CHAPTER IX

Evaluation of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī as an important thinker of Vedānta.

The Advaita philosophy of India is the most magnificent achievement of the Indian thinkers and above all, it stands first among the philosophical schools, for it comprehends both the aspects—practical and metaphysical.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī can be said to be a great author in the field of Kevalādvaita Vedānta. His excellent various works like Advaitasiddhi, Vedāntakabatikā, Advaitaratnaraksana are also on pure Kevalādvaita. Of these, Śiddhāntabindu is a small commentary on the Daśāloki, a small stotra, consisting of ten verses as its name implies, whose reputed author is Śaṅkaraśārya. Though being a commentary, its value is of a very high order because besides explaining the meaning of the words as found in the stotra, Madhusūdana and goes a step further explains the motive of the author in
composing the stotra, and interprets the stotra in the light of that.

The mangal verse of the 'Siddhantabindu' indicates that Madhusūdana has a very high respect for his Guru Viśvesvara. He regards him as re-incarnation of Śākara, the propounder of kevalādvaita doctrine. And the verses at the end of the text states the purpose of composing this commentary, called 'Siddhantabindu'. Here, the author says, that the commentary has been written due to Bhūvākāna of Balabhadra (who seems to be the disciple of the author.) He devotedly bows to Śākara and Śrīresvara.

This shows his deep sense of respect towards them.

1. अपि व्यवामाण्याचिन्तितकल्पप्रार्थनाचार्यांकण्णति तथापि 
कस्य मन्दवुद्ध्वयत्र वाचित्र्विद्विज्ञाशिश्यप्रतिकर्तनश्चात्मानशिश्यः 
साधृशयात्। विचाराणां तु संवलनेन निरपवधन्द्विज्ञानिश्चिति 
संस्कीर्तिकृतविद्विद्धिमिराकारणाःविचारबालयेः। 
S.B. P. 10

2. श्रीसंग्रामकारवादार्थान् विशेषार्थान् विद्वगुणः प्रणयम्। 
कैदान्तशास्त्रकाव्यालाखानात् वैवचाय कृते कामपि प्रकल्पम्। 
S.B. P. 1.

3. कृष्णाचार्या महामात्यम् कलस्मि कृते कृतौ निपत्:। 
S.B. P. 153.

4. न स्तौष्टि ते काव्यसंस्कृतां सम्भवसंस्कृतार्थसि यो स्वरूप:। 
विनापि तै: संग्रहितासङ्कल्पाति तं कार्यान्नोपि गुरुसत्तां च। 
S.B. P. 153.
Madhusūdana himself compares his short but significant essay with a gem which is small but of great value. Like a true scholar he says that the credit of whatever good there is in the work goes to his guru but he himself is responsible for the drawbacks.

While interpreting the stotra, Madhusūdana considers many more points pertaining to the Vedānta doctrine in particular and other philosophical systems in general. (The rival doctrines of the Lokāyatas, Baudhās, Jainas, Sāṃkhya, Pāṇcarāṭikas, Nyāya, Mīmāṃsakas are all subjected to a searching examination and refuted with great argumentative skill.)

'Siddhāntabindu' contains numerous quotations from the principal Upaniṣads because for the Vedāntins,

\[ \text{1. } \text{कुष्ठपि वधवसहच्च-नामामिथिव विक्रमोऽयम्} \\
\text{पुष्पदेव मानिना विलिन्ती शुद्धिना किरदायः सति} \]

\[ \text{2. } \text{यद्र सोंहवं किंचित्तुदाराेव भेन न हि} \\
\text{यद्रास्तं शुरुः किंचित्तुप्रक्षेपं गुरोऽनि हि} \]

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the only source from which the true knowledge of Brahman can be derived are the Upaniṣadic sentences. Madhusudana has also quoted the views of Gauḍapāda and Bādarāyaṇa. He also mentions the views of Śaṅkara regarding adhyāsa. Sūreśvara, the immediate pupil of Śaṅkara, has been referred to with respect by Madhusudana. The views of Sarvājñātman and Vācaspati have also been recorded by him.

As said before, there were differences of opinions among the successors of Śaṅkarācārya in the field of Kevalādvaita. Each one of them was trying to justify his own view on the ground of its being more in consonance with the main doctrine of Śaṅkarācārya which was accepted by all alike. (In the 'Siddhāntabindu' we have a clear glimpse of the relevant theories regarding Īśa and jīva. The theory of semblance, reflection and limitation are mentioned and discussed by Madhusudana.) He has also mentioned Srṣṭidṛṣṭivāda along with the Ekajīnavāda. It is notable that he does not show his preference for any of the vadas but has like a true scholar discussed the pros and cons of them.

While commenting upon the seventh verse of Daśāloki, Madhusudana has referred to the difference of
opinion among his predecessors on the topic of the substratum of the dream phenomena, without naming them.

The question raised and solved is whether jīva limited by mind or svabhāma limited by the original ignorance is the substratum of the dream phenomena. He has also referred to a third view according to which the substratum of the dream phenomena could be Brahmān limited by the mind. He accepts two views.

