

Indian philosophical and theological thought process has developed out of two slightly distinct traditions i.e., of '*Vāda*' and '*Pramāṇa*'. The first is the tradition of debate, connected with dialectical tricks, arguments and sophistry and the second is of *Pramāṇa* tradition, which is concerned with the means and criteria of valid empirical knowledge and correct cognition.

On account of this genesis, all six *Āstika* systems and Bhakti Vedānta schools imbibed and gained an epistemological character, which became their permanent characteristic. Both in the general model of reasoning and in their philosophical arguments they try to depend more or less on empirical evidences. A seeker tries to ascertain the truth of a particular statement or declaration from what generally is called 'evidence' to what is known as 'conclusion'.

### **Theory of Knowledge according to Śrī Rāmānuja and Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa**

Every *darśana* begins with a determination of *Pramāṇas*, which are the instruments of right knowledge. '*Pramāṇa*' means that by which things can be measured by the mind or known (from the verbal root '*mā*' to measure). All most every Indian philosopher begins with determining their scope or limitations before he embarks upon delineating the nature of the objects to be known, called *Prameya*. Maxmuller says in his *Six*

*Systems of Indian Philosophy* : “Such an examination of the authorities of human knowledge (*Pramāṇas*) ought of course to form the introduction to every system of philosophy. It seems to me the high distinction of Indian philosophy.” (Cited by Yāmūnācārya M. : 58)

Pramāṇas provide a general basis, which would ensure the possibility acquiring correct knowledge. They search for certainty, thus seeking and securing firm and sure foundation for knowledge. An importance problem will be a question of man’s capability of knowing the reality a specially Divine Reality, God with the perishable sense organs like eyes etc.

Indicating His immense confidence in man’s strength, Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa follows great eastern and western thinkers like Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hegel. In HVSS 97 there is a question of Śrī Caitanyānanda Swāmī. गुणातीतोऽक्षरातीतो ह्यस्ति वाक्मनसात्परः । स कथं मायिकैस्तत्त्वैर्भुवि साक्षादवाप्यते । “How can God, who is beyond all mundane sense organs, mind and speech be perceived by human beings ?” In reply to his question, Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa who is a spiritual teacher not a formal or professional epistemologist states, ‘It is possible to have, cognition of God when an aspirant’s sense organs are divinised by God. Just as a Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave divine sight to Arjuna so that he could see His Divine Cosmic Virāta Swarūpa. (HVSS 51: 22-28)

सर्वात्मात्मा स्वतन्त्रश्च सर्वशक्तिपतिः प्रभुः ।  
परात्परतरः शुद्ध ईश्वराणामपीश्वरः ॥ २२ ॥

HVSS 51 : 22

सर्वेति । सर्वात्मात्मा सकलक्षेत्रज्ञानामन्तःस्थित्वा नियन्ता । सर्वात्मनः सर्वान्तर्यामिणो महापुरुषस्याप्यात्मेति वा । ‘यस्यात्माशरीर’मिति । बृहदारण्ये । ‘योऽक्षरमन्तरे सञ्चर’न्निति सुबालोपनिषदिचोक्तेः । ‘आत्मात्मा चाक्षरात्मा’चेति स्कान्दे । ‘एष आत्मात्मनां धातः’, इति श्रीभागवते । स्वतन्त्रः । सर्वेश्वरेश्वरत्वात्सर्वकारणकारणत्वान्न कदाचिदपि परतन्त्र इत्यर्थः । सर्वशक्तिपतिः । ‘पराऽस्य शक्तिर्विविधैव श्रूयते’ इति श्रुतेः । प्रभुः कालमायादिनियन्ता । परात् । परतरः । ‘अक्षरात्परतः पर’ इति श्रुतेः । शुद्धः । ‘स शुद्धः सर्वशुद्धेभ्य’ इति स्मृतेः ईश्वराणामपि । ईश्वरः । ‘तमीश्वराणां परमं महेश्वर’मिति श्रुतेः ॥ ५१-२२ ॥

सर्वत्र कारणत्वेन सोऽन्वितोऽस्ति स्वतेजसा ।  
व्यतिरिक्तश्च धाम्नि स्वे राजतेऽनेकशक्तिभिः ॥ २३ ॥

HVSS 51 : 23

सर्वत्रेति। स श्रीकृष्णः। स्वतेजसा स्वकीयान्तर्यामिशक्तिरूपेण। कारणत्वेन। सर्वत्राक्षरब्रह्मादिसर्वेषु कार्येषु। अन्वितोऽन्वयं प्राप्य वर्तमानः। अस्ति। व्यतिरिक्तो व्यतिरेकभावेन वर्तमानः सन्। स्वे स्वकीये। धाम्नि अक्षरब्रह्माख्ये पदे। अनेकशक्तिभिः राधारमाब्रह्मभावा-  
पन्नानेकमुक्ताद्यपरिमितशक्तिभिः सह। राजते विराजमानो भवति॥ ५१-२३॥

स यदा कृपया जीवकल्याणाय धरातले।  
प्रत्यक्षो जायते नृणां धृतदिव्यनराकृतिः॥ २४॥

HVSS 51 : 24

स इति। स एवंभूतः श्रीकृष्णः। यदा। कृपया। जीवकल्याणार्थम्। धरातले।  
धृतदिव्यनराकृतिः सन्। नृणाम्। प्रत्यक्षः। जायते साक्षाद्दृश्यो भवतीत्यर्थः॥ ५१-२४॥

तदा कृत्वा सतां सङ्गं तस्य माहात्म्यमीदृशम्।  
अवगत्याश्रय सम्यग्ये कुर्वन्ति नरा इह॥ २५॥

HVSS 51 : 25

तदेति। तदा। इह लोके। ये। नराः। सतां साक्षाद्भगवन्तं समाहात्म्यज्ञानं प्राप्तानां  
तदेकान्तिक-साधूनाम्। सङ्गम्। कृत्वा। तस्य साक्षाद्भगवतः। ईदृशमुक्तविधम्। माहात्म्यम्।  
सम्यक्। अवगत्य ज्ञात्वा। आश्रयं तदीयैकशरणम्। कुर्वन्ति॥ ५१-२५॥

तेषां बाह्यान्यांतराणि करणान्यखिलान्यपि।  
तादात्म्यं प्राप्य तं साक्षात्कुर्वतीत्यवगम्यताम्॥ २६॥

In Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism there are basically two strong reasons that a *Mumukṣu* can perceive the self and the Highest Reality by the grace of the God.

- (I) The self or knower is *Cidrūpa*. It is *Caitanya*. It is of the nature of consciousness, which can and does reveal Reality as it is. Through *Caitanya* the self becomes (of) the object of experience; therefore in each case of correct cognition or knowledge-situation or *pramā*, we have three most <sup>valuable</sup> elements (1) *pramātā* the soul or the knower. (2) *prameya* or the object to be known (3) the means of valid cognition or *pramāṇa*.
- (II) God Himself makes connative and cognitive senses of a genuine devotee divine. So that he can perceive His auspicious divine form and enjoy it even when alive during his *Jivana-mukti* condition. As stated above in the HVSS 51. It is *Bhagavt-prasādjām-pratyakṣam*. It is direct perception due to grace of God and therefore, valid means of knowledge. But this is very rare for the selected devotee like Arjuna. For all other aspirant the *Pramāṇas* are essential for *pramā* or correct cognition. They are enumerated below :

प्रत्यक्षमनुमानं च वेदाश्चोपमया सह । अर्थापत्तेरभावश्च भाट्टानां षट्प्रमाण्यसौ । प्रभाकरमते पञ्चैतान्यभावस्य वर्जनात् । (Cited by C. V. Shankara Rau In “A glossary of Philosophical Terms : 56, TTD, Madras, 1941)

The Cārvākas admitted *Pratyakṣa* (direct perception) only as a source of knowledge, the Buddhist and Vaiśeṣikas added one more namely *Anumāna* (inference), the Sāṅkhya put a third viz; *Śabda* (revelation-verbal authority), the Naiyāyikas fourth viz, *Upamāna* (analogy), the Prābhākara's Mimāṃsakas a fifth *Arthāpatti* (implication), the Bhaṭṭas a sixth one, *Anupalabdhi* (non-apprehension).

