Chapter – III

REALITIES IN VISISTADVAITA

1. VAISHNAVISM - PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH
The renowned two main classes of Vaishnavas flourished in the south, viz. the Alvars and the Acaryas. Alvars devoted themselves to the culture of the feeling of ‘Love and Devotion’ for Vishnu or Narayana and composed songs, while the aim of the Acaryas was to carry on disputes and controversies and seek to establish their own theories and creeds. The first of the Acaryas, appears to have been Nadhamuni. His successor was Yamunacarya or Yamunamuni. Ramanuja succeeded Yamunamuni, wrote a commentary on Badarayana’s Brahmasutra.

Ramanuja attempts to systematize the philosophy of the Upanisads, taking the lead from the ancient theistic philosophers. He recognizes the three lines of thought in the Upanisads concerning the relation between Brahman, the self and the world. He led the Vaishnava movement and gave a completely anti – absolustistic and protheistic turn to the Upanisads.

Ramanuja vehemently criticizes the views of identity (abheda), of differences (bheda) and what is most puzzling, of identity and difference (bhedbheda) also. Reality, for Ramanuja, is no doubt the non dual spirit, but it is not a distinctionless homogeneous identity, it should rather be conceived on the analogy of an organism involving
internal differentiation. According to him, there are three ultimate realities, i.e., God (Isvara), Soul (Cit), World (Acit)

God (Isvara) or the Universal soul called Parabrahma, Paramatma, Paramapurusa, Narayana, Vishnu and so on. Soul (cit) or individual soul called Jiva, Pratyagatma, Jivatma, Ksetrajna, Cetana and so on. World (acit) or world called Pradhana, Avyakta, Prakrti, Avidya, Maya, Acetana and so on.

By Cit is meant the object which is the abode of consciousness, Jnana or Caitanya. By Acit is meant the object in which consciousness or Jnana does not and cannot inhere. By Isvara is meant by the Supreme being – God who controls these two. So, God alone is independent supreme reality; the other two are dependent on Him.

The relation between God on one hand and the world of souls and matter on the other is similar or parallel to that between soul (Sariri) and body (Sarira). God is the soul of souls and of nature. The latter are distinct from God, but not separate from Him. It is not an external relation that governs them, but the internal relation of
inseparability\(^6\) (Aprthak-siddhi). This is the difficulty of Ramanuja’s using so many Similes to signify the relation of the soul with God, sometimes he calls the soul as part of God; sometimes the body of God, sometimes an attribute or qualification of God and sometimes an absolutely dependent, controlled, supported and utilized by God\(^7\).

Even in each case of a substance (prakarin), Visesya is predicted as a mode (prakara) or quality (visesana), the relation of substance mode, or qualified qualification is an inseparable relation. God as qualified (visista) by the World of souls and matter is non–dual (Advaita)\(^8\).

According to Ramanuja, Vaishnavism identifies the supreme Reality with Lord Vishnu that is Lord Narayana. Brahman is nothing but Vishnu with any taint or defects. He is the creator, sustainer, destroyer, governor, and bestower of knowledge, releaser of bondage and bestower of knowledge, and bestower of liberation\(^9\). As Dr.S. Radhakrishnan says, The Supreme is Vishnu. He is the only true God who will not share. His divine honours with others”. God is the whole and sole cause of the world; He is not affected by the
changes of the world. God is himself does not change, the entities that are comprehended in him, and of which he is the inspiring principle – it is they that change. 

1.1. THEORY OF CAUSATION

In India, philosophical inquiry relates mainly to the nature of the ultimate cause of the world which has always been viewed as an effect. As cause and effect are relative terms, one necessarily refers to the other.

Ramanuja has accepted the theory that believes in the prior existence of the effect in its material cause. According to him, if we sincerely make an attempt to deduce the real implication of the upanisadic statement such as "by knowing one" all will be known, we cannot deny the identity between the cause and its effect so far as material is concerned. 

If cause and effect are two different and distinct substance, then by knowing the cause, one could not have known the effect. The pot is regarded as the effect of the earth, because in the production of the pot, the substance of the earth is not changed, but
different states, characteristics and features only have arisen in the
pot, there by differentiating it form the earth in general. It is because
the earthen jar and the earthen plates are nothing but different
states and features of the same substance that by knowing the
earth, one can know all earthen modifications\textsuperscript{12}.

1.2. THREE KINDS OF CAUSES

As we know Visistadvaita admits basically threefold causes
for the orgination and function of the universe., i.e upadana karana (material cause) nimitta –karana (efficient cause) and shakari-karana\textsuperscript{13} (assisting cause). The substance that under goes changes
of states in the form of effect is called the upadana, that which
causes the upadana to undergo changes is the assisting factor and
is called sahakari karana. God, in association with cit (soul) and acit
(matter)in subtle forms, or the upadana-karana of the world, God
with the resolution of "I shall be many"\textsuperscript{14} is the efficient cause, God
endowed with qualities of knowledge,power, etc., is the assisting
cause.

Hence it is no exaggeration to hold that God is the sole and
efficient cause of the world. While ascribing upadanata or material
causality to Isvara, Visistadvaita has admitted a distinction between
the visesyamsa(nounpart) And visesanamsa of God and that change is only a change of stages. both cit and acit change from a subtle form change in matter however does not take place in the same manner while unconscious matter undergoes a change of its essential nature. There is no such modification of svarupa in the case of soul.It is the dharmabhutajnana of the individual souls that undergoes modification and passes from a state of absolute contraction to a state of expansion the extent of which is determined by the law of karma.

The modes of God are supposed to form the body of God. It is therefore the body that undergoes change of states. God who is the indwelling self of both cit and acit remains unaffected by such modifications. In this world of ours, we do find that a change in the body does not necessarily create a change in the self which is its central core. The body passes through infancy, childhood, boyhood etc. But the soul remains the same. This will help us to understand how God remains pure and immutable although cit and acit suffer changes and modifications, imperfections and impurities.

In other words, we can say that the prakrit aspect of God is affected by transformations where as the purusa aspect of God is
affected by mental imperfections of the world. Isvara - the supreme Reality-always remains unaffected and immutable in essence under all conditions. At the time of creation God impels prakrit to evolve and change in accordance with the merits and demerits of the jivas. At the time of dissolution again, the evolutionary movement of prakrit is fully stopped and its various transformations are suspended through the will of God.

In the same manner, souls also undergo a change from the unmanifested state of subtlety to a manifested state of godness and vice versa during creations and dissolution through the expansion and contraction of the dharmabhutajnana\textsuperscript{16}. Thus, by recognizing God as Visistadvaita and also by admitting that changes take place in His modes only and not in His essece, Ramanuja has made his God become both the material cause and the efficient cause of the world.

God cannot be an immanent principle of the world unless He is the material cause. Such a world which is not wholly permeated by the Divine presence fails to satisfy the religious cravings of a devoted soul. Samkara too has felt this necessity and has made provision for a creater God in his philosophy; but as he has declared
God as phenomenal he has taken away by one hand what he has given to religion by the other\textsuperscript{17}.

In the philosophy of Visistadvaita, no distinction has been made between Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman. To him Visnu or Narayana is the highest Reality and is Saguna by nature. It is from him, that the world has emerged. At the time of creation, Sriman Visnu projects the whole world in a colourful manner and at the time of dissolution He again withdraws everything in His own tamo – aspect thereby suspending creative activities of prakrti for a period of time.

All these scriptural utterances have been admitted by Visistadvaita as proofs for the admissibility of Narayana as the Ultimate Reality possessing the characteristics of asthulatva, (Non-grossness) Anandamayatva (blissfulness) etc. He is therefore the only goal to be attained by the pursuit of all forms of vidya\textsuperscript{18}.

1.3. GOD AS THE MATERIAL AND EFFICIENT CAUSE OF THE UNIVERSE

In many of his description of the Deity, Visistadvaita has put first the fact of his being the cause of everything (Sarva Karantva).
There are many views about the God. The first group declares that the Supreme Brahman is the sole cause of the entire universe. The second defines his essential nature as true being, knowledge, infinity and bliss. The third denies that he has none of the defining qualities of material nature (prakrtah-hey-gunan), that he is connected with a material body, or that He is associated with the condition of being subjected to karma, which is itself the root of connection with matter; texts affirm that, He has auspicious qualities and an auspicious (bodily) form.

Visistadvaita understanding of causality (karantva) is affected by his acceptance of the doctrine of satkaryavada, which, in brief, is the view of the transformation of the causal substance into a new form but not into a new and different substance. (Visistadvaita here accepted the Samkhya view, along with most Vedantins, as against that of the Nyaya-Vaisesika school). Consequently the causal relation in the strict sense is not as we might expect, between God as cause and world as effect but between Brahman in His casual state as the cause and Brahman in his effected state as the effect. In both the states, souls and matter form part of Brahman as his body and his modes. Strictly speaking, it is Brahman with His cosmic
embodiment who is the effect is the essential nature of Brahmn is unchanged in the latter state, It is finite beings whose state (in the case of souls) or nature (in the case of material objects) are radically changed, since they are brought out of the darkness called pralaya into the ordered universe (Srsti that the supreme person has created or projected)\textsuperscript{21}.

Brahman is the material cause, since He is the promidial being (Sat) – albeit eternally differentiated into self and body, out of which this manifest universe (prapanca) has comeforth. He is also the intelligent (efficient) cause who orders and directs each new creation. Ramanuja often refers to the bahu-syam (may I be many!) of the Sadvidya as indicating, the Supreme Person's fundamental resolve to create a variegated universe.

It is true that all this variety was already potential in the casual state of pralaya preceding creation. In that state, however, the intelligent entities and non intelligent matter were mingled so closely together and so inseperably united with the supreme self that their distinctions from one another and from him, though real, could not be expressed by name and form. Therefore in this state one can speak of Brahman as ekam-eva (one-only), whereas in the
state of creation the differences have become manifest, the souls have been projected into manifestation in material bodies through which they can enjoy the material objects of enjoyment that God provide for them\textsuperscript{22}.

2. PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF BRAHMAN

Visistadvaita holds that the existence of God can be proved by the Agamas only and not by any other source. In the commentary on third sutra of the Sribhasya Ramanuja has made this point clear and has shown that other proofs which seem to establish the existence of God, finally fail to do so\textsuperscript{23}.

First of all, God cannot be known through perception. Perception is either externally carried by the five sense organs or internally carried by the mind. External sense organs can convey to us knowledge' of those object only which are present before us where as God who is the maker of all the objects is never present before the external senseorgans.

Mind too is incapable of giving us knowledge of God as mind can make known to us directly only our feeling of pleasures and pains etc. External objects can be revealed to us by the mind only
with the assistance of the outer sense organs. Yogic pratyaksa too, cannot prove the existence of God because this is only of the nature of memory\textsuperscript{24}.

God cannot be known through inference either; this is because inference is based on vyaptijnana and no vyapti is possible in respect of supersensuous objects. Of course, it is held by many thinkers that here from the presence of the world as an effect we can legitimately infer the presence of God as the cause: but this does not stand critical considerations. It is held that like a human body, the world too is a composite object consisting of parts. The human body is ruled and controlled by the conscious soul. The world too should therefore be ruled and controlled by God\textsuperscript{25}.

This is an example of a bad analogy as the two cases differ in a very important respect. The soul is not the soul maker of a human body but God is the maker of the whole world.

The production of the human body of a person is the combined effect of his own past actions as well as of the past actions of all those persons who are related to him. The creation of
the world, on the other hands is wholly due to the sportive mode of God\textsuperscript{26}.

Indeed there are some who would still insist on proving the existence of God by the cosmological argument of the ground that a vast thing like the universe can be produced by a being of unlimited powers only and not by the finite and limited souls\textsuperscript{27}.

Thus, from the above discussion, it is evident that inferential truths arrived at by one person may be refuted by another person. Since God can never be proved by perception and inference, His existence has to be established on the evidence of scriptural texts alone.

Truly speaking, the Visistadvaita Philosophy is a compromise between Philosophy and religion resulting in a harmonious blending of warm yearnings of the heart with the cold criticisms of reason. Man possesses reason together with sentiments and emotions. Just as reason inspires a man to test and verify all of reason, in the same way his emotional nature goads him to accept that principle as true and real which will give satisfaction to his loving heart, knowledge and emotion. A different ceaseless, qualities of Absolute may be a glorious achievement of human
intellect, but it fails to give satisfaction to the emotional nature of man. It is only through self-surrender to an all-knowing, all-good and exquisitely beautiful God that a man can find solace for his heart coupled with peace and tranquility for his suffering\textsuperscript{28}.

The fact that devotion to a qualified and creator God is necessary for man on the path of his spiritual march has been recognized by Sankara also. For that reason he has introduced a qualified Brahman to serve the purpose of religion and this qualified Brahman has been endowed with all-knowings, omnipotence etc. as its attributes.

Even then, this qualified Brahman has failed to arouse human respect and adoration, as it has been described as illusory and phenomenal. An illusory object can satisfy a man's heart only so long as he remains under the spell of illusion. As soon as the illusory spell is broken, the illusory object ceases to exist for him with the result that his loving heart loses its support and sustenance for ever.

The sum up, it can be said that the motive of philosophy is to produce calmness and tranquility of mind, in that case it must assume as ultimate such a principle which will not only satisfy a
man's reason, but will also bring for him fullness of heart and richness of spirit resulting in peace, gentleness and serenity of human soul. Visistadvaita is a philosophy of this kind and its special merit lies in the fact that it is a unique reconciliation of bhakti with the traditional Vedanta philosophy of his age\textsuperscript{29}.

2.1. CONCEPT OF BRAHMAN

At the very beginning of the Sribhasya is a brief definition of Brahman. The word "Brahman" is denoted the supreme person who is by inherent nature, free from all imperfections and possess hosts of auspicious qualities which are countless with matchless excellence. In all contexts he possesses the quality of greatness to whatever possesses the quality of greatness but its primary and most significant meaning is that being whose greatness is of supreme excellence. It is only the lord of all who is such a being. Therefore the word 'Brahman' is primarily used to signify Him only.

2.2. NATURE OF BRAHMAN

Ramanuja maintains that Brahman is one and undivided in his supreme reality of infinite perfection. But he is not a distinctionless
indeterminate reality. Visistadvaita asserts that formless and differenceless Brahman is unthinkable. Visistadvaita only believes in the qualified Brahman as the transcendent and immanent God holding within Him as his body, the finite self and the world of matter. Body is defined here as a substance whose existence is bound up inextricably with its dependence on the soul, whose activities are controlled by the soul and whose value lies in its contribution to the soul. Dependence in existence, subjection in operation and subservience in value, are the difference of the body.

Visistadvaita further declares: There is nothing equal or superior to Brahman. It transcends all. It is antithetical to all mutation and imperfection. It has pure and boundless knowledge. It is absolute reality. It is blissfully supreme. It is finite, transcending limitations of space, time, existence and attributes.

That which transcends is self-maintaining, self-ordering and self-subservient system. It is the Supreme controller. He shapes himself into numerous forms.

But his relationship with the world is unique. It is totally unlike the mutual relativity of finite things. He sustains them without being
one in them. He enters into cosmic process without losing his transcendence. In fact his power to sustain the world is by his supreme transcendence. His self sufficiency and fullness of inward perfection is not reduced or altered by his exercise of cosmic control. His self-distinction from what he controls is the very ground of his – Omni present control of all. It is not a case of reciprocal dependence. It is the ground of reciprocal dependencies in the world. The infinite is related to the finite in a unique way, a way in which no finite entities are related.

Not merely is God a Supreme marvel in Himself, but also He invests the world which he fills completely with marvellousness. The supreme wonder in nature is its being the garment of God. All that seems ugly, of small value, or insignificant, acquires a new dimension in this view. Nature and finite souls packed with God are suffused with the times shade of the Divine….. God is not merely a marvel in himself but also he moulds nature into a wondrous manifestations of himself^{31}.

The Supreme person (Parama purusa), who is meant by the term “Supreme Brahman” has as his sport the origination, maintenance and dissolution of the entire universe. He is opposed to
all evil whatsoever, and his essential nature (Svarupa), consists solely of what is auspicious (Kalyana) He is a great ocean containing a host of all auspicious qualities.

In the sribhasya, Ramanuja states the Brahman as, He is the cause of the origination of the universe; he is distinct in character from all non-intelligent things such as pradhana (material nature) and from all intelligent beings whether in a state of bondage or release; he is free from even the shadow of anything defiling; he is omniscient and omnipotent and his will is ever accomplished his nature (atmaka) is comprised of all auspicious qualities; he is the inner self of all, and he possesses unrestricted lordship.

2.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF BRAHMAN

Brahman is the Supreme Being. Brahman is called saguna, which means Brahman with qualities. He is free from all impurities. He is eternal. He is immaterial. He is the essence of bliss. He is infinitely small and infinitely great.

2.4. THE DIVINE NAMES OF BRAHMAN

The Visistadvaita tradition has always maintained the importance of the ‘name’ of God, or rather, of the names and the
Name. In a sense, all the auspicious qualities are names describing God, each celebrating a particular mode of devotional address. There are, however, certain names in the stricter sense that may appropriately be applied to the Deity; names hallowed by their use in scripture and fraught with the emotional associations of their use in worship. Each sect of Vaishnavas has usually chosen one name as the Divine name par excellence, and the very utterance of this name in the sacred formula of the sect is regarded as a sacred act.

For Visistadvaita this supreme personal name of God used in the cultic formula is Narayana, considered as a synonym for the more common supreme name of Vishnu. The sect derives its name from the expanded form of the name, also enshrined in a sacred formula, Sriman-Narayana. Narayana united with (or accompanied by) His Divine consort the Goddess Sri (also called Lakshmi).

We can arrange the four the most significant names in an order of increasing specification: Brahman, Purusottama, Bhagavan, and Narayana. Brahman, as it is used by Ramanuja, has already frequently been taken up for scrutiny, so we turn now to the second important Divine name, Purusottama.
2.4.1. THE CONCEPT OF PURUSOTTAMA

Purusottama is both a Divine name and a metaphysical definition of God. The word Purusottama means “highest (or supreme) person” as does the alternative form, Paramapurusa. Closely related in meaning is the term Paramatma the supreme Self, Visistadvaita prefer Purusottama to Paramatma as a name for God, though at times Ramanuja uses them interchangeably.

This is partly because of the close association between the terms purusottama and Narayana in the scriptural texts that were important in the Vaishnava tradition. The later forms of the ‘Purusa hymn’ in the Rgveda identify Narayana with the first ‘Man’ or primordial person (Adi-purusa), who by dividing Himself created the Universe. Moreover, in the Bhagavatgita the term Purusottama is used to designate the Supreme Being who possesses both matter and finite spirits but is superior to both Purusottama.

Therefore a scriptural designation implies that God is the Inner Self or person in His body the cosmos. Everything said thusfar about the relation between God and the universe may therefore be understood as a definition of Purusottama.
The highest purusa is of a different nature from both the bound and the liberated purusas and in all scriptural texts He is spoken of as the Supreme Self (paramatma). Because of this very designation of Paramatma, because He pervades and sustains them, He is of a different nature from them. He is also distinct from them because He is eternal (avyaya) and is absolute Lord (Isvara).  

2.4.2. THE CONCEPT OF BHAGAVAN

Visistadvaita often used in compound terms such as Sarvesvara (Lord of all) and Sarvesvaresvara (Lord of all Lords). There are number of other terms that function virtually as synonyms, such as Pati and Natha. The word ‘Isvara was in Common use in the systems of different schools and sects to denote the Supreme Personal Spirit transcending both matter and finite spirits.

