. The Veda is so permeated with and expressive of its one supreme Object, with each single word in it pointing to the same direction

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\item \textsuperscript{15} V.T.V., 164
\item \textsuperscript{16} Pratyaksavacca prāmānyāṃ svata evāgamasya hi—A.V. I 1, 66
\item \textsuperscript{17} Vide supra pp. 175
\end{itemize}

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that the entire Veda could be regarded as one phrase spelling Visnu.18

The single-minded attachment of Madhva to anything Vedic may astonish a modern critic, but it is perhaps the clearest pointer we have to Madhva's sense of orthodoxy. The Ācārya believes that the Vedic language is the most perfect instrument existing for declaring the nature of God. This applies to all the words found in it, ordained as they are in their primary meaning to express the only and supreme Object which is the Blessed One.19 We must go even further and maintain that apart from the phrases and words spelling the Supreme all individually, the very syllables (varṇa) as well as the intonations (svara) of the Vedic tongue have the same function to fulfil. Incidentally too, this confirms the general Madhva thesis against the Monists that Brahman is endowed with attributes that are infinite in number.20 For by analysing each syllable through its roots we are able to conclude to several senses according to the variety of our analysis. We must remember though, that each of these analyses is concerned exclusively with the primary meaning. We may also add that the rules governing grammatical roots and derivatives furnish scientific basis to the analysis and avoid the danger of caprice and the occult.21 After all the danger of fanciful interpretations is not greater in the case of the varṇas than when we deal with words, phrases and sentences. We must note also that in the Vedic language as in any other it is the

18. (Iti)aśēṣakriyānāmaśabdāireko janārdenah/ ucyate mu-khyato yasmāt padavarnasvarādibhiḥ/ tasmādanantagunatā śruti- tātparyato'sya hi/—A.V. I, 4, 16s.
20. Vide note 18
21. tasmāt samanvayo visṇau svaravarnapadātmanah/ api vedasya kimuta vākyarūpeṇa saṅgatih/—A.V. I 4, 40b s.
varṇas that remain unaltered throughout and confer on it much of the stability it enjoys. For in whatever tone the words are pronounced, whether in a piping high pitch or in a deepset growl, we are able to distinguish a sentence precisely because we can pin-point the varṇas: this is ga; this is ca. And ga remains ga whoever be the enunciator and whatever be the voice he employs. This alone goes to prove that the stability of the varṇas goes far deeper than in their pronunciation. Else we would not even have been able to distinguish a syllable in a pronunciation and say 'this is ga'—which we had heard before. So the conclusion should be that not only the Vedic sentences, phrases and words, but even syllables speak of Janārdana. And what is more, Madhva sees in his enthusiasm that all the sounds found in nature, in the sky or in the ocean, in the fall of a tree or in the boom of a drum—all of them without exception echo but the One and his perfections.

None of this argumentation, however, is acceptable to the monists. Their own contention is simply stated: The Veda cannot directly describe the ultimate Brahman, because the Brahman is indescribable. Madhva blasts the simple argument with as much simplicity: If the ultimate Brahman is essentially indescribable, the conclusion should have been that the Vedas cannot describe it in any way. It is against the laws of logic to conclude that the Scriptures can describe it indirectly. The monists, of course, would wriggle out of the difficulty by distinguishing between an attributeless (nirguna) or unqualified (nirviśeṣa) Brahman and the qualified (saguṇa)
Brahman. While the Veda may speak of the latter directly, the former it can describe only indirectly or by negation.

