ACINTYABHEDABHEDA

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We have already discussed acintyabhedabheda as the relation between sakti and saktimat, as relation of the Lord with the jīva and the world. We shall now discuss again the unique nature of Śrī Jīva's acintyabhedabheda to find out its significance in contrast with the relation of bheda upheld by Rāmānuja, Madhva and others, and also in comparison with different kinds of bhedabheda relation upheld by Bhāskara, Nimbārka, and others.

We shall find in the course of our discussion how Rāmānuja refuted all sorts of bhedabheda on logical grounds. He was really an advocate of bheda relation between Brahman and jīva, as he admitted the relation of 'body and soul' between jīva and Brahman. The relation of 'body and soul' is certainly not a relation of absolute identity as held by Sāṅkara, nor was it a relation of bhedabheda which he himself refuted. Therefore, this relation admitted by Rāmānuja must be a relation of bheda or real difference.

Madhvācarya was also an advocate of bheda relation since according to him Brahman and jīva are two different principles though they may be of the same class both being of the nature of consciousness (1). So, he admits svajātīyabheda, or similar difference in jīva from Brahman. Madhva also refuted bhedabheda in support of his bheda doctrine (2). In sarvasambādini Śrī Jīva

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(1) Bhimā jīvāḥ paro bhinnastathāpi jānarūpataḥ/
   Procyante Brahmarūpena ...// Bhaviṣya-pūrṇa quoted
   in Madhya-bhāṣya - 2. 3. 29.

(2) Yato bhedena cāsyāyamabhedena ca gīyata/
   atascāmātavamuddītam bhedabhedaṁ na mukhyataḥ/
   Brahma-sūtra - Madhva-Bhāṣya. 2. 3. 43.
clearly stated that Rāmānuja and Madhva are the advocates of bheda relation (3).

Baladeva may also be regarded as a follower of Madhva in admitting jīva as a different principle (tattva), though he somehow maintains the authority of the śruti-texts speaking of non-duality, by admitting the other four principles of jīva, prakṛti, etc. as śakti of Brahman (4).

Since Baladeva does not speak of bhedābheda between Brahman and jīva, or Brahman and the world, and rather he speaks of Isvāra as svatantra or independent controller, and the jīva as tadvāṣya or the controlled, his relation between Isvāra and jīva must be a relation of bheda or difference. In his Prameyaratnavālī Baladeva states that the world is said to be one with Brahman because its functions are dependent on Brahman, or because the world is pervaded by Brahman (5).

Now we shall proceed to discuss and examine the different forms of bhedābheda as held by Bhāskara, Nimbārka and others to have a full appreciation of Śrī Jīva's acintyabhedābheda. This theory of bhedābheda is a very old one as can be determined from

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(3) Gautama-Kanāda - Jaimini - Patañjali - Patañjalimate tu bheda eva/
Śrī-Rāmānuja - Madhvācāryamate cetyapi sārvatrikā
prasidhīh/ svamate acintyabhedābheda eva acintya śakti-
mayatvāditi/ Sṛṣṭiśāntvāditi. Page 149.
(Bangīya-Sāhitya-Parishad Ed.)

(4) Caturnāmeśam Brahma śaktitvād evaṃ śaktimad - Brahmetyā-
dvaitavyēṣāṃ saṅgatīritī/
Brahma-sūtra - Govinda-bhāṣya - Introduction 1.1.1.

(5) Brahmādhi navṛttter jagadekah Brahmācayate/Brahmāvāpyatvataḥ
kaiścid jagad Brahmeti manaye/
Prameyaratnāvalī, 4.6-7.
the references in the Brahma-sūtras, and the commentaries of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and others. But, for the appreciation of Śrī Jīva's acintyabheda-bheda, we shall limit our discussions to the study of aupādhika or aupācārika bheda-bheda of Bhāskara, and svabhābika bheda-bheda of Nimbārka who are the most renowned advocates of those theories.

Bhāskara, the advocate of aupādhika bheda-bheda, or non-difference-in-difference due to adjuncts, holds that the relation of the individual soul with Brahman is essentially abheda or non-difference. But in the stage of its bondage or samsāra, the soul or the ātma attains its limited jivahood due to the limitation of the adjuncts like dṛṣṭi-dṛṣṭi (or the body, sense, and mind. Since the souls and also the world emanate from Brahman, their cause, their difference from Brahman is true only in the state of being effects (kāryavasthā), and not in the state of Brahman as cause. The effects are also mutually non-different in the form of the cause, but different in the form of the effects. The effects are different in the form of individuals (vyaktirūpena), but they are non-different as the universal (6).