The theory of knowledge, or epistemology, therefore precedes ontology or the theory of Reality or Being. All the *Ācāryas* of Bhakti Vedānta Schools including Śrī Rāmānuja and Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa follow this time-honored method. As mentioned above Cārvāka had accepted only one means, viz., *Pratyakṣa*-Perception, Vaiśeṣikas admit *Pratyakṣa*-Perception and *Anumāna*-Inference; Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Viśiṣṭādvaita, Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism and most schools of Indian thought acknowledge *Pratyakṣa*, *Anumāna* and *Śabda*-Scriptural Authority; The followers of Nyāya accept four, *Pratyakṣa*, *Anumāna*, *Śabda*, *Upamāna*-Analogy; followers of Prābhākara School of Mimāṃsā add *Arthāpatti* or postulation. Kumārila, his disciples and some followers of Advaita Vedānta add *Anupalabdhi* / *Abhāva* or Non-Perception.

The school of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya gives maximum importance to *aparokṣānūbhūti* or immediate direct realisation of the Self as the most important means of valid knowledge though the school accepts other means, too.

This increase in the number of *Pramāṇas* is the result of freedom (विचारेस्वातंत्र्यम्) so that different founders have different *Pramāṇas* or means of knowledge to know the highest reality, self, world, their relation, the concept of final freedom and the means to reach it.

Both Śrī Rāmānuja and Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa accept only three *Pramāṇas*, *Pratyakṣa*, *Anumāna* and *Śabda*. Śrī Rāmānuja lays down a general

principle that whatever be the means of knowing, the objects that are known are always of things with attributes and of attributes in relation to things. Attributes apart from things in which they inhere and things, which are devoid of any attribute, are inconceivable. *There can be nothing without characteristics of any kind. There can be no nirviśeṣa vastu or absolute attributeless thing.* He maintains at the same time the view that things and attributes though different cannot be separated from each other. In other words, the 'that' is not the same as the 'what'.

What is knowledge? According to Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa knowledge is a synonym of understanding. अतो वेदनपर्यायं ज्ञानमित्युच्यते बुधैः ॥ <sup>1</sup> Knowledge is understood as definite, doubt-free, truthful, awareness of the thing episode or concept, especially about the true nature of ontological realities i.e. Parabrahman, Akṣarabrahman, Īśvaras, Jīvas, Māyā and its Māyika products including the cognitive/connative senses and non-sentient products.

The centre of epistemology of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism is a belief-system that accepts :

(1) The existence of self that is *Jñānaswarūpa* or *Prajñanaghana eva* (Bṛha. upa. VI/5-13). It is essentially of the nature of the knowledge. At the same time it is the possessor of knowledge *Jñātā* or *Jñānavān*.

एष हि द्रष्टा स्प्रष्टा श्रोता घ्राता रसयिता मन्ता बोद्धा कर्ता विज्ञानात्मा पुरुषः ।

प्रश्नोपनिषद् ॥ ४ : ४-९ ॥

In short the self is spiritual and not material it is different from the body along with its internal and external sense organs-cognitive/connative. There are innumerable selves. They are eternal, self-luminous, monadic and enjoyers, having God given freedom to do what they feel like in the initial effort. They are the *aṁśas* of God in the sense that they have the essential quality of God i.e. *Sat*, *Cit*, *Ānanda* because they cannot be *aṁśas* in the sense of spatial parts. They are impartite. It is the most important thing for *Jīva* to achieve *Mokṣa* and therefore the maximum importance to get right knowledge is for the *Jīva* or the self.

Esse est percipi-to be is to be perceived - to be cognised, Śrī Śatānanda Muni in the *Satsaṅgijīvanam* gives the definition of knowledge as

explained by ŚrīŚwāminārāyaṇa to his mother in its Śrī Harigītā section :

यद्वस्तु यादृशं तस्य तादृक्त्वेन प्रमाणतः।  
वेदनं यत्तदुदितं मातर्ज्ञानस्य लक्षणम्॥<sup>2</sup>

Oh Mother! The characteristic of knowledge is to know a thing as it is by a valid means of knowledge.

### The Nature of Perception

The first source of knowledge that we have to take into account is Perception (*pratyakṣa*). It is knowledge obtained by the exercise of our sense organs, the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the skin. Each sense organ is suited to cognise or to catch mainly one kind of sense-impression or sensation. The sensations are sound (*śabda*) touch (*sparśa*), color (*rūpa*), taste (*rasa*), and smell (*gandha*), grasped by the ear (*śrotra*), the skin (*tvak*), the eye (*cakṣu*) the tongue (*rasanā*), and the nose (*ghrāṇa*), respectively.<sup>3</sup>

Rāmānuja writes extensively about perception while explaining the very first sūtra of the Brahmasūtra अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा (I/1-1)<sup>4</sup> we give below a very short summary here:

### Pratyakṣa Pramāṇa as per Śrī Rāmānujācārya

प्रत्यक्षस्य निर्विकल्पक सविकल्पक भेदभिननस्य न निर्विशेषवस्तुनि प्रमाणभावः। सविकल्पकं जात्याद्यनेकपदार्थविशिष्टविषयत्वादेव सविशेषविषयम्। निर्विकल्पकमपि सविशेषविषयमेव, सविकल्पके स्वस्मिन्ननुभूतपदार्थविशिष्टप्रतिसंधानहेतुत्वात् निर्विकल्पकं नाम केनचिद्विशेषेण वियुक्तस्य ग्रहणम् न सर्वविशेषरहितस्य; तथा भूतस्य कदाचिदपि ग्रहणादर्शनानुपपत्तेश्च। केनचिद्विशेषेणेदमित्थमिति हि सर्वा प्रतीतिरूपजायते, त्रिकोणसास्त्रादि संस्थान-विशेषेण विना कस्यचिदपि पदार्थस्य ग्रहणायोगात्। अतो निर्विकल्पकमेकजातीयद्रव्येषु प्रथमपिण्डग्रहणम्। द्वितीयादि पिण्डग्रहणं सविकल्पकमित्युच्यते। तत्र प्रथमपिण्डग्रहणे गोत्वादेरनुवृत्ताकारता न प्रतीयते। द्वितीयपिण्डग्रहणेष्वेवानुवृत्तिप्रतीतिः। प्रथमप्रतीत्यनुसंहितवस्तु संस्थानरूपगोत्वादेरनुवृत्तिधर्मविशिष्टत्वं द्वितीयादिपिण्डग्रहणावसेयमिति, द्वितीयादिग्रहणस्य सविकल्पकत्वम्। सास्त्रादिवस्तुसंस्थानरूपगोत्वादेरनुवृत्तिर्न प्रथमपिण्डग्रहणे गृह्यत इति, प्रथमपिण्डग्रहणस्य निर्विकल्पकत्वम्; न पुनस्संस्थानरूपजात्यादेरग्रहणात्।

अतो द्वितीयादिपिण्डग्रहणेषु गोत्वादेरनुवृत्तिधर्मविशिष्टता संस्थानिवत्संस्थानवच्च सर्वदैव गृह्यत इति तेषु सविकल्पकत्वमेव। अतः प्रत्यक्षस्य कदाचिदपि न निर्विशेषविषयत्वम्॥

‘All apprehension by consciousness takes place by means of some distinction : ‘This is such and such’. Nothing can be apprehended apart from some special feature of make or structure, e.g., the triangularly shaped dewlap in the case of cows. The true distinction between non-determinate and determinate perception is that the former is the apprehension of the first individual among a number of thing belonging to the same class, while latter is the apprehension of the second, third and subsequent individuals. On the apprehension of the first individual cow for the first time, the perceiving person is not conscious of the fact that the special shape which constitutes the genuine character of the class ‘cows’ extends to the present individual also: while this special consciousness arises in the case of the perception of the second and third cows. Perception with its two subdivisions of non-determinate (*nirvikalpaka*) and determinate (*savikalpaka*) also cannot be a means of knowledge for things devoid of difference.’

