

THE RELATION BETWEEN LIŅGA AND AŅGA IN ŚRĪKARABHĀṢYAM OF ŚRĪPATI PAṆḌITA: A HERMENEUTICAL EXPLORATION

Ivan D'Souza (ivanmiyar@gmail.com)

Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune

Abstract

The Vedāntic Ācāryas try to solve the relation of identity and difference on the basis of *Prasthānatraya* or three foundational texts. Upaniṣads, Brahmasūtras and Bhagavadgītā are the triple authoritative treatises of Vedāntic doctrines. Brahmasūtras are the *sūtras* which deal with Ultimate Reality, Brahman. These brief aphorisms written by Bādarāyaṇa harmonize the teachings of the Upaniṣads. Different Vedāntic Ācāryas have interpreted the Brahmasūtras to suit their systems of thought. We have Śrīpatipaṇḍita's *Śrīkarabhāṣyam* which is one of the latest commentaries on Brahmasūtras from the perspective Vīraśaivism.

Since the concept of relation has been the central point of discussion among Vedāntic scholars this article highlights the relation between the individual self and the Universal Spirit in *Śrīkarabhāṣyam* of Śrīpatipaṇḍita. It explores the relation of both difference and non-difference as established in *Śrīkarabhāṣyam* and the hermeneutical contribution of Śrīpatipaṇḍita. The aim of this article is to undertake a hermeneutical exploration of "Liᅅgāᅅga Relation" in *Śrīkarabhāṣyam*, to open the new avenues of research in *bhedābheda* Vedānta School of thought, to unearth the inter-disciplinary influences and to show the relevance of identity and difference in the contemporary world.

Keywords

Aᅅśa, Aᅅga, Ātman, Bhedābheda, Brahman, Brahmasūtras, Jīva, Liᅅga, Mukti, Śiva, Vīraśaivism, Viśeᅅadvaita

Introduction

The concept of relation has been the central point of discussion among Vedāntic scholars. They elaborate their view of relation between the individual self and the Universal Spirit either by affirming their identity or difference, or difference-cum-non-difference. In India, there are strict non-dualistic schools of Śaᅅkara and Vallabha which harp on identity and strict dualistic doctrine of Madhva which insist on difference and again systems which consider non-difference as principal viz., Rāmānuja and Śrīkaᅅᅅᅅa schools. Furthermore, the schools of

Nimbārka, Bhāskara, Śrīkrṣṇacaitanya, Śrīpati are the schools which consider the relation of both difference and non-difference. Śrīpati in his *Śrīkarabhāṣyam* tries to reconcile all the Śruti texts by postulating the doctrine of ‘*Bhedābheda*tmaka *Viśeṣādvaita*’ (difference-cum-non-difference) from the perspective of Vīraśaivism. He advocates that both the duality and non-duality can mutually co-exist with each other in *liṅga* (Paraśiva or Absolute) and *aṅga* (Individual Self).

Śrīpatiṇḍita’s *Śrīkarabhāṣyam* means “Giver of good fortune/ auspiciousness commentary.”¹ It is one of the latest commentaries on Brahmasūtras and also the authoritative interpretation of Vīraśaivism. The aim of this article is to undertake a hermeneutical exploration of “*Liṅgāṅga Relation*” in *Śrīkarabhāṣyam*, to open the new avenues of research in *bhedābheda* Vedānta School of thought, to unearth the inter-disciplinary influences and resonances and to show the relevance of identity and difference in the contemporary world.

1. Life, Context and Philosophical Influences of Śrīpatiṇḍita

Śrīpati who hailed from the land between Krishna and Godāvāri called Bezwada (present Vijayawada of Andhra Pradesh), in the Guntur district (present Krishna District) lived in 14th Century. Śrīpati was a great Vīraśaiva teacher and some sources reveal that he was the *guru* of the ruling king of Vegi of his time.²

The eight teachers mentioned in the Brahmasūtras may have influenced the thoughts and trends of the philosophy of Śrīpati in writing his *bhāṣya*. They are: Ātreya (3.4.44); Āśmarathya (1.2.29; 1.4.20); Auḍulomin (1.4.21; 3.4.45; 4.4.6); Kāṣṇārjini (3.1.9); Kāśakṛtsna (1.4.22); Jaimini (1.2.28; 1.2.31; 1.3.31; 1.4.18; 3.2.40; 3.4.2; 3.4.18; 3.4.40; 4.1.17; 4.3.12; 4.4.5 and 4.4.11); Bādari (1.2.30; 1.2.31; 3.1.11; 4.3.7 and 4.4.10) and Bādarāyaṇa (1.3.26; 1.3.33).³ Śrīpati accepts the *bhedābheda* position of Kāśakṛtsna because he takes all the Śrutis into account. For Kāśakṛtsna, individual soul is absolutely non-different from Brahman. The non-modified highest Lord himself is the individual soul. He believes that Brahman abides in *jīva*.⁴

The thought pattern of Śrīpati’s *Śrīkarabhāṣyam* is mostly influenced and shaped by the philosophy of Vīraśaivism. Śrīpatiṇḍita refers to Vīraśaiva movement in his commentary

¹ José Pereira, ed. *Hindu Theology: A Reader* (New York: Image Books, 1976), 396.

