

The VOICE of ŚAṆKARA

śaṅkara-bhāratī



Editor :
S. Ramaratnam

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ŚĀṆKARĀ

Śaṅkara-bharātī

Editor

S. Ramaratnam

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The Editors

Dr. R. Balasubramanian who has been the editor of *Voice of Śaṅkara* for nearly two decades ranks among the finest scholars of Advaita in the world today. In *Paramparā*, a felicitation volume published in honour of him, the Editors say, "Prof. Balasubramanian is rightly acclaimed as the greatest living Advaitin and one of the most eminent Indian Philosophers known nationally and internationally". Popularly known as RB, the learned Professor has inspired generations of students by his brilliant teaching and writings. He is well acquainted with both Indian and Western traditions of Philosophy. Besides working very extensively in Advaita Vedanta, he has also contributed significantly to comparative philosophy involving Phenomenology and Existentialism. RB was awarded Ph.D. Degree in Philosophy by the University of Madras in 1961 for his work on *Brahma Siddhi* of Maṇḍana Miśra. Studying under the feet of Prof. Kalyanasundara Sastrigal, RB brought out a translation of Sureśvara's *Tattirīyopaniṣad vārtika* which earned him the prestigious D.Litt. degree. RB has worked with distinction in several institutions. He spent nearly 25 years in Dr. Radhakrishnan, Institute of Philosophy, University of Madras, the last 11 years as its Director. Widely travelled RB has numerous books and articles to his credit. Continuous work for the past several years has taken its toll and RB sought relief from the Editorship of *Voice of Śaṅkara* on account of indifferent health. The void cannot be filled easily but we had to find a suitable substitute for RB as the Editor of *Voice of Śaṅkara*.

On the suggestion of RB himself, Dr. S. Ramaratnam (SR) has been chosen as the next Editor of our Journal (from the current issue). SR took his M.A. in Sanskrit with Vedanta as one of his Special subjects from Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College in 1968. He joined as a staff member in the same year, got his Ph.D. in 1979 and became the Head of the Department in 1987 and Principal of the College in the year 2000. After his superannuation he worked as Principal in TS Narayanaswami College and Alpha College. He has now been chosen as the first Vice Chancellor of Sri Sri Ravishankar University, Bhuvaneshwar. In addition to M.A., Ph.D. in Sanskrit, SR holds M.A. Degree in Philosophy and M.Sc. in Psychology. Out of his own interest, he studied Management (MBA), Education, Indian Music and several other subjects. He holds Diplomas in German, French, Telugu, Kannada and Linguistics. SR has participated in International Conference held in Hamburg, Leiden, Vienna, Melbourne, Houston, Durban and several other places all over the world. He was honoured with Visiting Professorship at Oxford University in 2003 and 2004. We welcome our new Editor and wish him all well.

 HOMAGE TO ŚAṄKARA

॥ श्रीः ॥

वागंशुभिः द्वैतमहान्धकारं
 प्रोत्सार्य तत्त्वं समदर्शयत् यः ।
 मार्तण्डतुल्योऽपि शशीव कान्तः
 तं शङ्करं देवनुतं नमामि ॥

I offer salutations to Śaṅkara who has imparted the knowledge of the Truth, i.e. Advaita, by exterminating the abysmal darkness of duality through the rays in the form of his teachings, who, although refulgent like the sun, is as delightful as the moon, and who is adored by Gods.

[Gangādhara kavi in his *pañcīkaraṇa - candrikā*]



2

THUS SPAKE ŚAÑKARA

S. Ramaratnam

It is often said that while other ācārya-s like Rāmānuja and Madhava gave religion as well as philosophy, Śaṅkara gave only philosophy - the philosophy of *advaita* to the world. This view can be contested on two grounds. For Śaṅkara, religion and philosophy are not exclusive watertight compartments. They are complimentary to each other. Śaṅkara's emotionally charged devotional lyrics prove this point. Śaṅkara has not only composed stotras on almost all the gods of the Hindu pantheon but he has also written commentaries on traditional *stotra-s* like Viṣṇusahasranāma stotra. The significance of each epithet is brought out very effectively both from the point of view of religion as well as the philosophy that he represented. While interpreting the very first *nāma* in the *stotra*, *viśvam*, Śaṅkara first gives the literal translation of the term, as Universe. The Lord is the Universe, nay, the cause of the Universe. If the Lord is only the cause of the Universe, how can he be called as the

Universe itself, which is the effect? Normally, the cause and the effect are different. The potter is not the same as the pot. To understand the point we have to analyse the types of causes. There are two types of causes, namely, the *upādāna kāraṇa* and the *nimitta kāraṇa* (material cause and the efficient cause). For the pot to come into existence, the material cause is the clay and efficient cause is the potter. The material cause and the effect are essentially one and same like the gold and the golden ornament. Likewise, the Lord being the material cause of the Universe is the Universe itself. That he is also the efficient cause of the Universe is explained with reference to another *nāma*. If he is the efficient cause, what is the matter with which he creates the Universe? The answer to this question is the central point of discussion in Advaita philosophy, which we shall take up with reference to the relevant *nāma*. The second *nāma* in the text, namely *viṣṇuḥ* is translated as 'all pervading one'. Śaṅkara gives two etymological derivations for the term, that is (i) from the verb *viveṣṭi* (=vyāpnoti), one who pervades and (ii) *viśati*, one who penetrates. The Lord is inside as well as outside all beings of the Universe. The Lord is the Universe and the Universe is the Lord.

All beings in this world are controlled by Time. Apparently, they are born at a particular time, live for a particular time and depart at another time. None of these is under our control. But the Lord is the controller of past, present and future. In short, he is beyond Time and hence he is called *bhūta bhavyabhavat prabhuḥ*. All the creatures in the world are created by him. Hence he is called '*bhūtakṛt*' (bhūta = beings; kṛt = creator). Śaṅkara gives another interpretation, deriving *kṛt* from *kṛṇāti*, meaning 'destroys'. The Lord is also the destroyer of all beings. Destruction is the essential and inevitable part of the eco-system. Without destruction, creation cannot take place. The Lord is also the

sustainer of the Universe and hence he is called *bhūtabhṛt*. He is the fundamental concept of existence. All beings in the world have limited existence. The Lord is of eternal existence and the very root of existence. Hence he is called *bhavaḥ*. Having created and sustained the Universe, he is the very soul of all the beings. Hence he is *bhūtatmā*. He is also the *paramātmā*, the Supreme Soul, being free from all limitations of the world. He is the very purpose of creation. The Lord creates us in order to give us a chance to get liberated from this cycle of birth and death. One who gets liberated need not have to come back to the world, *na sa punarāvastate*, say the Upaniṣads. He is the ultimate goal of the liberated soul, *muktānām paramā gatiḥ*. The Gita says, *yad gatvā na nivartante taddhāma paramam mama XV.6* (it is my ultimate abode, attaining which one does not return). The Lord again says, *māmupetya tu kaunteya punarjanma na vidyate*, Gita VIII.16 (There is no rebirth for the soul that attains to me). Hence the Lord is said to be the ultimate goal of all the liberated souls.



3

IMPORTANCE OF
VYĀVAHĀRIKA IN ADVAITA

N. Hariharan*

Advaita anubhūti is the transcendental state of super-sensuous experience, the lofty status wherein the Truth of Non-duality is intuited and the multiplicities of the empirical universe are negated as basically illusory superimpositions on the Substratum of Non-dual Reality. All *jīva-s*, regardless of their philosophical persuasions or credal convictions, have to, willy-nilly, journey towards the summum bonum of non-dual experience that is not a mere theoretical construct but the Absolute Truth, ineluctable and inexorable. *Vyāvahārika*, the empirical universe marked by complex pluralism, is, according to *Advaita*, an inferior truth that suffers sublation, the moment the Ultimate Truth is realised. What, then, is the status of *vyāvahārika* – a transitory state that bristles with breathtaking diversity of phenomena- in the scheme of *Advaita* that jettisons all multiplicities and swears by Oneness

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of Existence? How is *vyāvahārika*, the brutal fact of life, viewed by the gospel of *Advaita* on the one hand and by striving souls on the other? Has *vyāvahārika*, an admittedly ephemeral state bedeviled with a host of flaws incidental to its pluralistic framework, any importance at all to *Advaita*? Has *vyāvahārika*, with its core of *mithyātva*, any relevance or importance to the striving souls who are convinced of and drawn towards the Truth of *Advaita*?

Kinesis emanates from Stasis, supports itself on the eternal stability of Stasis and finally merges back into the quietitude of Stasis. Stasis is the eternal normal poise and Kinesis is a temporary and an ephemeral deviation from the solemn repose of Stasis. A top that is galvanized into furious gyration rotates for a while and reverts back to its normal state of rest. *Jagat*, the temporal procession of phenomena, is an evanescent play and figure on the Immutable Truth of *Brahman*. The hypnotic play is triggered and sustained by *māyā*, the Cosmic Power of Illusion that has its locus in *Brahman*. The conquest of *māyā* by spiritual illumination and eternal abidance in the Bliss of *Brahman* are the professed goals of diverse *sādhana-s* laid down in the *śāstra-s*.

A little reflection will reveal that the end viz. cessation of *samsāra* and *jīva's* Self-discovery is an astounding spiritual experience that belongs to the sphere of *Pāramārthika Satya* (Transcendental Truth) while the means to that end viz. the diverse *sādhana-s* prescribed in the scriptures belong to the *vyāvahārika* level, the empirical sphere of spiritual purblindness. The classic paradox of *Advaita* consists in the fact that the summum bonum of Self-realisation that is, quintessentially, a transcendental experience is consummated by means employed in the *vyāvahārika* milieu. This is as it should be, because it is the soul in bondage (*jīvātma*) and implicated in the *vyāvahārika* state, that needs to work out his salvation and he can do this only by adopting spiritual

practices in the environment he finds himself in viz. the environment of spiritual ignorance and bondage.

It would, therefore, seem that the *vyāvahārika* plane, albeit a state shrouded in spiritual ignorance to be terminated and transcended at the earliest opportunity, is of pivotal importance in *Advaita*, as it constitutes a spiritual gymnasium for aspiring souls to shed their spiritual infirmities and evolve towards spiritual perfection. It is a picturesque irony of *Advaita* that the *vyāvahārika* stage provides ample opportunities to struggling souls for spiritual evolution and final emancipation, thereby consummating its own eventual self-destruction. In other words, by facilitating the spiritual evolution of aspiring souls, the *vyāvahārika* plane digs its own grave to usher in the ineffable experience of the Absolute.

True, *Advaita* swears by the ultimate reality of *Brahman*. But, it does not dismiss the empirical flux as an absolute untruth (*asat*) and a nonexistent entity as the son of a barren woman. It concedes the status of relative truth to the empirical universe. To the souls caught in the vortex of *samsāra*, *jagat*, (the temporal pageantry), far from being a *mithyā* (an illusion), is a stark reality that cannot be wished away. It is just like the reality of the dream to the dreamer during the period of the dream. The epigrammatic enunciation of the *Advaitic* doctrine in the words, "*Brahma satyam jagat mithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ*"¹ (*Brahman* is the Absolute Reality, the universe is an illusion, the *jīva* is *Brahman* itself, not another) has an experiential authenticity only for the minuscule minority of Self-realised souls. But, for the vast majority of struggling souls in spiritual quest of Self-realisation, the pithy formula is, at best, a lofty desideratum to be earnestly striven for or, at worst, an enigmatic hypothesis, somewhat incomprehensible. This is the import of the dramatic declaration of the *Gītā* in its charming couplet that reads,

*yā niśā sarvabhūtānām tasyām jāgati samyamī
yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneh 2*

What is night for all beings is the time of waking for the disciplined soul; and what is the time of waking for all beings is night for the sage who sees (or the sage of vision)

The message of Advaita, with its metaphysical core of the Plenitude of Being-Consciousness-Bliss of *Brahman* and its doctrine of the *vyāvahārika* level of experience as only a relatively real and flawed state to be outgrown by the practice of a pragmatic spiritual regimen, is more urgent and relevant for *mumukṣu-s* (aspirants for liberation) than for *mukta-s* (the liberated souls) It would seem that the *vyāvahārika* state has, for *Advaita*, a double dimension – the dimension of evil, pain, despair and phantasm on the one hand and the dimension of good, optimism, hope and practical efficiency on the other. *Advaita* minces no words in denouncing the *vyāvahārika* state as sapless, finite and imperfect. The *Gītā* calls it “*anityam, asukham lokam imam*”³ *Vyāvahārika*, for *Advaita*, is a sense-oriented state of spiritual torpor that is doped by the heady wine of *nāma-rūpa*, embroiled in the mire of multiplicities and too far taken in by the trickery of pluralistic phenomena to glimpse the Non-dual Ground of Existence that is the Noumenon. In a word, *vyāvahārika*, for *Advaita*, is basically a Slough of Despond, a snare and delusion to be got rid of. This is the seamy side of *vyāvahārika* that *Advaita* envisages. Now, *Advaita* also recognizes the bright aspect of *vyāvahārika*. In the perspective of *Advaita*, *vyāvahārika* is not only a lesser truth, defective and pain-ridden – a quagmire in which the *jīva* is pathetically stuck. It is also a plane of spiritual endeavour, an opportunity for *jīva*'s spiritual growth and a springboard for his spiritual ascent. The *Gītā* echoes this view when it says,

"uddhāredātmanātmānam nātmanānavasādayet I

ātmai'va hyatmāno bandhurātmai'va ripurātmanaḥ II ⁴

"Let a man raise himself by his own self, let him not debase himself. For, he himself is his friend, and he himself is his foe." It is this rosy side of *vyāvahārika* that invests it with enormous importance in the scheme of *Advaita*.

As a realm of sense-enjoyments and desire-prompted actions, *vyāvahārika* is an obstacle and poses a challenge to spiritual progress. As a field of spiritual effort and desireless and enlightened action, it is a potent aid to spiritual advancement. According to the profound remarks of Śaṅkara in his masterly introduction to *Gītā Bhāṣya*, *vyāvahārika* is a primeval and Veda-ordained state comprising the two-fold path of involvement in and withdrawal from the vortex of mundane affairs. Śaṅkara says, "*dividho hi vedokto dharmāḥ – pravṛttilakṣaṇaḥ, nivṛttilakṣaṇaśca jagataḥ sthītikāraṇam I prāṇinām sāksāt abhyudayaniḥśreyasaḥetuḥ yaḥ sa dharmāḥ I*"⁵ (Indeed, the Vedic law making for the world's stability is two-fold: (i) embracing works; (ii) embracing cessation. The law of righteousness (*Dharma*) is what directly promotes the prosperity and emancipation of living beings). The greatest exponent of *Advaita* clearly acknowledges the validity of the two-fold path of *Pravṛtti* and *Nivṛtti* that are an integral part of *vyāvahārika* stage. As paths leading to *abhyudaya* and *niḥśreyasa* respectively (worldly prosperity and the summum bonum of Self-realization), they form certainly part of the *vyāvahārika* stage marked by primal nescience.

Pravṛtti mārga (involvement in the meshes of worldly life), a feature of *vyāvahārika*, is a centrifugal force that weans the *jīva* away from the goal of Self-realisation and needs to be taken cognizance of and suitably reoriented by *Advaita* to enable bemused *jīvas* to enter on their spiritual voyage.

Souls treading the path of involvement are in dire need of spiritual rehabilitation and the saving wisdom of *Advaita*. The redeeming message of *Advaita* acquires special urgency in their case. Hence, the path's importance to *Advaita* as one to be urgently and radically reoriented and uplifted. *Nivṛtti mārga* (withdrawal from the web of worldly life), another feature of *vyāvahārika*, is a centripetal force that needs to be encouraged and strengthened by *Advaita* to accelerate the pace of spiritual voyage of *mumukṣu-s* and enable them to awaken into spiritual wisdom quickly. Hence, its importance to *Advaita* as a spiritual means to be assiduously cultivated and fostered. Thus, *vyāvahārika*, constituted mainly of the two paths of *Pravṛtti* and *Nivṛtti*, is of capital importance to *Advaita*.

But for *vyāvahārika*, marked by imperfections and crying for redemption, *Advaita* would degenerate into an armchair philosophy intellectually debated in the ivory tower of pedagogues but bereft of any pragmatic value. It is *vyāvahārika*, riddled with pain and ignorance and possessed of the possibilities of spiritual endeavour, that transforms the lofty gospel of *Advaita* viz. *Brahmavidyā* into a pragmatic art of union with the Divine viz. *Yogaśāstra*. Thus, *vyāvahārika*, with its tag of illusoriness, is not of mere peripheral concern but of prime importance to *Advaita*. In short, the *raison d'être* of *Advaita*, as a redeeming philosophy, is to be found in the existential crisis and spiritual infirmity of *vyāvahārika* and also in its serving as an excellent theatre for varied spiritual exercises, recognized by *Advaita*.

Brahman, the Absolute of *Advaita*, is non-dual and hence relation-less. *Vyāvahārika*, the empirical universe, bristles with complex meshes of varied relationships. There are, in *vyāvahārika*, such relationships as those of God-devotee, *guru-śiṣya*, *sādhaka-sādhana* etc. It is an ironical fact that *vyāvahārika*,

the seething cauldron of sizzling relationships, should be the launching-pad for the spiritual expedition to the state of relation-less non-duality. In the picturesque scheme of *Advaita*, *sādhana-s* are multiple and diverse but *sādhyā* is non-dual and unitary. All the spiritual *sādhana-s*, operative on the *vyāvahārika* plane, such as *nitya karma-s*, charity, pilgrimage, penance, spiritual instruction, meditation, discharge of ordained duties pertaining to the *varṇa* and *āśrama*, sacrifices, rituals, religious observances, ethical practices and prayers have their vital roles in the scheme of spiritual evolution. This is obvious from the following aphorism of *Brahma Sūtra*. "*sarvāpekṣā ca yajñādiśruterāśvavat*"⁶ (On the strength of the Upaniṣadic sanction of the sacrifices etc., all religious activities as well are necessary. This is the same as in the case of a horse (in matters of its adequacy). Human life, cast in *vyāvahārika* mould, has to be intelligently lived and fully devoted to the supreme end of Self-realisation. *Śruti* beckons man to lead such a purposeful life when it says, "*kurvanneveha karmāṇi jīvitsecchatam samah I evam tvayi nanyatheto'sti na karma lipyate narah* II"⁷ (Always performing works here, one should wish to live a hundred years. If you live thus as a man, works will not cling to you – there is no other way). The multiplicity of *sādhana-s* in *vyāvahārika* should not mislead one into thinking that they offend against the Truth of Non-duality and hence invalid and dispensable. Multiplicities are real for the *sādhaka* who is immersed in the dream of *vyāvahārika*. They are unreal only from the standpoint of non-dual experience that is a far cry from *vyāvahārika*.

Scriptures that unanimously proclaim the Truth of Non-duality admit the need for and validity of spiritual exercises that are dualistic in practice and hence belong to *vyāvahārika*. The tradition of the preceptor imparting spiritual instruction to the disciple is operative only within the dualistic

framework that is *vyāvahārika*. And yet, it is seriously commended by scriptures as an indispensable spiritual discipline. The need for spiritual instruction based on the teacher-taught nexus of dualistic nature is beautifully underscored by *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* in the following words. The *Upaniṣad* says, "*parīkṣya lokānkarmacitanbrahmaṇo nirvedamayānāstyakritaḥ kritena I tadvijñānārtam sa gurumevābhigacchetsamitpāṇiḥ śrotriyam brahmaniṣṭham II*"⁸

"Let a *Brāhmaṇa*, after he has examined these worlds, which are gained by works, acquire freedom from desire. The uncreated is not to be gained by mere works. To acquire this knowledge let him take the sacrificial fuel in his hand and approach a teacher who is learned and well established in *Brahman*."

The *Gītā* clearly spells out the salient features of the spiritual commerce of ideas that the teacher-taught nexus is, when it says, "*tat viddhi pranipātena paripraśnena sevayā upadeśyanti te jñānam jñāninaḥ tattvadarśinaḥ*"⁹ (Know it by means of obeisance, exhaustive questionings, service (to the teacher) Knowers who have realized the truth will impart to you that knowledge.)

It is in the *vyāvahārika* milieu that the esoteric exchange of sublime ideas between the preceptor and the pupil can take place. This largesse of spiritual lore by a *guru*, anchored in *Brahman*-experience, to an *adhikāri*, a genuine *mumukṣu*, possessing the traits of *viveka*, *vairāgya* and *sat-sampatti*, is a vital element in the spiritual strategy of consummating Self-vision. As the stage in which the spiritual transfiguration of the disciple by the preceptor is made possible, *vyāvahārika* is a keystone of the *Advaita* arch.

While the *Pāramārthika* experience is non-dual, homogeneous and immune from the onslaught of the triple *gunas* of *sattva* (peace), *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (inertia),

the *vyāvahārika* state is a hotbed of fierce clash of the triple *guṇas*. Now, this incessant ebb and flow of the triad of *guṇas* is the villain of the piece in the exciting drama of *jīva's* spiritual evolution. It is the triad of *guṇas* that conspire against the *jīva's* spiritual welfare and entangle him in the vicious coils of *ahamkāra*, *mamakāra*, mental myopia, intellectual torpor and moral turpitude. Fortunately, of the triad of *guṇas*, *sattva* is least inimical to spiritual endeavour while the other two *guṇas* constitute a millstone round the neck of spiritual life. The *jīva*, in spiritual quest, has to wage a perpetual battle against the twin *guṇas* of *rajas* and *tamas* and earnestly develop *sattva guṇa*, which is an ally of spirituality. But, the *jīva's* ultimate aim is to attain the summit of spiritual experience viz. Self-vision wherein even *sattva* is *persona non grata*. Thus, *vyāvahārika* is the field in which the twin *guṇas* of *rajas* and *tamas* have to be firmly jettisoned and *sattva guṇa* has to be consciously cultivated, only to be sacrificed finally at the altar of Self-experience. As a theatre of spiritual acrobatics wherein the *jīva* has to perform this feat, *vyāvahārika* is of vital significance in the scheme of *Advaita*.

The interplay of *guṇas* on the *vyāvahārika* plane embroils *jīvas* in the meshes of *karmas* that are mostly self-centred, sense-oriented and anti-spiritual. Swayed by the *guṇas*, the *jīvas* become utterly extrovert and seldom turn their gaze inward to have Self-vision. They chase power and pelf with unseemly frenzy. Their plight is vividly portrayed by Shakespeare in his *Measure for Measure*.

.....but, man, proud man,
 Dress'd in a little brief authority—
 Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
 His glassy essence—like an angry ape,
 Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
 As make the angels weep¹⁰

Extremely rare is the sagacious man, who, yearning for immortality, undertakes the inward voyage of Self-discovery. Echoing this view, *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says,

*Parāñci khāni vyatṛṇat svayambhūḥ
tasmāt parāñpaśyati nāntarātman
Kaścit dhīraḥ pratyagātmānamaikṣat
āvṛttacakṣuḥ amṛtatvamicchan*¹¹

The Self-existent Lord created the sense organs (including the mind) with the defect of an outgoing disposition; therefore (man) perceives (things) outwardly, but not the inward Self. A certain *dhīra* (wise man), desirous of immortality, turned his senses (including the mind) inward and realised the inner Self.

The clutch of *guṇas*, dominated by *rajas*, generates a host of selfish desires in the human mind and drives man to *karmas* marked by overweening self-conceit. Such *karmas* that impede spiritual growth have to be denuded of the sting of self-aggrandisement and sublimated into *Karma yoga*. It is *Karma Yoga*, the consecration of actions to the Divine in a spirit of utter renunciation and self-abnegation, which can purify the mind and pave the way for its one-pointedness. And this one-pointedness is the key element in *Bhakti Yoga*. The mind, purged of its dross by steadfast *Karma Yoga*, gains in its power of concentration and fastens to Personal God (*Iṣṭa Devatā*) with loving tenacity. As the mighty obsession with the Chosen Deity in a spirit of self-giving love grows and reaches its peak, it precipitates the dawn of *Jñāna* (spiritual awakening) by its extraordinary potency, aided by the grace of God. Thus, the triune paths of *Karma Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga* and *Jñāna Yoga* that are the burden of song of the *Gītā* lead to the summum bonum of *jīva*'s emancipation. And *vyāvahārika* is the domain wherein this integrated spiritual *sādhana*, forged by the *Gītā* out of the raw material

of *Upaniṣadic* wisdom, is most relevant and practicable, as *vyāvahārika* is at once an unregenerate state of *jīva*'s bondage and a dualistic plane essential for his zealous practice of the *sādhanā* to end that bondage. The point of capital importance is that all spiritual *sādhana*s without which the spiritual goal of Self-realisation is not possible can be practised only on the *vyāvahārika* plane with its pluralistic ethos. Thus, *vyāvahārika* occupies a strategic place in the scheme of *Advaita* that is preoccupied with the brutal fact of *jīva*'s bondage and the dire necessity of his spiritual redemption.

There is a widespread popular misconception that the myriad spiritual *sādhana*s to be performed at the *vyāvahārika* level are profitless, redundant and dispensable, as *vyāvahārika* itself is an illusory sphere. Spiritual aspirants of shallow thinking tend to jettison the prescribed *sādhana*s lock, stock and barrel and venture, in vain, to reach the sublime state of transcendental experience on their own without the prop of *sādhana*s. This is a dangerous course that will result in the *sādhaka*'s spiritual stagnation, if not retrogression. *Śruti*, that is rightly termed *Prabhu Samhita*, imperiously lays down stern injunctions for spiritually beneficial conduct in the empirical world. The commandments that *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* reels off are impressive and almost exhaustive. The *Upaniṣad* says,

“Speak the truth. Practise virtue. Let there be no neglect of your (daily) reading. Having brought to the teacher the wealth that is pleasing (to him), do not cut off the thread of offspring. Let there be no neglect of truth. Let there be no neglect of virtue. Let there be no neglect of welfare. Let there be no neglect of prosperity. Let there be no neglect of the duties to the gods and the fathers. Be one to whom the mother is a god. Be one to whom the father is a god. Be one to whom the teacher is a god. Be one to whom the guest is a god. Whatever deeds are blameless, they are to

be practised, not others. Whatever good practices there are among us, they are to be adopted by you, not others. Whatever Brāhmaṇas there are (who are) superior to us, should be comforted by you with a seat. (What is to be given) is to be given with faith, should not be given without faith, should be given in plenty, should be given with modesty, should be given with fear, should be given with sympathy.This is the command. This is the teaching. This is the secret doctrine of the Veda. This is the instruction. Thus should one worship. Thus indeed should one worship¹²

All the above injunctions that the *Śruti* prescribes are *karma*-related and belong to *vyāvahārika* sphere that the same *Śruti* is never tired of condemning as an inferior truth subject to eventual sublation. This clearly proves that the practical efficiency of illusory *vyāvahārika*, as an effective means of spiritual evolution, is acknowledged and affirmed by *Śruti*. *Śruti* unambiguously assigns a pivotal role to *vyāvahārika* in the *magna carta* of *Advaita*.

