UNIT: 14 MADHVA: CONCEPT OF BRAHMAN

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1. Learning objectives

14.2. Introduction to Madhva

14.3. Madhva's concept of Dualism (Dvaita)

14.4. Concept of Brahman

14.5. Significance of Brahman or God

- 14.5.1. God is qualified (Saguna)
- 14.5.2. God is the cause of the world.
- 14.5.3. God is the ultimate governor of the Jiva
- 14.5.4. God is said to be indescribable
- 14.5.5 Brahman is the supreme God
- 14.5.6. God has four manifestation
- 14.5.7. Laksmi is the consort of God.
- 14.5.8. God is full of grace.

14.6. The Panca Bheda Sidhanta ofMadhva

- 14.6.1. Difference between God and Jiva
- 14.6.2. Difference between God and the Matter
- 14.6.3. Difference between one Jiva and the other
- 14.6.4. Difference between Jiva and Jada (spirit and matter)
- 14.6.5. Difference between one matter to another

14.7. Pluralistic theism

14.8. Madhva's God is realistic

14.9. Let us sum up.

14.10. Further readings

14.11. Answers to check your progress

14.12. Model questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- explain Madhva's concept of dualism.
- discuss Madhva's view on Brahman
- describe various significance of God
- explain the concept of Panca Bheda Siddhant of Madhva
- analyse Madhva's Concept of Pluralistic Theism.
- discuss the realistic Philosophy of Madhva.

14.2 INTRODUCTION

Madhva is one of the greatest dualistic philosophers in ancient India. He was born in the year 1199, in a village of the west coast of Karnataka, near udipi. He lived for seventy nine years and died in 1278.

The chief aim of Madhva is to establish a dualistic Vedānta, as against the two major school of vedānta - the Advaita Vedānta of Sankara and the Visitadvaita of Rāmānuja. Sankara believes that Brahman is the ultimate reality and the individual souls are identical with Brahman. Rāmānuja believes in qualified monism, that ultimate reality is Brahman and human souls are different but forms the part of God.

Madhva wrote about thirty seven valuable books. Among them the important works are- commentary on the Brahma Sụtra called as Madhva-bhasya, Anuvyakhyana. Gita-bhāsya Bhagavata-tatparya-nirnaya, Mahābhārata - tatparyanirnāya, Visnu-Tattva-nirnaya and many others. He also wrote a commentary on the first forty hymns of the Rg̣veda. It is seen that through out his works, he gives the impression that he relies more on the Vedas and Purānas, than on the Prasthānatraya i.e. the Upanisads, the Bhagavadgitā and the Brahma sụtra.

This unit introduces you about Madhva's concept of Brahman in details. First let us know about the dualistic concept of Madhva.

14.3 MADHVA'S CONCEPT OF DUALISM (DVAITA)

'Dvaita' is a Sanskrit word that means 'dualism' or 'duality'. Dvaita Vedānta is a school founded by Madhva. He was influenced by the Vaisnavism, the Bhakti movement of India. Madhva is also known as Purnaprajna or Anandatirtha. As a teenager, he became a Sanyasin(monk), Joining Brahma - sampradāya. His Guru was Achyutapreksha. He developed his dualistic philosophy with the direction of his Guru. He made many of the followers to his faith of Lord Visnu, in different parts of the country, founded a temple for kṛsna at Udipi, and made it the main centre of his dualistic philosophy. Prohibition of bloodshed in the name of sacrifices is a statutory reform which is a special contribution of Madhva.

According to Madhava, there are two kind of reality- independent (svatantratattva) and dependent (Paratantratattva). Isvara (God as Vsnu or Krsna) is the independent reality. The created universe consisting of Jiva (soul) and jada (matter) is the dependent reality. The individual souls are plural, different and distinct reality. The Jivas are sentient and matter are non-sentient. The individual soul and matter though all are real and eternal, the two are subordinate to God and are dependent on him.



ACTIVITY: 14.1

"Madhvas Philosophy is Dualistic" Discuss

Ans…….....

"God is Qualified" Explain

Ans.…….....

