



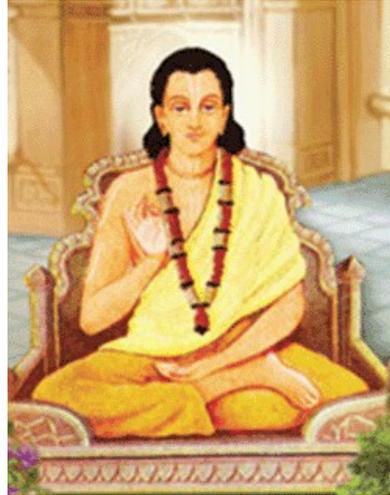
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Sri Nimbarkacharya

Bhagavan Shri Krishna moved by the pleading of the multitude devotees directed his favorite weapon- the Sudarshan Chakra in the following manner:

**"Sudarshana mahabaho ! Kotisurya samaprabha! /
Agyanda timirandhanam vishnor marga pradarschaya"**

Meaning : You (Sudarshan Chakra), resplendent with a crore Suns, quickly take birth on the earth and show the millions of people now steeped in ignorance, the way of the Vaishnava Dharma" by spreading the knowledge on the path of Bhakti.



Sri Nimbarkacharya, the avatar of the Sudarshan Chakra, was thus born of a great ascetic named Aruna Muni and Jayanti Devini at Vaiduryapatnam, (presently known as Moongipattinam) on the banks of the Godavari, in Andhra Pradesh in Southern India, in the eleventh century A.D and named Niyamananda. At the time of his birth as per the Hindu calendar on Yudhishtar year 6 on 15th of the month of Kartik in Mesha Rashi, five planets Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter and Saturn were at Ascendant. After they performed their son's sacred thread ceremony they sent him to Rishikul (School run by Rishi's) for learning the Vedas, Vedangas, Darshanas etc

Subsequent to the study he proceeded with family members to Nimbgram, near the Govardhan hillock, in the holy land of Vraja for doing penance. Here he obtained the "mantra upadesha" from Shri Devarishi Narada and the service of Lord Sarveshvar in the form of a Shaligram, which was once worshipped by the Sankadi Rishis.

When Niyamananda was in his teens, Brahma, the Creator, came to the Ashram of Aruna Muni in the disguise of a Sanyasi. The sun was about to set. The Muni was not in his residence. The Sanyasi asked the wife of the Muni for something to eat. As no food was available, the Muni's wife remained silent. As Sanyasi's do not take their meals after sunset, the Sanyasi was about to leave the Ashram when the Muni returned.

Niyamanandacharya said that he would soon provide him with food and till then the sun would not set. Soon he brought some fruits etc. and provided a glimpse of the sun even after actual sunset by placing his "Sudarshan Chakra" on the Neem Tree, as a part of Athithi Seva-Honour of guests, he being the Avatar of the Sudarshan Chakra. The Sanyasi, who was none other than Brahma, conferred on him the title of 'Nimbarka' (Nim-Neem tree; Arka-Surya or the sun).

Of the many of his literary works, the following are significant:

1. Vedanta Parijata Sourabh-A Bahshya On The Brahma Sutras
2. Vedanta Kamadhenu Dasha Shloki
3. Mantra Rahasya Shodashi
4. Prapanna Kalpavalli
5. Radha Ashtak
6. Prata Smaranadhi Stotra

Brindavan, Nandgram, Barsana, Govardhan and Neembgram are the chief Kshetras or holy lands of the followers of Nimbarkacharya. Parikrama of the 168 miles of Brij Bhumi is their foremost duty. To pay visits on different occasions to Sri Nimbarka's temple in Neembgram, two miles from Govardhan, is their Sampradayik duty.