² C. Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣya: Being the Vīraśaiva Commentary on the Vedānta-Sūtras by Śrīpati* (Introduction), Vol. I (Bangalore: Bangalore Press, 1936), 23.

³ George C. Adams, *The Structure and Meaning of Bādarāyaṇa Sūtras* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1993), 11.

⁴ S. M. Srinivasa Chari, *The Philosophy of the Vedāntasūtra* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1998), 107-108.

by the term “*jīvamukhya Prāṇaliṅgāt*” (SB 1.1.32). He refers to the religious ceremony of identifying *Prāṇa* with *liṅga*.⁵ Śrīpati defines Vīraśaivas as, “The Śaivas who have knowledge of the Vedas and Āgamas and their inner spiritual meanings; who are fired with the desire to attain *Mokṣa*; who are followers of the Vedic path; and who are strict in following the tenets of pure or strict Śaivism.”⁶ He does not call his philosophy as Vīraśaivism but his commentary is coloured by Vīraśaiva doctrines all through. He delineates the crucial doctrines of Vīraśaivism like *Pañcācāra*, *Aṣṭāvaraṇa* and *Ṣaṣṭhala*.

Pañcācāra or the fivefold ethical codes - *Śivācāra*, *Liṅgācāra*, *Sadācāra*, *Bhṛtyācāra* and *Gaṇācāra* (SB 1.1.2).⁷ *Śivācāra* is the belief in Śiva as the only Godhead or Parabrahman. *Liṅgācāra* is the worship of Śiva through the *Liṅga*. It calls for wearing of *iṣṭaliṅga* around the neck and worshipping it. *Liṅga* is the Godhead of *Aṅga*, the devotee.⁸ These two principles concern the personal realm of life. *Sadācāra* is religious and moral discipline. It comprises the good conduct of individual, family, and also the community. *Bhṛtyācāra* means devotee’s attitude of humility. It is placing oneself in a subordinate position forgoing one’s pride and ego. *Gaṇācāra* stands for loyalty to the community of Śiva-worshippers and worshipping of God at sacred places.⁹

Aṣṭāvaraṇas are the aids to faith. They are: *Guru*, *Liṅga*, *Jaṅgama*, *Bhasma*, *Rudrākṣa*, *Pādodaka* (*Tīrtha*), *Prasāda*, and *Mantra* (SB 1.1.2 & 1.2.2). The philosophy of Vīraśaivism is also called as the *Ṣaṣṭhala Siddhānta*. Vīraśaivism proposes that the individual passes from the state of *samsāra* to the state of grace of Śiva through *Ṣaṣṭhala*. *Sthala* designates Śiva or Brahman, the source of manifold universe. *Bhakta Sthala* is the stage of a devotee. *Bhakti* is an important factor for the realization of the self. In *Maheśvara Sthala* there is joy, glee and motivation to do good. In this stage the individuals have to observe the vows (*vrata*), regulations (*niyama*) and moral precepts (*śīla*) very strictly.¹⁰ The individual has to perform actions without desiring the fruits (*Niṣkāma Karma*). Then Śiva bestows on the *jīva* favour or grace. It is termed as *Prasāda*. In *Prāṇaliṅgi Sthala*, the difference begins to vanish. Due to the waning impressions of duality the identity is not complete here. *Śaraṇa Sthala* is the state of total surrender to Śiva. *Śaraṇa* or self-surrender is the form of *bhakti* that is active here. The

⁵ Kanti Chandra Pandey, *An Outline of History of Śaiva Philosophy*, ed. R. C. Dwivedi (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986), 37.

⁶ Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣya*, 24.

⁷ H. P. Malledevaru, *Essentials of Vīraśaivism* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1973), 73.

⁸ M. R. Sakhare, *History and Philosophy of Lingāyat Religion* (Dharwad: Karnatak University, 1978), 329.

⁹ N. C. Sargant, *The Lingayats: The Vira-Saiva Religion* (Bangalore: Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1963), 126.

¹⁰ S. C. Nandimath, *A Handbook of Vīraśaivism* (Dharwar: The Literary Committee, L. E. Association, 1942), 169-170.

soul is communion with Śiva in this stage. In *Aikya Sthala*, the final state, there is complete unity and there is no distinction. The soul ceases to exist from Śiva.

2. Content and Structure of Śrīkarabhāṣyam

Śrīpati deals with 544 *sūtras* under 173 *adhikaraṇas* or sections consisting 16 *pādas* or parts of 4 *adhyāyas*. The four chapters or *adhyāyas* are - *samanvaya*, *avirodha*, *sādhana* and *phala*. Each chapter is divided into four parts or *pādas* and each part into various sections or *adhikaraṇas*. *Adhikaraṇa* means the topic discussed. It consists of one or more *sūtras* or aphorisms in a cluster. An *adhikāraṇa* is a unit of interpretation which contains five members: subject or matter; doubt or question; prima-facie argument; conclusion or solution; pertinence or connexion.¹¹

In the first chapter of his commentary Śrīpati establishes that Paraśiva is the ultimate aim of all the Upaniṣads. To show that the Śruti texts are non-conflicting, Śrīpati refutes the positions of other systems in *Avirodhādhyāya*. Third *pāda* of second chapter, the *Jīvalakṣaṇa pāda* highlights the essential characteristics of the individual soul. The third chapter delineates the spiritual means or ways of attaining Brahman. In the fourth chapter Śrīpati enunciates the nature of liberation and fruits enjoyed by the *mukta* in the *mukti* state. The references to *Jīva* and its relation to Śiva, are found mainly in the third part of the second chapter (SB 2.3.16-50), the first and the second parts of the third chapter (SB 3.1.1-27 & 3.2.1-40) and in the fourth chapter.

