

SIDDHANTA

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First Draft

In order to summarize the fundamental ideas that are being discussed in this Google forum [Online_Sadhu_Sanga] the following is presented as a basis from which further development may be made for arriving at a coherent understanding of consciousness from the Vedantic and Western philosophical perspectives. [Advaita, Dvaita, Visisadvaita, Matter, Ego, Maya, Consciousness, Spirit]

ADVAITA

Advaita philosophy conceives the Absolute as One devoid of any qualities, dimensions, personality, and so on. Thus it is called monism or abstract monism. It is therefore *nirguna* - meaning without any differences, determinations, or distinguishing features. The idea is that there cannot be two truths that are absolute or they become relative truths - not absolute. So the Absolute must be One.

One is pure universality - abstract or empty universality. As such it lacks all determinations, or is indeterminate. To even say that One **is** or has Being is to violate the pure Oneness that is the Absolute for the monists. Lacking any determinate content it is thus formless.

In the ancient pre-Socratic Greek culture Parmenides represented the Eleatic school that considered God to be One without any qualities whatsoever, even Being was denied to the pure One.

In India the school of Shankaracharya is considered as representing *kevaladvaita* or the philosophy of pure Oneness without any determinateness or qualities. This is the nature of *nirguna* Brahman.

Eastern and Western monism both believe that All is One, because each of the entities of the All (Many) is after all in essence a one, i.e. many ones. In the same way every being is an instance of or immanently Being and thus all are Being. But One and Being are different, so the monists had to accept one or the other, so they chose One since Being is just as indeterminate as One and is thus the same as One. Of course there are many such arguments given in this way.

Because Brahman is One, allness or the many must be a perceptual illusion that is removed by logical thinking in accord with the monist philosophers. Thus they consider *Brahma satyam jagat mityam*, Brahman is true or real and the world is false or illusion. In this philosophy the ultimate destiny of the enlightened soul is to merge into the oneness of the One Brahman and lose its individuality or ego entirely.

The chief characteristic in the logic of the One is the one-sidedness of its doctrine of sameness of the entities of the All to the exclusion of their differences. Being-for-self or one is not the only determination of the entities of the All except in the abstract ideal sense, just as the atoms or

molecules of an ideal gas are considered in their isolation without regard to their relation to or interaction with one another.

A major problem here is that if a finite individual thinks oneself the same as the universal One then they are prone to conceiving that whatever they think is what the whole of Reality is, or that 'reality is just a human construct.' However, a finite individual can never speak for the universal Reality. For example, if someone has jaundice he sees the world as bilious (yellow) in color. He does not distinguish between his thinking and the color of the world as it is. In the same way a person in ignorance or illusion cannot claim that the universal reality is illusory, because it is only the individual who is in illusion. An advaitin cannot think this way, however, because by accepting only the sameness of all individual entities as Brahman as the only reality the actual universal Reality of all distinct individuals sinks into the untruth of illusion.

The advaitins are impersonalists or atheists because if indeterminate Brahman is the ultimate universal truth then any attempt to determine Brahman leads away from the impersonal truth to what they consider to be a misconception called God.

DVAITA

Those who think there are two or more irreducibly distinct or separate absolute principles are called dualists. Many philosophies hold that the conflict of opposing principles is the basis of reality. The mind/body, subject/object, soul/body, or *yin/yang* dualisms are associated with philosophers such as Descartes, or Daoism or the Tao. In India the most famous is Madhvacharya who is pictured holding two fingers up to indicate his philosophy that God and the individual are different. It was Madhvacharya's intent to contest the advaita doctrine of abstract oneness or sameness of everything by emphasizing that besides the being-for-self or oneness of individuals there is also the being-for-other or otherness that likewise characterizes the individual ones of reality. This would be like adding the interaction of particles of an ideal gas to get closer to a true explanation of the reality of the gas. So advaita is true but only one half of the Truth - there is a sameness or individual identity of each but there is also difference or otherness for each individual and thus *dvaita* is also true. The Whole Truth should contain both sameness and difference, but how to explain or unify them in one Truth.

