

## **Vedanta and its Modern Understanding:**

### **A Critical Study of the Concept of Anekānta Vedanta**

#### **Introduction:**

Taking Indian Philosophical schools as different branches of a tree, we find that they are extended from the same stem, namely the Veda. As springs come down from the mountain peaks, in the same way, the schools of Indian philosophy have been developed from their origin— the Vedic scriptures. There are four parts of the Vedas, namely Samhitā, Brāhman, Āraṇyaka and Upanishad. The philosophical school that developed directly on the first two parts is called Mīmāṃsā, while the school that is founded solely on Upanishad is known as Vedanta. The thought embedded in the Upanishad found philosophical tenet in the ‘Brahmasūtra’ of Vādarāyaṇa. Several commentaries are written on ‘Brahmasūtra’ by different scholars; in accordance with those commentaries, several sects are developed. In this way, Vedanta has left an impact not only in the philosophical literature of India, but a clear impression of Vedanta is witnessed in the ethos and culture of Indian societies.

Although Vedanta reigned supreme in ancient India, it is owing to the inability to make the subtle thoughts of Vedanta accessible to the common people; a large part of the society became disinterested in the Vedic culture. In this way, the rise of non-Vedantic thoughts was witnessed in medieval India. Taking rest in heterodox culture, the Vedantic tradition found reinforcement and ultimately got modest expression in the thoughts of Indian philosophers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There were many great poets and essayists, politicians and social workers, seers and others—

who nurtured and cultured the Vedantic thought in their ways. This modern understanding of Vedanta is the current research context.

There were many thinkers like Rammohan, Debendranath, Sri Ramakrishna, Bankimchandra, Rabindranath, Sri Aurobindo, Krishnachandra, Radhakrishnan and others in whose writings Vedanta got its expression in different ways. However, it is Kalidas Bhattacharya, in particular, in whose writings Vedanta received a unique formation. Taking Vedanta from his own viewpoint, Kalidas has explained all philosophical schools of Indian tradition as varied manifestations of the same Vedanta— in other words— ‘Anekānta of Vedanta’. Prof. Bhattacharya’s concept of ‘Anekānta Vedanta’ is the main area of this research work. How does Kalidas’s understanding of Vedanta differ from the classical viewpoint? How far is it different from the understanding of other modern philosophers? In what sense Vedanta can be claimed as ‘Anekānta’? Is it a mere re-iteration of the ‘Anekāntavāda’ of the Jain? To what extent is it innovative? Why is it markedly different from Ramakrishna’s ideal of ‘Jata mat tata path’ on one hand and the non-absolutism of Krishnachandra on the other? Is there any moral or social compulsion that led Kalidas Bhattacharya to reach this viewpoint? These are the questions addressed in this research work.

To find out answer to those queries, the entire research work has been divided into four chapters. Those chapters run as follows:

Chapter I: Introducing Vedanta.

Chapter II: Impact of Vedanta on Modern Indian thinkers.

Chapter III: Kalidas Bhattacharya and the Concept of Anekānta Vedanta.

Chapter IV: Exploring the background of ‘Anekānta Vedanta’.

## **First Chapter: Introducing Vedanta**

Before understanding how much Vedanta has been reflected in contemporary philosophy and how far Professor Bhattacharya's idea of 'Anekānta Vedanta' fits with the traditional idea of Vedanta, it is necessary to have an understanding of what exactly Vedanta traditionally means. The first chapter of this research paper is dedicated to the analysis of traditional schools of Vedanta. Although 'Brahmasūtra' of Vādarāyaṇa is the common philosophical source, different schools originated based on commentaries written on that text. In this chapter, the conventional commentaries of Vedanta, which have been written on 'Brahmasūtra', are discussed. From this compulsion, the literal and traditional senses of expression 'Vedanta' are elaborated. After clarifying the concept of Vedanta in this chapter, the researcher has endeavoured to reveal the differences among the schools of Vedanta that are developed on various commentaries written on 'Brahmasūtra'. In the very next step, an attempt has been made to go through the accounts founded and propagated by different commentators, namely by Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, Madhva, Vallabha, Bhāṣkara and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa.

The first and the most impressive variant of Vedanta is known as Advaita Vedanta. Although this Advaita theory was nurtured by Gaudapāda, Gavindapāda, Vartiprapaṇca and many others, this form of Vedanta is historically associated with the name of Śaṅkarācārya. In his commentary on 'Brahmasūtra', Śaṅkara declares the tenets of Advaita theory in a single statement: Brahman is the Ultimate truth, the world appearance is illusory, and what we call living being is not apart from Brahman.