The distinction between the nirguna and the saguna is totally unwarranted, declares Madhva. First, its exegetical foundation is nil. For it is contrary to all the hermeneutical canons to opt for an unreasonable meaning when a reasonable could be really derived.\(^{25}\) Now a natural reading of the vast majority of texts in the Vedas yields a sense that is reasonable on all counts. Would it not be more logical to re-interpret the few apparently contrary statements so that they fall in line with what is unanimously admitted by the vast majority? Now such a re-interpretation of the so-called nirguna texts is more than possible. Thus it is the nature of God as calling for our admiration that is expressed by such paradoxical phrases as indescribable, beyond reasoning or beyond knowledge. After all, even a man in the street exclaims, 'it is indescribable' when he intends to say only 'most wonderful'.\(^{26}\) Even where the term nirguna is used in the Scriptures, the sense is not so radical as the monist would make it out. It should be understood merely as 'devoid of material qualities'. Or else we should have the śruti contradict itself in such passages as—eko devaḥ sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ sarvevyāpi sarva-bhūtāntarātmā/ karmādhyakṣaḥ sarvabhūtādhivāsaḥ sākṣi ceta kevalo nirgunaśca/\(^{27}\) And finally nirguna may mean the absence of the three gunas as explained in the Sāṅkhya system.

\(^{25}\) yukto'yuktas'ca yadyarthā āgamasya pratīyate/ syāt tatra yukta evārttho...—A.V. II 1, 19
\(^{26}\) adbhutatvādavacyam tadatarkyājñeyameva ca/ anantaguna-pūrṇatvādityude paṅginām śrutīḥ/ avacyam iti lokyapi vaśtyāś-caryatamaḥ bhuvī/—A.V. I 1, 151
\(^{27}\) ...sattvādīgunābhāvoktestatra/ anystāḥ, eko devaḥ sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ ityādīnāmapi guṇatvāt svoktiyavrodhaḥ/—K.N., p.10
God transcends all of them.  

And then the very idea of nirguṇa and saguṇa in the way the monists propose, is as ridiculous as it is monstrous. We cannot have anything real that is totally devoid of all attributes. For to be attributeless (nirviśeṣa) is a contradiction in terms.  

Could the Brahman be truly possessing the characteristic of being without attributes? In case it did, we would have to admit that being without attributes is itself its attribute. If, however, it did not, there would be in the Brahman a plethora of attributes. In either case the monist cannot escape the dilemma of his own making. As for the monstrousity that is nirguṇa brahman, not much thought is needed to perceive its anomalous nature. For if we take nirguṇatva as the absence of all qualities in the strictest sense—and it is hard to see how else one could take it—what we are left with would be characterized by nothing, which is equivalent to a void.  

How does it differ from what the śūnyavādins among the Buddhists believe in? And as if to give substance to our accusation the crypto-buddhists assert that what they call Brahma is not even aware of itself!  

If, moreover, the absence of all qualities is taken to be also the absence of all perfections the nirguṇa Brahman would be a veritable demon by nature! Will the monist still cling to that monster? Well he might, though happily for us his god is not our God, or the

28. "Kevalo nirguṇasya ityādīśrutibhyaḥṣaḥ/ "traiguṇya- 

29. nirviśeṣatvaktereva vyāhāratvāt/—K.N., p.10 

30. Nirviśeṣatvavācaiva śūnyam brahmaiva no bhidā.—A.V. IV 2, 45b. 

31. ato'vācyatvāda jñeyatvēcchūnyameva tāditi prāptam/ 

32. nirguṇatvam tadā ca syādāsuratvam na cānyathā/ 

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one spoken of in the Scriptures. How could we possibly urge
him to describe his indescribable Brahman? We could as well
ask a drunk what he is babbling about. What our friend, the
monist, attempts to do is to steal the texts, undoing his own
protestations to the contrary. All the while he prefers to
forget that he is not entitled to support himself with the
Scriptures, having once repudiated all knowability or des-
cribability of his Brahman through any pramāṇa whatever.