The name Bhagavan (root from bhagavat) has the same general meaning of ‘Lord’ but in Ramanuja’s usage, all in that of the Vaishnava tradition generally, it comes much closer to being the specific personal name of Vishnu, both in His supreme state and in His incarnation. It is this name of the Deity that is used in the title. Bhagavatgita and it occurs frequently in the text of the Gita as well.
Ramanuja uses the term as an honorific when mentioning, the great sages, and venerable persons of the past, such as the authors of the Mahabharata and the Vishnu Purana, and in the same capacity before the personal name of God: Bhagavan Narayana. Ramanuja seems to regard this name as the closest possible general term that can substitute for that most specific name of God: Narayana.

There are two kinds of definitions of the name Bhagavan given in these verses in the Visnu-Purana. One is based on the common usage of the term and defines the Lord as the Supreme and only truly worthy object of worship. The other gives a metaphysical definition of the Lord's qualities. The first kind of definition is as this great word 'Bhagavan denotes Vasudeva, who is the Supreme Brahman, and no one else. The general meaning of the word is 'worthy of worship' (puja). To Him it applies directly.

Ramanuja refers to the definition of bhagavat an analogy to his primary and proper application of the primary. Proper application of the word Brahman (meaning greatness) is to the supreme person
alone, while the application to other persons or things possessing greatness is only secondary or derived\textsuperscript{35}.

The metaphysical definition of vedartha\textsuperscript{35}samgraha, the term Bhagavat is applied to the supreme Brahman, who is pure, possesses great realms manifesting His glory (Mahavibhutyakhaya), and is the cause of all causes. The word signifies the six qualities, Jnana, Sakti, Bala, Aisvarya, Virya, and Tejas, without any defiling qualities (heya\textsuperscript{-gunā}). In the Sribhasya, Ramanuja quotes the intervening, where from an analysis of the syllabus bha-ga-vat the following meanings are derived. The Lord is the sustain the leader (preserver), mover (destroyer), and creator. Moreover, He is the universal self who dwells in all, and all beings dwell in Him\textsuperscript{36}.

2.4.3. CONCEPT OF NARAYANA

Visistadvaita has designated the highest Brahman as Bhagavan Hari, Visnu, Purushottama. Narayana appears to be the most inclusive name. Ramanuja says that the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, Itihasas, and Smrits all teach that Narayana is the supreme Reality. According to the scriptures the concept of Narayana is the pervading reality, in Him abide all beings, through him does the finite
individual progress to perfection and in him do all finite souls reach their everlasting and infinite fullness of life.

The three fundamentals of the Upanisadic philosophy, namely the Supreme Reality, the Supreme way and the Supreme End are all enshrined in the single term Narayana, for he is the truth, the way and the end of life.\textsuperscript{37}

In the Metaphysique of Mysticism we have the following meaning of the term Narayana: Narayana is a compound of two words, Nara human or man and means collection of men. Nara is again derived from na and ra--that which never perishes. Hence Narayana is the imperishable spirit of the imperishable universe, which the manifestation dichotomies as ‘This’ and ‘That’ or which bifurcates itself into two aspects of the ‘subjective’ and the ‘objective’ or in otherwords, the ‘Noumena’ and the ‘phenomena’ It is the principle of love that links both these aspects.\textsuperscript{38}

This succession is: Sat(Being), Brahman(Extreme Greatness), Atma (Intelligent Being), and finally Narayana, who is the one particular self or person who is supreme. There can only be one such Supreme Cause (Parama - Karana). Hence Narayana is the
one denoted by the more general terms just mentioned, He is the particular Being who is the universal cause, His supremacy over all (Sarvasmad-paratva) is established in a passage, Hari and Laksmi are His consort., This is made more explicit in the section dealing with Narayana. Where all the words used in the different scriptures to denote the supreme Reality, along with their inherent qualities, are applied to Narayana.

The section that ‘goes on to show that all other entities different from him are dependent (ayatta) on Him, pervaded (Vyapya) by Him, supported (adhar) by Him, and that Brahma and Siva also are parts of His glorious realm (Vibhuti). Since they have the same status as Indra and the other vedic deities, the importance of this text is that it has no other purpose than to expound exactly who the supreme Reality is.

2.5. SIX QUALITIES OF BRAHMAN

Jnana (knowledge) - is direct and simultaneous. Knowledge of all things. Sakthi (Power) - is given two alternatives. Meanings, the power of being the material cause of all, or the power to make possible what is impossible for others. Bala (Strength) –is the capacity to support, everything without even being fatigued (or,
by his mere will) Aiswarya. Soverignity (Lordship) - is unchallenged rule over all. Virya (Valou) - is the quality of immutability, inspite of being the material cause of the mutable creation. Tejas (Splendor) - has been given two definitions, self sufficiency, not requiring any external aid, the quality of overpowering others by his splendor.

These are the essential as well as the important qualities of lord Brahman.

2.6. FIVE ATTRIBUTES OF BRAHMAN

Visistadvaita’s concept of the Divine supremacy includes. the five attributes of the supreme self, as well as’ all other secondary or nondefining qualities ‘that. ‘express God’s supremacy over all other entities. The other groups of qualities expressing God’s accessibility (saulabhya) are separated from or contradictory to the essential nature of God; they are further qualifications of the essential nature already in such a way as to contrast distinctively with finite-selves. The five defining qualities would not seen logically to imply Isvaratva (essential lordship), which concerns a relation to other existing entities.

In the Vedarthasamgraha Ramanuja has defined the essential nature of the finite self as being free from the distinctions
of the material bodies in which it resides and as being in essence wholly characterised by knowledge (Jnana) and bliss, (ananda). Then follows the definition of the Supreme self (paramatma), who is described as the inner Ruler (Antaryami) of the finite self. His essential nature is defined as follows.

The sole cause of the origination, continued existence, and dissolution of the universe and of the cessation of samsara, His essential nature is distinct from all other entities because He is opposed to all evil and is wholly infinite perfection (kalyanata). He has a host of such auspicious qualities (kalyanagunas) which are countless and of matchless excellence. He is known throughout the Upanishads by various terms such as the self of all, The supreme Self, and Being. He is the Lord (Bhagavan), Narayana the Supreme person (Purusottama).

It is interesting that following a definition of the finite self in terms of its essential qualities of knowledge and bliss, these same essential qualities are not mentioned in the definition of the supreme self, but the emphasis is on His being the sole cause (karana) of all the changes in the state of finite beings, both souls and material objects.
It is quite clear that the qualities of knowledge and bliss are simply assumed for the Supreme person, since He, too, is a “self”. Though one of a unique nature, being the cause of creation, and so on, He is regarded as the fundamental. Distinction between the Supreme person and other beings is made, but the term distinction or distinctive nature (Vilaksana) is reserved for the second part of the definition. He is distinct from all other entities because of His perfection, both in the negative sense of being the antithesis of everything which is defiling (that is, inauspicious) and in the positive sense of being wholly auspicious in nature, possessing a plentitude of unsurpassably excellent attributes.

The essential quality of Ananda is dealt with separately because it does not occur in the primary text discussed above, Satyam-Jnanam anantam-Brahma; is regarded as equally essential. Ananda is also essential attribute of the finite self,. but Ramanuja insists that the title Anandamaya which he means, full of bliss, refers specifically to Brahman,. not individual souls. Among the five attributes of Brahman. Amalatva form is very notable and its has its own significance as far as visistadvaita is concerned. Now let us see the Amalatva form of Brahman.
2.6.1. AMALATVA

Amalatva (purity), literally means stainlessness. Every description of Brahman by Ramanuja, usually begins with such a phrase as nikhila-heya-pratyanika opposed to everything defiling or nirasta. Nikhila -dose- gandam (free from all trace literally, scent - of evil or imperfection) The importance of this quality is differentiating the Supreme self from the first self. To comprehend, a certain substance (Vastu) is to be comprehended of its distinctive character (asadharana – akara) But bliss and the other essential attributes without further qualifications (kevala) do not suggest Brahman’s distinctive character, since they also belong to the finite self. What are distinctive or peculiar (literally, uncommon (asadharana) to Brahman are bliss and the other essential attributes which are of such a nature that they are (fundamentally) opposed to what is evil or defiling.

The finite self, on the otherhand, although in its proper nature is free from evil, is capable of connection with what is evil. To have the nature of being (fundamentally) opposed to evil means to have the character which is the opposite of grossness and all similar qualities that belong to the empirical world, in both its material and its intelligent aspects⁴².
So far we have seen the fact that the Supreme person is free from any impurities and essentially opposed to evil. It shows one basic distinction between the Lord and the individual soul. There are at least three other reasons for Ramanuja’s emphasis on this doctrine. First, there is his desire to provide an alternative interpretation of a term that was the favourite of his most powerful philosophical adversaries, the Advaitins. This Upaniashadic term is Nirguna, and it is interpreted by Advaitins to refer to the absolute nature of Brahman grasped only at the higher level of knowledge, a nature devoid of any qualification or distinctions whatsoever; hence Nirguna (without qualities). Ramanuja, however, denies that there is no being higher than the Lord possessing infinite auspicious qualities, who is Himself the supreme Brahman, and he therefore applies both terms, Saguna (with qualities) and Nirguna, to the supreme person.

Those texts stating, that He is without qualities (nirguna) are also well established, since they pertain to the negation of the defiling qualities of material nature (prakrta-heya-guna). In this context one may simply state that the Brahman is free from auspicious qualities. Nirguna, is not being from any quality; it is his
Being from bad qualities that may arise due to his association with Prakrti (matter).

The second reason for Ramanuja’s emphasis is his desire to show that it is possible for Brahman to be embodied in, and also to be in contact with, imperfect and sinful beings, both material and spiritual, without detracting from or contradicting His perfection. Ramanuja denies that embodiment proves dependence on karma (and hence contact with evil) since a being has the power of realising, His will can simply will to assume a body. Nor is the body of the Supreme Self subject to the defects of material nature (prakrti), for it is not an effect of prakrti but a body that is in accordance with His own desire and suited to his own nature. The final and the most important reason for Ramanuja’s emphasis on God’s purity and radical opposition to evil is that this was a deeply held conviction. This is one half of the Ubhayalingatva. The fact of God’s possessing dual characteristics, the second half of which is his possession of a host of auspicious qualities of matchless excellence. There is nothing which is more characteristic of Ramanuja’s theology, as it is reflected in the memories of his followers as well as in his own writings, then this.
emphasis on the perfect nature of a God, meaning both without imperfection and full of all possible perfections.