For Madhvacharya the soul, the world and God were all different principles, and individual souls and individual items in the world were each different from one another, and all were different from God. At the same time they were all related to God and to each other. By proper behavior and devotion to God the separated or conditioned souls could purify themselves and be admitted to God's domain at His pleasure. They did not lose their individuality but established their proper relation with God as good and faithful servants. Thus Madhvacharya resolved the problem of sameness and otherness through relationship.

VISISTADVAITA

Qualified monism is the philosophy of Ramanujacharya. This is a monism in which the One or God also has qualities such as personality, spiritual associates, spiritual domain (*Vaikunta*), and various energies. The ultimate destiny of the souls is to enter the kingdom of God by following proper

behavior and devotion toward the Supreme by the grace of God. This is similar to Madhvacharya's philosophy but the oneness and difference are brought into unity by the conception of God as having Divine qualities. Thus it is also a monism or unity, but it is at the same time a determinate or differentiated unity. This is how Ramanuja resolved the sameness and otherness of individuality in the ultimate Truth.

A red rose, for instance, has the quality of redness, which is a universal, and rose-ness, which is a particular kind of substance. Though they are different categories they still retain oneness or permeation of the distinctions in one identity. The redness is a determination of the rose, so it belongs to the rose even though redness is different from rose-ness. Rose-ness can accommodate color, softness, fragrance, and other qualities without losing its identity as a rose. Similarly God has many qualities without minimizing His identity as God.

The qualities are inherent in God, and God is inherent in the qualities since they belong to God or are God's properties. Thus they are different yet not different from God. The ultimate goal of the soul is thus to recognize their qualitative nature as dependent atomic particles of Spirit or God through practice and devotion and not identify themselves with matter and forgetfulness of God.

ACINTYA BEDA ABEDA TATTVA

The philosophy of Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu combines all three of the above philosophies into one. The Absolute is simultaneously One (or an identity) and different (with qualities) and this difference and identity are identical as a dynamic or living process. The same idea is found in Hegelian philosophy where it is called the identity of identity and difference. Here sameness and difference are united in a living process that allows for real difference and its sublation as a continuing eternal process of othering and return - the Playful Life of the Absolute.

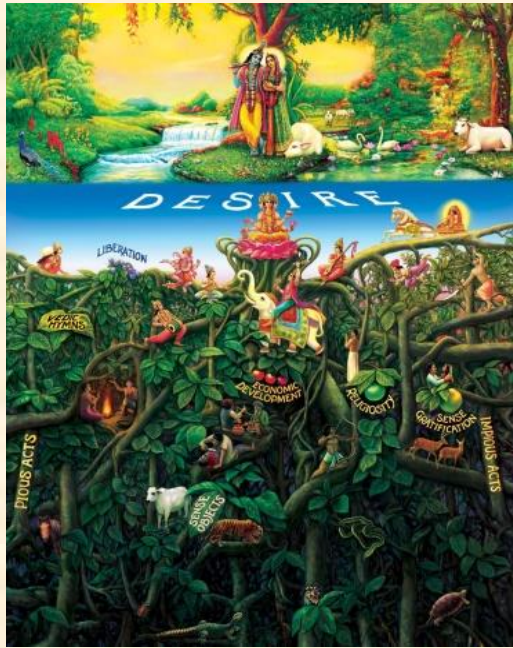
The souls are not part of the Personality of God but part of God's energy (*Shakti*), specifically God's *tatashta shakti* or marginal energy. They are called marginal because they can either forget or develop their relationship with God or Krishna according to their association with the Lord's internal devotional or external non-devotional energies. God is actually considered to be the Creator Brahma who is different from and subordinate to Krishna who is ever engaged in playful pastimes of love. The ultimate goal of the soul is to develop love for Krishna by association with devotees engaged in acts of devotional service through which Krishna may become pleased and by His grace remove their illusion (*Maya*) of separateness so they may develop consciousness of their loving relation with the Lord.

This idea can be understood in a dynamic or dialectical sense and thus defies abstract or fixed understanding of ordinary thinking, therefore it is called ACHINTYA. The movement involves three moments: identity as One, then negation of itself as its self-determination or qualities, then return to itself as identical with itself in its other or differences. This essentially contains the features of all the other philosophies. Mahāprabhu was thus called the Great Harmonizer. This is the philosophy of the Bhakti Vedantists as far as I may understand it by the grace of Guru-Gauranga and those who have received Their grace. The original idea of the science and scientist conferences is based on presenting this concept in terms of the scientifically verifiable principles that life comes from life,

and matter comes from life. This is quite different from the advaita philosophy that rejects all life and personality and variety in the Absolute Truth.