The final and profound *upadeśa* that Śankara imparts to his disciples on the eve of his entering on his *mahāsamādhi* and embodied in his *Sādhana Pañcakam* constitute an irrefutable testimony to the immense importance he attaches to *vyāvahārika* as a passport to final beatitude. The lofty instruction runs on the following lines.

“Study the Veda every day; do properly the *karma* prescribed therein; through that (act), worship the Lord (Iśa); give up the thought of doing an act with desire (for the fruit); shake off the group of sinful deeds; consider (mentally) the defect in worldly pleasure; strive for the desire (for the knowledge) of the *Ātman* (Self); get out of your home without delay.

Form association with the good; entertain firm devotion for the Lord; practise *Śānti* (calmness of mind) and so on; give up at once the fast-binding *karma* (action); approach the good, wise person (for knowledge); serve (worship) his sandal (feet) every day; seek (from him) the knowledge of *Brahman*, symbolized by the single Syllable (*Om*); listen to the *Vedānta-vākya* dealing with *Brahman*.

Ponder over the import of the scriptural texts (*Vedānta-vākyas*); dealing with *Brahman*. Accept the view (verdict) of the *Vedānta* texts. Deliberately desist from vain (bad) reasoning (discussion). Bear in mind (follow) the reasoning that is in accord with the scriptures (*Veda*). Always revolve in the mind the thought "I am *Brahman*". Always give up pride. Give up the notion, "I am the body". Avoid vain discussion with the wise.

Cure the disease in the form of hunger; take in the medicine in the form of *bhikṣā* (borrowed alms); do not ask for delicious (savoury) food; be contented with what is acquired providentially (without effort); endure patiently cold and heat and other (pairs of opposites); do not utter words in vain, have desire to be neutral (without taking sides); give up the attitude of being kind to some people and cruel to others.

Sit comfortably in a lonely (quiet) place; fix the mind on the Higher (Supreme) Self; seek the full (all-pervading) *Ātman* within; consider this universe as sublated by it; melt away (destroy) the effect of *karma* already done; by dint of discriminating knowledge, get detached from future actions; go through the effect of *karma* which you have begun to experience here; finally remain (peacefully) in the exalted state of the Supreme Self (*Para-brahman*)"¹³

In his *Sādhana Pañcakam*, Śankara, the greatest apostle of *Advaita*, provides aspiring souls with a ladder, as it were,

to climb up and reach the zenith of spiritual experience of Self-realisation. It is significant that the poem that vividly charts the path to spiritual redemption is also called *Sopāna Pañcakam*. *Sopānam* literally means "a flight of steps". The spiritual ladder that Śaṅkara erects to enable *mumukṣus* to reach the peak of Self-realisation is constituted of five rungs, as portrayed in the five stanzas of *Sopāna Pañcakam*. The first rung of the ladder may be taken to refer to *Karma Yoga* that consists in the cutting asunder of worldly attachments and the discharge of *Veda*-ordained duties pertaining to the *varṇa* and *āśrama* in a spirit of consecration, with a sense of detachment and free from desire. The second rung of the ladder may be considered to imply *Bhakti Yoga* consisting of such elements as love of holy company, worship of God with true devotion, veneration for the preceptor and eager receptivity to the lofty spiritual instructions imparted by him. The third rung of the ladder may be held to represent *Jñāna Yoga* that primarily consists in the steadfast practice of the triple disciplines of *śravaṇa* (hearing), *manana* (contemplation) and *nididhyāsana* (deep meditation and inward assimilation) and insulating the mind from its proneness to vicious reasoning that contravenes *Vedic* norms. The importance of this integrated discipline of *śravaṇa-manana-nididhyāsana* is stressed by Sage *Yājñavalkya* in the course of his spiritual instruction to his wife *Maitreyi*. He says, "*ātmā va are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ*" (It is the Self that should be seen, heard of, reflected on and meditated upon) ¹⁴ The fourth rung of the ladder may be construed as implying the set of six golden virtues (*sat sampattiḥ*) viz. *śama* (mind-control), *dama* (sense-control), *uparati* (self-withdrawal), *titikṣā* (endurance), *śraddhā* (faith) and *samādhāna* (tranquility). The fifth and the topmost rung of the ladder may be deemed to symbolize the penultimate stage of the spiritual Odyssey - the crucial plane from which the

mumukṣu has to take the final plunge and land in *Turiya*, the Transcendental Plane of Consciousness that is the spiritual terminus. It pictures the climax of spiritual endeavour wherein the intense stress of profound meditation on the Truth of *ātman-brahman-abheda* (the non-difference between *Ātman* and *Brahman*) fructifies into *ātma sākṣātkāra* (Self-vision) and *advaita anubhūti* (Non-dual experience). It depicts the flight of "the alone to the Alone."

The ladder is ever below and the upper floor is ever above. The ladder of spiritual *sādhana*s is ever "below", as it belongs to the lower order of reality - to the sphere of relative truth (*vyāvahārika*) while the apogee of spiritual ascent viz. Self-realisation is ever "above", as it belongs to the higher order of reality - the sphere of Absolute Truth (*Pāramārthika*) By offering aspiring souls the ladder of spiritual *sādhana*s portrayed in his *Sopāna Pañcakam*, Sri Śaṅkara clearly underscores the vital point that *vyāvahārika*, as a field of spiritual exercises, is of paramount importance in the gospel of *Advaita*.

But, *vyāvahārika*, by definition, is illusory and sublatale. How can an illusory state be a passport to Absolute Truth, the eternal and imperishable state of the Bliss of Self-realisation? Śaṅkara answers this query in his *Śataślokī* (Verse 38) convincingly. The gist of the explanation of the meaning of this verse as given by Sri V.S.V. Guruswamy Sastry, the eminent *Vedāntic* scholar, in his Tamil commentary "*Gurupriyā*" on *Śataślokī*, is given below¹⁵

In dream, a person receives *mantropadeśa*, by divine grace, through his Guru, practises profound meditation on it and chants it with faith and fervour. His intense ecstasy caused by his being blessed with rare divine grace in the dream jolts him out of his dream and makes him wake up. He finds, to his joy, that the benefits of his spiritual act of meditation

in the dream accrue to him really in his life. The grace of *Īṣvara* that he receives in his dream operates in his waking state and brings him benefits. Thus, we find that the illusory dream-happenings like *mantropadeśa* and *Īṣvarānugraha* actually produce concrete results in life. The testimony to this fact of practical efficiency of the dream-occurrence is to be found in *Śrīmad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*. The sacred epic relates that in the encounter between Indrajit and Lakṣmaṇa, when the former discharged the arrow gifted to him by Yama with a view to killing his uncle Vibhīṣaṇa, Lakṣmaṇa promptly employed the arrow gifted to him *in his dream* by Kubera in order to save Vibhīṣaṇa. ¹⁶

It is a matter of common experience that the dream-tiger startles us into quitting the dream and migrating into the state of wakefulness. Similarly, the diverse spiritual *sādhana-s* practised in dream-like *vyāvahārika* are capable of shaking us out of our spiritual slumber and delivering us into the lofty state of spiritual awakening.

To conclude, *vyāvahārika* is Janus-faced. It has a benign face that consists in its being a gymnasium for spiritual evolution – a theatre of opportunities for *jīva*'s spiritual redemption. It has also a baleful face that consists in its being a "vale of tears" – an imperfect plane of misery, evil and ignorance. Both these aspects of *vyāvahārika* call for *Advaita*'s attention. *Advaita*, preoccupied as it is with the spiritual redemption and eventual emancipation of *jīva-s*, attaches immense importance to *vyāvahārika* as a plane of spiritual possibilities. In this perspective, *vyāvahārika*, for *Advaita*, is a tool of great promise for consummating the spiritual growth of *jīva-s*. *Advaita*, with its avowed goal of release of *jīva-s* from the prison-house of *vyāvahārika* and deliverance of them into the wide meadows of *Pāramārthika* experience, is obliged to take cognizance of *vyāvahārika*

marked by spiritual torpor. In this perspective, *vyāvahārika*, for *Advaita*, is the field to be acted upon for its redeeming work of effacing empirical misery and engendering the unexcellable Bliss of Self-vision. Thus, from both the angles of utility and need for spiritual redemption, *vyāvahārika*, for *Advaita*, is of capital importance.

NOTES

1. Brahma-Jñānavālimālā
2. Bhagavad Gītā II - 69
3. Bhagavad Gītā IX -33
4. Bhagavad Gītā VI- 5
5. Śaṅkara's Introduction to Gītā Bhāṣya (English Translation of Śaṅkara Bhāṣya by Dr.A.G. Krishna Warriar)
6. Brahma Sūtras III.iv.26 (Translated into English by Swami Gambhirananda)
7. Īśavāsyā Upaniṣad I.2
8. Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad I-2-12
9. Bhagavad Gītā IV-34
10. Shakespeare's Measure for Measure II.ii.119-124
11. Kaṭha Upaniṣad II i.1 10
12. Taittirīya Upaniṣad I.11.1
13. Sādhana Pañcakam - English Translation by Dr.C.S.Venkateswaran Volume 2. Number. 2 Voice of Śaṅkara 1977
14. Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad II.4.5
15. Sri V.S.V.Guruswamy Sastri's Tamil commentary "Gurupriya" on Verse 38 of Śataśloki
16. Śrīmad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa - Yuddha Kāṇḍa, Sarga 91 Verses 46-48.



RELEVANCE OF ŚAṄKARA'S REFUTATION
OF THE COMBINATION OF KARMA AND
KNOWLEDGE (JÑĀNA KARMA
SAMUCCAYAM) TO THE PRESENT TIMES

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Any student of Vedānta can never miss an undercurrent of Śaṅkara's vehement criticism and opposition to the idea of combining pursuit of karma and jñānam simultaneously, if he has gone through any of Śaṅkara's work or commentaries on the Prasthāna Traya. This is more highlighted in his commentaries on *Bhagavad Gītā*, probably because the Lord's advice to Arjuna often implies such a combination and Śaṅkara spares no pains to justify his stand that karma and pursuit of knowledge can never be combined at the same time by one and the same person.

What exactly is meant by *Jñāna karma samuccyayam* by Śaṅkara? How does he refute the several objections to his

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stand? Is such an approach justifiable in the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gītā*? Is there a compromise for this approach and lastly what is its relevance in the present day world? This article attempts to examine the above questions and draws some conclusions based mainly on Śaṅkara's work *Sarva Vedānta Siddhānta Sāra Sangraha* which we term S.V.S.S. hereafter and on his commentaries of some portions of *Bhagavad Gītā* and other texts.

During Śaṅkara's time, the Pūrvamīmāsakas, Bhāṭṭarprapañca and many others advocated that either Karma alone or Karma combined with knowledge only could give liberation. The Pūrvamīmāṃsakas even went one step further quoting scriptural authorities to prove that one must never renounce karma; knowledge of Brahman in their view was only an Arthavāda or glorification and Vedānta was not useful in giving mokṣa. Śaṅkara has refuted their views in many of his commentaries specifically under his comments for the karma śloka i.e. of verse 18-66 of *Gītā*. Bhāṭṭarprapañca and others wanted to give equal importance to pūrvabhāga and uttarabhāga of Veda and they are called ekaśāstravādīs, i.e. who hold the view that the vedas including Upaniṣads and Vedānta is comprised of one unit only, whereas Śaṅkara clearly distinguishes between Pūrvabhāga which he calls as Aparā Vidyā and Uttara Bhaga as Parā Vidyā. He was called Sāstradvayavādi (exponent of two separate śāstras). Therefore Śaṅkara has to clearly explain his stand via-a-vis karma and jñāna and even his introductory comments in *Bhagavad Gītā* (before 2-11)¹ he asserts that in *Gītā* there is not even an iota of suggestion to combine knowledge of the Self with action laid down in sruti or smṛiti.

The foundation for such a view can be clearly seen in one of his lesser known works called S.V.S.S. of which verses

177, 181, 182, 189 and 203 are quoted at the end of this article for ready reference².

He bases his arguments on five fundamental differences between *Karma* and Knowledge. We shall examine them briefly one by one.

1) *Adhikāribhedah*: Śaṅkara explains that the *karma* requires the doer to have material desires to go to the higher worlds. The seeker of knowledge is a man of no desires; his goal is only liberation. Dispassion is his primary qualification whereas passion for mundane ends is the requirement for one who engages himself in rituals.

2) The infrastructure for *karma* has five factors including the doer, his wife, son, *Vedic mantras* and material wealth; whereas the seeker after knowledge just requires a teacher only. In those days there was no question of such modern accessories like books, cassette recorder etc. The student is first told to memorize the entire *Tarka samgraha*, *vyākaraṇa* and the texts like *Gītā* and *Upaniṣads* by heart before sitting down for *Śravaṇa*.

3) The fruits of *Karma* and knowledge are very much different. A ritual is done keeping some material end in view or to attain more *punya* or to go to higher worlds etc., In the case of a seeker who is not interested in accumulating *punya*; his goal is only knowledge, which will give him immediate liberation here and now. The ritualist bloats up his ego by doing the rituals, whereas the seeker gets his ego reduced as much as possible as he progresses in his *Śravaṇa*.

4) The very nature of *karma* and that of knowledge are totally different. *Karma* is based on the *Kartā* the doer. He can either do an action or refuse to do or do it in any way he chooses. In the case of knowledge once you sit down to listen with your hearing instruments in working conditions and your mind backing the same, you have no choice but

to register the sounds coming from the teacher even if he talks in a language unfamiliar to you. This is true of all other sense instruments like eyes, nose, tongue and skin. The knowledge of perception, smell or taste just takes place whether you like it or not. Hence we call karma as *Kartṛ tantram* and knowledge as *vastu tantram*. The former depends on the doer, the later on the object outside.

5) The scriptures categorize karma under injunctions and prohibitions. It uses the imperative mood to prescribe karma by saying 'you do this', 'you do not do this' etc., But in case of knowledge only the present tense is used defining a fact, such as 'You are Brahman', it only reminds you of your nature.

6) Śaṅkara, brings out one more point in his commentaries (Brahma Sūtra 1.1.4) Karma is relevant only where the production of some thing, attainment of some place, refinement of some substance or modification of a material is required. Self-knowledge is not an event, it is never produced, it has no date of birth or date of expiry; it is never reached as self is everywhere; it cannot be refined being the purest and it is not subject to any modification.

Śaṅkara asserts in conclusion in verse 203, that there is no question of karma being an accessory to knowledge and hence karma has to be relinquished by a seeker after knowledge. The same idea is very convincingly brought out by Śaṅkara in Chapter I of his very famous work *Upadeśa Sāhasrī*.

Applying the above conclusions to the Lord's teaching to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gītā* Śaṅkara encounters some difficulties. In the introduction to chapter V of *Gītā*, Śaṅkara discusses two types of *sannyāsa*, the *vividisa sannyāsa* i.e. one taken by a seeker before knowledge and *vidvat sannyāsa* that adopted by a man of knowledge. It is understandable that

for a seeker *karma* could be an impediment and a distraction in his pursuit of study of *śāstras*. A life style more conducive to *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* such as *sannyāsa* is helpful for him. All the same in verses 2 and 3 in Chapter V, in an answer to a question from a confused Arjuna, the Lord emphatically says that a *karma yogi* is superior to a mere *sannyāsi* and can be considered as a permanent renouncer (*Nitya Sannyāsi*). Śaṅkara explains away verse 3 in his comment saying that the Lord was glorifying a *karma yogi* but in verse 4, he says a *sannyāsi* is one who has conquered the evil of *Rāga-dveṣa*, implying thereby that mental *sannyāsa* is adequate and external symbols like ochre robe etc are only secondary. These obviously refer to *vividiśa sannyāsa*.

Earlier in Chapter IV the Lord clearly stated in verses 20 and 23 that a householder who has acquired self-knowledge can continue in any lifestyle he wants and even if he does *karma* it will not bind him as he is considered *Akartā*. This obviously refers to the second type of *sannyāsa* and Śaṅkara elaborately comments on both the verses towing the line of the Lord and striking a compromise to his vehement views on the *samuccayavāda*. He writes that work done by such a wise man is no work at all. He might continue in active life style either for serving the world or because of fear of severe criticism from his near and dear³. However, this commentary by Śaṅkara may not be taken as his conclusive opinion as this is only an exceptional context. He has emphatically made his point clear in his commentary in the introduction to *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*⁴ where he states "That we see in some householders the rise of knowledge along with doership is not adequate to cancel the proven rule. Even hundreds of rules cannot accept that darkness and light can co-exist".

When we examine such abundance of scriptural data and lucid commentaries by Śaṅkara and other protagonists of *advaita* on the condemnation of *jñāna karma samuccaya*,

where do we stand with reference to the seekers of the present world? One point which is very relevant and important which Śaṅkara makes clear is that by karma he means *Vaidika karma* i.e. rituals connected with one who has eligibility to do such karma. Obviously one who is not initiated into the Vedas is not eligible to do the rituals and hence his observations are limited only to those ritualists. In the present day where the varṇa and āśramas are totally missing where are the rituals or ritualists?

This brings us to the question of the relevance of renouncing laukika karma by the modern men of knowledge or seekers. Śaṅkara has not elaborated on this point as during his time those who were engaged in *vaidika karma* belonged to a particular varṇa and they had no separate *laukika karma* to speak of. Today the position is totally different, those practicing *vaidika karma* are almost extinct and hence renunciation has to be applied only to *laukika karma*. In the light of the above the following conclusions on the topic are justified.

The discussion on *jñāna karma samuccaya* by Śaṅkara has its own relevance even today. If the pursuit of karma is causing impediment to a seeker and is disturbing his spiritual progress, depending upon his seriousness towards his goal, he may renounce his family life and seek to spend his entire time on spiritual pursuit provided he can embrace such a life style without giving much mental agony and agitation to his family. Alternatively he can reduce the mundane activities to a bare minimum and continue his spiritual studies with a detached interest in karma as a karmayogi. On the other hand if he has already mastered the scriptures and is a realized *jivanmukta*, he can adopt any life style. He has the sanction of the Lord and Śaṅkara because throughout the Gītā what is stressed is *Akartṛtvam* i.e. non-identification with the doer. If the man of knowledge

can see *Akarma* in *Karma* and vice versa he is indeed an intelligent wise man (B.G. 4-18) Śāṅkara himself is an example of such a *jivanmukta* as he was most active travelling all over India spreading his knowledge and establishing centres of learning. We have later examples of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Ramana Maharṣi who never ran away from society. We have a very convincing authority that any style of life can be adopted after knowledge in the words of Lord Krishna in B.G. 6-31 and 13-23.



1. तस्मात् जीतशास्त्रे ईषन्मातमपि श्रौतेन स्मार्तेन वा कर्मणाऽऽत्मज्ञानस्य समुत्थयः न केचित् दर्शयितुं शक्यः ।
2. Sarva Vedanta Siddhanta Sara Samgraha verses:-
177. कर्मणः फलमन्त्युं श्रवणस्य फलं पृथक्
ब्रह्मदेशस्य च सामग्याश्रयाभयजाहाधिकारिणाः
कार्मी कर्मव्याधिकृतो लिखकामी श्रवणं मतः ॥
181. उपर्युपर्युक्तादौ वदते कर्मणा अर्थम्
उपार्कृतस्य विच्छिन्तिः श्रवणं प्रतिक्षणम् ॥
182. प्रवर्तकं कर्मशास्त्रं ज्ञानशास्त्रं निवर्तकम्
इत्यादिपरीत्य तस्याथलं वाहिकारिणाः ॥
189. कर्म कर्तुमकर्तुं वाप्यन्यथा कर्म शक्यते
न तथा वस्तुनो ज्ञानं कर्तुं तन्न कदाचन ॥
203. न ज्ञानकर्मणोर्वत्तमानं सहयोगास्तु युज्यते
तस्मात्स्यात् प्रयत्नं कर्म ज्ञानेच्छना दियम् ॥
3. जीता- 4-20 विर्द्ध्या कियमाणं कर्म पराशरतः अकर्म एव
तस्य लिखिक्यात्मदर्शनसम्पन्नत्वात् । तेन एवैतन्न
स्वप्रयोजनाभावात् स्याथलं कर्म परित्यक्तव्यं
इति प्रायः ततः त्रिजोभासभावात् लोक संशयविच्छि-
न्ना हि ब्रह्मविज्ञानप्राप्तिसिद्धिर्वाहाहे वा पूर्ववत्
कर्मणा अभिप्रेतं ऽपि लिखिक्यात्मदर्शन-
सम्पन्नत्वात् नैव विचिन्तं कर्तव्यं सः ।
4. यत्पि यदृश्यं ब्रह्मविद्या सभासदाकर्तव्यं
लिङ्गं न तद्विद्यतव्यायं बाह्यवृत्तिसहते ।
न हि विद्याशास्त्रेणापि तमः प्रकाशाशास्त्रे कल्पसम्भवः
शक्यते कर्तुं विचिन्तं लिङ्गैः केवलैरिति ॥

NOTES - Sanskrit Quotations

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SOUL IN
ŚRĪMAD BHĀGAVATA*

T.P. Ramachandran

7. Jñāna-yoga

The final metaphysical position of the *Bhāgavata* is that of Advaita. It teaches that Brahman alone is real, that the physical world is illusory, and that the so-called *jīva* is Brahman itself and not any other. In ordinary life, we take the ultimate reality to be a Supreme Being with attributes (Īśvara), we take the physical world to be real, and we consider ourselves as individuals different from one another and from God whom we worship. This impression is the result of *māyā*, which is nothing but our *avidyā*, or *ajñāna*. So long as there is *avidyā*, we are in bondage, undergoing repeated births. How and when *avidyā* came to be is insoluble so long as we are in *avidyā*. It is in this sense that *avidyā* is said to be beginningless (*anādi*). Fortunately, it has an end. *Avidyā* comes to an end when its opposite, namely *vidyā*, or *jñāna*, dawns.

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Jñāna is not the mere intellectual conviction, acquired from scripture, teacher, and reflection, that Brahman alone is real. Since *avidyā* and its consequences are a matter of direct experience (in the form of perception), they can be negated only by the direct experience of Brahman as the sole reality. Hence mediate knowledge relating to Brahman has to be transformed into immediate experience. The whole process of acquiring mediate knowledge in the first instance and then converting it into experience is called *jñāna-yoga*. It consists of three stages, *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*. *Śravaṇa* is the study of the Upaniṣads culminating in the mahāvākyas. This has to be done under a teacher who has himself had experience of Brahman, besides learning. *Manana* is reflection on what has been learnt with a view to removing lingering doubts relating to it. Doubts about the non-dual nature of reality arise because of the presence of rival views. *Manana* produces intellectual conviction that the reality is non-dual. *Nididhyāsana* is constant meditation on the non-dual Brahman in order to secure the direct experience of it. What stands in the way of such experience are old habits of thought (*vāsanā*) centering on the difference ingrained in the mind (*viparīta-bhāvanā*). By removing these obstacles, *nididhyāsana* provides for the experience of the non-dual reality.

The work of *śravaṇa* will not be over once *manana* and *nididhyāsana* have begun. It is supposed to go on till actual realization occurs. So the question arises whether realization is effected by *nididhyāsana* or by *śravaṇa*. Post-Śankara Advaitins are divided on this question. But Śankara's own view is that the work of *nididhyāsana* is only to remove the obstacles to realization and that realization as such is effected by *śravaṇa*. (See *Upadeśasāhasrī*, Verse portion, "Tattvamasiprākaraṇam"). The *Bhāgavata* also seems to be of this view, considering the supreme role it accords to the teacher.

The *Bhāgavata* recognizes that *jñāna-yoga* is the direct means to release and that *karma-yoga*, *dhyāna-yoga*, and *bhakti-*

yoga become useful in preparing the ground for *jñāna-yoga*. The eleventh Skandha is replete with *jñāna-yoga*. There are other portions also which directly bear on the Advaita view of reality, release, and the means to it. The special contribution of the *Bhāgavata* lies in the way in which it conceives of the relation between *bhakti-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*. While recognizing that *bhakti-yoga* is a means to *jñāna-yoga*, the *Bhāgavata* points out that the transition from the former to the latter is not discontinuous, but smooth and unnoticeable, such that we could even say that *bhakti*, "becomes" *jñāna*. After all, both are directly aimed at Brahman, the only difference being in the view of Brahman — one of Brahman as *saguṇa* and the other of Brahman as *nirguṇa*.

The *Bhāgavata* further emphasizes that *bhakti* is indispensable to *jñāna*. Those who resort to *jñāna-yoga* without *bhakti* run the risk of entertaining in their minds impediments like vanity. But the practice of *bhakti* ensures humility. A person who belittles the need for *bhakti* on the plea that it is only for ignorant people and presumes that he is capable of taking to *jñāna-yoga* straightway forgets that he himself is equally ignorant. Mere capacity to understand the subtleties of Advaita and expound them to others is not sufficient qualification for Brahman-experience. The *Bhāgavata* exposes the arrogance of such a person and shows that he is even less qualified for Brahman - experience than the simple-minded *bhakta*. Freedom from all impurities including pride is an absolute must to enter into any spiritual effort, not to mention to reach its culmination in direct experience. The advantage of a *bhakta* over one who by-passes it is that, since the *bhakta* is endowed with humility, the Lord himself will enable his mind to experience the true nature of himself as beyond names and forms. Thus, the special feature of the *Bhāgavata* is that it combines *jñāna* and *bhakti* in such a way that we can say that the ultimate means to *mokṣa* is "*jñāna* suffused with *bhakti*" (*bhakti-sampanna-jñāna*).

Gist of relevant verses

II, 9, 35. The essence of *jñāna-yoga* consists in knowing (and realizing) the sole reality of Brahman. The mediate knowledge of Brahman is acquired by inquiry of two kinds — by denying the reality of everything other than Brahman (*vyatireka*) and by affirming that Brahman is the basis of everything that appears to exist (*anvaya*).

III, 7, 10-12. *Māyā* deludes the *jīva*, but not *Īsvara*. *Jñāna* obtained through *bhakti* and *niṣkāma-karma* removes the delusion of the *jīva*.

III, 24, 42-47. Sage Kardama practised intense *bhakti* with dispassion and gradually realized the presence of God in everything. As a result, he began to view everything as nothing but the manifestation of God. He thus attained release.

III, 27, 21-23. Though the *avidyā*-born association of *puruṣa* with *prakṛti* is very fast, it can be nullified by *jñāna*, for which the ground is gradually prepared by all other means, like *niṣkāma-karma*, *bhakti*, *vairāgya*, and *dhyāna*.

III, 27, 28-29. *Bhakti* leads to *jñāna*, and *jñāna* ensures permanent release.

III, 32, 23-26. Through *bhakti* one attains the experience of Brahman. In substance, all objects are equal as manifestations of God. Hence, once a person is able to view everything in an equal manner, it is then clear that he experiences his self as Brahman himself. Such a one is of the essence of consciousness; he is non-different from Brahman, who manifests himself as everything.