‘If perception made us apprehend only pure Being, judgments clearly referring to different objects - such as ‘here is a jar’, ‘there is a piece of cloth’, -would be devoid of all meaning. And if through perception we did not apprehend difference -as marked by generic character, etc., constituting the structure or make a thing- why should a man searching for a horse not be satisfied with finding a buffalo ?’

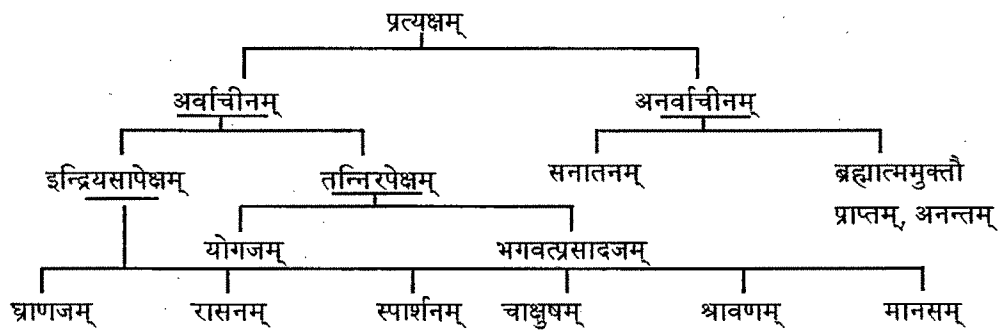
‘Nor does, as a matter of fact, the eye apprehend there being only : for what it does apprehend is colour and the coloured thing, and those other qualities (viz., extension, dimensions etc.) Which inhere in the thing together with colour. Nor does feeling do so : for it has for its object things palpable. Nor have the ear and the other senses mere Being for their object : but they relate to what is distinguished by a special sound or taste or smell. Hence there is not any source of knowledge causing us to apprehend mere Being (without any attribute).’

‘From all this we conclude that perception has for its object only what is distinguished by difference manifesting itself in generic character and so on, which constitute the make or structure of a thing.” While pointing out the scope and limitation of perception, Śrī Rāmānuja points out that

perception will not enable us to obtain the knowledge of Brahman and quotes the *Kāthopaniṣad* (II.6.9) न संदृशे तिष्ठति रूपमस्य न चक्षुसा पश्यति कश्चनैनम् । which says, “His form is not to be seen, no one beholds Him with the eye.”

Śrī Rāmānuja says that perception is two-fold, being based either on the sense organs or on extraordinary concentration of mind (*yoga*). Of the perception of the former kind there are again two sub-species, according as perception takes place either through the outer sense organs or the internal organ (*manas*). Now the outer sense organs produce knowledge of their respective objects, in so far as the latter are in actual contact with the organs, but are quite unable to give rise to knowledge of the special object constituted by the supreme self that is capable of being conscious of and creating the whole aggregate of things. Nor can internal perception give rise to such knowledge: for only purely internal things, such as pleasure and pain, fall within its cognisance and it is incapable of relating itself to external objects apart from the outer sense organs. Nor again can perception be based on Yoga : for although such perception, which springs from intense imagination, implies a vivid presentation of things, it is, after all, nothing more than a reproduction of objects perceived previously and does not, therefore, rank as an instrument of knowledge: for it has no means of applying to objects other than those perceived previously. And after all, it does so; it is not means knowledge but sours of error.

Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa accepts the *Pratyakṣa Pramāṇa* as given by Śrī Rāmānuja. However, he elaborates upon it and states that there can be इन्द्रियनिरपेक्षप्रत्यक्ष which can again be of two types namely योगज and भगवत्प्रसादज, both of which can again arise through two respective types of समाधि and grace (*kṛpā*) of God or God realised saint as shown below in the table.





The *Pratyakṣa* of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa can give the knowledge of Parabrahman or Akṣarabrahman because according to Him the Supreme 'Reality is *always* present on the earth in human form, either He Himself incarnates or He comes as the God-realised saint. When an aspirant with the help of scriptures knows him to be so then he becomes a true devotee.' God then divinises his cognitive and connative senses. So a devotee gets correct knowledge of God, himself and the world of objects.

साक्षात्कृष्णोऽथ वा तस्य भक्ताः श्रेयस्करा नृणाम् ।  
भवेयुरेव धर्मिष्ठा यत्र कुत्रापि भूतले ॥ ५ ॥  
शास्त्रोक्तलक्षणैस्तस्य तेषां वा यदि वेदनम् ।  
मुमुक्षोस्तस्य पुंसः स्याद्भक्तः स्यात्तर्हि स प्रभोः ॥ ६ ॥

HVSS 219 : 5-6

The knowledge in order to be valid must correspond with the fact and should lead to 'artha-kriyā-kāritva' i.e. successful activity. For valid perception both the sense organs, external and internal including *antakarāṇas* must be sound, free from defects, receptive and alert. The self also must be completely involved in the process then only perception will result into firm, resolute and complete knowledge. <sup>5</sup>

According to Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism intellect or buddhi pervades all the five sense organs. The sense experience of each one may be different and independent. But intellect coordinates sense experiences of all five and comes to a certain specific judgment. *The absolute difference and distinction between nirvikalpaka and savikalpaka pratyakṣa - indeterminate and determinate perception is not accepted by Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa.*

He gives an example of valid perception of milk to illustrate how all the sensible qualities of the physical world cannot be known singly by anyone of the five sense organs fully.

दृष्ट्या सितं त्वचा शीतं जिह्वया मधुरं यथा ।  
घ्राणेन सुरभीत्येकमप्युक्तं बहुधा पयः ॥ ३८ ॥  
सर्वे गुणा हि पयसो गुणैर्मिन्नं पयो न हि ।  
एवं हि भगवानेको भूयांसः संति तद्गुणाः ॥ ३९ ॥

HVSS 202 : 38-39

When we see that milk is white in colour with our eyes, smell with nose and know that it has pleasant smell, touch it with a fingertip and perceive it to be hot or cold and test it with tongue and come to know that it is delicious, then only we know it really and fully. Thus, we have valid knowledge of milk through the perception. This perception is *purṇa pratyakṣa* or complete perception. There can be incomplete or *apurṇa pratyakṣa* also.

Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa also gives an example of *apurṇa pratyakṣa*. This may give inadequate knowledge or invalid knowledge. He says, 'If a person enters a semi-dark room he can't see exact shape, size, colour of pots and pitcher. Of course, he can touch and feel and perceive some knowledge about them but not complete knowledge due to lack of proper light. He may get partial knowledge. He will not have 'Yathārtha Pratyakṣa Jñāna'. Like partial knowledge of proverbial six blind men touching and feeling some part of an elephant or a cow, his cognition will be an inadequate perceptual knowledge. (HVSS 219 : 4-6)

As mentioned above in case of *purṇa-pratyakṣa*, if all sound cognitive and connative senses are accompanied by intuitive experience of the manifest form of God or God-realised saint or a true devotee then such *purṇa-pratyakṣa* can lead to the realisation of God. Because according to Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa God is always present on the earth i.e. as long as there is human existence. Because of this belief unlike that of Śrī Rāmānuja, the *purṇa-pratyakṣa* of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa can lead directly to the final liberation or *Jivana Mukti*. This concept is explained and understood differently by Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism and Viśiṣṭādvaita. While, Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa fully believes in *Jivana Mukti* Śrī Rāmānuja and his followers do not accept *Jivana Mukti* जीवन्मुक्तादिशब्दः क्वचिदुपचरितस्तत्समावस्थयैव । (तत्त्वमुक्ताकलाप, २-७३) It means wherever in the scriptures there is mention of *Jivana Mukti* it should be considered as indicative only not really.