MATTER - MATERIAL WORLD

Krishna has innumerable energies, which can be categorized into three: internal, external, and marginal. The *antaranga* or internal energies corresponds to the multienergies of the spiritual



world, the self-forgetful service world of devotion and dedication. The *bahiranga* or external energy corresponds to the material world, the world of self-interested forgetfulness of God and of selfish exploitation. The marginal or *tatashta* energy corresponds to the soul who can develop or forget its relation to God depending on either associating with those engaged in devotional culture under the direction of the *antaranga* potency or by engaging with the exploitative activities under the influence of the *bahiranga* atmosphere, or one can remain in the suspended position of neither which is called renunciation. So the marginal soul can choose a life of dedication, renunciation or exploitation. Those who want to enter the world of *sat-cit-ananda* follow the path of dedication and pure devotion (*suddha bhakti*). Those who want to enter the impersonal Brahman follow the path of withdrawal from and denial of everything or renunciation (abstract *jnana*). Those who want to enter the material world follow the path of exploitation, fruitive work (*karma*) and attempt for material knowledge (*jnana*) to achieve their self-interests.

EGO

In the Advaita philosophy the ego or self-identity seeks to be dissolved and disappear so it can merge into the One Brahman. This is the path of renunciation where the conditioned soul seeks to disentangle itself from the world of exploitation by thinking it to be illusory. It is illusory in the sense that exploitation is not its real identity. It thereby aims to escape the world of exploitation by considering it all an illusion and renouncing it. What is unknown to this soul is that there is another world beyond the world of exploitation and renunciation, and that is the world of dedication - where the ego is engaged in self forgetful service and love of God.

The ego engaged in selfish exploitation is called the false ego because in the material world of mundane consciousness it does not know its true ego or identity as a self-sacrificing or self-forgetful soul in the spiritual world of dedication.

MAYA

The material world is a real energy of the Lord called *prakriti*. It manifests from the *bahiranga shakti* or external energy of the Lord for the purpose of engaging the souls who in a sense of

superiority want to enjoy or exploit the energy of the Lord. The conception that allows them to think in this way is provided by the energy called *Maya shakti* or illusion. It is illusory because the infinitesimal living entity is never superior to the Lord who originates controls and owns everything as the Lord's own properties (*Ishwara*).

Factually nothing is separate from the Lord since the Absolute Truth is One even in God's difference from Godself as God's external energy and *Maya*. This is all confirmed in the *sastra* or Vedic literature.

TRIPLICITY

This concept is important since it represents the three moments of every Concept, viz. universal, particular, and individual (singular). Pierce called these moments firstness, secondness, thirdness to emphasize their implicitness to each other. It also represents the logical moments of Being, Essence, Concept or the World, Soul, God. In addition *Sat, Chit, Ananda* can be found expressed as a triplicity. The Phenomenal, Noumenal, Absolute also forms a triplicity.

The rational relations and development of this triple structure is considered Divine, as in the Holy Trinity within Christianity, the Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu triune of Hinduism, the *Brahman, Paramatman, Bhagavan* conception of Truth in Bhagavat theology. How the triple leads to the quadruple and quintuple structures in the mundane sphere is also of interest.

CONSCIOUSNESS

The relation between Ego and object is called consciousness. Ordinary consciousness knows only an object; it does not make itself its object.

In other words, the determinations of objects (empirical science), does not make an object of the determinations of knowing that belongs to the object (philosophy).

Thus both the subjective and objective determinations of knowing are considered in the mutual relation of subject and object.

The object considered on its own apart from consciousness is called realism. The object considered as merely belonging to knowing is called idealism.

In general consciousness is considered in stages as sensuous, perceptual, and understanding. This triplicity forms a system that in its development may be considered the subjective evolution of consciousness. Beyond consciousness is the system of self-consciousness, reason and Spirit. Spirit is the self-activity of knowing in and for itself. In relation to an existing reality these stages are called the phenomenal appearance of Spirit and their development the phenomenology of Spirit.