

**Philosophy and Critical Thinking**  
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**Lecture 43: Vedanta Philosophy**

Namaskar to all. Today we are going to talk about the Vedanta philosophy. In last class, I was discussing about Ramanujacharya and before we have discussed Shankaracharya from Vedanta philosophy. And, I have discussed the concept of Maya from Shankaracharya perspective and again from Ramanujacharya perspective. So, how he has talked about that Maya is the cause of this unreal appearance or this appearance is ultimately unreal. Ramanujacharya rejected his idea and argued that this world is real. Now, he said that Avidya what Shankaracharya has explained that is not a right explanation and then he presented on a very fine argument. These arguments rejected the concept of Maya, but it does not mean that the school of Shankaracharya philosophy is stopped there. They again presented an argument against the Ramanujacharya argument of Maya. Now, what I discussed in the last class that was on a very basic level and I understand that even it is difficult to understand Ramanujacharya argument, but this argument is a very fine and this is also very important to understand because that will give you a insight a different way to see the things. Now, if you remember there was an argument which we have discussed in last class that Shankaracharya argued that Maya is neither real nor unreal. Therefore, Maya is indescribable. We cannot describe. Now, there is an argument against this argument and Ramanujacharya said that if there is anything either it will fall in real or unreal. You cannot say that neither real nor unreal and if you are going to say this then you are confused. You are saying this indescribable. You are not able to describe. You are not able to describe means there is no Maya. I mean you are not have a proper idea of Maya. However, there is an argument just I wanted to mention here if you can understand. Then, so the argument goes like this from the Shankaracharya school of thought. They are saying that later on, in later school that we are saying that it is not real. It only means that we are not taking it real as an a table. For example, for us there is in a real object. For example, table, for example computer, For example fan. So, we are saying oh look he is a real person. Look, he is in a real object. So, the idea of Maya does not fall in this category and that is the reason that we are saying it is not real. But again, we are saying even it is not unreal. Then we need to understand what is unreal. Unreal is something which is beyond your imagination. For example, remember we have been like discussing in western philosophy in this course and in this course, we have discussed how the John Locke has talked about the simple idea and the complex idea. Take a little bit a reference from there and otherwise you take idea of imagination where we can even, we have not seen anything but we can imagine. For example, Unicorn, we can imagine, flying horse can imagine. Indian philosophy gives a very classic example Akash-kusum, sky lotus, circle with four angles. Those things you

cannot even imagine. That is not possible and that kind of thing falls in unreal. Even you cannot think of that is called unreal. So, unreality is something which is we cannot think of right and the concept of Maya even does not fall in this category, and therefore we say this is not indescribable. I mean this is one of the arguments later on by the school but it does not what my intention is to tell you that there are very strong argument in favor and against. And this Indian school of system is very very critical and if you read their argument then you realize that how this argument is strong argument and presented for and against on concept and that is the reason that I like this philosophy and their arguments and that is the also the reason that is included in this course. Just to give an idea just to tell you that you need to read this text, and if you reading this text if I can understand this arguments if you can go through the argument to blow your mind. One reality and then a different way to argue for this and against of the sub concept. They have presented a very fine argument and that is the reason that I have been arguing that Indian philosophy is very very critical and they have very strong argument for any concept or if they are presenting an argument against of any concept there again there is a very strong argument. You can take many examples not in the Vedanta philosophy, even Buddhism and Nyaya. However, Buddhism will be discussing in next week. Nyaya is not a part of this course but again Buddhism and Nyaya philosophy again have lot of discussion. If you can go through it again it is very important. They also presented a very sharp argument. Now, coming back to the Vedanta philosophy today we are going to talk about Vedanta philosophy in the sense that we have discussed Shankaracharya, we have discussed Ramanujacharya. I would like to give you some more idea about other school of thought in Vedanta philosophy. So, Vedanta philosophy is a very important school where there are many philosophers and they have presented a very strong argument. So, what today I will be doing, I will be discussing the school, Dvaitadvaita. Today, I will be discussing Dvaitavāda of Madhvācharya. Again, I will be giving you some idea about Dvaitadvaitavāda of Nimbarkacharya and also, I will give you a overview of Shuddhādvaitavāda of Vallabhacharya. So, these philosophers is again it is very important and I will be giving you a idea in very basic level about their philosophy. So, you will have an idea of their philosophy in the Indian philosophy. So, now let us start the Dvaitavāda of Madhava.

So, Madhvācharya is the founder of Dvaita-Vedanta. Shankaracharya, we have discussed in this class as an Advaita monism or Advaita. Now, Ramanujacharya talked about Vishistadvaitvada and third he is talking about Dvaita dualism. So, dualism is in a two. Madhvācharya argues for reality of visesa which is the essence of the thing and defines the specific its own nature. So, this is a contribution of this Madhvācharya and this is how he argued for the reality of viśeṣa. He gave an example of perception of whiteness and of a cloth. So, first there is a cloth and there is a white cloth. So, whiteness is not a different from this cloth. So, the qualities are identical with the substance. So, for example there is an X and the Y is in a quality. Cloth and then whiteness. So, what Madhvācharya is arguing that these qualities are is identical with the substance. It is not different from the substance.