3. The Relation between Liṅga and Aṅga

Śrīpati's system is characterized by different names - *Viśeṣādvaita*, *Dvaitādvaitābhidhāna*, *Bhedābhedātmaka*, and *Viśeṣādvaita Siddhānta Sthāpaka*.¹² He also gives the following epithets to the Vīraśaiva sect: *Davitādvaita*, *Viśeṣādvaita*, *Seśvārādvaita*, *Śivādvaita*, *Sarva-śruti-sāra-mata*, *Bhedābheda* (SB 2.1.13).¹³ It is also known as *Śakti-Viśiṣṭādvaita*. Śrīpati's *Viśeṣādvaita* is different from other *Advaita* systems. He distinguishes his *Advaita* from others with *viśeṣa* i.e., 'distinctness without contradiction'. He intends technical sense of the term "vi-śeṣa-advaita."¹⁴ Śrīpati gives the meaning of *Viśeṣādvaita* in

¹¹ H. T. Colebrooke, *Essays on the Religion and Philosophy of the Hindus* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1858), 211.

¹² Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣhya*, 90.

¹³ Ganesh Vasudeo Tagare, *Śaivism: Some Glimpses*, (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld (P) Ltd., 1996), 101-104.

¹⁴ Shailaja Bapat, *A Study of the Vedānta in the Light of Brahmasūtras* (Delhi: New Bharatiya Book Corporation, 2004), 168.

the 15th hymn at the beginning of his *bhāṣya*. ‘Vi’ means *Paramātmā* or Lord Śiva; “śeṣa” refers to *jīva* or embodied self and *advaita* means non-duality as rivers merge in the sea so too *jīva* attains Śivahood through *upāsanā* (15th hymn at the beginning). *Viśeṣādvaita* is opposed to the *Nirviśeṣādvaita* (SB 2.2.27) of Śaṅkara. The word “*Viśeṣa*” which is prefixed to “*advaita*” shows that it is neither pure monism nor pure dualism at everytime and all levels.

3.1 Paraśiva or Liṅga as Brahman

Śrīpati uses Paraśiva and *Pati* as the synonyms for Brahman. Paraśiva is used to distinguish it from the first category of categories (Śiva). Paraśiva is also called as *liṅga* Vīraśaivism. Literally *liṅga* stands for a symbol, mark or a sign. The term *liṅga* is derived from the two roots, ‘*li*’ which means ‘to absorb’ and ‘*gam*’ means ‘to go.’¹⁵ So it means, ‘that into which everything goes or is dissolved’ i.e., Paraśiva.

Discussing on the nature of Brahman, Śrīpati propounds that the Śrutis dealing with attributeless, differenceless Brahman indicates the period before the creation. Śiva expands His energy and creates the world. Thus, Brahman appears in two forms, namely, pure consciousness and the unconscious material world.¹⁶ *Parameśvara* has the qualities of *Sarvopādānatva* (material cause of everything), *Sarvāntaryāmitva* (inner controller of everything), *Sarveśvaratva* (Sovereignty), *sarvātmakatva* (immanent in everything), *sarvaśabdavāchyatva* (revealed by all words), etc (SB 1.2.6). The six qualities which are exclusive to *Parameśvara* are: *Sarvajñatva* (all-knowing), *Sarvāntaryāmitva*, *Sakalajagadvyāpakatva* (present in all the worlds), *Sarvadhikājñānatva* (knowledgeable than everything), *Sarvaśāstrapraṇetritva* (creator of all scriptures) and *Sarvavastvabhāṣakatva* (illuminated in all states).¹⁷

3.2 Doctrine of Jīva

The term ‘*aṅga*’ is derived from the root, ‘*aṁ*’ referring to ‘Brahman’, and ‘*gacati*’ which means ‘goes.’¹⁸ Hence, *aṅga* means ‘that which goes towards Paraśiva i.e., *jīva*. Śrīpati elaborately discusses the nature and attributes of *jīva* in two portions in his commentary, namely, third part of second chapter and fourth part of fourth chapter (SB 2.3.16-50 and SB 4.4.1-22).

¹⁵ Malledevaru, *Essentials of Vīraśaivism*, 4.

¹⁶ Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy: Southern Schools of Saivism*, Vol. V (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 177.

¹⁷ Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣya*, 352.

¹⁸ Tagare, *Saivism: Some Glimpses*, 114.