III, 32, 31. When *jñāna*, which is the means of experiencing Brahman, dawns, the true nature of *prakṛti* (as appearance) and the true nature of *puruṣa* (as Brahman) also becomes clear.

III, 32, 32. *Jñāna-yoga* is connected with Nirguṇa Brahman, and *bhakti-yoga* with Saguna Brahman. But the result of both is the same, namely Brahman.

III, 32, 39-43. Instruction in *jñāna-yoga* is not for people who are not qualified for it. It is only for the virtuous. They alone will benefit by it (attain Brahman) even if they receive it once.

IV, 7, 50-54. Śrīhari declares his true nature as Para-Brahman. He is the basis and witness of everything. He is beyond *māyā* and *upādhis*, and he is self-revealing. He is the one who appears as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva for the sake of creating, sustaining, and resolving the world. He also appears as all the *jīvas*. Anyone who sees beyond differences and knows this basic reality attains peace.

IV, 24, 75. In this world, of all the means that give happiness, *jñāna* is the most important, because it gives *mokṣa*. He who mounts the raft of *jñāna* easily crosses the unsurpassable ocean of *saṁsāra*.

X, 14, 4. Those who seek *jñāna* without *bhakti* face difficulties and do not succeed.

X, 87, 40. Those who have experienced Brahman are not bound by scriptural injunctions on *karma*. Likewise, the great bhakta also gets released from karma. But others who [want only] flout injunctions come to grief.

XI, 7, 11-12. The knower avoids bad *karma* and performs obligatory deeds — not out of a sense of duty, but spontaneously. He never again takes birth.

XI, 10, 12-13. *Jñāna* is the fire that destroys *avidyā* and, with it, the illusory appearance of the physical world. When *jñāna* destroys *avidyā* and illusion, the Ātman shines as the sole reality, and *jñāna* subsides in the Ātman.

XI, 11, 10-13. This body is subject to *prārabdha-karma*. The ignorant person regards himself as doer and feels

renunciation also as his own act and thereby remains bound. Reflect on these lines and become detached. Regard all activities as the work of *gunas*, and not of yourself. The *gunas* are also the enjoyer, not yourself. Thus, one can escape being bound by *karma* and its fruits. Just as one detaches oneself from a dream, which, at the time, appeared real, one becomes free from the illusion of difference.

XI, 11, 18. One may be learned in the Veda. But if one has not attained *jñāna*, his efforts have no use (for *mokṣa*).

XI, 11, 21. Give up the illusion of the *jīva*'s plurality, and devote a pure mind to meditation on God, and withdraw from all activities relating to the world.

XI, 19, 1-4. *Śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana* relating to the Upaniṣads lead to experience of *Ātman*. Such a one who is established in *Ātman* has no need for *yukti*, which gives only mediate knowledge. He realizes that the whole universe of duality and even its remedy, namely *vṛtti-jñāna* are of the nature of *māyā*, which is based on Brahman. The *jñānī* seeks nothing but Brahman. He alone knows Brahman's real nature and meditates on him. No other *sādhana* leads (directly) to Brahman - experience as *jñāna* does.

XI, 20, 7. Those who have developed *vairāgya* towards action and result are fit for *jñāna-yoga*.

XI, 21, 35. The Veda has three portions — *karma*, *upāsana*, and *jñāna*. The real import of all the three *kāṇḍas* is the non-difference of the *jīva* from Brahman. But the teaching is not conveyed explicitly, because to understand it, requires mental purity.

XI, 24, 1. The value of Sāṅkhya-Yoga is that, by knowing this, one can overcome the delusion of difference and its results, viz. pleasure and pain.

XI, 26, 2. The *guṇas* are not real (They are part of the mind. They belong to *māyā*. Once *jñāna* is attained, even though a person lives and acts within the *guṇas*, he will not be bound by them.

XI, 28, 5. Till the experience of non-duality, the perception of duality causes fear.

XI, 28, 23. *Śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana* lead to experience of *Ātman*. The help on this path is a *guru* who has himself experienced the *Ātman*. By these means, one becomes free from pride of body, and gets immersed in the bliss of *Ātman*.

XII, 7, 21. When a person practises *manana* and *nididhyāsana*, he transcends all *guṇas*, states and modifications of mind. His mind becomes calm, and he acquires *ātma-jñāna* through *mahāvākyas*, like *tat tvam asi*. He becomes free from *karma*, which is born of *avidyā*.

8. Bhakti - Yoga

Of all the methods traditionally prescribed for *mokṣa*, the *Bhāgavata* accords special importance to *bhakti-yoga*. The salient features of its contribution may be stated as follows:

1. Bhakti and jñāna

According to Advaita, Nirguṇa Brahman is the sole reality and *jñāna-yoga* is the direct means to realize it, *avidyā* being capable of removal only by *vidyā*. *Bhakti-yoga* prepares the ground for *jñāna-yoga* by purifying the mind and making it one-pointed. The *Bhāgavata* recognizes this position. But, instead of subordinating *bhakti* to *jñāna*, it often shows that *bhakti* merges in *jñāna*. Though the *bhakta* needs to invest Brahman with qualities to bestow his love, he knows that Brahman is really beyond attributes. And the highest point of *bhakti* is where the *bhakta* experiences his non-difference

from Brahman. He loses his sense of separateness from Brahman, and his erstwhile position as a knower, doer, and enjoyer. Thus, the culmination of *bhakti* is the same as that of *jñāna*.

2. Bhakti and dhyāna

Dhyāna-Yoga is also a preparation to *jñāna -yoga*. But it is a difficult process. The self-effort required for bringing the mind under control and directing it on the ultimate reality is beyond the capacity of most seekers. But the same process can be facilitated if it is suffused with *bhakti*. Such a process is possible because the essence of both *dhyāna* and *bhakti* is the same, namely withdrawal of the mind from all wordly concerns and fixing it on one and the same point in an uninterrupted manner. The only difference is in the mode of fixation. While *dhyāna* is an intellectual process, *bhakti* is an emotional one, being intense love for God. The strain involved in deliberate mental fixation can be obviated if *dhyāna* is permeated by the element of love. This kind of *dhyāna* in the form of *bhakti* is very dear to the *Bhāgavata*. Another feature of *dhyāna* is that in its higher reaches it produces extra-ordinary powers (*siddhi*). Though *siddhis* are a necessary product of *dhyāna*, they could serve to distract the mind of the yogi from his real goal, which is liberation. The infusion of *bhakti* into *dhyāna* undoubtedly protects the yogī from the distractive influence of *siddhis*.

3. Bhakti and karma

Karma-yoga is subordinate to *jñāna*, *dhyāna*, and *bhakti*, because it is essentially based on a sense of difference. This position is recognized by all the schools of Vedānta. *Karma-yoga* purifies the mind of selfish inclinations, and only a pure mind is a fit vehicle for other disciplines. The essence of *karma-yoga* is doing one's duty without any thought of personal benefit. For ordinary seekers, such renunciation is not easy. The temptation to expect benefits is very strong, by force of deep-ingrained habits. It is to help in this process

of renouncing personal desires that we are asked to surrender all actions to God. To the *Bhāgavata*, this attitude of surrender is not a mere facility. It is a mission. It infuses *bhakti* into *karma-yoga* and transforms it into a form of worship.

4. The pervasive use of bhakti

Vedānta stresses the need for certain qualifications for any person who seriously pursues *mokṣa* by the four disciplines — *karma*, *dhyāna*, *bhakti* and *jñāna*. The uniqueness of *bhakti-yoga* is that it not only follows upon the presence of these qualifications, but can even produce them. Love of God comes easy to anyone buffeted by the problems of life, irrespective of whether one is qualified for *mokṣa* or not. And once *bhakti* takes hold of the mind, even if it be for personal ends, it unawares generates the qualifications for pursuing release. Thus, according to the *Bhāgavata*, *bhakti-yoga* is not merely one of the disciplines. It is a pervasive discipline, which can help all the other disciplines and even initiate the very process of spiritual life by cultivating the required qualifications.

5. The nature of bhakti

The *Bhāgavata* highlights the difference between two levels of *bhakti*, lower (*aparā*) and higher (*parā*). *Bhakti* of the lower level is addressed to gross forms of God; it is practised with personal ends in view; it is pursued by people who are of any of the three types of dispositions — low (*adhama*), intermediate (*madhyama*), and high (*uttama*). The first type of disposition is characterized by *tamas*, the second by *rajas*, and the third by *sattva*. At the higher level, *bhakti* is focussed on the subtle form of God; it is practised without personal motives (*niṣkāma-bhakti*); it is special to people who have risen above the three *gunas* (*nirguṇa-bhakti*). This higher level of *bhakti* is itself of two grades. It is either practised for the sake of *mokṣa* (*sādhana-bhakti*) or as an end in itself (*sādhyabhakti*).

6. The result of bhakti

The *Bhāgavata* states that the result of practising *bhakti-yoga* is release after death (*videha-mukti*) by the realization of intimate union (*sāyujya*) with Saguna Brahman. This mode of release is, of course, different from *jīvanmukti* in the Advaita sense, which comes in this very life through the realization by the *jīva* of its non-difference from Nirguna Brahman. Those who have merged in *Īvara* after death retain a sense of difference from *Īvara*. Nevertheless, as the *Bhāgavata* points out, they eventually attain *jñāna* by God's grace and realize non-difference from Brahman in the Advaita sense. *Sāyujya*, which means intimate union, is preceded by three steps, which are *sālokya*, *sāmīpya*, and *sārūpya*. In the literal sense, *sālokya* means entering the abode of God, *sāmīpya* is attaining nearness to God, and *sārūpya* is acquiring the form of God. Taken thus, they are comparable to steps to be climbed and hence described as *sopāna-krama*. But the *Bhāgavata* presents the four expressions in a figurative sense — as standing for four decreasing degrees in the sense of difference which the released soul experiences with reference to God. Even the least difference which the *jīva* feels in *sāyujya* disappears when it acquires *jñāna* by divine grace. Thus, even those who rely on *bhakti*, unable to practise *jñāna-yoga* while in life, ultimately attain the fruit of *jñāna* and get released in the Advaita sense of non-difference.

The attainment of *sāyujya* with *Īvara* through *bhakti-yoga* is different from what is called *krama-mukti* in Advaita. A person who practises *upāsana* on *Hiranyagarbha*, or *Brahmā*, along with *niskāma-karma* goes to *brahmaloka* after death, retaining the subtle body. The path by which such a person goes is called the path of the gods (*devayāna*), the northern path (*uttara-marga*), and the path of many stages beginning with light (*arcirādi-mārga*). Acquiring the status of a *siddha*, he enjoys the company of other *siddhas* in the higher worlds of *mahaḥ*, *janaḥ*, and *tapah* and of *Brahmā* himself in *satya-*

loka. During *mahā-pralaya*, all the siddhas together with all the worlds and their inhabitants are absorbed into Brahmā, and then Brahmā himself is absorbed into Nārāyaṇa. If by then a *siddha* has acquired the knowledge (*jñāna*) that the *jīva* is no other than Nirguna Brahman, he is released and is never reborn. (Otherwise, he is reborn as a *siddha* in a higher world during the next creation).

Brahma-sāyujya acquired through *bhakti-yoga* is different from *krama-mukti* for two reasons. (1) The focus of *dhyāna* is *Krama-mukti* is Brahmā. Brahmā is formally included in the trinity of God-head to show that he is superior to the devas, but he is not identical with the Supreme Being like Visnu or Śiva. Brahmā is created by Nārāyaṇa out of himself, so that he, in turn, may create the worlds and their inhabitants. He has a specific place from which to rule creation, viz. *satya-loka*. Therefore the attainment of *brahmaloka* involves travel (*gamana*) for the soul, which is invested with a subtle body, through a path marked by stages. In contrast, the focus of contemplation for the *bhakta* is Saguna Brahman, or *Īśvara*. And *Īśvara* is not limited to a specific place. Expressions like *Vaikunṭha* and *Śivaloka* are taken literally as places only to enable the common *bhakta* to fix his mind on God. They are finally to be understood in the figurative sense as the status of Viṣṇu or Śiva. *Īśvara* is said to pervade all that exists and he is also declared as the indweller of every being. Hence to realize *Īśvara* does not involve any travel for the *bhakta*. At death, he becomes free from both the gross and the subtle bodies and spontaneously realizes his own inner ruler.

(2) The soul who is the subject of *krama-mukti* is said to have practised *niṣkama-karma* also. But we have to note that the spirit of the practice here falls short of the spirit in which a *jñāna-yogin* or a *bhakti-yogin* practises it. If good action is to become useful to *mokṣa*, it should be free from (i) desire for personal objective benefits and (ii) all sense of agency. The *jñāna-yogin* fulfils the first condition by performing good

actions purely for self-purification. And he secures the second condition by reminding himself constantly that all actions are purely the work of the *gunas*, which characterize the mind and body, and that the *Ātman* as such is free from action. The *bhakti-yogin* fulfils the two conditions by constantly telling himself that God is the cause of all his good actions and, therefore, he, as God's instrument, is not entitled to their fruits. He thus does good deeds in a spirit of service to God and as directed by him. He thereby becomes free from a sense of agency and enjoyership. For these reasons, the *niṣkāma-karma* practised by the *jñāna-yogin* and the *bhakti-yogin* conduces to *mokṣa*. But the *niṣkāma-karma* performed by the seeker of *brahma-loka* is not inspired either by *jñāna* or by *bhakti*. It is practised wilfully rejecting the fruits. Such a direct effort has no guarantee of success. Even if we grant that it succeeds and thereby rids the doer of a sense of enjoyership, there is no attempt to fulfil the other condition. It is said that the sense of agency remains with a *siddha*, and so long as it remains, there is every chance of his being reborn after *praḷaya*.

The point of the above discussion is that, unlike the one who contemplates on *Brahmā*, the *bhakta* of *Iśvara*, even though lacking in *jñāna*, is under no obligation to go to *brahmaloka* and wait for *krama-mukti*. He attains, as we have shown at the outset, immediate union with *Iśvara* following the death of the body. This is an important lesson we learn from *Srīmad Bhāgavata*.

Gist of relevant verses

1. On *bhakti* and *jñāna*

II, 2, 6. By *niṣkāma-bhakti*, one can overcome *ajñāna*, which is the cause of *saṁsāra*.

X, 14, 54-55. Everything is loved for the sake of *Ātman*. The *Ātman* is the seat of love. That was why *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, who is the self of all selves, was loved so much in *Vṛndāvana*.

XI, 3, 47. One who desires that the knot of the heart (*ajñāna*) be untied and that one's real nature as Brahman be realized has to worship Bhagavān both in Vaidika and in Tāntrika forms.

XI, 29, 9-18. Begin with doing all acts for God's sake. Then, in a few days, the mind will spontaneously begin to be devoted to God. With a pure mind, feel the presence of God in yourself and in all beings. If this attitude is cultivated, in a few days, you become free from competition, jealousy, vanity, and so on. Worship God in all beings and be indifferent to how you are treated. Till realization of Brahman, viewing everything as Ātman is an effort; after that, it comes naturally. This practice results in *jñāna* (*anubhava*), which releases one from *samsāra*.

2. On bhakti and dhyāna

I, 6, 36. One whose heart is afflicted by the impact of mental impurities can find peace in the service of God. Such peace is not gained even by the steps in yoga.

3. On bhakti and karma

I, 2, 8. Even if *dharma* is observed strictly, the effort is wasted unless the mind rests in God.

VI, 1, 18-19. *Bhakti* purifies the heart and rids one of past sins. Even big *prāyaścitta-karma* will not wash away sins if they are bereft of *bhakti*. *Bhakti*, by itself, is an excellent substitute for expiatory acts.

VI, 2, 17. The name of the Lord is the best *prāyaścitta*. It washes away both sins done and the tendency to do them in future, whereas *prāyaścitta-karma* wipes out only sins, but not *vāsanās*.

VI, 2, 46. There is no better means for relief from sin and bondage than the name of God. *Prāyaścitta-karma* only aggravates one's qualities of *rajas* and *tamas*.

VI, 3, 25. Even a learned karma-yogi is deluded by the results promised for great sacrifices. He does not realize the greatness of uttering the name of God.

VI, 3, 31-32. The best means of purifying oneself of all sins is to recite the name of God. In purifying the heart, no vrata is equal to hearing and reciting the story of the Lord's *litā*.

VI, 3, 33. A *bhakta* never returns to petty pursuits and bondage. But one who resorts only to *prāyaścitta-karma* retains the tendency for sin and, therefore, remains bound.

X, 46, 32. At the time of death, a *jīva* should at least for a moment devote his pure mind to God. On doing so, he washes away all *vāsanās* for karma, and very soon becomes resplendent and divine like the sun and attains the supreme state of *mokṣa*.

XI, 5, 42. Those who are devoted to God with a one-pointed mind do not commit sin; even if somehow sin occurs, the Lord seated in their hearts will rid them of sin and render them pure.

XI, 11, 23-24. The story of the Lord will purify and ennoble all those who hear it. It should be heard with faith, sung, and remembered. His incarnations and *litas* should be enacted. Subordinating oneself to God, one should pursue *dharma*, *kāma*, and *artha* for the sake of God. Whoever does so acquires one-pointed devotion to God.

XI, 14, 25. *Bhakti* rids one of bad tendencies, because the *bhakta* is really identical with God.

XI, 16, 32. The Lord says that among *bhaktas*, he is their *niṣkama-karma* which is imbued with *bhakti*.

4. On the pervasive use of *bhakti*

I, 2, 7. From one-pointed *bhakti*, one is rid of desires and attains *vairāgya* and *jñāna*.

I, 2, 11-12. By reading and listening to the Bhāgavata, and thereby developing *bhakti* with *jñāna* and *vairāgya*, the faithful experience that truth which is the non-dual Brahman.

II, 2, 33. For one who is enmeshed in *samsāra*, there is no more valuable path than one-pointed devotion to God.

VII, 7, 29. Of all means to *mokṣa*, *niṣkama-bhakti* is the best.

X, 2, 32-33. Those who are vain with their spiritual efforts fall. But those who are humble and pure and cling to the lotus feet of the Lord suffer no such fate. Any *sādhana* without pure *bhakti* is useless.

X, 51, 61. The mind cannot be controlled and the tendency to run after objects cannot be rooted out by any discipline if it is without *bhakti*.

XI, 2, 33. The best way for release is devotion to God. It is always free from fear.

XI, 2, 42. Love of God increases with practice, intensifies dispassion towards everything other than God, and finally gives experience of God.

XI, 14, 20. Even other methods like *dhyāna* and *jñāna* are not so effective in taking one to God as *bhakti*.

XI, 14, 22. Those who are not devoted to God fail to succeed through other methods.

XI, 20, 8. He who is neither fully detached nor entirely attached, but who, by virtue of some good deed in a past life, is drawn with faith towards the story of the Lord's *litā* - such a one is fit for *bhakti-yoga*. And he attains liberation by *bhakti-yoga* itself.

XII, 12, 52. Even that pure *jñāna*, which is the immediate means to release, is useless if it is not allied to *bhakti*. And even exalted *karma* is useless if it is not done for God.

5. On the nature of bhakti

III, 29, 7-14. *Bhakti* varies according to the attitude of the devotees. A *tāmasa bhakta* worships God with bad motives, like enmity for others. A *rājasa bhakta* worships God with legitimate, but personal motives, like prosperity. A *sāttvika bhakta* offers worship for expiation of sins and out of a sense of duty. All the three kinds of devotees are committed to a sense of difference between themselves and God. There is a fourth kind of devotee who transcends the three *guṇas* and rises above the sense of difference between himself and God. He offers one-pointed, continuous, and desireless devotion to God, regarding hm as the indweller of all beings. This is *nirguṇa-bhakti-yoga*. At this level, one does not ask even for *mokṣa*, but he does attain it by God's grace.

III, 29, 23-27. God is immanent in every being. So *bhakti* should involve love for all beings. It should not be confined to images, forgetting that God is immanent in all. It should also rise above the sense of difference between *jīvātman* and *Paramātman*.

IV, 9, 11. Dhruva asks from God only the company of great bhaktas to develop his own devotion and thereby cross the ocean of *samsāra*.

V, 26, 38. The fourteen worlds described in the Purānas are the Lord's gross (*sthūla*) form, produced by his power of *māyā*. One may not understand the subtle (*sūkṣma*, *nirguṇa*) form taught in the Upanisads. Such a one becomes pure by contemplating on the gross form, and proceeds to experience even the subtle form.

VII, 5, 23-24. The nine forms of *bhakti* cited by Prahlāda: listening to the story of the Lord, reciting it, remembering him always, worshipping his feet, making offerings to him, rendering obeisance to him, being his servant, and even his friend, and surrendering oneself to him.

VII, 6, 19-24. God reveals himself as the indweller of all souls including the *bhakta*, and he also pervades all the objects known. So one should love all to please God.

VII, 7, 55. One-pointed *bhakti* is that where the *bhakta* sees God, always, everywhere, and in all objects.

VII, 10, 7-9. When asked to seek a boon, Prahlāda replies that the only boon he would desire is absolute freedom from all desires. To entertain any desire is to lose all virtues. One attains the true nature of the Lord the moment one gives up all desires.

X, 32, 14. The Lord makes himself accessible to the *gopīs* — a blessing hard to obtain even by great *yogīs*.

X, 32, 22. Śri Kṛṣṇa assures the *gopīs* that their love is even greater than that of great *yogīs* — it is marked by utter renunciation.

X, 47, 58-59. The *gopīs*' love for Kṛṣṇa transcends all worldly attachments. Even Uddhava regrets that people like him have not been able to practise such love. Even those who offer pure *bhakti*, in spite of being unaware of the true nature of God, are sure to attain him, just as a person who takes *amṛta*, without knowing what it is, becomes immortal.

X, 81, 3. God is pleased, not by the quality and quantity of offerings, but by the purity of the *bhakti* of one who offers his mite.

X, 82, 45. The Lord himself says that *bhakti* like that of the *gopīs* alone leads to realization.

XI, 2, 36. *Bhāgavata-dharma* is the easy path taught by Bhagavan himself for the release of even the ignorant one. To practise this, all that is required is the attitude (*bhāva*) that whatever one does by mind, body, speech, and so on, one does for the sake of God.

XI, 2, 45. The *uttama-bhakta* looks upon everything as the manifestation of God and regards God as the indweller and guide of all. He, therefore, views everything with a sense

of equality. (Here the term *uttama* is a eulogy to the *para-bhakta*, who is *nirguṇa*).

XI, 2, 48-52. Life is full of varied experiences. But the *uttama-bhakta* is not shaken by them, as he is immersed in devotion to God. He does not give room for the tendency to sense enjoyment; he is not proud of his status or spiritual attainment; he has no sense of "mine" and "of others"; he is always peaceful; he does not flinch from God's feet even in the worst of times.

XI, 3, 31. *Bhakti* as a means (*sādhana*), when diligently practised, paves the way for *bhakti* as an end in itself (*sādhya*).

XI, 3, 33. It is difficulty to cross God's *māyā*. But the higher type of *bhakti*, by constant practice of selfless love, does so.

XI, 3, 40. When *bhakti* is practised intensely, the heart becomes pure. And in the pure heart there arises the direct experience of Brahman.

XI, 19, 24. Surrendering oneself (*ātma-nivedanam*) is the highest form of *bhakti*. When one attains such *bhakti*, what else remains for one to attain?

6. On the result of bhakti

II, 2, 20. There are two paths for the soul after death. One is the southern path for the enjoyment of those who do good deeds with desire. The other is the northern path for those who do good deeds without desire. This is for their gradual emancipation (*krama-mukti*). But God is the basis of both. (So the "path" of *bhakti* is different from both).

X, 12, 39. He who offers his heart even once for the Lord to be seated in it is sure to attain *mokṣa* and will never again be subject to *māyā*.

XI, 24, 14. The worlds beyond *svarga* are got by *yoga*, *tapasya*, and *sannyāsa*. But by *bhakti* one attains the presence of God.

XI, 29, 34. When a person gives up (the fruits of) all actions and completely surrenders himself to God, God relieves him from *jīvatva* and bestows *mokṣa* on him - he becomes one with God's real nature.

XII, 3, 50. Those who near the moment of death should think of nothing but God. The Lord, who is the refuge of all and the all-pervading one, takes into his own form and makes identical with himself those who thus meditate on him.

9. Importance of Bhakti and Bhāgavata in Kali-Yuga

The universe passes through a series of four yugas. They are *kṛta-yuga* (*satya-yuga*), *tretā-yuga*, *dvāpara-yuga*, and *kali-yuga*. A full cycle of four yugas takes 43,20,000 years in the human time scale. But each of the four yugas occupies a decreasing period as the yugas proceed from the first to the last. *Satya-yuga* takes 17,28,000 human years, i.e. 40% of the *catur-yuga*. *Tretā-yuga* takes 12,96,000 years, i.e. 30%, *dvāpara-yuga* takes 8,44,000 years, i.e. approximately 20%, and *kali-yuga* takes 4,52,000 years, i.e. approximately 10%. One thousand *catur-yugas* must pass before the universe undergoes a conditional dissolution called *naimittika-pralāya*. (This period of one thousand *catur-yugas* is also divided into fourteen *manvantara* periods, each rule by a deity called Manu). It takes several rounds of *naimittika-pralāya* before the universe undergoes an absolute dissolution called *mahā-pralāya*. And this is followed by a fresh creation. We need not enter into details here. The *Bhāgavata* states that *bhakti-yoga* is of special importance to *kali-yuga*.

The passage of the universe from the first to the last of the four yugas is marked by a relentless regress in moral value. *Dharma* is said to stand on four main virtues — truth (*satya*), compassion (*dayā*), austerity (*tapas*), and charity (*dāna*). Figuratively, they are described as four limbs (*aṅga*) of *dharma*. In *kṛta-yuga*, these qualities are unimpaired. In *tretā-yuga*, all of them come down by a quarter, and in

dvāpara-yuga, by another quarter. When *kali-yuga* begins, the third quarter disappears, and by the end of *kali-yuga*, even the last quarter vanishes. Corresponding to the decline in virtue, there is a decline also in the physical conditions of life, in spite of increasing attention being paid to material ends. This is because physical well-being ultimately depends on *dharma*. Thus, *kali-yuga* is the worst of all the four yugas, both in terms of morals and in terms of physical life.