14.4 CONCEPT OF BRAHMAN

Brahman or God, according to Madhva is the ultimate reality. Like Rāmanuja, Madhva is also a follower of Vaisnavism. He posits God as a being personal and saguna, who is endowed with spiritual qualities. The metaphysical concept of Brahman is Visnu, according to the Vedas. Visnu is the one and only Supreme Being. Madhva believe that Visnu, the God, is the ultimate Reality (Svatantratattva). The Jivas are different from God.

14.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF BRAHMAN OR GOD

In Madhva's philosophy, we can trace out some important significance of God, which can be explained as follows-

14.5.1 God is Qualified (Saguna)

Madhva believe in saguna Brahma. God is full of all good qualities like Anantajñana (Infinite knowledge), AnantaBala (Infinite Vigour), AnantaBirja (Infinite Potency) and AnantaYasa (Infinite fame) etc. Brahma is thus saguna i.e. full of excellent qualities. He is real (satya), conscious (jnana) and infinite (ananta).

14.5.2 God is The Cause of The World

God is the creator, maintainer and destroyer of this universe. God is the supreme Being. He creates the Universe, maintains it and also destroys the world in accordance to the law of karma.

14.5.3 God is the Ultimate Governor of the Jiva

God is the governor of the law of Karma. God as a perfect being, judge the action of jivas and accordingly the jivas get the result of the karmas, performed by them. According to Hindu tradition, God as a moral governor cannot be regarded as arbitrary, unconditioned and groundless as He always takes into account the universal moral principle to maintain the universe i.e. the Law of karma.

14.5.4 God is Said to be Indescribable

God is said to be indescribable, because he can not be completely comprehended. At the same time God is not indefinable. We can know His nature by the study of the Vedas. When the supreme is said to be indescribable all that is meant is that a complete knowledge of Him is difficult to acquire.

14.5.5 Brahman is The Super God

Brahman and God is the same in Madhvas philosophy. The highest and perfect Lord is God who is Visnu, Isvara, Krisna. He is the supreme self (paramatma) and Bhagavan (Lord) He is omniscient (SarvaDrasta), Omnipotent (sarvasakti) perfect (purna), eternal (nitya), extremely subtle (suksma) immutable (aparibartaniya) and omnipresent (sarvavyapta).

14.5.6 God Has Four Manifestations (VYUHA)

God has four manifestations, as Vasudeva, Samskarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. The Vyuhas are the manifestation of God, which God assumes out of tenderness for his devotees. God manifests Himself in the various incarnations and is present in sacred images.

14.5.7 Laksmi is The Consort of God

Laksmi is the consort of God Visnu. She is all pervading and eternal like God. But her qualities are a little less than those of Visnu. She is ever Liberated (nityamukta) and possesses a divine body. She is the power of the lord. Laksmi is the personification of God's creative energy.

14.5.8 God is Full Of Grace

The theory of Grace is adopted by Madhvafor the attainment of

liberation. A man can never deserve liberation by his own effort. It is only through grace that he can get liberation. For salvation, the soul must feel attraction love, attachment and devotional surrender to God. Then only he can expect the grace of God.

14.6 THE PANCA BHEDA OF MADHVA

Sankara in his advaita Vedānta maintains that Brahman is devoid of all differences such as homogeneous difference (sajatiyabheda), heterogeneous difference (vijatiyabheda) and internal difference (svagatabheda). But Madhva recognized differences in the reality i.e. Brahman. He stresses the five kinds of differences which are real and beginning less.

14.6.1 Difference Between God And Jiva

God and the Jiva are different on various points. The Jivas are conscious, but dependent on God. God is worshipped and the Jivas are worshipper. God is free but Jivas are dependent on God. God is all knowing (sarvajna) and the Jivas are subject to ignorance. God is called Bibhu and the Jivas are Anu. God is one, but the Jivas are many.

14.6.2 Difference Between God And The Matter

God is conscious. but matter is devoid of consciousness. As unconscious, the matter is different from conscious God.

14.6.3 Difference Between One Jiva And Another

The Jivas are innumerable and atomic and therefore there is a difference between one Jiva to another. Not only this, there are difference in respect of nature, caste among the Jivas.