From the above the understanding of the Divine purity that makes possible the more celebrated doctrines of Ramanuja, that the cosmos is God’s body and that it is - if we only have pure enough eyes to see- like His transcendent realm, a manifestation of His glory (vibhuti).

2.7. FIVE FORMS OF BRAHMAN

According to Visistadvaita God has five forms in which He manifests himself with a view of satisfying the desires and inclinations of his different devotees. Different devotees conceive of God in different ways and make idols of Srivisnu accordingly. These vigrahas are placed in different temples and mathas and are worshipped daily by the upasakas. God in the forms of arcavataraas is wholly dependent on His devotees for His maintenance and protection. Omnipotent God, here becomes helpless like a child in order to satisfy the intense desires of His devotees to serve Him in all possible ways.

2.7.1. PARA
God as the transcendent possesses six attributes, which are knowledge, lordship, potency, strength, virility and splendour. (Jnana, Asvarya, Sakti, Bala, Virya and Tejas)

2.7.2. VYUHA

The grouped forms of God are four; they are called Vasudeva Samkarsana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. (The Vyuha Vasudeva is the same as the transcendent form of the Lord) The other three are named after the elder brother, the son, and the grandson respectively of Krishna.

2.7.3. VIBHAVA

The incarnated forms of Visnu are the Avataras. There are several of them mentioned in the Agamas; but the Chief of them are ten. (1) Matsya (Fish) (2) Kurma (Tortoise) (3) Varaha (Boar) (4) Narasimha (Man - Lion) (5) Vamana (Dwarf) (6) Parasurama (7) Rama (8) Balarama (9) Krishna (10) Kalki.

2.7.3.1. WHY GOD INCARNATES?

The principle of incarnation is setforth in the Bhagavatgita where Sri Krishna declares: ‘Whenever dharma declines and
adharma is on the ascent. I incarnate myself in every age” in order to protect the good and punish the wicked.

"Paritraanaaya Sadhunaam
Vinaasaaya Chathushkruthaam
Dharma Samsthabanaarthaaya
Sambhavaami Yugae Yugae"\textsuperscript{45a}

2.7.4. ANTARYAMIN

The immanent form of the Lord is the theme of a section of the Brhadaranyaka where Brahman is described as the inner ruler immortal. This is the form which is favoured by those who are given to the practice of meditation.

2.7.5. ARCA

The idol is the most concrete of God’s forms and the belief is that God descends into the idol and makes it divinely alive, so that he may be easily accessible to his devotees.

The ultimate goal, according to all forms of Vaishnavism, is enjoying the presence of Narayana (end and means)\textsuperscript{46}.

2.8. LILA , THE DIVINE SPORTS
Brahaman is Himself capable of creating the universe, but why should he do it?

“This magnificently variegated creation looks like something which was made for some purpose (Prayojana), and there is no possible purpose which the Lord could have had. There are two kinds purposes which motivate those who undertake some action after having previously considered what they may thereby accomplish, their own interest, or the interest of others.

Since the Supreme Brahman is one whose inherent nature is such that all his desires have already been attained, by creating the universe he does not accomplish any purpose which has not already been achieved. Neither could He have created in the interest of others, for a Being whose desires all are attained would only work for the interest of others, by bestowing favour upon them and He would not be the cause of a universe like ours, filled with infinite misery of so many kinds, such as pregnancy, birth, old age, death, and hell.

If He were to create, He would make a world which was entirely happy. Therefore, Since Brahman has no possible purpose,
He cannot be the cause of the universe. Ramanuja does not place these reasons for the creation of the World, by God.

According to Visistadvaita God’s action ‘in sport’ is both for His own sake (Sva - artha) and for the sake of others (para - artha), but not in the sense in which those alternatives are understood by the objector. All purposive human action, except that in a game, is done to gain or to accomplish something that one wants. There is nothing that God desires ‘This is why He is ‘self-satisfied’. ‘ This does not, however, mean that He may not engage in activity. This is His delight in His sport (lila-rasa). For such Divine action the material and spiritual substances making up the universe are not the goal but only the instruments (Upakarana) or materials (parikara). It is the Divine sport itself which is the purpose of God’s spontaneous self-expression in creation of an end in itself.

There are two important explanations that must be made here, however. First, finite beings cannot complain that creation is against their interest or that God has been partial or cruel. The inequalities in status and the sufferings of the living beings to which the objection referred to the results of the souls own previous actions in previous embodiments. To this extent God has limited His
creative action, since He creates each body to a soul appropriate to the fruit of its previous deeds. This very fact shows that Lila does not mean aim-less in the usual sense of wandering to and fro without any fixed course. It is neither fun and frolic of the Divine.

2.9. THE RELATIONSHIP OF BRAHMAN WITH CIT AND ACIT

Sarira – Sariri, Prakara – Prakari

In course of explaining the sadvidya, at the beginning of the Vedartasamgraha, Ramanuja states his distinctive metaphysical doctrine as follows.

The finite self (jivatma) has Brahman as its self, for it is His mode (Prakara) since it is the body (Sarira) of Brahman... all things have varieties of characteristic physical structure, such as the divine form or the human form. They are the modes of finite individual selves, since they are in their respective bodies. This means that these physical objects, too, are ensouled by Brahman. Therefore all worlds naming these objects first signify the objects they name in ordinary parlance. Then, through these objects, the finite selves dwelling in them, extend in their significance to denote the Supreme Self (Paramatma) who is their inner controller (antaryamin).
Thus all terms do indeed denote the entire composite Being (Samghata). Thus this section of scripture explains in detail that the entire created universe (prapanca) of intelligent and material entities has being (Sat) as its material cause, and its support (adhara), it is controlled (niyamya) by Being and is the sesa of Being\(^49\).

Ramanuja then is declaring identity between the cosmic principle (Brahman) and the self (atma), tat-tvamasi, ‘That (Brahman) art thou!’\(^50\).

Indeed both the terms that and thou, when used in a prediction of identity (Samanadhikaranya) signify Brahman alone. The term 'that' refers to Brahman, who is the cause of the universe, the abode of all suspicious qualities, the flawless and the changeless one, where as the term ‘thou ’ signifies that same Brahman who, as the inner Controller of finite selves, has these selves, along with their bodies, as His modes.

The doctrine that the most significant meaning (mukhyartha) of all names is the Supreme self is a corollary of both of the fundamental relationships here propounded. Ramanuja frequently
expresses this as in the passage above, by saying that the meaning of all worlds extends up to or culminates in (paryanta) Brahman.

This corollary can be derived from their relationship; the name of a body can properly be applied to the self ensouling that body and the name of an attributes or mode belongs also to its underlying substance, for this is the significance of coordinate prediction (Samnadikaranya). This corollary, or restatement of the two basic relationships in terms of language, is important for Ramanuja in his task of reconciling the apparent contradictions of various scriptural texts.

The two basic doctrines are best understood as different conceptions of the same relationship, which in the Srivaishnava tradition has usually been entitled the body – self relationship (Sarira – Sariri – Bhava). Kumarappa, however, believes that the substance mode relationship is Ramanuja’s own distinctive view of the relation in which Brahman stands to the world.

The effect, we found, was nothing but a mode of the causal substance; the body also, we have just seen, is nothing but a mode of the self. Hence it follows that all scriptural teacher with regard to Brahman as cause and world as effect, or of Brahman as soul and
the world as body, imply in the end that Brahman in substance and the world is His mode\textsuperscript{51}.

Ramanuja often says that the body is only a mode, but it is a mode of self or soul. He frequently indicates some causal sequence, and this almost always has the form: By virtue of being a body (as the instrumental cause, Sarirataya) this substance is a mode. Occasionally there is a statement that seems to reverse the sequence: By virtue of being a mode of a soul, a material body is a definite thing or substance (Padartha). This means, however, that any material substance has intelligible and substantial reality only when it is a mode of a soul or self, which is the same as saying; only when it is the body of a self\textsuperscript{52}.

Bodies have a relation to their ensouling selves analogous to that of generic characteristics and qualities to their respective substances, for the self is the sole ground (asraya) and the sole purpose (prayojana) of the body, and the body is its mode (prakara). Ramanuja defines each of these three qualifications more closely as follows: Bodies are altogether dependent on souls as their ontological ground, since they perish as soon as they are separated from a soul. Bodies exist only to enjoy the fruits of their respective karma. Bodies are
modes of their respective souls, since they are attributes qualifying these souls\textsuperscript{53}.

The same relationship that exists between material bodies and finite selves is also present between finite selves or souls and the supreme self. Thus Ramanuja goes on to say. “Because the finite selves are the body of the supreme self, they are modes of that self; therefore words denoting finite selves extend in their meaning to signify the supreme self\textsuperscript{54}.

To say that something is a mode is not just a brief way of stating its relationship of utter dependence, but to state that something is a body is to state an irreducible and fundamental fact. Therefore it is this category which is primary. If a material is the body of some intelligent self, then it is a mode. Ramanuja's belief that finite selves constitute the body of the supreme self is for him, not the conclusion of a rational argument, but a fundamental fact vouched for by scripture. It is thus because of this fact that finite selves constitute the body of Brahman that we can say that these souls or selves are modes of Brahman\textsuperscript{55}.

3. CONCEPT OF CIT
The three fundamental categories of the philosophy of Visistadvaita are Brahman, Cit and Acit. Of these, Acit and Cit constitute the body of Brahman who is the supreme indwelling spirit of the whole universe. Visistadvaita Philosophy has described the soul in two ways: namely, positive and differentiative. In trying to explain the characteristics which Jiva (soul) possesses, Visistadvaita has made a sincere attempt to distinguish soul from all possible things with which it may get identified through confused thinking.