According to Advaitavāda, Brahman embodies Truth or Existence, Knowledge, and Infinite Bliss. Only after having first-hand knowledge of saguṇa Brahman, one can upgrade himself to have a better understanding to reach in understanding of Avaṁmānasagocara and Saccidānanda Brahman. This realisation tempted Advaitīns to speak of Brahman as both determinate and indeterminate (saguṇa and nirguṇa).

The world appearance we experienced is nothing but the disguised presentation of Brahman. The multitude of things we experience in the world is nothing but miss presentation or false appearance of one and only reality– Brahman. What we think the world is nothing but the super-imposition of the magical power of Brahman, called māyā. It is māyā which covers the true nature of Brahman and reflects the world appearance on it. It is neither real like Brahman nor unreal like Sky Lotus.

According to Śaṅkara, jiva or individual self is identical with Brahman. However, owing to its ignorance of the individual self, it felt to realize its divinity. Advaitīns have developed various doctrines like, Avacchedavāda, Prativimbavāda, and Āvāsvāda etc. to reconcile the monistic account of Brahman with the pluralistic account of the jiva.

According to Advaitīns, an aspirant of liberation (mokṣakāmī) attains this self-realization (Brahmansvaruptā) by understanding the meaning of Mahāvākyas through listening, meditation and contemplation (śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana). What we call attainment of liberation (mokṣa) is nothing but one's awakening that he himself is undifferentiated with Brahman. So, it can be said that salvation or liberation is not a new achievement for the living being; rather, it is the awareness about the

divinity he already possesses (prāpteri prāpti). In another word, it is the realisation of one's own nature.

Ramanuja's 'Sribhāṣya' is one of the prominent commentaries on 'Brahmansūtra'. Unlike Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja admits the reality world and empirical self apart from Brahman. Although Brahman, according to him, is the ultimate reality, it is qualified with Cit (jiva) and Acit (jagata). Hence, it is not devoid of qualifier (viśeṣaṇa). Brahman is endowed with innumerable qualities and, hence, saguṇa in nature. However, there is no bad quality in him, and that's why Brahman is described in the scriptures as nirguṇa. Despite their distinction between Brahman, jiva and jagata, an inseparable relationship (apṛthaksiddhi) exists between them.

Śaṅkara observed māyā as a magical power, illusory in nature, but to Rāmānuja, māyā is a real power of Brahman that gives rise to real creation. In Śaṅkara primacy was given to knowledge for attaining liberation, whereas in Rāmānuja, it is bhakti or devotion that plays the role of the main key to proceed along the way of liberation.

In Madhva's commentary of 'Brahmasūtra', we witnessed the rise of one type of dualism. According to Madhva, Vishnu (Brahman) is the Supreme Lord; there is nothing equal to Him or better than Him. Jiva and Brahman are two separate substances. Worship and worshiper relation exists between Brahman and jiva.

While Śaṅkara promotes absolute monism, Madhva advocates pluralistic theism, emphasizing the reality of five kinds of eternal and inherent differences. These differences include distinctions between God and individual souls, God and matter, soul and matter, one soul and another, and one material thing and another. The fivefold difference is not merely an illusion, as māyā represents the will of God.

According to the Madhva, the world is real and eternal but inert. Lord Vishnu is the ruler of this world. This world is eternal and true because it is created by māyā. By māyā, Madhva means the will of the Supreme Lord. It is by the will of the Supreme Lord that the creation, status and destruction of this world phenomenon are taking place. That is, duality is never false.

The individual soul, known as jiva, assumes roles as the knower, enjoyer, and doer. Although atomic in size, it can experience sensations throughout its entire being, akin to how a lamp illuminates a room. The individual soul's eternity is marked by its birth and death, attributed to its connection with and separation from the body.

Madhva says that when a devotee surrenders and seeks refuge in God, divine grace bestows the saving knowledge of differentiation, leading to liberation. Devotion, knowledge, and fulfilment of duties serve as pathways to liberation.

Vallabha's 'Aṇubhāṣya' is one of the prominent commentaries written on 'Brahmansūtra'. He founded Śuddhādvaitavāda on the 'Brahmasūtra'. According to Vallabha, Brahman is singular, formed, omnipotent, omniscient, the cause of all, and embodies being, consciousness, and bliss. Lord Krishna is the Brahman. The various qualities and powers located in the living beings, world and Brahman are all one and identical with Brahman. Śaṅkara denied the world and other attributes and powers of Brahman, but to Vallabha, they were all true. So, He is Śuddhādvaita in nature.