14.6.4 Difference Between Jivasand Jada (Spirit and Matter)

The Jivas are conscious and the matters are unconscious. So there is a difference between matter and spirit.

14.6.5 Difference Between One Matter To Another

Every matter has its own existence and there is a difference of quality among them. So automatically the matters are different from one another.

14.7 PLURALISTIC THEISM

Madhva with his concept of pancabheda sidhanta establishes his philosophy of pluralistic theism. The whole universe is full of many tattvas and God is the Lord of these tattvas. The matter and soul can not merge in God. But they are dependent on God.

14.8 MADHVA'S GOD IS REALISTIC

Madhava admits the ontological reality of God, soul and the world. In his panca-bheda theory he recognizes eternal distinction between God and soul, God and matter, soul and matter, one soul and another and one material thing and another. When we perceive objects we perceive their relations, their differences and their individualities.Difference is the essence of reality. Thus Madhva admits pluralistic universe with God as its creator preserver and destroyer.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What do you mean by the term Dvaita ?

Q 2: What are the two kinds of reality according to Madhva ?

Q 3: What are the various manifestations of God.

Q 4: State whether the following statements are True or False

a) Madhva is a dualist. (True/False)

b) God has pancabheda (True/False)

c) Matter and soul are dependent reality. (True/False)

Q 5: What do you mean by 'Pancabheda' of Madhva?

Q 6: State whether the following statements are True or False

a) The Jivas are conscious and the matter are unconscious" - (True/False)

b) Madhva's philosophy is not pluralistic - (True /False)

c) 'God has four manifestations (True/False)

d) Madhvas God is realist -(True/ False)



14.9 LET US SUM UP

- Madhva is a famous dualistic philosopher of medieval India. He recognizes two kind of reality - Independent (svatantratattvas) and dependent reality (paratantratattva)
- Brahman or Isvara is the independent reality and the individual souls and material world are dependent reality. The Jivas are sentient and matter are non-sentient. So, both (Jiva and matter) are dependent on God.
- God has some important significance. God is qualified. God is the cause of the world. God is the ultimate governor of the Jiva. God is indescribable. God is the supreme Brahman. God has four manifestations.
- Laksmi is the consort of God. God is full of grace.
- Madhva recognizes five kinds of differences in reality, as - between God and soul, God and matter, soul and matter, one soul and another and one matter and another matter.

- Madhva's philosophy is pluralistic theism. He recognizes realistic concept of God.



14.10 FURTHER READING

1) Radhakrsnan, S. Indian Philosophy, Vol II.
2) Hiriyana, M. Outlines of Indian Philosophy. Motilal Banarasidass publishers Pvt. Ltd.
3) Sharma C.D. A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, MotilalBanarasidas, Delhi, 1973.
4) Misra, Hridaya Narayan.(2006).BharatiyaDarshan (Hindi) Sekharprakashan. Allahabad
5) Bhattacharya, Haridas (Editor) (2005) The cultural Heritage of India. Vol- III. The Ram Krishna Mission Institute of culture, Calcutta



14.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: "Dvaita" is a Sanskrit word which means "dualism or duality".

Ans to Q No 2: Independent (Svatantra) and dependent (paratantra)

Ans to Q No 3: God has four manifestations- Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.

Ans to Q No 4: a) True b) True

Ans to Q No 5: Pancabheda means five types of differences such as- the difference between God and Jiva, God and matter, one Jiva and the another, Jiva and Jada and one matter to another.

Ans to Q No 6: a) True
b) True
c) True
d) True



14.12 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short questions

Q 1: How many books were been written by Madhava?

Q 2: How many kinds of realists are there, according to Madhava?

Q 3: What are the ultimate realities, according to Madhava?

Q 4: According to madhava, how many Manifestations of God?

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

Q 1: Write short notes on:

a) Dualism

b) Four manifestation of God.

c) Pluralistic Theism of Madhva.

d) Realistic pluralism of Madhva.

Q 2: Briefly explain Madhya's concept of dualism.

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

Q 1: Explain the dualistic philosophy of Madhva.

Q 2: Explain various significance of God, according to Madhva.

Q 3: Discuss the "Pancabhedasidhanta" of Madhva.

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