

# Shankaracharya's Concept of Brahman (ब्रह्म)

DR. RANJANA SHARMA

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

DURGA MAHAVIDYALAYA

# Shankaracharya

- Adi Shankaracharya (8th century) was a great philosopher and theologian.
- He established Advaita Vedanta (non-dualism).
- Traveled across India to spread Vedic knowledge.
- Founded four mathas (monastic centers).
- Emphasized knowledge (jnana) as the path to liberation.

# Concept of Brahman

- Brahman (ब्रह्म) is the ultimate, unchanging reality.
- It is eternal, infinite, and beyond the material world.
- The source and essence of everything in the universe.
- Cannot be fully grasped by senses or mind.
- Realization of Brahman leads to moksha (liberation).

# Saguna Brahman (सगुण ब्रह्म)

- Saguna Brahman: Brahman with attributes (qualities).
- Tatastha Lakshan: Defined by relation to creation and the world.
- Seen as Ishvara (God with form and qualities).
- Vyawaharik Drishti: Practical way to understand Brahman.
- Worshipped through devotion (bhakti) and rituals.

# Nirguna Brahman (निर्गुण ब्रह्म)

- Nirguna Brahman: Brahman without attributes (beyond qualities).
- Swaroop Lakshan: Defined by its own essence.
- Described as formless, infinite, pure consciousness.
- Parmarthik Drishti: Ultimate way to know Brahman.
- Realization requires deep meditation and self-inquiry.

# Satyam, Gyanam, Anantam Brahman (सत्यम्, ज्ञानम्, अनंतम् ब्रह्म)

- Satyam (Truth): Brahman is absolute truth, unchanging.
- Gyanam (Knowledge): Pure consciousness, knower of all.
- Anantam (Infinite): Boundless, beyond space and time.
- This triad is used in scriptures to explain Brahman.
- Represents the eternal nature of ultimate reality.

# Brahman is beyond Duality

- Brahman transcends all dualities (joy–sorrow, life–death).
- It is non-dual (Advaita) – only one reality exists.
- All opposites are reconciled in Brahman.
- Duality exists only in ignorance (maya).
- True knowledge removes illusion of separateness.

# Best narration of Brahman is 'Neti-Neti' (नेति-नेति)

- Neti-Neti means 'not this, not this'.
- Used to describe Brahman by negating all worldly attributes.
- It removes false identifications and limitations.
- Points towards Brahman beyond words and concepts.
- Encourages seekers to go beyond sensory understanding.



# Realization of Brahman is Salvation (मोक्ष)

- Moksha: Liberation from cycle of birth and death (samsara).
- Realization of unity between Atman (self) and Brahman.
- Removes ignorance (avidya) and illusion (maya).
- Brings eternal peace, bliss, and freedom.
- Considered the highest goal of human life in Vedanta.



Thank You