The doctrine of avidyā is also discussed at length by Madhusūdana. The debatable point is whether on the rise of ghatajñāna, ajñāna pertaining to ghāta alone is removed or the entire ajñāna is removed. Madhusūdana accepts the first view and says that when knowledge of an object like pot arises, the ignorance about the pot disappears, but the ignorance of a cloth remains. If the ajñāna is one, it can be easily destroyed by the knowledge of one object only. By knowledge of one pot, everything

1. विमियिष्ठानम् स्वप्नाक्षरस्य | वाधविष्ठे जीवनेत्यमिन्यस्य | 
   मुलाशानाविष्ठान्तं ब्रह्मेत्यमिन्यस्यपरे | 
   S.B.P: 109-110

2. वाधविष्ठे जीवनेत्यमिन्यविष्ठान्तं मृत्युशापिनिपि पलविष्ठाशानस्यकः 
   वानेकृतव्रीघीकाराणे क्रस्तस्यपरी | 
   S.B.P: 117

3. तस्मानं पलावपैपि कायमुपपरः | 
   S.B.P: 119
would become known and there would be no place of ajjhàna and there would be immediate liberation. Madhussudana maintains that there are as many ajjhànas as there are jñànas - one specific ajjhàna is removed by the corresponding jñàna that arises. The ajjhàna of an individual remains till the knowledge of the oneness of jîva and Brahman arises.

Madhussudana has also carefully dealt with the question whether the experience of pain occurs in the state of deep sleep. He firmly holds that the experience of pain does not occur in the state of deep sleep. But he conceives the opposite view only under the proviso that each of these

1. नृ सौनै ग्रन्थिन ज्ञ्यात्मिक अवर्णमेत्र सदृष्टमलाच्याः | क्षणनस्कृतां प्रथम नानाज्ञानप्रदेशिपं स्वस्ते जीवसञ्जानापापितान्तर | न उद्देकैं मण्डलितां तृत्यावरणस्या भिषात्कृतांकाराणां | तथा न प्रभावणकृष्य-न्यः करणकृत्यावथ्रहृदमार्गाय तर्कित महत्यगिः पस्त मात्र न माति इति प्रती तित्तरनमास्मावरण पित्युष्काणां |

S.B.P. 61-62

2. तत्वमस्यापिवायमेत्रज्ञानानाधिष्ठितमावभिवृत्त्यमुष्माजिः |

S.B. 62
three conditions are again classified into the three sub-types.

It seems from his Siddhāntabindu, that Madhusūdana prefers the pañcikarana prakṛtya to the trivṛtkarana prakṛtya. He has raised a question whether the organ of speech is produced from the element of space or from light and has discussed it properly. He opines that speech must be a product of space.

At some places we have to understand the pūrvapakṣa from without the text. One feels that one is reading sūtras. He sometimes gets furious and uses harsh words for the opponent. He once tells the opponent not to be too clever regarding the difference of jīva and Īśa. While criticising the rival views he puts forth

1. अवस्थानां बुद्धियां च विज्ञातिकाराः सुचुमाणिः सुचुमानिः दु:सुकष्यनिः। तता हि-प्रमाणो जागृताः सुकिर्तात्तिविघो जागृत्तवर्तः, समाविकासुक्ष्मी-भाषाः जागुत्तुपार्थिः। एवं स्वस्वै: विवादिनार्थः स्वतंत्रभुतः स्वार्थः मया दृष्टं हृतं कुदिः स्वबल्क्तः, जागुत्तुपार्थिः क्षञ्चितुं न नृत्ये स्वातान्त्र्याः। यथा कनुपुरे कर्तवनुपुर्व्यः।।

2. हर्ष तु शक्त्रियाः श्रीरामाविधानसौवृष्टिः कर्तवनुपललोकः भाषाः।

S. B. 138-139

S. B. P. 51.
the prima-facie view and then refutes them with the help of śrutī passages and reasoning. Nevertheless we have to say that though the style of Madhusūdana is admirably lucid and impressively attractive, yet it is not always easy to comprehend.

Madhusūdana's Siddhāntabindu seems to be the centre of attraction among the scholars. The fact that four commentaries (all available) written on it shows clearly its importance and thus Madhusūdana holds a unique position in the kevalādvaita literature. It seems that Siddhāntabindu performs a double function. Like Vedāntaparibhāṣā of Dharmrājādvārāṇḍra, it refutes the views of other schools and establishes the Vedāntic view. And like Siddhāntaleśasamgraha of Appaya Dīkṣīta, he collects various views of the ācāryas of the Śaṅkara Vedānta on various problems without going into their details. Sometimes he has mentioned the views of Sarvajñatman and Suresvara; he calls Sarvajñatman प्रविन्द्रवानी and Suresvara वासिकारः.

Madhusūdana was a genius of the intellectual atmosphere of his age. His credit lies in his successful attempt at systematization, elaboration and methodical
philosophical treatment of the subject. He has dealt with the subject properly and has preserved the lines of thought and original features of Daśaśloki and has done this by means of serious and careful interpretations in the commentary.

As a commentator, Madhusūdana has successfully interpreted the stotra of Śaṅkara called Daśaśloki and has presented a clear outline of the main stream of Advaita system viz. 'Tattvamasi'. The points he has raised and solved are absolutely necessary for a clear grasp and the right comprehension of the Advaita doctrine and its principal aspects. He has made a successful attempt to give various views about each and every problem which he wanted to discuss in order to keep the reader on the main tract of the theme. He has suitably arranged the subject matter in order to arrive at a proper and convincing solution of the various points with the help of logical reasoning.