The waves, ripples, and foam are different as such effects, but non-different as the cause - the water. The black and the white cows are different as individual cows, but the universal cow-hood

(6) Evam sarvesāmya vastunāṁ bheda-bhedaśeva Sarvātām kāraṇātmanā jātiyātmanā ca bheda- pratīyate/ Sarvasambādīni - Page 148 (V.S.P. Ed.)
(gotva) being one, the cows are non-different in the form of the universal (7).

According to Bhāskara, the non-difference (abheda) of the jīva with Brahman is natural (svābhāvika) and eternal (nitya), while its difference from Brahman is adventitious and temporal (aupādhika, anitya).

But, the relation of the world with its cause - Brahman is also bhedaabheda, both the non-difference and the difference being equally natural (8). Just as the effect jar is essentially non-different from its cause - clay, and is naturally also different from clay by its attributes and activities (utility), so also the world is essentially non-different from its cause Brahman, and naturally different from Brahman as effect by its attributes of materiality and impurities, and its activities as different objects. On the other hand, the difference of jīva being adventitious (aupādhika), jīva attains ekābhāva or union with Brahman at the stage of liberation, and also at the stage of dissolution (pralaya) when the differentiating adjuncts are dissolved. The theory of svābhāvika bhedaabheda as the relation of the soul and the world with Brahman is ascribed to Yādavapraśāsa and Nimbārka. But, as the works of Nimbārka are available, and because his philosophy is a theistic

(7) "Kāryakāranayorthedābhedāvevānumbhūyate/abhedadharmasca bheda yathā mahodasherabhedaḥ, sa eva taraṅgädhyātmanā vartamano bheda ityucyate"/ Brahmāṣṭra - Bhāskarabhāṣya, 2. 1. 18.

(8) Cultural Heritage of India - Volume III Page 362
vaishnava one, the discussion of his views will be of considerable value in the appreciation of Sri Jiva's position.

According to Nimbarka, the non-difference and difference of the jiva and the world with Brahman are equally natural (svabhavika) and eternal (9). Unlike the view of Bhaskara, the jiva will maintain its natural difference even at the time of liberation. The natural non-difference (abheda) will of course also continue being equally eternal. The non-difference lies in the jiva's being essentially non-different with its cause Brahman, and Brahman's being immanent in its effect - the jiva, just as, the jar is essentially non-different from its cause - the clay, being nothing but clay, and the clay is also non-different from the effect - the jar, being immanent in it. On the other hand, the difference of the effect jar lies in its possessing different attributes and activities (function), and the natural difference of the clay, the cause, lies in its being transcendent beyond the effect - the jar, etc.

Thus, according to Nimbarka, the jiva is different from Brahman by its different attributes like its atomicity and impurities, and by its different activities like limited agent-hood, and enjoyer-hood (karta, bhoktrtva). Similarly, Brahman is also different from the jiva by its different attributes of omnipresence and omniscience, by different activities like creation, etc. of the world, and also by his transcendence beyond the jiva (9,10).

(9) Ambamamembrvavajiva paramatmanav bhedabhedau daravyati/ Brahmasutra, Nimbarka-bhasya, 2. 3. 42.3

(10) Murtamurtadikam visvam Brahmani svakaran bhinnambhinnavambandhena sthutumarhati bhedabhedavyapadesatahikundalavat/ Brahmasutra, Nimbarka-bhasya, 5. 2. 27.

The most crucial point of difference between Bhāskara and Nimbārka, or between aupādhika bhedabheda and svābhāvika bhedabheda difference is that while according to the former, jīva's difference from Brahman is adventitious and temporary, and there is complete union (ekabhāva) of the jīva with Brahman in the state of liberation, according to the latter, jīva's difference from Brahman is natural and eternal which will be maintained even in the state of liberation.

But, neither Bhāskara nor Nimbārka found any difficulty in reconciling the two opposites—bheda and abheda i.e. difference and non-difference, because such non-difference in difference is perceived everywhere in the universe specially in the case of cause and effect.

