

IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE: VEDANTIC PHILOSOPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE

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- ▶ The inherent nature of *Vedantic* philosophy is only through the articulation of diverse view-points that the truth will finally come out.
- ▶ So far as traditional Indian philosophical version is concerned, it not only gives primacy of theistic devotion (bhakti), it also has given primary importance for yukti/tarka/reasoned arguments (vicharana) for arriving at conclusion (siddhanta), (*Vade vade jayate tattvabodha*).

- ▶ **The identity-difference controversy is a traditional controversy in Indian philosophy, and all the major *Vedantic* schools have participated in it. The arguments, the counter arguments, reason-based discussion and their philosophical implications have been discussed again and again to know the truth.**

- ▶ Acharya Sankar has rightly pointed out that absolute can be realized through knowledge and knowledge alone. Removal of the sense of plurality or denial of duality is the principal objective of *Advaitic* Philosophy. He lays utmost emphasis upon that absolute as a bare identity; there is no duality, no diversity at all.
- ▶ To know the reality he makes a difference between intellect and intuition. Finite intellect is not the basis to know the reality but we can realise it by pure intuition. It is the fact that if ‘intellect stands condemned’, must be made by intellect itself. Etadapi hi tarkanam apratisthitattvam tarkenaiva pratisthapyate (Shariraka-Bhasya,II,I,II).

- ▶ Shankara repeatedly asserts that knowledge means knowledge of unity. Just like light and darkness, Knowledge and action both are polar concepts. Knowledge is not mental activity simply because it depends not on mind but on the existent fact (*Brahmajnanam vastutantram na purusa Vyapara*).

- ▶ **Acharya Ramanuja has proclaimed that discrimination is essential to all knowledge. Knowledge is both substance as well as attribute, self luminous and self conscious. It is never for itself. Knowledge can reveal both itself and its object. In his philosophical doctrine he emphasized that pure identity and pure difference are alike unreal.**

- ▶ Madhva, the champion of unqualified dualism is known as born foe of Acharya Shankara. He has emphasized that difference is true and his philosophical doctrine is known as *Atyanta –bheda –darshana*. His *bheda darshan* is meaningful when he said that Attributes are absolutely real. That is why he has raised his voice against the relation of inseparability (*aprthakasiddhi*).

- **For Nimbarka, both difference and non-difference are natural and equally real. There is neither absolutely identity nor absolutely difference but identity and difference.**

- ▶ **Vallabhacharya offered a theistic interpretation of the Vedantic philosophy which differs from the interpretation of Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhva. According to Vallabhacharya, absolute is independent reality and personified as Lord (Krushna).**

- ▶ **Culmination of knowledge is the intrinsic nature of Vedantic Philosophy.**
- ▶ **All reason-based Vedantic philosophical schools are true unless proved otherwise.**

THANK YOU