CHAPTER - V

SADĀNANDA: HIS DATE, LIFE AND WORKS

Spiritual life is the true genius of intellectual personalities. Those who make a remarkable appeal to the Indian mind, are the holy sages or philosophers who embody spirituality of its purest. Sadānanda is one such personality of the Vedānta tradition. He is one of those rare beings in whom the quality of simplifying even very terse topics of Vedānta with lucidity and brevity. He made the Vedānta philosophy accessible even to laymen.

Sadananda was a contemporary of Nṛsiṁhārāma Muni and Prakāśānanda who flourished during 15th century A.D. He belonged to one of the ten distinguished orders of sannyāsins of Śaṅkara's school.¹ No account of Sadananda's life is available. The phrase "Advayānandā atītadvaita bhānataḥ" in the second verse of the Vedāntasūtra justifies that Sadānanda's spiritual guide was Advayānanda.

In fact, it has been very difficult to take any decision regarding Sadānanda's life, for the three personalities bearing the same name are found in the history of the Vedānta literature. The first is the author of the
Advaïtabrahmasiddhi siddhântasâra, a copy of which is said to have been written in 1769 Samvat. From the colophon at the end of this work, it is suggested that Sadânanda, disciple of Brahmânanda Sarasvâti, hails from Kashmir; and his date is presumed to be 18th Century A.D. approximately.

The second is the author of the Pratyâk-tattvacintâmanâpi which has been published at Varanasi in 1911. Shri Krishna-pant, the editor of this work, in the introduction to the work, opines that there is no sufficient proof to say anything about Sadânanda's life and his contribution. On the basis of available evidences, it may be said that Sadânanda was a Sârasvata brahmin, and was born in Punjab. He makes a mention of his own date i.e. 1836 Śaka, at the end of his own work viz. Śâṅkarâdgvijâyasâra.

The third is the author of the Vedântasâra. Narasimha Sarasvâti at the end of his commentary called Subodhini on the Vedântasâra, clearly says that he wrote the commentary in 1510 Śaka (or 1588 A.D.). Sadânanda must have therefore lived prior to this date. Keeping all these evidences in view, Sadânanda the author of the Vedântasâra is absolutely different from the other two. And, this Sadânanda must have lived during latter half of the 16th
century A.D. Basing on the fact of Sadananda's referring to the Pañcadaśi of Vidyārāṇya, it can be said that Sadananda was posterior to Vidyārāṇya who belonged to the 14th century A.D. And on the basis of other internal evidences, it can be said that Sadananda lived somewhere about in the middle of the 15th century A.D.

Regarding the works of Sadananda, the Vedāntasāra is one of the most popular and well read syncretistic works on the Advaita Vedānta. In this most popular elementary treatise on the Vedānta, Sadananda discusses the theory of superimposition, Jīva and superimposition, de-superimposition, the means to self-realization, the concept of Jīvan-mukti and other connected topics of the Advaita Vedānta. The great importance of this work is indicated by the number of commentaries written on it. Of these, the Subodhini by Nṛsimha Sarasvati, the Bālabodhini of Apo Deva and the Vidvanmanoranjanī by Rāma Tīrtha, the teacher of Madhusūdana Sarasvati, have been well known.

"Rāmatīrtha made large use of writings of the highest class; and his commentary, which contains no less than 428 extracts, is a much more scholarly production than that of Nṛsimha Sarasvati. In some parts, however it is wearisomely prolix. In the valuable preface to his edition of the
Vamsabrahmana, Dr. Burnell says 'many (if not most) of Sayaga's quotations are what may be called traditional, and have been taken by him from the works of predecessors, not from the original texts, and even in cases, where he might have referred to the original'. This is true to some extent, of Ramatirtha also.'

Besides, the Vedantasara, Sadananda has written a commentary on the Upadesahasri of Sankara and also of one on the Saṅkṣepaśārīraka of Sarvajñātmamuni.

Nothing more than this, is available to bring in this context.
Chapter - V

FOOT NOTES


3. इति श्री परमदेवपरिवकायायः भ्रोक्तमान्यतत्त्वायः भ्रोक्तमान्य, श्रीदानन्द, कार्योऽधिकारित... 

4. रमणंतुलक्षपूर्विकाविद्वारश्रवणात् 
समानवतेऽ वर्णविवेचनात् माति श्रुतेत। 
श्रवणानां सौम्यार्थां लघुमाने 
गृहितं इति निबन्धः तिथिः ईश्वराताद्। 


5. जासे पौरवतार्थिका दशसे संवतरावत्र धुन:। 
संवतारे दशावत्ते पुरुषस्वरूपावलीवते शब्दे। 
प्राप्ते दुर्वलत्ते पुरुषस्वरूपेन मात्स्यमुक्ताया तिथिः। 
प्राप्ते भार्गवास्ते नरसरिन्दोऽव वामशेष्वराश्चत्राय। 