Since the pursuit of *mokṣa* has to be undertaken by various methods within the world in which we find ourselves, conditions in the world have a necessary impact on the practice of the various means to *mokṣa*. The *Bhāgavata* points out that we in the *kali-yuga* cannot afford to practise the means to *mokṣa* in the same way as people in previous yugas. In *satya-yuga*, men resorted to intense and prolonged meditation to attain liberation. But *kali* is the very picture of distraction and disturbance to mental fixation. Meditation, which requires one-pointed attention to the select object, is well-nigh impossible in the manner of olden days. In *tretā-yuga*, liberation was sought mainly by performing elaborate sacrifices. Even this is impossible now. There is neither the time needed nor suitable space nor purity of the material required nor even enough experts to guide such practices. In *dvāpara-yuga*, the chief means to liberation was worship of God strictly according to rules laid down in scripture. This, again, has become difficult for want of time, dwindling faith, and laxity in the austerity required as preliminary to such worship. Hence it is said that in *kali-yuga*, worship of God in the personal form by reciting his name and glory will compensate for the impossibility of all other methods.

Thus, of all the methods prescribed for attaining *mokṣa*, *bhakti-yoga* — and that too in the very simple form of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* — has an important role to play in *kali-yuga*. That is why the *Bhāgavata* devotes special attention to *bhakti-yoga* in most of its chapters. In fact, the *Bhāgavata* itself as a vehicle of *bhakti* took shape specially for succour in *kali-yuga*.

In recommending devotional praise of God (*nāma-saṅkīrtana*) as the means most suitable for attaining *mokṣa* in *kali-yuga*, the *Bhāgavata* does not overlook the true place of *bhakti* in the scheme of disciplines as subordinate to *jñāna*. The conception of *mokṣa* found in the *Bhāgavata* is ultimately that of Advaita. According to Advaita, *mokṣa* consists in the *jīva* realizing its non-difference from Brahman. Hence *jñāna* is the direct means to release. But in preparing the ground for *jñāna*, *karma*, *bhakti*, and *upāsana* have an important role. All the three disciplines purify the mind of selfish worldly inclinations. *Bhakti* and *upāsana* promote also mental concentration. These results are indispensable for the pursuit of *jñāna*. Thus, the practice of *bhakti* in *kali-yuga*, even in the form of singing the praise of the Lord, prepares the seeker for attaining *jñāna*. In fulfilling this purpose, *bhakti* has an advantage over *upāsana*. The strain involved in fixing the mind on the chosen object as in *upāsana* is absent here. Loving devotion to God easily carries the mind away from all worldly distractions and imperceptibly fastens it to the Supreme Being. Another advantage of *bhakti* is that it can transform itself into *jñāna*. For these reasons, while recognizing that *jñāna* is the direct means to *mokṣa*, the *Bhāgavata* accords a special place to *bhakti* in the scheme of disciplines.

Again, in proposing *bhakti* as most suitable for *kali-yuga*, the *Bhāgavata* does not rule out the need for *karma* as a preparation for *jñāna* and *bhakti*. It appreciates the difficulties faced by the agent in the practice of *karma* in *kali-yuga*. But it warns that the presence of difficulties should not be cited as an excuse for not observing codes of conduct. In fact, the difficulties should rather be taken as a challenge and test to one's righteousness. In the face of difficulties, *dharma* should be observed with greater determination and with the firm belief that the Lord in his mercy would overlook and forgive whatever limitations that occur purely due to pressure of circumstances. *Sādhāraṇa-dharma* has to be

observed, abjuring all *pratiṣiddha-karma*. *Kāmya-karma* could initially be performed selectively, for example for the sake of relief from any kind of suffering or as a matter of duty to one's family, but not for needless desires like excessive wealth or fame. Eventually, all *kāmya-karma* should be given up once intense desire for *mokṣa* takes hold of the mind. *Nitya* and *naimittika* karmas have to be observed without any thought of their personal benefits and purely as a means of service to God and thereby to purify oneself.

The *Bhāgavata* was composed by Vyāsa keeping in mind the aspirations of a common seeker after *mokṣa* who is born in *kali-yuga* and who has to encounter innumerable difficulties unlike a seeker in earlier yugas. Its central figure is Śri Kṛṣṇa and its ubiquitous teaching is the sweet path of *bhakti*, which spontaneously leads one to *jñāna* and *mokṣa*. The *Bhāgavata* is, therefore, wonderfully suited to *kali-yuga*, as extolled by other Puranas, especially the *Padma* and the *Skanda* Puranas. It contains the essence of the Veda and the Itihasas. Its message is subtle, but still accessible to all sincere seekers.

Gist of relevant verses

1. On bhakti in kali-yuga

I, 18, 7. The advantage of *kali-yuga* is this. Even by thinking of doing good, one attains the fruits of good deeds. But as for evil deeds, one does not suffer by mere resolve to do them, but only by actually doing them.

X, 90, 50. Hearing, singing or even recalling the *lita-kathā* of Śri Kṛṣṇa every moment will ensure release. Although time is a difficult factor to cross, for bhaktas it has no influence in the state of release, because it is beyond time. Even great kings have renounced their positions to meditate on God.

XI, 1, 11. The auspicious and meritorious deeds of Śri Kṛṣṇa, when recited, rids people of the evils of *kali* (*kali-mala*).

XI, 5, 35-36. In each *yuga*, people worship God in different ways according to the nature of the *yuga*. In *kali-yuga*, the mere recital about the Lord (*nāma-saṅkīrtana*) serves the ends of man—personal and altruistic. For this very reason, those exalted ones who know the nature of this *yuga* love and praise it.

XI, 5, 38-40. The people of *satya*, *tretā*, and *dvapara yugas* desire that they be born in *kali-yuga*, because in this *yuga*, everywhere, many bhaktas will emerge who will be absolutely surrendered to Lord Nārāyaṇa. Especially in Dravida-deśa, where sacred rivers like Tāmraparṇi, Kaverī, and Mahānadī flow, there will be more bhaktas. Those who drink the waters of these rivers get purified in their hearts, and they become bhaktas of Vāsudeva.

XI, 6, 24. In *kali-yuga*, pious people who sing or listen to the litās of Śri Kṛṣṇa will easily transcend the darkness of ignorance—says Brahmā.

XII, 3.15. Singing the graces of Śri Kṛṣṇa removes all that is inauspicious. That is why great persons sing them. Those who love Śri Kṛṣṇa with all their heart must always listen to this recitation.

XII, 3, 43-44. The Lord is himself the teacher and master of the world of moving and unmoving beings. All the devas are devoted to him. But in *kali-yuga*, people, out of stupidity and hypocrisy, are far removed from worshipping God by deed and thought. The Lord is the sure saviour of one who sincerely prays to him in times of danger. The prayer is answered even if it is made out of despair. God saves him then from bondage to *karma*, and he attains the best of states. But, alas! by the impact of *kali-yuga*, people become aliens even to such worship of God.

XII, 3, 45-48. In *kali-yuga*, there are several evils - those occurring in the family and those occurring in places. The root cause of all evils is in our own hearts. But the moment the Lord gets seated in the heart, all evils turn away

from us. Devotion to God, seated in the heart, in the form of hearing, singing, meditation, worship or service, removes also the sins of all past lives. Just as fire removes all the impurities in gold, the Lord seated in the heart of the seeker removes for ever even all tendencies (*vāsanā*) to bad action. The purity created by God by his presence in the heart is real. Such purity is not attained by any other means like knowledge, austerity, *prāṇāyāma*, friendliness, holy bath, penance, gift, and *japa*.

XII, 3, 51-52. *Kali-yuga* is the treasure-trove of evils. Nevertheless, there is one great virtue in it. It is that, during this age, even by singing the praise of Lord Kṛṣṇa, one becomes free from all attachments and realizes God. In *kṛta-yuga*, one attains liberation by meditating on God; in *tretā-yuga*, one realizes this goal by performing elaborate sacrifices dedicated to God; in *dvāpara-yuga*, liberation is accomplished by conducting devotional service to God as ordained in scripture. In *kali-yuga*, uttering the name of God would be sufficient for realizing the same goal of release.

Bhāgavata-māhātmya (*Padma-purāṇa*) 1, 68. That result which is not attained by *tapas*, *yoga*, and *samādhi* is fully attained in *kali-yuga* by merely singing the glory of Śri Hari.

Ibid., 2, 4. In *sātya*, *tretā*, and *dvāpara jugas*, *jñāna* and *vairāgya* were the means to *mokṣa*. In *kali-yuga*, *bhakti* alone is the means.

Ibid., 2, 12-13. In *kali-yuga*, *jñāna* and *vairāgya* come to be neglected. So these means have become decrepit. However, in one respect, no yuga is equal to *kali*. In this *yuga*, *bhakti* will become established in the heart of each person in each household.

Ibid., 2, 15. In this *kali-yuga*, even if a person be a sinner, he will attain the fear-free abode of Śri Kṛṣṇa, provided he has *bhakti*.

Ibid., 2, 19. People acquire a taste for *bhakti* as a result of the power of merit (*punya*) earned through thousands of births. In *kali-yuga*, *bhakti*, and *bhakti* alone, will lead us to the very presence of Śri Kṛṣṇa.

2. On the Bhāgavata in kali-yuga

I, 1, 10-11. In *kali-yuga*, human age has come down. People are not inclined to make effort for *mokṣa*. They have become lazy. They are less fortunate, their understanding is little. Moreover, they are beset by innumerable obstacles and distractions. Scriptures are many. But among them, there is no agreement as to the means to *mokṣa*. And they describe various types of *karma*. Moreover, they are so voluminous that even to listen to a portion of them is difficult. Pray, guide us—so the sages ask Sūta.

I, 1, 22. The sages ask Sūta further. This *kali-yuga* destroys the purity and strength of people's minds. It is difficult to cross *kali-yuga*. After Śri Kṛṣṇa ascended to his abode, where has dharma taken refuge?

I, 2, 3. Sūta replies thus. This *Bhāgavata* Purāna is full of hidden truths. This contains the essence of all the Vedas, and this will provide the experience of the true nature of God. Those who are immersed in the ocean of *saṁsāra* and long to transcend this fierce darkness of ignorance can find in the *Bhāgavata* an unparalleled source of light, for it reveals to them spiritual truths. That is why, out of compassion for all such people, the teacher of even great sages, Śri Śukadeva, has expounded the *Bhāgavata*.

I, 3, 40-45. Vyāsa composed the *Bhāgavata* equal to the Veda for the welfare of humanity. It contains the essence of the Veda and the Itihāsas. Śri Kṛṣṇa left the world along with *dharma*, *jñāna*, and so on. Now it is *kali-yuga*. In this period, to all those who are blinded by the darkness of ignorance, the *Bhāgavata* is like the sun to dispel the darkness.

I, 4, 25-33. Even after having written the *Mahābhārata* for the welfare of those who are not qualified for the Veda, Vyāsa was still not at peace. He had not said anything about attaining God. (The *Bhāgavata* is the outcome).

XII, 12, 59. The *Bhāgavata* destroys all sins and their vāsanās. Ultimately, it leads to *mokṣa*.

XII, 12, 65-66. God is the master of all, and he alone can destroy the entire stock of evils that obtain in *kali-yuga*. There are several Purānas to describe the glory of God amidst other topics. But the *Bhāgavata* is exclusively devoted to the praise the God, his gunas, and his litās. Even when it deals with topics like praḷaya and so on, it does so only as part of God's litā and not independently. Therefore the *Bhāgavata* is different from and superior to all the other Purānas.

Bhāgavata-māhātmya (Padma-purāṇa) 1, 11. Śrī-Śuka has taught the *Bhāgavata* precisely to save the people of *kali-yuga* from the fierce bite of the deadly serpent appearing in the form of time.

Ibid., 1, 18-20. Even Brahmā was surprised at the capacity of the *Bhāgavata* to grant release to Parikṣit. He weighed in the balance all the means to *mokṣa*, and the *Bhāgavata* alone outweighed all the others. The ṛṣis were astonished. And Brahmā concluded that in *kali-yuga*, the *Bhāgavata* alone can grant instant release.

Ibid., 2, 60. The daily *pārāyaṇa* of the *Bhāgavata*, which is *jñāna-yuga*, will lead to *mukṭi*.

Ibid., 2, 62-63. Just as deer flee on hearing the roar of the lion, at the reverberation of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, all the evils of *kali* will disappear. Then *bhakti*, carrying with it *jñāna* and *vairāgya*, will sport in each household and in each person's heart.

Ibid., 2, 67-70. The story of the *Bhāgavata* is made of the essence of the Veda. Therefore it is of special merit. Yet we

cannot derive this essence except in the form of its fruit, which separates itself from the tree. Milk contains ghee. But the taste of ghee is not got from milk itself. When it is separated from milk, even the gods enjoy its taste. Molasses pervades sugarcane. But when it is separated, it is of greater taste. Similar is the story of the *Bhāgavata*.

Ibid. 3, 1. *Bhakti*, *jñāna*, and *vairāgya* occur through the study of the *Bhāgavata*. It is *jñāna-yajna*.

Ibid. 3, 61-63. Śri Kṛṣṇa transferred all his powers to the *Bhāgavata* and disappeared in it. Service to the *Bhāgavata*, listening to it, reading it, even seeing it rids people of sins. Its audition in the *saptāha* mode is more important in *kali-yuga* than other methods.

Ibid., 4, 9. In *kali-yuga*, there is nothing better to chasten men's minds and rid them of all sins than the theme of the *Bhāgavata*.

Ibid., 6, 97. In *kali-yuga*, the *Bhāgavata* is the medicine against the disease of rebirth (*bhava-roga*). It is also like the arrow of Rama (against evils).

Bhāgavata-māhātmya (*Skanda-purāna*), 3, 11-13. Now after the departure of Śri Kṛṣṇa from the earth, the only means to experience Śri Kṛṣṇa is the *Bhāgavata*. Wherever and whenever the *Bhāgavata* is recited or heard, Śri Kṛṣṇa manifests himself. Even one or half a *śloka* from the *Bhāgavata*, studied with *bhakti*, is sufficient for Śri Kṛṣṇa to appear along with the gopis.

Ibid., 3, 18. Spiritual benefit attained through other methods in several births is attained through the *Bhāgavata*.

Ibid., 4, 8-9. For finite minds on earth who are caught between the fierce jaws of *kali-yuga*, the *Bhāgavata* is the best succour.

Ibid., 4, 32. For those who are afflicted by the sorrows of *samsāra* and pine for mokṣa, the *Bhāgavata* is like medicine against the disease of rebirth in *kali-yuga*.

A study of the *Bhāgavata* reveals the following points:

1. The *Bhāgavata* has a high philosophical content.
2. The final metaphysical position of the *Bhāgavata* is that of Advaita.
3. Jñāna yoga is emphasised in the *Bhāgavata*.
4. Traditionally, the *Bhāgavata* is recognised as a *bhakti-grantha*.
5. True *Bhakti yoga* leads to videha-mukti.



6

ETHICS IN ŚAṄKARA'S ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

T.S.Rukmani*

*Sarve bhavantu sukhinah sarve santu nirāmayāḥ, sarve
bhadraṇi paśyantū mā kaścit dukkhabhāg bhavet*

"The disinterested, idealist task of realizing values is
culture" Ricoeur Paul in *The Conflict of Interpretations*

Parodying Oliver Goldsmith one can say that 'Culture is what culture does' and one of the paramount expressions of culture is the notion of morality which is a sense of right and wrong and its application in the everyday world. But a sense of what is right and what is wrong is easily said than done for there is no way we can come up with a theory of normative ethics. Moreover, even if one were to be able to come up with such a theory there would be the added difficulty of whether that can hold good for all people for all time across the globe i.e will it be possible for instance to prescribe the same normative standards of behaviour for

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all people in all cultures transculturally across the board for all time. To date it is a fact that moral philosophers are increasingly concerned with the lack of being able to come up with any normative ethics. Whether one believes in a transcendentalist origin of ethics like the medieval theologians (Thomas Aquinas et al) as opposed to others like Aristotle and David Hume who support an empiricist origin of ethics, the fact of the matter is that we are still far away from an understanding of the origins of ethics.

It was fashionable till recently to talk generally about two theories of moral philosophy between which moral philosophers divided their loyalties i.e. between a utilitarian approach to morality or a de-ontological approach to morality. But those two theories have been beset with a number of problems and there is therefore a turn to what is known as Virtue ethics in recent writings on moral philosophy.¹

Virtue ethics is as the word denotes ethical behaviour based on virtues. In this reformulation of ethical theory there is a recognition of Aristotle's contribution to this debate in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. Virtue ethics, unlike deontological or utilitarian ethics allows for the advantage of understanding virtues based on norms that are 'local both in origin and in application'. This approach is the result of recognizing that every culture has its own world view and the virtues that are developed have a direct relevance to the life lived within that world view. It is the lack of understanding of the world view of the Upaniṣadic sages, for instance, that prompted scholars like Zaehner, Schweitzer et al, to declare that there can be no ethics or moral behaviour in a philosophy that propounded a unity experience. In other words they believed that there is a

¹ Rosalind Hursthouse *On Virtue Ethics*

blurring of boundaries between what is good and what is evil in Upaniṣadic philosophy that emphasizes only the reality of the One Brahman identified with the Ātman. One can only attribute this prejudice and lack of understanding, to the presupposition that moral behaviour has of necessity to be based in action which, in general, is directed towards the other.²

One can raise the question of how the virtues themselves are decided in any particular society. While this is not an easy question to answer we could say that the way a culture views its religious, metaphysical and social aspects could give rise to some notions of the virtues that it believes in. If the notion of an end value is also built into that of the virtues, as we see happening in the Hindu/Veda context, we can get some idea of how some of the virtues got crystallized in the tradition and then informed systems like Advaita Vedānta (AdV). The close connection between ethics and society has been demonstrated by philosophers like Alasdair MacIntyre in many of his works. Gadamer has added his own voice in support of how ethics cannot be divested from the ethos of the society to which it belongs. Thus Gadamer says "Indeed, recognizing human conditionedness...is quite compatible with the sublime unconditionality of the moral law"³. Thus there is a recognition in Gadamer that normative morality can indeed evolve within an 'ethos' and it is increasingly being

² Zaehner even carries this prejudice in his discussion on mysticism when he makes the remark that "theistic experience was an advance over the monistic, since the latter expressed a self-centred interest of the mystic to be included in the ultimate" in Jerome I Gellman "Mysticism and Religious Experience", in William J. Wainwright, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 146. Where all mystic experiences are generally considered to be ineffable to bring in a distinction between two ineffable states surely speaks of an inbuilt prejudice, which Zaehner shows no evidence of hiding!

³ Gadamer Hans-Georg, *Hermeneutics, Religion, and Ethics* (trans) Joel Weinsheimer, p.25

recognized that in order to understand the moral virtues of any society one needs to empathetically study the respective culture where the virtues occur. That is not to say that one cannot construct some basic virtues like truthfulness, non-violence, etc., across the board, which can be spelt out for all cultures. But it is in the interpretation of how and where these can be applied in cases of moral dilemmas, that the specifics of each culture will be tested.

Going back to our discussion on moral action in the context of an unity experience as advocated by AdV, one can easily approach it from a virtue ethics point of view. Thus, one can concede the presence of *Rta* in virtues like honesty, truthfulness, charity, integrity etc, which the Vedic Indian valued and which formed the background of its ethos in a person, that are spelt out in the Upaniṣads, not systematically but whenever there was an occasion for it. If these virtues were recognized in the tradition, then the one who possessed these virtues would be considered a virtuous one. Since this presentation is concerned specifically with ethics in AdV, I shall now turn my attention to see how AdV as propounded by Śāṅkara fares in the area of virtue ethics.

One can discuss AdV from three points of view in the context of virtue ethics. One can look at it, firstly, from the point of view of the *jīvanmukta*, one liberated while still in the body, which is a unique contribution by AdV to the history of spiritual thought; secondly from the point of view of the person who is striving for *mokṣa* and thirdly from the perspective of a person living in the world in accordance with *dharma*. I shall deal with the third model first i.e with reference to the individual who lives his/her life in accordance with *dharma*, then go on to the one who has *mokṣa* as the ultimate value to be achieved and then come to the case of the *jīvanmukta*.

Vedic society as seen in the R̥gveda, is one that has evolved the notion of *R̥ta* as the highest moral and physiological principle. "*R̥ta* is...the ideal principle of ordering, the paradigmatic principle of ultimate reality".⁴ The fact that *R̥ta* is accorded the function of maintaining moral order in the universe is significant. *R̥ta* is also called *satya* or Truth in the RV and it is a metaphysical principle intuited by the Vedic *R̥sis* and is considered to be protected by the *devas*. The humans on their part maintain their side of the bargain by performing the sacrifices in a prescribed manner in order to realize the teleological principle of *R̥ta* and thus leading a virtuous life..

The maintenance of *R̥ta* ensured the end values of a healthy, prosperous life in this world with the possibility of spiritual welfare after death. The good or virtuous person in this society is thus the *R̥tvik* or one who performs his sacrifices with devotion. The other virtues would be being truthful, having *śraddhā* or faith in the efficacy of the *yajñas* (sacrifices), obedience, as it is obedience to the *R̥si* and to the rules of correct performance of the *yajñas* that ensures the maintenance of the order in the universe, self-discipline and self-restraint also called *tapah*. The dual obligation to maintain order in society and also ensure one's own welfare entailed behaving morally towards one's fellow beings. We see that illustrated in such statements as "He who eats alone is a sinner"⁵, "Let us meet together, speak together"⁶etc., and the quotation at the start of this presentation i.e. *sarve bhavantu sukhinah* also echos the same universal feeling of good will towards all beings.⁷ One very important virtue

⁴ G.C. Pande, *Foundations of Indian Culture*, Vol.I. p.24

⁵ RV. X.117.6

⁶ *ibid.* X.191

⁷ Many ancient societies had parallel ideas and the notion of *R̥ta* can be compared in a general manner with the idea of the Good in Plato or the idea of the Unmoved Mover in Aristotle.

already accepted in the Ṛgveda at many places is the freedom to question and to choose. The *muni* who walks out of a rule bound society is perhaps exercising his choice for living a different kind of life,⁸ RV. X.136 the *Ṛṣi* who questions to which deity the sacrifice is being offered⁹, again represents one who makes bold to question the prevailing custom. Thus we get an indication of one more virtue present in the Ṛgveda milieu i.e. the freedom to question and to choose what one thinks is right.

We can quickly gloss over the other periods and come to the Upaniṣads on which the AdV of Śaṅkara relies heavily. The Upaniṣads themselves represent a changed atmosphere. Dharma is now in the forefront and *Ṛta* is not mentioned much as the ultimate value; similarly *dharma* and *mokṣa* vie with each other as the highest value to be striven for, a social structuring in terms of *varṇa* and *āśrama* has taken place and in general, the theory of *karma* as a principle of moral retribution had come into being. One also observes that, in general, in the Upaniṣads in which the earlier value of a life lived well in the world with the prospect of an assured good life post-mortem, has now been replaced by liberation or *mokṣa* as the highest value.

However, even though *mokṣa* was the highest value to be striven for, that was the ideal and like all ideals formed the cherished goal of very few in society. It is the other ideal of living in accordance with *dharma* that still played a part in the moral context. Religion and culture are also not static in any society and as society and the aspired values change, there is a corresponding change in the virtues that the same society considers important in the changed milieu. That, however, does not mean the abandonment of the earlier virtues but, especially, in the Indian context meant an adding on to the virtues already in existence. Thus the early virtues

⁹ RV. X. 121

enumerated above like *śraddhā* etc., continued to exist but many more also got added to the list. The value of social obligation to the society one lives in and in which one cultivates cultural memories had already led to the acknowledgement of the five debts or *ṛṇas* that one owes to the *rsis* (*brahma-ṛṇa*), to the deities (*deva-ṛṇa*), to one's ancestors (*pitr-ṛṇa*), to one's fellow travelers on earth (*manusya-ṛṇa*) and to all living beings (*bhūta-ṛṇa*) in the Brahmana manuals and reiterated in the BrU as well.¹⁰ This is known collectively as the *pañcayajñas* or five sacrifices. Virtues like compassion and justice are built into this concept of *pañcayajñas*.

The change from *Ṛta* to *dharma* is a dramatic turn. *Dharma* is a ubiquitous term and as is well known, it has many shades of meaning. While the word occurs in the Rgveda itself, it has not acquired the all important sacred dimension there. While *Ṛta* was conceived as being an external telos, *dharma* could be attained as a personal value by conducting one's life in a certain manner. This important change has been interpreted in many ways and one such is that found in the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad (BrU). Thus it is mentioned in the BrU that Brahman, after creating all the four *varṇas* was still unhappy and had to fulfil itself by projecting *dharma*, by which the ruler rules says the Upaniṣad. There is thus a suggestion that *dharma* is a transcendent principle on which even the ruler relies when taking decisions. This is confirmed by Śaṅkara when he states that *dharma* rules even the ruler.¹¹ Further *dharma* gets identified with *satya* in the Upaniṣad as happened earlier with *Ṛta* and thus, one behaving in accordance with *dharma*, was a truthful one. Śaṅkara, in this manner, acknowledges

¹⁰ BrU. I. 4. 16

¹¹ dharmam tadetat śreyorupam sṛstam kṣatrasya ksatram ksatrasyapi niyantr, ugradapyugram, Sankarābhāṣya on BrU. I.4.14

dharma as an inner principle or virtue and this commitment to dharma would surface in many of his commentaries. The *vyāvahārika-sattā* or *samsāra*/world is the theatre of right action guided by dharma for the ordinary person as opposed to the exceptional ones aspiring for mokṣa.

As one of the earliest of the Upaniṣads to come down to us, the BrU is indeed a mine of information. I would like to draw attention to two more passages in the Up. that advocate some more virtues that are to be cultivated if one has to be a virtuous person. The famous parable of Prajāpati instructing his three kinds of pupils i.e. the *devas*, humans and *asuras* in the three 'da-s' is one of the most fascinating in the classical world. Prajāpati's instruction to the three classes of his children designated variously as *devas*, *manuṣyas* and *asuras* consisted of only the letter 'da' as instruction, to each group. It was left to them to interpret it according to their understanding. The *devas* understood 'da' to mean self-restraint (*dāmyata*), the men took it to stand for charity (*dāna*) and the *asuras* knew that it meant *dayā* or compassion. In this context Śaṅkara acknowledges the role of the *brahmacāryāśrama* or a student's life in the guru's place wherein he learns both the virtues rooted in the tradition for leading a proper life as well as other disciplines that fit him for his future life in the world. Śaṅkara in this passage, says that sons and students have to be instructed into the good things or virtues. Thus what was said at the beginning i.e. virtues are culture specific and are cultivated within the ethos of a culture are corroborated by Śaṅkara here. Śaṅkara significantly also adds that *devas* are those amongst us who are basically virtuous but are tempted by desire, *manuṣyas* are the ones who are greedy and *asuras* are those subject to anger thus indirectly classifying self-restraint, lack of greed and compassion as some of the virtues.¹²

¹² BrU V. 2. 1-3

One needs to also look at that famous statement in the Br̥U which mentions that everything in the world like a husband, wife, children and almost everything is desired not for its own sake but for the sake of the *ātman*.¹³ While Śaṅkara interprets it according to his AdV viewpoint¹⁴ one can use his AdV to understand this statement as advocating an important moral principle. After all AdV's unique contribution to ethics is to cultivate a sense of equality by viewing everything as non-different from the Self or one's own Self. Thus Śaṅkara commenting on Īs. Up verse 6 implies that one who realizes the unconditioned Self in all beings is devoid of hatred, as he has developed love for all because there is nothing or no one different from oneself¹⁵. Instead of attributing this attitude only to the one who has attained *mokṣa* one can also understand it to mean that such a cultivation of a mental attitude in an aspirant is conducive to taking one closer to the attainment of *mokṣa*. As *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyasāna* is the means to self realization according to AdV, it is quite feasible to understand Vedānta statements like everything is loved for the sake of the *ātman* alone in the Br. Up as what the aspirant would be using as means for developing such a mental frame. In this view, then, an AdV aspirant is asked to develop the virtue of love by looking upon everything as oneself, which could be the first step in such a spiritual enterprise.