Jīva is endless (*anādi*); bound down from birth by *māyā* (*māyāpāśabaddha*); and always subject to *tāpatraya* (three kinds of passions); and consequently subject to birth and death. The *jīva* is the abode of all happiness and misery (*sukha* and *duḥkha*). Both the *jīva* and Brahman have no beginning (*ajanya*) and eternal (*avināśi*).¹⁹ *Jīva* has three kinds of bodies, viz., *sthūla* (gross), *sūkṣma* (subtle) and *kāraṇa* (causal). The body is attached with *malatrayas* (impurities): *āṇava* (ignorance), *māyā* (transmigratory experience), *kārmika* (action). There are three kinds of *jīvas* - *baddha*, *śuddha* and *mukta*. Śiva is present in the consciousness of the person like sword in the sheath, so, Śiva is in the consciousness of *śarīra* (SB 1.1.1). Commenting on SB 1.1.13, “*ānandamayobhyāsyāt*,” (The self consisting of bliss on account of repetition of bliss) Śrīpati presents that *jīva* is never different from Brahman and he is always *ānandamayah*.²⁰

3.2.1 Jīvalakṣaṇa Pāda (2.3.16-50)

Śrīpati systematically presents the nature and attributes of individual self in the section 2.3.16-50. He has dealt mainly with six characteristic marks in this part in six *viśaya vākyas* or topics. He concedes that *jīva* is eternal, knower and knowledge, atomic in size, doer, prompted by Brahman in its actions and it is part of Śiva.

3.2.1.1 Jīva is Eternal or Nitya (2.3.16)

On the basis of SB 2.3.16 Śrīpati asserts that the Śrutis dealing with creation do not mention about the creation of *jīva*. Hence, *jīvas* are not born. For instance, “*jñau jñau*” (Both the souls are eternal – Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 1.9), “*na jāyate mṛyate vā vipścī*” (It has no birth and death), “*dvāvajau*” (Both are eternal – Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 1.9) etc. declare that *jīvas* are not created.

3.2.1.2 Jīva is Knower and Knowledge (2.3.17)

The author of *Śrīkarabhāṣyam* upholds that *jīva* is knower (*jñātr*) and has knowledge as its attribute (*jñānasvarūpa*) simultaneously whereas Paraśiva is *jñānasvarūpa* (SB 1.2.12) and all-knowing (SB 1.3.5). In *sūtra* SB 2.3.27, it is postulated that knowledge is the highest quality of *jīva*.

3.2.1.3 Jīva is Atomic or aṇu (2.3.18-30)

In twenty-two *sutras*, which forms an *adhikaraṇa*, the author of *Śrīkarabhāṣyam* asserts that the soul is atomic in size because it departs from body, moves about in heaven and other

¹⁹ Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣhya*, 238.

²⁰ Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣhya*, 412-413.

places and after experiencing the fruits returns to the earth. The Śruti declares that the individual self is a part of hundredth part of the point of a hair (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 5.9). This shows that *jīva* is atomic in character. Paraśiva alone is *vibhu* since he is *sarvātmaka* and *mūrthitryātīta* (SB 2.3.18). The *sūtra* SB 2.3.26 “*Prthagupadeśāt*” (Their distinction is taught.) gives the idea about *vibhutva* of *jīva* and Śiva. *Jīva* is not *vibhu* because the *jīva*-Brahman relationship is like *niyāmya-niyāmaka bhāva* (controlled and the controller relation). *Vibhutva* is only reserved to the independent Parabrahman.²¹ If *jīva* is accepted as *vibhu*, then *Īśvara* cannot be called as *antaryāmī*. In *sūtra* SB 2.3.30, it is contended that if *ātmā* is considered as *vibhu* then there has to be experience of *jñāna* and non-experience of *jñāna* at all times.

3.2.1.4 Jīva is the Agent of Action or Kartā (2.3.31-37)

The aphorism SB 2.3.31 asserts that *jīva* is a doer. It has a moral obligation to perform duties. Even if there is the desire for *Sādhana*, *ātmā* is *kartā* in *saṁsāra* state due to its association with the *guṇas*. *Kartṛtva* is a natural attribute of the individual soul (SB 2.3.37).

3.2.1.5 Jīva acts with the Instigation of Īśvara (2.3.38-39)

The question is asked whether the self is absolutely independent in his action or is dependent on someone else. The agentship of the *jīva* proceeds from the Highest Self.²² *Īśvara* grants pleasure and pain according to the *karmas* of *jīva*. In *Śivagītā*, it is said that Paraśiva is *preraka* and *kāraṇa* of *jīva*, hence, *jīva* acts through the instigation of Brahman (SB 2.3.39).

3.2.1.6 Jīva is Part or aṁśa of Brahman (2.3.40-50)

The last *adhikaraṇa* of third *pāda* of second chapter, ‘*aṁśādhikarāna*’ is very significant because it deals with the relation between the Highest Self and the individual self. It discusses nature of *jīva* particularly in SB 2.3.40, “*Aṁśo nānāvyaapadeśāt anyathā ca api dāśa kitavāditvam adhīyata eke.*” The *sūtra* says, ‘*jīva* is a part of Brahman, on account of difference declared and otherwise also (non-difference); in some (recensions of the Vedic texts) is spoken of as being fisherman, rogue, etc.’ In this *sūtra* the Oneness of the *jīva* (*jīvaikatva*), the *Brahmatva* of the *jīva* (*jīva brahmatva*), the *jīvas* falling off from Brahman (*jīvalikatva*), the reflected character of the *jīva* (*jīvapratibimbādikam*) and other aspects are discussed elaborately.²³ Śrīpati claims that the soul or *jīva* is part or *aṁśa* of the Universal self, Brahman (SB 2.3.40). With the aid of Śruti texts he proves that *jīva* is not different from Brahman. For instance, Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (4.10) says – “This whole world is pervaded with beings that

²¹ Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣya*, 562.