The Dvaitadvaita Philosophy of Sri Nimbarkacharya

This is also known by the name Bhedabheda School of Philosophy or dualistic monism. This system was evolved by Sri Nimbarkacharya. He wrote a short commentary on the Brahma Sutras called Vedanta-Parijata-Saurabha, as well as Dasasloki. His commentary develops the theory of the transformation (Parinama) of Brahman. Nimbarka's view was largely influenced by the teachings of Bhaskara who

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flourished in the first half of the ninth century and who interpreted the Vedanta system from the viewpoint of Dvaitadvaita or dualistic non-dualism. This doctrine was not a new discovery of Bhaskara. It was upheld by the ancient teacher Audulomi to which Sri Vyasa himself refers in his Vedanta Sutras.

God, Soul and World - Identity in Difference

Nimbarka holds that the relation of God to the soul and the world is one of identity in difference. The soul and the world are different from God, because they are endowed with qualities different from those of God. At the same time, they are not different from God, because God is omnipresent and they depend entirely on Him. Nimbarka's philosophy admits Brahman as the Supreme Reality without a second. The world and the Jivas are only partial manifestations of His Power (Sakti).

Jiva and Brahman are self-conscious. Jiva is limited. Brahman is infinite. Brahman is independent Reality. Jiva and Prakriti are dependent realities. Jiva is the enjoyer (Bhokta). The world is the enjoyed (Bhogya). Brahman is the Supreme Controller (Niyanta). God, Jiva and the world are not absolutely distinct. If the Supreme Being is absolutely distinct from the individual soul and the world, it cannot be omnipresent. It will be as limited as the individual soul or the world. It cannot, then, be regarded as their Governor. Nimbarka says that both difference and non-difference are real. The soul and the world are different from Brahman, as they are endowed with natures and qualities different from those of Brahman. They are not different, as they cannot exist by themselves and as they depend absolutely on Brahman. Such a relation exists between the sun and its rays, the fire and its sparks. The souls and matter are distinct from God, but they are closely connected with Him-as waves with water, or coils of a rope with the rope itself. They are both distinct and non-distinct from Brahman.

The Supreme Being and Its Characteristics

In this school, Brahman is regarded as both the efficient and the material cause of the world. Brahman is both Nirguna and Saguna, as it is not exhausted in the creation but also transcends it.

The Four Forms of the Ultimate Reality

The Ultimate Reality exists in four forms. In its primary form, it is the unconditioned, immutable, Supreme Brahman. In Its second form, it is Isvara, the Lord of the Universe. In the third form, it is called Jiva or the individual soul. In Its fourth form, it is manifested as the universe of names and forms. The phenomenal universe is a part of Brahman. It has no existence separate from, and independent of Brahman. The relation between the world and Brahman is also one of Bhedabheda. The universe is not different from Brahman.

Krishna- the Supreme Being

The Supreme Being is absolutely free from all defects. He is full of all auspicious qualities. He has a divine body. He is full of beauty, love, sweetness and charm. Nimbarka identifies the Supreme Brahman with Krishna. He is endowed with all auspicious qualities. He is free from egoism, ignorance, passion and attachment. He has the four forms (Vyuhas), viz., Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. He also manifests Himself as the Avatars (incarnations). In Nimbarka, Krishna and Radha take the places of Narayana and Lakshmi. Radha is not simply the chief of the Gopis, but is the eternal Consort of Lord Krishna.

Relation between the Individual Soul and the Supreme Soul

The individual soul is a part of the Supreme Soul. It is also identical with, or the same as, the Supreme Soul. Just as a wave is both different from the ocean (being only a part of the ocean), and identical with it (both being water), so also is the individual soul both different from (being a part of the Supreme Soul), and identical with (both being of the nature of Chaitanya or Consciousness), the Supreme Soul. The relation between the individual soul or Jiva and the Supreme Soul or Brahman is one of formal difference and essential identity. There is no difference between Jiva and Brahman in kind. The difference is only in degree.

