

The Nimbārka School of Vedānta and the Indian Classical Dance: The Philosophical Relevance through Rasa Theory

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Abstract : This paper illustrates a relationship between the Dvaitādvaita (dualistic non-dualistic) doctrine of Nimbārka school of Vedānta and philosophy of Indian classical dance, through the Rasa theory. There would be a separate focus on the philosophies of both the disciplines and then analyzing Rasa theory as a connexion between them. The paper presents ideas regarding the similarity between the Brahman and the dancer, manifestation of enacting character and the Jīva (soul), the existence of the phenomenal world and the imaginary world classification of rasa on the basis of three modes of nature, and the feelings and expressions depicting the Dvaita and Advaita. The reason behind choosing such a topic is an intention to explore the relativity of the Vedantic philosophy of this school in real manner. It is really important to study the practical implications and relevance of the doctrine with other disciplines for perceiving it cogently. In our daily lives, we use various forms of facial expressions and bodily gestures in order to communicate, along with the oral and written means of communication. What if, when gestures and expressions mingle with the music beats, in order to present an idea? Indian Classical dance is highly rich in expressing the emotions using extraordinary expressions, unconventional bodily gestures and mesmerizing music beats. Ancient scriptures like Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata Muni and Abhinava Bhārati by Abhinavaguptā recount aesthetics in a well-defined and structured way of acting and dancing and also reveal the grammar of rasa theory. Indian Classical dance is not only for entertainment but it is deeply in contact with divinity. During the period of Bhakti movement in India, this art form was used as a means to narrate the vignettes from epics like Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata and Purānas. Even in present era, this art has a deep rooted philosophy within.

Keywords : Advaita, Brahman, Dvaita, Jiva, Nimbarka, Rasa, Vedanta

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