Can the mute speak out and confess, "I am dumb"? Our
friend does precisely that when he sets out to expatiate on the
indescribable one. But, of course, self-contradiction is not
going to deter him, who can boast of it aplenty. Thus at his
own admission Īśvara or saguna-brahma is eternally such because
of his eternal qualities. And yet the monist would feel him-
self slandered if he is charged with dualism. Whatever be
his protestations, the Advaitin deludes himself if he thinks
he has abstained from the dualistic dividends. Experience
tells us that no one gives in to superimposition or lets one-
self be deluded unless one admits at least the theoretical
possibility of the object of illusion. It is only on the

33. astu tanmā vaded vādī na cāsmacchāstragam tu tat/
avācyam vācyamityuktvā kimityunjmatavanmṛṣā/ amsacchāstrasya
caurśyāya yatate svoktīditūśakah/—A.V. I 1, 145b-46
sarvaśabdairavācyam taduktvā tadvisayam punah/ śāstram
vadantam unmattam katham loko na vārayet/—Ibid. 148-49
34. māmena kena vijñeyamavācyājñeyanirguṇam/ ameyam cen
na śāstrasya tetra vṛtti kathaṃca/—Ibid. 142b-43a
35. aṁcyatvam katham brūyaṁ muko'ham itivat sudbhīḥ/
—A.V. I 1, 122
36. sadaiva guṇavattve'sya bhinnam syānirguṇam sadā/
—Ibid. 102a
37. Thus in the illusion of conch-shell silver, men must
admit that what shines like silver could actually be silver.
Else there cannot be an illusion.
supposition that some attributes like generality are present, that other qualities could be ascribed to the subject—rightly or wrongly. How can we then visualize the superimposition of attributes on what is devoid of all attributes?38 The same is true also of the series of negations in which the monist believes his nirviśeṣa-brahma is implied. If the Brahman were devoid of all attributes how could the negations in the śruti be repeated?39

In the weird speculation indulged in by the Advaitin little respect is shown to the laws of logic. Still less of it is seen with regard to the Scriptures for all the lip-service the monist might flaunt. How could the Brahman divested of all attributes be attained by the Scriptures even in their way of thinking?40 If no words at all could describe the nirguna how in the name of truth could the Scriptures claim it for their object? Only a drunkard could be trusted to make such statements, and one wonders how he is tolerated at large!41 But alas, nothing will keep the Advaitin from abusing the Sacred Lore. He stoutly maintains, without producing a shred of evidence, that the object of descriptive texts is the Brahman as coloured by illusion—like the son of a barren woman. It would naturally follow then that any knowledge of what is described as Ātman can never be the means of liberation! If this is not

38. dharmāropo’pi sāmānyadharmādinaṁ hi darśane/ idantad- ādidharmitve dharmo’nyah kalpyate’tres hi/ serva dharmavihīnasya dharmāropah kva drṣyate/—A.V. III 2, 47s.
39. akhaṇḍavādino’pi syād viśeṣo’nicchetopyasau/ vyāvṛtve nirviśeṣa tu kim vyāvarttyabahutvatah/—A.V. I 2, 25
40. sarvadharmaṁjhitasyaśya kim śāstrenādhigamyate/-—Ibid. III 2, 44b.
41. sarvasabdairavacyaṁ taduktva tadviṣayasya punah/ śastraṁ vaddantam unmattam kathaṁ loko na vārayet/—Ibid. I 1, 148b-49a.

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But the adversary seems to be unaware that any tampering with the sacred texts is bound to boomerang on himself sooner or later. Concede that Scriptures do teach something illusory and you have jeopardized the absolute nature of the identity-texts so dear to your heart. And yet the teachers of so much non-sense pass for learned doctors of the Veda! In what way are they less malignant in their belittling of the Veda than the heretical Buddhists? They go even so far as to destroy the very basis of all philosophical quest by eliminating every attribute of the Absolute, the object of philosophical enquiry. Such an enquiry, it will be readily granted, is defined as the investigation of the Brahman's attributes. Let not the Advaitin cloud the issue by referring the attributes to some creation of his own like the saguṇa-brahma. No quality of its, which is intrinsically imperfect, could be the object of the Revelation. If the Revelation is intrinsically conducive to liberation by means of winning the Lord's favour, it would be suicidal to interpret it as speaking of his defects. As for us we maintain without a trace of hesitation that from such declarations as Iksāṇīya of the sutra, Visnu is describable, and directly, too. The indirect description as the monist restricts it is a subterfuge. It involves infinite regress with the ever-recurring

