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# The VOICE of ŚAṆKĀRA

*śaṅkara-bhāṣaṭī*

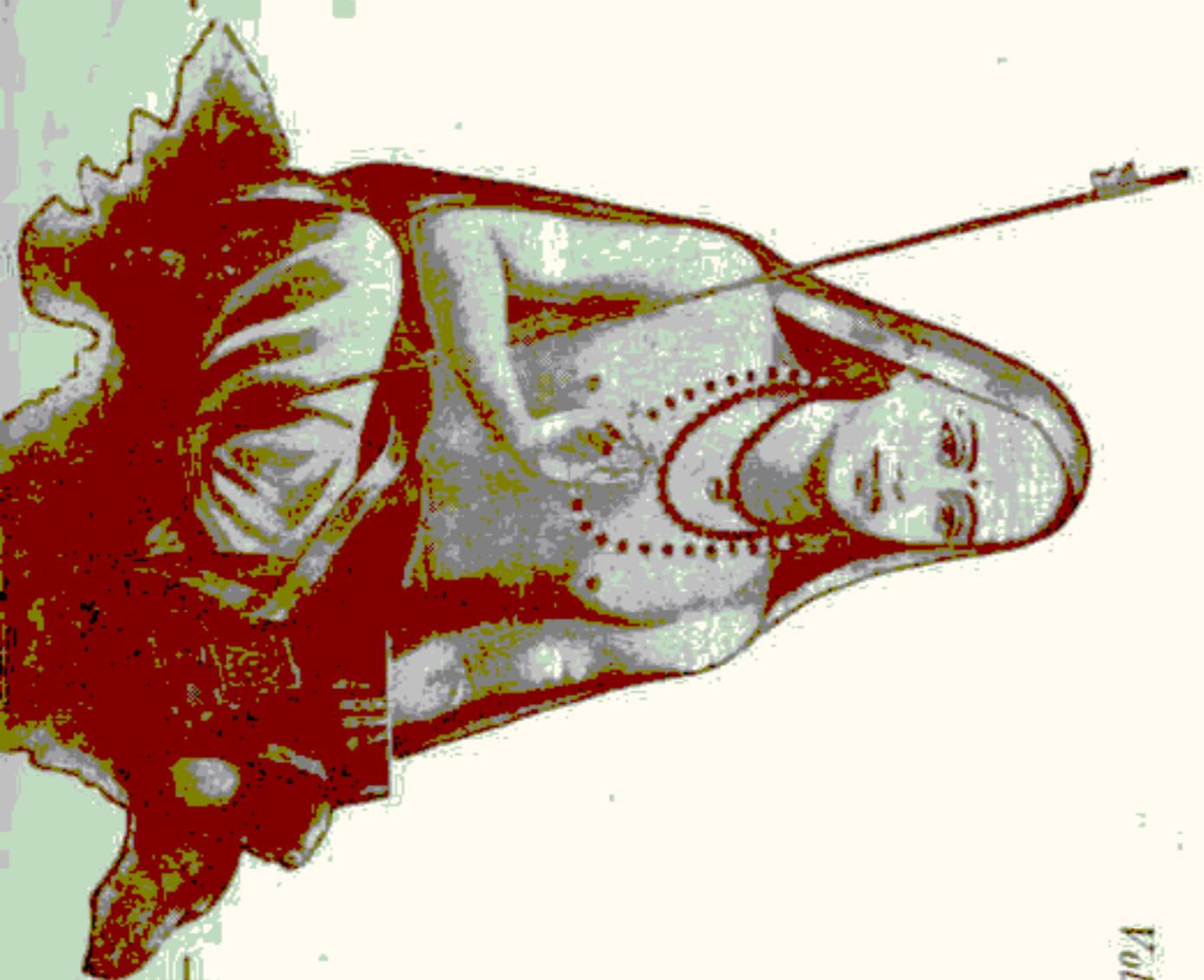
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BHINI

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Number TWO



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1986

esā śaṅkara-bhāratī vijagate  
nirvāṇa-sandāhinī

victorious is the voice of śaṅkara.  
leading, as it does, to liberation

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**ŚĀṆKARA**

śaṅkara-bhāratī

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*V. R. Kalyanasundara Sastri*

*Editor*  
*N. C. Krishnan*

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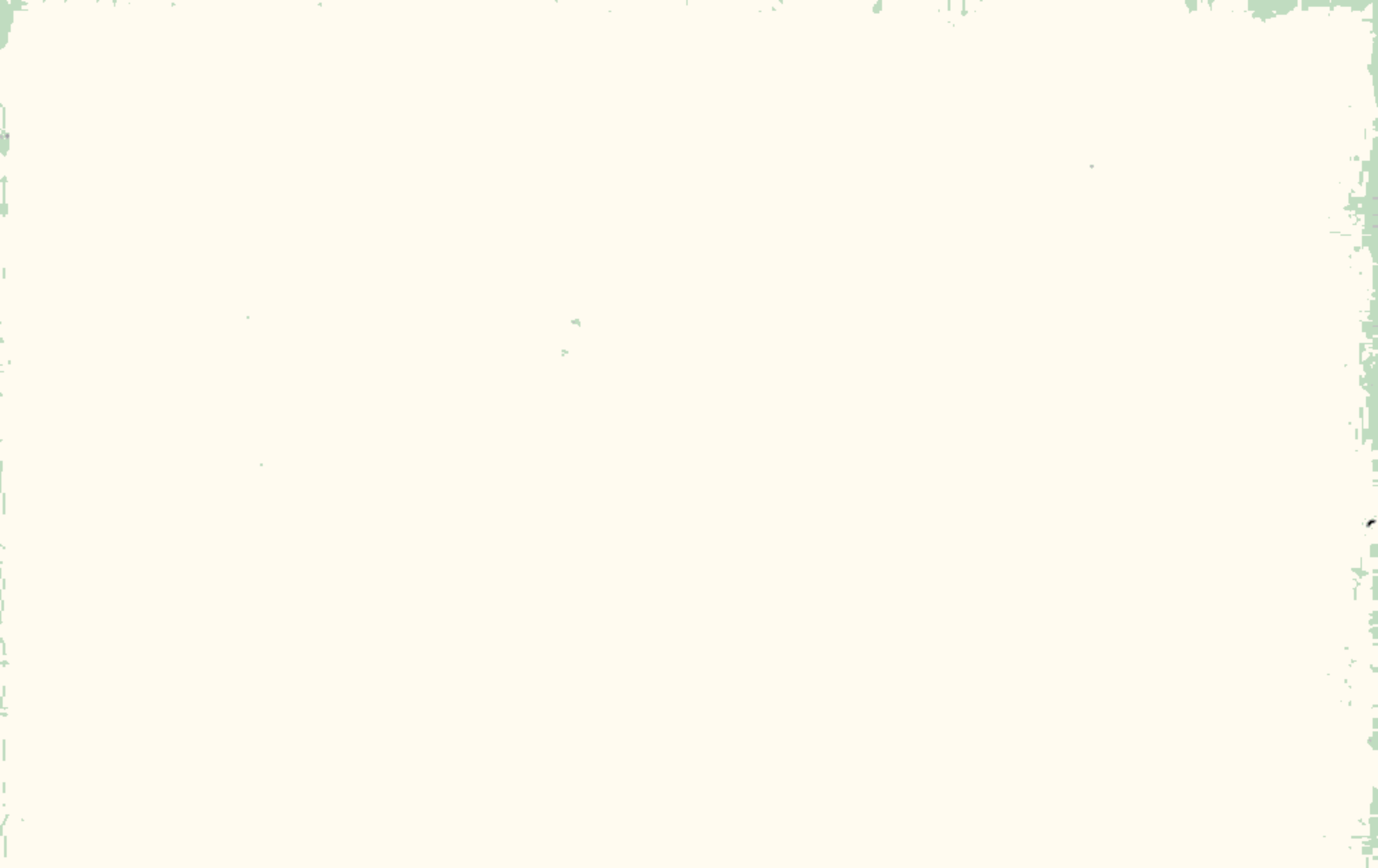
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**SANATHANA DHARMA GURUKULAM LIMITED**



## HOMAGE TO ŚAṆKARA

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[ 113 ]

कृपासागरायाशुकाव्यप्रदाय  
प्रणम्राखिलाभीष्टसन्दायकाय ।  
यतीन्द्रैरुपास्याङ्घ्रिपाथोरुहाय  
प्रबोधप्रदात्रे नमः शङ्कराय ॥

*krpāsāgarāyāśukāvyaṣṭadāya*  
*praṇamrākhilābhīṣṭasandāyakāya*  
*yatīndrair-upāsyāṅghripāthoruhāya*  
*prabodhapradātre namaḥ śaṅkarāya.*

I bow to Śrī Śaṅkara, the ocean of compassion, one who composes poems quickly, who fulfils all the desires of the people who bow to him, whose pair of lotus-like feet is adored by great ascetics and who yields the supreme knowledge.

[ 114 ]

चिदानन्दरूपाय चिन्मुन्द्रिकोद्य-  
 त्करायेशपर्यायरूपाय तुभ्यम् ।  
 मुदा गीयमानाय वेदोत्तमाङ्गैः  
 श्रितानन्ददात्रे नमः शङ्कराय ॥

*cidānandarūpāya cinmudrikodyat  
 karāyeśaparyāyarūpāya tubhyam  
 mudā gīyamānāya vedottamāṅgaiḥ  
 śritānandadātre namaḥ śaṅkarāya.*

I bow to You, Śrī Śaṅkara! You are the embodiment of knowledge and bliss. Your palm is adorned with *cinmudrā*. You are an *avatāra* of Lord Śiva. The Upaniṣads sing happily in praise of You. You yield bliss to those who resort to You.

Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānandaśivābhinava Nṛsiṃhabhārati  
 in *Śrī Śaṅkarācāryabhujāṅgaḥpratyāstotra*

## ON THE NATURE OF SUBLATION\*

---

*S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri*

The concept of sublation figures largely in Advaita epistemology and metaphysics. Its implications, however, are not always clear. Truth sublates error; the noumenal sublates the phenomenal; knowledge sublates nescience. The world must be constituted of nescience, it is argued, since knowledge is said to sublimate the world and all other bonds; and only of nescience and its products is sublation by knowledge intelligible.

The *prima facie* meaning of sublation in all such cases is destruction. Knowledge, we say, destroys ignorance; and since ignorance and nescience are largely used interchangeably, it is the destruction of nescience that is understood by its sublation. Even on this view, nescience has necessarily to be treated as positive; for it is common sense that you can destroy what is, not what is not. Unfortunately for the claims of common sense, the Indian Logician admits a variety of non-existence prior to the production of an effect and

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\*Courtesy: *Collected Papers of Professor S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri*, University of Madras, Madras, 1961, pp. 191 - 196.

destructible by that production, the *prāgabhāva* of the effect; and ignorance as the anterior non-existence of knowledge may be destroyed by knowledge. That nescience is positive and not to be confused with the *prāgabhāva* of knowledge, the Advaitin labours hard to establish; with his success we are not concerned for the moment; suffice it to note that nescience is a positive entity which holds undisputed sway until the rise of its adversary, knowledge. In the case of this *bhāvapadārtha*, it is legitimate for us to ask what happens to it on destruction. If we were treating of ignorance as absence of knowledge, our question might be meaningless; it is bad enough to ask what happens to the non-existent; it would be worse still to raise such a question about its destruction. But when nescience is destroyed, does it become non-existent? Perhaps so, but what does the statement mean? When wood is destroyed, it does not merely cease to be; it becomes ashes. A living person when destroyed becomes a decaying corpse. Nothing existent merely ceases to exist; it ceases to exist in that form under those conditions. Not even physical darkness is barely destroyed by light; it shifts from hemisphere to hemisphere or room to room; it expands or contracts; it never merely ceases to be. One of the arguments for the positive character of physical darkness (*tamas*) is that if it were negative and destroyed by light, there would be no explanation of the sudden re-obscuration by darkness when the light is withdrawn. The same argument will show that properly speaking there is no destruction at all of *tamas*. And what applies to *tamas* may apply equally to its analogue, *avidyā*. The sublation of nescience must consist not in a wiping out, but in a transformation.

Let us look a little closer at the sublation of delusions and dreams. The rope-cognition sublates the snake-cognition. In both stages we have cognition; the content of the earlier is a partially apprehended presentation as something straight or coiled; this partial content instead of sticking to the rope-whole where it belongs, marches off to play independent pranks, joins hands with remembered aspects of a snake and masquerades as a snake. When the rope is cognised as really such, what happens is that the partially similar content is duly brought back under control, made to consort with its proper associates, and transformed into the rope-content. While the part is brought back under control, the supplementation is transformed from the erroneous to the truthful. And what is truthful will be found in the last resort to be a matter of the degree of coherence. So that once again we see but the whole exercising its ascendancy over and transforming the part.

Again, as Gauḍapāda has shown, it is abstractly possible to treat dream as sublating waking cognition just as much as waking is thought to be the sublater of dreams. The dream-water cannot quench waking thirst; but the water of waking experience is no more useful in quenching the dream-thirst. There is nevertheless a justification for the treatment of waking as the sublater of dream, not *vice versa*; the relative universality of the former, as compared with the purely personal and private character of the latter, makes of waking a more coherent whole, capable of dominating and subordinating other aspects of experience. If the problem were that of annulment of one kind of experience by the other, we should be left with little or no guidance as to which is sublater and which sublated.

Such uncertainty, however, is only a theoretical possibility, not a fact. And that is so, because sublation means not destruction but control by a larger whole and a transformation into the substance of that whole.

The destruction of three kinds of reality (*sattā*) also presupposes this same idea. The lowest, the barely phenomenal exists only so long as the presentation lasts. Of such are dreams and delusions. The next grade of reality is relatively more objective; it subserves empirical usage; it survives particular presentations in that it can be the object of cognition for the same person at various times or for various person at the same time; it is more extensive and also more harmonious than the private reality of dreams etc.; hence its ability to sublimate the former.

We now come to an apparent difficulty. Presumably, on the above line of reasoning, the sublater belongs to a higher grade of reality. This, however, is not always the case. The snake-delusion may be removed by the rope-cognition; but it may also be removed by another delusion, that the presented object is a stick or a streak of water and so on. Further, what sublates the world of empirical usage (*vyavahāra*), Brahman-intuition, is itself empirical (*vyāvahārika*), not the absolute reality; for Brahman-intuition is *not* Brahman. Hence no case can be made out that sublation is equivalent to subordination or transformation.

The difficulty is not insuperable; and it is largely due to conceiving the three grades of reality, of Advaita tradition, as watertight compartments. It is true that a delusion may be dispelled by a delusion but not by any delusion. The second delusion must

take into account the clearly presented features of the first while rendering a little more satisfactory account of other features. The presented colour and shape are not ignored in the stick-delusion, while it fits in better with the immobility of the presented object. If a stick-cognition which is thus more comprehensive and coherent than the snake-cognition, is itself a delusion, it is because of not reckoning with still other features cognisable on a closer approach. So too Brahman-intuition, though non-real, in so far as it seeks to envisage the real as the object in relation to something else, is yet the most comprehensive relational cognition that we can have; for even while recognising the impropriety of treating Brahman as an object, we must admit that there can be no object falling outside Brahman, which is all that is, the sole real. *Brahma-sākṣātkāra* cannot be supplemented or transformed by any other relational cognition (*vṛttijñāna*); it can only be transformed into the *svarūpajñāna* that is Brahman.

Here, again, we can see a limitation for the view which holds sublater and sublated to be inimical or barely opposed in the popular sense. *Brahmasākṣātkāra* has to be transcended in Brahman; it is itself a product of nescience, though its highest product; it is that phase of *avidyā* which helps us to cross over death. What is sublated by *sākṣātkāra*, the empirically valid, etc., is also the product of *avidyā*. The destroyer of the higher should not be incapable of destroying the lower; he who can defeat a regiment will not fall back before a company thereof; and for annulling even the *prātibhāsika* delusive cognitions etc., *Brahma-sākṣātkāra* should certainly have the capacity, though it may be analogous to breaking a fly on the wheel; similarly, what sublates this final intuition should be capable of subla-

ting lower forms of *avidyā*. We are told however that *svarūpa-jñāna* far from dispelling *ajñāna*, co-exists with the latter as its locus; what sublates (and destruction is understood by sublation) is not *svarūpa-jñāna* but *vṛtti-jñāna*. And the disappearance of the final intuition is not due to sublation either by another *vṛtti* (which may not be recognised without infinite regress) or by *suarūpa-jñāna* (which cannot sublata) but to self-destruction.

We are entitled to ask the Advaitin at this stage to stick to one uniform principle. If *Brahma-sākṣātkāra* commits suicide, may we not legitimately envisage a similar process in lower grades of *avidyā*? Why should we not treat the snake-cognition, the dream-cognition and the world-cognition as merely committing suicide, rather than as being transcended in and by other cognitions? It is not that there is no compelling cause whatsoever; all these cognitions are finite; and cognitions may pine and die in despair at their being ever identical with or even equal to the objects cognised; the snake-cognition is not a snake any more than Brahman-intuition is Brahman. Once the possibility of self-redemption is admitted, there can be no justification for treating the succeeding cognition as the sublater, without committing the *post hoc* fallacy. The only light in this suicide chaos must come from a principle that self-destruction results only from the compulsion of an immanent higher. The snake-cognition is not adequate to the content; though not aware of the inadequacy at the time, it blindly but none the less compulsorily seeks completion; and at a certain stage, varying with individuals and circumstances, it becomes so complete as to burst its skin and become more comprehensive and adequate; the sublation is through an



inner compulsive force, which manifests itself but not fully as the sublater; for this too will be sublated in turn until all limitations and finitude are transcended. The compulsive force manifesting itself ever increasingly in time is the infinite, the *Bhūman*, Brahman. Viewed thus we have one principle of transcendence throughout, not a combination of universal murder and solitary suicide.