Let us first try to follow how Jiva or soul has been differentiated from its natural accompaniments which are not identical with it.

3.1. THE NATURE OF CIT

Of the positive characteristics of the Jiva described by Ramanuja and his followers some belong to the God as well and these are, therefore, the common characteristics of both God and Jiva. Besides these common characteristics, the Jiva also possesses some other characteristics which are peculiar to it self and which are not, therefore, applicable to God.
The characteristics, commonly shared by God and Jiva are pratyaktva (inwardliness), cetanatva (consciousness), atmatva (spirituality) and kartrtva (agency). The peculiar characteristics are anutva, sesatva (as accessory), adheyatva (supportedness), Vidheyatva (dependence), paradhinakartrtva, paratantratva etc.,

Like God soul is also pratyak or internal principle in the sense that it dwells in a body. The soul possesses consciousness as its essence. As it is the indwelling and controlling principle of the body, it is called Jiva.

Jiva is the agent or karta like God as it moves the body and the organs to various types of intellectual and non-intellectual activities. It is also the substratum of knowledge. The Jiva is also eternal in the sense that it exists in past, present and future. Its birth means association with the body and its death means dissociation from the body.

3.2. PECULIAR CHARACTERISTICS OF CIT

The Jival is atomic in nature as otherwise we shall not be able to explain its utkramana which has been upheld by the sruti. Here we should remember that the atomic nature of the Jiva does not
prevent it from being the experiencer of pleasures and pains which may occur in any part of the body. The Jiva feels and knows all that is happening in any part of the body with the help of its dharma-bhutajnana (attributive knowledge) which spreads itself everywhere like the glow of the precious stone.

The Jiva has also been described as the sesa (accessory, God being the principal Tattva) of God. This is because the Jiva is fully supported, controlled and employed by God and has no real independence of its own. Since, house, land, wife and children of a man, being wholly under his control, are regarded as his properties, these things, too, can be called sesas of the owner.

There is, however, an important point in which Jiva as the sesa of God differs from land, house, wife and children which are the possessions of a man of the world. Land, house, etc. have separate existence of their own but Jiva can never exist without being connected with God. The relation between God and Jiva is inseparable.
Though Visistadvita has described Jiva as the Niyamya (controlled mode) of God, it has also made provision for the spiritual freedom of the Soul. The soul is allowed to have desires in his mind according to His own free-will but those desires will not find expressions in actual actions unless they are approved from by God. Actual action is possible only through the approval by God of the desires of the Jiva. Here also God’s interference is not detrimental to the freedom of the Jivas. If an individual desires to do bad actions, God will allow him to act according to his own desire. He will not prevent the individual from doing the action he likes best by creating any kind of obstacles: the individual is trying to go far off from God because of his vitiated personality and God, too, will help him to have such desires which will lead him farther away from his Lord.

On the other hand, those who are specially attached to Him will have through His grace such desires only that will bring them very close to God. The choice of desires will be determined by the character of the individual soul but these desires will be effective only through the grace of God. This is how Ramanuja has tried to make a happy compromise between the Jiva's dependence on God and its spiritual freedom.
In the philosophy of Visistadvaita, God appears as the giver of the fruits of actions in accordance with the adrista (desert) of the individual’s character, and consequently the desires of the individuals are determined by their past karmas or adrista: but as adrista is unconscious, it cannot do its service without being controlled by a conscious agent. So, God is the controller of adrista. An individual has freedom for choosing his own line of action, but when such actions are performed and consequently the adrsta of the Jiva is formed he has got to reap the fruits of his karmas.

In this process of reaping the harvests of his past deeds, God will be his controller (being the controller of the individual’s adrista). God is the supporter of all actions because the actions being unconscious, need a conscious and powerful guide. Man is both the master and the slave of his actions.

He is the master of the kriyamana-karmas (actions he is doing the present life) and a slave of the prarabdha-karmas (past actions which have started bearing fruits). Sancita-karmas also can be destroyed by the individual’s own will and future action. Since
prarabdha-karmas bear fruits under the supervision and control of God, the kind of pleasures and pains that an individual will go through (due to his Prarabdha-karmas) will be determined by Isvara.

For the performance of every action, God indeed is necessary as the common cause of the whole universe, but the special cause (asadharama-karana) is the individual himself who is performing the action. An action is done when both the causes are present. So, in the act of moving a limb the will of God must be present, as the common cause, but together with the will of God, the desire of the soul too will be needed as the asadharana-karana of that particular action. God can work only with the help of the Jiva's body, mind and sense-organs.

If soul's adrista does not determine its present actions, if all actions performed by an individual self are mere actualizations of God's wishes, then soul will be relieved of its responsibility, and, therefore, there will be no reason why an individual soul should receive punishment for such actions which are really the wishes of God. Hence, Visistadvaita holds that God is the general cause of the individuals actions and the soul is the particular cause of the individuals actions.
Soul or Atman has been described as ajada (immaterial). This is because the soul is self-revealing. That which can reveal itself independently without receiving help from any quarter is called ajada. Just as one lamp does not need the help of another lamp to make itself known to us, in the same manner atman also can show itself and reveal itself and is called svayam-jyoti or svayamprakasa (self revealing) \(^{60}\).

The soul also is of the nature of bliss. During the state of deep sleep, an individual experiences no object of the external world. Subject-object consciousness remains fully suspended during this stage; but as soon as the individual gets up from deep sleep, he at once remembers that he had a peaceful and blissful experience during the state of susupti (deep sleep). As no object was present at that time, this happiness must be supposed to have sprung forth from the self itself.

The soul is described as acintya (unthinkable). This epithet has been applied to the souls due to the fact that it cannot be grasped by discursive intellectual thinking. It can be realised only
through sravana, manana and nidadhityasana\textsuperscript{61} (concentration, constant remembrance through recollection and contemplation).

The soul is the substrate of knowledge or consciousness. Consciousness is both the essence and the property of the soul. This point has been clarified by Ramanuja with the help of the example of the light of a lamp. Light constitutes the essence of a lamp and is also a quality inhering in the lamp. Like light, consciousness is also both a substance and a property. It is substance as it constitutes the essence of the soul and Isvara (God).

In this sense, soul is of the nature of Jnana and is not the asraya (substratum) of knowledge: but knowledge in the shape of Dharma-bhutajnana exists as a property of the soul and since there is the relation of aprithaksiddhi (inseparableness) between substance and its property, the soul is regarded as the substratum of caitanya (consciousness)\textsuperscript{62}. It is ever qualified by dharmabhuta-jnana (attributive knowledge).

According to Visistadvaita soul possesses all the three characteristics of drastritva, bhoktritva and kartritva, Bhoktrtva (power of enjoyment) and kartrtva (agency) of various activities of
the empirical life belong to it in a special sense. Kartrtva or agency of the soul refers to all its efforts directed towards various types of activities of the worldly life and bhoktrtva refers to diverse forms of its enjoyment of worldly pleasures and pains. Bhoktrtva, therefore, follows as a necessary consequence of kartrtva and as agency is due to the soul’s association with the body, bhoktrtva too is not a natural characteristic of the soul.

Since agency and enjoyment are two characteristics that belong to the Soul only in this worldly life, these properties are, therefore, non-eternal, destructible and changeable. These properties are generated in the soul during waking and dream states and disappear from the soul in deep sleep, fainting fit and also in liberation. So, it is just and proper to hold that the soul in its real eternal and transcendental form is not an agent or enjoyer of worldly pleasures and pains.

Further, according to Qualified Monism agency and enjoyment of the soul are also effected under the supervision of God. No action can be performed by an individual unless it is sanctioned by God. God allows a soul to perform actions in accordance with its own adrista.
The fact that the soul is a knower does not imply any kind of change in the individual. Although knowledge in essence is eternal and infinite, it can undergo contraction and expansion due to adrīsta of the individual self. The contraction of knowledge of an individual self is effected through the use of the sense-organs. So, the appearance and disappearance of indriya-vṛtti is falsely spoken of as the origin and decay of knowledge. The agency of the soul that is involved in the expansion of knowledge is not natural to it; but is due only to its past actions and is non-eternal. Hence, as the nature of the soul does not change, the soul remains immutable in spite of the expansion and contraction of its dharma-bhutajnana.

3.3. KINDS OF CIT

Visistadvaita refers to three classes of souls. The first category consists of eternal souls who are never bound. They always remain free from karma and acit and live in Vaikuntha in the constant presence of God. At the time, they are rendering services to God. Sesa, Garuda etc., are examples of such eternal souls. The second category consists of liberated souls who were once in bondage but who obtained release through their knowledge, action
and devotion. The third category consists of bounded soul who are still steeped in ignorance and impure actions, as a result of which they are moving round the cycles of births and deaths.  

It is because Visistadvaita has accepted Dharmabhuta-jnana as an eternal quality of the soul that has to admit soul as the eternal possessor of this attributive knowledge. So, the soul is always the knower or jnata, being the substratum of knowledge. Quality without a substratum is unthinkable and substance without quality is absurd. Dharmabhuta-jnana possesses the power of revelation and this revelation or manifestation become meaningful when something is revealed to a subject. Knowledge can reveal itself and can also reveal other objects but it cannot know itself as an object. Knowledge is different from reality: knowing is not identical with being.

The characteristic of knowing do not belong to knowledge: it belongs to a spiritual substance that knows. Revelation of objects should always be made to a perceiver who must be different from perceptual knowledge which is a quality. Dharmabhuta-jnana, being the quality of the Jiva soul cannot be identified with it. The quality of knowing, however, is inseparable from the self.
Visistadvaita has maintained a distinction between caitanya and cetana – consciousness and the possessor of consciousness, knowledge and the knowing reality. Atma or soul is the possessor of consciousness because it is the substratum in which caitanya or knowledge is generated. Knowledge is always the knowledge of an object and that object is always revealed to a subject who appears as the cognizer of that cognition. Self-revelation, on the other hand, means that knowledge stands revealed to the soul which is its substrate.

