UNIT: 12 RĀMĀNUJA: JIVA AND THE WORLD

UNIT STRUCTURE

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12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- analyse the three classes of souls- ever free, liberated and bound,
- explain the parts of God,
- explain that the Jiva and Brahman are non-different,
- explain that Prakṛti is a part of Brahman,
- discuss Rāmānuja's concept of Prakṛti,
- explain Rāmānuja's concept of Satkāryavāda.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

In the philosophy of Advaita of Sankara, it is said that "Jiva Brahmaiva na parah' i.e. the individual soul is Brahman and nothing else. As against the view of sankara, Rāmānuja says that the Jiva is an integral part of Brahman and is eternal, real and unique. The individual self is the embodied soul. It is an agreegate of body, senses, vital force, mind, buddhi (intellect) and soul. Here the last i.e. the soul is spiritual and others are material in nature. The soul enters into relation with these material products and takes birth as the bound soul or the Jiva. As embodied soul, it enjoys or suffer the fruits of action, according to the law of Karma.

The Jiva is knower (jnata), agent (Karta) and the enjoyer (bhokta). Though the soul or Jiva is an attribute or mode of God and forms part of His body, yet it is also a spiritual substance in itself and is absolutely real. It is beyond creation, it is in embodied form, according to its karmas, while in the state of dissolution, and in the state of liberation it remains in itself, forming the body of God.

12.3 THREE CLASSES OF JIVA

Rāmānuja describes three classes of jivas or souls. The first one is ever-free (nitya-mukta) jivas, which are never bound. They are ever free from karma and prakṛti and live in Vaikuntha, in constant union with God. They are like Shesa, Gaurda, Visva-ksena etc.

The second one is released or liberated (mukta) jivas or souls who were once bound but who obtained liberation through the path of knowledge, action, and devotion.

To the third belong the bound (baddha) jivas, who are wandering in the samsara, due to the performance of sakama karma, on account of ignorance. These are further divided into four classes: as superhuman, human, animal, and immobile.



ACTIVITY:12.1

What is the relation of Jiva with God? Discuss

Ans…….....

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: State whether the following statements are True or False

a) The Jiva is an integral part of Brahman (True/False)

b) The nitya - Mukta souls are always free - (True/False)

c) The Jivas are the body of God and God is the soul of the Jivas' - whose view is this?

12.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JIVA

According to Rāmānuja, there are some significance of the Jiva, for which it is different from God.

12.4.1 The Jivas are the parts of God

The Jivas are regaded as the part of God. Just like there are difference between whole and parts, similarly there is a difference between God and the Jivas. God is whole and Jivas are parts. God is free, independent but the Jiva is dependent on God. The Jivas are the body of God and God is the soul of the Jivas.

12.4.2 Jiva and God

Both God and Jivas are eternal agent and self luminous. There are some points which are found to be common in Jiva and God, e.g. Self-luminousity, consciousness, selfhood and agency are common to the self and God. The self manifest itself and is the conscious substrate of knowledge. It is embodied as an active agent. The Jivas constitutes the 'Chit' gunas of God and are eternal like God. The Jivas are the body of God and it is the soul of the individual body. The Jivas, in the embodied form are in bondage, according to the law of karma.

12.4.3 Jiva and Avidyā

The souls are born due to avidyā. When the soul identified itself with the body, then there starts avidya and the soul become separate from God. The natural quality of the soul is knowledge and it is eternal. Due to avidyā or ignorance, the soul is bound in body. There are so many embodied souls. The soul, as a result of constant devotion to God, can attain the liberation, when they overcome the avidyā.

12.4.4 The Jiva and Brahman (God) are non-different

According to Rāmānuja, the Jiva or the soul (cit) are the body of God and are non-different from God. The famous upanisadic dictum - 'Tvat tvam asi', i.e. 'That thou art' - here That thus stands for God, the omniscient, omnipotent, creator of the universe. 'Thou' -stands for God existing in the form of man, the embodied soul. The identity between God and man is interpreted by Rāmānuja, in accordance with his view of knowledge. According to Śaṅkara 'That art thou', is intended to mean the metaphysical identity between Brahman and Jiva. Rāmānuja, on the other hand, is of the opinion that the text 'That art thou', implies the complex nature of the ultimate reality where Brahman and Jiva are related as substance and attribute (Viśeśa and Visesana) or soul and body. Thus the Jivas are the eternal parts of God and are non different from Him.



ACTIVITY:12.2

Explain the relationship between jivas and God.

Ans…….....…….....



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: State whether the following statements are True or False

a) Is it true that according to Rāmānuja, God creates the world out of Himself? (True/False)

b) Rāmānuja's concept of world creation is in conformity with the Upanisads, Purānas and Gita. - (True/False)

c) Lila is the gracious will of God. (True/False) - (True/ False)

12.5 RĀMĀNUJA'S CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD

Rāmānuja's concept of the world creation is in consistence with the Upanisadic authority. For Rāmānuja, the omnipotent being i.e. God creates the manifold world out of Himself by a gracious act of will. Brahman includes within himself the finite spirits (cit) and unconscious matter (acit). The acit, the source of materials objects, is called prakriti, which is uncreated and eternal. The cit is the source of the embodied souls (jivas). Ramanujas view is thus in accordance with the Svetasvatara Upanisad, the Puranas and the Smrities.

12.6 RĀMĀNUJA'S CONCEPT OF PRAKṚTI

Prakriti is regarded as a part of Brahman and controlled by Brahman, just like the human body is controlled from within by the soul. In the state of dissolution (pralaya) the acit or primal unconscious prakrti remains in a latent subtle (suksma) and undifferentiated (avibhakta) form. Thus, Rāmānuja admitted prakriti as the material cause of the world.