That the Advaitin is hard put to it to make the dual process intelligible is evident from the many analogies he presses into service; goat's milk digests other milk and is itself digested; poison dispels other poison and dispels itself; the powder of the clearing-nut precipitates other dust in water and precipitates itself. In every one of these illustrations it will be noted that the causal efficiency is over-rated or not properly assessed. Any suspended impurity in water will be precipitated in due course, given sufficient time; the clearing-nut hastens the process; once it has been mixed up with the other impurity, the water precipitates the whole mass quicker; it is not the case that the other impurity is first eliminated, like an enemy from the battlefield, and that the clearing-nut enacts a disappearance trick afterwards. Similarly, it is the nature of the human system to reject whatever is injurious or cannot be assimilated; because of natural or adventitious weakness, it may fail to do this efficiently in some cases; what the remedial poison or milk does is to enable the system to throw out or assimilate as the case may be; the real agent in either case is the human body, the external factor being only ancillary; were it not thus, nature-cures would be impossible, instead of being merely rare?

Let us look at the problem again from the viewpoint of the alleged co-existence of *svarūpa-jñāna* and *ajñāna*. The former is the locus of the latter, but not as the table of book or the ground of pot. It is the basis of superimposition like the rope for the snake-delusion; rope and snake are not co-existent, nor rope-cognition and snake-cognition; the existence of rope is contemporaneous with the delusive cognition of snake; that part of the latter which is not unreal, its existence-aspect, is included in the rope; the rest of it is non-real appearance due to a part being taken for a whole. The co-existence of the substrate and delusion then amounts only to the existence of the part in the whole, not to be the simultaneous existence of independent reals. So too, *ajñāna* co-exists with *svarūpa-jñāna* only as a part in the whole; if it asserted its independence it could not claim co-existence. And in the case of *ṛtti-jñāna* too we find just this opposition to *ajñāna*; the latter may be transcended in the former, but cannot assert its existence against the former. There is no difference in principle between the transcendence of ignorance in *ṛtti-jñāna* and the transcendence of the latter in *svarūpa-jñāna*. The former, of course, is temporal, the latter eternal; but the sublation or transcendence is throughout due not to the temporal, but to the eternal functioning in and breaking through the temporal. The temporal envelope in the final act is so diaphanous that the breaking through appears as self-transcendence.

Sublation thus is unintelligible except as a process of transcendence and mastery of the lower by the higher, the finite and the temporal by the relatively less finite and less temporally limited, if not by the infinite and the eternal. Mere destruction is unintel-

ligible except to defective thinking. What is abolished has to be transformed into the stuff of that which sublates. Māyā is sublatale by Brahman only because it is of the very nature of Brahman (*devasyaiṣa svabhāvo'yaṁ*, as the earlier Advaitins put it). When this nature is looked upon as if it were a quality different from the substance, we have the beginning of all our delusions and sufferings; when realised to be what it truly is, the stuff of Brahman (since there is no room at that level for the substance-attribute or any other relational category), there is peace. This realisation is through sublation, which, for all its appearance to the contrary, is a positive transformation, not a negation being an incidental relational phase of the former. Sublation, in other words, is sublimation.

## SELF - BLISS\*

---

*T. M. P. Mahadevan*

For the sake of those dull-witted persons who are not able to grasp the manifestation of *Brahman*-bliss in the experience of sleep and the persistence of its residual impression in moments of calmness, another mode of conveying the bliss-nature of the self is set forth herein. This method, however, will prove helpful only to those of the dull-witted who are desirous of knowing *Brahman*. For the others either *karma* or *upāsana* is prescribed, the way of knowledge not being open to them.

### 1. *Self, the Seat of Love: Evidence of Scripture*

The method adopted here is the one which Yājñavalkya had recourse to while instructing his younger wife, Maitreyī. As Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* observes, "In order to teach that non-attachment is instrumental to immortality, he (Yājñavalkya) creates a distaste for wife, husband, sons, etc, so that they may be renounced."

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\*Courtesy: T.M. P. Mahadevan, *The Pañcadaśī of Bhāvatīrtha Vidyāranya*, Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, 1975, pp. 189-201.

Yājñavalkya does this by declaring that the self alone is the seat of supreme love. The love that one bears to other objects is not really for their sake; but it is for the sake of the one who loves. "This self is dearer than a son, dearer than wealth, dearer than everything else, and is innermost." The love for other objects is secondary, since they contribute to the pleasure of the self; and the love for the self alone is primary. Husband, wife, progeny, wealth, cattle, castes, the worlds, gods, the Vedas, elements, and all the rest have no intrinsic value in themselves. They are dear for the sake of the self. "Not for the sake of the husband is the husband dear, but for the sake of the self is the husband dear."<sup>2</sup> A woman loves her husband only when she likes him, and that too for her own pleasure. Were the husband the object of her absolute love, she ought not at any time and under any circumstance be displeased with him. But it is a matter of common knowledge that couples fall out with each other not infrequently over trifling and trivial things. "Not for the sake of the wife is the wife dear, but for the sake of the self is the wife dear."<sup>3</sup> Even when husband and wife are attracted towards each other at the same time, each loves the other for his or her own sake. Similar is the case with the love that one bears towards one's children. "Not for the sake of the sons are the sons dear, but for the sake of the self are the sons dear."<sup>4</sup> Sometimes a child may cry when fondled by its parent, but the parent derives pleasure and does not weep with the child. This shows clearly that he loves the child for his own pleasure and not for the sake of the child itself. If this be the case with beings which are endowed with intelligence, need it then be said that inert things like wealth, caste, and the worlds, and the lower animals

like cattle, etc., are loved not for their own sake but for the sake of the self? "Not for the sake of wealth is wealth dear, but for the sake of the self is wealth dear. Not for the sake of brahmin-hood is brahmin-hood dear, but for the sake of the self is brahmin-hood dear. Not for the sake of kṣatriya-hood is kṣatriya-hood dear, but for the sake of the self is it dear. It is not for the sake of the worlds that they are dear, but for the sake of the self that they are dear." The gods like Viṣṇu are worshipped not without any ulterior motive. The devotee worships them for the removal of his sins, and not for the sake of the gods themselves who are devoid of sin. "Not for the sake of the gods are the gods dear, but for the sake of the self are the gods dear." The brahmins study the Vedas in order to preserve their brahmin-hood. The members of the three higher castes take to Vedic study so that they may not become outcastes. Hence even the study of the Veda is not intrinsic. "Not for the sake of the Vedas are the Vedas dear, but for the sake of the self are the Vedas dear." In short, everything subserves the purpose of the self. The self is the centre and the seat of love.

"Now, what is the love which is said to be for the sake of one's own self? It may be attachment, faith, devotion, or desire. There is attachment to objects like women; there is faith in such rites and rituals as the sacrifices; there is devotion to the preceptor, the deity, and the elders; and there is desire for things which we long to have. But all these four forms of love are not found for one and the same object. Hence love as such cannot have everything for its object. If love be regarded as devotion, then as there is no devotion to one's wife, it would result that there is no love for her. Thus it is with love taken in any of its forms." If thus

it be said, we reply that the statement would be true only when love is understood in the above manner. In all the varied manifestations of love, there is a constant character which does not change. That mode of the mind is called love, which has for its object pure pleasure or happiness. It cannot be said that this love is identical with desire; for unlike the latter, it is observed to have for its objects those things which have perished as well as those which are procured. Nor may it be said that since love is seen for food, etc., which are the instruments of happiness, there may be love for the self, not because it is an end in itself, but because it is also a means to happiness; for the inference "The self is fit to be a means to happiness, because it is dear, like food, etc.," is conditioned by an adjunct. Food, etc., possess the characteristic of being enjoyed (*bhogyatva*); but the self is not what is enjoyed. It is the enjoyer, the subject of all experience. And to say that the self is its own object is a contradiction; for one and the same thing cannot be at the same time both the helper and the helped, the subject and the object.

The happiness that is dependent on external objects excites mere love — love of a very low degree. But the self is the most lovable, the locus of supreme happiness. The happiness that is got from the objects of sense is not constant, whereas the happiness that is centred in the self is ever present without any inconstancy. When a person gets disgusted with a particular object which for sometime has given him pleasure, he puts it by and takes to another object in the hope of finding happiness there. Thus the pleasure which the objects yield is not constant. That the self is the seat of supreme love is shown by the fact that never does a person get a desire to destroy or relinquish the self. The self can neither

be abandoned nor be accepted, neither be renounced nor be received. It cannot be said that because the self can neither be abandoned nor be accepted there can be only indifference in respect thereof; for, even if there were indifference, since the self is the subject which has that indifference, it cannot be itself the object of indifference. Nor may it be said that since, when a man gets disgusted with himself owing to excessive attachment or aversion, he desires to put an end to his life, what was said before that nobody desires to destroy the self is wrong; for what the man who is tired of his life wants to do is to destroy his body; and the body, verily, is not the self. The *jīva* which desires to abandon its body is not the object of disgust. It is the body that is sought to be destroyed and not the self.

We have seen above the evidence of scripture for the fact that the self is the locus of absolute and unconditioned love. It is possible to arrive at the same conclusion through reasoning. In the world it is observed that a parent, Viṣṇudatta, loves his son, Devadatta, more than his son's friend, Yajñadatta. His son is dearer to him than his son's friend who is remote in regard to relationship. Similarly, since the self is dearer than all other things, it is the locus of supreme love.

Further, the experience of the desire "Let me not go out of existence; let me live forever" proves that the love for the self is direct, immediate, and unconditioned. Thus it is established from scriptural statements, reasoning, and the evidence of experience that the self is the source of happiness and the locus of love.

## 2. *Three Notions of Selfhood*

There is a view which holds that the self is secondary to son, wife, etc., and it cites in its favour such



scriptural texts as "The self verily came to be called the son, etc." That the son, etc., are principal in importance is alleged to be evident from the declarations of the *Aitareya Upaniṣad*. The second chapter of that Upaniṣad begins by saying that the *jīva* becomes at first the vital fluid in the parent-*buruṣa*; and when the male-parent entrusts this fluid to the woman, he causes the soul to be born. This is called his first birth. The parent is said to sustain the child before and after the birth, for in doing so he sustains himself for the continuation of the race, thus securing the continuation of the species. This is called his second birth. The son, when he comes of age, takes on himself the burdens of his father, he becomes the representative of his father for the right performance of religious rites. Then, the father becoming aged on the completion of his life's purpose passes away, and is reborn. This is his third birth. Thus the Upaniṣad sets forth the primal importance of a son to a father.

It is because the birth of a son is considered to be supremely valuable to a father that it is said that "there is no other world for him who has no son." The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* states the same idea in a positive way in the passage, "They speak of an educated son as being conducive to (the attainment of) the (other) world." Not only is the attainment of the other world made possible by the son; even this world is to be won through him. "This world of men is to be won through the son alone and by no other rite." By describing the *Samprattikarma* (the entrusting rite), the Upaniṣad states how the worlds are to be won through the son. The rite is so called because a father, when he is about to die, is to entrust his own duties to his son in the following manner. He is to call his son,

“You are *Brahman*, you are the sacrifice, and you are the world,” and the son, thus addressed, is to reply, “I am *Brahman*, I am the sacrifice, and I am the world.” The word ‘*Brahman*’ has reference to whatever has been and remains to be studied; the word ‘sacrifice’ stands for whatever sacrifices have been performed and still remain to be performed; and the word ‘world’ signifies whatever worlds have been won and still remain to be won. The significance of the rite is this. The father entrusts to his son the resolve which was his of dutifully undertaking the study of the Vedas, sacrifices, and the conquest of the worlds, and is freed from the resolve concerning these ties of duty. The son takes on himself all this load which belonged to his father and protects him from this world. Hence it is said that a well instructed son is conducive to the world of his father.

Even the derivation of the word ‘*putra*’ points that, should anything, any duty, be left undone by father, through any slip or slight omission in the middle, the son exonerates him from all that unfulfilled duty of his, standing as an obstacle to his attainment of the world, by fulfilling it himself. Because he saves his father by fulfilling his duties, he is called a son. The father, although dead, is immortal and lives in this world through such a son. Thus it is that he wins this world of men through his son. From all this it is argued that scripture is evidence for the fact that the self is subsidiary to son, wife, etc.

Those who uphold this view do not rest content with quoting scripture in their favour. They show how even empirical usage testifies to the correctness of their position. The son is regarded as the principal member of his family. Through sweat and toil the

father hoards money for the sake of his son. Hence the son, etc., are more important and primary than the self.

The arguments set forth above do not prove that the self is subsidiary to other things. The self can be characterized in three ways, as the secondary self, the illusory self, and the principal self. The appositional usage 'Devadatta is a lion' has only a secondary or figurative sense. Similarly, the self-hood of son, etc. is secondary, for difference is seen of son, etc., from the self. There is difference between the psycho-physical organism which consists of five sheaths and the witness-self; and yet that difference is not manifest. The mind-body combination is mistaken to be the self. Hence there is for it illusory self-hood. There is neither the existence nor the manifestation of difference between the witness-self and anything else, for there is nothing apart from the self of which the latter is the counter-correlate. And because the witness is the self of all, it is called the principal self. Thus there are three notions of self-hood, secondary, illusory, and principal; and according to the difference in empirical usage, the conception of self-hood also varies. In an empirical usage concerning any one of three, that one assumes primacy and the other two take on a subsidiary position. For example, in that act of protecting the family of a dying person, what is useful is the secondary self in the form of son, etc. In the empirical usage, 'I am lean, I am going to become fat,' etc., it is the body-self (*viz.*, the illusory self) that is meant. What is adequate as the subject of such assertions as "Through austerities I shall attain heaven" is the agent-self, and not the body-self; for a man who desires heaven performs sacrifices even at the risk of neglecting the care of his body.

That which is the subject of the usage "I shall be liberated, etc." is the intelligence-self. Rituals and rites are of no use to him who desires release. From the instruction of the preceptor and from the statements of scripture he knows the truth. Thus it is clear that the notion of self-hood differs according to the difference in the mode of empirical usage. It is analogous to the distinctions that are made in respect of eligibility for particular rites. Sacrificial rites like the *Bṛhaspati-sava* are prescribed for the brahmin and not for the members of the other castes. Similarly, kings are asked to perform the *Rājasūya* sacrifice; and for the merchant class the *Vaiśyastoma* is enjoined. In the same way, it is to be understood that each empirical usage has for its content a particular notion of self-hood as the primary one, to which the rest are subsidiary. Whatever notion of self-hood is primary in a particular usage, that notion exacts supreme love; and there is also love of a lower degree to such of those things of the class of not-self which subserve the purpose of the self. To what is neither the self nor a subsidiary thereto, there is not even a fraction of love. Thus it is seen that the self, whatever may be the conception thereof, is the centre and seat of love. If there be love for any other thing, it is for the sake of the self to which that thing is but a subsidiary.

### 3. *Grades of Love and Happiness*

What is neither the self nor a subsidiary thereto is either the object of disregard or the object of disdain. For things like a blade of grass on the wayside, we have no regard; while we look with horror upon such harmful beings like the scorpion and the snake. The self, we have said, is the seat of supreme love, while what

is helpful thereto is the object of moderate love. There is no rule, however, by which we can characterize certain things to be helpful all the time and certain other things to be harmful. The tiger, for example, is hated when it pounces upon us; when it is indifferent to us we take no notice of it; and when it is in a playful mood with us, we love it. Thus we cannot fix which things are lovable, which are hateful, and which we can disregard. But we can give general definitions. Those things are lovable which are helpful to us; those things are hated which are hurtful to us; and those are objects of our indifference which are neither helpful nor hurtful. But the case with the self is unalterable. It is always the locus of supreme love. This is what Yājñavalkya had in view when he said that for the sake of the self everything is dear.

That the self is the most lovable of all is declared in the passage, "This self is dearer than a son, dearer than wealth, dearer than everything else, and is innermost."<sup>16</sup> While commenting on this passage, Viśvarūpācārya (Suresvara) observes, "Dearer than wealth is the son; dearer than the son is one's physical body; dearer than the body are the senses; dearer than the senses is the mind; but dearer than the mind and the dearest of all is the self." The nearer a thing is to the self, the dearer it is than the rest. The intensity of love than an object merits is dependent on its proximity to the self.

Those who do not realize this fundamental fact and consider things other than the self to be dearer than the self meet with disappointment and finally disillusionment. They find themselves in a 'vale of tears' and what they regard as dear turns out to be the cause of

their misery. That things other than the self are sources of misery becomes very clear when we examine, for example, the life-history of a son. The parent is worried so long as a son is not born to him, when a son is about to be born there are the dangers of delivery; after the child is ushered into existence, anxiety continues to sit on the brow of the parent who is in constant fear of his darling being badly influenced by malevolent stars; when the child grows up into a boy, there is the risk of his turning to bad ways; even after the boy is invested with the sacred thread, there is the contingency of his continuing to be illiterate; or if he becomes proficient in learning, the anxiety for getting him properly married haunts the parent; when the boy is married, there is the fear whether he would be faithful to his wife or not; if he begets children and becomes the father of a large family, there is the difficulty of finding means to provide him and his offspring with money; and when the son is provided with enormous wealth, there is the contingency of his passing away. Thus there is no end to the misery which things other than the self bring in their train. Hence a man of discrimination must discern the defects that lie deep-seated in things other than the self, and cease to be attached to them. He must realize that the witness-self alone is the locus of supreme love.