Unlike the *avatāravāda* of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism God remains on the earth all time according to Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism. The most important

endeavour is to identify Him as per the characteristics of God or God realised saint mentioned in the scripture.<sup>6 & 7</sup>

### ANUMĀNA PRAMĀNA as per Śrī Rāmānujācārya

अतः प्रत्यक्षस्य सविशेषविषयत्वेन प्रत्यक्षादिदृष्टसम्बन्धविशिष्टविषयत्वादनुमानमपि सविशेषविषयमेव ।  
प्रमाणसङ्ख्याविवादेऽपि सर्वाभ्युपगतप्रमाणानामयमेव विषय इति न केनापि प्रमाणेन निर्विशेषवस्तुसिद्धिः ।

The second source of knowledge is inference (*anumāna*). Inference takes us over from what is perceived to what is not perceived on the basis of what is perceived.

Inference or *anumāna* according to Śrī Rāmānuja, like perception, can never reveal to us knowledge of things, which are devoid of quality. Inference depends on knowledge obtained through perception. Like perception, inference also can never give us knowledge of *nirviśeṣa vastu* or non-differentiated substance. Rāmānuja writes :

“Perception thus having for its object only what is marked by difference, inference also is in the same category, for its object is only what is distinguished by connection with things known through perception and other means of knowledge. Thus, even in the case of disagreement as to the number of different instruments of knowledge, a thing devoid of difference could not be established by any one of them since the instruments of knowledge acknowledged by all have only one and the same object, viz., what is marked by difference.”

Śrī Rāmānuja seeks to prove that just as perception is unable to give us true knowledge of Brahman, inference also is not able to do it. Inference either of the inductive type or the deductive type is unable to give us this knowledge. He thinks that what is true of perception is equally true of inference either of the kind which proceeds on the observation of special cases or of the kind which rests on generalisations. Not inference of the former kind, because such inference is not known to relate to anything beyond the reach of the senses. Nor the inference of the latter kind, because we do not observe any characteristic feature that it

invariably accompanied by the presence of Supreme Self capable of being conscious of, and constructing the Universe of things.<sup>8</sup>

After refuting intellectual proofs for the existence of God, Śrī Rāmānuja follows the view of the *Sūtrakāra* (I/I/3) and declares that scripture is the source of our knowledge of Brahman. “Brahman, being raised above all contacts with the senses, is not an object of perception and the other means of proof, but is to be known through scripture only.”<sup>9</sup>

### ŚABDA PRAMĀṆA as per Śrī Rāmānujācārya

शब्दस्य तु विशेषेण सविशेष एव वस्तुन्यभिधानसामर्थ्यम्, पदवाक्यरूपेण प्रवृत्ते :। पदद्वयतरुपस्य वाक्यस्यानेकपदार्थसंसर्गविशेषाभिधायित्वेन निर्विशेषवस्तु-प्रतिपादनासामर्थ्यात् न निर्विशेषवस्तुनि शब्दः प्रमाणम्।

This source of knowledge of Brahman has been called *Śabda Pramāṇa*. What exactly it meant by the term may be brought out by expressions like ‘the spoken word.’

*Śabda Pramāṇa* refers to scripture, the Śruti i.e. the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upniṣads (but) also includes Vedānta-sutra and Smṛtis, such as the Gītā, which do not contradict the Śruti. Śrī Rāmānuja is of the view that ‘all the Smṛtis quoted are of not necessarily authority.’ He rejects as valueless the Smṛtis that contradicts the scripture. “The Vedānta texts are concerned with theoretical truth lying outside the sphere of perception and the other means of knowledge, and hence students possessing only a limited knowledge of the Veda require some help in order fully to make out the meaning of the Vedānta”..... “The support required is elucidation of the sense conveyed by scripture, and this clearly cannot be effected by means of a *Smṛti* contradicting scripture.”<sup>10</sup>

Regarding the relation between Scripture and ratiocination (*tarka*) Rāmānuja says: “Scripture, although not dependent on anything else and concerned with super sensuous objects, must all the same come to terms with ratiocination (*tarka*) for all the different means of knowledge can in many cases help us to arrive at a decisive conclusion, only if they are supported by ratiocination. For by *Tarka* we understand that kind of

knowledge (intellectual activity) which in the case of any given matter by means of an investigation either into the essential nature of that matter or into collateral or ancillary factors, determine what possesses proving power, and what are the special details of the matter under a consideration : this kind of cognitional activity is called *Uha*. All means of knowledge equally stand in need of *tarka*; Scripture, power, the authoritative character of which specially depends on expectancy (*ākāṅkṣā*), proximity (*sannidhi*) and compatibility (*yogyatā*) throughout requires to be assisted by *Tarka*. In accordance with this Manu says: “He who investigates by means of reasoning, he only knows religious duty, and none other,” “It is with a view to such confirmation of the sense of Scripture by means of the reasoning that the texts declare that certain topics such as the Self must be ‘reflected on’ (*mantvya*)”.<sup>11</sup>

*Śabda* also refers to the intuitive revelation of Seers or (*ṛṣi*) to whom knowledge of Brahman is vouchsafed. He quotes the Kathopaniṣad text which says Brahman is not to be obtained by ratiocination or by mere learning of scripture but only by him whom the Deity chooses as the recipient of His grace. (*Nāyamātmā pravacanena labhyo, Na medhayā Na bahunā śrutena, Yamevaiṣa vṛnute tena labhyaḥ, Tasyaiṣa ātma vivṛnute tanuṁ svām*) Devout meditation (*bhakti* or *upāsanā*) and the grace of God are revelatory of the knowledge of Brahman. Rāmānuja writes: “What we have to understand by knowledge in this connection has been repeatedly explained, viz. a mental energy different in character from the mere cognition of the sense of texts, and more specifically denoted by such terms as *Dhyāna* or *Upāsanā* i.e. meditation, which is of the nature of remembrance (i.e. representative thought), but in intuitive clearness is not inferior to the clearest preventative thought (*pratyakṣa*) which by constant daily practice becomes ever more perfect”<sup>12</sup>

“Steady remembrance of this kind is designated by the word devotion (*bhakti*) for, this term has the same meaning as *upāsanā*, meditation.”<sup>13</sup>

“Such meditation is originated in the mind through the grace of the supreme person, who is pleased and conciliated by the different kinds of

acts of sacrifice and worship duly performed by the devotee day by day.”<sup>14</sup> “It is only in the state of perfect conciliation or endearment, i.e., in meditation bearing the character of devotion, that an intuition of Brahman takes place, not in any other stages.”<sup>15</sup>

Śrī Rāmānuja quotes Vāmadeva and others as persons who ‘saw’ God by means of *Bhakti* (devotion) in other words, ‘had attained to intuition into Brahman’s nature.’<sup>16</sup>

Śrī Rāmānuja makes a distinction between the lower knowledge and higher knowledge. He says: “The lower knowledge is the *R̥gveda* etc. This knowledge is the means towards the intuition of Brahman, while the higher kind of knowledge, which is called ‘*Upāsanā*’ has the character of devout meditation (*Bhakti*) and consists in direct intuition of Brahman.”<sup>17</sup> *Upāsanā* is totally different for Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa. It means to know thoroughly the nature of God as *Sarvopari*, *Sākāra*, *Kartā* and *Prakāṣa*. He is above all with definite (human) form, the doer and always present on this world through Satpuruṣa.

He draws a conclusion from all this that, “With regard to super sensuous matter, scripture alone is authoritative, and reasoning is be applied duly to the support of scripture.”<sup>18</sup>

Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa accepts of *Anumāna* and *Śabda* as propounded by Śrī Rāmānuja. There is no important distinction in these except that the connotation of the term *Śabda* *pramāṇa* will be different from Rāmānuja.

### **Eight Scriptures (or Authoritative Texts)**

According to *Yatīndramatadīpika*, at the end. Just before *Upasamhāra*, Śrīnivāsācārya states that there are three ontological categories according to Śrī Bādarāyaṇa. Śrī Rāmānujācārya follows him. The authoritative Vedānta texts prove this thesis.