It is perhaps in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad (Taitt.Up)¹⁶ that one gets a clear idea of the virtues that were considered

¹³ *ibid.* II. 4. 5

¹⁴ *tasmāt ātmāpritisādhanaatvāt gauni anyatra pritiḥ, atmanyeva mukhyā, Śāṅkarabhaṣya on ibid*

¹⁵ *aḥamevatmeti sarvabhutesu cātmanam nirvīsesam yastvanupaśyati, saḥ tataḥ tasmādeva darsanat na vijugupsate vijugupṣam ghr̥ṇam na karōti, Śāṅkarabhaṣya on Īs. Up. 6*

¹⁶ Taitt.Up.I. 11

important in the tradition and it will be worthwhile to see how Śaṅkara understands them. At the outset Śaṅkara mentions clearly that just because Brahman-realization according to Advaita is only through knowledge, it should not be construed to mean that one can ignore the *karmas* or rituals enjoined in the tradition.¹⁷ Much like Yoga which insists on *samprajñātā* in order to reach *asamprajñāta yoga*, Śaṅkara makes it clear that *karma* for one who has gone through his studentship and is about to enter the world as a householder is mandatory, in order to lead a virtuous life. It is thus addressed to all those living in the world without undue spiritual overtones.

It is in this section I.11 of the Taitt. Up that Śaṅkara attempts a definition of *dharma* as that which is to be understood in a generic manner covering many virtues like speaking the truth and so on enumerated in the instruction given by the teacher. Thus *dharma* can only be understood as part of the cultural history of the group one belongs to. This part of the Taitt. Up is therefore extremely important to understand the virtues that the culture believed in and wanted its citizens to continue to maintain.

Self preservation is enumerated as one of the virtues but as that is circumscribed within the other virtues like speaking the truth, continuing to learn and to instruct others and so on, it is not an individualistic pursuit but keeping the welfare of others in mind one is asked to also take care of one's own protection.¹⁸

Respect for those near and dear to one like one's mother, father, guru etc., is insisted upon. An important point given in this passage is that when one is in doubt as to what the

¹⁷ ...kartavyatopadeśarāmbhah pragbrahmatmavijñānanniyamena kartavyāni srautas-mārtani karmaṇītyevamarthah Śāṅkarabhāṣya on ibid.

¹⁸ evam kuśalāt ātmarakṣaṇārthāt karmaṇah na pramāditavyam. ibid

right course of action or *dharma* is in a particular situation, one takes the advice of those in society who are wise and who have gained a reputation for correct behaviour. This is almost like what the virtue ethicists say that when one is confused as to the correct mode of behaviour when faced with a moral dilemma. It is then that one seeks the advice of those virtuous people in society.¹⁹

The way Śaṅkara describes these virtuous individuals is instructive. They are the ones who deliberate cogently, who are dedicated to their duties, who follow the customs, who are not cruel and who are not victims of desire (*akāmahatāh*).²⁰ This could be the lead given to later *smṛti* writers like Manu who give the sources of *dharma* as *śruti*, *smṛti*, the conduct of virtuous persons in one's society and finally one's own inner voice, this last calling attention to the earlier mentioned *dharma* notion in the Br.Up.²¹

A significant point about the virtue of developing an attitude of selflessness is introduced in the very first verse of the *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad*. While Śaṅkara himself will connect this virtue of selflessness with a *sannyāsin* even his own gloss mentions that a spiritually inclined one would develop this quality of abandoning a selfish attachment to things in the world for he knows that eventually everything is pervaded by *Isa*. This gets added support when one looks at the commentaries on verses 9-14. Śaṅkara is forced to interpret *avidyā* and *vidyā* occurring in verses 9-11 in quite a different sense than what he normally does. Thus since the verses state that one devoted to *avidyā* is superior to one devoted to *vidyā* in verse 9, he glosses *avidyā* as the *karma-mārga* as

¹⁹ Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*, Chapter 2

²⁰ ...sammarsinah-vicaraksamah...karmāṇi vṛtte va ayuktah aparaprayuktah, aluksah aruksah akruramatayah, dharmakamah adrstarthinah akamahata tyetat. bhāṣya on I.11

²¹ see note 11 above

opposed to false knowledge, while *vidyā* is the worship of *devatas*.²² Thus both *avidyā* and *vidyā* belong to the realm of *dharma*, perhaps indicating the different paths of spirituality prevalent at the time. Verse 11 confirms this when it says that a combination of both *avidyā* and *vidyā* leads to immortality i.e. crossing over death through *avidyā* one attains immortality through *vidyā*.²³

While Śaṅkara interprets these verses as part of the earlier eschatology mentioning the path of the *pitṛs* and that of the *devas*, to be consistent, it seems the Upaniṣad is legitimizing both the paths of *karma* and knowledge using *avidyā* for the one and *vidyā* for the other. When Śaṅkara uses the word *tatparaḥ santaḥ* i.e. performs them whole heartedly, one can detect a reference to the unselfish way of doing things hinted at in the first verse itself and the quality of humility and selfless dedication to what one does, find mention as virtues here.

I shall look at one more Upaniṣad i.e the Kathopaniṣad (Kath.Up) before moving on to other topics. Śaṅkara approved the path of leading a life in accordance with *dharma* for the common person. He was only pointing to a higher dimension of reality which can be realized provided humans seek it earnestly. Thus all the aspects of *dharma* including the performance of rituals are ethical precepts which he accepts when in Kath.Up. I. 2.14 he contrasts the path of

²² *vidyaya anya avidya karmetyarthah, kamano vidyavirodhitvat, tamavidyamagnihotradilaksanameva kevalm upasate tatparaḥ santanutisthantityabhprayah. Tataḥ andhatmakat tamasaḥ bhuya eva bahutārameva te tamaḥ pravisanti...karma hitva ye...tu vidyayameva devatajnane eva rataḥ abhirataḥ. Bhasya on Isa. Up 9*

²³ *vidyām ca avidyām ca devatājñānam karma cetyarthah...avidyāya karmanā agnihotrādīnā mṛtyum, svābhāvikam karma jñānam ca mṛtyuśabdavācyam, tadubhayam tīrtvā atikramya vidyayā devatājñānena amṛtama snute prapnoti. bhasya on Isa. Up 11*

dharma as opposed to that of *adharmā*.²⁴ Though he talks of *preyaḥ* as the path chosen by the dull witted in I.2.2 (*mandāḥ*) it is as if he evaluates him in comparison to the one who chooses the good (*śreyaḥ*) that has a higher aim of Brahman realization. Thus the path of *preyaḥ* is not a hedonistic one of eat, drink and be merry. It is an ethical path of following *dharma* for the sake of *abhyudaya* in this world and hereafter. This is made clear in Śaṅkara's commentary on the first verse itself (I. 2.1) when he defines the path of *śreyaḥ* and *preyaḥ* as having the goals of *amṛta* and *abhyudaya*.²⁵ Verses I. 3-10 of the Up. elaborate on the path that is to be followed and can be interpreted to mean the training into the ethos of the culture in order to be able to enter the higher path.

For all the vehemence with which Śaṅkara opposes the combination of *karma* and *jñāna* for *mokṣa*, we still do find sometimes, statements in Śaṅkara's commentaries that accord equal status to both the follower of *dharma* and the one aspiring for *mokṣa*. For instance in the Isa.Up I.15 where the sun (Pūṣan) is being prayed to for revelation of the Truth (*satyadharmāya-dṛṣṭaye*), Śaṅkara glosses the word '*satyadharmāya*' as 'One who is *satyadharmā* because of meditating on Truth' or alternately as 'One who has rightfully performed *dharma*'²⁶.

One understands that at least in this instance, Śaṅkara is validating the path of *dharma* and not merely, *jñāna*, for the attainment of the same result.

²⁴ ...anyatra dharmat satriyaddharmanusthanattatphlattatkarakebhyasca prthakbhutamityarthah. tatha anyatra adharmat vihitakaranarupapapat... bhāṣya on I. 2. 14

²⁵ anyat prthageva śreyaḥ niḥśreyasam tathā anyat uttaiva api ca preyaḥ priyataramapi te sreyaḥpreyasi badhirah ibid 1.2.1

²⁶ ...satyadharmāya tava satyasyopasanatsatyam dharmo yasya mama...athava, yathābhūtasya dharmasyanusthātre... bhāṣya on Iśa. Up. 15

Thus, in general, one could say that the initial acceptance of an ethical path of *dharma* is accepted by Śaṅkara. It is only when he talks about those who are *mumukṣus* (those desirous of *mokṣa* intensely) that he prescribes some additional ethical rules of behaviour. Yājñavalkya himself is used as a powerful example in the tradition to stand for such a moral figure. He is the one who gradually progresses through the different stages of life. He has opted for *samnyāsa* after going through the earlier stage of a householder as we find in the Br.Up. One also recognizes that for Śaṅkara it is the *samnyāsin* who is the perfect *adhikārin* for *mokṣa* and thus there are added some additional ethical principles which were more suited to the *samnyāsa* mode of living. A selfless performance of action, development of a sense of oneness with all that exists because of the knowledge of the identity of the ātman and Brahman which in turn annihilated the sense of ego and helped in a genuine feeling of 'love for all', are some of the moral values developed in the *mokṣa* milieu. Self restraint and self-denial (*vairāgya* and *anahamkāra*) were perhaps the most important twin virtues that developed in this atmosphere. Thus *samnyāsa* linked with self restraint resulted in total renunciation and were spelt out as abdication of attachment to one's family (*putraīṣaṇa*), to society or to worldly desires (*lokaiṣaṇa*) and to wealth in any form (*vittaiṣaṇa*).²⁷ became a moral value. In a sense even in a ritual mode of life there is a sense of detachment and non-egoism but these were raised to their highest level in the *samnyāsin*.

It remains now to ponder on the criticism of scholars like Zaehner, who believes that there is a blurring of boundaries between good and evil in Upaniṣadic philosophy and that the *jīvanmukta* in AdV with his/her unity sense cannot be

²⁷ BrU. III. 5. 1; IV. 4. 22

bound by ethical norms. They could be thinking of statements like " Whoso were to know me, not by any action of his whatsoever can the world be injured; not by murdering his mother or his father; not by stealing nor by killing the embryo. Nor can anybody observe any pallor or darkening of his face even though he were to do what is ordinarily considered as sin or crime" in the Kauśītaki Upaniṣad (Trans.Ranade,p.399). It can certainly give rise to the impression of the amoral character of a *jīvanmukta*. Many scholars have given different interpretations of this text. It is interesting to note however that this statement is perhaps the only one of its kind that occurs in the early Upaniṣads to state in such expressive terms the fall out of the *jīvanmukta* ideal. To my mind this is just rhetorics or artificial eloquence and has no substance to it. Its significance is more in the attention drawn to the exalted nature of the *jīvanmukta* rather to the actions he would indulge in. Moreover, the crimes mentioned are the ones considered as *mahāpātakas* in the tradition which no one is supposed to commit. That itself should indicate the rhetorical nature of this statement.

Let us go back to the prerequisites that are required in one who desires *mokṣa* in the AdV sense. Śāṅkara tells us in the introduction to his commentary on the Brahmasūtra that the prerequisites include a clear knowledge of the distinction between what is permanent versus that which is impermanent and more importantly that the aspirant should have trained himself and perfected the six virtues of control of the sense organs of action and knowledge, tolerance of extreme opposites like pain and pleasure, the quality of dispassion, faith in the teachings of the tradition and total one pointedness in one's resolve. In his commentary on the first *sūtra* he has also stated that one assumes that the aspirant who wants to follow AdV is one who has studied the Vedas (and the other appropriate texts). Such a one then

is equipped with the necessary virtues and is also one trained in the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of the culture. It is also good to remind ourselves that in general, apart from exceptions like Śaṅkara himself, one adopts the samnyasin's way of life in which one totally devotes oneself to the pursuit of *mokṣa*, only after going through the life of a student and a householder where all the moral rules are binding. To then suggest that such a one will suddenly go and do the most heinous crimes under the false notion that as a *jīvanmukta* whatever he/she does will not bind is the height of travesty.

The late Prof. Matilal gives a different explanation for this in his *The Logical Illumination of Indian Mysticism* where he distinguishes between what we ordinarily understand as good and as evil and the symbiotic relation that exists between the two in the day to day lived world for all ordinary humans.²⁸ They thus form a pair and have a symbiotic relationship to each other; i.e the one cannot be understood without knowing what the other stands for. This is a category that is related like light and darkness and when one falls the other also disappears. In the *jīvanmukti* stage a higher level of good makes its appearance but there is no duality of good and evil in that stage but only oneness of reality. Thus in the stage of *jīvanmukti* the dualism of good and evil ceases to be operative and perhaps that is what the *Isavasyopanisad* describes as "What delusion and sorrow can there be for one who sees Oneness".²⁹

Billington expresses the same in a different manner in his work *Understanding Eastern Philosophy*. He says that in the state of liberation benevolent acts and other morally desirable acts are viewed as an intuitive expression of the experience of oneness with all beings . This is a deeper level

²⁸ B. K. Matilal, *The Logical Illumination of Indian Mysticism*, p. 26

²⁹ *Is. Up.* 7

of experience than the dualistic state, which is the "context of moral decision making".³⁰

There are also other scholars who have rightly interpreted the *jīvanmukta* as a virtuous individual living the rest of his life due to *prārabdhakarma* in a benevolent, just and kind manner. She is a virtuous person and the *jīvanmukta*'s actions are expressions of the virtues including the virtue of being a *jīvanmukta*.

Thus this sojourn in Śaṅkara's AdV using his own commentaries in his acknowledged works, has demonstrated that it is built on a set of virtues and can be called a school which advocated Virtue Ethics. It is such an aspirant in whom the virtues are assiduously cultivated who can become fit for realizing the goal of Śaṅkara's AdV.

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 THE PROBLEM OF THE ONE AND THE MANY

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The subject-matter of religion and philosophy may be said to comprehend primarily the three factors - God (*Īśvara*), the soul (*jīva*) and the world (*prapañca*) each having its own rights. The difficulty, of course, is to show how these three are capable of interacting with one another. This difficulty is sought to be overcome by the major schools of *Vedānta* in more than one way. *Bhartṛprapañca*, a pre-Śaṅkara *Vedāntin* explains that the relation between *Īśvara* identified as Brahman and the *jīva*, as that between *Īśvara* and the world is one of identity in difference (*bhedābheda*). The *Viśiṣṭādvaita* school of Rāmānuja owes something to the *bhedābheda* school but gives a more coherent account of how *Īśvara*, the cosmos and the *jīvas* are intimately related to one another and yet distinct by using the analogy of the self-body relationship. The *Dvaita* school of Madhva argues for a strict distinction

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between *Īśvara*, the world and the *jīvas*. It maintains that the world and the *jīvas* are absolutely dependent upon *Īśvara* who is supremely independent. The Advaita school upholds the view that *Īśvara*, the *jīvas* and the world are apparent manifestations, through *māyā-avidyā*, of a single transcendental principle. The latter is consciousness, bliss and non-dual; and it is termed Brahman or *Ātman*. It is the only reality. Thus we see that there is a great antithesis between Advaita on the one hand and the other schools of *Vedānta* on the other. While the Dvaita school maintains that there is many only and not one; the Advaita holds that there is one only and not many and the Viśiṣṭādvaita school accepts that there is one in many or many in one. The *Bhedābheda* school admits that the one and the many are identical with and different from each other.

I shall first present the view of the Advaitin on the problem of the one and the many and then consider the views of other schools on this problem from the stand point of Advaita.

In a Celebrated section of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* entitled *Sadvidyā* which is in the form of dialogue between *Uddālaka*, the father and *Śvetaketu*, his son, the ultimate reality, *Sat* or Being is described as one only without a second, the world of plurality is characterized as unreal (*mithyā*) and the *jīva* is recognized as non-different from *sat*.¹ Referring to this Balasubramanian observes :

How the one appears as the many is the problematic involving both metaphysical and epistemological issues. It is through the paradox of identifying the many with the one that the *Chāndogya* text raises metaphysical and epistemological issues. Hence its importance for Advaita.

All this is preceded by an affirmation of the knowledge of the many from the knowledge of the one known from the promissory statement contained in the following question put by the father to his son :

Have you ever sought after that principle which could be known only through instruction (*ādeśa*) and by knowing which that which is not heard will become heard, that which is not deliberated will become deliberated and that which is not ascertained will become ascertained.²

To the question as to how could there arise the knowledge of the many by the knowledge of the one, the *Upaniṣad* explains what has been said in general terms by providing the examples of clay,³ gold⁴ and black iron⁵ and their respective products.

He who knows clay can claim, to know everything which is a product of clay, be it a water-pot or pitcher, a pan or a cup and so on. It is because clay is the material cause of water-pot, pitcher, etc. The knowledge of the material cause will enable one to have the knowledge of its products. Similar consideration applies to the examples of gold and black iron and their respective products.

From these illustrative examples it is known that the promissory statement that by the knowledge of the one there will be the knowledge of the many must be understood in the sense that by the knowledge of the material cause there would result the knowledge of its effects. The causal relation between the knowledge of the material cause and that of its effects implies that the effect does not have an independent existence apart from its material cause. Śaṅkara states :

kāraṇena ananyatvāt kāryasya ⁶

In his commentary on the *Vedāntasūtra*, Śāṅkara explains the meaning of the term *ananyatva* as *vyatirekeṇa abhāvaḥ*.⁷ He means that the relation between the material cause and its effect is not real, because the effect is only a phenomenal appearance of Brahman, not an actual emanation from it. This is as it should be; for, the effect, pot (say) cannot be considered as either distinct from its cause or identical with it. Nor can the effect be viewed as either existent or non-existent in its cause prior to its production.

An effect cannot be considered either as identical with the cause or different from it on the following grounds; if the effect were identical with the cause, then one and the same object would have to be viewed as cause and effect. In that case, the causal relation which involves a difference between the two cannot be maintained. Further, there will not be difference in the practical efficiency of the two. The cause, clay is adapted to the practical need for bringing into existence the effect, viz., pot, while the effect, viz., pot is adapted to the practical need of bringing water. If the cause and the effect were identical, then clay can be used to bring water and the pot may be efficacious in bringing into existence a pot. This, however, is not the case. Hence the cause and the effect cannot be treated as identical.

The cause and the effect cannot be viewed as different from one another too. For, in that case, we cannot have the cognition involving identity in the form *mṛdghaṭaḥ*. Never indeed do we have the cognition involving identity between two disparate objects like a cow and a horse.

From this it follows that the effect cannot be treated either as identical with or as different from its cause, Vidyāraṇya in his *Pañcadaśī* states :

When subject to close analysis, the pot cannot be viewed as different from clay. Nor can it be taken as identical with

clay, as it is not perceived in the lump form of clay (prior to its production).⁸

In the same way, the effect cannot be treated as either existent or non-existent in its cause prior to its origination. The Nyāya school holds that the effect does not exist in its cause prior to its production and the causal operation brings into existence that which is non-existent. This position, however, is wrong. It is because the non-existence of the effect, cloth (say) is present even in clay prior to its production. Hence cloth could arise from clay too. But it is not so. One who desires to have a cloth seeks only the threads and not the clay. This recourse to an appropriate material shows that the effect pre-exists in its cause. This is the view of the Sāṅkhya school. According to it, the effect pre-exists in its cause in a subtle form and causal operation brings about the manifestation of what is subtle into a gross form. This position too is untenable. If manifestation were existent, then it need not be brought into existence. Causal operation would, therefore, become futile. To overcome this difficulty, if it is held that manifestation is non-existent, then it must be said that causal operation brings into existence that which does not exist prior to its production. This amounts to subscribing to the view of the Nyāya school which the Sāṅkhya school has rejected. An effect, therefore, cannot be taken as either identical with or different from the cause.

Gauḍapāda summarizes the Nyāya and the Sāṅkhya position in regard to the origination of an effect thus :

Some disputants argue that an entity which pre-exists in its cause is produced. Others assert that what is produced does not pre-exist in its cause.⁹

He further states : An entity which already exists need not and cannot be produced; and, a thing which does not

pre-exist in its cause also cannot be produced. The disputants thus reveal the absence of the origination of objects and they thus confirm the Advaitin's view.¹⁰

He concludes : We endorse the view that nothing really comes into existence - the view that emerges from their disputation.¹¹

It emerges from the above discussion that an effect cannot be ascertained either as existent or non-existent in the cause prior to its production. Nor can it be discerned as either identical with or different from the cause. This suggests that the effect is not real. And the cause alone is real as it exists prior to the origination of the effect, at the time of its existence and also after its destruction.

The above view that the causal element alone is real and the effect is non-real is based on the authority of the *Chāndogya* text - *vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam*¹²

This text means: the effect, pot (say) is merely referred to in verbal usages such as "The pot exists". The pot does not really exist. This is the significance of the expression *vācārambhaṇam vikārah*. It may be asked that if pot were non-real, then how are we to account for the verbal usage 'The pot has come into existence from clay' which involves reference to the difference between pot and clay. It is answered that since we cannot take pot as either different from or identical with clay, the above verbal usage is to be considered as devoid of any content. In other words, the difference between clay and pot, i.e., the cause and the effect too which is noticed in the verbal usage referred to above is unreal like the effect. This is the significance of the word *nāmadheyam*.

The question that suggests itself at this stage is : what then is real? It is answered that it is clay alone that is

real. This is the meaning of the expression *mṛttikā iti eva satyam*.

A note on the particle 'iti' in the expression *mṛttikā iti eva satyam* is necessary. According to the rules of grammar, the particle *iti*, if added to a word, would signify the sense of the word. If it is added to an object, it would stand for the word that signified that object. Here it is added to the object, *mṛttikā* and so it stands for the word that signified *mṛttikā*. The expression *mṛttikā iti eva satyam* would, therefore, mean that the word *mṛttikā* alone is real.

Abhinavanārāyaṇānandendra Sarasvati in his commentary on the *bhāṣya* of Śaṅkara on the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* states that the particle *iti* conveys the sense of specific feature. And the specific feature of clay is the state of its being the material cause (*upādānatva*).¹³ The expression *mṛttiketyeva satyam*, therefore, means that it is only clay which is manifested in pot, etc., as their material cause that is real.

The import of the texts that set forth the illustrative examples of clay, gold and black iron is that the true nature of the effects is their cause only and when the cause is known, the effects too will be known in their true perspective. And the texts do not intend to convey that by the knowledge of the cause there would result the knowledge of the effects in their particular aspects.

When it is said that clay, the material cause alone is real, and pot, etc., the effects are non-real, an objection may arise that apart from Brahman there is another real entity, viz., clay and so Brahman cannot be viewed as non-dual in the sense that there is no entity apart from it.

The above objection is untenable. The cause, clay is said to be real when compared to its effect, the pot. But clay is not absolutely real. It is only Brahman, the material cause of the world including clay that is so in view of its non-

sublation in the three divisions of time - past, present and future. The text - "*vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam*" refers to the reality of the cause, the clay as an example of the reality of the cause of the world; and it refers to the unreal nature of the effects such as pot and the like as an example to prove the unreal nature of the world. In other words, this text intends to convey that the cause is more real than its effects.

*ata eva jagatkāraṇasya satyatve mṛdādisatyatvam,
jagataḥ mithyātve ca mṛdādikāryasya ghaṭādeḥ
anṛtatvam ca drṣṭāntatayā śrutyā upādīyate* ¹⁴

In this connection Balasubramanian states :

Taking the clue provided by the *vācārambhaṇaśruti* Advaita adduces two reasons to show that the pluralistic universe is not real. With reference to clay and its products given as an example in the illustration of the promissory statement, the *śruti* text says that clay alone is real, (*mṛttiketyeva satyam*), the implication being that pot, pan, etc., which are the products of clay are not real. Applying the principle that cause alone is real, Advaita draws the conclusion that the world which is the effect of Brahman is not real; in other words, the world is *mithyā*.¹⁵

Vācaspatimiśra in his *Bhāmatī* states :

The effects are indeterminable, as they cannot be discerned as identical with or different from the respective causes. Nor can they be ascertained as existent or non-existent prior to their production in their causes. The causal element as it exists prior to the origination of the effects, at the time of their existence and after their destruction is real. It is the unreality of the effects and the

reality of their cause known through reasoning are given as examples by the text - *vācāraṁbhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam*.¹⁶

Vidyāraṇya in his *Pañcadaśī* states :

The śruti (*vācāraṁbhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam*) sets forth the non-reality of the effects (such as pot, etc.,) and the reality of the cause, clay which is their substratal principle.
*evam māyamayatvena vikārasya anṛtātmatām vikārādhāramṛdvastu satyatvam ca abravīcchrutiḥ*¹⁷

Acyutakṛṣṇa while interpreting this text in his commentary *Kṛṣṇālaṅkāra* states that the śruti text has said (*abravīt śrutiḥ*) this is an example (*dr̥ṣṭāntatayā*) *dr̥ṣṭāntatayā iti śeṣaḥ*¹⁸

Balasubramanian summarises this idea very clearly:

The *Upaniṣad* tackles the problem of Being and becoming by holding that, while Being is real, becoming is an appearance. Being and becoming do not have the same ontological status because both are not real; and so there is no possibility of conflict between them. It is not a case of either Being or becoming or of both Being and becoming but it is a case of Being appearing as becoming. This will become evident if we consider the illustrative examples given by Uddālaka.¹⁹

Having thus set forth as an example the reality of the cause, clay and the unreality of the effect, pot, to illustrate the point that the knowledge of the cause would enable one to have the knowledge of the true nature of the effect, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* proceeds to deal with the cause of the world. It states :

sadeva saumya idamagra āsīt, ekamevādvitīyam ²⁰

This text means that this world which is now perceived as differentiated into names and forms existed as *sat* only prior to creation. And the *sat* is one only (*ekam eva*) without a second (*advitīyam*). While discussing the import of this text, Balasubramanian in his paper 'The one and The many'²¹ points out that the first part of the text is a causal statement (*kāraṇavākya*) and the second part, a clarifying statement (*śodhakavākya*). The former identifies the cause of the world as *sat*, while the latter provides clarification regarding its nature.