When it is settled that the self is the locus of supreme love, it is easy to deduce that it is also the seat of the highest happiness. The self is of the nature of supreme happiness, because it is the object of unexceltable love. What is not of the nature of supreme happiness is not the object of unexcellable love, just as pot, etc., which are neither of the nature of supreme happiness nor the objects of the highest love. In the

*Taittirīya* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣads* we find it declared that according to the increase or decrease in love there is a corresponding increase or decrease in happiness. "From the post of an emperor to the position of Hiraṇyagarbha, wherever there is an increase in love, there is also an increase in happiness." Since the self is the apex of this pyramid, it is the locus of supreme love and the seat of the highest happiness.

#### 4. *Manifestation of Happiness and Intelligence*

The self which is of the nature of happiness is the witness-intelligence which manifests the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep. But unlike the intelligence-aspect of the self, its bliss-aspect is not manifested in all the modes of the intellect. Just as the lamp, which is of the nature of both light and heat, spreads only light and not heat, even so the self, which, no doubt, is of the nature of both happiness and intelligence, reveals only its intelligence-nature in all the mental modes. Nor may it be asked why, if intelligence and happiness be non-different, both of them are not manifested in one and the same mode; for there is no invariable rule that where intelligence is revealed, happiness should also be revealed. In a flower, though fragrance, colour, etc. reside, a single sense-organ is able to apprehend only a single quality and not the rest. Similarly, it is intelligible that in a mental mode wherein the intelligence-nature is revealed, the bliss-aspect need not necessarily be revealed. It cannot be said that in the example of the flower, fragrance is different from colour, whereas in the case of the self there is no difference between intelligence and bliss; for, although in reality there is no difference between intelligence and bliss, we admit that there is apparent

and adventitious difference. Even in the flower we do not recognize any inherent difference between its fragrance and its colour. They appear to be different only because they are apprehended through different sense-organs. In the same way, happiness and intelligence which constitute the essential nature of the self appear to be different because they are manifest in different modes. In that mode of the intellect which is of the nature of the transformation of the *sattva*-constituent brought about by meritorious deeds, there is revealed the identity of intelligence and happiness, because that mode is flawless and pure. And in the mode of the nature of *rajas*-constituent, because of its impurity, there is manifest only the intelligence-aspect, the bliss-nature being veiled. This is analogous to the sourness of the tamarind fruit being concealed when it is seasoned with salt. Because the happiness-nature is not revealed in some of the modes, we cannot say that it is non-existent. Nor can we say that happiness and intelligence are not identical. We have already established that the witness-intelligence is the locus of supreme happiness.

### 5. *The Two Ways*

There are two roads which lead to the knowledge of the bliss-nature of the self — the way of discrimination and the path of *yoga*. The fruit of both the methods is the same, namely, the knowledge of the self. What is called discriminative knowledge is the intuitive experience of the inner self gained through an inquiry into the nature of the five sheaths. *Yoga* is said to be for the sake of the attainment of self-knowledge. That both these methods, *viveka* and *yoga*, are instrumental to knowledge is declared by the Lord in the *Gītā*.



“The place which is reached by the *Sāṅkhyas* is reached by the *Yogins* also. He who sees that the way of *sāṅkhya* and the way of *yoga* as one — he sees indeed.”<sup>11</sup> The path of *yoga* may be difficult to some people; and the way of discrimination may be difficult to others. And so, these two paths are intended to suit the difference that is found among the seekers of truth.

It cannot be said that the path of *yoga*, because it is more difficult to follow, is superior to the way of discrimination. The alleged superiority of *yoga* cannot be due to its being the cause of intuitive knowledge; for even *viveka* leads to the same result. It cannot be said that because *yoga* causes the removal of attachment and aversion, it is superior to discrimination, for the latter also destroys attachment and aversion to objects. The man of discretion who knows that the self alone is the locus of supreme love, how can he be attracted to external objects? And for him who has attained the balanced vision, how can there be the feeling of hatred or aversion? He is no whit inferior to the *yogin* in being free from all flaws of the mind. Nor can the superiority of the *yogin* be sought to be maintained by pointing out that for him there is no apprehension of the world of duality, while the man of discrimination is not devoid of that apprehension. In the state of empirical usage, both the *yogin* and the *vivekin* apprehend the world. Just as in the state of *samādhi* there is no cognition of duality for the *yogin*, even so for the man of discrimination there is no presentation of duality when he is possessed of discriminative knowledge. Thus both the methods, *viveka* and *yoga*, lead to the same goal, viz., release, through the channel of knowledge.

## NOTES

1. *Bṛhadāraṇyakoṇiṣad*, IV, iv, 5.
- 2-7. *Ibid.*, IV, v, 6.
8. *Kauṣītakyuṇiṣad*, II, 11.
9. *Bṛhadāraṇyakoṇiṣad*, I, v, 17.
10. *Ibid.*, I, iv, 8.
11. *Gītā*, v, 5.

THE CONCEPT OF LIBERATION AND ITS  
RELEVANCE TO PHILOSOPHY  
AN ADVAITA APPROACH\*

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I

That the path of life is not roses, roses all the way, but is wet with many a bitter tear of sorrow and suffering is a fact too well known to be emphasised upon. It is no wonder that philosophers who claim to speculate about the entire universe should have some comment to make on the sorrows of life. But of all philosophers the philosophers of ancient India have made some positive contribution to the devising of ways and means as to how the miseries may be permanently got rid of. The Indian philosophers of different schools (with the exception of the Cārvākas) speak of the possibility of liberation and show us a path leading to liberation. This emphasis on liberation constitutes an important landmark of Indian philosophical systems and distinguishes them from the Western systems. It is true that some Western thinkers offer us theories of

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\*Courtesy: *Indian Philosophical Annual*, vol.5 (Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, Madras, 1969), pp. 67-75.

Eternal Life, intellectual love of God, Moral ideal and the like, but none of them is on a par with the Indian philosophical view of eternal release from the bondage of the cycle of births and deaths. It is generally believed that unless we can do away with the cause of the cycle of births and deaths, we have to come back again and again to this earth and experience sorrows, and there is no hope for any release. So the Indian mind has been, since the days of Vedic speculation, troubling itself with the problem of release.

In the Vedic age the Ṛṣis believed that the world of beings has been created by the gods and so they pined for union with the gods by attaining some kind of fellowship (*sūyujyam*), companionship (*sālokatā*) or community of being (*sārūpatā*) with the gods, like Indra, Agni, Varuṇa, etc. Gradually it was realised that Ātman is the cause of creation, and it was held that release could be had through ātman, as though ātman were to be found somewhere other than in our selves. At a still later period the sages had the vision that the finite self has no separate existence apart from Brahman, and so by knowing the true self liberation can be achieved.<sup>1</sup>

## II

The word *mukṭi* (meaning, liberation) has been derived from the root *muc* (meaning, to release). But release from what? It has been variously described as release from death, from desires, from body, from *samsāra*, from the possibility of a stay in the mother's womb, from attachment, from sin, from greed, from the bondage of birth, and so on. All these descriptions point to a state in which there is complete destruction of all sorrows followed by perfect freedom.

The synonyms of *mukti* are various, viz., *kaivalya*, *nirvāṇa*, *niḥśreyas*, *amṛta*, *mokṣa*, *apavarga*, etc. *Kaivalyam* indicates the state of *kevala*, a state of *niḥsaṅga* or non-attachment. *Nirvāṇa*, a concept generally used by the Buddhists, involves a comparison of the liberated soul with the state of a blown-out lamp, inasmuch as the consciousness of particular self-hood is completely annihilated. *Niḥśreyas* signifies a sure or definite *summum bonum* or the highest good. Birth and death are the causes of the miseries of an individual—they are the greatest evils, and *niḥśreyas* stands as their opposite. It is also called a state of *amṛta* or a state bereft of death. It is a case of *apunarāvṛtti*, i.e., of non-returning to the bodily form. It is also a case of *svarūpa-prāpti*, of getting back one's real nature. It also means *apavarga*. The term '*apavarga*' is derived from *apa-vṛj*, which means 'giving up'. The *jīva* that accepted the non-souls as souls gives them up permanently and thereby attains liberation. The cumulative effect of the examination of these various synonyms of *mukti* is that we may regard it as a state in which an individual realises his own true nature and brings about a state of perfect cessation of all miseries by giving up all attachment to worldly objects and attaining knowledge of reality.

From the philosophical standpoint *mukti* or *mokṣa* has been characterised as the highest good, *parama-puruṣārtha*, as compared with three other desirables, viz., *kāma*, *artha* and *dharma*. These three together with *mokṣa* constitute a four-value system, *caturvarga* or tetrad, which is recognised by almost all the systems. *Kāma*, *artha* and *dharma* are rooted in *vāsanā* or desire, but *mokṣa* is *nivṛtti* or withdrawal from desires, and it therefore constitutes the highest value. As the highest or supreme value, it stands as the opposite of highest

disvalue, viz., *saṃsāra*. So long as we are merged in *saṃsāra*, we are subordinate to passions and impulses, and as such steeped in sorrows. It is only when we can throw off the bondage of *saṃsāra* as a result of true knowledge that we are free and liberated.

The trouble with the concept of liberation is that it being the highest spiritual value, it defies logical definition. It is really a matter for realisation, and so long as we do not realise it, it is to be grasped with the help of contrast-effects in relation to what it is not and with the help of some superlatives. The following description given by Jaina scholar Hemacandra may be cited here :

“*Mokṣa* consisting of supreme bliss (*paramā-nandamaya*) is the foremost of the four-value system (*caturvaga*), because it is characterised by the cessation of the effect of good deeds (*punya*) and of the effect of the bad deeds (*pāpa*); because it is not full of worries like *artha*; because it is not like poisoned food beautiful in appearance, but painful in the end like *kāma*; and because it is not polluted by the desire to attain results (*phala*) in this world or in the next (*aihika* or *āmuṣmika*) like *dharma*.”

It should be borne in mind that, because we have to resort to negative descriptions, *mokṣa* is not an empty concept signifying nothing. On the contrary, it signifies the highest spiritual truth which is *anirvacanīya*, and as such is a class apart.

We have so far tried to clarify the concept of liberation with the help of certain descriptive statements, positive and negative. We now turn to the Advaita system which typifies the highest type of philosophical speculation for further light.

## III

Bondage, according to the Advaita, is the erroneous association of the soul (*ātman*) with the gross and subtle bodies through the influence of ignorance or *avidyā*. In this state arises the sense of egohood (*ahaṅkāra*) owing to which the soul identifies itself with the finite mind and body, opposes itself to other finite things and beings and runs after temporal and transitory objects. In reality, however, the soul is one with Brahman, and so Śaṅkara attempts to show how the soul would be able to shake off its state of bondage and regain its own intrinsic nature of oneness with Brahman, which is the state of liberation.

But what is the status of the individual self or *jīva*? Śaṅkara replies that on the empirical plane the *jīva* is associated with an organism which is the effect of the individual's ignorance. The *jīva* is *viññānātman* and is subject to change. It is the object of selfconsciousness — *aham-pratyaya-viśaya*. It is the agent of all activities and also the enjoyer. The activities which belong to the empirical individual are due to its upādhis or adjuncts. But no such activity can in reality be attributed to the *jīva* and its pure state of oneness with Brahman. In support of his view Śaṅkara here falls back upon the Upaniṣadic saying '*Tat tvam asi*' (That thou art). Here '*tat*' (that) refers to Brahman while '*tvam*' refers to the *jīvātman*, and the whole proposition is only a judgement of identity, signifying an unqualified identity between *jīva* and Brahman. The realisation of such an identity is impossible if we cling to the merely empirical point of view, and fail to have knowledge of the transcendent reality. But such knowledge, thinks Śaṅkara, cannot be attained unless the mind is prepared before-hand. He lays down a

course of practical discipline to which an individual must subject himself before he can have an insight into the Vedāntic truths. It does not involve a scrupulous observance of Vedic rituals, which rests on a false dualism between the worshipper and the worshipped, and which can, therefore, at best lead to *abhyudaya* or earthly merit and not to salvation. Śaṅkara, therefore, lays down a fourfold scheme of discipline whose aim is to establish that highest sense of unity with Brahman, which a proper study of the Vedānta involves. It includes: (1) *nityānitya-vastuviveka* or ability to discriminate between what is eternal and what is non-eternal, (2) *ihāmutrārtha-bhoga-virāga* or the ability to give up all selfish desires for earthly and heavenly goods, (3) *śamadamādi-sādhana-sampat* or the ability to control one's mind and the senses and develop the virtues of tranquillity, restraint, renunciation, resignation, concentration and reverence, and (4) *mumukṣutva* or an intense desire for freedom and liberation. This course of practical discipline prepares one to receive the Vedāntic truths. The study of the Vedānta consists of a threefold process of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* — listening to the discussion of the teacher, understanding and deliberating through reasoning such truths until all doubts are removed and repeatedly meditating upon the accepted truths. These alone can lead to *darśana* or the realisation of the highest truth, viz., 'I am Brahman', and with it to the disappearance of ignorance-begotten bondage. Śaṅkara finally describes liberation as "that incorporeality, which is real in the absolute sense, immutable, eternal, all-penetrating like *ākāśa* free from all change, all-satisfying, undivided, whose nature is to be its own light, in which neither good, nor evil, nor



effect, nor past, nor present, nor future has any place.””

Liberation, therefore, is a matter of direct realisation of absolute oneness with Brahman. Such a state of realisation of something which has been present through all eternity, but which was hidden from our view by our ignorance or *avidyā*. The moment our ignorance is dispelled by right knowledge, *mokṣa* is attained, so that the attainment of *mokṣa* does not mean the production of anything new, or the attainment of a new state of existence, but only the realisation of what was already there without our knowing it. It is just a case of *prāpta-prāpti*. Just as a princess who gets back her missing necklace does not get anything new or just as a prince brought up as a hunter since his infancy and later on discovering that he is of royal blood does not really get any new blood, so a man getting liberation with the dawn of true knowledge simply regains his true nature (*svārūpāvasthā*) and nothing *new* created. Nothing also happens to the world, but the liberated self's views of the world are changed. It is only the disappearance of a false outlook or a change in perspective — a removal of the sense of plurality and of various kinds of attachment generating therefrom. Further, as the essential nature of the self is bliss, with the dawn of self-knowledge the nature of the self as absolute bliss becomes revealed. In other words, the state of liberation is one of pure existence, pure consciousness and pure bliss, i.e., one of identity with the Brahman. It is not simply a state of *duḥkha-kṣaya* (destruction of misery), but is one of supreme happiness (*uttamasukha*), not only a state of absence of fear (*abhaya*) and absence of restlessness (*niṣcalasthiti*) but is one of sameness (*sāmya*) and omniscience (*sarvajñatā*).<sup>4</sup>

It should also be noted that liberation does not mean death, but it can be had here and now. Even after liberation, the self continues to work though in a perfectly disinterested manner. No new fruits of action are accumulated at this stage, but like an arrow shot from the bow, the body continues to reap the fruits already accumulated till they are exhausted. But there is no longer any identification of the self with the body after the attainment of knowledge, and there is no longer any superimposition of the illusory upon the real.

#### IV

We may here compare the Advaita approach to liberation with the approaches of other systems. It should be noted at the outset that there are certain basic similarities in the different approaches. All the systems (except Cārvāka) more or less agree in holding *darśana* as a kind of *mokṣa-śāstra* — even an astute logical system as the Nyāya is inspired by the ideal of *mokṣa*. All agree in holding that liberation involves a complete cessation of miseries, and all speak of knowledge of reality as a sort of pre-requisite, though there is a difference of opinion as to what is real.<sup>5</sup> But the Advaita has certain special features of its own. While the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika holds that in liberation the self ceases to have any experience, pleasurable and painful, and exists as a pure substance bereft of consciousness,<sup>6</sup> the Advaita moves far ahead and establishes *mokṣa* as a state of pure consciousness and bliss. The Sāṅkhya-Yoga takes a step further than Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, and holds that liberation which originates from *vivekajñāna* or discriminating knowledge between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is a state of pure consciousness

only and not of joy (as joy can be experienced as such only in relation to pain). But even though the *udāsīna puruṣa* remains no longer attached to *prakṛti*, she (*prakṛti*) remains as something real and distinct from *puruṣa*, thus retaining a dualism. But the Real of the Vedānta transcends the universe and so there is no problem pertaining to dualism. The Vedānta also repudiates the idea of a plurality of liberated selves. Moreover, the Vedānta points out that the empirical conception of joy as the opposite of pain and therefore presupposing it does not apply to the experience of the liberated self, for he no longer belongs to the world of the relative — the joy or bliss that the liberated self experiences belongs to the very nature of Brahman with which it is identical and which is not therefore generated by any contrast-effect. The Mīmāṃsā is overburdened with the notion of rituals and heavenly bliss, and as distinguished from it the Vedānta develops the idea of knowledge-begotten *mukti*, pointing out that performance of Vedic rituals gives rise only to earthly merit. The Jainas hold that liberation is the expulsion of matter (*pudgala*) from soul (*ātman*) which is capable of infinite potentialities. The way to liberation lies through right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. But the Advaita differs from Jainism in many important respects. For the Advaitins the Brahman or Paramātman is one and attributeless, while for the Jainas even paramātmans are *saguṇa* or *anantaguṇa* and many. For the Advaitins *mukti* means realisation of Brahman and hence there cannot be many separate liberated individuals, but for the Jainas just as the *jīvas* are many in bondage, so they are many also in liberation. Again, the Jainas do not believe that all are capable of attaining liberation —

some are, in their opinion, debarred from having liberation (the Digambaras, for example, hold that women do not deserve liberation). But the Advaitins do not entertain any such distinction. Finally, the Advaita conception differs also from the Buddhistic view. The third noble truth preached by Buddha speaks of cessation of misery in the state of *nirvāṇa*. When one understands the unreal, impermanent and sorrowful character of this *samsāra*, when one understands the no-soul character of the self, when one attains *prajñā*, through *śīla* and *samādhi* harmoniously cultivated, one attains liberation. The different schools of Buddhism are not perfectly unanimous as to the character of liberation. The analogy of the blown-out lamp is there and some openly compare *nirvāṇa* with *sūnya* (though the exact connotation of *sūnya* itself is controversial). As contrasted with Buddhism, the Advaita offers a more definite characterisation of liberation by identifying the liberated soul with the eternal Brahman.