²² V. S. Ghate, *The Vedānta: A Study of the Brahmasūtras with the Bhāṣyas of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, Madhva, and Vallabha*, 3rd ed. (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1981), 92.

²³ Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣya*, 517.

are parts of Him.” The relation between Śiva and *jīva* is like the relation between the fire and its sparks (SB 2.3.40). An individual soul is part of God, as a ray of light is a part of a luminous thing, as a white cow is a part of the genus of cow.

The term ‘*amśa*’ denotes one part of a larger whole. This indicates both difference and non-difference between Brahman and *jīva*. The *jīva* holds the double states of *jīva* and Brahman in its respective *amśas*. The *nānātva*²⁴ of the *jīva* is exhibited in the *sr̥ṣṭatva* and *sr̥jyatva* (power of creation), *niyantr̥tva* (controlling) and *niyāmyatva* (commanding), *sarvajñātva* (omniscience) and *ajñatva* (not knowing), *svādhinatva* (independence) and *parādhinatva* (subordination), *śuddatva* (purity) and *aśuddhatva* (impurity), *kalyāṅguṇākaraṭva* (auspicious qualities) and *ita viparītatva* (bad qualities), *patitva* (Lordship) and *śeṣatva* (servanthood) etc.²⁵ Thus, due to *jīva*-Brahman difference *jīvas* are many in number. The non-difference between them is expatiated in the Śrutis like *tattvamasi* (“That Thou Art” Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.8.7). In order to reconcile the two kinds of Śrutis *jīva* is predicated as *Brahmāmśa*.

3.3 Jīva and Mukti

For Śrīpati, *mukti* means freedom from all desires. He posits both *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti*. He holds that a soul that worships an image of Śiva attains gradual liberation, and that a soul that worships formless Śiva attains immediate release and becomes identical. The four types of liberation (SB 2.1.22) are:²⁶

1. *Sālokya* or *Salokatā* – It means dwelling in the region or land of Śiva.
2. *Sāmīpya* or *Samīpatā* – It refers to proximity or closeness to Śiva. Commenting on 4.3.9 Śrīpati states that “*Sāmīpyattu tat vyapadeśaḥ*” which means *Parabrahma sāmīpya* is *mukti*. (SB 4.3.9)
3. *Sārūpya* or *Sarūpatā* – It is the similarity with Śiva, possessing the same form, attaining omniscience, *satyasankalpatva*, *nirbhayatva* of Śiva.
4. *Sāyujya* or *Sāyujyatā* – It stands for identity or union with Śiva or *aśarīra mukti*.

In SB 4.4.4, Śrīpati quotes *nādīsamudranyāya* and remarks that *muktajīva* stands in relation to *Paraśivabrahman* as the *nadi* does to the *samudra* in the divided and undivided form. As the river joins the ocean so also *jīva* attains the likeness of Śiva. The *jīvas* enjoy all

²⁴ *Nānātvavādins* are pluralists. They maintain *Sāṅkhya* doctrine that each individual has a soul distinct from the Universal Spirit.

²⁵ Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣya*, 520-521.

²⁶ Tagare, *Śaivism: Some Glimpses*, 114-115.

the powers except that of creating the world. The capacity to perform the cosmic functions exclusively belongs to Śiva (SB 4.4.17).

Śrīpati holds that *Śivopāsana* continues even in *mukti*. *Mukhyatva* (i.e., *Parabrahmatva*) would remain in Śiva while *muktitva* would come to the *upāsaka*.²⁷ He uses the term *Bhagavān*²⁸ which means ‘glorious’, ‘illustrious’ exclusively to Śiva even after *mukta* is in Śiva’s own form. As far as Śrīpati’s proposition is considered, this term is chiefly applicable to no other deity than Śiva.²⁹

Śrīpati combines *Bhakti*, *Jñāna* and *Kriya* (*samuccayavāda*) as the means of liberation, but he gives a higher place to knowledge.³⁰ The *jīva* attains *Brahmatva* by *jñāna*. *Jñāna* is obtained by *draṣṭavya* (closely examining the truth), *śrotavya* (by hearing the *Smṛtis* by *guru*’s *upadeśa*), *mantavya* (by reflection), and *nidhidhyāsavya* (by firm concentration and meditation). If *jñāna* is obtained in this manner, the result is that the *jīva* becomes *Śambhu* or attains Śivatva.³¹ Śrīpati says *Śivadhyāna*, *Śivadhāraṇa* and *Śivajñāna* will end in *Śivarūpa*. The means of attaining *Śivabhāva* mentioned by Śrīpati are - *bhakti* or devotion, *vairāgya* or renunciation, *yoga* or spiritual discipline, *śama* or sense control, *dama* or mind control, *bhūtaśānta* or compassion towards all beings, *vicāra* or discernment, *śravaṇa* or listening, *manana* or reflecting (knowing Śiva), *nidhidhyāsa avadhāna* or meditation, *jñāna* or wisdom etc. (SB 2.1.8).

