CHAPTER V

TWO SUB-CATEGORIES

1. Now let us consider the two sub-categories, namely, the animate souls and the inanimate objects. What has gone before may have some mediate concern no doubt. But these two have immediate concern for us. For one of them we actually are in our present state and the other constitutes the setting in which we find ourselves. Of these two again, the first, i.e., the animate souls have direct importance. For they are active participants in this World-Play. The importance of the other lies in so far as it contributes to the happiness or otherwise of the first. As our aim in this Thesis is simply to deal with only the general aspects of any problem, we do not go into details and touch only the salient points. Now, whatever be the Ultimate Nature of these two categories, it is a patent fact that the majority of those that belong to the first do not feel fully satisfied in the setting in which they find themselves. They have a dim vision of, and an unconscious instinctive drive in, some definite direction. This is happiness. But what constitutes their happiness they do not know. And this definite ignorance of theirs together with the indefinite urge is at the root of all the worldly activities, whether economical, social, political, or spiritual. These souls try their level best to secure the happiness, of which they have only a dim vision.
Most of them fail to do so. And even those who either wholly or partly succeed are again not as happy as they expect to be. For they want more. The poet Shelley's lines:

"We think before and after
And pine for what is not" (1)

very beautifully describe this condition. After this much general consideration, we may now turn to the consideration of what our System of Süttadhāvaita Vedānta can contribute in this direction. Let it be made clear at the outset that it, being a spiritual activity, will directly contribute to mental peace only. Next, we have to consider how it will help us in adjusting ourselves to the setting in which we find ourselves.

2. Coming to the point, the souls referred to above are either active or contemplative. And we find that the majority thereof are active, the minority alone being contemplative. These latter will concentrate on the one thought that the Ultimate Reality has become these animate souls as well as the inanimate objects. In the beginning this will be a mere idea only. But by constant concentration on this one idea, that idea will gather strength and the sight of everything will in course of time evoke this one idea in his mind, which in its turn will give rise to ineffable mental peace and even joy. That such a person will radiate
peace and joy all around, we can easily suppose. But being contemplative he will generally do nothing more. Coming to the active type, we can say that behind all his activities there will be this one idea animating them all. He will, in course of time, come instinctively to feel that God or the Ultimate Reality is a Master Organism whereof the various souls are different organs. The nature of this feeling will be made clear by the following illustration: Our body is a big organism. Our hands and feet are its various organs. If a mosquito sits on our foot, our hand instinctively reaches it and drives it away. Our hands and feet are evidently different. Nevertheless, one instinctively runs to the succour of the other. Why? Because some one and the same entity animates both of them. The same will be the case with an ardent active follower of this system. To the best of his ability, he will, in the first place, do no harm to anything whether animate or inanimate, and in the second place, will run to the succour of others without any distinction of caste or creed. The lives of Śrī-Vallabhācārya and Śrī-Vītthalesā were ideal in this respect. The former was more contemplative, the latter more active. And this latter is reported to have offered to a dying untouchable woman the water that was meant to be offered to his Deity. As for their attitude towards inanimate objects, they will be worshippers of beauty and grace everywhere. The ideal person, according to both
Sri-Vallabhacarya and Sri-Viṭṭhaḷesā, is one who hurts nothing either animate or inanimate, and to the best of his ability, to please the animate souls and to beautify the inanimate objects. It is in this way that he realises his ideal according to the System of Śuddhādvaita Vedānta. Is this ideal not a universal one in its application? And does the System of Śuddhādvaita Vedānta not supply a rational basis for this ideal? This is what I have humbly to place before the general intelligent public to the best of my ability. But this ability is not mine. It is the liberal gift of the Almighty All-gracious Ultimate Reality.