The chief merit of Advaita lies in its emphasis on the path of knowledge. It speaks of what may be called *ātmopāsanā* or worship of the self. This realisation of the self by the self is to be distinguished from the knowledge of the not-self by the self — it is not a process nor is it again dependent on any condition. It is not fleeting and temporary. It does not involve any gap or interval (*vyavadhāna*) between the subject and its object. To quote Dr. Brahma, "The realisation through meditation and love, which Royce and McTaggart in the West, and the *bhakti* schools in India have emphasised, or the realisation through argumentation and analysis, which the Nyāya philosophy relies on, or the realisation through higher

speculation and synthesis which the Sāṃkhya and Hegel have adopted, are all cases of realisation of something *by* the subject, and as such, are indirect (*vyavadhānavat*) and hence require an additional proof for their veracity. But the realisation that the Vedānta aspires after is something that results when even the least interval (*vyavadhāna*) between the subject and the object disappears, and where the pure *cit* shines as the self, ... where there is no subject-object consciousness at all.”

## V

Let us next examine some objections to the Advaita concept of liberation and the difficulties involved therein.

The consciousness of the liberated self is described as devoid of subject-object dualism. But it is questioned: How can *cetana* be *nirāśraya* and *nirviśaya*? How can there be consciousness which has neither a subject nor an object? In reply it may be said that subject-object dualism is a feature of empirical consciousness which is transcended in the pure Consciousness that Brahman is. The relatedness to an object is a characteristic of the empirical level and does not affect the nature of true consciousness any more than the red colour of a *japā*-flower reflected in a crystal affects the nature of the crystal. Consciousness is *svapprakāśa* or self-revealing and *nirvikalpa* or non-relational. The *nirvikalpa* or non-relational mode of apprehension is not a mere presupposition of conscious experience lying below its threshold, as Nyāya presumes; rather the non-relational apprehension is a fundamental form of direct experience which transcends all forms of relational experience. Those who challenge the Advaita misin-

interpret the experience of the Absolute as a kind of ordinary object-knowledge; but strictly speaking, this experience is of the nature of *aparokṣānubhūti* — it is the most direct and intimate and is of the nature of *ānanda*. The state of dreamless sleep is the nearest analogue of this type of experience. In dreamless sleep mind and the senses become inoperative so that there is no longer any consciousness of objects, and with the absence of such consciousness of objects the *jīva* ceases to be a knower. To be sure, this consciousness in the state of dreamless sleep is not a case of inference, for the fundamentals of an inference are lacking here.

Again, it is sometimes questioned how knowledge can bring about *mokṣa*. So long as there is knowledge, *mokṣa* cannot be had; again, if we do not have knowledge of Brahman, we do not have *mokṣa*. It should be noted here that knowledge of Brahman is not object-knowledge, but is realisation of Brahman which is of the nature of pure consciousness. If analogies help understanding, it may be said that just as the power of *kālaka* fruit poured in impure water takes off its impurities and sinks to the bottom, just as a drop of water thrown on a piece of red-hot iron absorbs a portion of the heat and then disappears, so knowledge of Brahman is itself destroyed after destroying our ignorance.

The conception of *jīvanmukti* has also been called in question. It is asked how perfect knowledge can be realised if the ignorance-begotten body persists. Various analogies have been used to show how the effects of past karmas persist for some time even after the dawn of Wisdom. But those who speak of a residual ignorance seem to have a lingering faith in the reality of the world. They think that transcendent knowledge

and body are opposed to each other; but really speaking, the question of opposition does not arise at the transcendental level. Hence there is no possibility of the liberated self being deluded by the appearance of the body, just as a man who is convinced that the sun is stationary is not deluded by its seeming motion round the earth.

## VI

In conclusion we cannot overemphasise the importance of the ideal of liberation and its relevance in any philosophical discussion. If philosophy is not to degenerate into a mere intellectual gymnastic, if it is not to culminate in a jargon of words, it must offer some genuine aid to the suffering mankind." It is only liberation that can put a permanent and effective stop to our miseries. The special virtue of the Advaita ideal is that it, if properly pursued, would create a spirit of unworldliness and would strike at the root of worldliness which is the real cause of all our ills. Unworldliness creates a negative attitude to the merely empirical and sense-given together with a positive attitude to the transcendent reality.

The liberated man is not a mere star-gazer. The *jīvanmukta* is in the world, yet not of it; he does not idly pass his days, but dedicates his life to the cause of his suffering fellow-men. As he is actuated by the Upaniṣadic maxim, "That thou art", he is able to see "all beings in himself and himself in all beings". The *jīvanmukta* goes beyond good and evil, and he then no longer realises virtue, but reveals it. If example is better than precept, Śaṅkara's own life is a case in point — after the attainment of liberation he did not spend his days idly, but made a very strenuous effort

to kindle the light of knowledge in his fellow-men. The *jīvanmukta* is the fittest man to render the highest kind of social service, for he is the spirit of detachment incarnate. He is perfectly free — free from evil, free from impurity, and free from doubt. He is the hope of mankind.

### NOTES

1. Vide P. Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, pp. 342-43.

2. Hemachandra, *Yogasūtra*, 1, 15.

3. *Brahmasūtra*, 1, 1, 4. (Śāṅkarabhāṣyam).

4. See Mahadevan, *Gauḍapāda: A Study in Early Advaita*, p. 186.

5. Commenting on the underlying unity among the different views of the Supreme Value, Das Gupta says, "... it is that which the Sāṅkhya calls *puruṣa*, the Vedāntists Brahman, the Idealistic Buddhists *viññānamātra*, and the Nihilists *śūnya*." (*Indian Idealism*, p. 156).

6. This is specially true of Vātsyāyana and post-Vātsyāyana views.

7. N. K. Brahma, *Philosophy of Hindu Sādhana*, p. 139.

8. "Philosophical inquiry must, according to the Indian view, lead to the apprehension of value. Any metaphysical investigation which does not so lead is generally compared to such futile occupations of examining the teeth of a crow," points out Mahadevan. (See his Article on "The Basis of Social, Ethical and Spiritual Values" in *Essays in East-West Philosophy* (Ed. by C. A. Moore), p. 317.



## THE PROBLEM OF METHOD IN ADVAITA\*

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*N. Veezhinathan*

The aim of this paper is to bring out the methodology of Advaita. As the method cannot be explained without reference to the subject-matter, I propose to bring in details relating to the subject-matter of Advaita in so far as they are necessary to illustrate the method.

### 1. *The Method of the Removal of Avidyā*

The goal of Advaita is Brahman — the partless ultimate. Happiness and absence of misery which every being desires to have constitute the essence of liberation. These two, according to Advaita, constitute the nature of Brahman. The *jīva*'s real essence is Brahman. On account of *avidyā* it is not aware of this truth. Having thus lost sight of its identity with Brahman, the *jīva* longs for liberation. It is the removal of *avidyā* by the knowledge of identity of *jīva* with Brahman that is to be accomplished.

Knowledge could arise only from *pramāṇas* or means of knowledge. The *Mīmāṃsakas* of the *Bhāṭṭa*

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\*Courtesy: *Indian Philosophical Annual*, vol. 4, University of Madras, 1968, pp. 233-240.

school admit six *pramāṇas*, namely *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna*, *ūpamāna*, *śabda*, *arthāpatti*, and *anupalabdhi*. Advaitins admit all these *pramāṇas* and it is evident from Śrī Śaṅkara's reference to them in his commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma-stotra*.<sup>1</sup> A *pramāṇa* is defined as that which gives rise to the knowledge of that object which is hitherto unknown or veiled by *avidyā*. According to Advaita, Brahman alone can be veiled by *avidyā* as it alone is self-luminous. All other things being insentient by themselves need no external cause for being obscured. When viewed in this light the Upaniṣads alone can be considered as *pramāṇa* in the strict sense of the term. No doubt all the *pramāṇas*, according to Advaita, are the transfigurations of Brahman. But noticing that the Upaniṣadic texts deal with the nature of Brahman and the other *pramāṇas* with the objects of the world, the objects of the world the Advaitins conclude that the sentient element of Brahman is predominant in the Veda in general and the insentient element of *avidyā* is predominant in other *pramāṇas*.<sup>2</sup> The Upaniṣadic portion of the Veda alone gives rise to the knowledge of Brahman. Yet the other *pramāṇas* are useful to the Advaitins in one way or another. Discussion about *pratyakṣa* is useful in this that the Advaitins conclude that the Upaniṣads could give rise to the immediate experience of Brahman. *Anumāna* and *arthāpatti* are useful to establish the unreality of the universe. *Ūpamāna* gives rise to the knowledge of similarity between the objects. In the same way it would give rise to the knowledge that a particular object is dissimilar to another object. The Advaitins on the basis of this *pramāṇa* conclude that Brahman is unlike everything and like nothing and the world, therefore,

is not real like Brahman. *Anupalabdhi* is useful in this that the aspirant is able to ascertain the absence of silver in the shell after the rise of the knowledge of the true nature of the shell and then to conclude that shell is free from silver in the three divisions of time — past, present, and future. He is then able to extend this line of explanation to Brahman and to conclude that Brahman is free from the universe.

We said that the Upaniṣadic texts alone are the means of knowing Brahman. Herein arises the question as to the place of *yukti*. Padmapāda takes<sup>2</sup> the word *yukti* to be a synonym of *tarka*. *Tarka* is only argument which proposes the unwelcome position if a particular premise is not admitted. For example, the knowledge of the invariable concomitance in the form “wherever there is smoke, there is fire” is the instrument of the inferential knowledge in the form “the mountain has fire.” If the validity of the invariable concomitance is questioned by stating that smoke could exist without fire, then *tarka* in the form “if there is no fire, there could be no smoke” comes into operation. This argument proposes an unwelcome conclusion, namely, the absence of smoke when smoke is being perceived if the invariable concomitance between the smoke and fire is not admitted. Thus *tarka* is only an aid to a *pramāṇa*. In the same way, the proof — presumption is applied to prove the unreality of the universe. The universe is *mithyā*; for, otherwise it would neither be presented in cognition nor annihilated. This is a *pramāṇa*. It might be objected that a thing may be presented in a cognition and it may be annihilated; but it is not necessary that it must be *mithyā*. Herein *tarka* in the form “if the universe is real, then it cannot be annihilated; if it is

unreal, then it cannot be presented in a cognition” comes into operation, Brahmānanda in his *Laghucandrikā* states<sup>1</sup> that this argument is *arthāpattiśodhakatarka*. *Tarka* is, therefore, an aid to a *pramāṇa*. Vācaspatimisra takes<sup>2</sup> *yukti* to mean *anumāna* and *arthāpatti*. Brahmānanda in his *Laghucandrikā* interprets<sup>3</sup> the word *yukti* to mean *anumāna* and other proofs aided by *tarka*. For our purpose we shall use the word *yukti* in the sense in which Brahmānanda uses it.

The Upaniṣadic texts themselves speak of the need for *yukti*. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text, “The Ātman should be realized; for that it should be heard, reflected, and meditated upon”<sup>4</sup> emphasizes the need for reflection which is only arguing within oneself on the basis of inference, etc., aided by *tarka*. This helps one to convince oneself that the teaching of the Upaniṣads is true. *Tarka* is also useful in ascertaining the import of the Upaniṣadic texts. When the doubt as regards the validity of the truth arrived at from the Upaniṣads is removed by the exercise of *yukti*, then one pursues what is known as *nididhyāsana*. The major texts of the Upaniṣads when contemplated after this stage give rise to the direct experience of the identity of *jīva* with Brahman. It is this direct experience that is referred to by the term *anubhava*. It is only a mental state and it annihilates *avidyā*, and thereby leads to the manifestation of Brahman which is experience. This is what Śrī Śaṅkara means when he says: *anubhavāvasānatvād-bhūtavastuviśayatvācca brahmajñānasya*.<sup>5</sup> *Brahmajñāna* or the direct experience of Brahman which is only a mental state is *anubhavāvasāna*, that is, it has for its goal the manifestation of Brahman by removing *avidyā*. Amalānanda interprets<sup>6</sup> the word *anubhava* to

mean *abhivyakti*. *Anubhava* which is only the mental state is valid and can on no account be doubted. Examination of the Upaniṣadic texts and arguing within oneself with the help of *yukti* that does not contradict the scriptural teaching — these constitute the method suggested by the Upaniṣads themselves to discover the truth.

## 2. *The Method of Interpretation of the Texts of the Upaniṣads*

The major texts of the Upaniṣads like *tat tvam asi* convey the true nature of Brahman, that is the identity of *jīva* and Brahman. The major text *tat tvam asi* conveys the identity of the terms *tat* and *tvam*, and this is ascertained by analysing the context in which this text occurs.

A sentence conveys its sense only through the senses of the words constituting it. The senses of the words are twofold: primary and secondary. The Upaniṣadic texts which convey the primary and secondary senses of the terms *tat* and *tvam* separately are termed subsidiary sentences. There are certain texts<sup>10</sup> which convey the primary sense of the term *tat* to be Īsvara and the secondary sense of the term to be consciousness, bliss, truth, and absolute. For arriving at the knowledge of the secondary sense of the term *tat*, the author of the *Brahmasūtra* prescribes<sup>11</sup> a method of gathering unrepeated words found in the affirmative Upaniṣadic passages dealing with Brahman. The words thus gathered amount to ten, and they are *nitya*, *suddha*, *buddha*, *mukta*, *satya*, *sūkṣma*, *sat*, *vibhu*, *advitīya*, and *ānanda*.<sup>12</sup> No additional essential nature is accepted in the case of Brahman apart from those signified by these words. Apart from these affirmative

texts, there are negative texts<sup>13</sup> which convey Brahman as free from all objective elements. These texts thus confirm the knowledge that Brahman is absolute. The primary sense of the term *tvam* is *jīva* who experiences the three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep. And the secondary sense of the term is pure consciousness which is constant in the above three states.<sup>14</sup> *Īsvara* is mediate and is known to be omniscient. *Jīva* is immediate and is ignorant. The primary senses of the terms, *tat* and *tvam*, namely, *Īsvara* and *jīva* cannot be identified because of the contradictory attributes they possess. The Advaitins hold that the two words constituting the sentence convey, therefore, through secondary signification the sense conveyed by the subsidiary Upaniṣadic texts.

Of the three kinds of secondary signification, namely, *jahallakṣaṇā*, *ajahallakṣaṇā*, and *jahod-ajahallakṣaṇā*, Śrī Śaṅkara holds<sup>15</sup> that the words *tat* and *tvam* through *jahod-ajahallakṣaṇā* give rise to the *recollection* of the secondary senses arrived at from the subsidiary sentences. Suresvara maintains<sup>16</sup> that the modes of interpreting the major texts are *jahallakṣaṇā* and another kind of signification known as *gaunīvṛtti*. The sentence as a whole conveys the identity of the two senses, which is hitherto unknown from any other source.

The knowledge of Brahman as the absolute arises from the Upaniṣads only by sublating the knowledge of duality resulting from perception. This is analogous to the subsequent knowledge of the true nature of a desert land which arises only by sublating the erroneous knowledge of mirage that arose earlier. The principle of the subsequent one sublating the earlier

one is known as *apaccheda-nyāya*, and this maxim is arrived at in the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā-sūtras*.<sup>17</sup> It should be borne in mind that the maxim holds good only where the latter cognition cannot arise without contradicting the earlier cognition as in 'This is silver' and 'This is not silver'.<sup>18</sup> On this ground perception does not stultify the Upaniṣadic texts.

Thus the major texts of the Upaniṣads are valid in the sense that the knowledge that arises from them removes *avidyā* pertaining to Brahman. They do not convey Brahman as 'This is Brahman'. When *avidyā* is removed, Brahman manifests itself in its true nature as bliss and this is Advaita.

### 3. *The Method of Refutation of Rival Theories*

The concept of *avidyā* and the non-real character of universe are but a corollary of the Upaniṣadic view that Brahman which is the sole reality is non-dual. The world is considered to be the appearance of Brahman, and Brahman is taken to be the material and the efficient cause of the world. The Upaniṣads first speak of Brahman as associated with the world and later negate it mainly to prove the non-real character of the world and thereby the absolute nature of Brahman. The concept of *avidyā* is introduced to account for the relation of Brahman to the world. This method of superposition and negation is known as *adhyāropa* and *apavāda* and the well-known saying "Brahman is shown as being acosmic by the method of superposition and subsequent negation" first finds expression in the fifteenth chapter (verse 23) of the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* thus: *adhyāropāpavādābhyām kurute brahmacintanam*. It is clear therefore that the Advaitins

had to reject the theories of creation advocated by the other schools, as their admission would clearly contradict the absolute nature of Brahman. The *Vedānta-sūtras* themselves critically examine the schools of the Sautrāntika and the Vaibhāṣika, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and the Sāṅkhya. The former two schools are rejected on the basis of reasoning, while the Sāṅkhya school is rejected on the basis of scriptural authority also. The reason is that the Sāṅkhya school read their views into the Upaniṣadic texts.