According to Vallabha, like Brahman, the world is eternal, true, and the same as Brahman. The world is a part of Brahman. Brahman is the cause, and the world is its function. This world originates from the Truth (Sat) part of Brahman. However, the world is real like Brahman but not conscious (Cit) and joyful (Ananda svarupa) in nature. Brahman has become the world for his līlā. So, the world is Brahman. Līlā

alone is not possible, so He created the living being and the world for His līlā. So, just as Brahman, living beings and the world are also true and eternal.

‘Māyā’ or ‘Avidyā’ is the power of Brahman. With the help of this power, he creates various worlds. So, this world created by māyā can never be false. However, false knowledge can arise due to māyā in the living being. But it never produces a false object. Because māyā or avidyā only beguiles the intellect of the living being by its illusory power, and the covering power of māyā only covers the true nature of the object.

Vallabha says that jivas are a part of Brahman. They are eternal and free from the attributes of prakṛti. They embody conscious souls, inherently self-luminous, exerting control over their bodies, sense organs, life, and internal faculties. Their existence is apprehended through self-awareness, devoid of intrinsic natural qualities. There exist three types of souls: pure, worldly, and liberated.

According to Vallabha, liberation or mukti entails attaining the ‘Gopi-bhāva’, embodying the state and nature of a Gopi, and serving the Supreme Being, Sri Krishna, as both lord and the husband in Vrindavana, the transcendental realm of Brahman.

In Bhāskara’s commentary of Brahmasūtra we witnessed the rise of one type of Bhedābheda-vāda. According to Bhāskara, Brahman is the Supreme reality. Two forms are present in this Brahman— one is the Causal form (kāraṇarūpa) and the other is the functional form (kāryarūpa). Brahman is formless as the cause and Brahman is jiva and world as action. Even though Brahman has two forms, his causal form is true and natural. His function is nominal (Aupādhika). Although there is no existence other than Supreme Brahman in the form of action Brahman, but as a causal form,

Brahman exists beyond the world. Jiva, in action, is a part of Brahman, so there is an identity-in-difference relation between jiva and Brahman.

Just as there is a relationship of identity and difference between Śakti and Śaktimāna, similarly, there is a relationship of identity and difference between Brahman and the living being and world.

According to Bhāskar, the living being is not free from the beginning. Salvation is a matter of attainment. Liberation or mokṣa is attained by sādhanā. The freed jiva attains the Brahmaness, attains the power of omniscience of Brahman.

Nimberka's 'Vedanta Pārijāta Saurabha' is one of the prominent commentaries written on 'Brahmansūtra'. Although Nimbārka's doctrine was similar to that of Bhāskarācārya, he interpreted the 'Brahmasūtra' from a completely different perspective. According to Nimbārka, Brahman is the Ultimate, Supreme Being (Puruṣottama), endowed with boundless, incomprehensible natural essences, qualities, and abilities. There is no one superior or equal to Brahman. Jiva and the world are the result of Brahman. The World is a līlā of Supreme Brahman. Brahman created the living beings by the Cit Śakti inherent in Him and the world by the Acit Śakti.

Brahman and the world are identical. Again, Brahman is different from the world because it has an existence beyond the world. Therefore, the world is different from Brahman in function, but Brahman as cause is identical with the world. Therefore, the relation of the world to Brahman is the relation of difference and non-difference.

Jiva is a part of Brahman and Brahman is a part holder. There is both difference and non-difference between jiva and Brahman. Just as the sea and waves of the sea are different yet the same, the sun and the sun's rays are different and the

same, so the enjoyer jiva is different from Brahman and the same. The Individual soul, as the worshipper, undergoes the consequences of its actions, whereas Brahman, as the worshipped, remains unaffected by such experiences.

Nimbārka says that even if the living being attains liberation through sādhanā, the living being remains in the form of a living being. Jiva is always eternal. Even in the free state, the jiva is Anuparimāṇa. The difference between a bound jiva and a free jiva is that the jiva cannot realize the Brahmarupatā of itself and the world in a bound state. He spoke of devotion as a means of attaining liberation. Bhakti is the main means of liberation.