42. vandhyāputropamam māyaśabalam vācyamityāpi/ kalpa-yitvāvinā mānam laksyam saddham vaden/ padaith/ ātmasabdoditasyaiva jñānam muktāvasāđhanc/ āha śrutaparityāṣah syāt cāsyaśrutakalpanam/ syāt sarvatra ca...—A.V. I l, 126s.

43. mithyāvādīte ca śruteh katham aikyasya satyatvam/ katham caiva mantvān vedaśādhyam/ vedāntasya mithyātvāgāh- kārādeva hi avedādhyam vauddhādīnāmapi/—V.T.V., 163s.

44. ...yadi dharmā na kecana/ brahmaṇo naiva jijnāsyam jijnāśā bhūtavacca dharmaipatnegah/—A.V. III 2, 40

45. guṇāh śrutā iti hyasmāna doṣo'rhah śruterbhavet/ prītyā moksaparastvācca tātparyam naiva duṣaṇe/—Ibid. I 1, 92b-93a.
question—What does that indirect designation finally mean? 46

In fine let the monist remember that we gain the Lord's benevolence only when we recognize the excellence of his perfections, and never of a fictitious identity. The superior's displeasure is sure to be roused if the inferior claims equality with him. Even kings condemn a man to death if he claims to be king, but grant all his desires if he celebrates the excellence of their qualities. 47

Having demonstrated, then, that the Vedas speak of only one Brahman who is full of attributes, and that any objections against such a position can at best be specious while the dichotomy between a nirguna and a saguna is gratuitous, we may now ask a further question: What precisely is that metaphysical foundation in Brahman which could justify the attribution of qualities to him. The answer must, of course, be sought in viṣēsa and all that we said about it earlier. Viṣēsa justifies many an expression found in our everyday parlance, often seemingly absurd and certainly tautological. Being non-different and non-difference itself do not differ in reality. And yet in our ordinary usage we do treat them as different. If one were to give in to the conceptualizing tendency of the mind and postulate difference between the non-different and non-difference, or say between the different and difference, the result would be infinite regress. The grasping of the quality as attributive to an entity presupposes the apprehension of the basic relation between the entity and the quality. And so all thanks to viṣēsa a single entity could be legitimately spoken of, so to say, as a manifold consisting of

46. Ikṣāṇīyatvato visṇurvācyā eva nacānyathā/ laksyatvam kvāpi drṣṭām hi kim tādityānava sthitih/—Ibid. I 1, 120
47. pritiśca guṇotkarṣajñānādeva viṣēṣato drṣṭā nābheda-jñānāt/ abhedajñānādapritirevottamānām bhavati/ ghātayanti hi rajano rajahamiti vadantam/ dadati ca sarvamabhipśvetam guṇotkarṣam vadatāh/—V.T.V., 112ss.

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substance, quality etc. In the case of Viṣṇu, his attributes, actions etc. are not different from his essential, substantive nature. No real difference obtains between themselves or between them and the substance. As for the viśeṣa, however, it is always there—even in the substance, since there is substantiality in the substance. It is because of this that Brahman is referred to as ānandī as well as ānanda. We also speak ordinarily of a serpent as a coiled one or as a coil itself. We also divide time which is undividedly one as earlier and later.