In the 9th and the 10th centuries the great authorities on Nyāya like Jayantabhaṭṭa and Udayana introduced logical methods to prove that all that is knowable is real. This position is directly opposed to the Vedāntin's position that all that is knowable is indefinable. There was a renewal of activity in the field of Nyāya when it received a fresh impetus from the new technique developed by one Kulārka Paṇḍita in his *mahāvīdyānumāna* in the 11th century. This type of *anumāna* was originally invented for refuting the Mīmāṃsaka arguments of the eternity of sounds and proving their non-eternity. But some writers on Nyāya adopted this type of syllogism to establish the eternal nature of atoms, and to prove the existence of God as the efficient cause of the world. The Advaitic writers who flourished in these centuries adopted this kind of syllogism to refute the above-mentioned Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika positions. Śrī Harṣa in the 12th century, Citsukha in the early part of the 13th century, Ānandagiri and Ānandānubhava of the same century criticized the reality of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika categories on logical grounds to prove the Vedāntic position that the universe is not real.



After sometime the Nyāya system was rendered more or less ineffective and Advaita definitely triumphed over all systems of Indian thought prevalent at the time. Then we land ourselves in a most controversial period in the history of Indian thought. Śrī Rāmānuja and Śrī Madhva appeared on the scene and led a revolt against Advaita. It may be said that their objections against Advaita had already been anticipated and answered in earlier Advaitic works. But the Advaitins had to resort to logical methods to prove the non-real nature of the universe. It is because the theistic and the pluralistic schools interpreted the Upaniṣadic texts in a way that is totally opposed to Advaita. For example the Advaitins state that the Upaniṣadic text, *neha nānāsti kiñcana*,<sup>19</sup> affirms the non-real nature of the universe: *iha* — in this Brahman, *nānā nāsti* — there is no multiplicity. This presumptively implies that the universe is *mithyā*. But the dualistic schools interpret the text as follows: *iha* — in God, *nānā nāsti* — there is no distinction because of His several incarnations.<sup>20</sup> Hence the Advaitins have to frame a definition of *mithyātva* on logical grounds as *pratipannopādhanau traikālika-niṣedha-pratīyogitā*.<sup>21</sup> This means that an object is *mithyā* because it does not really exist in the substratum where it appears. In the same way, the Upaniṣadic text<sup>22</sup> “Just as the rivers leaving out their names and forms merge in the ocean, so also the one who has realized the self becomes one with Brahman by leaving out (*vimukta*) one’s name and form” states that the knowledge of Brahman removes the universe characterised by name and form. This text implies that name and form are *mithyā*, as they are removable by the knowledge of Brahman. The dualistic school, however, interpreted the word *vimukta*

to mean *amukta*, that is, not leaving out or retaining.<sup>23</sup> Hence the Advaitins felt that there is no point in citing the Upaniṣadic texts to prove the non-real nature of this universe and so framed the definition *jñānanivartyatvam mithyātvam*.<sup>24</sup> This means that an object is *mithyā* if it is removed by knowledge. This *mithyātvā* is established with reference to the universe. Vyāsatīrtha, the most noteworthy commentator of the Dvaita school, criticized the viewpoints of Advaita on logical grounds by adopting the method of Gaṅgeśa, Raghunātha Śiromaṇi, and Gadādhara. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī also adopted the *navya-nyāya* dialectic and proved that the most cherished objections of the dualistic school against Advaita are in general false.

A word about the method adopted by the Advaitins to establish *avidyā* which is so pivotal to Advaita. Vyāsatīrtha asks the proof for the existence of *avidyā*. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī points out that the witness-self manifests *avidyā* and as such it does not require any proof for its manifestation. Following Padmapāda and Prakāśātman he points out that preception and other proofs go to establish the positive nature of *avidyā*. *Avidyā* as such cannot be an object of any proof; for proof is that which makes known a thing that is unknown or characterized by *avidyā*. If perception, etc., were said to be the proofs for the evidence of *avidyā*, then we must admit that *avidyā* is characterized by another *avidyā*. This would definitely lead to the fallacy of *infinite regress*. And an entity which is directly manifested by the witness-self does not need any proof, like happiness or misery. But as regards its specific nature, namely, whether it is positive or not, there may arise doubt. And it is this element that is

characterized by *avidyā*. And perception and other proofs go to prove that it is positive in nature by removing the *avidyā* pertaining to that element.<sup>25</sup>

The view that unintelligibility of *avidyā* is an ornament to *avidyā* and to Advaita is often mentioned, but its true import is seldom understood. Vyāsātīrtha sardonically remarks that the Advaitins could very well say that *ahankāra* is real and *avidyā* is superimposed on it; or they could say that *ahankāra* is the effect of *avidyā* and *avidyā* is superimposed on it; for, any problem connected with *avidyā* is said to be unintelligible and unintelligibility constitutes glory to Advaita.<sup>26</sup> Madhusūdana Sarasvatī points out that unintelligibility with regard to any problem connected with *avidyā* is not an ornament. We do not say that *avidyā* is unintelligible in all its aspects. We define *avidyā*, offer proofs to establish its positive nature, and discuss locus and content and also its annihilating factor. But it is only when we try to prove whether it is real or unreal, we are beset with difficulties; and, it is this unintelligibility that is said to be the ornament, as it suggests that *avidyā* is *anirvacanīya* and thus is removable by knowledge.<sup>27</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

We started our discussion by saying that the knowledge of the identity of *jīva* with Brahman is the annihilating factor of *avidyā*. The major texts of the Upaniṣads alone give rise to such a knowledge. Its validity, however, is questioned by certain objections that suggest themselves or are suggested by the schools that are opposed to Advaita. Exercise of *yukti* confutes all these objections and confirms that the knowledge that arises from the major texts of the Upaniṣads is

true. While it may be said that the method of interpretation of the texts of the Upaniṣads remained uniform, methods of refutation changed with bewildering rapidity on account of the impact of the schools that are opposed to Advaita.

## NOTES

1. See Śaṅkara's commentary on the verse — *aprameyo hṛṣīkeśaḥ padmanābho' marāprabhuh*, *Viṣṇusahasranāmastotra*, 23.
2. *pratyaksamivīdāvacchinnam-ajñānam-pramāṇākkāreṇa vivartate, tatra ajñānapradhānena cakṣurādivivartaḥ, samvitprādhānyena vedavivartaḥ*, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's commentary on the *Saṅkṣepa-sūtriraka*, II, 102.
3. *Pañcapādikā* [Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, 1958], p. 171.
4. *Advaita-siddhi — Laghucandrikā* [Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay], p. 630.
5. *yuktisā arthāpattiḥ anumānam vā, Bhāmatī* [Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay, 1938], p. 39.
6. *Advaita-siddhi — Laghucandrikā*, p. 577.
7. *Bṛh adāraṇyakopaniṣad*, II, iv, 5.
8. *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, I, i, 2.
9. *iha anubhavaḥ svarūpābhivyaktiḥ, Kalpataru* [Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay, 1938], p. 90.
10. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, III, i, 1; II, i.
11. *Brahma-sūtra*, III, iii, 11.
12. *Saṅkṣepa-sūtriraka*, I, 173.
13. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*, III, viii, 8.
14. *ibid.*, IV, iii, 18-19; IV, iii, 7.
15. *Vākya-vṛtti*, 48.
16. *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, II, 55.
17. VI, v, 20/54.
18. See *Saṅkṣepa-sūtriraka*, II, 116-119.

19. *Bṛhadāraṇyako paṇiṣad*, IV, iv, 19.

20. *dvaitamithyātvaṃ anaṅgīkurvāṇāḥ 'neha nānāsti kiñcana' iti śrutih brahmaṇi avatārabhedena niyāmyabhedena vā prasaktam niṣedhati, brahmaṇi na ko'pi bhedo'sti, ekameva brahma na nānā iti tadarthaḥ iti manyante, Brahmānandiyabhāva prakāśaḥ* [Edited by Sri V. Subramania Sastri and Published by The Private Secretary To His Highness The Maharaja of Cochin, 1961], p. 54.

21. *Advaita-siddhi*, p. 94.

22. *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*, III, ii, 3.

23. *vidvān — brahmajñāni, nāmarūpādi vimuktaḥ — amuktaḥ nāmarūpayukta eva, Brahmānandiyabhāva prakāśa*, p. 94.

24. *Advaita-siddhi*, p. 160.

25. *ibid.*, p. 565.

26. *ibid.*, p. 577.

27. *ibid.*

### BRAHMAN, THE SUPREME SELF

The supreme self does not have either the gross or the subtle body. There is none equal or superior to it. And it is known that it has the supreme power capable of creating manifold objects. It has the inherent power of creation by virtue of its consciousness.

The supreme self has no master and also no controller. It does not have the subtle and the gross body. It is the source of the universe and also the lord of the presiding deities of all the sense organs. It neither proceeds from anything nor has any lord.

The *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*, VI, 8-9

ŚĀRĪRAKAVYĀKHYĀPRASTHĀNABHEDAḤ

by

*Ātmavidyābhūṣaṇam V. S. V. Gurusvāmī Śāstrī*

*(Contd. from Vol. XI, No. 1)*





(viii) शङ्करमण्डनोक्तयोः ज्ञानकर्मविरोधाविरोधयोः  
वाचस्पतिमिश्राणां सामरस्योक्तिः

[ 163 ]

वस्तुतो न विरोधोऽस्ति तयोर्भावे परीक्षिते ।  
परीक्ष्य भगवान्प्राह भावं वाचस्पतिः शुभम् ॥

[ 164 ]

कर्म कर्तव्यतायां स्यादधिकारो हि कारणम् ।  
अधिकारश्च विदुषः श्रद्धधानस्य युज्यते ॥

[ 165 ]

पसेक्षब्रह्मधीर्यस्य निश्चिता जायते स हि ।  
जानन्क्रियाकर्तृरूपप्रपञ्चासत्यतां स्वयम् ॥

[ 166 ]

अश्रद्धधानोऽविद्वांश्च कुतस्तस्याधिकारिता ।  
पित्तेन दूनरसनो लिहन्रसनया गुडम् ॥

[ 167 ]

तिक्ततां तस्य नैवासौ श्रद्धत्ते तं त्यजन्नपि ।  
तिक्ततानुभवं यद्वत्पित्तदुष्टेन्द्रियः पुमान् ॥

[ 168 ]

मिथ्येति मनुते तद्वत्सोऽपि पूर्वोक्ततत्त्ववित् ।  
जाते तत्त्वावबोधे येऽविद्यासंस्कारहेतुकाः ॥

[ 169 ]

व्याहारा अनुवर्तन्ते तान्मिथ्येत्येव मन्यते ।  
विरोधमविरोधं च भगवत्पादमण्डनौ ॥

[ 170 ]

यद्वचस्तद्वचितं वाचस्पत्यव्यवस्थया ।  
तत्त्वबोधः कर्मविधिष्वश्रद्धोत्पादनक्षमः ॥

[ 171 ]

जायते यस्य विदुषो नासौ कर्म समाचरेत् ।  
एवंविधेन भावेन विरोधं भाष्यकृज्जगौ ॥

[ 172 ]

अतादृशस्तत्त्वबोधो यस्य विज्ञस्य जायते ।  
विदुषा तेन नियतं कर्म कार्यं न संशयः ॥

[ 173 ]

अविरोधमनेनैव भावेनाह स्म मण्डनः ।  
विद्या क्षिप्रतरा क्षिप्रा कर्मिणामूर्ध्वरेतसाम् ॥

[ 174 ]

संभवेदिति चोवाच प्रोक्तभावेन मण्डनः ।  
संनिकृष्टजपापुष्पलौहित्यस्थितिमात्रतः ॥

वर्तते गुणित्वात् हि श्रुतौ श्रुतौ ॥  
 ननु विरोधिनौ स्यातां भगवत्प्राप्तौ ॥  
 एवं विरुद्धव्याख्यानापत्तौ क्वचित् ।

[ 179 ]

अथान्वयव्युत्पत्त्येव न भवतीत्युच्यते ॥  
 श्रुतौ विरोधिनौ श्रुतौ श्रुतौ ॥

(IX)

॥ एतद्व्याख्यानापत्तौ क्वचित् ॥  
 व्याख्यानापत्तौ क्वचित् ॥  
 क्वचित् व्याख्यानापत्तौ क्वचित् ॥

[ 178 ]

॥ स हि श्रुतौ श्रुतौ श्रुतौ ॥  
 श्रुतौ श्रुतौ श्रुतौ श्रुतौ ॥

[ 177 ]

॥ श्रुतौ श्रुतौ श्रुतौ श्रुतौ ॥  
 श्रुतौ श्रुतौ श्रुतौ श्रुतौ ॥

[ 176 ]

॥ श्रुतौ श्रुतौ श्रुतौ श्रुतौ ॥  
 श्रुतौ श्रुतौ श्रुतौ श्रुतौ ॥

[ 175 ]

[ 180 ]

बार्हदारण्यकं वाक्यं व्याकुर्वाणौ विलक्षणम् ।  
स्थितप्रज्ञं च भगवान्सिद्धं भाष्यकृदब्रवीत् ॥

[ 181 ]

तमेव साधकं प्राह श्रीमदाचार्यमण्डनः ।  
भाष्यवार्तिककारौ च प्रकृतेऽपि निदर्शनम् ॥

[ 182 ]

निदिध्यासनमाह स्म ध्यानमेवेति भाष्यकृत् ।  
साक्षात्कारात्मविज्ञानमिति तत्तु सुरेश्वरः ॥

[ 183 ]

श्रीसुरेश्वरसिद्धान्तवर्णनावसरे मुखे ।  
शङ्करस्य सुरेशस्य व्याख्याभेदप्रदर्शनम् ॥

[ 184 ]

येषु वाक्येषु भवतीत्येतत्स्पष्टं भविष्यति ।  
शारीरकार्थसंक्षेपे सर्वज्ञात्ममुनिः क्वचित् ॥

[ 185 ]

अज्ञानस्याश्रयो जीव इति यन्मण्डनोऽब्रवीत् ।  
तन्मण्डनस्य प्रस्थानं नैवादेयं मनीषिभिः ॥

[ 186 ]

इत्येवं बोधयामास तद्विमृश्यं विमर्शकैः ।  
यथाविद्याश्रयो ब्रह्म तथा जीवोऽपि संभवेत् ॥

[ 187 ]

सिद्धान्तद्वितयं चैतद्भाष्यादेवावगम्यते ।  
न चेदं परिहार्यं स्यान्नाप्यशाङ्करमेव वा ॥

[ 188 ]

प्रस्थानान्तरमेवास्तु तथापीदं न दुष्यति ।  
प्रस्थानान्तरता नैव हेयतायां प्रयोजिका ॥

[ 189 ]

हेत्वन्तरं च वक्ष्यामः प्रकृतार्थप्रसाधकम् ।  
सिद्धान्तलेशसंक्षेपप्रारम्भेऽप्ययदीक्षितैः ॥

[ 190 ]

‘स्वग्रन्थानूदितानेकभिन्नसिद्धान्तावदिभिः ।  
आचार्यैर्वहुधा नीता सूक्तिरेकैव शाङ्करी ॥

[ 191 ]

तच्छाङ्करोक्तिमूलानां सिद्धान्तानां प्रदर्शनम् ।  
उपादेयत्वबोधाय सुधियां क्रियते मया ॥’

[ 192 ]

इत्येतन्मङ्गलार्थेन पद्येन प्रतिपाद्यते ।  
नाशाङ्करः कश्चिदस्ति सिद्धान्तः सङ्गृहे यदि ॥

[ 193 ]

तन्मण्डनस्य सिद्धान्तः शाङ्करो नैव संशयः ।  
सर्वज्ञात्ममुनिः प्राह त्याज्यं मण्डनभाषितम् ॥

[ 194 ]

न चेदं मन्यते सारं सारदर्शी मखीश्वरः ।  
सिद्धान्तलेशसंक्षेपेऽप्यत एव बहुत्र सः ॥

[ 195 ]

सिद्धान्तलेशगणने गणयामास मण्डनम् ।  
तदतात्पर्यविषये मतिभेदो न दुष्यति ॥

[ 196 ]

भावाद्वैतं मण्डनस्य मतं माध्वैरनूद्यते ।  
मधसूदनसद्ब्रह्मानन्दादिभिरपि क्वचित् ॥

(x) भावाद्वैतम् न मण्डनमतम्

[ 197 ]

अद्वैतमतसिद्धान्तसङ्गृहे बद्धकङ्कणैः ।  
ब्रह्मसिद्धयुक्तसिद्धान्तानपि संक्षेप्तृभिः पुनः ॥

[ 198 ]

नानूद्यते मखिवरैर्नामाप्यस्य मतस्य तु ।  
अवसाने ब्रह्मसिद्धेर्मतं बोधयतापि तत् ॥

[ 199 ]

उपक्रमेऽनूद्य सम्यक् खण्डयते मण्डनेन यत् ।  
तदिदं युज्यते तेषामप्यथाध्वरिणां पुनः ॥

[ 200 ]

मण्डनाचार्यमतमित्येतस्यानुपवर्णनम् ।  
ये विजानन्ति नितरासुपक्रमपराक्रमम् ॥

[ 201 ]