Śaṅkara has refuted the theory of bhedabheda on the ground that it is in contradiction with the Śruti-texts emphasising abheda, and on the ground that if both abheda and bheda be true, the realisation of abheda cannot remove the knowledge of bheda causing bondage. (11)

Rāmānuja has also rejected both the kinds of bhedabheda stating that, because in the former there is real contact of the adjuncts with Brahman which brings limitations and impurities in the jīva, those defects should also vitiate Brahman as much as the jīva. And thus the Upaniṣadic dictum of identity of pure Brahman and self becomes totally absurd due to contradiction.

(11) Brahmaśūtra, Śaṅkara-Bḥāṣya, 2. 1. 14.
Again, in the case of svabhāvikā bhedābheda, since jīva—hood
is ascribed as a natural aspect of Brahma, the defects and merits
of the jīva should naturally pertain to and vitiate Brahma as well.
In this case also the Upaniṣadic dictum of identity of pure Brahma
and self becomes equally absurd (12).

Śrī Jīva has, in his Sarvasambādini, presented the views of
Rāmānuja and the Naiyāyikas also, in refutation of the theory of
bhedābheda in both of its aspects of aupādhika and svabhāvikā, only
to establish the inconceivable or supralogical nature of bhedābheda,
both bheda and abheda being incapable of being logically conceiv-
ed (13).

Śrī Jīva has put forward various arguments to refute the
different conceptions of the jīva as a part of Brahman due to limi-
tation of adjuncts. The jīva cannot be a torn piece of Brahman due
to adjuncts, since Brahman is not capable of being divided or torn.
Nor can the jīva be a portion (pradesa) of Brahman, limited by an
adjunct, because when the adjunct changes its position it cannot carry

(12) Bhedābheda-dvāde tu Brahmānyevopādhisamārgāt tat-
prayukta-jīvagatadosā Bhārmaneyevapraṇāyaṇaṇiki
nirastanikhiladosakāryapagunātmakā-Brahmātmaabhāvopadesa
hi virodhādeva parityaktaḥ syuh/Svabhāvikā-bhedābheda-
vade'pi Brahmaṇāḥ svata eva jīvabhābhyupagamamāt guṇavad-
dosāśca svabhāvikā bhaveyuriti nirdoṣā-Brahmātādātmya-
padesaśo viruddha eva/
Śrī Rāmānuja-bhāṣya - 1.1.1. Sarvasambādini Page 133.ś

(13) Bhede'pyabhede'pi nirmāryanadadasa — santati—
darsānena bhinnataya cintayitumaśaśayatvādabhedaṃ
śādyantah tadavabhinnatayeśi cintayitumaśaśayatvād
bhedaṃapi sādhyante 'cintyabhedaśahedavādam
svākurvanti/ Sarvasambādini - Page 149 (V.S.P. Ed.)
that portion or locality of Brahman with it, since Brahman is all-pervading and immobile (unmoved). As a result, every portion or pradeśa of Brahman through which the limited adjunct passes, will become free from bondage and beset with bondage successively.

Again, if Brahman Itself is held to assume jīva-hood due to contact with adjunct or upādhi, then entire Brahman becomes vitiated by such contact with upādhi, and there remains no Brahman to control the jīva as antaryāmin.

Still, there may be some other view that the adjunct or upādhi supported by Brahman is the jīva (Brahmadhisthānamupadhireva jīvah). But Śrī Jīva refutes the view stating that such view will mean that liberation would be the destruction of the jīva itself (mokṣe jīvanāśah syat). Such liberation which involves self-annihilation cannot be a human end (purusārtha).

Though the Advaitins have attempted to avert these difficulties by admitting the limitation of the jīva-hood as superimposed by ignorance, they have failed to determine the locus or support (āśraya) of such avidyā or ignorance (14). Neither jīva, who is conceived by avidyā itself, nor Iśvara who is also equally conceived by avidyā can be the support of avidyā, since that will lead to the defect of self-dependence (svāśrayadoṣa). Pure consciousness also which is self-luminous, cannot possibly the support of the nescience due to evident contradiction. By analysing the theories of aupādhika and svābhāvika bhedābheda as maintained by Bhāskara and Nimbārka

(14) Sarvasambādīnī Page 118-19 (V.S.P. Ed.)
and others, and by presenting all sorts of defects in their theories, Śrī Jīva leads us to the appreciation of the significance of acintyabheda-bheda. As absolute difference (atyanta-bheda) cannot be maintained due to contradiction with Śruti-texts declaring non-difference, and as absolute identity (atyanta-bheda) cannot also be upheld due to inconformity with reason and Śruti-texts, so also the relation of non-difference-in-difference is equally beset with logical defects and difficulties.