Now, he talked about two realities. First one is the independent reality that is called God and second which is a dependent reality that is called individual soul and world. Madhvācharya argues that there is a God and that God is determinate God. So, we have discussed in this course the two kinds of God, indeterminate and determinate. Nirgun Brahman and Sagun Brahman. Shankaracharya has argued for the Nirgun Brahman. However, Ramanujacharya says that the word Nirgun has interpreted differently that is not right interpretation. So, Nirgun only means that devoid of all imperfection. Madhvācharya also arguing in the same line and argued that God is devoid of all imperfection and again he is not attributeless. So, there is an attribute it means the God is determinate. So, God is determinate in the sense that what they are saying ultimately and ontologically God is real but this God is Sagun Brahman. This God is with attributes. Now, when we are using this word Nirgun it only means that this God does not have any bad qualities because he is a perfect being. So, he is devoid of all imperfections. Madhvācharya argued for the qualities of God and he argued that there are qualities for example, Lordship, infinite knowledge. He has infinite knowledge. He has infinite power, infinite strength, infinite rulership, infinite vigor and infinite glory. So, if you see in all the qualities there is a word infinite. So, infinite means he is a perfect being. You cannot talk about any limited knowledge, limited power and so on. So, God who has an ontological real, ultimately real he has all the qualities but in infinite. Now, Madhvācharya argues that there is a difference between God and his qualities. So, he is the efficient cause and Prakriti is the material cause of the world. Madhvācharya argues that the highest and perfect Lord is Vishnu and he is absolute Brahman, supreme self, Paramātmān and Bhagavan, Lord. So, this is about Dvaitavāda from Madhvācharya. He argued about reality of difference. There is a difference between God and individual soul. Now, he is talking about difference of five different type of the kind of difference. So, first he says that there is a difference between God and individual soul. So, this is again is real. So, when I am saying is a real difference it only means that even the soul is not real. So, there is a difference between God and individual soul. There is a difference between God and matter. There is a difference between soul and matter. There is a difference between one soul and another, and there is a difference between one material thing and another. So, this is how he talked about reality of difference and he again argued that matter, soul and God is irreducible to one another. For Madhvācharya, Jiva is the active agent. He is the knower. He is the enjoyer. He is the doer and he can feel everything, pleasure and pain, experience pleasure and pain, but he is different from God. So, once he is released in other sense that when he achieved the state of liberation, when he realized his own identity then it becomes the original state of purity. But it attains the similarity with God but do not lose its identity. So, what does it mean like if you take this example of Shankaracharya philosophy which we have discussed in this course. So, when you achieve the liberation, when you see your own reality and your own identity then you will become a God, because the self is not different from Nirgun Brahma. Atman is not different from Nirgun Brahma. So, when you realize your own identity or real nature of

Atman then you will see the real identity and real God or Nirgun Brahma. Realizing means then there is no removing the avidya and basically removing all this unreal appearance of which all the appearance will vanish. Now, there is a God. There is no subject-object duality. So, only Nirgun Brahma. Ramanujacharya argued that when you achieve the liberation state, when you see your own reality, this world, then you will become attributes of God, the body of God. So, that is Madhvācharya, he argues that when you attain this liberation, so you will attain the similarity with the God but you are not going to lose the identity. Its identity means the soul will be there. So, this is what from Dvaitavāda, from Madhvācharya.

Now let us discuss about Dvaitādvaitvāda of Nimbarkacharya. For again, for Nimbarkacharya, Brahman is a supreme person and possesses infinite qualities of power. So, when they are talking about Brahman as a supreme person, so you have to take it as Brahman which is an ontological reality. So, all of them what they are doing, they are discussing this ultimate reality based on the scriptures and arguing that about the ontological reality. So, Nimbarkacharya arguing that Brahman is a determinate God and he is the supreme person and he possessed the infinite qualities and power. As I said, they believe that scriptures are the source of knowledge because any other means of knowledge cannot be a means of knowledge of God. So, if you want to know the God, other means of knowledge which we have discussed while discussing Shankaracharya, there are many different means of knowledge and those means of knowledge is only means for the empirical knowledge. So, many all the philosophers from Vedanta philosophy argued that these means or, source of knowledge or valid source of knowledge in empirical level. So, the ontological reality if you know of valid knowledge, so only scriptures are the source of knowledge because we are incapable or through the means it is difficult to get an idea. I mean there is no way to get an idea. So, only this kind of knowledge is only possible through the scripture, the verbal testimony. We have discussed this idea, the theory of knowledge, different knowledge where we have talked about the Sapta-pramana and in Sapta-pramana, scriptures are the valid source of knowledge. Nimbarkacharya argues that Brahman is a material cause and the efficient cause of the world. Now, he argues that effect is not absolutely different from cause. The effect is implicit in cause and becomes explicit when it assumes the form of the effect. So, there is another question. We have talked about this idea while discussing the Indian philosophy. Even when we start this course in first few classes we have talked about the cause and effect, and this cause and effect plays an important role when we argue about cause and effect. So, cause and effect. So, there is a cause, for example there is a cause, fire and then there is a smoke, the milk and then curd. So these are the causes, cause- effect. Now the question arises is that effect is different from cause. Is curd is different from milk? Is the smoke different from the fire? So, this is the main question and while answering this question you also answer the many other concept. So, when you are saying what Nimbarkacharya is saying this effect is basically is different from the cause but it is not absolutely different from the cause, Dvaitadvaita. So,