श्रीप्रकाशात्मयतयः मायाविद्यैक्यसाधने ।  
भाष्योक्ति-पञ्चपाद्युक्तिकथनात्समनन्तरम् ॥

[ 202 ]

प्रमाणमित्यकथयन् ब्रह्मसिद्धिकृता वचः ।  
तच्छङ्करानुयायि स्यात् मण्डनोऽपीति गम्यते ॥

[ 203 ]

मण्डनग्रन्थदृष्टत्वान्मण्डनस्य मतं भवेत् ।  
इति भ्रान्ता बभूवुस्ते मन्ये माध्वमहाजनाः ॥

[ 204 ]

मधुसूदनसद्ब्रह्मानन्दमेधाविभिः पुनः ।  
अनूदितं द्वैतिभिर्यत्तच्च तदूषकैस्तथा ॥

[ 205 ]

अनूद्यते साधयितुं मतस्यास्यापि साधुताम् ।  
'प्रपञ्चस्य प्रविलयः शब्देने'ति तु वाक्यतः॥

[ 206 ]

अवसाने ब्रह्मसिद्धौ बोधितत्वादिदं मतम् ।  
मण्डनस्यैव तत्स्यादित्यस्तु वा तैरनूदितम् ॥

[ 207 ]

मतं केषाञ्चिदेवेति प्रतिजानाति मण्डनः ।  
अत एवादूषयच्च ब्रह्मसिद्धिमुखेऽपि तत् ॥

[ 208 ]

कथमेकेन चैकस्मिन्ग्रन्थे त्वेकस्य वस्तुनः ।  
उपक्रमे खण्डितस्य पुनरन्ते प्रदर्शनम् ॥

[ 209 ]

वस्तुतो मण्डनात्प्राचां केषाञ्चिन्मतमेव तत् ।  
विभ्यतां स्निह्यतां वापि नैयायिकबुधैः सह ॥



[ 210 ]

आरिराद्यिषूणां वा नैयायिकमनांस्यपि ।  
यथा तथा वा भवतु सप्रमाणमिदं मतम् ॥

[ 211 ]

समन्वयाधिकरणभाष्यमूलं भवेदिदम् ।  
'अविद्याकल्पितस्यैव भेदस्य विनिवर्तने ॥

[ 212 ]

तत्परं शास्त्रमित्येवं भाष्यकारा वभाषिरे ।  
प्रसिद्धा ये तु वर्तन्ते सिद्धान्ता भामतीकृतः ॥

[ 213 ]

प्रायः सर्वे ब्रह्मसिद्धौ मण्डनाचार्यबोधिताः ।  
बहुना किं ब्रह्मसिद्धिमूलं वाचस्पतेर्मतम् ॥

[ 214 ]

या ब्रह्मसिद्धिः प्रथिता पुराणी तां मण्डनाचार्यकृतिं विमृश्य ।  
सिद्धान्तभेदाः किल ये तदीयाः प्रादर्शयं तामिह संग्रहेण ॥

[ 215 ]

न मण्डनाचार्यमतं कदापि त्याज्यं भवेत्पण्डितमण्डलीभिः ।  
अत्यन्तमादेयमसंशयं तत् सारार्थगर्भं त्वनसूययैव ॥

(अनुवर्तते)

## MAY BRAHMAN PROTECT ALL

May the supreme Brahman, which is beginningless which is free from *avidyā* and all its evil consequences superimposed on it, which is self-luminous, one, and pure, which the sannyāsins, with minds which are pure and are engrossed in the continuous, uninterrupted contemplation (of Brahman), attain knowing it as the inward Self — may that supreme Brahman protect all.

*Sureśvara, Taittirīyopaniṣad-bhāṣya-vārttika, III, 89*

ŚĀRĪRAKAVYĀKHYĀPRASTHĀNABHEDAḤ

*Ātmavidyābhūṣaṇam V. S. V. Gurusvāmī Śāstrī*

Free rendering in English

by

Sri J. R. S. Vasani Ramanan

*(Contd. from Vol. XI, No. 1)*



- (ix) *Vācaspatimiśra sees no contradiction between the views expressed by Śrī Śaṅkara and Maṇḍana with regard to the relation between karma and knowledge*

[ 163 ]

When the views expressed by Śrī Śaṅkara and Maṇḍana with regard to the relation between *karma* and knowledge, are carefully examined, there is, in fact, no contradiction between them, says Vācaspatimiśra.

[ 164 ]

A person should have the required eligibility to perform *karmas*. Only that person who is knowledgeable and is interested is deemed to be eligible.

[ 165 ]

The knowledge which arises from the Upaniṣads is indirect and mediate (*parokṣa*). When this indirect and mediate knowledge of Brahman becomes direct and immediate, a person attains liberation and sees the unreal nature of this world.

[ 166 - 169 ]

How can a person become eligible to perform *karmas* when he is not knowledgeable and is not interested? When a person suffering from bilious fever tastes a piece of jaggery, he finds it bitter; but it is contradictory to the fact. Even after the abandonment of the piece of jaggery, the taste of bitterness persists and this taste is considered by the person as false. Similarly, the person who has known the truth considers all that belongs to the empirical state as illusory.

[ 170 - 171 ]

The views expressed in this connection by both Śrī Śaṅkara and Maṇḍana appear to be opposed to each other. According to Vācaspati, the views expressed by both Śrī Śaṅkara and Maṇḍana are correct. He, who has known the truth loses interest in doing *karmas* and he does not perform them. This is the view expressed by Śrī Śaṅkara.

[ 172 - 176 ]

That knowledgeable person who has not realized the Self, should undoubtedly perform all the obligatory rites. This is the view expressed by Maṇḍana and it is not contradictory to what Śrī Śaṅkara has said. According to Maṇḍana, the exclusive pursuit of contemplative discipline on the one hand and the combined use of contemplative discipline and ritualistic discipline on the other, lead to the direct intuition of the Self. When a china flower (*japā-kusuma*) and a piece of crystal are placed side by side there arises the erroneous cognition, "The crystal is red." Here, Maṇḍana accepts the theory of error called *anyathākhyāti*. This does not mean that he is opposed to the theory of error called *anirvacanīyakhyāti* advocated by the Advaitins.

[ 177 - 178 ]

Maṇḍana advocates *sphoṭa-vāda*, but he does not criticise Brahma-vāda. The truth that the nature of Brahman is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, is acceptable to him. He has interpreted the texts of the *Kaṭha*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Māṇḍūkya*, and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣads* in such a manner that they suit his own line of thought.

But his interpretations do not appear to be different from that of Śrī Śaṅkara.

(x) *Maṇḍana's views are different from those of Śrī Śaṅkara only on minor issues*

[ 179 ]

Even though Śrī Śaṅkara and Maṇḍana have written different commentaries highlighting their own viewpoints, they are not inimical to each other. Similarly, Śrī Śaṅkara and Suresvara who are the master and the disciple respectively, hold different views.

[ 180 - 183 ]

While commenting on a sentence of the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Śrī Śaṅkara explains that a *sthita-prajña* is a person who has realized the Self but Maṇḍana holds that a *sthitaprajña* is just a *sādhaka* (an aspirant of liberation). Similarly there is difference between the views of Suresvara and Śrī Śaṅkara. While Śrī Śaṅkara holds that *nididhyāsana* (deep reflection) is only *dhyāna* (meditation), Suresvara holds it to be immediate knowledge. This point will be explained in detail in the next section on Suresvara.

[ 184 - 187 ]

Sarvajñātmamuni in his work, *Saṅkṣepaśārīraka* has called upon the scholars of Advaita to reject the view of Maṇḍana, who says that the *jīva* is the locus of *ajñāna*. The critics should examine this. Just as Brahman is the locus of *avidyā*, the *jīva* is the locus of

*ajñāna*. These two points have their origin only in the commentary of Śrī Śaṅkara. These views could neither be rejected nor could it be said that they are contradictory to what Śrī Śaṅkara has said.

[ 188 - 192 ]

Holding a different view does not mean that it should be rejected. In this context we shall point out what Appayya Dīkṣita has said in the beginning of his work, *Siddhāntaleśasaṅgraha*. Dīkṣita says: "Various authors who advocated the philosophy of Advaita, have interpreted the words of Śrī Śaṅkara that are in consonance with their own line of thought. For the benefit of scholars, I shall now point out the words of Śrī Śaṅkara that have formed the basis for various authors to express their viewpoints." So, it should be understood that all the views expressed in the *Siddhāntaleśasaṅgraha* have originated from those of Śrī Śaṅkara.

[ 193 - 195 ]

So, there is no doubt that the views of Maṇḍana have originated from that of Śrī Śaṅkara. But Sarvajñātmanamuni says that the views of Maṇḍana deserve to be rejected. But Appayya Dīkṣita has thought otherwise. According to him there is nothing wrong to hold different views on minor topics if such views are not contradictory to what Śrī Śaṅkara has said.

[ 196 ]

According to the Mādhyas, *bhāvūdvaita* or the negation of all positive entities other than Brahman, is the view of Maṇḍana. Madhusūdana, Brahmānanda and others also opine the same.



(xi) *Bhāvādvaita is not the viewpoint of Maṇḍana*

[ 197 - 200 ]

Appayya Dīkṣita, who has been very keen in explaining the views of all the authors belonging to Advaita philosophy, does not even mention this point. Maṇḍana at the beginning of his *Brahmasiddhi* mentions this point and later criticises it. Dīkṣita has rightly omitted this point.

[ 201 - 202 ]

While trying to establish the identity between *mīyā* and *avidyā*, Prakāśātman explains a portion of Śrī Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* and also a portion of the *Pañcapādikā*. After that, he says that the words of the author of the *Brahmasiddhi* are authoritative (*pramāṇa*). From this, it could be concluded that Maṇḍana was the follower of Śrī Śaṅkara.

[ 203 - 204 ]

When the Mādhvas found *bhāvādvaita* being mentioned in the *Brahmasiddhi* of Maṇḍana, it seems, they mistook it to be the view of Maṇḍana. Madhusūdana and Brahmānanda also are of the same view.

[ 205 - 206 ]

It is possible to justify the *bhāvādvaita* view with which Maṇḍana's name is associated. At the end of his *Brahmasiddhi*, Maṇḍana explains the *bhāvādvaita* view in these words *viz.*, '*prapañcasya pravilayah śabdena,*' etc. This, perhaps, made the Mādhvas and others associate the name of Maṇḍana with this view.

[ 207 - 210 ]

Maṇḍana, in fact, has understood this *bhāvādvaita* view as belonging to others. That is why he criticises this view at the beginning of his *Brahmasiddhi*. How could Maṇḍana criticise the same view at the beginning of his work and establish the same view at the end of the same work? This is not so. He has, in fact taken up the *bhāvādvaita* view of some earlier author or of the Naiyāyikas for critical examination. Whatever may be its origin, it is valid.

[ 211 - 213 ]

The basis for this view is the commentary of Śrī Śaṅkara under. *samanvayādhikaraṇa*. In the above context, Śrī Śaṅkara says that the purport of the *śāstra* is to remove the difference fictitiously created by nescience. All the prominent views expressed by Vācaspatimīśra could be found in the *Brahmasiddhi* of Maṇḍana. In short, it could be said that the views of Vācaspati are derived from the work, *Brahmasiddhi*.

[ 214 - 215 ]

After studying carefully the famous work called the *Brahmasiddhi* of Maṇḍana, I have mentioned here, in brief, all his viewpoints. The view of Maṇḍanācārya should be accepted by all Sanskrit scholars without any bias. His views are very useful to the extent that no scholar can afford to neglect them.

(to be continued)

## THE DOCTRINE OF MĀYĀ

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The Advaita doctrine of *māyā* affords illimitable scope for discussion between its advocates and opponents. In spite of the complicated dialectics that has gone into its architecture, it still continues to be misquoted, misused, and misunderstood. Though one may have reservation about its value, certainly one cannot question its content as a metaphysical-epistemological theory.

The doctrine of *māyā* can be better understood if one understands the philosophy of Advaita. According to Advaita, the ultimate reality is one only, without a second. It is called "*Brahman*" or "*Sat*." It is no other than the *Ātman* or the Self of the individual. It is pure consciousness by nature (*caitanya-svarūpa*). Consciousness is not an attribute of Brahman. On the contrary, it is the very essence of Brahman. Since it is one and homogeneous, it is free from attributes and specifications: that is to say, it is *nirguṇa*, *nirviśeṣa*. Whatever be the qualities or attributes which are associated with it, they do not *really* exist in it. They are superimposed on it in the same way as "snakeness"

is superimposed on a rope when a person mistakes it as a snake. When we speak of Brahman as the cause of the world, we superimpose causality on Brahman. Only if there is a second entity in addition to Brahman, the latter can be related to it. When we speak of Brahman and the world as cause and effect, we *assume* the reality and existence of the world, and relate the world with Brahman superimposing *causality* on the latter. Just as Brahman is devoid of qualities, even so it is bereft of all kinds of relation including causal relation. Advaita holds the view that the highest reality which is one and non-dual can be known only by denying the attributes and relations superimposed on it due to ignorance. It can be known only through the “*neti neti*” method as taught in the *Upaniṣad*.<sup>1</sup> This “*neti neti*” (“not this, not this”) method is appropriate, since Brahman is free from all kinds of difference—*sajātīya-bheda*, *vi-jātīya-bheda*, and *svagata-bheda*. Though there is nothing like or unlike Brahman and though Brahman is free from internal distinction, we superimpose on it all kinds of distinctions not knowing its real nature; and so the only way by which it can be known is to deny or negate everything that is superimposed on it. The objects of the world can be brought under two categories—*mūrta* and *amūrta*, *i.e.* gross and subtle. The *Upaniṣad* says that Brahman, the ultimate reality, is not gross; it is not subtle either. Since it is not gross and also not subtle, it can be known only through negating the gross and the subtle from it.<sup>2</sup>

If there is no reality in addition to Brahman, then how does one explain the appearance of the world in which we exist as human beings? To answer this question the Advaitin brings in the doctrine of *māyā*.

Though Brahman in itself is not the cause of anything, it plays the role of cause because of *māyā* (otherwise called *āvidyā*) which is its power. *Māyā* and Brahman are related as "power" and "possessor of power".<sup>3</sup> It is not enough if we say that *māyā* is the power of Brahman; we have to explain its metaphysical status in the context of the thesis of non-dualism.

*Māyā* cannot be *sat* or "being", for Brahman alone is *sat*, and *māyā* is different from Brahman. According to Advaita, *sat* is real in the sense that it exists all the time. It means that *sat* does not suffer sublation at any time. Conversely, whatever suffers sublation is not real. Since *māyā* gets sublated at the time of Brahman-realization, it is not real. Also, *māyā* cannot be called *asat* or "non-being". What is *asat* can never be experienced and cannot be the cause of anything. *Māyā* is not only experienced by us, but it is also the cause of the world of name and form. It cannot, therefore, be *asat*. Though Brahman in itself is not the cause of the world, it becomes the cause of the world through its association with *māyā*, in the same way as a magician is enabled by his power to produce illusory appearances of animate and inanimate beings. Drawing a distinction between *pariṇāmyupādāna-kāraṇa* and *vivartopādāna-kāraṇa*, Advaita says that, while *māyā* which undergoes modification is the *pariṇāmyupādāna-kāraṇa* of the world, Brahman which is not subject to change or transformation is the *vivartopādāna-kāraṇa* of the world. It may be mentioned here that Brahman, when associated with *māyā*, is called *Īśvara* or *Saguṇa-Brahman*, and that when it is conditioned by *avidyā* or *antaḥkāraṇa*, it is called *jīva*. So both *Īśvara* and *jīva* are conditioned realities (*sopādhika-tattvas*). Just as *Īśvara* in His

essential nature is *Brahman* itself, even so every *jīva* in its essential nature is *Brahman* itself. The *jīva* which is under the control of *māyā* or *avidyā* in empirical existence is not able to look through and beyond *māyā/avidyā*. Identifying itself with the mind-sense-body complex, it considers itself to be the agent and enjoyer, and thus burdens itself with merit and demerit, the consequences of which it has to reap in a series of embodied existence until it is liberated through the attainment of the right knowledge of Brahman-Ātman.

According to Advaita, *sat* and *asat* are the two extremes of the spectrum. While *sat* or being is the reality, *asat* or non-being is what is totally non-existent. The latter may also be called *śūnya*. Taking into consideration the *vyāvahārika* realm in which things appear to us, Advaita speaks of levels of reality — *pāramārthika*, *vyāvahārika*, and *prātibhāsika*. While *sat* or being has absolute reality (*pāramārthika-sattā*), the objects of the world such as table, tree, mountain, etc., have empirical reality (*vyāvahārika-sattā*) and illusory objects such as a rope-snake and a dream-lion have phenomenal reality (*prātibhāsika-sattā*). The last two categories, *i.e.*, objects possessing empirical reality and phenomenal reality, constitute the *vyāvahārika* realm. *Sat* or Brahman through *māyā / avidyā*, appears as objects possessing empirical as well as phenomenal reality.