वस्तुतस्तु वेदान्तानां चिदचिद्विशिष्टद्वैतम् एकमेव ब्रह्म इति तात्पर्यम्। अत एव चिदचिद्विशिष्टं ब्रह्म एकमेवेति मत्वा भगवान् बादरायणः—अथातो ब्रह्म जिज्ञासा इति उपक्रम्य तदेव सप्रकारं निरूपितवान् अतः चिदचिद् विशिष्टः ब्रह्मशब्दवाच्य विष्णुवाच्यः परं वासुदेवो नारायण एवैकम् इति विशिष्टद्वैतवादिनां दर्शनम् इति सिद्धम्।<sup>19</sup>

‘In fact, the quintessence of Vedānta has its purport the unity of Brahman qualified by the sentient and the non-sentient things. With the purpose of teaching this Brahman as the only reality qualified by cit and acit the revered Bādarāyaṇa began his enquiry into the nature of this Brahman and explained that Brahman as having modes. Thus Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Vāsudeva known by the of Viṣṇu indicated by term ‘Brahman’ and qualified by cit and acit is the only reality. This is the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita.’

The texts of the Vedas, Smṛtis, Itihāsa, and Purāṇas are the authoritative texts of the Viśiṣṭādvaita. They are could Pramāṇas or the first category of authorities. The works of the Ālvāras saints like Śrī Śaṭhakopasuri etc. are *Pramāṇatara* i.e. the higher category of authorities and the text of Śrībhāṣya of Śrī Rāmānujācārya is *Pramāṇatama*, i.e., the highest category of authority. It further states that it is because Nārāyaṇa as the Highest Reality is the *Prameya* (= that which is to be established by all means of valid knowledge) of all these scriptures, these are accepted as the authority to texts.

Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa has accepted eight texts as authoritative. They are : the Vedas, Bādarāyaṇa-sūtra, Bhāgavatam, Viṣṇusahasranāma, Bhagavadgītā, Vīdurnīti, Vāsudevamāhātmyam, (of Skanda-purāṇa) and Yajñavalkyasmṛti.

ग्रन्थास्त्वभीष्टा अष्टौ हि भवत्युद्धववर्त्मनि।

वेदाश्च व्याससूत्राणि श्रीमद्भगवत् तथा ॥ १० ॥

HVSS 218 : 10

ग्रन्थाइति। ग्रन्थास्तु। उद्धववर्त्मनि। अष्टौ। अभीष्टाः। भवन्ति। हि। तान्नाम्ना निर्दिशति सार्द्धद्वाभ्याम्। वेदाश्चत्वारोऽपि निगमाः। तथा। व्याससूत्राणि। श्रीमद्भगवत् पुराणं च ॥ २१८-१० ॥

विष्णुनामसहस्राख्यं स्तोत्रं भगवतोदिता।

गीता विदुरनीतिश्च भारतस्थमिदं त्रयम् ॥ ११ ॥

HVSS 218 : 11

विष्ण्विति। विष्णुनामसहस्राख्याम्। स्तोत्रम्। भगवता श्रीकृष्णेन। उदिताऽर्जुनं प्रति कथिता। गीता। विदुरनीतिश्च। इदं विष्णुसरस्वनामस्तोत्रादि। त्रयम्। महाभारतस्थम्। ज्ञेयम् ॥ २१८-११ ॥

श्रीवासुदेवमाहात्म्यं तथा स्कन्दपुराणम्।  
याज्ञवल्क्यस्मृतिश्चेति ग्रन्था अष्टौ प्रकीर्तिताः ॥ १२ ॥

HVSS 218 : 12

श्रीवासुदेवेति। तथा। स्कन्दपुराणम्। श्रीवासुदेवमाहात्म्यम्। याज्ञवल्क्यस्मृतिश्च।  
इत्येते। अष्टौग्रन्थाः। प्रकीर्तिताः ॥ २१८-१२ ॥

HVSS 218 : 10-12, Śikṣāpatrī: 93-95

This fact is also mentioned in Śikṣāpatrī : 93-95. If we follow the logic of Yatindramatadīpikā, we can say that Vedas-Smṛtis-Purāṇas are the Pramāṇa texts, the eight authoritative texts mentioned above will be called the Pramāṇatara texts and the Vacanamṛtam ('nectarine discourses'), which are the very utterances of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa himself, will attain the status of Pramāṇatama or the highest category of authoritative text because in Śrī Swāminārāyaṇism, Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa is the Highest Ontological Reality.

In short the status the Śruti or the Vedic texts as one only highest authority was not accepted by any of the Bhakti Vedānta School Acāryas.

### **The Śāstra Pramāṇa (Acceptance of Authoritative Schools of Thought by Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa)**

We have in India nine traditional schools of philosophy of which three - Cārvāka, Bauddha and Jaina - do not accept the Śrutis as Śabda Pramāṇa. They do not accept the authorities of the Vedas and are therefore called heterodox systems and are generally rejected by the traditionalistic Hindu philosophical systems.

The remaining six are sub-grouped into three pairs - Nyāya and Vaiśeṣikas, Sāṅkhya and Yoga, Mīmāṃsā (or Pūrva Mīmāṃsā) and Vedānta (or Uttara-Mīmāṃsā) they recognised as orthodox systems as they accept the authority of the Vedas or Śruti literature as Śabda Pramāṇa.

Out of these six orthodox systems, however, Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa accepts only three i.e. Sāṅkhya, Yoga, and Vedānta and adds the Pāñcarātra-system from Āgama literature. In fact, one whole discourse of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇam, - discourse no. 52 of *Vacanāmṛtam* (corresponding to the Taranga 52 of HVSS) - expounds the topic of *Darśana-pramāṇa*. The relevant portion of the same is reproduced here.



### Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Vedānta and Pāñcarātra

According to Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Vedānta and Pāñcarātra should be studied together, as reading each separately does not give a consistently full knowledge of God. Each one is supplemented by the other.<sup>20</sup>

Sāṃkhya explains that before the cosmic evolution there were only two entities namely *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*. *Puruṣa* is always dormant and before creation *Prakṛti* was in a state of equilibrium and as such motionless. But the presence of *Puruṣa* disturbs and influences the equilibrium of *Prakṛti*, which then evolves. When the ubiquitous *Prakṛti* evolves, it produces *Mahat* and other twenty-four elements in all. As these *Tattvas* are evolved out of *Prakṛti*. They are *Vikṛtis*. This cosmic evolution has two aspects-expansion and contraction. The *tattvas* that have evolved out of *Prakṛti* are, therefore, transitory and have a cause-effect relationship with *Prakṛti*, the original cause.

This system, according to Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa, is faulty since it is possible to consider here the various manifestations of God like Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Saṃkarṣaṇa as the evolutes of *Prakṛti*. Therefore, they can be subject to change. Sāṃkhya says that only *Nirguṇa* Vāsudeva is above *Prakṛti* and, therefore He is not subject to change and the object of perception and conception. He is cognisable only by *ātman*. Similarly *Jīvas* also can be included in the category of twenty-four *tattvas*.

Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa, however, interprets the Sāṃkhya system by eliminating from it the concept that the manifestations of God are separate from Vāsudeva - the *Nirguṇa* Brahman. He says that everything that has evolved from *Prakṛti* is transitory. *Nirguṇa* Vāsudeva manifests Himself on the earth for the redemption of many *Jīvas* and is, therefore, the Ultimate Reality. He, in the manifested human form and is the object of meditation and devotion by the *Mumukṣus*. Because of His manifestation in human form, He cannot be said to have evolved out of *Prakṛti*.

The Sāṃkhya however, offers one solace to *Mumukṣu* inasmuch as it makes him realise that even the best of sense objects, having evolved out of *Prakṛti* are perishable. He is, therefore, not captivated by them. With such abstinence from the sense objects, he is asked to follow *Yoga*, which prescribes the meditation of and devotion to personal God here, on the earth and afterwards. Since God has to liberate people by the process of involution, He manifests Himself on earth for this purpose.