The most important function of knowledge, therefore, is to manifest objects to the individual souls. Knowledge, thus, has a referential transcendence. It always refers beyond itself to objects and subjects and is never revealed in the absence of objects. Objects never exist in the absence of the knower. Even in the state of liberation when the world-feeling will be fully uprooted, the liberated person will constantly experience the real nature of God. In the absence of worldly objects, the real nature of God will then become the object of the liberated person’s knowledge.
In the state of susupti (deep sleep) when external objects are not manifested, the soul becomes the knower of its own pure 'aham' which is its true character. Pure aham' being the soul's nature is always present. It is not the quality of the soul; and in dreamless sleep in the absence of external objects, it is manifested as its own object.

It is because knowledge constitutes the essential quality of the atman and is also the distinguishing characteristic of the soul that the soul is also described as consciousness or jnana. In reality atman and jnana are logically distinguishable as substance and attribute-though physically inseparable.

3.4. PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF CIT

3.4.1. CIT DIFFERENT FROM ACIT

According to tattvatraya, Cit cannot be identified with the body, the sense-organs, the mind or the vital airs which are the constituent parts of a psycho-physical organism. The soul is different from the body, because while making a reference to body, we usually say: it is my body: it is the body. Body is a whole of many parts. When it is said that the body is identical with soul, the question will arise: does consciousness belong to all parts of the body or to some parts
thereof? If it is said that consciousness belongs to all parts of the body, then at one and the same moment, the consciousness is expected to carry with it a felling of multiplicity which certainly is not guaranteed by experience. Again if consciousness belongs to one part only, then due to the absence or invalidity of that particular organ, there will be no memory of the past experience.

Even in the case of the present experience, consciousness being limited to one part only, the feelings of pleasure and pain will not pervade the whole body. As such things do not happen, it is held that consciousness must belong to some entity which is different from the body and its parts. And, that is the Soul

3.4.2. CIT AND THE EXTERNAL SENSE-ORGANS

Cit cannot be identified with the sense-organs; because in that case the commonly-felt identity between the 'I' that is perceiving the object and the 'I' that is touching the object will be inexplicable. If the soul is identified with the visual organ, then the blind man will not be able to remember his past experiences as he has lost his soul or consciousness. Similar is the case with every other sense-organ. Truly speaking, the soul is the one identical knower in a particular body and all sense organs are the karanas or the instruments of the
knower. The knower is wholly different from the psycho-physical organism\textsuperscript{69}. The knower is the Soul.

### 3.4.3. CIT AND ANTAHKARANA

The Cit cannot be identified with the antahkarana. Antahkarana is only the instrument through which the soul is able to perform internal actions like remembering, recognizing, etc. If antahkarana is regarded as soul, then performance of internal actions will become impossible. An agency to perform the internal actions is necessary and that is Soul.

### 3.4.4. CIT AND THE WHOLE OF THE PSYCHO-PHYSICAL ORGANISM

The, Cit is different from the whole body and also from each one of the it is parts such as sense-organs, antahkarana, vital airs etc. The soul is always referred to as aham, whereas the word aham is generally used in connection with the body and its organs. Of course, on certain occasions, the aham is also used in regard to body as aham sthula, but such use is occasional and not universal. Moreover, the feeling of body does not exist constantly and uniformily for all times.
In deep sleep, the body-feeling of man ceases to exist, but the feeling of cit persists in all forms of physio-logical and psychological states. When an individual gets up from deep sleep he says: I was not able to know my own body during that period. This shows that the body-feeling of an individual does not exist while in deep sleep. Of course the feeling of aham persists.

Body is subjected to birth and death. At the time of birth a new body is formed and one can experience the feeling of this particular body to the last day of his life. After death there will be no more feeling of that particular body. Since the soul has to reap the fruits of actions of his previous life, it does not die with the death of a particular body.

The soul is eternal and indestructible and as such it is wholly different from the body which is destructible and dissolvable. In the case of sense-organs also, we find that they can be felt so long as they are intact. A blind man whose eyes are totally destroyed, will never have such a feeling as I am a Suksuma person (I possess visual organs). The presence of mind also will not be felt in a state of total implicity (mudavastha).
In the case of atman, however, the feeling of self will always be present. When a man is recovered from a state of fainting fit, he gets the feeling that it was he who remained in a state of fit sometime back and has got back his consciousness just now. Thus by distinguishing the self from the body, sense-organs, vital airs and antahkarana, Visistadvaita philosophy has been able to keep its theory free from the influences of Materialism, Buddhism etc.

4. CONCEPT OF ACIT

According the Visistadvaita, the ultimate reality can never be an unqualified principle. Absolute unqualifiedness is inconceivable and can never be proved by any means. This is because if anything is conscious, then its being, as qualified at least by consciousness, must be supposed to exist. Consciousness is the property (dharma) and the being itself is the substratum (dharmi); and these two necessarily stand in the substance-attribute relation. Hence, a conscious being is always a qualified being,-qualified at least by one quality (i.e. consciousness)\textsuperscript{72}.

One Brahman, in fact, has revealed itself into the form of the world and all the souls together with all physical objects, being its attributes, are at once one with Brahman and yet have real
existence as parts or modes of that one Ultimate Reality. Since God or the Highest Reality is immanent in all forms of the universe, both soul and matter, or cit and acit are real and permanent, though subject throughout to the control of God\textsuperscript{73}. Both soul and matter find their real existence in and through their inseparable association with God.

4.1. MEANING OF ACIT

According to Lokachara, acit refers to that aspect of Brahman which is not the substratum of consciousness. It is the objective principle of all changes and modifications which are visible in this world\textsuperscript{74}. Being dynamic it does not remain identical in its form and nature, like the principle of consciousness.

Acit is of three forms; Suddhasattva, Misrasattva and Sattvasunya; of these, the second and the third are described as Jada (inert) whereas the first one (i.e. Suddha-sattva) is described as ajada (non-inert or immaterial). Since dharma-bhutajnana, soul and God are also reckoned as ajada, the difference between ajadatva (immateriality) of Suddha-sattva and that of dharma-bhutajnana etc. should be made clear and explicit.
4.2. AJADATVA OF SUDDHA-SATTVA

It has been stated in the commentary on the Yatindramata-dipika that the immateriality of Suddha-sattva is admitted here by following the lines of the Tantric religion. Described Suddha-sattva as ajada (immaterial); this recognition is due to the fact that according to Tantric religion complete destruction of avidya is possible only on the awakening of this pure and unmixed sattva.

According to Visistadvaita philosophy also, Nirupadhika-jnana, which is suitable for liberation, arises only when Suddha-sattva flashes on the mind of the worshipper. Hence, Suddha-sattva is regarded as the substratum of true knowledge. During the state of bondage, the individual soul, though conscious by nature, does not seem to realise this truth and behaves like an unconscious material object due to avidya.

As soon as Suddha-sattva is roused up, the essentially conscious nature of the individual soul is fully manifested as a result of which it realises completely its essentially self-revealing character. Hence, Suddha-sattva, being the instrument that helps the individual soul to realise its ajada-nature, is itself described as ajada. Ghee, for instance, is called Ayu as it increases the life-span of a man.
Further Suddha sattva is not identical with the guna-sattva of prakṛti\textsuperscript{77}.

In the Yatindramatadipika, ajadatva (immateriality) has been explained as Svayamprakasattva; (self-revealing capacity). Soul is svayamprakasa in the sense that it shows itself and also knows itself. Suddha-sattva, however, does not possess such powers. Still it is also called self-revealing since it is the only means that helps the spirit to know and realise its true nature fully. Its self-revealing power consists in being the medium through which true knowledge emerges and helps the soul to attain liberation from this sorrow-stricken worldly-life\textsuperscript{78}. This inclusion of Suddha-sattva among ajada (immaterial) substances by the Srivaisnava school evidently proves that the bhakti-religion of India has, by that time, accepted many concepts of the tantra-cult.

Further, Visistadvaita, being the religion of a personal God like Visnu, must give us a soul-enchanting description of the abode of that supreme personality where the devotees of Narayana will be able to serve their beloved God through eternity. The abode of God cannot be made of the three gunas which form the matrix of this imperfect world. The stuff, out of which the abode of God, His body,
and the bodies of the liberated souls are made, should, therefore, be different from prakrti-the mother of this empirical world. Since Suddha-sattva is devoid of rajas and tamas, the ideal world, which made of it, is not subject to destruction and imperfection\textsuperscript{79}.

Suddha-sattva, however, is not an object of perception or of inference in the empirical state (i.e., in the stage of bondage). It can be known only through the sastras\textsuperscript{80}. The effects of prakrti as well as of time are perceptible in this world; but not so are the effects of Suddha-sattva. In the case of Suddha-sattva, the effects themselves are known through the scriptures. Hence, it is not possible for us to comprehend the nature of Suddha-sattva by any other worldly means except the means of scriptures.

Despite this, suddha-sattva has found a place in the philosophy of Visistadvaita. In the first place, the followers of this school have tried to arouse devotion in the minds of men towards nitya-vibhuti etc. described in the Puranas. Further, in order to make these things intelligible to human beings, this school has introduced the category of suddha-sattva perhaps with the hope that this theory will help men understand the nature of nitya-vibhuties etc.-the important concepts of the Vaisnava religion.
4.3. THE NATURE OF PRAKRTI

The matrix of the phenomenal world is Misra-sattva or Prakrti. The author of the Yatindramatadipika has defined Prakrti as the substratum of the three qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas. It is called Misra – Tattva because it constantly undergoes changes. A bound soul suffers from want of knowledge and bliss because of its association with Prakrti. Hence, Prakrti is called Avidya or the principle that prevents the soul from realising its essentially conscious nature. Prakrti is not a stable principle.

It is essentially a principle of change and becoming—a perpetually fleeting flux - without stability. Changes (both subtle and gross) are constantly taking place in the vast and expansive bosom of prakrti.