A brief explanation about the appearance of the world is necessary at this stage. According to Śaṅkara, Brahman and the world are related as reality and appearance. What the rope is to the snake, Brahman is to the world. It is well-known that rope is the

substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*) for the appearance of the snake therein. It is necessary to bear in mind the following points in the case of the rope-snake illusion. (1) In the absence of the rope which is the substratum there cannot be the appearance of a snake thereon. (2) The rope remains the rope all the time without undergoing any change. (3) It is *avidyā* which not only conceals the nature of the rope, but also projects the appearance of a snake at that time in the given substratum (*i.e.*, the rope). (4) The snake that is perceived is a *new creation* by *avidyā*. (5) The cognition of snake suffers sublation at the time of the cognition of the rope. (6) Since the rope-snake suffers sublation, it is *mithyā*. It can also be characterized as *anirvacanīya* in the sense that it cannot be described as real (*sat*) and as unreal (*asat*). (7) The rope-snake is *prātibhāsika* in the sense that it exists only when it is seen. What is suggested by the rope-snake analogy is that (1) Brahman is the *adhiṣṭhāna*, whereas the world is *adhyasta*; (2) *māyā* which conceals the nature of Brahman projects the appearance of the world; (3) the world which is *adhyasta* is *mithyā* or *anirvacanīya*; and (4) the world as the world ceases to be at the dawn of the knowledge of Brahman. It should be noted that, unlike the rope-snake which is *prātibhāsika*, the empirical world is *vyāvahārika*. Though it is *vyāvahārika*, it is nevertheless *mithyā*. It means that the Advaitin does not deny the existence of the world as an empirical reality, though he holds that it is *not ultimately real*.

That Brahman, the ultimate reality, is the substratum of the world, is known through scripture (*śruti*) supported by reasoning (*yukti*) as well as through experience (*anubhava*). The world which

is an appearance cannot exist without a substratum; and nothing else can be the substratum for the world excepting Brahman, which is uncaused and which is, therefore, independent. It is needless to quote the numerous passages in the *Upaniṣads* which not only bring out the nature of Brahman as real, as consciousness, as infinite, as bliss, but also identify Brahman with *Ātman*. It is enough to refer to two *mahāvākyas* in this context. There is the declaration: "Brahman is consciousness" (*prajñānam brahma*).<sup>4</sup> Again, there is the statement: "This Self is Brahman" (*ayam ātmā brahma*).<sup>5</sup> It means that Brahman which is consciousness is no other than the Self of the individual. Śaṅkara is never tired of saying that the Self does not remain unknown to everyone of us. The 'I' which everyone speaks of and affirms in our day-to-day experience is the Self. It is the knower. It is that which reveals everything, though it is not revealed by anything else. It is, therefore, said to be *svaprakāśa*, *i.e.*, self-luminous.<sup>6</sup> Since the Self which is consciousness is the subject, whereas everything else which is insentient or material is the object, Śaṅkara begins his celebrated commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* by emphasizing the radical difference between the subject (*i.e.*, the Self) and the object (*i.e.*, the not-Self) comparable to the difference between light and darkness.<sup>7</sup> The subject and the object, Śaṅkara declares, cannot be identified. If they cannot be identified, it is wrong to superimpose the nature of the one on the other. Notwithstanding the radical difference between the Self and the not-Self we carry on our business of life (*loka-vyavahāra*) by identifying the Self and the not-Self, or by superimposing the nature of the one on the other. The point to be noted here is that the defini-



tion of Brahman, *viz.*, “Brahman is real, knowledge, infinite” (*satyam jñānam anantam brahma*) is also the definition of *Ātman*, because Brahman and *Ātman* are identical.

It has already been stated that Śaṅkara does not deny the existence of the world; only he assigns to it a lower reality, *i.e.*, *vyāvahārikasattā*. Śaṅkara begins his philosophical analysis by noticing the existence of the world which calls for an explanation. The world requires a cause just as a pot requires a cause. Taking his stand on the authority of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Brahma-sūtra*, Śaṅkara tries to account for the world by tracing it to the non-dual reality which alone existed in the beginning, *i.e.*, before creation. There is, for example, the *Chāndogya* text: “In the beginning, my dear, *Sat* alone existed, one only, without a second.” The same *Upaniṣad* says in the sequel: “It thought: may I become many...”<sup>10</sup> It means that the non-dual reality is the cause of the world. Since there are logical difficulties in ascribing causality to Brahman, the non-dual reality, Śaṅkara makes use of the doctrine of *māyā*, which is not his own creation, but which is a scriptural doctrine, to relate Brahman and the world as cause and effect. Brahman which is non-relational becomes relational through *māyā*; Brahman which is acosmic (*niṣprapañca*) becomes cosmic (*saprapañca*) through *māyā*. The distinction between the non-relational and relational, acosmic and cosmic, aspects of Brahman is well brought out by the two terms, “Nirguṇa-Brahman” and “Saguṇa-Brahman”. There should not be any confusion between these two terms. If it is a “fact” that there is the pluralistic universe, then we have to postulate, according to Śaṅkara, *Īśvara* or *Saguṇa-Brahman* as the cause of it. *Īśvara*

who is endowed with the power called *māyā* is omnipotent as well as omniscient; He is the *māyin*, the wielder of *māyā*; and so *māyā* is under His control. A careful examination of the notion of *Īśvara* through a rigorous analysis of the cause-effect relation will help us to realize that we have to transcend "Īśvara" or "Saguṇa-Brahman" and arrive at "Nirguṇa-Brahman" as the highest metaphysical reality. The technique of transcendence through which *Nirguṇa-Brahman* is realized is beautifully brought out in the oft-quoted statement: "The acosmic reality is sought to be conveyed through the methods of superimposition (*adhyāroḥa*) and negation (*apavāda*)."<sup>11</sup> From the world which we experience we arrive at *Īśvara* as the cause thereof. *Īśvara* is Brahman with the power of *māyā*. *Māyā* which is not ultimately real points to the pure, non-dual Brahman as its locus. Both *māyā* and its projection are superimpositions on Brahman. One should realize Brahman through negating the superimpositions thereon, taking advantage of the scriptural texts such as "*tat tvam asi*"<sup>12</sup> which affirm the identity of Brahman and *Ātman*.

#### NOTES

1. See *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 2.3.6.

2. All the objects of the world including the five elements can be brought under two categories: *mūrta* and *amūrta*. Brahman is different from objects which are *mūrta*. It is also different from objects which are *amūrta*. Hence the *Upaniṣad* makes only two denials, "not this", "not this". There is no need for a third denial, since everything else has been negated by the two denials "*neti neti*".

3. See *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad*, 4.10.

4. *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, 3.1.3.

5. *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, II.

6. See *Pañcadaśī*, 3.13:

“ स्वयमेवानुभूतित्वाद्विद्यते नानुभाव्यता ।  
ज्ञातृज्ञानान्तराभावादज्ञेयो न त्वसत्तया ॥ ”

7. “ युष्मदस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरयोर्विषयविषयिणोः तमः प्रकाशवद्वि-  
रुद्धस्वभावयोः इतरेतरभावानुपपत्तौ सिद्धायां तद्धर्माणामपि सुतरां  
इतरेतरभावानुपपत्तिः । ”

8. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.1.1.

9. 6.2.1.

10. 6.2.3.

11. “ अध्यारोपापवादाभ्यां निष्प्रवञ्चं प्रपञ्च्यते । ”

12. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.10.3.

## ŚAṄKARA ON AVIDYĀ

अविद्यावत्त्वात् क्षेत्रज्ञस्य संसारित्वं इति चेत्, न; अविद्यायाः तामसत्त्वात् । तामसो हि प्रत्ययः — आवरणात्मकत्वात् — अविद्या विपरीतग्राहकः, संशयोपस्थापकः, अग्रहणात्मको वा; विवेकप्रकाशभावे तदभावात्; तामसे च आवरणात्मके तिमिरादिदोषे सति अग्रहणादेः अविद्यात्रयस्य उपलब्धेः ॥

If it be said that *Kṣetrajña*, endowed with *avidyā*, is a *saṃsārīn*, the reply is: no; for *avidyā* is a product of *tamas*. Since it is of the nature of a veil, *avidyā* — whether it is the cause of mis-apprehension, or doubt, or non-apprehension — is a *tāmasic* notion; *i.e.*, a notion produced by *tamas*; for, when discrimination arises, it disappears; for example, we find the same three modes of *avidyā* such as non-apprehension, arising from *timira*, which is *tāmasic*, as partaking of the nature of a veil.

— Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, 13.2.

पुनः स्मृतं इत्येतद्वचनं तस्मात्तदर्थः नान्यत्रापि प्रतीयते ।  
ननु तत्रापि । न परमात्मिकसत्तः परमात्मदेवतासम्भवात् । ननु  
व्यावहारिकसत्तः अव्यक्तव्यवहारो ननु व्यावहारिकसत्तसम्भवात् ।

इति ॥

### वदन्त्यादिभ्यो न तत्रेव भाष्ये ननु ननु

तस्मात्तत्रापि । तदर्थम् —

वदन्त्यादिभ्यो न तत्रेव भाष्ये ननु ननु । अत्रान्वयस्येव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव प्रतीयते ।  
वदन्त्यादिभ्यो न तत्रेव भाष्ये ननु ननु । अत्रान्वयस्येव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव प्रतीयते ।  
वदन्त्यादिभ्यो न तत्रेव भाष्ये ननु ननु । अत्रान्वयस्येव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव प्रतीयते ।  
वदन्त्यादिभ्यो न तत्रेव भाष्ये ननु ननु । अत्रान्वयस्येव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव प्रतीयते ।  
वदन्त्यादिभ्यो न तत्रेव भाष्ये ननु ननु । अत्रान्वयस्येव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव प्रतीयते ।  
वदन्त्यादिभ्यो न तत्रेव भाष्ये ननु ननु । अत्रान्वयस्येव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव प्रतीयते ।

परिकल्पितव्यवहारो ननु विचारः क्रियते मया ॥  
सामान्यतया ननु इहोक्तं ननु ननु ।

भाष्ये भाष्ये : अत्रान्वयस्येव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव प्रतीयते

अत्रान्वयस्येव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव व्यावहारिकसत्तस्यैव प्रतीयते

तु माया, अविद्यापदानकं कायं व्यावहारिकव्यवहारमायया ज्ञानमित्य-  
 मायायाश्चैवैवमाया । अथा, अविद्यामात्रं प्रकृतः, शेषसद्वैतविद्या  
 मुक्तं, परमायता लोकस्यैवासावादिषु चैव, मयम् । उक्तविद्यया प्रकृत-  
 यिकमित्कं सैवकर्म । तथा न परमायता लोकवदिति माय्यकर्मव्यवहारिक-  
 ननु प्रकृतिमायायैकायैवात्मानवकृतिसिद्धिषु मायाया सरसवामित्य-

इति प्रकृतिमायायैवैवशेषम् ॥

प्रकृति स्वामिद्विषय सत्त्वव्याप्तिसमायया ।

समाययापि भाववैतनियाम-

कायद्वैतवैवहारशास्त्रिकमया, सर्वसाधारणा तु प्रकृतिसिद्धि । अत एवाकृत-  
 शेषं सिद्धयेत्यस्य, भाववैतनियामिति । तस्याद्वैतवैवहारद्विषय-  
 वैवहारिकं तद्व्यावहारिकमित्यस्य । यस्य तदाशयवैवहार्यस्य तद्विद्यया-  
 चारक्ष्यमित्यस्य । तदेव यद्वैतनियामासायापि विषयस्यैव विचारक्ष-  
 सिद्धयेत्या तत्र कस्यापि व्यावहारिकः, अथमापि विद्यया भवति । तत्राह-  
 इति । तथापि तेनैवावैवहारवैवहारकाशाहैवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहार-

पश्यत्यति शोणितं विद्यया तया शब्दवैवहारवैवहारि ॥

प्राप्त्यापि विद्यैवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारः

वैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहार ।

वैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहार

प्राक्तम् -

यद्यपि सिद्धान्तं व्यावहारिकं जगदपि विचारक्षयम् । अत

अविद्यवैवहारम् ॥

एकत्र आध्यात्मिकवैवहारिकेऽपि । यद्यपि प्रतीतं विचारक्षयं न तत्राविद्यवैव-  
 हारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहार-  
 वैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहार-  
 वैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहार-  
 वैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहार-  
 वैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहारवैवहार-

इति तत्र इव स न कर्मादानं नम, किन्तु जीवव्यवहारः, सा च जीवा  
मनुष्यादिदेवतानुशेषं नम वस्तिवो जन्म, वन्दकवदियुधियाः ।  
न वस्तिवो जन्म, किन्तु जन्मव प्रतिभाति, अवन्दकवत । अत्रसा जीवस्य व  
त्वात् । तथा प्राज्ञस्यैवस्वयावन्दकवदोमकर्णादिदेवतानुशेषं नम  
प्राज्ञस्य वं लिङ्गाम् तत्कम न वस्तिवः कम, किन्तु कमवभाति, अवन्दक-  
न जात इति जात इत्युच्यते, यथा अत्रसा सकाम कम वस्तिवः कमव ।  
जात इत्युच्यते । यस्मि केवलप्रकृतिजनयो रामकर्णादिदेव परमात्मा  
यो हि धर्माधर्मिभिरकारसन्निवधप्रकृतिजनयो मनुष्यादिदेव परमात्मा  
स्यैव सप्तधर्मा, न तु धर्माधर्मिभिरनुभववामनयाधर्मममायद्युक्तम् ।  
अथा प्रकृतिमया स्यैवकमवस्ति वस्ति । यथाकिन्तुकिन्तु प्रक-

लेकस्यैवभावात् ॥

परमात्मा इत्यस्य अवधारत इत्युः । न तु वस्तिव इति । वस्तिवो  
धासिकम् । अत एव न परमात्मा लोकवदिति भाषितमाचार्यः । अत्र  
मयाकार्यमूर्तस्य देहिदेयादिकं तु देवैर्भक्तिकमवन्दनपरवभाति-  
विश्वः । तथा च प्रकृतिकाय जीवानां देहिदेयादिकं व्यावहारिकं,  
यदा विजुगोपिका मया प्रकृतिः, इदंजातमिदंजातं तु माद्यति

तु साक्षात् बुद्धिरिति विश्वः ॥

तन्मस्यादिभिरः । जीवस्य वास्तव रूप कटस्य आत्मैव, व्यावहारिक  
बुद्धिरिव विज्ञानात्मा जीव इति । कटस्य आत्मा इवैवर्तव्यैव एव  
विश्वे । नत्र कटस्य आत्मा जीवशब्देन विश्वश्च, किन्तु साक्षात्-  
जीवनाथम् । अथवा हि जीवान् स्ववशीकृत्य तेषां स्वजन्यगोचिरस्योन  
अथवाया एतत्परतन्वदादेतस्य धर्मिसंयोगं कर्तुं न क्षमत इति  
प्रकृतिप्रतिष्ठापितं वचनं तु जीवानामिव नास्याविद्यामयधर्मिसंयोगः

जन्म, इव स तु दीपसदृशतद्विद्यारूप मायामय इत्युच्यते ॥

साधनपक्षे मायामयो भिद्यते । तद्विज्ञानां धर्मिसंयोगोऽविद्यामाय-  
रजसर्गो भिद्यते, यथा वा साधनपक्षेऽविद्यामायजन्मस्यस्य,  
जातमित्थ इति । यथा यद्विद्यामायजन्मस्यस्यस्यस्यस्यः मायामयस्व  
व्यते, मायोपादानकं तु प्रतिभासिकत्वात् परमात्मा जात, किन्तु





भायाकायुर्भूतपुण्यमास्वादेभ्योऽपि कर्तव्यं प्राकृतं राजसत्त्वं, कर्मशरी-  
 भायामयं ज्ञानं लोकः, तथा लोकद्वेषा कर्णस्तुव भायाभयवृत्ति ।  
 सत्त्व्यापि प्राणिभूतिसकसत्त्वभायाभयत्वे सत्यपि प्राणिभूतिसकसत्त्व-  
 कर्ण एव भायामय इत्युच्यते इति चेत्, उच्यते - यथा स्यात्प्राणिक-  
 त्वे यथा राजसत्त्वं प्राकृतं भायाभयस्तथा कर्णोऽपि कर्ण

पूर्वोक्तः, अतस्त्वेष वात्तस्यद्वेषात्तदोऽपि एव इति चेत् ॥

तदपेक्षयात्वेनः पूर्वोक्तः इति वाच्यम् । अतस्त्वेषात्तदोऽपि कर्णोऽपि  
 कर्णोऽपि प्राणिकसत्त्वभायाभयत्वे सत्यपि कर्णोऽपि कर्णोऽपि कर्णोऽपि  
 तस्मात्प्राणिकसत्त्वभायाभयत्वे सत्यपि कर्णोऽपि कर्णोऽपि कर्णोऽपि

भावीति हि तदर्थः ॥

वस्तुतः अस्माद्विचारः, किञ्च भाया अस्माद्विद्युत्तदोऽपि कर्णोऽपि  
 भायापि न सत्त्वभायाभयं, भायापि सत्त्वभायाभयं, इत्युच्यते न  
 द्वेषस्य लोभया कर्णो वा न कर्णोऽपि प्राणिकसत्त्वभायाभयं । न च  
 तस्मात्तदर्थः ? त्रिभूतस्य द्वेषः, अतो त्वेष इत्युच्यते । तस्मा-  
 कस्यचित्त्वा अतस्त्वेषात्तदोऽपि कर्णोऽपि कर्णोऽपि कर्णोऽपि  
 प्रयोजककर्णत्वेन ? न हि कोऽपि लोभयापि एतत् । लोभयत्त्वं वा  
 प्राणितः कर्णोऽपि प्राणिकसत्त्वभायाभयत्वेन ? कथं वा लोभया सत्त्व-  
 भायाभयं ? तथा च अस्मात्प्राणिकसत्त्वभायाभयत्वेन कर्णोऽपि कर्णोऽपि  
 इत्या तस्याप्यकर्णत्वेन कर्णोऽपि प्राणिकसत्त्वभायाभयत्वेन कर्णोऽपि कर्णोऽपि  
 वक्तुं सौभाग्ययोग्यवत्त्वं हि । तथा तस्मात्तदर्थः त्रिभूतस्य वात्त-  
 भायाभयः सत्त्वभायाभयः तदपेक्षया सत्त्वभायाभयं न सत्त्वभायाभयं  
 पूर्वोक्तं इत्या चेत्, अहमित्येव भायापि सत्त्वभायाभयं इति चेत्  
 सत्त्वभायाभयं कथं वा कर्णोऽपि सत्त्वभायाभयं ? इत्युच्यते ? इत्युच्यते  
 एव त्रिभूते त्रिभूतस्य सत्त्वभायाभयत्वेन कर्णोऽपि कर्णोऽपि कर्णोऽपि