Baladeva's 'Gavindabhāṣya' is one of the prominent commentaries written on 'Brahmansūtra'. His doctrine is known as Acintya-Bhedābheda-vāda. According to Acintya-Bhedābheda-vādīns, Brahman is the only Supreme Being. Lord Krishna is the Supreme Brahman. Brahman embodies Truth or Existence, Knowledge, and Infinite Bliss. He has infinite and inconceivable power. There is none more powerful than him or equal to him. Among these eternal and unthinkable powers of Brahman, three powers are the main ones. They are— Cit Śakti, Jiva Śakti and Māyā Śakti. Cit Śakti is the natural power (svarupakti) of Supreme Brahman. With the help of this Cit Śakti, Supreme Brahman performs his various intimate activities.

Jiva Śakti is the Tatstha Śakti of Supreme Brahman. Jivas are part of this Jiva Śakti of Brahman. These living beings are of two types— eternally free and eternally illusory.

Māyā Śakti, on the other hand, is Jadarupā Śakti (material energy). This Śakti cannot touch Brahman. Because Brahman is the form of knowledge, and māyā is the form of ignorance. This Śakti always resides outside of Brahman; hence, it is also known as Varhīgā Śakti.

The Gaudiya Vaishnavācāryas say that the relation of the living being and the world to Brahman is the relation of Acintya-Bhedābheda-vāda. For example—apparently, the difference between fire and its heat and light is magnified to our eyes, but actually, fire has the same identity as heat and light. Heat cannot be separated from fire, and light from its source. On the other hand, the separate existence of heat and light is also accepted from fire. Such is the relationship between the phenomenon-creating power and the transcendental Lord Krishna.

To Acintya-Bhedābheda-vādīns, emancipation means being free from the bonds of māyā. It is under the influence of māyā that the living being is bound by body and perceives a form different from its own form. When this māyā is removed, the living being re-establishes itself or attains liberation. Devotion is the main means of attaining salvation. It is through devotion that the devotee can attain God.

## **Second Chapter: Impact of Vedanta on Modern Indian thought**

The second chapter of this work aims to establish the impact that classical Vedanta left on contemporary philosophical thought in India. It is undoubtedly true that classical Vedanta has left an indelible impression on contemporary Indian thought. Particularly, the philosophical thoughts developed in India during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been greatly influenced by Vedanta. To establish this claim, the researcher has gone through an analysis of the writings of some contemporary Indian philosophers.

In the writings of the thinkers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, an urge is seen to return to the root of Indian philosophical thought, i.e. to the Upanishadic tradition of ancient India. In most of the Indian thinkers who appeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, we observed a tendency to follow either Advaita or Viśiṣṭādvaita or some other sect of Vedanta. Although in their writings we do not find the classical

convention of defending the original text with sufficient elaboration, however in developing their poetical, political or social-literary works, they have maintained the Vedantic traditions of ancient India in some way or other. In this chapter, an attempt is made to go through the philosophical world views of some of those thinkers of modern India, particularly the metaphysical views of Rammohan, Debendranath, Bankimchandra, Sri Ramakrishna, Rabindranath, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Krishnachandra and Radhakrishnan.

After giving brief accounts of the philosophical thought developed in the writings of the contemporary philosophers mentioned above the researcher proceeded to make a comparative study among those views. It is seen that the thinkers mentioned above are not follower of the same sect of Vedanta. In Rammohan, primacy is given mainly to jñāna or knowledge. However, he was not a pious person, rather a social activist who wanted to remove the superstitions that were embedded with the observation of Vedantic as well as Hindu culture. Even being a hard-core follower of Śāṅkara Vedanta, Rammohan didn't deny the reality of this world, nor consider it as an illusory reflection of Brahman.

Debendranath Tagore, on the contrary, was deadly against the interpretation of Upanishads put forward by Śāṅkara. Like Rammohan, he belongs to Brahmasamāja, but instead of jñāna (knowledge), he emphasized on bhakti and anubhuti (devotion and feeling) in his writings. At the very outset, he seems to be a follower of Madhva. However, in his later writings a tendency is seen to go beyond the binary of Svatantra and Paratantra, which fits better with the philosophy of Rāmānuja.

Advocation of almost all variants of Vedanta is noticed in Sri Ramakrishna's teaching and perching. Hence, it is really puzzling to conclude about the position he

was in favour of. But if we do justice to Pramahan̄sa's thought, it can aptly be said that his philosophical position is the synthesis of all Vedantas.