3.4 Bhedābhedātmaka Viśeṣādvaita

Śrīpati holds a middle position between *bheda* and *abheda*. He calls his system as *Bhedābhedātmaka Viśeṣādvaita*. According to Rāmānuja’s *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, ‘*Viśiṣṭa*’ means *advaita* with a distinction. It may also mean superior kind of *advaita*. It signifies that Brahman and *Prakṛti* are identical and real entities. *Viśiṣṭa* in Sanskrit is a name for *Viṣṇu*. But ‘*Viśeṣā*’ in Śrīpati’s *Viśeṣādvaita* means species, kind or variety; an *advaita* of a special kind or variety. The term *Viśeṣādvaita* would also mean an *advaita* doctrine which has an individuality, peculiarity or particularity of its own. Śrīpati not only asserts the reality of Brahman and *Prakṛti* but also writes that the Brahman is possessed of *viśeṣā*, i.e., attributes.³²

²⁷ Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣhya*, 701.

²⁸ It is an epithet applied to gods, demi-gods and respectable deities.

²⁹ Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣhya*, 484.

³⁰ H. P. Malledevaru, "Vīraśaivism and Śaiva Siddhanta," in *Śrī Basaveśvara: Commemorative Volume* (Bangalore Government of Mysore, 1967).

³¹ Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣhya*, 701.

³² Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣhya*, 590-591

Śrīpati shows that in *samsāra* state there is *bheda* between Śiva and *jīva* and in *mokṣa abheda*. The difference and similarity between *līṅga* and *aṅga* are: *līṅga* is omniscient, all pervasive (*Vibhutva*) and eternally free (*nityamuktatva*) whereas *aṅga* is limited by knowledge, atomic (*aṇutva*) and in bondage (*nityabaddhatva*) (SB 3.2.26). He thinks that difference and non-difference is equally natural in *jīva* and Śiva.³³ The identity and difference are not found simultaneously but at different times (SB 3.4.49).

4. Refutation of and Comparison with other Brahmasūtra Interpreters

We find many commonalities and differences between *Bhedābheda* *Viśeṣādvaita* of Śrīpati and other schools of thought.

4.1 Heterodox Systems

Śrīpati differs from heterodox systems of philosophy in the understanding of the concept of individual soul. In his rebuttal of Cārvākas, Śrīpati states that any conglomeration of matter producing life is far from reality. It is against human experience.³⁴ Jainism holds that the *ātman* is of the same size as the body it occupies (*madhyma parimāṇa*). This leads to a difficulty. If the size of the soul of an elephant is as big as elephant and the size of the soul of an ant is as small as ant, then, when ant attains the intelligence of an elephant it will be impossible to enter into the body of elephant (SB 2.3.18). Buddhism maintains that *jīva* is *vibhu*. Śrīpati repudiates this claim pointing out that if the soul is *vibhu* then it cannot depart from the body, move about in heaven and other places and return to the earth (SB 2.3.18).

4.2 Repudiation of Kevalādvaita or Nirviśeṣādvaita of Śaṅkara

The major part of refutation in *Śrīkarabhāṣyam* is that of *Nirviśeṣādvaita* (as Śrīpati calls it). Unlike Kevalādvaita, Śrīpati holds that everything we see in the world is real, and Śiva is the ground of everything. With regard to the individual self, the *Bhedābheda* system upholds that there is unity of the soul with Śiva only after the full realisation of Brahman, whereas *abheda* system of Śaṅkara asserts unity and identity all through.

Śrīpati thinks that both the doctrine of an attributeless Brahman and an illusory world cannot be maintained. He posits Brahman as *saviśeṣa*. He argues that just as difference between Brahman and *caitanya* is untrue, similarly Brahman without attribute is also untrue, for realization of such a Brahman is of no use (*aprayojakam*) and in this world it is unattainable

³³ Madan Mohan Agarwal, ed. *Brahmasūtra-Nimbārkabhāṣyam*, 4 Vols., The Vrajajīvana-Prācyabhāratī-Granthamālā, Vol. 1 (Delhi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishtan, 2000), xlvii.

³⁴ Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy: Southern Schools of Saivism*, Vol. V, 174-175.

(*tadasiddheḥ*).³⁵ Śrīpati points out that the negation of *Īśvara*, world and the individual soul means that *advaitins* accept the existence of no beings at all. It is equivalent of saying ‘the son of a barren woman.’ (SB 2.2.28).³⁶

For Śaṅkara the *caitanya* which has *upādhi* of *avidyā* is *jīva* (SB 2.3.16). *Advaita* Vedānta approves that the individual self is neither non-different from Brahman due to the *upādhis* nor different from Brahman because it dwells in *jīvātman*. Self is not ontologically real for Śaṅkara. It is co-eternal with Brahman. He views it as *vibhu*. Objecting this position, Śrīpati writes that if *jīva* is accepted as ubiquitous then the *utkrānti* (going of the soul out of the body), *gati* (going of the soul to the higher worlds, like moon etc.) and *āgati* (return of the soul from other worlds in this world) of the *jīva* should not occur (SB 2.3.18).