The next form is called vibhaktataman which means that the prior homogeneous state of prakrti has changed in such a manner that its differentiation into various forms and shapes, now seems to be possible. In other words, the tension of differentiation becomes visible in this stage and prakrti is now in the stage of passing into a more developed condition which is called aksaravastha. This stage or the stage of Aksara, therefore refers to that condition of nature in
which different tattvas are on the way of emergence; but they still remain in a unified and closely knitted condition. Gunas have been disturbed but this disturbance is not visible.

When the disturbance of the gunas becomes explicit, prakrti becomes ready to create different constitutive principles of this universe. The condition of nature which is just prior to the emergence of different effects in the graduated series is called the state of avyakta\textsuperscript{82}. These are simply the different states through which prakrti passes in order to create the world. As tattva, prakrti is one.

4.4. PRAKRTI AND MAYA

Like Maya of Sankara, Prakrti has been regarded as the material cause of the world and in many respects, one can easily detect similarities between the two. Still, the ontological status of Ramanuja’s prakrti is wholly different from that of Maya. According to Sankara, Maya is bhavabhava-vilaksana (different from both positive and negative) and is not metaphysically real.

There is no aprithaksiddhi relationship between Brahman and Maya. Maya is destroyed by knowledge of the ultimate reality. It, therefore, exists only so long as the nature of truth is not realised by
an individual soul. Prakrti, on the other hand, is metaphysically real, and as such, it is beginningless and endless. It is also inseparably associated with Brahman as one of its attributes.

Prakrti is described in the Sruti as asat because of its inherent dynamic nature\(^83\). The elements of the world undergo a change of nature at the time of creation and so they are termed either asat or nasti. These elements are not illusory and are not subject to absolute decay or total annihilation. The souls, on the other hand, do not undergo any change of essential nature. They are always the knowers and hence they are called asti, nitya, etc\(^84\). All physical objects, being the products of a real Prakrti, are also real under all circumstances. They constitute together the body of God.

The phrase ‘jagatcasa’ also implies the reality of Prakrti and its creation. Had the world been illusory then God would not have been described as the Lord of the world. It is non-sensical to describe Brahman as the protector of the universe that does not exist at all. The world, being the body of God, cannot be separated from Him. He is described as the ruler of the world.
Thus, according to Visistadvaita the Sruti and the Puranas have never described the world as non-existent or illusory. The distinction between knower and the known is not a fabrication of imagination. The knower can never be reduced to a form of knowledge and prakrti, too, can never be viewed as an adjunct or upadhi of pure differenceless Consciousness. It is as real as Brahman and is not the cause of super-imposition. The world is not projected by prakrti in the manner of a magic world. It is evolved from nature through the instrumentality of Divine will.

4.5. REALITY OF THE WORLD

Just as Sankara has deduced the illusory nature of the world from the illusory nature of maya—its material cause. In the same manner, Ramanuja has derived the real character of the world from the reality of its material cause (i.e. Prakrti). In the Chand-upanisad, it has been stated that even before creation, the world was real\textsuperscript{85}. The whole world has originated from the real, is grounded on the real and is merged in the real. Before creation, the world was in prakrti in a very subtle and unmanifested form and that form was not suitable for practical purposes. Hence it is stated that before creation, the world was asat. Asat here really means unsuitability for bearing names and forms due to extreme subtlety\textsuperscript{86}.
The world being a real modification of a real cause, is real. It is called non-eternal (anitya) because of its essentially mutable nature. What exists cannot be unreal or false. Things enter into different states successively. The previous state of a substance passes away and a subsequent state comes into being without bringing into existence an entirely new substance. Things in space and time change and disappear in quick succession. Prakrti is not merely what it is but what becomes and this becoming of prakrti in diverse directions gives rise to different worldly objects. Matter is eternally unstable. Every physical object of this world is essentially fugitive and flows into different states without pause.

It is because of these fugitiveness, instability and perpetually fleeting nature of prakrti and also of the world that both are often described in the Sruti as nasti. Nasti, in no context, means false or tuccha. In the causal state, prakrti is subtle and undifferentiated; but in the effect state, it evolves itself into numerous varieties of names and forms constituting the empirical world.

4.6. EVOLUTION OF THE WORLD

According to Visistadvaita, the evolution of the world from Prakrti takes place through the instrumentality of thought and will
power of God. When a commotion is caused in the three gunas, the subtle prakrti gradually becomes more and more gross so as to become more and more suitable for creating this world. Creation is gradual throughout the whole course (i.e. from the initial stage till its final result).

From the account of evolution given in the Tattvatraya, it appears that this system believes in the existence of a condition of prakrti in between its avyakta form and the form of mahat. This intermediate form is termed pragnaga Prakrti by Lokacharyya. During bondage, the soul remains in close contact with this pragnaga prakrti in which the fictitious notion of self-hood is generated. This pragnaga prakrti then evolves into mahat with the three states of sattva, rajas and tamas.

The introduction of the pragnaga prakrti in the evolutionary scheme and the upholding of the view that this pragnaga prakrti produces gradually 24 principles, seem to offer some justification for the evolution of mahat with a preponderance of sattva guna in it. Against the philosophy of classical Samkhya, it has been held that Samkhya has failed to answer why the first category in the evolutionary process should be one in which sattva-guna should
predominate when nature in the subtle state does not show any tendency towards the predomination of sattva over rajas and tamas.

Here, it has been shown that even before the evolution of mahat, prakrti undergoes a change in such a manner that a subtle state of it with a tendency towards transperance comes into being in the form of pranaga prakrti in which the false notion of self-hood is produced\(^8\).

### 4.6.1. ORGANS

In the state of pranaga-prakrti, rajas and tamas too exist but the tendency is towards the excess of sattva over rajas and tamas. From pranaga-prakrti, by a further process of change, mahat comes into being. Mahat then changes into ahamkara with the three states of sattva, rajas and tamas\(^9\). According to the predominance of a particular guna, ahamkara is called vaikarika, taijasa and bhutadi. From sattvika ahamkara originate. These are included in the psychical aspect of evolution. Organs are eleven in number and they are again of two kinds: organs of knowledge and the organs of action. Organs of knowledge help the self to know and understand the world and they are classified into mind, ears, eyes, nose, tongue and skin.
4.6.2. MIND AND INTELLECT

Manas or mind is the inner sense-organ and is the instrument for recollection and coordination of knowledge. Heart is the seat of manas. Mind functions as ahamkara, citta, buddhi etc. It is also the cause of bondage and liberation. In the Bhagavadgita also, mind has been described as the cause of bondage and liberation. In Samkhya-yoga, however, bondage and liberation are spoken of as being due to the functioning of buddhi-tattva. Manas is only an organ derived from sattvika ahamkara which again is a product of buddhi\(^91\).

Thus, apparently speaking, there seems to be a difference made between buddhi and manas by the philosophy of the classical samkhya. But if we go deeper into the philosophical subtleties of this school, we will find that this distinction between buddhi and manas is not very rigid or absolutely non-flexible. Samkalapa is the function of mind and the function of buddhi work together and both of them are very subtle. When manifested, both remain so closely intermingled that it is very difficult for us to detect whether one organ or more than one is functioning at the root\(^92\).
Hence it does not make much difference whether mind and intellect are differentiated as two or recognized as one organ performing different functions on different occasions. According to Ramanuja manas is called ahām karā when due to mind's activity the self is falsely identified with the body. It is called citta when it desires a thing. When manas discriminates between what is true and what is false, it is regarded as buddhi.49

4.6.3. SENSE ORGANS

According to Visistadvaita philosophy all sense-organs together with the atomic soul are located in the heart. This seems to be fully justified when the soul is atomic in nature. Consciousness belongs to the soul and is manifested in experience only through the actions of the sense-organs. Hence, there must be a very close and intimate-connection between the soul and the sense-organs. Since the soul is atomic in nature, it can maintain an intimate relation with the sense-organs if it exists in a place where sense-organs are located.

Moreover, regarding the place of buddhi and ahamkara, the general belief is that they are located in the heart. Now the sense-organs are the modifications of ahamkara and according to
Parinamavada, cause and effect cannot remain separate in two different places\textsuperscript{94}. Hence, the sense-organs also should reside in the heart which is the seat of ahamkara and buddhi. Thus, We find that visistadvaita is not dogmatic and uncritical in locating the soul as well as the sense-organs in the heart. It is therefore obvious that the views expressed by Ramanuja-school in this regard are in harmony with its fundamental position.

Of the different sense-organs, the eye is the organ that perceives colour, the ear is the organ that hears sound, the nose is the organ that smells odour, the tongue is the organ that tastes objects and the skin is the organ that gives a man the sensation of touch. The five organs of action are speech, movement, grasping, excretion and generation.

From the tamasa ahamkara, called Bhutadi, arise the five subtle elements (tanmatras) from which by successive evolutions, the five gross elements come into being. The five subtle elements are ether, air, fire, water and earth. Now, regarding the evolution of tanmatras and mahabhutas from the tamasa-ahamkara, two different views are found in the Tattvatraya\textsuperscript{95}.
4.6.4. GRADUAL EVOLUTION

According to one interpretation, Sabdatanmatra, first of all, arises from tamasa-ahamkara; and from sabdatanmatra, akasa and sparsatanmatra come into being. From sparsatanmatra arise akasa and rupatanmatra; from rupatanmatra, fire and rasatanmatra are produced. From rasatanmatra, water and gandhanmatra emerge and from gandhanmatra arises the earth.

Sabdatanmatra arises from bhutadi, akasa arises from sabdatanmatra. Sparsatanmatra again arises from akasa and air arises from sparsatanmatra. Air further produces rupatanmatra and rupatanmatra brings fire into existence. Rasatanmatra then arises from fire and water is produced from rasatanmatra. Lastly, gandhanmatra arises from water and the earth comes into being from gandhanmatra.