God is conceived in Yoga Sūtras as a means for removing the obstacles from the path of a Yogi, so that he can easily concentrate and attain liberation from the bondage of *Prakṛti*. In the Yoga system, Hiranyagarbha, Virāṭ, etc. are conceived of as the *aṃśas* of God. Therefore, in this system the - indivisibility (*acyutabhāva*) of God, is impaired. Commenting on this apparently conceptual fault, Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa says :

‘The ultimate God is without an equal by His preeminence, and reigns supreme. *Prakṛti*, *Puruṣa*, Hiranyagarbha, Virāṭ, etc. are his devotees and they meditate upon Him. Because of His *antaryāmin śakti*, being concomitant in them even they are described as God in scriptures. *Śruti*, therefore, says: ‘Everything is Brahman and nothing is apart from it.’

‘Thus the whole universe is Brahman since He is the creator of the universe by his ubiquitous power. But He is immanent in it and also separate from it. Therefore, the imposition of Godship on *Prakṛti*, *Puruṣa*, Hiranyagarbha, Virāṭ etc. becomes consistent because of the concomitance in them of the *antaryāmi-śakti* (faculty) of the Supreme God.’

‘Advaita Vedānta accepts the eternal Brahman as the cause of the whole universe. It describes God as immanent, all pervasive, and *nirguṇa*. Under this system the Highest Ontological Reality is held to be formless.

‘To remove this deficiency in the knowledge about the Formless Highest Reality, found in Advaita Vedānta philosophy, Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa prescribes the reading of Pāñcarātra Śāstra which clearly proclaims that God who is The Highest Reality has a divine form and possesses all divine qualities.

‘But the apprehension of God according to the Pāñcarātra system creates again a difficulty. According to Pāñcarātra, when God descends on earth in human form, all the human attributes are imposed on Him. He cannot, therefore, be visualised as absolutely perfect, and all pervasive. As such Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Vedānta and Pāñcarātra should be studied together for having complete and comprehensive knowledge of God.’

According to Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa God is always *Sākāra* - having definite human form both in His divine abode as well as here on earth when He so manifests. Again, the two forms of God, one in the divine abode and the other on the earth, are identical as He simply appears on earth by His will and does not descend due to the force of *Kāla*, *Karma* or *Māyā*. He is to be understood as always *Sākāra*, all-doer, totally divine, transcending all and always present on the earth Himself or through God-realised saint, in one or the other form. Contact with *Satpuruṣa* and knowledge of this personal God only redeems the *Jivas*; there is no other path for redemption.

Dharma when spoken of esoterically is *Bhāgavata Dharma* or *Ekāntika Dharma*. ‘Dharma which propitiates God is *Bhāgavata Dharma* or *Ekāntika Dharma*. This Dharma is a synonym of *Ekāntikī Bhakti*. God incarnates himself on earth to establish this Dharma not to not to establish *Varṇāśrama Dharma* only, which lacks the glory of *Bhāgavata Dharma* or *Ekāntikī Bhakti*. Observance of *Bhāgavata Dharma* redeems a devotee from the shackles of *Māyā* and lifts him to Akṣarabrahma the divine abode of *Puruṣottama*.’

It is interesting to note that Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa states that the knowledge of all the four *Śāstras*, mentioned above, together is essential for the complete or ‘full’ knowledge of God in His Manifest or Human form. Only when aspirants know all the four the purpose will be served because it also means, by implication, that none of the four individually is capable of giving a complete understanding of the Highest Reality. Sāṃkhya describes the physical world in terms of the 24 elements, but

since it leaves out the 25th principle of God, no proper explanation of *Jīva* and *Īśvara* is found in it. This must be supplemented by Yoga-darśana. Vedānta emphasises the principle of Parabrahman but does not explain its aspect of being Formful as human manifestation, His divine corporeal aspect. This deficiency must be fulfilled by the Pāñcarātra, which emphasises the devotion to the Human manifest form of the Ultimate.

All the four Śāstras, thus, act as complimentary to each other, fill up each other's lacunae in the understanding the Parabrahman vis-a-vis its manifestation in human form; together they form a full revelation and the complete understanding of the Ultimate. Therefore, the one who possesses knowledge of three Śāstras has only three-fourth understanding of the right knowledge of Ultimate Reality, the one having knowledge of two Śāstras has only one-half of it and the one having understanding of one Śāstra has only a quarter of it. Naturally, therefore, one possessing none will have to be called a hypocrite (*dāmbhika*) even if he is man of knowledge (*jñānī*) or a man of devotion (*upāsaka*) in HVSS 52 : 4-5.

साङ्ख्येन योगेन च यः स्वरूपं राधिकापतेः।

वेदान्तपञ्चरात्राभ्यां विद्यात्पूर्णः स नान्यथा ॥ ४ ॥

HVSS 52 : 4

साङ्ख्येनेति। हे साधवः!! यो भगवद्भक्तः। साङ्ख्येन कपिलाचार्यप्रणीतसेश्वर-  
साङ्ख्यशास्त्रेण। योगेन हिरण्यगर्भाचार्यप्रणीतसेश्वरयोगशास्त्रेण। वेदान्तो  
द्वैपायनाचार्यप्रणीतोत्तरमीमांसाख्य-शास्त्रं च पञ्चरात्रं श्रीनारदाचार्यप्रणितागमाख्यशास्त्रं च  
ताभ्यां च। राधिकापते रासेश्वरीप्राणनाथस्य श्रीकृष्णस्य। स्वरूपम्।  
विद्यात्साक्षाद्भगवदुपासकैकान्तिकसाधुभ्यो जानीयात्। स भगवद्भक्तः। पूर्णः सम्पूर्णतया  
भगवत्स्वरूपज्ञानवान्। भवेत्। अन्यथैवं भगवत्स्वरूपवेदनाभावे। पूर्णो न भवेत् ॥ ५२-४ ॥

शास्त्रैश्चतुर्भिरेतैस्तत्स्वरूपं

परमात्मनः।

निश्चेतव्यं प्रयत्नेन स्यात्पूर्णज्ञानवान् यतः ॥ ५ ॥

HVSS 52 : 5

शास्त्रैरिति। तत्तस्मात्कारणात्। चतुर्भिः!! एतैः साङ्ख्यादिभिः। शास्त्रैः। परमात्मनः  
श्रीकृष्णस्य। स्वरूपम्। प्रयत्नेन। निश्चेतव्यं निर्णयं ज्ञेयम्। यतो येनेत्थंभूतवेदनेन।  
पूर्णज्ञानवान्सम्पूर्णतया भगवत्स्वरूपज्ञानी। स्यात् ॥ ५२-५ ॥

The argument implies a holistic approach of Śrī Swāminārāyaṇa to the problem of correct knowledge as the means of liberation. He was mainly preacher to general audience. His lectures did not follow systems

and logic generally employed by professional scholar - acāryās like Śrī Śaṅkara etc. He used to give common examples to make a topic easy to understand. Therefore there is no śāstric and epistemological continuity in his discourses.<sup>21</sup>