4.3 Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja

Unlike in *Viśiṣṭādvaita* of Rāmānuja where Brahman is qualified by *jīva* and *prakṛti*, in Vīraśaivism the *viśiṣṭatva* (qualified) is confined only to Śakti or power of Śiva. In *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, the soul cannot be considered as the attribute and the Highest Self as the substance for it means that there is only one atomic soul. If the souls are considered to be many, then it is difficult to establish oneness of the Highest Self, because the difference of the attributes means the difference of the substance too. On the basis of relation too there is no tenability in *Viśiṣṭādvaita*. The relation between the Highest Self and the souls is not that of inherence (*samavāya*) because they exist in isolation from each other, nor is it mere contact (*saṁyoga*) because if it is said to be pervasive (*Vyāpyavṛtti*) it would mean the admission of identity of the two and the partial contact (*Avyāpyavṛtti saṁyoga*) is not possible between them, because both of them are without parts. The *svarūpasambandha* is not logical.³⁷

4.4 Dvaita or Tattvavāda of Madhva

Śrīpati disagrees with this absolute *bhinnatva* of *Dvaita* School, both before and after *mokṣa*. Śrīpati differs with *bheda* doctrine of Madhva. He admits that the difference between *jīva* and Brahman is only temporary or transient. The transient difference remains till the *jīva* attains its liberation. In *mukti* state, there is non-duality because Śrutis claim that *jīva* is eternal.³⁸ For Śrīpati, *Dvaita* stresses only one set of Śruti texts which amounts to the rejection of authority of other set of Śrutis. Śrutis are not contradictory but it is the failure of *bhedavādins*

³⁵ Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣya*, 394.

³⁶ Pandey, *An Outline of History of Śaiva Philosophy*, 166.

³⁷ Pandey, *An Outline of History of Śaiva Philosophy*, 169.

³⁸ Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣya*, 97.

to harmonise all the Śruti texts into a consistent whole. *Sauparṇa Śruti* describes that God is faultless and Śrutis also are non-contradictory.³⁹

One important point of convergence between Śrīpati and Madhva is the gradation in liberation or *mukti* state. In Śrīpati's opinion, Paraśiva Brahman appears to be Supreme even in *mukti* and *mukta* worships Him in *mukti* though he attains Śiva's own form. Madhva mentions the inevitability of *bhakti* even in the *mukti* stage. He says that *bhakti* has to continue in different levels.⁴⁰

4.5 Svābhāvika Bhedābheda of Nimbārka

Śrīpati stands in proximity to Nimbārka in terms of his philosophy. Nimbārka maintains that both difference and non-difference are true at the same time, both in bondage and in liberation. There is both identity and difference between Brahman and the world are of nature (*svabhāva*, essence), but not of being (*svarūpa*).⁴¹ Śrīpati claims that difference and non-difference is equally natural which is found at different times. Identity is not only natural but also in form.

5. Significance of Study of Liṅgāṅga Relation of Śrīpati to the Present Context

Śrīkarabhāṣyam has put Vīraśaivism on a sound philosophical footing. It is evident that Śrīpati has read the Upaniṣadic texts closely. In his philosophy, he has given a rational interpretation of Reality as a whole. His philosophy embraces both the sensible and supra-sensible world. He takes into account the oneness, the unity of the whole universe, the maker and the made.

5.1 Hermeneutical Contributions of Śrīpati

Śrīkarabhāṣyam is a synthesis of Vedas, *Upaniṣads* and *Āgamas*. Śrīpati is relevant both in the ontological and existential domains. His philosophy can make a strong impact on our identity of 'Indianness.' He takes recourse to more or less 18 Upaniṣads. The characteristic feature of Śrīpati's writing is that he extensively makes use of maxims in his work. He has mentioned 69 *nyāyas* in his text. Some *nyāyas* he has mentioned are *aṁśāṁśinyāya*, *bhramarakīṭanyāya*, *bījāṅkuranyāya*, *nadīsamudranyāya*, *sthūlaruṇḍhatīnyāya* etc. Śaṅkara uses around twenty-five *nyāyas*. Rāmānuja refers to *śākhāchandranyāya* (1.1.14) and the *niṣādashapatinyāya* (1.3.14). Madhva does not make use of *nyāyas* in his commentary on

³⁹ Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣhya*, 597.

⁴⁰ K. T. Pandurangi, *Essentials of Bhagavad Gītā* (Bangalore: Bangalore University, 1994), 23.

⁴¹ P. T. Raju, *Structural Depths of Indian Thought* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1985), 509.

Brahmasūtra.⁴² Śrīpati accepts both statements of difference and non-difference in Śrutis in the primary sense. According to him the harmonizing of Śruti texts can be done only through the doctrine of *bhedābheda*. Through the *bhāṣya* Śrīpati aims at *samanvaya* of different philosophical Śruti texts. It calls for the *samanvaya* of relation, within oneself amidst contradictions of joy and jeopardy, suffering and satisfaction. *Śrīkarabhāṣyam* invites us to give thought to the very meaning of our own existence in this society. Creation is not an illusion but a purposive activity, the purpose is the liberation of the souls. In union, one becomes oneself and becomes God.

5.2 Implications of Śrīpati's Philosophy

Philosophy of Śrīpati impels us to act philosophically. It calls us to philosophize through our head, heart and hands. Truth is not a monopoly; there are different faces and views to it. Reality is multifaceted. Views are different in a particular context due to the situatedness in one's culture and background but from a larger world-view and horizon they can be united, harmonised and converged. This is the *bhedābheda* in the multiple contexts and cultures.