Unlike the former two, Bankimchandra was a hard-core follower of Hinduism. He was clearly an advocate of qualified monism, who observed the relation between worshipped and worshiper as *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vāstaly*, and *madhura*. He believed in the reality of Krishna, who is endowed with all sorts of good qualities. A harmonious culture of knowledge, devotion and action is prescribed by him in his 'Dharmatattva'. However, preponderance to *niṣkāma* karma, i.e. renunciation in action is the hallmark of Bankim's Vedanta.

From Tagore's poetic writings, it is really difficult to judge in which school he belongs. It is true that he believes in the non-duality of everything. In man's universe, he has described how, through the process of evolution, everything has come out from one ultimate reality. But unlike Śaṅkara, he admits this world and the worldly life as real and non-illusory. The type of liberation he aspires is not transcendent, but a matter of having the feeling of oneness of all in this earthly life that leads a person to attain '*Ānanda*', i.e. the feeling of joy, love and bliss together. So, the form of Vedanta he is in favour of would be described as one type of 'Concrete Monism' or 'Mukta Advaitavāda'.

Vivekananda, unlike the formers, has lived an ascetic life. It is vehemently declared by Swamiji himself that he is a follower of Advaita Vedanta. But many points of departure from Śaṅkara's Vedanta are also noticed in his writings. His life was an experiment to put Vedanta into practice. That's why the type of Vedanta he follows is often called neo-Vedanta or practical Vedanta.

Sri Aurobindo was exceptional from his predecessors to a great extent. In his integrated monism, unification between matter and consciousness is proposed. It is in matter, he believes, the pure consciousness is expressed in a synchronized form. Hence, there can be evolution and liberation in the case of matter also. The type of Advaita theory he attempted to defend is popularly known as Puraṇadvaitavāda or Perfect Monism. Tagore was in favour of giving emphasis to a particular state of mind, only knowledge or feeling or action. In Vivekananda, we observed an alternation of those mental states. In addition to Jñāna, Bhakti and Karma yoga, Swamiji spoke of Raja yoga too. While in Sri Aurobindo, a way of Integral yoga is prescribed where Jñāna, Bhakti, and Karma all ways are incorporated together.

To Krishnachandra Bhattacharya, Ultimate reality is beyond understanding or intellectualisation. At this point, his claim resembles with the view of Śaṅkara. However, he is not in favour of approaching that reality through any positive means, like, jñāna, bhakti, karma etc. In his opinion, it is only through negation or denial that one can reach to that ultimate. The researcher finds some sort of similarity with Śaṅkara in this approach also. In Śaṅkaras non-dualism, the entire worldview is fabricated on the basis of adhyāropa or illusory ascription. As snakeness is ascribed on a rope, in the same way, the world appearance is wrongly fabricated on Brahman. Only when one proceeds through the path of apavāda, i.e. denial or negation of the predicate, he can reach to the reality.

Radhakrishnan's understanding is an admixture of Advaita Vedanta of Śaṅkara and the Absolute idealism of the West. Like Śaṅkara, he admits consciousness as one and supreme reality is beyond attributes and forms. However, it is expressed in different ways in the form of animate and inanimate things. Like Brahman of Śaṅkara, Absolute to Radhakrishnan is not a distant, unknowable entity,

rather, it is pure consciousness that permeates everything. Neither by sense nor by intellect we can have awareness about that ultimate reality; it is only by intuitive feelings for a type of mystical experience that one can be aware about this all-pervading consciousness. One would be able to achieve his goal of life only by transcending the illusion of dualism.

### **Third Chapter: Kalidas Bhattacharya and the Concept of Anekānta Vedanta**

Professor Kalidas Bhattacharya is one of the most original philosophers to emerge in India in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many great philosophers appeared at that time, in whose writings Vedanta received various manifestations. However, in the writings of contemporary Indian thinkers, we find a re-appearance of traditional Vedantic schools in different ways. Prof. Kalidas Bhattacharya is such a philosopher of the academic tradition, in whose writings; we witness a modern and unique interpretation of Vedanta that has not been seen in any of his predecessors. The philosophical approach witnessed in his writings makes him different from all other thinkers of the time. He points out Vedanta can be defined in such a way that the multifaceted Indian thoughts can be mingled into one. By providing a new definition of Vedanta, he has not only narrated the various forms of Vedanta in one unit but also explained almost all Indian sects, regardless to orthodox or heterodox, as variations of the same of Vedantic culture. In this chapter, an attempt is made to go through the philosophical approach of Kalidas Bhattacharya, particularly the modern interpretation he introduced in the field of Vedanta– in other words, his concept of '*Anekānta Vedanta*'.