To quote Balasubramanian in this connection :

This *Chāndogya* text ... presents the metaphysical problem of the one and the many in a paradoxical way. Pointing to the pluralistic universe, the manifested universe characterised by name, form and change, as 'this' (*idam*), the text identifies it with Being in its unmanifested form, because it declares that in the beginning before creation it was Being alone, while emphasizing at the same time that Being is bereft of plurality on the ground that it is one only without a second.²²

We shall consider the import of this text in some detail. The two words *idam sat* have similar case-ending and are juxtaposed to each other. Thus they are in appositional (*sāmānādhikarāṇya*) relation. In his *Advaitasiddhi*, Madhusūdana Sarasvati states that the appositional relation is noticed in the view of superimposition (*adhyāsa*), sublation (*bādhā*), attribute - substantive relation (*viśeṣaṇa-viśeṣya-bhāva*) and pure identity (*tādātmya*).

In the case of the expression 'This is silver' (*idam rajatam*), the two terms are in appositional relation. The sense of the term *rajatatvam* is superimposed upon the 'this-element' of

the shell or more strictly upon the consciousness conditioned by the 'this-element' of the shell which is the sense of the term 'this'. There is thus a superimposed identity between the 'this' - element and the silver. And the appositional relation between the terms 'this' and 'silver' is in the view of the identity based upon superimposition.

In the case of the expression 'what was (taken to be) a post is a man' (*yo'yam sthānuḥ sa pumān*), what is intended is not the identity between the post, the sense of the term *sthānuḥ* with the man, the sense of the term *pumān*, but is the sublation of the prior cognition of the post of the form 'there is really no post'. The appositional relation between the term *sthānuḥ* and *pumān* is in the view of sublation.

In the case of the expression 'blue lotus' (*nīlam utpalam*), the appositional relation between the terms *nīlam* and *utpalam* is in the view of attribute - substantive relation. The sense of the word *nīlam* is an attribute and that of the word *utpala* is the substantive one. And this relation is intended to be conveyed by the two words *nīlam* and *utpalam* which are in appositional relation.

In the case of the text '*tat tvam asi*', the appositional relation between the terms *tat* and *tvam* is in the view of pure identity between their secondary senses.²³

In the text *sadeva saumya idam agre āsīt*, the terms *sat* and *idam* are in appositional relation. And it could be in the view of *adhyāsa* or *bādhā* only. The world is superimposed upon *sat* and hence there is a false identity between the two. It is this identity based upon superimposition that is intended to be conveyed by the terms *idam* and *sat*. Or, it is the sublation of the cognition of the world of the form 'The world does not really exist in *sat*'. This explanation is based upon Abhinavanārāyaṇa's interpretation of the text *sadeva saumya* etc. In his commentary on Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* on the

Chāndogya Upaniṣad he states : *idam sadeva ityuktyā kāryavivartavādaḥ* ²⁴

From this it is known that *sat* is free from any relation to the world of duality. It is on this basis Śaṅkara defines *sat* as mere existence, subtle, free from any characteristic feature, all-pervasive, one, free from any taint, partless, consciousness. ²⁵

We shall now explain the clarifying statement - "*ekam eva advitīyam*"

Vidyāraṇya in his *Pañcadaśī* remarks that this text is intended to convey the idea that *sat* is free from any internal differences; it is also free of difference from entities that belong to its class and from objects that belong to a different class.²⁶ Śaṅkara in his commentary on the above text states that the expression *ekameva* conveys the absence of anything that would fall under the category of the effects of *sat*.²⁷

Ānandagiri in his commentary states that this text means that *sat* is free of difference from entities that belong to its class. (*sajātīya-bheda*) and also is free of internal differences (*svagata-bheda*)²⁸. The significance of the word *advitīyam*, Śaṅkara explains thus :

Just as in ordinary experience we notice an efficient cause like potter apart from the material cause, clay in respect of the origination of pot, in the same way it may be thought that in respect of the creation of the world there may exist an efficient cause different from *sat*. And it is the existence of an efficient cause different from *sat* that is being negated by the word *advitīyam*.²⁹

Ānandagiri in his *Ṭīkā* explains that this passage conveys the idea that *sat* is free of difference from objects dissimilar to *sat*.³⁰ In the light of the commentary of Ānandagiri on the above passages of Śaṅkara we may offer the following

explanation : *Īśvara* and *jīva* may be viewed as belonging to the class of *sat*, as they too possess an element of consciousness in them. In the same way, the objects of the world too may be considered as belonging to the class of *sat*, as they are manifested as *sat* in the experiences and corresponding expressions such as "The pot exists" (*ghataḥ san*), "The cloth exists (*pataḥ san*), etc.

Brahmānanda in his *Laghucandrikā* states :

The world too may be viewed as belonging to the class of *sat*. For, like *jīva* and *Īśvara* it also is manifested as *sat* owing to its superimposition upon the latter.³¹

Further, although existence, consciousness and bliss constitute the essential nature of *sat*, yet, owing to *māyā* they appear to be the attributes of *sat* which, therefore, is taken to have internal differentiation in so far as these attributes are concerned. It is the difference from *Īśvara*, *jīva* and the world and also internal differentiations that are negated by the expression *ekam eva*. As associated with the characteristics of *Īśvaratva* and *jīvatva*, *Sat* is viewed as *Īśvara* and *jīva*. And *Īśvaratva* and *jīvatva* are the illusory projections of *māyā*. In the same way, the world is manifested as *sat* not because it is *sat* by nature but because it is superimposed upon it through *māyā*. Similarly existence, consciousness and bliss which constitute the essential nature of *sat* appears, owing to *māyā* as the characteristics of *sat*. Padmapāda states :

*ānando viṣayānubhavaḥ nityatvamiti santi dharmāḥ
apṛaktvépi caitanyāt pṛthagiva avabhāsante.*³²

All these, viz., *sat* as associated with *Īśvaratva*, *jīvatva*, the world and the characteristics fall under the illusory projection of *sat* through *māyā* and they have no independent existence apart from *sat*. It is only in this way we could explain the text of Śaṅkara cited above, and Ānandagiri's comment on

it. Further Śaṅkara's explanation that the term *advitīyam* negates the difference from an efficient cause and Ānandagiri's comment that it is intended to convey the idea that *sat* is free from any entity that belongs to a different class may be explained as follows: in ordinary experience we notice that an efficient cause is the one who makes a choice after deliberation, resolves it into an intention and put that intention into effect. In this sense, an efficient cause essentially differs from the material cause which lacks all the above characteristics. Hence it may be viewed as not belonging to the class of the material cause. On this ground *sat* which is considered to be the material cause of the world may be thought of as having a different entity as the efficient cause that does not belong to its class. It is this difference from an efficient cause which does not belong to the class of *sat*, viz., the material cause that is negated by the word *advitīyam*.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his work *Advaitaratnarakṣaṇa* states :

By the word *ekam*, the absence of any entity that may be thought of as belonging to the class of *sat*, is conveyed. The word *advitīyam* means "for which there is no second entity", and it conveys the absence of any entity that belongs to a class different from that of *sat*. By these two words alone *sat* is described as free from any object of the world. Yet, one who is not conversant with the teachings of the *Upaniṣads* may have a doubt that just as *prakṛti* of the Sāṅkhya system, although one consists of the three strands of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, in the same way, *sat* also may consist of oneness as its attribute, and may have the substance-attribute differentiation. To dispel such a doubt, the particle *eva* is used.³³

In his *Advaitasiddhi*, Madhusūdana Sarasvati states :

The word *advitīyam* etymologically means "wherein there is the absence of duality". It may be thought that since by this word itself the three kinds of difference are negated, the words *ekam* and *eva* may be rendered futile. But it is not so. Owing to the presence of the words *ekam* and *eva*, the significative power of the word *advitīyam* is restricted and it conveys only the negation of any entity that belongs to a class different from that of *Sat*.³⁴

From the above discussion it follows that the clarifying statement - *ekameva advitīyam* conveys that *sat* is free from internal differentiation; it is also free of difference from objects that belong to its class or to different class. *Sat* is thus free from difference of any form whatsoever.

It may be added here that *sat* cannot be thought of as different from any entity. It is because if an entity apart from *sat* were to exist, then *sat* would be different from that entity; and, any entity that is distinct from another is subject to change and hence unreal. In his commentary on the *Vedāntasūtra* - "In all effects whatsoever, there is separateness, as is seen in the world."³⁵ Śaṅkara states : Never indeed an object is noticed to be distinct from the other and yet is not subject to change.³⁶

It may be said that the Advaitin who holds the view that the world - creation proceeds from *sat* through *māyā* must admit the existence of *māyā* along with *sat* prior to creation. As such the difference from *māyā* exists then. The result of this contention is that *sat* being different from *māyā* will be subject to change and hence non-eternal.

This contention is wrong. It is because difference from cloth exists in pot. And difference and pot have the same

level of reality. This suggests that pot, the substratum of difference is subject to change and hence non-eternal. In the case of *māyā*, its difference exists in *sat*. But while *māyā* is not real, *sat* is real in the sense that it is unsublatable in the three divisions of time. Difference from *māyā* is not real while its substratum is real. Since the two do not belong to the same level of reality, *sat* although distinct from *māyā* will not be subject to change and so cannot be viewed as non-eternal. Abhinavanārāyaṇa remarks : *na ca mayāyāḥ sakāśāt vibhaktatvamastīti vācyam dharmisamāna-sattākavibhāgābhāvāt* ³⁷

It may be objected that the expression *agre* in the text "*sadeva saumya idam agre āsīt*" conveys the existence of a specific time before creation. Hence one must admit that *sat* is differentiated from time which is dissimilar to it.

This contention is untenable. Time, as Appayya Dīkṣita says is only the relation between *sat* which is consciousness and *māyā-avidyā*. Although beginningless, it is not real. And difference from an un-real entity in *sat*, as has been said above, will not subject *sat* to change forcing us to view *sat* as unreal.

On this point Balasubramanian observes :

It is not the case that the śruti text admits the existence of the category of time as a reality different from Brahman... The expressions such as 'now' 'in the beginning' 'in future' have meaning only in the context of time. The Viśiṣṭādvaitin here exploits the built-in-difficulty inherent in the use of language and says that the category of time is therefore, a reality different from Brahman. This objection apart, since the śruti text specifically declares that in the beginning there was Being alone, one only (*ekameva*) it is wrong to admit the category of time

as a reality in the absolute sense in addition to Being.³⁸

The text - *sadeva saumya idam agre āsīt* conveys *sat* as associated with the world in its subtle form at a particular point of time, i.e. prior to creation. Here duality in general (*dvaitasāmānya*) is referred to as existing in *sat*. And the text - *ekameva advitīyam* refers to *sat* as free from duality at that time itself. From this it is known that duality is not real. Brahmānanda in his *Laghucandrikā* states :

*ekakālāvacchinnapratiyogyabhāvayoh ekādhikaraṇa
vṛttitva dhtrūpaḥ mithyātvaniścayaḥ.*

Having thus presented *sat* as free from any kind of difference, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* proceeds to describe the creation of the world from *sat*. The world - creation cannot proceed from *sat* which is free from duality and which is of the nature of consciousness. If it were so, then even at the state of liberation, there would be the unwelcome result of the creation of the world. From this it is known there must be some principle by being associated with which *sat* becomes the cause of the origination of the world. And that principle is *māyā* which is indeterminable either as real or as an absolute nothing. In the state of liberation, *māyā* does not exist and so there is no possibility of world-creation from *sat*. Being located in *sat*, *māyā* undergoes transformation into the form of the world. *Māyā* is the transformative material cause of the world. *Sat* being the substratum of *māyā* is the transfigurative material cause. *Māyā* and the world are sublated by the knowledge of *sat* and hence they have the same level of reality. It is in this sense *māyā* is admitted to be the material cause of the world. *Sat* is absolutely real, while the world is provisionally real. The two belong to two levels of reality and it is in this sense *sat* is described as the transfigurative material cause. Further, *māyā* undergoes

modifications or *vṛttis* and they are inspired by the reflection of *sat* in them. And these *vṛttis* are known as knowledge, deliberation, desire and resolve. *Sat* as associated with these *vṛttis* is spoken of as the efficient cause of the origination of the world. It requires the knowledge of the world to be created, makes a choice after deliberation, resolves it into an intention and put that intention into effect. The *Chāndogya* text states : "It thought; "May I become many"⁴⁰ It then explains the diversification of *sat* into three elements, viz., fire, water and earth. *Sat* resolved to enter into these three elements in the form of *jīva*; it then differentiated the elements into name and form by the process of triplication.⁴¹ From this it is known that *jīva* in its true nature is none other than *sat*, although it falsely identifies itself with the psycho-physical organism and imagines itself as an agent, experient and knower.

The gross forms of fire, water and earth which result from the process of triplication the *Upaniṣad* states, are only names and they have no substance and it is only the three subtle elements which constitute their cause that are real. "*vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam trīṇi rūpāṇi ityeva satyam*"⁴²

Herein the *Upaniṣad* re-affirms the view that it is only the cause that is real and the effects are not so. Having thus explained that whatever is, has sprung from *sat*, the *Upaniṣad* identifies it with the *jīva*. "*aitādātmyam idam sarvam tat satyam sa ātmā tat tvam asi śvetaketo.*"⁴³

From the above it emerges that according to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, it is *sat* alone that is the cause of the world. The *Jīva* is non-different from it. The world is non-real. And *sat* itself as associated with the characteristic of being the material and the efficient cause of the world is viewed as *Īśvara*.

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* identifies the *sat*, the cause of the world with Brahman and describes it as real, knowledge and

infinite. "satyam jñānam anantam brahma" 44

Balasubramanian in his paper referred to earlier has given an excellent heremeneutical study of this text. *Sat* or Brahman is real, knowledge and infinite and these three are not its attributes. Balasubramanian's explanation of the distinction between the surface grammar and the depth grammar in this context is unique. He is of the view that Śaṅkara is sensitive to the distinction between the surface grammar and the depth grammar in his exegesis of this and other śruti texts.⁴⁵ The *Upaniṣad* then identifies the *jīva* as Brahman immanent in the body-mind complex. Then it speaks of the creation of the world from Brahman which it identifies with the true nature of *jīva*. "tasmādvā etasmādātmana akāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ"⁴⁶

From this *Upaniṣad* too we understand that the world is the effect of Brahman and *jīva* is none other than Brahman. The world, being an effect, is not real. And Brahman as the cause of the world is *Īśvara*.

Now it is easier to explain the import of the promissory statement that by the knowledge of the one, everything else will become known. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* too we have the similar promissory statement. "ātmano vā are darśanena śravaṇena matyā vijñānena idam sarvam viditam".⁴⁷ "ātmani khalu are dṛṣṭe śrute mate vijñāte idam sarvam viditam."⁴⁸

In Brahman, owing to *māyā*, the state of being *Īśvara* (*Īśvaratva*) and that of *jīva* (*jīvatva*) are illusorily presented, while the spiritual element of Brahman in *Īśvara* and *jīva* is real, the state of being *Īśvara* and that of *jīva* are unreal. The world, being the transformation of *māyā*, is totally unreal. No part of it is real. By the direct knowledge of Brahman, *māyā* will be removed. Consequently, the state of being *Īśvara* and that of *jīva* and also the world will be removed. What then will remain is Brahman which is liberation. Śaṅkara in

his commentary on the *Vedāntasūtra* states : When the jīva realizes its true nature as Brahman from the great sayings of the *Upaniṣads* such as "tat tvam asi" and the like, the characteristics of being an agent, etc., will be removed from it. The state of being the cause of the world will be removed from *Īśvara*. It is because everything that is projected by the indeterminable *māyā* will be sublated by the correct knowledge of Brahman.⁴⁹

From this it follows that the knowledge of Brahman does not result in the knowledge of the specific aspects of the objects of the world. It is because the world is an appearance of Brahman, like silver in a shell. The knowledge of the shell removes the appearance of silver and as such we do not have the knowledge of silver at all. In the same way, when the knowledge of Brahman arises the world which is an appearance of Brahman will be removed and so there can be no knowledge of the world at all. So it might be said that the promissory statement which asserts that by the knowledge of Brahman, there would ensue the knowledge of the world is not valid.

The above objection, the Advaitin answers by saying that when it is said that by the knowledge of Brahman there would result the knowledge of everything what is intended to be conveyed is that there will arise the knowledge of the true nature of every object. And this knowledge is of the form that Brahman is the essential nature of every object, and no object has independent existence apart from Brahman.

The explanation given above is based upon the teaching of the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* which too has a promissory statement. In this *Upaniṣad*, the Sage Śaunaka besought Aṅgiras to impart him the knowledge of that by knowing which everything else will become known.⁵⁰ Aṅgiras imparts him the knowledge of Brahman and concludes by saying

that by attaining this knowledge one would transcend the knot of *avidyā* (*māyā*). He has not said that the knowledge of Brahman will result in the knowledge of every object in its specific aspect. He has said that the knowledge of Brahman will result in transcending *avidyā*. By saying thus he means that by the knowledge of Brahman everything else will be known as having no independent existence apart from Brahman and the true nature of everything is Brahman only.

From the above it follows that when *māyā* is removed, it is only the true nature of Brahman that is known and not anything else. How could it be said, it may be asked, that there is the knowledge of everything? It is known from this that the knowledge of everything is the knowledge of the true nature of Brahman. And this assertion would be intelligible only when it is said that the knowledge of everything is only the knowledge of the true nature of everything.⁵¹

By the expression "knowledge of everything", the knowledge of every object in its specific aspect is never intended to be conveyed on three grounds :

- (1) No purpose will be served by having the knowledge of every object in its specific aspect;
- (2) By the knowledge of Brahman, every object ceases to exist and so there is no possibility of knowing it; and,
- (3) The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* - *mṛtyoḥ sa mṛtyumāpnoti ya iha nāneva paśyati*⁵² reproves the cognition of duality by stating that he who sees duality as it were will experience phenomenal existence often times.

To sum up this part of the discussion : Brahman or *sat* is the only reality. It appears as *Īśvara*, *jīva* and the world through *māyā*. And when *māyā* is removed, the state of being *Īśvara* and that of *jīva* and also the world will be removed. There is one only and not many. This is the conclusive view of the Advaitins.

We shall now consider the *Bhedābheda-vāda* of Bhartṛprapañca. According to this Brahman undergoes modification into the form of the world and *jīva* too is the transformation of Brahman through *upādhi* or adjunct. There is the relation of identity in difference between Brahman and *jīva* and Brahman and the world. This view is not sound. When it is said that Brahman undergoes modification into the form of the world, it is asked as to whether the whole of Brahman becomes changed into this multiform world or a part of it. If the former alternative were held, then there will be no Brahman left, but only the effect, the world. Moreover this would contradict the *śruti* text which speaks of Brahman as immutable. If the second alternative were maintained then it amounts to admitting that Brahman is composed of parts. And being so it will be non-eternal. On this ground the theory that Brahman undergoes transformation stands discredited. Bhāskara too advocates this view. Udayana in his *Nyāyakusumāñjali* derisively remarks that the view that Brahman undergoes transformation may gratify those who come in the 'impressive line' of Bhāskara. It has been said by Bhartṛprapañca that *jīva* is essentially one with Brahman but is different from it owing to limiting adjunct which is real. Hence liberation can well be attained through knowledge from the stand-point of the unity of Brahman, whereas sacred and secular activities can be justified from the stand-point of diversity.

Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Vedāntasūtra* states :

If both difference and non-difference are true, then attainment of liberation through knowledge cannot be justified, since in this view, no false ignorance is admitted as the cause of transmigratory existence that can be removed by right knowledge.⁵³

Śaṅkara proceeds to state :

When with the help of the simile of the thief, it is shown (in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, (6.16.2.3) that one banking on lying comes under bondage and one adhering to truth becomes freed, the point established in the *Upaniṣad* is that unity alone is the highest truth and that multiplicity is conjured up by false ignorance. If both difference and non-difference be true, why should a being be condemned as attached to unreality even though he be within the domain of empirical existence? The text "He, who sees difference as it were, in Brahman, undergoes cyclic existence in an unending manner" emphasizes only this very fact.⁵⁴

Thus the attempt of Bhartṛprapañca to solve the problem of one and the many by admitting the relation of identity in difference between the two is not in conformity with the teachings of the *Upaniṣads*.

Rāmānuja seeks to explain the relation between the one and the many by admitting the relation of *śarīra-śarīri-bhāva* between the insentient world and the sentient souls on the one hand and Brahman identified as Lord Nārāyaṇa on the other. This view is based upon the texts of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. One text is : He who is immanent in the earth, whom the earth does not identify, who controls the earth from within, and for whom the earth is the body, He is Your Self, the internal ruler, and He is immortal.⁵⁵

The *Upaniṣad* further proceeds to point out that the internal ruler who is immortal is the controller of water, fire, sky, air, heaven, the sun, etc., by being immanent in them and has these as His body.⁵⁶

Again the same *Upaniṣad* states : He who is immanent in the soul, whom the soul does not identify, for whom the soul is the body and who controls the soul from within, He is Your Self, the internal ruler; and, He is immortal.⁵⁷

These texts, Rāmānuja argues, convey that God (Brahman) has the insentient world and the sentient souls as His body (*śarīra*) and the latter have God as their Self (*Ātman*). God is the *śarīrī* or *śārīra*. When it is said that the world and the souls constitute the body of God what is meant is that they are controlled and supported by God and they exist in a subordinate relation to God solely for the fulfilment of the purposes of the latter.⁵⁸ The world and the souls are the inseparable attributes (*apṛthaksiddhaviśeṣaṇa*) of God and thus together stand as an adjectival feature (*prakāra*) of God who is, therefore, the substantive one (*prakārin*). Rāmānuja defines *prakāra* thus : *prakāro hi nāma "idamittham" iti pratīyamāne vastuni itthamitipratīyamāno'mśaḥ*.⁵⁹

According to Rāmānuja, the text - *sadeva saumya idam agre āsīt, ekameva advitīyam'* is intended to convey the relation between God on the one hand and the souls and the world on the other. The word *sat* refers to God who is omniscient, omnipotent and is one whose resolves never go unfulfilled. The word "*idam*" refers to the world which is differentiated into names and forms and which we perceive now. It remains in an exceedingly subtle form as *prakṛti* which is the body of God.⁶⁰ The souls too freed from the names and forms that pertain to their physical bodies remain in a subtle form in God.⁶¹ These two remain subtle in such a manner that it is very hard to recognize them as existing at all although they constitute the body of God.⁶² The word *sat* refers to God as associated with the world and souls in their subtle form. This is the causal form of God. The word "*idam*" which stands for the world and the souls that are differentiated into names and forms actually refers to God

who is associated with the world and the souls in their gross form. And this is the effect form of God. There is always an identity between the cause and the effect, as according to Rāmānuja, an effect is only a different configuration of the cause.⁶³ And the effect is as real as the cause. The text - "*vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam*" does not convey the unreality of the effect as the Advaitin thinks. This text means: clay in order that it may come within the range of verbal usages such as "This is pot" and the like and in order that it may be adapted to practical needs of life such as bringing water, etc., (*vācā*)⁶⁴ attains (*ārambhaṇam*) the different configurations of pot, jar, etc., (*vikārah*) and also the names such as pot, jar, etc., (*nāmadheyam*). And the forms of pot, jar, etc., are clay only (*mṛttiketyeva*). This is valid (*satyam*) as it is known through the proof - *pratyabhijñā* which is of the form "This pot is clay only". This text, therefore, conveys that clay and pot constitute one and the same substance and there is no difference between the two. It must be noted here that in this interpretation there is no reference to the non-reality of the effect.

According to Rāmānuja, God as associated with the souls and the world is the cause, and He Himself as associated with the souls and the world in their gross form is the effect. The jīva too although eternal is viewed as an effect, as its attributive consciousness inseparable from it undergoes modification at the time of creation. Since there is identity between cause and effect, by the knowledge of the cause, viz., God as associated with the world and the souls in their subtle form there would result the knowledge of the effect, viz., God as associated with the world and the souls in their gross form. This is the significance of the promissory statement. Rāmānuja is of the view that there is no need for resorting to the concept of *mithyātvā* in the interpretation of the promissory statement as the Advaitin thinks. The text

"*tat tvam asi*" primarily signifies that the soul (*tvam*) is the body of God (*tat*). From this it follows that Rāmānuja explains the relation between God on the one hand the souls and the world on the other on the basis of *śarīra-śarīri-bhāva* relation. The one, God is in the many, the world and the souls; and the many is in the one.

Balasubramanian succinctly puts it thus :

Without affirming oneness to the exclusion of plurality or plurality to the exclusion on oneness, Rāmānuja accepts both of them by integrating or synthesizing Brahman, *cit* and *acit* into an organismic whole in which plurality is preserved without prejudice to the organismic unity of Brahman with *cit* and *acit*. Rāmānuja's oft-repeated expression, "*cidacid-viśiṣṭam brahma*" is brief and unambiguous vindication of the *bhedābheda* stance of the Viśiṣṭādvaita system. Whether one speaks of oneness and plurality, or oneness in plurality, the implication is that this view accords equal ontological status to both oneness and plurality.⁶⁵

In his commentary - *Brahmavidyābharana* on Śaṅkara's *Vedāntasūtra-bhāṣya*, Advaitānanda examines ⁶⁶ the relation of *śarīra-śarīri-bhāva*. He states that the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text "*yasya pṛthivīśarīram*", etc., is intended to convey that God is the ruler and the world and the souls are the ruled. The word *śarīra* is well-known as significative of the physical body which is the limiting adjunct of the soul and which is the abode of the experience of happiness or misery. It may be said that in secular usages the word *śarīra* may denote the physical body but in sacred texts it must be taken in the special sense as viewed by the Viśiṣṭādvaita school. This contention is not valid. For, we may be forced to take the

word *śarīra* that occurs in the *Śruti* texts such as "The earth is the body of the organ of speech" ⁶⁷, "The Heaven is the body of this mind" ⁶⁸, "Water is the body of this vital force", ⁶⁹ in the special sense as conceived by Rāmānuja. Hence the word *śarīra* must be taken in a figurative sense. Since earth, etc., are controlled by God, they are figuratively referred to as the body of God. Hence the reference to earth, etc., as constituting the body of God is only figurative. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* texts cited in favour of the view that there exists the *śarīra-śarīri-bhāva* relation between God on the one hand and the souls and the world on the other is actually intended to convey the idea that God does not have any body distinct from that of the deity of the earth. Further, the concept of *śarīra-śarīri-bhāva*, Rāmānuja derives from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* texts referred to earlier. Based upon the relation of *śarīra-śarīri-bhāva*, God is referred to by the term *śarīri* or *śārīra*. But a study of the *adhikaraṇa* entitled - *antaryāmyadhikaraṇa* which is primarily intended to discuss the import of the above *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* texts shows that the word *śārīra* is used by Bādarāyaṇa not in the sense of God, but in that of *jīva*. The aphorism is : *śārīraśca ubhaye'api hi bhedenā enamadhīyate*. This means that the *jīva* (*śārīra*) is not the internal ruler within; for both the recensions of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* read the soul as different from the internal ruler. In the same way, the author of the sūtra-s in the aphorism - *anupapattestu na śārīrah* (1-2-3) states that *śārīra* or the soul is not referred to in the *Chāndogya* text (3.14.2) as the qualities mentioned therein are not applicable to it. Here the word *śārīra* is used to refer to the soul and to God. Another aphorism - *pratiṣedhāditi cet na śārīrāt* states that the vital airs of the knower of Brahman do not depart from *śārīra*, i.e. the soul. But Rāmānuja considers the word *śārīra* to be significative of God and his stand is contradictory to the teachings of Bādarāyaṇa. From this we may conclude

that the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* texts do not convey the *śārīra-sarīri-bhāva*. Nor does the author of the *sūtras* approve of the view that God is *śārīra*. Thus the entire edifice of the Viśiṣṭādvaita school based upon this key-concept requires reconstruction. The relation of the one to the many *as one in many* or *many in one* as admitted by the Viśiṣṭādvaitin cannot satisfactorily be explained.