when I am talking about this milk and curd Nimbarkacharya will argue this curd is a different from this milk but it is not an absolutely different from the cause, from the milk. So, when we are going to talk about the God and this world, so cause and effect. So, you will say that it is in a different from God but it does not mean this is in an absolutely different from the god. So, he argues that cause and effect are partly different. So, different but this is not different. So, cause and effect is different. God and world is different. So, world is different from the god, but it is not absolutely different from the god. Nimbarkacharya argues that Brahman is transformed into the world which is both different and not different from the Brahman. So, world is different from the Brahman, but at the same time it is absolutely not different from Brahman. For Nimbarkacharya the individual soul is eternal and an active agent. So, he is the experiencer, doer, he can enjoy the impression of the past karmas. Nimbarkacharya argues Brahman and soul are different from each other, but there is no absolute difference between Brahman and soul. For instance, sun and its rays. Sun is both, different form is rays and at the same time it also identical with it rays. So, this is how Nimbarkacharya talked about the idea of this world and then Brahman.

Now the next philosophy is Shuddhādvaitvāda of Vallabhacharya. Vallabhacharya argues that Brahman is supreme person and determinate God. So, in Vedanta philosophy whatever we have discussed, Shankaracharya is the person who believes that this God is ultimate reality is a nirgun Brahman. So, only nirgun Brahman is an ontological reality and everything is just an appearance and false appearance. Now, Ramanujacharya, we also have discussed many other philosophers and all the philosopher Nimbarkacharya, Madhvācharya arguing that the ultimate reality is Brahman and this Brahman is determinate God and this Brahman is perfect and he does not have any imperfect qualities or does not have any devoid of all the bad qualities. So, Nirgun means that he does not have any bad qualities. Vallabhacharya argues that soul are eternal parts of God. The universe and soul are Brahman. He voluntarily concealed and manifest his qualities. We have discussed in this course in the last class even how Shankaracharya has talked about there is a Brahman and Avidya conceals his reality. Now, Ramanuja argued that how a darkness can conceal a light. So, this argument is a problem. Vallabhacharya arguing that God voluntarily concealed and manifest his qualities. So, when there is a world and when I am saying there is concealing his reality, so this is not because of God's will. So he is voluntary, he is doing that. Now, very important argument from Vallabhacharya that he argues that the cause remains intact and unchanged though it is modified into the effect. Now we were talking about the cause and effect. So, there is a God and there is no world. So, there is an argument that God is transforming where into the world. So, some of them saying these attributes are changing. What Vallabhacharya is arguing, it is a very important argument. He says that there is no change in God, though it is modified into the effect, modifying into the world. So, when it is destruction, it is an effect is observing where in the cause. For example clay. So, there is a pot made out of clay. When there is a destruction

of this pot, it is going back to the clay. Vallabhacharya argues that there is a causal power in the cause and that produces effect. But this power is neither its nature and essence. So, when I am saying that there is a God and T1 and T2 is what is a nature or essence of the God. If Vallabhacharya is arguing that essence and nature, it is not different from the God. So, if you are going to say this is a nature or this is an essence, then what does it mean that this is a God himself is doing that. So, there will be any change in the God and that will go against the argument of eternal God. Now, what he argues that this essence, this power is a power which is different from its nature and essence. Therefore, when we are arguing that God has a power and it is producing, creating this world, so this power is neither a nature of God nor essence of the God. But again, Vallabhacharya argues that effect is real and it is not different from God. Vallabhacharya argues that Jiva is knower, enjoyer, doer and dependent on the God. So, he is an active agent, he experiences the pleasure and pain. Vallabhacharya argues that there is a real identity between the whole and its parts. So, there is a whole and parts is a real identity. So, this is what all and Vallabhacharya also argues that about the Samsara is due to soul ignorance of its non-difference of from Brahman. When we identify, when we take it this self which is a different from God, so that is a main cause of this Bhava chakra or this is the samsara where we are in the cycle of birth and rebirth. So, this is I have discussed in this Vedanta philosophy in very basic level we have just give you just an idea about different Vedantic school of thought and just for an idea, that how their argument is important and they have presented argument about the concept of God and the world very differently and about the same time in a very strong argument.

So, thank you, it was all about the Vedanta philosophy and as I have been saying that in this course is philosophy and critical thinking and our for us is arguments everything and same time I am also my trying my best to restrict myself in the only basic level. So, it will be easy for you to understand. Thank you so much and this talk was based on this Indian philosophy by Jadunath Sinha. Thank you so much for your kind attention. Thank you.