वस्तुतः अस्मात्प्राणिकसत्त्वभायाभयत्वेन कर्णोऽपि कर्णोऽपि कर्णोऽपि

प्रसङ्गात् । सत्त्वभायाभयत्वेन अस्मात्प्राणिकसत्त्वभायाभयत्वेन कर्णोऽपि कर्णोऽपि



तत्र एव कुरुते विभ्रवणवत्पुत्रो विरयते ॥  
 विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै प्रविष्टो विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै  
 शक्तिव्याः सामानाधिकरण्याव्याजस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै  
 विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै ॥

मन्त्रो विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै ।  
 अथ यो ज्ञानक प्राप्नोति ।  
 अथ यो ज्ञानक प्राप्नोति ।  
 अथ यो ज्ञानक प्राप्नोति ।

इत्यादिभिः । अथकामेन साहैतमात्मैव शिवस्य । तदेषा  
 द्वितीयाह मयावति

रात्रि ।  
 इति । तत्र साधनसिद्धौ इत्यवदत्तौ सुप्रसन्नितरणीया मयहेत-  
 मात्मानसकर्मवद्वरं प्रतिपद्यते इति सिद्धं साधनमहैतमसाधनानां च  
 विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै  
 कलासङ्गतविशेषात्मानस्यै इत्यवदत्तौ प्रतिपद्यते । ये तु विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै  
 य एवमात्मानस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै

अथैव जीववत्पुत्रोऽहोः शक्तिव्याव्याजस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै  
 विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै  
 शक्तिव्याव्याजस्यै शक्तिव्याव्याजस्यै शक्तिव्याव्याजस्यै

विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै ॥  
 रति । इत्यवदत्तौ विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै विद्वान्निवृत्त्याव्याजस्यै  
 शक्तिव्याव्याजस्यै शक्तिव्याव्याजस्यै शक्तिव्याव्याजस्यै  
 शक्तिव्याव्याजस्यै शक्तिव्याव्याजस्यै शक्तिव्याव्याजस्यै

## AVATĀRAS — WHO ARE THEY?\*

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ॐ  
*Bhāṣyabhāvajña Varahūr Kalyānasundara Śaṣṭrī*

I bow to Śrī Rāmarāyakavi, who follows the views of Śrī Śaṅkara and following whose writings I have prepared this discussion.

First, one should know this: The things are four-fold as empirically real, absolutely real, apparently real and wholly unreal. Among them, the empirically real things are the physical entities constituting the world, the living beings of men, animals, birds, etc. and the gross elements beginning with earth which are experienced through infallible means during the waking state. The absolutely real is Brahman which is one only without a second. (*Chāndogyopaniṣad* vi, ii, 1) The apparently real things are dream, magician's magic, rope-snake, etc. which are apprehended through defective means and which are existent only during their apparent apprehension. That which is wholly unreal consists of the son of a barren woman, the hare's horn, etc. which are non-existent as they are not experienced. Indeed, it is said: "In fact there is no *vandhyūputra*

(son of a barren woman); even in illusion, such an object does not appear.”

When this is the position, God’s descents—in the *vibhava* forms of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and so on—are not wholly unreal in nature, for they are cognized to be real. But they are not ultimately real, as they are not existent in the *pāramārthika* state. Nor are they empirically real, for their empirical reality is untenable because of their unimaginable birth, etc. So there remains only the apparent reality with regard to the forms of the descents of God. And it is proper (to speak of the descents of God as apparently real) because they (the forms) are so beautiful beyond inquiry like *gandharva* city, etc. For, none will, indeed, accept it to be true, if someone tells that a mother had an omniscient child with four hands, wielding weapons such as conch and discus, and adorned with crown, etc. Similar is the case if someone tells that there appeared the terrific man-lion form of a person from a pillar. Whatever is cognized, but does not admit of enquiry is *mithyā* like *indrajāla* (magic).

However, (if it is said): even the empirical world, according to Advaita, does not admit of enquiry, as it is said: “Tell, what else is there as *indrajāla* (magic) than this instance of a man who first stays in the form of an embryo in the mother’s womb; becomes endowed with the limbs of mind, hands, head, feet, etc., and later goes through the stages like childhood, youth and old age; and has the activities of seeing, eating, hearing, smelling, going and coming (in the cycle of birth and death)?” — nevertheless, none becomes wonderstruck or finds it to be untrue when everyone, by experience, understands the birth of a man, a tree, a pot

etc. from the semen, seed, clay, etc. respectively, So it is said to be justifiable. In this way, in the eyes of common people, whatever is not extra-ordinary (wonderful) and is within the limit of enquiry, such as (mortal) body, is said to be empirically real (*vyāvahārika*). However, whatever is exciting and transgresses the limit of enquiry is said to be unreal, like the *gandharva* city, etc. Therefore, (it is ascertained) that the power of Īsvara, viz. *māyā*, is the cause of various effects and is like *indrajāla*; but, *prakṛti* (the primordial matter) is only ordinary entity (without anything mysterious about it). So, when the Lord says in the *Bhagavadgītā* (IV, 6): “Ruling over my own *prakṛti*, do I make my advent through the power of my *māyā*,” he makes the distinction between *prakṛti* and *māyā*.

If it is argued: “Because the words ‘*prakṛti*’ and ‘*māyā*’ are synonymns, when it is said, ‘Ruling over my own *prakṛti*, do I take my advent out of *māyā*,’ the text of the author is, indeed, inappropriate. Even in this context, the commentator has committed a mistake as he interprets, ‘...not in reality like the world,’ because the world is non-existent in the absolute sense,” it is not so. As already pointed out, the words *prakṛti* and *māyā* are distinguished. In another way also we can show the distinction: i.e., *prakṛti* is *avidyā* (nescience) only, whereas *māyā* is *avidyā* along with its defects; the effect, evolved out of *avidyā* as its material cause, is said to have originated in the real sense, for this effect is empirically real. But that effect which has *māyā* as its material cause, is not the one born in the real sense, yet appears to be really born. It is similar to this: the serpent produced by *avidyā* alone is (empirically) real, while the ‘rope-serpent’ which is a product of *māyā* is only *mithyā* (illusory). To give another example: the

wakeful world produced only by *avidyā* is real, whereas the dream-world that is totally evolved out of *māyā* is *mīthyā*. Similarly, in the case of *jīvas*, their connection with the mortal body (*śarīra*) is produced only from *avidyā*; but in the case of *Īśvara*, His connection with the body is due to *māyā*, which is *avidyā* associated with its defects. Thus there is no inconsistency with regard to the Lord's declaration in the *Gītā*.

The text "*prakṛtim-adhiṣṭhāya*" is used to teach us that God has no such *avidyā*-made body as that of *jīva*, because *avidyā*, being dependent on Him, cannot have any connection with His body. Indeed, *avidyā*, after making the *jīva* dependent on it, provides the *jīva* with a body. Here the word *jīva* does not refer to the primordial, immutable Self, but only to the conscious Self that has a mind tainted with worldly knowledge. The immutable Self, indeed, is non-different from *Īśvara*, according to *śruti* texts like "*tatvam asi*." The essential nature of *jīva* is only the immutable Self; but its intellect which carries the reflection (of the Self) is empirical.

It can also be explained otherwise: *māyā* made up of the three *guṇas* is *prakṛti*; and *māyā* has the power similar to that of *indrajāla*. Consequently *prakṛti*'s effect that takes the form of body, senses, etc. of the *jīvas* is empirical; while *māyā*'s effect that takes the form of body, senses, etc. of *Īśvara* is only phenomenal similar to the *gandharva* city conjured up by *indrajāla*. Therefore, Śaṅkara has commented on the said text as '*na paramārthataḥ lokavat*.' Here, '*paramārthataḥ*' conveys the sense of *vyavahārataḥ* (empirical), but not '*vastutaḥ*' (absolutely real). For, in the absolute sense the world has, indeed, no reality.

Or else, let *prakṛti* and *māyā* be one and the same entity. (Then, the *Gītā* text means:) ‘As *prakṛti* is dependent on me, I take my advent out of *prakṛti*, but not due to *punya*, *pāpa* (*dharma*, *adharma*), etc.’ Implying this the Lord has said, “*ātma-māyayā*”. He who is produced from *prakṛti* which is associated with its latent qualities of *dharma*, *adharma*, etc. is the individual referred to as man and is held to have real birth. But he who has the forms of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, etc. produced by *prakṛti* alone is not really born, but appears to be born as it were. For instance, it is said: a *karma* performed by an ignorant person with desire is really a *karma*; whereas, a *karma* performed without desire by the wise is not really a *karma*, though it appears to be such, for it does not bind the wise. Therefore the birth of the omniscient *Īśvara*, in the embodied forms of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and so on is not really birth, but only appears to be so, for it does not bind Him. But it should be noted that in the case of an ignorant *jīva*, its birth with the human body, etc. is really birth, for it binds the respective *jīva*. Even the Dvaitins talk of *Īśvara*’s birth to be not dependent on *karma*; but His birth takes place due to *līlā* (sport). In that case also, *līlā* is not something over and above *māyā*, for *līlā* is only *māyāmaya* (full of *māyā*). Suffice it to say: indeed there is no scope for *līlā* in respect of *Īśvara* who is free from distinction.

The meaning of the above-cited *Gītā* verse can be finalised as follows. As a result of the foregoing discussion it is found that the individual who has a conditioned mind, who is dependent on *prakṛti* and who is called *jīva* takes birth as he is endowed with the body produced from *prakṛti*. But it is not the case with



regard to Īsvara; for Īsvara does not make his advent with the body born from *prakṛti*, as he is the immutable Self not dependent on *prakṛti*. Īsvara's birth is only *māyāmaya*.

If it is contended: "it is not possible to make such a distinction as the body of Īsvara is made up of *māyā* because it is *prātibhāsika*, while the body of *jīvas* is made up of *prakṛti*, because it is *vyāvahārika*; for, similar to the body of Arjuna even Kṛṣṇa's body is existent according to the empirical usage," it is not so. Kṛṣṇa's body is said to be seen in manifold form, and at times it is also unseen; and so Kṛṣṇa's body is made up of *māyā*. It is similar to this: the 'rope-snake' is sometimes said to be seen as stick, etc., and at other times not at all seen; and hence it is made up of *māyā*. Therefore, there is no real birth of Kṛṣṇa similar to the real birth of Arjuna and others; and so it is proper to speak of Kṛṣṇa as eternal, unborn and Īsvara.

Moreover, the argument of others, *viz.* "The birth of Kṛṣṇa is not *mithyā* like *indrajāla*, etc., but it is only real, as the Lord says in the *Gītā*, (IV, 6) '*prakṛtim* — essential nature, *adhiṣṭhāya* — without discarding, *ātmamāyayā* — by the divine will (knowledge), I take birth;' even the Lord's essential form has been established in *śruti* texts like, 'Of the lustre of the sun' (*Svetāśvataropaniṣad*, III, 8); 'of golden hue' (*Maitrāyaṇīyopaniṣad*, VI, 34), 'All *nimeṣas* ..... were born from the self-luminous person' (*Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad*, I, 8)," is untenable. That, by nature, Īsvara is free from form is established by *śruti* texts like, 'Brahman is real, knowledge, and bliss,' (*Tripīḍvibhūti-mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad*, I, 3) 'Free from parts, free from activity, serene,' (*Svetāśvataropaniṣad*, VI, 19), 'Beyond

sound, beyond touch, free from form, indestructible' (*Kāṭhopaniṣad*, III, 15). His form such as golden hue, etc. is assumed for the sake of worship, and so it is made up of *māyā* like *indrajāla*. If Īsvara has an iconic form, His being the indweller and witness of all becomes unestablished; for, then He would be an object of sight, like jar, etc., and so there will be the contingency of His being non-eternal. It is not proper to speak of birth even by His will because He is unborn; and Īsvara being the person free from any contact whatsoever cannot possess any body at all; and so to speak of the birth of Kṛṣṇa is only *mīthyā*.

This being the case, one should not ask the questions: How is association with birth possible for Īsvara which is non-relational consciousness? How can it have birth which is not due to *karma*? Having killed the wife of Bhṛgu, Viṣṇu was cursed: "Like me, you too should suffer the pains of separation from your wife;" and so with a view to free himself from that curse and from the sin incurred therefrom and also with a view to kill the demon, He took the descent in the form of Rāma and experienced separation from Sītā. During the *avatāra* of Rāma, hiding Himself He killed Vāli, and as a consequence of this He was killed by an arrow of a hunter during the *avatāra* of Kṛṣṇa. If so, how can it be said, one may ask, that the divine descent into the world in the forms of Kṛṣṇa, etc., is not caused by *karma*, even though they have experienced pleasure and pain due to merit and demerit of the deeds performed in the previous life? How can any action be done even through *līlā* which is the cause of pleasure and pain? Indeed, no one falls into the fire through *līlā*. How can Īsvara be the Lord when He suffers birth, old age and death, pleasure and

with *Rudra* is an *avatāra* of *Īsvara*. Therefore, all the *avatāras* of *Īsvara*, which are *abhautika* (i.e. not products of elements), are the direct modifications of *māyā*; but others which are the products of elements are the evolutes of *prakṛti*, and so they are spoken of as *jīvas*.

If it be asked how one set of bodies is referred to as the *avatāras* of *Īsvara* whereas another set of bodies is spoken of as *jīvas*, even though both the sets of bodies possess common features such as perceptibility, materiality, grossness, etc., it is on account of the supernatural qualities exhibited (by one set of bodies). The bodies which perform supernatural deeds are the bodies of *Īsvara*; for example, Agastya, Śiva, Hanūmat, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Narasimha, Varāha, Matsya, Vāmana and others are called *avatāras* of *Īsvara* as they performed supernatural deeds such as drinking the waters of the ocean, drinking the deadly poison called *hālāhala*, lifting the mountain, swallowing forest fire, constructing *setu*, coming out of a pillar, recovering the world, getting back the *Vedas*, and encompassing all the three worlds. But other bodies which perform only common deeds are the bodies of the *jīvas*, e.g., those of human beings. Making the distinction between the bodies of *jīvas* and those of *Īsvara* which are *bhautika* and *abhautika* respectively, the Self which is embodied in the body which is *bhautika* is called *jīva*, whereas that which is embodied in the body which is *abhautika* is called *Īsvara*. The *jīvas* are many, since the bodies are different. Also, *Īsvara* appears in many forms only on account of the difference among the bodies. According to their beliefs, people speak of *Īsvara* in many ways as He is embodied in different ways.

This distinction between *jīva* and *Īsvara* is also restated by *śruti* texts with a view to establish the thesis

(*siddhānta*) of non-dualism. The thesis cannot be established without restating the *pūrvapakṣa*. One should not, therefore, wrongly think that the distinction between *jīva* and *Īsvara* is the final teaching of *śruti*; for *śruti* only restates the distinction. The purport of *śruti* has already been shown, *viz.*, the Self which is one only is *Īsvara*; and everything other than the Self is the not-Self, which is a superimposition on the Self. Those who are incapable of making the distinction between the Self and the not-Self think that the bodies of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are the products of *prakṛti* and are not, therefore, the bodies of *Īsvara*. Those who discriminate the Self from the not-Self know that the Self which is free from all adjuncts and specifications, which is real, knowledge and bliss, which is in every being, is identical with *Īsvara* which is one; there is, thus, identity (as the truth) for the knowers of truth, and duality for those who are ignorant of it. The standpoint of duality which is rooted in ignorance should be avoided by the spiritual aspirants, as it is the cause of fear; and there are *śruti* texts such as, "Fear arises because of the second," in support of this position. Those who desire the state free from fear should listen to the teaching of non-duality, reflect and repeatedly contemplate on it. In support of this there are *śruti* texts such as: "He who is established in the state free from fear knows it," "You have attained that which is free from fear," "He who knows the Self overcomes sorrow."

*Viśiṣṭādvaita* must be rejected, since it is not the teaching of *śruti*. Rāmarāyakavi in his book, *Siddhāntasindhu*, which is a commentary on the *Siddhāntabindu*, has elaborately shown that there is no coordination between the two words "*viśiṣṭa*" and "*advaita*". Those who are interested in this should read it.

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*sānsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodbhūtadāhavyathā-  
 khinnānāṃ jalakāṅksayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā  
 paribhrāmyatām  
 atyāsannasudhāmbudhiṃ suhakaraṃ brahmādvayaṃ  
 darśayaty-  
 eṣā śaṅkarabhārati vijayate nirvāṇasandāyini.*

To those who are afflicted, in the way of the world, by the burning pain given rise to by the scorching sun-shafts of misery, and who through delusion wander about in the desert (of worldliness) seeking water — showing the felicitous ocean of nectar, which is very near, the non-dual *Brahman*, this — the Voice of Śaṅkara — is victorious, leading, as it does, to liberation.