Madhva holds that there is many only and not one, and the one is supremely independent and the 'many' is real but absolutely dependent upon God. We notice here that the entire fabric of the Dvaita school rests on the reality of difference. But the concept of difference does not stand logical scrutiny. Balasubramanian in his work '*Ādvaita-Vedānta*' and also in his article 'The One And The Many' has given an analysis of the concept of difference in accordance with the rules of logic and in an orderly fashion. Difference, it may be said, could be known from the verbal usages such as 'Pot and Cloth are different' (*ghaṭapaṭau bhinnau*) or 'There is difference of cloth in pot' (*ghaṭe paṭabhedaḥ*). In the former case, difference is manifested as an adjectival feature (*viśeṣaṇa*), and in the latter, as the substantive feature (*viśeṣyaḥ*). If it is said that difference is known from the usage '*ghaṭapaṭau bhinnau*', the criticism is that this assertion involves the fallacy of interdependence. Difference is known from this usage. But the usage of the expression 'Pot and Cloth' (*paṭau*) in dual number presupposes the cognition of difference between the two.

In the second case too, there is the defect of interdependence. The cognition of difference is said to be derived from the verbal usage 'There is difference of cloth in pot'. But this verbal usage itself presupposes the cognition of difference. In this usage, cloth is the counter-correlate (*pratiyogi*) of difference and the pot is the substratum (*anuyogi*) of difference. In order to treat these two as *pratiyogī*

and *anuyogi* we must have the knowledge of the difference between the two. And the cognition of difference would, however, arise from the verbal usage. The Dvaita school, therefore, concludes that the difference from the cloth which exists in the pot is of the nature of pot. Just as for arriving at the cognition of pot, we do not depend upon the cognition of anything else, in the same way, for arriving at the cognition of difference from cloth in pot too, we need not depend upon the cognition of anything else, as the difference from cloth is of the nature of pot. In his work *Viṣṇutattvanirṇaya*, Madhva states : Difference is of the nature of the object in which it is present.⁷⁰

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his *Advaitaratnarakṣaṇa* rejects the contention that difference is of the nature of the correlated substratum (*anuyogi*). He argues that difference is manifested as having a correlative (*sapratiyogika*) while the correlated substratum, i.e., pot (say) is manifested without any reference to a correlate (*pratiyogī*). In spite of this, if the Dvaita school contends that the two, viz., difference and the correlated substratum are identical, then this contention is based on one's choice by one's bias or predilection; or it may be due to aversion to the teaching of the *Upaniṣads* that duality is unreal.⁷¹

In his *Advaitasiddhi*, Madhusūdana states that if difference from cloth were of the nature of pot, then cloth too will have to be treated as of the nature of pot. It is because the Dvaita school does not admit that difference as such (*bhedamātram*) is of the nature of pot but it is difference which has cloth as its correlate (*pratiyogi*) that is so.⁷²

Balasubramanian in the section on 'Critique of difference' in his work *Advaita Vedānta* points out :

Difference is mutual non-existence. The proposition "A is not B" conveys the notion that

A is not of the nature of B and that B is not of the nature of A; i.e., there is the non-existence of B as A, as also the non-existence of A as B. Thus difference is of the nature of non-existence. If difference constitutes the nature of object, it follows that the object is of the nature of non-existence, because difference which constitutes its nature is of the nature of non-existence. So this view would deprive the object of its existence and reduce it to a nullity.⁷³

It may be asked as to whether the Advaitin totally dispenses with the concept of difference. The answer is to the contrary. In a forcibly significant and strong marked tone, Vimuktātman in his *Iṣṭasiddhi* states :

Undoubtedly there is the experience of difference. That is why we are able to carry out activities, sacred and secular.

He hastens to add that this does not mean that we ascribe any reality to it. We are not able to identify its root cause.⁷⁴

What Vimuktātman means may be set forth in the language of Hiriyanna thus: *bheda is prasiddha* i.e., it is given in common experience; but it is not *pramāṇasiddha* i.e., it defies logical scrutiny.

To sum up: the schools other than Advaita are not able to explain satisfactorily the relation of the one to the many. The Advaitin proves on the basis of the *Upaniṣads* aided by reasoning that the one is related to many through what is known as *ādhyāsika-sambandha*. The one is the real and the many is unreal.

In his commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara while replying to an objection that he will not be able to ascertain the truth by disputation with the dualists, as he is wedded to the theory of oneness or pure identity, while

they are to manyness, expresses his feeling of satisfaction that he is admired for his commitment to the theory of non-dualism faced by many who are firmly attached to the doctrine of duality. And he proclaims with a state of mind free from diffidence, misgiving or embarrassment that he shall triumph over them and with that end in view he would commence the enquiry into the import of the Upaniṣad.⁷⁵

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33. *Advaitaratnarakṣaṇa* Published along with *Advaita Siddhi*, pp. 4 - 5.
34. *Ibid*, pp. 524 - 525.
35. VS, 2.3.17.
36. ŚB on the above...
37. *Abhinavanārāyaṇa's Ṭikā* on 'B on CU, p. 216.
38. R. Balasubramanian "'The One and The Many", p.55.
39. *Laghucandrikā*, p. 9.
40. CU, 6.2.3.
41. *Ibid*, 6.3.3.

42. Ibid, 6.4. 1 - 4.
43. Ibid, 6-8-7.
44. *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, (TU) 2.1.1.
45. R. Balasubramanian "The One and the Many", pp. 54 - 55.
46. TU, 2.1.1.
47. BU, 2.4.5.
48. Ibid., 4.5.6.
49. ŚB on VS, 2.1.22.
50. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 1.1.3.
51. Ibid. 2.1.10.
52. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 4.10.
53. ŚB on VS, 2.1.14.
54. Ibid.
55. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (hereafter BU), 3.7.3.
56. Ibid. 3.7. 4 - 21.
57. Ibid. 3.7.22.
58. *Śrībhāṣya* (in 2 Vols. with the C. *Śrūta Prakāśikā*, Viśiṣṭādvaita Pracarini Sabha, Chennai, 1989, Vol. II pp. 222 - 223.
59. Ibid, Vol.I, Part II, p. 222.
60. *Śrībhāṣya* on VS, 1.4.27.
61. Ibid. on 2.1.35.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid, 2.3.18.
64. *Adhikaraṇaratnamālā* by Kapisthalaṃ Deśika, p. 155.
65. R. Balasubramanian, "The One and the Many", p.60.
66. *Vedāntasūtra* 1.2.5 / 18 - 20.
67. BU, 1.5.11.
68. Ibid. 1.5.12.
69. Ibid. 1.5.13.
70. *Viṣṇutattvanirṇaya* with five commentaries (Sriman Madhva Raddhanta Samvaridhini sabha, Madras., 1969, p. 461.
71. *Advaitaratnarakṣaṇa*, p.17. See also Advaitasiddhi, pp. 800-1.

72. *Advaitasiddhi*, p. 794.
73. R. Balasubramanian "'Critique of Difference" *Advaita Vedānta*, Madras University Philosophical Series No.23, 1976, p. 156.
74. *Vimuktātman, Iṣṭasiddhi*, Baroda: Gaekwad Oriental Series, No.LXV, 1933, p.2.
75. ŚB on *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.8.



8

FALSITY OF THE WORLD

Goda Venkateswara Sastry*

The main tenets of Advaita can be known from the simple sentence "*Brahma satyam jagan mithyā jīvo Brahmaiva nāparaḥ*". That is to say, (i) Brahman alone is real, (ii) the world is false and (iii) the jīva is none other than Brahman. Thus barring Consciousness either in the form of Brahman or Jiva, the rest of the world is false according to Advaita. Hence the Advaitins are called illusionists. On the other hand, the Dvaitins view the world as real. For them the world is as real as its cause. They are, therefore, called realists. The fight for establishing one's system by refuting the tenets of the opponents had a long origin. Bādarāyaṇa in his *Vedānta-sūtra* refutes many arguments of the Dvaitins (those who advocate the theory of many souls). Śaṅkara too in his *Sūtra-bhāṣya* had severely dealt with the *Naiyyāyikas*, *Sāṅkhyas* and other dualists. The commentators of Śaṅkara like *Padmapāda*, *Sureśvara*, *Vācaspati Miśra* and *Vimuktātman* followed suit and refuted Dvaita to establish the Advaitic viewpoint.

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But the real controversy between the Advaitins and the Dvaitins started with the work *Nyâyâmṛta* of *Vyāsatīrtha*. *Vyāsatīrtha* has actually formulated the refutations of Advaita, which were given as *pūrvapakṣas* found in the Advaita texts starting from the *Brahmasiddhi* of Maṇḍana up to his time. But he did not state from where he laid his hand to those refutations. But this work has pushed Advaitins at that time to a corner. Many Advaitic *ācāryas* took up cudgels against *Vyāsatīrtha* and refuted the arguments given in the *Nyâyâmṛta*. The *Bhedadhikkāra* and the *Advaitadīpikā* of Nāsimhārama are some of the works that refuted the Dvaita views before establishing Advaitic standpoint. The *Madhva-tantra-mukha-mardana* of Appayya Dīkṣita also has to be taken into account for its frontal attack on the Dvaitins. But refutation *verbatim-et-litleratim* to the arguments contained in the *Nyâyâmṛta* was not taken up by any one till *Madhusūdana's Advaita-siddhi*. The advent of *Advaita-siddhi* inaugurated the birth of a series of polemical literature. Many terse philosophical texts came up in the form of refutation of each one in both the schools. One thing may be noted here that the *navya-nyāya* method of dialectical arguments was employed. This attracted the attention of all learned scholars, who started reading the original works and their commentaries along with the refutations, replies, counter-refutations, etc. The series of works from the *Nyâyâmṛta* could be codified as under:

Nyâyâmṛta	:: by <i>Vyāsatīrtha</i>
Advaita-siddhi	:: by <i>Madhusūdana Sarasvati</i>
Taraṅgiṇī	:: by <i>Rāmatīrtha</i>
Siddhi-vyākhyā	:: by Balabhadra, refutation of Taraṅgiṇī
Nyâyâmṛta- kaṅṭhakoddhāra (or)	:: by Vijayendra-tīrtha Anandabhattachāraka, refutation of Siddhi vyākhyā

Guru-candrikā and Laghu-candrikā	:: by Brahmānanda Sarasvatī – refutation of the Taraṅgiṇī
Taraṅgiṇī Saurabhā and Nyâyāmṛta Saugandhya Viṭṭaladeśiyi	:: by Vanamālimiśra :: by Viṭṭaladeśiya-upādhyāya- refutation of works of Vanamālimiśra.
Nyâyāmṛta Saugandhya vimarśa	:: by N.S. Anantha Krishna Śāstri.

The keynotes of the rival schools of Advaita and Dvaita centre round two slogans generally quoted are:

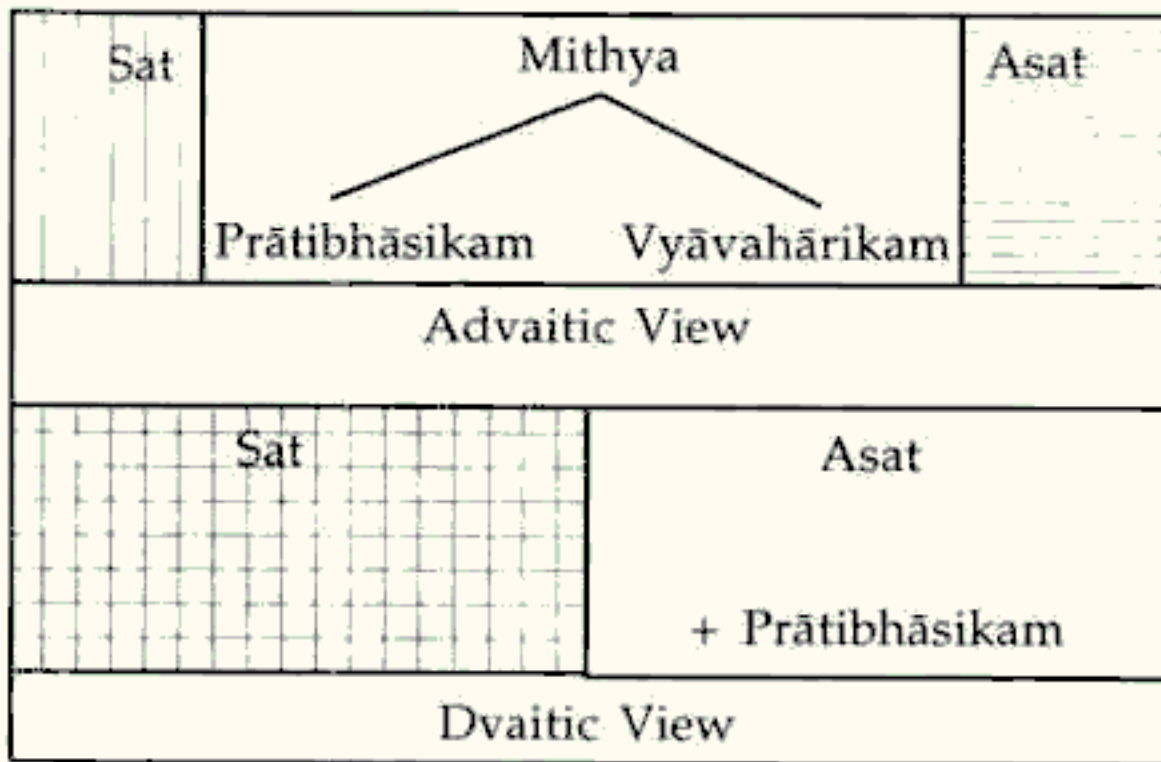
Brahmaivedam Jagat sarvam brahmaṇonyan na vidyate
Brahmaṇonyad bhāticen mithyā yathā maru marīcikā.

The Dvaitins, however, maintain that

Yādṛśam brahmaṇaḥ sattvam tādṛśam syājjagatyapi
Tatrasyāt tadanirvācyam chedihāpi tathāstunah.

Both of them produces ruti texts in support of their views. The sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa also were interpreted to suit their preconceived ideas. Arguments and counter-arguments over the past four centuries did not alter the position of both the sides. Both of them stuck to their views with unshaken faith in them and were convinced with their position. Hence arguments, refutations and sometimes accusations, etc. did not alter their positions. Perhaps, the only benefit that accrued as a result of this polemics is the considerable growth of dialectics in Indian philosophy. A brief analysis of the five definitions of falsity (*mithyatva*) is taken up for study in this article.

The Advaitins had to resort to the falsity of the world to establish the oneness of Brahman without a second. If the world has the same ontological status as that of Brahman, then the *advitīyatva* (being one only without a second) will be at stake. Hence Brahman has been afforded the status of transcendental nature. It is transcendental, because it does not cease to exist in all the three periods of time. The world, however, being a product of *māyā*, will continue to exist till such time the Brahman-knowledge dawns on the individual. When Brahman is realized, automatically the nescience or *māyā* is annihilated. The individual is released from all the bonds. Hence the world cannot have the same transcendental status as that of Brahman. There are other objects like the silver seen in a shell, snake comprehended falsely in a rope, which are falsified even before the Brahman-knowledge dawns. In fact, they are annulled by the knowledge of their substratum. Such objects have an ontological status called *prātibhāsika* (phenomenal existence). Apart from these three kinds of things, there are, however, some more objects which are dealt with during discussion in Advaita. Consider, for example, objects like the horn of a hare, son of a barren woman, milk of a tortoise, sky-flower, etc. They do not have any ontological status as they are not comprehended at all. They are figments of our imagination. It is the power of our minds which is responsible for the same. The Dvaitins, on the other hand, are pluralists. They hold that the world has the same reality as that of its cause; hence it is as real as Brahman. Objects of phenomenal reality are included in the last category, namely, *tuccha* or *asat*, like the son of a barren woman. (pl.see the diagram).



According to the Advaitin, Brahman - knowledge alone is the panacea for all the ills of transmigration.¹

Only when Brahman is experienced directly, *māyā* and its effects including various limitations will cease to operate. Also, all the karmas, save the one which is responsible for the present birth, which he had carefully saved all along will be burnt by the Brahman - knowledge.² The karmas that started this birth has to be exhausted through experience. Finally, when the body of the *jñāni* falls, there is no balance of karma, and so he becomes free from birth. The dawn of the Brahman-knowledge will occur only when one has the firm knowledge of the non-dual Brahman obtained through hearing the same from a qualified Guru, by reflection and by meditation.³ This firm conviction of Brahman will come after the advent of the knowledge of the falsity of the world, the reason being that, if the world is also true how can Brahman be one only without a second? Hence 'the proof of the truth of non-duality follows from the proof of the unreality of all duality or plurality. Hence at the very outset, it becomes necessary to prove this

unreality.⁴ To this end, five definitions of unreality given by the earlier *ācāryas* were taken up for establishing the false nature of the world by refuting the adverse arguments advocated in the *Nyâyâmṛta*. These definitions of falsity are given below.

1. From the figure shown above, an object which is in the central set will be different from *Sat* and *asat*. Thus it can be said that any object in the set of *mithyā* has the absence of *sattva* and also the absence of *asattva*, either individually or collectively. Thus the definition of *mithyātva* is formulated as: possessing the combined or separate attributes of the absolute negation (*atyanta abhāva*) of non-being (*asattva*) as accompanied by the absolute negation of being (*Sattva*). This definition follows the statement of *Padmapāda*, a senior disciple of Śaṅkara in his 'Pañcapādikā' as "the word unreal denotes undefinability, (*anirvacanīyatā*)", it might be held that what is meant by the 'unreality' of a thing is that it is undefinable, i.e. that it is not the substratum of either being or non-being.

2. It is the correlative (*pratiyogin*) of absolute negation (*atyantābhāva*) with regard to the substratum in which it is cognized. When a jar is called as unreal, we mean that it is capable of being absolutely denied in regard to the point of space and time in connection with which it is perceived. This comes from the *śruti* text 'Neha nānāsti kiñcana'.⁵ This falsity is taken from the book '*Pañcapādikā vivaraṇa*' of *Prakāśātman*.

3. Unreality is the character of being set aside or discarded by cognition (true knowledge of the substratum). This is also taken from the '*Pañcapādikā vivaraṇa*' of *Prakāśātman*. It is based on the *Sruti* text "*Vidvān nāma rupāt vimuktaḥ*".⁶

4. Unreality is the character of being cognized in its locus where there is the absolute negation too. It is based on the Śruti text "*Na tatra rathâ na rathayogâ na panthânaḥ atha rathân rathayogân patha srjate.*"⁷ It is taken from Citsukha's work by name *Pratyak-tattva pradīpikā*.

5. Unreality of an object is its being something distinct from existence. This is from the *Nyāya-makaranda* of Ānandabodha. It is based on the Śruti text "*Atonyadārtam.*"⁸

Though five definitions are mentioned, on scrutiny there are only three distinct definitions. The fourth definition is nothing but a recast of the second definition as there is an interchange of substantive and attribute only. Similarly, the fifth definition is nothing but the first definition as it is necessary to incorporate distinction from non-existence also in the definition. Otherwise, the definition will be too wide on 'son of a barren woman', etc. We thus have only three separate definitions left over for detailed study.

First definition of falsity.

This is the earliest definition of *mithyātva* (falsity) given by Padmapāda. Its form is *Sattva atyantābhāva, asattva atyantābhāva dharmadvayam* or *Sattva atyantābhāvavattve sati, asattva atyantābhāva rupam viśiṣṭam*.

Before understanding the above, we will have to understand certain terms of the Śāstra. Here *sattva* means *trikāla abādhyatva*—that which is not sublated in all the three periods of time; in other words, existing in all three periods of time. Only Brahman belongs to this set. Śrutis clearly state this position as "*anuchitti dharmā,*"⁹ "*atonyadārtam.*"¹⁰ The other extreme to this is *asat*—that which never exists. The examples to this are 'horn of a hare', 'horn of a man', 'son of a barren woman', 'milk of a tortoise', 'flower of skies' and so on. These are never comprehended as 'existing' with reference to any place or any time. Can anybody say that

he had comprehended the son of barren woman at any period of time anywhere? Or will it be possible to do so now or at any later period? Such objects are called *tuccha*. Even the *Mahābhāṣya* the earliest written text now available, explains this concept. The third set is the set of *mithyā* or illusory objects to which the world belongs. The objects in the world are perceived by us through our sense organs. But they are not ever-existent. Some objects may have a long span of existence like space, air and so on; whereas some other objects are impermanent. They fade away before our own eyes. They cannot be categorized as Sat as they are not ever-existent like Brahman. As they are comprehended by us through our sense-organs either directly or by other means of valid knowledge like inference and so on, they cannot be categorized as *asat*. Hence is the necessity of the third category, *mithyā*. The objects seen in a dream too belong to this category. They are comprehended as though existing at that period of time. But their existence is sublated by the *jāgrat* (waking experience). The experience of the common man is that the objects comprehended in a dream are illusory. In the same way, all the objects seen in the waking state are also illusory since the Vedas proclaim that, by the knowledge of Brahman, the existence of duality (*dvaita*) will be sublated. "jāte dvaitam na vidyate."¹¹

The Dvaitins do not agree to this categorization of objects. According to them, there are only two sets of objects namely Sat and *asat*. This is totally against the Vedic teaching and the common experience as stated earlier. The Vedas say that Brahman had become Satyam, Anṛtam and Asatyam,¹² clearly enunciating the three states of epistemological existence. The non-existent *asat* cannot be included either in Vyavahārika (empirical) or in prātibhāsika (illusory) state. This is the main reason of misunderstanding of advaitic position by the dvaitin.

Thus by definition, *Sat*, *asat* and *mithya* each being distinct by itself; the absence of both *Satva* and *Asatva* can exist simultaneously in a *mithya* object.

The Taraṅgiṇi criticizes Advaita on the ground that the statement "*asat cet na pratiyeta*" (if it is *asat*, then it may not appear) does not make any sense since the *prayojaka* and *prayojya* are identical in the argument. This criticism is due to non-comprehension of the Advaitic position. Let us analyze the same:

If we take a pot for our discussion, the pot does not clearly belong to the first category *Sat* as it ceases to exist when it is broken. It may exist for a thousand years. But there is no guarantee that it will continue to exist. The fall of a single block of wood is enough to break the pot and cease its existence. Let us examine whether it is an *asat*. Clearly it (the pot) does not belong to *asat* as one can see the pot, touch the pot and pour water in it and use it as he likes. Such actions are not possible with an *asat* object like the 'son of a barren woman', or 'horn of a hare'. Now the pot by the above argument clearly does not belong either to *Sat* or to *asat*. But it exists as it is the object of our perception. Hence it belongs to the third category called *mithyā*. There is no special significance of naming the category as *mithyā* except that any object can be either (i) *Sat* or (ii) *asat*. An object, however, cannot be simultaneously belong to both, that is (iii) *Sat* and *asat* as they are mutually exclusive, one ever-existing and the other never-existing. Hence the fourth possibility is inexplicable that is *mithyā*-not belonging to either of the categories. This set is experienced by everybody in the world irrespective of his status whether he has read the *śāstrās* or not. Such a common experience cannot be repudiated by any one. (see figure).

Now the Dvaitin analyses the definition of *mithyātva* and says whether it is

1. Absence of Sat qualified by *asat*; (*asattva viśiṣṭa sattva-abhāva*)

2. Absence of Sat and absence of *asat* (*sattva atyantābhāva vatve sati asattva atyantābhāva*) or

3. Absence of Sat qualified by the absence of *asat*. (*sattva atyantābhāva viśiṣṭa asatva atynatābhāvah*)

The first explanation fails at the first stage itself as the Advaitin never agreed nor stated anywhere such a position.

For the second explanation, the Dvaitin adduces three flaws. The first is (i) contradiction as, if there is no *Sat* it should be *asat* and vice versa.

Apparently this is due to non-comprehension of Advaitic position that there are three categories namely *Sat*, *asat* and *mithyā*. If the world does not belong to *Sat* it may either belong to *asat* or *mithyā*. Similarly if the world does not fit in *asat* it may belong to either *Sat* or *mithyā*. Clearly in this case, as it is stated that the world does not belong to either *Sat* (the first category) or *asat* (the second category), naturally it belongs to the middle category namely the *mithyā*. Hence the criticism does not hold water.

The next criticism is the world may be of the form of *Sattva* like Brahman which does not contain *Sat* but in the form of *Sat*. (like sugar which does not contain sweetness, but is sweet).

The answer of the Advaitin for this is that it is not necessary to accept another *sattva* in the world separately. Brahman is *Sat* and the world appears to be *Sat* as it is superimposed in it. Hence to accept *Satva* apart from the Brahman-*Sat* is redundant. Also by accepting it, all objects in the world appear as *Sat* uniformly. If, on the other hand,

a separate *Sat* in the world is accepted, then different objects will be connected to *Sat* differently as in the Nyāya School.

The third flaw is that the *mithyātva* is not available in the example *śukti-rūpya* (silver appearing on the shell). The reason is in *śukti-rūpya*, absence of *sattva* exists since it is different from Brahman, the *Sat*. Hence it cannot hold the *Asatva-abhava* (absence of *asat*). The answer to this is that *Sat* and *asat* are not mutually exclusive. Even when *Sat* does not exist in *śukti-rūpya*, it need not be *asat* also according to the definitions of *Sat* and *asat* given above. Hence all the three flaws of the Dvaitin do not affect the advaitic position.

The third explanation of this definition was scrutinized and the same three fallacies were made by the Dvaitin. Thus by the explanation given above, these three fallacies also do not affect the Advaitic standpoint.

As the absence of *gotva* (cow-ness) and *aśvatva* (horse-ness) can co-exist in *gaja* (elephant), the absence of *Sattva* and *asattva* can co-exist in an illusory object. There is thus no contradiction in this definition of *mithyātva*. Also, this explanation is not the brain child of Advaitin, but given in *śrutis*, *smrtis* and *Purāṇas*. Non-acceptance or rebuttal of the same only proves the ignorance of the above texts by the Dvaitins.