But, as non-difference-in-difference is the only evident and possible relation between śakti and śaktimat - between the soul and Brahman, or the world and Brahman, and since natural bheda-bheda involves many logical defects, acintyabheda-bheda or supralogical non-difference-in-difference is the only conclusion which may be maintained in conformity with the Śruti-texts and the Bhāgavata which are the greatest authority with regard to metaphysical realities.

Therefore, as Śrī Jīva remarks in his Sarvasambādīṇī, the theory of bheda-bheda may be true with regard to some qualified ordinary effects, and the theory of non-difference may be upheld by those who lack the knowledge of the difference, the true conclusion is acintyabheda-bheda because the Lord is endowed with acintya or supralogical powers (15).

(15) Ato bheda-bheda-bheda-vādā vāśāstavastva-pakṣāya-pravartatām/ abhedavādaśca vāśāeenasandhe-anarāhi tyenaśvete/....
mm svamate tvacintyabheda-bheda-mīśa eva acintyā Śaktimayatvādīti/
Sarvasambādīṇī - Page 149.
According to Śrī Jīva the soul and the world are but sāktī or powers of the Lord. The individual souls are modifications of His tāṭasthā sāktī, while the world is the modification of His vāhiraṅgā or māyāsāktī. Therefore, the relation of the soul and the world with the Ultimate Reality is the same as the relation of sāktī and sāktimat - the relation of potency to its substrate.

Even in the case of the empirical objects the relation of sāktī with sāktimat is inconceivable or supralogical bhedābheda, since sāktī is both different and non-different from the sāktimat which is logically inconceivable. The soul and the world are also in the same way non-different from the Lord, because they have no existence apart from the Lord being modifications of His sāktī. Again, sāktī is non-different from sāktimat its substrate, because the Lord is Lord with all His powers, and not without powers. But this non-difference cannot be absolute identity, since, the one Lord possesses many powers. Even in the empirical world one substance is found to possess various powers. This indicates that sāktī is different as well. Again, sāktī is found to extend and function even outside the sāktimat, which also indicates its difference. Sāktī or powers of the Lord have some difference from Him also because sāktī undergoes various modifications, while the Sāktimat (Lord) does not. It should be known that this difference of sāktī is not an absolute one, for then it could not have been Him His sāktī, and could have existed even without the Sāktimat.

Thus, evidently the relation of sāktī to sāktimat stands as non-difference-cum-difference or non-difference in difference. But such
a relation involves logical contradiction as Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and others have remarked.

Such a relation is inconceivable as well. And this logical difficulty and the inconceivability have provided the clue to Śrī Jīva’s philosophy which has led him to come upon the theory of acintyabhedabheda. According to him the logic of the finite does not in every respect hold good with regard to the Infinite — the Lord. Therefore, it is the relation of inconceivable or supralogical non-difference in difference — acintyabhedabheda in which Jīva and the world stand related with the Ultimate Reality — the Lord.

The jīva — the individual souls are non-different from the Lord in as much as they have their existence dependent on the Lord, and in the Lord. They are non-different from the Lord also because they are of the same nature with the Lord as pure consciousness in their true nature. They are different as well being modifications of His taṭasthā śakti, and also because of being atomic consciousness subject to the influence of māyā causing its bondage and various impurities.

The world is also non-different from the Lord being His śakti, and having its existence entirely dependent on Him. Its difference is still wider being itself entirely insentient (jaḍa) beset with various defects and impurities. For this, it is regarded as the modification of vahiraṅgā śakti or extraneous powers, while the jīva is regarded as the modification of taṭasthā śakti or marginal power which is nearer to the Lord than vahiraṅgā māyaśakti. It may be said in this connection that though śakti stands in the relation of non-difference-in-
difference with the Lord, the non-difference in the case of svarūpa-śakti is most prominent and keen because it is almost the svarūpa (essence) which is regarded as svarūpa-śakti, the only difference being in its admitting modifications. The difference in the case of taṭasthā-śakti and the jīva is greater, because the jīvas are atomic and subject to the influence of māyā.

Again, in the case of vahiraśgā-śakti or the world, the difference is greater still due to its being of insentient (jaḍa) nature beset with various defects and limitations involved in the prākṛta guṇas of sattva, rajas and tamas.

In the conclusion, it may be said that Śrī Jīva's conception of the relation of acintyabhedābheda is the axis round which the whole of his philosophy moves. It forms the key-note for the appreciation of the originality of his philosophy.