### Footnote

1. HVSS 115 : 5
2. SSJV I : 34/I
3. HVSS 212, 219
4. Yamunacārya M., *Ramanuja's Teachings in His Own Words*, pp.138-139
5. **प्रत्यक्षप्रमाणम्** : प्रमाणविषये प्रमाणत्रयं स्वीकृतमिति वचनामृतग्रन्थाद्विज्ञायते। प्रत्यक्षं, अनुमानं शब्दश्चेति। यद्यपि प्रत्यक्षप्रमाणलक्षणं शब्दशस्तेनोद्भूतं तथापि रामानुजीयश्रीवैष्णवमतस्याभीष्टतमत्वेन तदीयग्रन्थोक्तं साक्षात्कारिप्रमाणं प्रत्यक्षमिति स्वीकृतमिति प्रतिभाति। प्रत्यक्षप्रमाणावान्तरभेदाः वचनामृतानुसारेण अधोलिखितकोष्ठकानुसारेण शक्याः विज्ञातुम्।
  - **प्रत्यक्षभेदनिरूपणम्** : प्रत्यक्षभेदान् सन्दर्भपूर्वकं व्याख्यायते — अनर्वाचीनत्वञ्च प्रध्वंसप्रतियोग्यभाववत्त्वम्। तच्च भगवद्भक्तिं मुक्तानां भगवद्दर्शनम्। कथितं यथा — ‘भगवत्सिंहासनसमीपस्था मुक्ता अनन्तकोटयो नारायणस्य दर्शनं कुर्वन्तः सन्ति’। (वच.१२२) मुक्तानां मुक्त्यवस्थाऽनन्तरमेतत्सुखं प्राप्यते। तादृशं दर्शनं लभ्यते। उक्तञ्च ‘तद् (भगवतः) मूर्तेः चतुर्दिशं निष्पन्नानि सन्ति मुक्तानां मण्डलानि, सर्वे मुक्ताश्च समुपविष्टाः सन्ति, भगवतोऽस्यां मूर्तीं दृष्टिध्यानं कुर्वन्तिः’ (वच.१४६) इति। सादित्वेऽप्यनर्वाचीनत्वञ्चास्यानन्तत्वाद् हेतोर्ज्ञेयम्। अनर्वाचीने सनातनञ्च त्रैकालिकसंसर्गानवच्छिन्नदेशादिविघ्नानवच्छिन्नं निरन्तरं दर्शनम्। अवच्छेदश्च सङ्कोचविकासभ्याम्। तादृशी च भगवतः दृष्टिः। सा च दृष्टिः भगवान् स्वयं स्वधाम्नि स्थितश्चेद् इह लोके वा स्थितः स्याद् उभयत्रैका एव। तदुक्तम् — ‘तामेतां मूर्तिं प्रकटप्रामाण्येनाधुनाऽपि वयं पश्यामः सत्सङ्गसमागमात् पूर्वमपि वयं दृष्टवन्त एव, मातुर्गर्भस्था अपि तामेतां मूर्तिं निरीक्षतवन्त एव, गर्भस्थितेश्च पूर्वमपि दृष्टपूर्विणस्तां..... ज्ञातव्यञ्चेत्तदपि सर्वैर्यत् तत्र तेजसि या विद्यते भगवतो मूर्तिः स एवायं प्रत्यक्षो भगवान्.....’ (वच.१४६) इति। एतत्सन्दर्भेण ज्ञायते यत् मूर्तिः दृष्टा चोभयं भगवान् स्वाभिनारायण एव। अतश्चैकत्र कथयति स्वात्मविषयकत्वेन यद् ‘अहं रामानन्दस्वामिसमागमात् पूर्वमेव कृतवान् साक्षादात्मदर्शनं, करोमि चाधुनाऽपि तथैव। सोऽयमात्मा सूर्यसदृशः प्रकाशवान् वर्तते। एतेषां मम सर्वेन्द्रियाणां क्रियास्वपि क्षणमात्रमपि नैव विस्मृतमात्मदर्शनम्’। अक्षरब्रह्मणोऽपीदं दर्शनम्। अक्षरब्रह्मणो मूलमायायाः मूलप्रकृतेरित्यपरत्वेन भगवत्सेवकत्वेन च हे तोरिदं सनातनं भगवद्दर्शनम्। (द.वच.२१, १६३) अत एव अक्षरब्रह्मावतारगुणातीतानन्दस्वामिस्तुतो तत्समकालिकाचिन्त्यानन्दवर्णिना लिखितमस्थितो मातुर्गर्भं हरिमविरतं योऽक्षरपरं। चिदानन्दाकारं ललितवसनालंकृतिभरम्॥ अपश्यत्पुण्याक्षं विधुमिव चकोरः शुचिरुचिं। गुणातीतानन्दं मुनिवरमहं नौमि सततम्॥ (स्वामिनी वातो महिमस्तोत्र-६) इति। इन्द्रियसापेक्षावर्चीनप्रत्यक्षत्वञ्च जायमानत्वे सत्यनित्यज्ञानत्वम्। तच्च प्राणजादिभेदेन पञ्चविधम्, मनोजन्यं षष्ठं मानसञ्च। इन्द्रियनिरपेक्षमर्वाचीनं प्रत्यक्षमपि द्विधा — योगजम्, भगवत्प्रसादजम्। तत्र योगजप्रत्यक्षं योगसाधनाजन्यम् एकदेशेनात्मदर्शनरूपञ्च। तदुक्तं वचनामृते “भगवद्भक्ताः भगवद्धाम गच्छन्ति, तान् योगसमाधिभाजः प्रत्यक्षं पश्यन्ति”। (वच.१) अक्ष्यादिशरीराङ्गानि लक्ष्यीकृत्य प्राणायाम-प्रत्याहार-ध्यान-धारणा-समाधिद्वाराऽऽत्मप्रत्यक्षं करोति तदपि योगजम्। यथा चोक्तम् ‘यथा यस्य विद्यतेऽक्षिविद्या, तस्य भवति नेत्रद्वारा जीवदर्शनम्। स च तत्र पश्यति भगवतो मूर्तिमपि। तथैव यस्य यदिन्द्रियद्वारा लक्ष्यमभूत् तस्य तादृगेवात्मा प्रतिभासते स्म’.....। (वच.१२३) भगवत्प्रसादजञ्च साधनां विहाय भगवत्कृपयैव समाधौ भगवद्दर्शनम्, अथवा साक्षाद् भगवतो यथार्थदर्शनम्। तदुक्तम् — ‘अधुनैवास्माभिरेकहरिभक्तस्य समाधिः कारितोऽभूत् तत्र तेन दृष्टं जाञ्चल्यमानं तेजः’। (वच.२५) ‘यद्यप्यक्षरातीतः परमात्मा वाङ्मनोभ्यां परः सर्वांगोचरश्च तथापि कृपयैवं चिन्तयति यथा ज्ञानिनोऽज्ञानिनश्च सर्वेऽपि मर्त्यलोकमनुग्याः साक्षात्कुर्वन्तु मामित्येवं विचिन्त्य सत्यसङ्कल्पो भगवान् कृपया मर्त्यलोकीयसर्वमनुष्याणां दुग्गोचरी भवति’। (वच.७८, ९७) इत्येवं प्रत्यक्षज्ञानं बहुविधं प्रतिपादितम्। श्रीस्वाभिनारायणीयदर्शने भगवतः प्रत्यक्षमूर्तेरूपं तन्महिमा, तद्द्वारा मोक्षश्च निरूपितः तस्मादपि प्रत्यक्षप्रमाणनिरूपणं वैशिष्ट्यं भजते (दृ.९, २०, २१, ३१, ८७, ९५, १०४, १०५, १०६, १३२, १५४, १६८, २२५, २५४, २६१, इत्यादीनि वचनामृतानि) प्रत्यक्ष-प्रमाणसन्ततिः सविकल्पनिर्विकल्पभेदादिकमन्यत् समानतन्त्रात् श्रीवैष्णवसिद्धान्ताद् ग्राह्यमिति विचारितं स्यात्।
- (From unpublished Thesis of Sādhu Shrutiprakashdas submitted to an accepted by Rashtriya Snaksrit Snasthan for Vidhyavaridhi Degree 1998.)
6. 39 Virtues of God when manifested as a King. HVSS 62 : 4, श्रीमद्भागवत - 1/16/26-28.
 

