

shrlgurubhyo namaH

In the Bhagavadgita commentary for the 14th chapter, as introduction

Shakara writes:

...ईश्वरपरतन्त्रयोः क्षेत्र-क्षेत्रज्ञनयोः जगत्कारणत्वं....[the kshetra (prakRti) and kShetrajna (purusha/jiva) **being dependent on Ishwara (Brahman)** are the cause of the world.]

This implies that Brahman, according to Shankara, is Independent, Swatantra.

Shankara has used the term 'paratantra' (dependents) in respect of both prakriti and purusha, even before the Madhva system designated these two as dependents (paratantra). This implies that Brahman, according to Shankara, is Independent, Swatantra. We see that even the core metaphysical layout the Madhva system has is already present in Advaita.

The 'Article' contains this key paragraph that sets at rest all misconceptions regarding the conclusions arrived at in the article:

//While Advaita explicitly calls the vyavaharika a seeming reality, Dvaita stops short of saying this by just saying that it is paratantra reality. Both terms culminate in holding the dependent reality a mithya, unreal, entity. For the goal of both Advaita and Dvaita is definitely not to retain samsara but to show the means to realize Brahman as free from Vishnu Maya. That this is the ultimate goal is unambiguously declared in the statement '**Brahman can very well do without prakriti and purusha**'.//

Another important paragraph that also requires careful reading is:

//The Correct World-view

Whose world-view is the correct one, the ignorant man's or the wise man's ? Obviously, the wise-man's view alone has to be the correct view of the world. And what is the wise man's, in other words, the liberated man's view? This is answered by the Madhva system thus:

www.dwaita.org (under the question: Why does Tattvavada deny Jivanmukti?)

/// Because a mukta, or liberated person, should not even be physically present in the material universe, unlike the un-liberated. A person who is living in the world cannot be said to be free of sorrow born of material contact, and also cannot be said to experience the joy of his own nature at all times. The very act of living in a gross material body entails things such as eating, sleeping, pleasure and pain, etc., which cannot be accepted in a mukta. //

The above statement about the mukta makes it clear that he is no longer in 'prapancha' where alone the five bheda-s persist. All the worlds, 'above and below' the human world attainable owing to one's karma, too, come under the class of 'prapancha'. For, it is only in the wake of the five differences any samsaric experience possible.

Thus, the wise man does not see the world/samsara; he 'sees' Brahman in the place of the world/samsara. He/there is no longer a samsari; there is only Brahman that is free of Its 'will' to support the samsara and samsari. For the wise man everything is Brahman – VaasudevaH Sarvam. For, **'Brahman can very well do without prakriti and purusha'** as per the Madhva system we saw above. //

What does this mean? The liberated jiva of the Madhva system 'does not contact the material world'. So does the mukta jiva of the Advaita system. So, even according to the Madhva system, the world is 'real' only from the point of view of the bound jiva. This is true even according to Advaita. Naturally, like in Advaita, even in Dvaita, 'the world is real' only based on ignorant viewpoint. Is that not a core similarity between the two

schools? Even Dvaita aims at removal of ignorance. Even for them the body-mind identification is an error.

This following quote from the Article on the Dvaita system is also very significant:

//The dependence of the world of matter and the souls on Brahman is in the sense that both are functioning at His will, which is the essential condition and sustaining principle that invests them with their reality and without which they would be but void names and bare possibilities.//

Is this not Advaita repackaged? Is this not saying in so many words that the world is mithya, unreal, does not exist at all in truth? This highlighted portion read with their own sentence: 'Brahman can very well do without prakriti and purusha' requires no further elucidation to conclude that even according to the Madhva system the world and jiva are not absolutely real.

The problem is, if the Dvaita system too openly says that the world is mithya, there would be no way they can claim to be 'different' from Advaita. That is the reason why only the language has been changed in Dvaita but the core content of Advaita is retained by them as well. This is inevitable, as Shankara has stated:

//sarva-vAdinaamapi aparihaaryah paramaarthasamvyavahaarakRto vyavahaarah// (Brihadaranyaka bhashya: 3.v.i).

//in fact, all schools must admit the existence or non-existence of the phenomenal world according as it is viewed from the relative or the absolute standpoint.//

Whether Dvaitins accept the conclusions arrived at by the author is of no concern. We have the pioneering work of Sri Appayya Dikshitar of the Advaita tradition who has worked out a reconciliation of the four systems long ago in the 15th century. The work

'chaturmata saara sangraha', a summarization of this effort of Dikshitar by Polagam Rama Sastry is available in English print too with the title 'Chatur mata saamarasyam' (the non-contradictory nature of the Four Systems). Vidwan Mani Dravid Sastrigal has given a special discourse on this theme.

There is one renowned Madhva Scholar, Dr. Anandatirtha Vyshampayanacharya Nagasampige, director of the Poornaprajna Samshodhana Mandiram, Bangalore, who has authored a very popular book: 'mata traya sameekshaa' (a close look at the three systems) in Kannada. This book is in such great demand that the publishers have going into repeat prints. The author has taken up the task of presenting before the public the non-contradictory nature of the three schools through public discourses. He was recently invited to speak at the Shankar Matha, Bangalore. His address was simply marvelous. In the course of his talk he said that Sri Vadiraja Tirtha (a very vociferous opponent of Advaita) of the Madhva school in his famous work 'Yukti Mallika' has said something to this effect:

The Acharyas of the three schools are like the Devas coming together to churn the ocean of the Vedas. They are like brothers of one household. Their common enemy is the atheistic forces. They might have internal differences but their ultimate aim is the same.