12.6.1 Difference between the prakrti of Rāmānuja and Sāṁkhya

There is a difference between the prakrti of Sāṁkhya and the prakrti of Rāmānuja.

a) The Sāṁkhya prakṛti as different from Rāmānuja, is an ultimate reality. But according to Rāmānuja, prakṛti or matter is a part of God and controlled by God.

b) The prakṛti of Sāṁkhya is infinite but in Rāmānuja it is taken to be limited and finite and a part of God.

c) The prakṛti of Sāṁkhya is independent of the Purusa, but in Ramanuja it is entirely under the control of spirit or Isvara.

d) The three guṇas - Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are the constituent factors of prakṛti in Sāṃkhya. But in Rāmānuja the gunas are conceived as characterizing it, so they are distinct but inseparable from it.

12.7 BRAHMAN IS THE CAUSE OF THE WORLD

Brahman is both the material cause and the efficient cause of the world. Spirit (cit) and matter (acit) which are the integral parts of Brahman, are the source of the material world as well as the embodied individual beings respectively. Brahman is also the efficient cause, because He controls and guides the objects of the world.

12.8 RĀMĀNUJA'S VIEW OF SATKĀRYAVĀDA

Rāmānuja believes in the theory of Satkaryavāda, i.e. the pre-existence of the effect in the cause before its production. Satkāryavāda is of two types - Parināmavada and Vivartavāda. Vivartavāda is the unreal appearance of cause into the effect. Unlike Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja believes in the Parināmavāda form of satkāryavāda, which means that the cause is really transformed into the effect. During the state of dissolution (pralaya), Brahman remains with pure matter (acit) and the soul (acit) in an unmanifested form (cit). In this state, Brahman is said to be a causal condition (karanavastha) or Kārana Brahma. When creation takes place the subtle matter becomes gross physical object and the souls enter into embodied form corresponding to the merit or demerit of their past actions (law of karma), and this state is the effect (karyavastha), and Brahman is called as the effect (kārya brahma). The cause and the effect are in essence identical and the world is the parināma of Brahman.

12.9 THE WORLD CREATION IS REAL ACCORDING TO RĀMĀNUJA

Rāmānuja holds the world creation to be a fact and the created world is as real as God. Impelled by the will of God, the undifferentiated matter or Prakṛti with three kinds of elements as sattva, rajas and tamas produce the gross physical world. Thus God or Isvara is the material, efficient and final cause of the world and both cause and effect are real. The world is created by the gracious will of God.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: What are the two types of Satkāryavāda?

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Q 4: What are the Guṇas?

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Q 5: What is Kārana Brahma?

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Q 6: What is Kārya Brahman?

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Q 7: a) The world creation is real, according to Rāmānuja - Is it true?

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12.10 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed about the concept of Jiva and the World, according to the Visístvadvaitavāda of Rāmānuja. After going through this unit, you have learnt that-

- The Jiva is an integral part of Brahman and is eternal and real.
- The Jiva is the knower, agent and enjoyer (Jnatakarta bhokta)
- There are three classes of Jivas- free, liberated, and bound jivas.
- The cit part of Brahman is the source of Jiva.
- The Jivas are born due to avidyā.
- The Jiva and Brahman are identical.
- Rāmānuja's concept of the world creation is in consistent with the upanisads.
- The Acit part of God is the source of the world, which is also called Prakṛti.

- Prakṛti is the material cause of the world and is controlled by God.
- Rāmānuja's Prakṛti is not same as the Prakṛti of Sāṁkhya.
- Brahman is the cause of the world.
- Rāmānuja believes in Satkāryavāda.
- The world is a real creation of God.



12.11 FURTHER READINGS

1) Radhakrasnan, S.Indian Philosophy, Vol.-II

2) Chatterjee S.C And Dutta D.M. An Introduction To Indian Philosophy

3) Hiriyana, M. (1983). Outlines Of Indian Philosophy, Motilal Banarasidass, Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi

4) Sharma. C.D.(1973). A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi.

5) Misra, Hridaya Narayan (2006). Bharatiya Darshan (Hindi), Sekhar Prakashan, Allahabad



12.12 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: a)True b) True c) True

Ans to Q No 2: a) True b) True c) True

Ans to Q No 3: Parināmavāda and Vivartavāda

Ans to Q No 4: Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas

Ans to Q No 5: During the state of dissolution, Brahman is called Kārana Brama

Ans to Q No 6: During the state of creation, Brahman is called Kārya Brahma

Ans to Q No 7: True



12.13 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very short questions

Q 1: Mention the three classes of jivas.

Q 2: What is meant by liberated jivas?

Q 3: What is bound jivas?

Q 4: "Jiva Brahmaiva na parah' -Write the meaning of the statement.

Q 5: 'Tvat tvam asi'- Write the meaning of the statement.

Q 6: What is satkāryavāda?

Q 7: What are two types of satkaryavada?

Q 8: What is parināmavāda?

Q 9: What is vivartavāda?

B) Short questions (Answer in about 100-150 words)

Q 1: Write short notes: a) Jiva and God

b) Jiva and Avidyā

c) Cit and Acit

Q 2: What are the three classes of jivas, according to Rāmānuja? Explain in brief.

Q 3: Explain briefly the concept of satkāryavāda.

Q 4: Explain briefly the distinction between the prakṛti of Rāmānuja and Sāṁkhya.

Q 5: Are Jiva and Brahman non-different? Explain in brief.

C) Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Explain Rāmānuja's concept of the Jiva.

Q 2: Discuss the various classes of Jiva.

Q 3: Explain the various significance of Jiva.

Q 4: Discuss Rāmānuja's view on Prakṛti. How does it differ from Sāṁkhya.

Q 5: Explain Rāmānuja's concept of the world.

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