(१) सत्यम्, (२) शौचम्, (३) दया, (४) क्षान्तिः, (५) त्यागः, (६) सन्तोषः, (७) आर्जवम्, (८) शमः, (९) दमः, (१०) तपः, (११) साम्यम्, (१२) तितिक्षा, (१३) उपरतिः, (१४) श्रुतम्, (१५) ज्ञानम्, (१६) विरक्तिः, (१७) ऐश्वर्यम्, (१८) शौर्यम्, (१९) तेजः, (२०) बलम्, (२१) स्मृतिः, (२२) स्वातन्त्र्यम्, (२३) कौशलम्, (२४) कान्तिः, (२५) धैर्यम्, (२६) मार्दवम्, (२७) प्रागल्भ्यम्, (२८) प्रश्रयः, (२९) शीलम्, (३०) ओजः, (३१) बलम्, (३२) भगम्, (३३) गाम्भीर्यम्, (३४) स्यौर्यम्, (३५) आस्तिक्यम्, (३६) कीर्तिः, (३७) मानः, (३८) अनहङ्कृतिः।
7. 30 Virtues of God when manifested as a saint. HVSS 77 : 5, श्रीमद्भागवत - 11/11/29-33
 

कृपालुरकृतद्रोहस्तितिक्षुः सर्वदेहिनाम्। सत्यासारोऽनवद्यात्मा समः सर्वोपकारकः॥ कामैरहतधीर्दानो मृदुः शुचिरकिञ्चनः। अनीहो मितभुक् शान्तः स्थिरो मच्छरणो मुनिः॥ अप्रमत्तो गभीरात्मा धृतिमान् क्षितपद्गुणः। अमानो मानदः कल्पो मैत्रः कारुणिकः कविः॥ आज्ञायैवं गुणान् दोषान् मयादिष्टानपि स्वकान्। धर्मान् सत्यञ्च यः सर्वान् मां भजेत् स सत्तमः॥ ज्ञात्वाऽज्ञात्वाऽथ ये वै मां यावान् यश्चास्मि यादृशः॥ भजन्यनन्यभावेन ते मे भक्ततमा मताः॥
8. S. Bh. I. I. 3
9. S. Bh. I. I. 3

10. S. Bh. II. I. I
11. S. Bh. II. I. 4
12. S. Bh. III. 4. 26
13. S. Bh. I. I. I
14. S. Bh. III. 4. 26
15. S. Bh. III. 2. 23
16. S. Bh. III. 2. 24
17. S. Bh. I. 2. 23
18. S. Bh. II. I. 12
19. Srinivasacarya, *Yatindramatdipika*, pp-290, Editor : Acarya Sivaprasad Dwivedi, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi, 1989
20. शास्त्रचतुष्टयापेक्षावर्णनम्: मान्यशास्त्रेषु वेदाद्यष्टशास्त्राणां स्वीकृतिरित्यादिकं एतदध्यायप्रारम्भे श्रीस्वामिनारायणदर्शने प्रस्थानत्रय्याः वैदिकशास्त्राणाञ्च स्थानमिति शीर्षके प्रतिपादितं ततो विज्ञेयम् । विशेषेण भगवत्स्वामिनारायणेन परब्रह्मतत्त्वमीमांसायां वेदान्तादतिरिक्तान्यपि दर्शनानि स्वीकृतानि । एतत्खलु दर्शनेऽस्मिन् वैशिष्ट्यम् । प्रायः सर्व आचार्या वेदान्तमेव परमतत्त्वमीमांसायां मूर्धन्यभूतशास्त्रत्वेन स्वीकुर्वन्ति किन्तु भगवान् स्वामिनारायणो वदति यत् —

साङ्ख्येन योगेन च यः स्वरूपं राधिकापतेः । वेदान्तपञ्चरात्राभ्यां विद्यात् पूर्णं स नान्यथा ॥ ४ ॥  
 शास्त्रैश्चतुर्भिरेवातः सम्यग्बोधस्तु जायते । नृणां कृष्णस्वरूपस्य भक्तानां धीमतामिह ॥ २५ ॥  
 शास्त्रेणैकेन या ज्ञाने भक्तस्य न्यूनता भवेत् । शास्त्रान्तरैः सा तु नश्येत् पूर्णं ज्ञानञ्च सिद्ध्यति ॥ २६ ॥  
 एकपादं भवेज्ज्ञानं शास्त्रेणैकेन च प्रभोः । द्वाभ्यां द्विपादं भक्तस्य त्रिपादं च त्रिभिर्ध्रुवम् ॥ २७ ॥  
 पूर्णं ज्ञानं चतुर्भिः स्यादतः शास्त्रज्ञसाधुतः । सम्यगेवावगन्तव्यश्चतुःशास्त्रार्थ आदरात् ॥ २८ ॥  
 शास्त्रं विना स्वतो यस्तु ज्ञानी वा स्यादुपासकः । तावुभौ दाम्भिकौ ज्ञेयौ स्वस्वाध्वानवबोधितौ ॥ २९ ॥

(वच.५२)

- अत्र खलु शास्त्रचतुष्टयस्य परमतत्त्वविज्ञाने समाना प्रवृत्तिर्निरूपिता । शास्त्राणां च परस्परमपेक्षा प्रदर्शिता, तुल्यबलतया केवलं वेदान्तविज्ञानेनैकपादं ज्ञानं भवेदिति कथयित्वा पादचतुष्टयतुल्यं गौरवं साङ्ख्य-योग-पञ्चरात्राणां प्रदर्शितम् । ब्रह्मसूत्राणां बहुभिः भाष्यकारैः उत्पत्त्यसम्भवाधिकरणं (२/२/८) पञ्चरात्रमतखण्डनपरं, बहूनि च सूत्राणि च साङ्ख्ययोगमतखण्डनपराणीति निरूपितम् । भगवत्स्वामिनारायणस्य दृष्टिरत्र भिद्यते ।
- भगवान् स्वामिनारायणो शास्त्राणां परस्परापेक्षायां युक्तिर्वदति । यथैकमपि पयः दृष्ट्या सितं, त्वचा शीतं, जिह्वया मधुरं, घ्राणेन सुरभिः ज्ञायते इत्येवमेकेनैवेन्द्रियेण दुग्धस्वरूपस्य सम्पूर्णं ज्ञानं नैव भवेत्, किन्तु सर्वैरिन्द्रियैरनुभवे कृते एव सम्पूर्णं ज्ञानं भवति, तथैव वेदादिपञ्चशास्त्रैः (पाशुपतशास्त्रमपि) भगवतः स्वरूपज्ञाने कृते सम्पूर्णतया ज्ञानं भवेदिति ज्ञेयम् । (वच.२०२) । अत्रोल्लिखितं पाशुपतशास्त्रम् प्रायः किम् ? इति ज्ञातुं नैव शक्यते तथापि तस्य विषयः पञ्चरात्रतुल्य एव स्यादिति वचनामृतावलोकनेन ज्ञायते । अधस्तात् पाशुपत-पञ्चरात्रयोरैक्यमागमत्वेन स्वीकृत्य शास्त्रचतुष्टयस्य कोष्ठकं दीयते यस्मिन् शास्त्रे यस्यापूर्णता प्रतिभाति साऽपूर्णता केन शास्त्रेण कथं पूर्येत । यद्यपि शास्त्रेऽपूर्णता एवास्ति इति निश्चयेन कथनमशक्यम्, किन्तु अमुकामुकविषयाणां सुस्पष्टनिरूपणाभावेन तद्विषयाभावत्वरूपोन्मागप्रवर्तनाऽपि समाजे प्रवर्ततेति विचार्य तत्खलु प्रदर्शितम् ।
- 21. प्रामाण्यस्य स्वतस्त्व-परतस्त्व, प्रमाणानां सङ्ख्याविषयकविवादः, इन्द्रियाणां प्राप्यकारित्व-अप्राप्यकारित्वम् इत्यादिविषयिणी चर्चा वचनामृते सूक्ष्मतया नोपलभ्यते । यज्ज्ञानं खलु परमात्मसाक्षात्कारे आत्मसाक्षात्कारे चोपयोगि तदेव ज्ञानं, नान्यदिति इति तस्य निश्चितं मतम् । अत एव एतज्ज्ञानोपयोगिनी चर्चैव कार्या नान्यत् काशकुशावलम्बनम् इत्याशयो दृश्यते ।