Of these two interpretations, the first one appears to be better than the second, as in the second theory, tanmatras are supposed to be produced from the bhutas. Generally, evolutionary changes proceed from the subtle to the gross and this direction has been reversed to a certain extent in the second interpretation.
4.6.5. SPACE

Space or akasa is a product of prakrti, being an evolute from sabdatanmatra. Since it is a product, it is not eternal; and as it does not pervade ahamkara, it is not allpervasive. Space or akasa, however, is not the absence of covering. On the contrary, it is something positive. Since space-feeling is never contradicted, it has to be regarded as positive like all other positive entities, such as earth, air, etc. Space can never be viewed as the mere negation of positive entities like the earth, air, water, etc. Had space been prior or posterior negation of earth, air, etc. then so long as these objects, constituting the world exist there should not have been any experience of space\textsuperscript{96}. This, however, is not the case. Moreover, space cannot be the absolute negation of the earth, etc. because absolute negation of things like the earth, air, etc. is unthinkable. Hence, space should be admitted as a real entity.

4.6.6. TIME

Time is also a form of acit. Since it is devoid of sattva, it called sattva-sunya. Rajas and tamas are present in kala\textsuperscript{97}. Time is the cause of the modifications of prakrti and also of all created objects. Time is real; it is not outside Brahman though it does not merge in Brahman. It is not independent like the time of the Nyaya-
Vaisesika system. It is also not an aspect of prakrti as is held by the samkhya-yoga philosophy. It is independent of prakrti and everything in this world is subject to it. In reality, Time is eternal, one and all-pervasive; but in practice, Time is divided into hours, moments, seconds, etc., and is used in such a manner as to suggest that it is non-eternal. Non-eternity of Time is due to upadhi or limiting adjunct.

At the time of creation, God too arranges things of the world in accordance with the law of Time. In the case of Nityavibhuti Time exists but does not exist as an independent principle. As changes are perceived everywhere, the reality of time cannot be denied. The scriptures also speak of the reality of Time.

4.7. SATTVA SUNYA AND SUDDHA SATTVA

It has already been stated that Time has been described as sattva-sunya. The question that naturally disturbs our mind is: what does this ‘sattva-sunyata’ really imply? Does it mean that sattva is wholly absent in Time? Or does it mean that sattva becomes so much over-powered by rajas and tamas that it becomes totally ineffective? According to Samkhya, there cannot be any object in which three gunas are not present. This, in Visistadvaita philosophy,
is true only with regard to those objects which are the products of prakṛti (i.e. misra-sattva)." 

Time is not a product of prakṛti and so it is not absolutely necessary that all the three gunas should exist in it. Just as there is pure sattva, there is time, consisting only of rajas and tamas. In fact, the presence of sattva becomes absolutely necessary in the sphere of knowledge. In the case of time, no knowledge-giving property is needed. So, Visistadvaita philosophy has spoken of Time as devoid of sattva. It is a form of acit different from prakṛti and suddha-sattva.

From the acceptance of these two forms of acit, namely suddha-sattva and sattva-sunya, it follows that unlike Samkhya, Visistadvaita believes that rajas and tamas can exist without sattva and sattva too can exist without being mixed up with rajas and tamas. Acit is, thus, a term that includes within itself two jada (inert) substances and one ajada (non-inert) substance. Since both prakṛti and kala are regarded as the causes of this empirical world, the philosophy of Visistadvaita asserts the existence of more than one cause of the world even if Brahman is excluded.

4.8. CHANGE AND PERMANENCE
The principle of evolutionary process of nature mainly implies the inclusion of all qualities in all the bhutas. The empirical world is a world of change and mutation; but all these changes take place in a substratum that is permanent. According to Buddhism, however, the world has a ceaseless flow of changes, but these changes simply hang in the air, as there is no permanent principle underlying this process of becoming. Ramanuja holds that unless we recognize the existence of a permanent substance which continuously undergoes changes of states, we shall not be able to explain the fact of recognition. If the objects to be recognized are newly created at every moment, then recognition becomes an absurdity.

Buddhism, however, seeks to remove this difficulty by saying that recognition means recognition of an object as similar to the prior one which no longer exists. This, too, is not possible, since the person who experienced the prior object and the person who is experiencing the posterior, are entirely different according to the doctrine of momentariness. Ramanuja holds that if the knower and the known are supposed to be momentary, then the phenomenon of recognition can never be explained. Hence Ramanuja always maintains that must be permanent knower Universe not a chance creation.
This universe, according to Visistadvaita, is not a chance-creation, nor is it a mere superfluous manifestation of Divine energy. It is meaningful as it is the place where bound souls can achieve emancipation which is their due. Visistadvaita explains the universe in terms of Sarira-sariri relation. Under all circumstances, souls and matter constitute the body of God. When they are subtle, Brahman is in the causal condition and when they are in the gross state, Brahman is in the state of the effect and is called the world. The world as the body of God or as the adjective of God is inseparably associated with Him. It is because as the innermost soul of the entire world of cit and acit, paramatman (the Supreme soul) pervades, supports, regulates and protects all things and beings, that He is called Isvara.

Due to inseparable relationship, both conscious soul and unconscious physical world are regarded as parts, or body or power of God. Cit (spirit), acit (matters) and God are naturally distinct and different: but as they always remain together due to aprithaksiddhi relation, (relation of inseparableness), the triune unity is regarded as one. Adjectives which are inseparably associated with a
particular noun do not merely express their own meanings but they also refer to the noun which is their common substratum\textsuperscript{101}. 

In the case of the blue lotus, blueness and lotusness not only convey their own meanings but they also refer to the substance of which they are inseparably related qualities. Separable adjectives, however, in the case of samanadhikaranya, needs the help of ‘matuparthiya pratya’ to refer to their substrates. Kundala, for instance, will be changed into kundali to refer to the person who wears it. Cit and acit, therefore, being inseparable adjectives of God\textsuperscript{102}, naturally refer to God while conveying their own meaning. In fact, inseparably related adjectives become meaningful from the practical point of view in and through the meaning of the noun that they qualify. The practically useful meaning of blue is not intelligible unless it gets associated with the noun lotus or the noun jar or any other noun.

In the same manner, Cit and acit also become meaningful and effective by being associated with Brahman. It has been stated in the Sruti that God, through His will power, changed the subtle acit (matter) into gross acit, bearing different forms and names; then He made cit (spirit) enter into acit as their indwelling spirit thereby
manifesting Himself in the form of this meaningful world. So, it is clear that cit, acit and Brahman are three different tattvas; but as both soul and matter remain always in union with God, we get only one substance qualified by two adjectives\textsuperscript{103}.

The identity propositions of the upanisads do not imply identity between God, Soul and matter or between soul and matter. On the other hand, all these propositions express emphatically the identity between Karana Brahman (causal Brahman) and Karya Brahman (effect Brahman)\textsuperscript{104}.

4.9. CONCEPT OF AVIDYA

The word avidyas has been used by Visistadvaita in two different senses: metaphysical and ethical. Avidya appears in almost all the systems of Indian Philosophy, although there is a great divergence of opinions regarding its specific nature. In Samkhya, 'avidya' has been termed 'aviveka' which is intellectual in the sense that it is a failure to discriminate between the self and the not self. The Nyaya-darsana, too, gives an intellectual interpretation of avidya or ajnana. Sankara-vedanta, on the other hand, has recognized maya or avidya as the objective matrix of the world and has described it as bhavarupa (Positive) anirvacaniya (indescribable)
and illusory from the transcendental point of view. This avidya theory of Samkaracharya has been severely criticised by Ramanuja who does not believe in the existence anywhere of anything bearing resemblance with the avidya of Sankara\(^{105}\).

### 4.9.1. METAPHYSICAL MEANING OF AVIDYA

In the metaphysics of Ramanuja-darsana, Prakrti itself has been called avidya since ‘acit’ is the principle that prevents the soul from realising its essentially conscious nature. Prakrti, being unconscious, is naturally opposed to vidya or knowledge (navidya). It is the material cause of the world and is trigunatmika (Possessor of the three gunas) Prakrti of Ramanuja possesses a status wholly different from the status of the avidya of sankara.

In the Philosophy of Advaita avidya is a terminable principle and is not the ultimate truth. It possesses freedom to put forth appearances only and not to create a real world. The knowledge of Brahman not only reveals the falsity of the given world but it also implies the falsity of maya or avidya as nothing else can remain before the Advaita-Brahman.
But Prakrti of Ramanuja, though called avidya in a particular sense, is real and as such it is beginningless and endless. The only speciality about its reality is that it is real as a mode of God from whom alone it derives it substantiality and meaning. Like the avidya of Sankara, prakrti is not 'Namadheyatvamatraram'. On the contrary, it is the metaphysically real cause of all modifications of the world\textsuperscript{106}.

4.9.2. ETHICAL MEANING OF AVIDYA

In the ethical realm of Visistadvaita philosophy has used the word avidya in the sense of varnasrama karmas\textsuperscript{107} which bring about the expansion and contraction of the dharmabhuta-jnana of the individual soul. Avidya, in this sense too, is a positive entity possessing the power of obscuring dharmabhuta-jnana (attributive knowledge) and creating thereby the false sense of agency in the soul. The attitude of the individual soul towards the world, therefore, becomes distorted. The individual thinks himself to be the lord of the world and the main purpose of the world seems to him to be simply to cater to his various needs and comforts.

Avidya in the form of karma, thus becomes the generating cause only of the bhoga (experience) of the individual souls and not of the bhogya which is prakrti. Due to the inadequate expansion of the dharmabhuta-jnana, the individual develops a false attitude
towards the universe and instead of admitting God as the ultimate source of everything, he considers himself to be the controller of the world. In the sense of karma, therefore, avidya is a principle of obscuration. In this sense avidya can be treated as a third power besides ksetrajna-sakti and prakrti-sakti.

Now, all these deliberations on the meaning of avidya lead us to believe that in the visistadvaita philosophy, avidya has not been used in any rigid and fixed sense. Anything that stands in the way of self-realisation and God realisation or anything that develops in the soul a strong yearning for the ordinary pleasures of life, may be called avidya\textsuperscript{108}. 