In general we may assert that every kind of perfection which does not imply any defect in its turn is to be found in Brahman. We have seen how the śruti resorts to negations in order to deny imperfections and limitations in Hari's attributes. Positively, too, we can discover in his names a meaning of plenitude or pūrṇatā. However, as Madhva explains, there is a resemblance between the bliss of the Lord and what

48. abhinmavansabhedaśca yathā bhedaśvārjanam/ vyavahāryam prthak ca ayādevam sarve gunā hareh/ abhedabhinnayor-bheda yadi vā bhedabhinnayoh/ anavasthītireva syānma viśeṣaṁ- ātānatīh/ mūlasambhandhajātātvā tasmaṅkamaṅkamadāhā/ vyavahāryam viśeṣaṁ dūstākābala hareh/ viśeṣo'pi svarūpam ca svanirvāhakastāya ceto brahmatarke/

gunakriyādavo viṣṇoh svarūpam nañyadisyate/ ato mitho'pi bheda na teṣām kaścit kadaccana/ svarūpe'pi viśeṣo'pi svarūpa- tvāvadeva tu/ bhedābhāve'pi tennāvā vyavahārāśca sarvata iti paramopenisadī--V.T.V., 458, 457

49. svarūpeṇa'nandādinā kathmahānanditvādirityatrocjetete --ubhayasvāpaśātttvahi-kundalavat/ "ānandam brahmamo vidvān", "athaśa eva parama ānandah" ityubhayaśvapadesādahikundalavadeva yujyate/ yathā'hih kundalikundalam ca/ tuṣeñāt kevala- drutigamayatvaṃ darsayati/...yathā' idyasya prakāśatvaṃ prakāśitvaṃ ca, evam vā draṣṭāntah/ tejorupatvād brahmānāh/... yathāka eva kālāh purva ityavacchedako'vacchedaśca bhāvati/ --B.S.Bh. III 2, 28s.

50. adbhutatvādavacyaṃ tad atarkyājñayaṃeva ca/ ananta- gunapūrṇatvādityude paṅginām śrutiḥ/--A.V. I 1, 151
is found in others. But the latter do not possess it in its plenitude. Thus the difference between the two is also great. The Plenitude is what governs the universe, the enjoyer of the highest delight, unique, the deposit of all the qualities, without any division whatever.\footnote{\textcopyright 51. \textit{anyānandādisādṛṣṭāyamānukūlādīnā param/ pūrnatvādi mahat teṣāṁ vairākṣayam śrutau śrutam/ pūrno'śeṣaniyantā ca sukhādutama ekalāḥ/ guṇorūsamudāyo'yam vāsudevah sa niśkalāḥ/ \textcopyright --A.V. III 2, 199b-201a.}

God's plenitude in His perfections is ultimately connected with His nature as svatantra. We know that Madhva divides the entire range of beings into two categories, the svatantra—the independent or autonomous—and the asvatantra—the dependent. Only God being svatantra, He is clearly distinguished from all the rest.\footnote{\textcopyright 52. \textit{svatantratvam sada tasya bhedasca sarvatah/ --A.V. Ill 3, 79a.}} The notion of svatantra includes not only the negative aspect—absence of dependence on anything else—but what is more important, something positive that consists in following one's own will, or autonomy—\textit{svecchānusārītā}.\footnote{\textcopyright 53. \textit{svecchānusārītāmeva svātṛtṛyam hi vido viduh/ --A.V. II 2, 19a.}}

And since autonomy in will is also a pointer to the autonomy in the entire being, God who is totally independent of anything else, is ipso facto free from all limitations. This is but another way of saying that He is the plenitude of all perfections.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[51] \textit{anyānandādisādṛṣṭāyamānukūlādīnā param/ pūrnatvādi mahat teṣāṁ vairākṣayam śrutau śrutam/ pūrno'śeṣaniyantā ca sukhādutama ekalāḥ/ guṇorūsamudāyo'yam vāsudevah sa niśkalāḥ/ \textcopyright --A.V. III 2, 199b-201a.}
\item[52] \textit{svatantratvam sada tasya bhedasca sarvatah/ --A.V. Ill 3, 79a.}
\item[53] \textit{svecchānusārītāmeva svātṛtṛyam hi vido viduh/ --A.V. II 2, 19a.}
\end{footnotes}