Hardliners of both Advaita and Dvaita may not find the conclusions of the Article palatable. But Mahatmas like Ramana Maharshi, the Kanchi Paramacharya, Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati Swamiji of Sringeri always took a non-contradictory stand on the issue of the 'three-schools', especially the 'two-schools'.

Here is a comment this article evoked:

//Dear VS,

A mightily erudite piece. May your tribe increase!

I just want an opinion from you. You will see that three variant out-looks came into being:(1) Advaita of Sankara (2) Dvaita of Madhava and (3) Visishtadvaita from

Ramanuja.

To what extent these philosophies derive origin from each of various factors like (1)REALIZATION or ENLIGHTENMENT in terms of REVELATION from above(?), (2) logic (3) non-bhakti metaphysics (4) bhakti-centricism etc?

Do you think that at least now, in the 21 st century, we can get the real picture out of the three systems with no disputes remaining at all?

Cheers!

vs gopal //

This is my reply to him:

Dear Shri Gopal,

Thank you for appreciating and recommending the blog. Regarding your question:

To what extent these philosophies derive origin from each of various factors like (1)REALIZATION or ENLIGHTENMENT in terms of REVELATION from above(?), (2) logic (3) non-bhakti metaphysics (4) bhakti-centricism etc?

my reply, as I understand your question, is:

What you mean by No.1 is presumably, Shruti. Yes, the Veda is the primary source, the foundation, on which all the three Acharyas have formulated their systems. Shruti is called 'Revelation'. Logic of course is also a key factor in all the systems. Shankara repeatedly cautions and clarifies that logic should be subservient to Shruti and not be an independent tool.

Regarding 'Non-bhakti' metaphysics, I would not comment much as all schools emphasize bhakti. Bhakti-centricism, as normally what people understand by the term 'bhakti', however could be said to be pronounced in Dvaita and Vishishtadvaita where Saguna Brahman, Narayana or Hari, is the Supreme and an aspirant has to cultivate and take the Bhakti to its culmination. In Advaita this kind of Bhakti is mandatory in the initial stage, to culminate in Jnana-lakshana-Bhakti. The path is: Devotion to a God with

a particular form, Eka rUpa Ishwara Bhakti, leading to devotion to God with Cosmic or Universal form, VishvarUpa Ishwara Bhakti and culminating in God with no form: arUpa Ishwara Bhakti. This last is Nirguna Brahman identical with one's self, Atman. Shankara says in the Vivekachudamani: मोक्ष साधन सामग्र्यां भक्तिरेव गरीयसी Among the means to liberation, devotion is the supreme, foremost. Thus, bhakti is indispensable in all the three systems.

Regarding your last observation:

Do you think that at least now, in the 21 st century, we can get the real picture out of the three systems with no disputes remaining at all?

my reply is:

One can, if one seeks it, certainly get the real picture out of the three systems without any contradictions, for oneself. When a truly realized Advaita Guru like Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi guides an aspirant, he will present the Truth from a totally catholic perspective, not being bogged down by this or that school. He might seem to use the dialectics of say, Advaita, but one will realize that he has not left out any system in the process. This is because only a truly realized Advaita Acharya can have the ability to teach the Truth that is all-encompassing. He will show where each of the schools are relevant to this particular aspirant. Thus, the teaching is aspirant-specific and not teacher-specific. A typical reply of Ramana to a question like this is: All the three schools teach one to give up ego, ahankara, and submit oneself to a Higher Power. As to what that Power is the schools might apparently differ. But the essence is the same in all the three schools.

The renowned Advaita Acharya Appayya Dikshitar of the 14 century has made a very formal, pioneering accomplishment in this area. He viewed the three schools, in addition to the Shivavishishtadvaita, as hierarchically formulated. In this scheme, Advaitic realization is the ultimate one and he held that all the four Acharyas had this. Vishishtadvaita came to address the needs of those who were not capable enough to take to the Advaitic core teaching. Dvaita came to address those who could not tread even Ramanuja's path. SrikanTashivacharya's system caters to such aspirants who are

unable to grasp even the Dvaita core teaching. Thus, Dikshitar wrote four different books with Brahmasutras as the basis with this background.

Thus, it is definitely possible to get the dispute-free view of the Truth. This is true of not just the 21st century but at any time. Even in the earlier centuries the Truth sans these petty disputes could be given to the really fortunate aspirants. The beauty is, all the schools have all the ingredients in them to make them One in the final point. It is generally seen that only Advaita Acharyas have been able to offer such a fine all-encompassing teaching. The problem with the other schools is that they have openly engaged in name-calling and other base practices. Gaudapadacharya says: It is only dualists (non-Advaitins) that quarrel with each other; Advaita has no quarrel with any of them. The Advaitin is a friend of all; he can speak in any language be it dvaita or vishishtadvaita or whatever. For, Advaita is like a unifying theory where every other school or ism is just a particular case. The final Advaitic Truth is at the basis of all these schools. And it transcends them all ultimately.

To gain a clear view of these topics you may read a few of my blogs like: Everything is Brahman, Who creates the World?, etc.

Trust these points help in clarifying your questions. Thanks once again,

Regards,

subrahmanian.v

Even a layman, not very well exposed to Vedantic systems, hopes to get a unified view and despises reiteration of differences. In my personal opinion it is like the Advaitins being capable of both highlighting the differences as well as bringing to the fore the common points between the waking and the dream states while dealing with the Bauddhas. If this approach is seen in the present article there would be no room for disagreement at all. It is the prerogative of the List Moderators to remove the article from the files section if it is considered that the article would positively hamper the correct understanding of Advaita.

Om Tat Sat