Traditionally, by Vedanta, we understand the philosophical system or systems which are founded on the last part of the Vedas, i.e. the Upanishads. But this way of

understanding Vedanta, which is commonly approved, is not endorsed by Kalidas; nor does he observe Vedanta as the extract of Prasthān trays— namely Śruti Smṛiti and Nyāya. In his view, Vedanta has two foundations (lakṣana)— one is ‘tolerance to other views’ (‘paramata sahiṣṇutā’) and the other is ‘indifference’ (‘udārata’). He feels that if any philosophy has influenced Indian culture, tradition and lifestyle, it is none other than Vedanta. According to Kalidas, the trust in one absolute and the tendency to judge the multitude of things in terms of that one, have given rise to the idea of ‘tolerance’ and ‘indifference’.

If we look back to the philosophical tradition of India, we see that there are conflicts, disputes, adversaries, and refutations on epistemological, metaphysical and moral issues. Not only among the schools of different traditions, minute points of departures are noticed, even within the womb of a particular system. If we focus our attention on the nine popular schools, it is brought to our notice that while some of them are orthodox, some are heterodox, some advocate theism and some other atheism; even the theists differ from one another in many issues: whether God is only omniscient or omnipresent too, whether He is the creator of the world or not; even if God is the creator, does He play the role of efficient cause only or both material and efficient etc. Taking all these differences into account, one may object, do we have any right to claim that all schools of Indian philosophy, without having any exception, are manifestations of Vedanta?

Prof. Bhattacharya acknowledges that there are many philosophical theories and ideas. But in his opinion, amidst them, only those views were retained which maintained compatibility with the Vedantic outlook— particularly the belief in oneness, the ideal of tolerance and indifference. Wherever deviated from this outlook, they failed to make the mark in Indian culture and society. After explaining the

contribution of other philosophical schools in this manner, Kalidas comes to the conclusion that whatever philosophical schools appeared and survived in Indian tradition that can be viewed as a manifestation or duplication of Vedanta.

#### **Fourth Chapter: Exploring the background of ‘Anekānta Vedanta’**

Every exceptional or innovative thought has a background of its origination; it crops out in the mind of a thinker in a typical situation. The same holds true in the origination of Prof. Bhattacharya’s modern understanding of Vedanta. The alternative Vedanta he tends to defend also has its roots, which branched out and took the form of a banyan tree through the long journey of philosophical understanding. Although it was western thought, to a great extent, which led him to reconcile the conflicting epistemological and metaphysical claims to reach his philosophy of alternation, there are contributions of classical Indian schools in giving birth to his noble view.

If we notice his family tradition, particularly the academic environment in which he was developed, it becomes clear that there was an urge for alternation from the very beginning. If we go through the philosophical writings of his father, Krishnachandra, we notice that there was a search for the nature of the Absolute, which ended in one type of non-absolutism. Behind cognitive relativity, there is a tendency to think of an Absolute entity, which is unchanging or eternal. This is the approach which the religious thinkers often advocate. But Krishnachandra was not in favour of this type of absolutism, rather, on the background of the plurality of knowledge, Krishnachandra thought of multiplicity of reality– a plurality of the Absolute. In a sense, it amounts to a denial of the absolute. In his opinion, corresponding to the alternation of cognition, there is alternation in the realm of reality. This philosophy of alternation has greatly influenced the thoughts and writings

of his son Kalidas. In his research work, he has nurtured and nourished this standpoint and that approach received maturation in his idea of ‘Anekānta Vedanta’.

## **Conclusion**

After providing exposition and explanation of Prof. Kalidas Bhattacharya’s concept of ‘Anekānta Vedanta’, it is necessary to enquire justification in its favour. It is also necessary to show that the view Prof. Bhattacharya endeavoured to defend is neither a baseless imagination nor is it coined from any other philosophical thought. In conclusion, the researcher has tried to establish the plausibility and originality of the thought by nullifying the claims like– it is an application of Jain ‘Anekāntavāda’ in the domain of Vedanta or a slide modification of the view of religious pluralism of Sri Sri Ramakrishna. Finally, it is also shown that though his father’s philosophy of alternation cast a spell on his mind, the credit for applying this method of alternation in the field of Vedanta goes absolutely in favour of Kalidas. Not only that, although like Krishnachandra, Kalidas also advocates one type of disjunction of the alternative views, the disjunction he opts for is a type of inclusive one, whereas the disjunction Krishnachandra intended to defend is an exclusive one.

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