Śrīpati combines realism and idealism. His philosophy resembles more with Plato who speaks of ideal and real worlds. He combines or harmonises sensible and suprasensible worlds. Continental German Philosopher, Heidegger comes close to the thought of Śrīpati especially when we come across his philosophy of relation in his lecture on "Identity and Difference." He writes, "Identity is belonging-together."⁴³ Identity can have varied meanings such as equality, unity, sameness so on and so forth. When the *bhedābheda* of Śrīpati is referred it is not a play of opposites as Jacques Derrida describes in his 'Binary Typology.'⁴⁴ The doctrine of Śrīpati is not built on binary opposites of 'either/or' structure. The first term *bheda* does not marginalise the second term *abheda* as in the case of binary opposition. He philosophically maintains that the difference and non-difference can co-exist in *jīva*-Brahman relationship.

Vīraśaivism is a living faith particularly in South India. In the polyphonic, multi-perspective and multi-rooted setting of today there has to be dialogical scholarship between religions rather than polemical discussions. By probing into Śrīpati's doctrine of Śiva-*jīva*

⁴² Hayavadana Rao, ed. *The Śrīkara Bhāṣhya*, 229-230.

⁴³ Heidegger, 12. The Expression 'belonging together' is to be taken in the sense of 'being held together and apart.' Also See Johnson Puthenpurackal, "The Question of Identity: Philosophical Reflections from a Postcolonial Perspective," in *Identity, Difference and Conflict: Post Colonial Critique*, eds. Victor Ferrao & James Ponniah, (233-247), ACPI Annual Series (Bangalore: ATC & ACPI, 2013).

⁴⁴ Continental French Philosopher Jacques Derrida deconstructs Binary opposites. For him whole Western philosophical thought is built on binary opposites. It is nothing but 'either/or' structure. For instance, present-absent, sacred-profane, man-woman, good-bad. Here only the first term has the identity. When we ask, 'what is present?' The answer is 'that which is not absent'. The first term occupies the centre.

relation, the reader is not only invited to get acquainted with *Upanṣadic* teachings and Vīraśavism, but also to undertake cultural and intellectual exchange through inter-religious dialogue and daily practices of life. There has to be a perennial dialogue for an authentic co-existence through the dialogue with various traditions. The existential philosophers emphatically propose ‘to be is to be with’ which implies that human person is a relational and dialogical entity. In the multi-religious, cultural and linguistic context of Globalised India, the exposure to different situations is a need of the hour.

One difficulty in Śrīpati’s philosophy would be that he does not offer an explanation in the commentary on the distinct roles of human efforts and Divine grace in the attainment of liberation.⁴⁵ The question whether God takes into account human efforts and grants grace accordingly. Which of these is more significant? These difficulties confront us as we delve deep into *Śrīkarabhāṣyam*.

Conclusion

Traversing through the doctrine of *liṅgāṅga* relation in *Śrīkarabhāṣyam* makes us clear that Śrīpati’s philosophy is challenging, unique and open for further discussion and in-depth study. In Śrīpati’s *Bhedābhedātma Viśeṣādvaita* we can note that *jīva* is eternal; only its body is created. It is impurities which makes the soul to be in bondage. The *jīva* is *ānadamaya*, both the knower and the knowledge, atomic, an agent of action, it acts with the help of Brahman and above all is part of Brahman. Śrīpati considers both the Śrutis of difference and non-difference as primary to establish *bhedābhedavāda*. It means that there exists a relation of identity and duality between *liṅga* and *aṅga* at different times. The *jīva* in *mukti* not only gets identified with Śiva but also takes its form. There is *jīvanmukti* for the individual self. *Mukti* can be accomplished by means of *bhakti*, *jñāna* and *karma*.

Śrīkarabhāṣyam is a treasure-trove of Śrīpati in the field of Indology. It has a vast scope because it is not yet unearthed. Since the attention of scholars is usually to the schools of *Advaita*, *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, *Dvaita* and few other schools, the systems of *bhedābheda* especially Śrīpati’s system needs a lot of research and investigation. As there are lots of indigenous resources for us those who are ‘Indians,’ favouring or leaning too much or only on Western philosophy would mean underestimating the richness of one’s own worth.

⁴⁵ Ashok Kumar Lad, *A Comparative Study of the Concept of Liberation in Indian Philosophy* (Burhanpur: Girdharlal Keshavdas, 1967), 151.

Meaning of Nyāyas or Maxims

Amśāmsīnyāya	This maxim of relation between part and whole.
Bhramarakīṭanyāya	The maxim of an insect or fly becoming a bee.
Bījāṅkuranyāya	The rule of an eternal series of seed and sprout. It is used in those cases where two things stand to each other in the relation of both cause and effect.
Nadīsamudranyāya	The maxim of the river and the ocean. The river no longer exists once it get merged in the sea.
Niṣādasthapatinyāya	The topic of a king who is a Niṣāda by caste. He who is a Niṣāda is a <i>Stapati</i> ; and therefore a superior Niṣāda is entitled to perform the Raudra sacrifice.
Śākhāchandranyāya	The maxim of the moon and the bough. As the moon, though distant from the bough of a tree, is spoken of as ‘the moon on the bough.’
Sthūlaruṅdhatīnyāya	The method of spotting the tiny star, Aruṅdhatī, with the help of larger stars near it. It is a process of moving from the known to the unknown.

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