The Jiva is different from Brahman with reference to the phenomenal aspect or the body-idea. It is identical with, or the same as, Brahman with reference to the nominal aspect as the indivisible whole. This is what is called Bhedabheda. The mind is agitated by desires and cravings. It runs towards the objects along with the senses and becomes conscious of a distinctive individuality. The ego or the finite self beholds the relative world with its phenomena, and gets experiences. When the mind becomes calm and serene by eradication of desires, it ceases to function and all the Vrittis or waves subside. The phenomenal world vanishes and the finite self realizes the Infinite Self or Brahman.

The Jiva and Its Attributes

Souls are infinite in number and are atomic in size. The Jiva is minute (Anu). It is of the form of knowledge (Jnanasvarupa), though not in the sense of Sankara. The Jiva is knowledge and it is the possessor of knowledge also, just as the sun is light and the source of light also. The relation of the soul to its attribute is like that of the Dharmin (the qualified) to the Dharma (the attribute). It is one of difference and non-difference (Bhedabheda).

Though the Jiva is atomic in size, it experiences the pleasures and pains throughout the body owing to its omnipresent quality of knowledge. It is everlasting. It continues to exist in deep sleep and the final state of emancipation. In Pralaya or dissolution, the individual souls and the world merge in the Lord in subtle form. Births and deaths concern the body, but not the Self.

The individual soul is the agent of activity (Karta). It has no independent knowledge or activity. The individual souls and the world are not self-sufficient. They are guided by the Lord. They are all sustained and governed by God. Each soul is a ray of Brahman individualized. Ananda or bliss belongs to the individual soul in all its states.

Two Classes of Jivas

Jivas are of two classes: (i) Jivas who have knowledge of the all-pervading indwelling spirit and who have realized that the appearances are non-separate from Brahman. They are called liberated souls (Mukta).

They are free from ignorance.(ii) Jivas who only behold the appearances, but have no knowledge of the all-pervading indwelling spirit, the support of these names and forms. They are called bound souls (Baddha).

The World-A True Manifestation of Brahman

The world is not an illusion for Nimbarka, as it is a manifestation (Parinama) of what is contained subtly in God. It may, however, be said to be unreal only in the sense that the present state of its existence is not self-sufficient and it has no separate existence from Brahman. The world is identical with as well as different from Brahman, just as a wave or bubble is the same as, and at the same time different from, water.

There are three principal Tattvas or principles: (i) Aprakriti, which is not derived from the primordial Prakriti, which is the stuff of the divine body of the Lord (which is similar to the Suddha-Sattva of Ramanuja), and which is the basis of the Nitya-Vibhuti (eternal glory) of Isvara; (ii) Prakriti with its three Gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas; and (iii) Kala or time. These three Tattvas or principles are also eternal like the individual souls. According to Nimbarka, the Sakti of Brahman is the material cause of the world. The changes of Sakti do not affect the integrity of Brahman. The 'Body of Brahman' of Ramanuja is the 'Sakti' of Nimbarka.

True Devotion and Real Knowledge Lead to Release

Prapatti or complete surrender to God is the way to release. God showers His grace on His devotees who make complete self-surrender. The grace of God lifts up the devotees to have Brahma-Sakshatkara. The Lord generates devotion in them which results in God-realisation.

Bhakti involves knowledge of Brahman, of the nature of the Jiva, of the fruit of the Lord's grace or Mukti, and of the nature of the impediments to God-realisation such as the wrong identification of the soul with the body, the senses and the mind. Salvation is attained by real knowledge (Jnana) and true devotion (Bhakti). Real knowledge reveals the true nature of the all-pervading Brahman. True devotion leads to total self-surrender to the Lord. The individual soul retains its individuality with reference to divine enjoyment (Bhoga-samyatvam), but its will is subservient to that of Brahman. The individuality of the soul is not dissolved even in the state of Moksha or the final emancipation. Even in the state of release, the individual soul is different from, as well as identical with, Brahman. This is identity with difference, Bheda-abheda.