Also for the objection of the Dvaitin that the absence or difference of *asat* is already known to be present in the world and hence proving the same by the *anumāna* (inference) is redundant; the answer of Advaitin is that we prove not only absence/difference of *asat* but also the absence/difference of *Sat* also in the worlds. Hence it is not redundant. Also such a position is accepted in the pantheon of *Śāstras* as such usages are found in the criticisms and answers between the *Mīmāṃsakas* and the *Logicians*.

Also it should be noted that Brahman is free from *Sattva* and *asattva*. It transcends both. It is, however, *Sat* in its form like sweetness in Sugar. Hence objections of the Dvaitins pale away in thin air and the definition of *mithyātva* given by Sri Padmapādâcârya is perfect.

Second definition of falsity.

Prakāśātman wrote a commentary on the Pañcapādika of Padmapāda in which he has given two definitions for the falsity of the world. This is the first one. It is thus: Falsity is the co-relative of negation at all the three points of time in the very same locus where it appears.¹³ Silver appearing in a shell is the example given in this case also. As silver does not exist in all the periods of time in the shell where it appears, it becomes co-relative of negation 'silver is absent in this (shell)'.
 (i) real; or
 (ii) apparent; or
 (iii) empirical?

The author of *Nyāyāmṛta* discards this definition. He asks: what is the ontological status of the co-relative of the eternal negation in the locus where it appears? Is it

- (i) real; or
 - (ii) apparent; or
 - (iii) empirical?
- In the first case, the thesis of non-dualism gets affected as there are two real objects, Brahman and the said co-relative. In the second case, the argument of Advaitin involves the fallacy of establishing what has already been established. In the last case three defects arise. They are
- (i) Being empirical it will be negated at a later time and thus it will not be contradicting absolute Brahman. Thus there is a fallacy of proving an unintended thesis (*artāntara*);
 - (ii) It implies that the advaitic texts are not expressive of ultimate truth; and finally

(iii) It establishes the absolute reality of the world; since it is not apparent it must be real.

Madhusūdana Sarasvati's replies to these are as under:

All the above charges are not justified. There are no proper grounds for raising the same. Even if the co-relative of the eternal negation is to be real, the thesis of non-dualism is not affected since the negation of the world is identical with the Brahman which is the substratum or locus of the negation.

Nor can it be objected that the negation being real, the co-relative of the negation namely, the world is also real. The rule that the negation and the co-relative should be of the same order of reality cannot be accepted since there is an exception in the case of silver in the shell; as the negation of silver in the shell is real whereas the shell-silver is illusory.

The second option is not accepted by the advaitins and hence to object that is wrong. The third option namely that the negation is empirical is being answered thus.

(i) It cannot be said that the negation too being negated at a later time, it will not be presenting the absolute reality of the worlds leading to the fallacy of arthantara (proving unintended thesis), as we find that when the dream is negated the objects seen in the dream are also negated. The reason of the negation being non-contradictory to the reality is not due to negation of negation. It is because that the negation is of lesser status (of truth) than that is negated. In the present case the negation and the negated are both of the same status. Hence they are opposed to each other.

Nor it can be said that when the negation is negated, the co-relative regains reality. It is only at those places that by negating the negation, the co-relative will regain greater reality, where the act of negating the negation is done with

an intention to re-establish the reality of the original object in question. In other words the negation of negation alone is the intention and not to negate the counter-position also. This is better understood by the example where a person gets a false knowledge in silver as 'This is not silver'. Then it is negated as 'this is not non-silver'. This negation will re-establish the reality of the silver. Where the intention is to negate the earlier negation as well as its co-relative, then the negation of negation will not establish the reality of the co-relative. This is like negating the pot and its absolute negation at the time of destruction of pot in the parts of the pot. Now the negation of absolute negation of pot does not posit the pot.

Similarly, in the present case the world and its negation, both are negated by the same argument, knowability (*drśyatva*). Hence even if the negation is negated, the world does not regain greater reality, since the determinant of the negation is common to both.

Objection of the Dvaitin: Since the negation of the world given by the śruti is not real, "rutiis concerned may be invalid.

Reply: No. As the śrutis reveal the not real as not real, it is not possible to reject the validity of the śrutis.

Objection of the Dvaitin: Is the negation of this negation determined by its intrinsic nature? (*svarūpeṇa niṣeda*) or is it regarded as determined by the character of being ultimately real leaving its (of the world) nature distinct from the unreal?

The first alternative is not true as it is wrong to negate the world that exists at the time of appearance distinct from the unreal object as not existing in all the three periods of time. This is because the śruti explains that these objects in the world

- a. have origination;
- b. have causal efficiency;
- c. have nescience as their material cause; and
- d. are destroyed by the knowledge of reality. Thus they are distinct from unreal objects. They are related to the time of their appearance. They, therefore, cannot be negated intrinsically in all the three periods of time in the locus of their appearance.

The second alternative is not possible. This is because the reality is uncancellable. Uncancellability is to be understood as the negation of cancellability. Hence the fallacy of mutual dependence will arise. (The concept of falsity involves the concept of reality and the concept of reality involves the concept of falsity. Thus each has to be understood as the difference of the other only).

Also if the character of being real is negated intrinsically (*svarūpeṇa*), then all the fallacies of the first alternative too will result. If it is said that the character of being real is also negated as being determined by the character of being real, then infinite regress will result.

The Advaitin answers that both the world and the silver on the shell are eternally negated as being determined by their intrinsic nature. This concurs with our experience that after the cognition of the substratum (the shell), the silver in the shell is negated as 'there is no silver now nor was there silver before, nor there will be silver even at a future time'. This negation is in the form of its intrinsic nature (*svarūpeṇa niṣeda*). Similarly the negation of the world by the *Sruti* '*Neti, neti*'¹⁴ is also a negation in its intrinsic nature.

Objection by the Dvaitin: The co-relative of the negation is only the empirically real silver (and not the apparent silver) in its intrinsic nature.

Reply: No. Then the object of illusion and the object of cancellation (or correction) will then be different. Also, there will be absurdity of an object being negated, which did not appear earlier.

Objection by the Dvaitin: If the world is negated intrinsically, then there may not be origination, etc. for the same.

Reply: There is no rule that wherever there is no negation intrinsically of an object, then there will be origination of it. Then only, because the world is being negated intrinsically it may not have origination, etc. According to the Dvaitins, the objects like *akāśā* (ether) are not negated in their intrinsic nature and yet they are not admitted to have origination. Thus origination, etc., are determined by some other condition namely the nature of the object, etc. which is accepted by us too.

Also this view is not against the view of *Prakāśātman*, the author of the *Vivaraṇa*, as when viewed along with the interpretation of the above text in the *Tatvaprakāśika*, we get that 'the view of *Prakāśātman* is that the empirically real silver is the co-relative of the negation. This also concurs with the fact that activity of the individual to take it is directed towards what is known as empirical silver. Hence one has to admit that the apparent silver directly appears as identified with the real silver can never be the empirically real silver.

When both the object and the co-relative are represented by similar case endings, the negation (*naṣ*) means reciprocal negation or the difference. Thus the sentences 'Pot is not the cloth', 'This is not silver' mean that there is difference

between them. Thus this (the silver appearing in the shell) is not the empirical silver. This is what we get by this negation. *Prakâsâtman*, when he says that empirical silver which is negated, he means that the illusory silver which appeared as identical with the empirical silver is negated (and not the empirical silver alone). The proof for the acceptance of illusory silver identified with the empirical silver is the fact that the person under illusion was drawn towards it. The negation shows that the illusory silver is distinct from the empirical one. Thus the empirical silver is the co-relative of the reciprocal negation between the illusory silver and the empirical silver. Hence the negation 'This is not silver' indicates the distinction between the apparent silver in the forefront of the individual, denoted by the word 'this' and the empirical silver denoted by the word 'silver'. The knowledge of this distinction implies that the apparent silver is false.

But in case the negation is in the form 'there is no silver here' (*nâtra rajatam*), then the object of this knowledge is absolute negation of silver. In other words, it is the absolute negation of the experienced apparent silver in the locus of its appearance. This is because of the rule that whenever there are different case endings in the words representing the co-relative and the locus of the negation, then absence of association is revealed by the negation. Thus in this case where negation is in the form 'there is no silver here' has for its object, the absolute negation of the experienced illusory silver and this absolute negation is empirical in nature. This states the falsity of silver explicitly. Hence the definition of falsity does not lead to any conclusion against the established opinion (*apasiddhânta*); does not entail the forced admission of a real silver elsewhere (*anyathâkhyâti*) nor does it involve any contradiction of the views stated in the earlier texts.

Objection by Dvaitin: The falsity is then identical with the *asat* (devoid of any ontological status). It is because the objects like pot etc., are eternally negated in the locus of their appearance and you do not accept their presence at a place other than their locus of appearance resulting in their negation everywhere; i.e. both in their locus of appearance and at other places. Then 'How does the illusory object differ from the unreal (*asat*)? The unreality of the horn of a hare is not in any way different from this. The unreality of the horn of a hare cannot be its incapability of being denoted by a word, since it is denoted by the expression 'incapable of being denoted by a word'. Nor the unreality can be the character of not being cognized. If the unreal object is not cognized then how one can have

- (i) the knowledge of difference of unreal and
- (ii) the denial of the cognition of the unreal; and
- (iii) usage of the word unreal (*asat*).

Nor can it be said that unreal is one that can never be the object of direct cognition because then the definition of unreal (*asat*) will be too wide of its application to objects that are not cognized directly by any one like *ākāśa*, *dharma*, *adharma*.

The Advaitin replies to this as: Negation of an object at all places both in its locus of appearance and in other places is common to illusory objects and *asat* (unreal) objects. But unreality (*asatva*) is the incapability of being presented in any locus as existent. This does not exist in silver on the shell or in the world prior to its negation. Hence they do not become unreal. Before negation, both the silver in the shell or the world do not fail to appear as real and hence they appear as existent. The fact that the locus of appearance of the false is real, is signified of the word 'upādhi' in the present definition of falsity. For *śūnyavādins*, the illusion

is not grounded in a real locus. Hence they cannot claim that the silver appearing on the shell or the world possesses the character of being presented as existent in a locus which distinguishes the illusory object with an unreal.

Third definition of falsity.

This definition is also given by Prakāśātman in his Vivaraṇa. Falsity consists in its being cancelled by knowledge. The author of the *Nyāyāmṛta* criticizes this definition too. The flaws adduced are:

(i) This definition applies to any cognition that is destroyed by a succeeding cognition. But the preceding cognition is not false. Hence it is too wide;

(ii) Objects like a pot which are false according to advaita too get destroyed by the fall of a pestle (log of wood) etc and not by knowledge. In such places the definition is too narrow;

(iii) Even if character of being cancelled by knowledge qua knowledge is intended then the same flaw as being too narrow in pot etc., will continue;

(iv) If it is the character of being cancelled by the direct realization of the substratum is intended, then it exists in the shell-silver too as it is cancelled by the direct realization of substratum. But the character of being cancelled by knowledge by virtue of its character of being knowledge is absent in it. Hence there results the flaw of the probandum being absent in the example shell-silver (*sādhya vaikalya*).

(v) If falsity is that being cancelled by knowledge by virtue of its possessing the character which is universally concomitant with the character of being knowledge (*jñānatva vyāpya dharmeṇa*), then the definition will be too wide since it will apply to the mental impressions which are cancelled by the corresponding memories that are universally concomitant with the character of being knowledge.

The Advaitin replies to this as follows: The intended meaning of the expression 'sublation by knowledge' is the 'character of being the co-relative (*pratiyogin*) of a negation which is due to knowledge and which is the negation of the object in all forms of existence both gross and subtle. Each object exists in two forms; (i) in its own form as an effect and (ii) its causal form. This is due to the fact that the effect pre-exists in its material cause.

Even though the pot ceases to exist in its own form as an effect when it is broken by a log of wood, it does not cease to exist in its causal form. The cessation of that pot even in the causal form is due to the Brahman knowledge only. Hence the definition does not fail to apply to objects like the pot not existing in its physical form. Thus the definition is not too narrow and the flaw shown (as ii) above does not arise.

Also the earlier cognition, cancelled by the succeeding cognition continues to exist in its causal form. Thus there is no negation by the succeeding knowledge in all forms of existence. Hence the flaw of proving what is already accepted also does not arise. When objects like *ākāśa* (ether) are negated by the knowledge of Brahman both forms are cancelled and hence they are proved as illusory. Thus the definition will not lead to proving an unintended thesis. The non-existent objects like the horn of a hare etc are non-existent in all forms; gross as well as subtle. But that non-existence is not due to knowledge and so the definition does not suffer from the flaw of being too wide in its applicability to unreal (*asat*) objects. Objects like shell-silver have to be accepted as existing at the time of their appearance (since they will not appear if they do not exist). They thus have an ontological status as phenomenal. They are cancelled by the corrective knowledge. Hence the flaw of probandum not existing in the example also does not arise (See (iv) above).

This has been very well explained by the sentence in the Vivaraṇa "Sublation is the cessation of ignorance with what it entails in the potential as well as actual state, by knowledge".¹⁵ The author of Vārtika also says "As soon as the valid cognition is generated by the statement 'That art thou' ignorance with its effects is understood to be non-existent in the present, in the past and in the future".¹⁶ The sentence 'along with the effect it did not exist' is intended to show that the effect of ignorance in its potential form does not exist. Similarly the sentence 'along with the effect it will not exist' shows the cessation of the future effect of ignorance. The negation of a future effect on account of something else, i.e., negation not due to knowledge cannot be taken as a cause of sublation. We thus find that the material cause of silver namely ignorance is cancelled along with its effect, in the gross and subtle forms by the direct cognition of its substratum.

Each shell-silver perceived by every individual has a distinct nescience as its material cause. Hence the probandum is not absent in the example. Every one accepts that after the knowledge of substratum, the ignorance of shell as well as the silver over it does not exist like the pot after it is broken by a log of wood. It is also right to say that falsity consists in being cancelled by knowledge in its capacity of possessing a character which is universally concomitant with the character of being knowledge (*jñānatva vyāpya dharmena jñāna nivartyatvam*). This is because the cessation of prior knowledge by a succeeding one is not by the knowledge as shown above but by being a special quality of the Self that arises immediately after it. (*udīcya ātma viśeṣa guṇatvena*). Thus there is no flaw of proving what is already accepted. Nor is the definition too wide, as it applies to the mental impression not cancelled by desire etc but cancelled by memory.(v. above). There is no proof that

mental impressions are cancelled by memory in the capacity of memory. On the other hand experience confirms that birth of each memory strengthens the mental impressions. The strength of mental impressions is to have many of them corresponding to an object. Thus the definition is flawless. However, the definition of falsity could be 'the character of being cancelled by the direct realization of the substratum. Then all the flaws shown above will have no place at all. Nor there is no flaw of being too wide, in its application to the doubt when it is cancelled by knowledge acting in its capacity of certitude (*niścaya*) which is universally concomitant with the character of knowledge (*jñānatva vyāpya dharmena*). Thus the third definition is also flawless and thereby proves the illusory nature of the world well.

¹ jñātvā devam mucyate sarva pāpaiḥ. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 1.11

² 'jñānāgniḥ sarva karmāṇi bhasmasāt kuruterjuna' - Bhagavad Gītā 4.37.

³ 'ātmāvāre draṣṭavyo mantayo nididhyāsitavyah' - Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (hereafter BU) 2.4.5

⁴ Advaita Siddhi-N.S.Anantha Krishna Sastry-Parimal Publications Delhi 1997. P.4

⁵ BU.4.19

⁶ Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad.2.8.

⁷ BU.4.3.10

⁸ BU.3.4.2

⁹ BU.4.5.14

¹⁰ BU.3.4.2

¹¹ Māndūkya Kārikā 1.18.

¹² Taittirīya Upaniṣad.2.5.4

¹³ Pañcapādikā Vivaraṇam p.106. S.Subramanya Sastry, Mahesh Anusandhana samstan,Varanasi

¹⁴ BU.2.3.6

¹⁵ Vivaraṇa p108, S.Subramanya Sastri, Mahesh Anusandhana Samstan,Varanasi,1992

¹⁶ Vārtika, 1.1.83



9

ADHYĀSABHĀṢYA

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(For the expansion of the abbreviations in the footnotes please see Bibliography at the end).

The bhāṣya of Śaṅkara is the means for understanding the meaning of the Vedānta sūtras. The bhāṣya begins with the adhyāsabhāṣya. We shall first examine what is the purpose of the adhyāsabhāṣya and what is the relationship between the first sūtra and adhyāsabhāṣya. Another matter to be considered is, what are the objections raised by other schools and what is the reply of Advaita to them.

The first sutra is — अथ अतः ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा

The meaning of the word *atha* is, after having acquired the four essential requisites, namely, discrimination between the eternal and the ephemeral, an attitude of detachment towards enjoyment of the fruits of action in this world as well as in higher worlds, perfection of disciplines such as control of the mind, control of all the senses and organs,

etc., and intense yearning for liberation¹—नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः, इहामुत्रार्थभोगविरागः, शमदमादिसाधनसंपत्, मुमुक्षुत्वं च.

Brahmajijñāsā implies adhyāsa

A person who has acquired these four requisites is the competent person (adhikāri) to take up Brahmajijñāsā. Jijñāsā means the desire to know. Desire and knowledge are not matters in respect of which there can be an injunction. They have to arise by themselves. The desire for liberation arises in a person who has acquired the four requisites mentioned earlier. Then he should do whatever is necessary for the fulfillment of this desire. A man who is hungry and wants relief from it should eat. Similarly, this sūtra says that one who desires liberation should engage in vedāntavicāra, just as a man who wants to go to heaven must perform a yajña. The knowledge of Brahman is the means for liberation. Liberation is the removal of bondage. By the knowledge of a particular thing the ignorance about it is removed. When it is said that knowledge of Brahman removes “bondage, it is indicated that bondage is due to ignorance of Brahman. Bondage cannot be removed by any means other than knowledge of Brahman. Ignorance and its effects are removed by knowledge. A real snake can be driven away by some action, but an illusory snake appearing where there is only a rope can be removed only by the knowledge of the rope. The first sūtra therefore indicates that bondage is mithyā (not real). This conclusion is arrived at by the pramāṇa known as arthāpatti. Arthāpatti is explained later on.

The nature of bondage

There are gradations in bondage. The main bondage is the connection of ignorance with the ātmā, in the form of superimposition. Thereafter comes the superimposition of the

¹ BSSB-MIE - Page 45 - sūtrabhāṣyam

subtle and the gross bodies. Then follows the superimposition of external objects. In superimposition there is a substratum (adhiṣṭhāna) and the superimposed (āropya). Śaṅkara says that there is a blending of the real and the unreal²—सत्यानृते मिथुनीकृत्य. So in bondage one part is real (ātmā), and the other part is unreal (anātmā).

The purpose of adhyāsabhāṣya

Now an objection is raised. It is said that such a superimposition is impossible because the requisite conditions for the same are not present. So the claim in the first sūtra that bondage can be removed by knowledge cannot be correct. The adhyāsabhāṣya is intended to reply to this objection.

Now the question arises, what is the need for dealing with superimposition at the beginning of the bhāṣya itself? The answer is that if the objections raised are answered, then the further study of the śāstra can proceed.

This work is known as शारीरकमीमांसा. Śārīra means the one who is in the body, i.e. the jīva. So this śāstra deals with the jīva. But it begins with the desire to know Brahman. This shows that the subject-matter of this śāstra is the oneness of jīva and Brahman. But, the jīva looks upon himself as different from Brahman. It follows that this difference is only due to ignorance. Bondage which is the result of this ignorance is therefore mithyā. Thus it is seen that two results flow from this. One is that, since bondage can be removed by knowledge, it must be mithyā. The second is that, since jīva and Brahman are one, bondage is mithyā. The purpose of the adhyāsabhāṣya is to establish these two matters.

Knowledge cannot destroy what is real

Now two objections are raised: (1) Just because knowledge removes bondage, it does not follow that bondage is mithyā.

(2) Since the śāstra is pramāṇa, why can it not be merely accepted, and what is the need for proving that bondage is mithyā?

In support of the first objection some examples are given. It is said that a poison which has entered the body is removed by thinking of garuḍa (garuḍasmarāṇam). The thought of garuḍa is only knowledge. By this knowledge the poison, which is real, is removed. It is said that detachment can be acquired by knowing the adverse effects of sense-objects. Here also the knowledge of the adverse effects removes the desire for the sense-objects, though the desire is real. The sin of killing a Brāhmāṇa is said to be removed by the sight of Setu. The sight of Setu is only knowledge and it destroys the sin which is real. Another example is the antecedent negation of knowledge (jñānaprāgabhāva), which is removed by knowledge, though it is real.

These objections are answered as follows. The mere thought of garuḍa does not remove the poison. It should be accompanied by the chanting of the relevant mantras and the performance of prescribed rituals. Detachment is not mere removal of desire. It is the attainment of a state of mind which is opposed to desire. The sight of Setu by itself does not remove the sin. The person has to observe celibacy for twelve years, should publicly announce his guilt and repentance wherever he goes, and also perform the prescribed rituals. Antecedent negation is not a positive entity and so this example is not valid. So in all these cases mere knowledge does not destroy something that is real.

The role of arthāpatti

The second objection is that since the śāstra is pramāṇa, there is no need for proving its correctness by means of other reasons. This objection is met as follows. For attaining heaven

yāga is prescribed. But the result, heaven, will come only much after the performance of the yāga. If there is to be the relationship of cause and effect between the yāga and the attainment of heaven, there should be no intervening period between the conclusion of the yāga and the attainment of heaven. To solve this difficulty Mīmāṃsakas have postulated a result in the form of apūrva which is produced during the performance of the yāga. This apūrva continues till the life of the person who has performed the yāga comes to an end and he attains heaven. This apūrva is not mentioned in the śruti. It is postulated on the basis of the pramāṇa known as arthāpatti. When there is conflict between two pramāṇas, a conclusion has to be postulated which reconciles the conflict. For example, a person named Devadatta is known to be alive, but he is not found in his house. Both these are pramāṇas and they are in conflict. So it has to be concluded that he is elsewhere. This reconciles the conflict. This is arthāpatti. Another example is - Devadatta does not eat during the day, but he continues to be fat. Here also there is conflict between two pramāṇas. This is resolved by the conclusion that he must be eating at night. Similarly, the śruti which is pramāṇa, says that yāga is the cause of heaven. But we see that heaven is not attained immediately on the completion of the yāga. This is also a pramāṇa. Thus there is conflict between the two pramāṇas. To resolve this conflict apūrva has been postulated by arthāpatti.

Knowledge does not need any other help to remove bondage

Śaṅkara has said repeatedly that the śāstra gives knowledge alone and cannot modify facts (शास्त्रं ज्ञापकं न कारकं). The opponent now asks: In the case of nacre-silver it is true that knowledge of the nacre alone is necessary for removal of the

illusory silver. But has Vedānta proved that knowledge by itself leads to removal of bondage and that knowledge does not depend on anything else for this purpose? This question has been answered later in the bhāṣya on Brahma-sūtra 3.4.25 and 3.4.26. There it has been said that for knowledge to arise karma, etc., are necessary, but once knowledge has arisen it does not need the help of anything else for removing bondage. In Bhagavadgītā also it has been said in chapter 6 that karma is necessary for a person to become yogārūḍha, but thereafter karma is not necessary, but only the pursuit of knowledge.

Some contend that even without establishing superimposition, the study of the śāstra can be proceeded with. This is rejected as untenable.

Reality is of one nature only

The following objection is raised: When you say that if bondage is real, it cannot be removed by knowledge, what is the nature of the reality that you are speaking of? Is it vyāvahārika or pāramārthika?

The answer to this objection is that it is not correct to divide reality into two categories. Reality is only one. Only mithyā can be divided into two categories, namely vyāvahārika or empirical and prātibhāsika or illusory. So the question raised is without any basis.

Superimposition is on Consciousness

The next objection is:- You say that there is superimposition of avidyā on the ātmā. Is this superimposition on the paramātmā or on the jīvātmā? The former is impossible, since paramātmā is Pure Consciousness. To say that there is superimposition of avidyā on paramātmā would be like saying that there is darkness in the sun. If you say that there is superimposition of avidyā on the jīvātmā, that is also not tenable, because according

to you the *jīvātmā* is the same as *paramātmā*. Moreover, *jīvātmā* is consciousness with the superimposition of *avidyā*. How can there be a superimposition of *avidyā* on such a *jīvātmā*?

The answer to this objection is: This is not a proper question at all since it goes against the theory of the *Naiyāyika* himself. To take an example. A man with a stick is called a *daṇḍi*. All men in the world can be divided into two categories, those with a stick and those without a stick. There is no other category. Who is the person for whom connection with a stick arose? Clearly not the person without a stick. If you say that connection with a stick arose for the *daṇḍi*, it will mean that he was a *daṇḍi* even before he had the stick. So the correct answer is that the connection with the stick arose for a man and not for a *daṇḍi* or an *adaṇḍi*. Similarly superimposition of *avidyā* is for the Pure Consciousness. Another example can be given. A man sees smoke on a mountain and infers that there is fire on the mountain. Any fire falls into one of two categories: mountain fire and non-mountain fire. Does the person who infers the existence of fire on a mountain after seeing smoke there infer that it is mountain fire or non-mountain fire? It cannot obviously be non-mountain fire. Then if he says that it is mountain fire, what is the basis for this inference? The inference is based on his experience that when there is smoke in the kitchen there is fire there. But that is non-mountain fire. On the basis of this experience how can he infer the existence of mountain fire? So it could be said that there is the defect of non-existence in the example (kitchen) of the thing to be proved (mountain fire). This is answered by saying that what is inferred is just fire without any qualification such as kitchen fire, mountain fire, etc. Similarly, what we say is that the superimposition is on consciousness as such, without any qualification.

Superimposition is the effect of avidyā

By association with avidyā, Pure Consciousness becomes three-fold, namely, Pure Consciousness, Īśvara and Jīva. According to the reflection theory (pratibimbavāda), these are Īśvara who is the bimba, jīva who is the pratibimba, and Pure Consciousness which pervades both of them. Superimposition is the effect of avidyā. This superimposition is for the reflection in avidyā (namely jīva) and not for the other two. To take an example: there is a pot with water in it. There is space within the pot, there is total space and there is the reflection of space (the sky with the sun or stars, etc) in the water. When the water in the pot moves it is only the reflection of space that moves and not the other two. So also, it is only the reflection in avidyā that is affected and not the bimba or pure consciousness.

According to the author of Prakaṣārthavivarāṇa³ both Īśvara and Jīva are reflections. The distinction is caused by the reflecting medium. The medium is māyā for Īśvara and avidya for the Jīva. Māyā has an infinite number of parts and each part is an avidyā. This avidyā has two powers, veiling power and projecting power. It is called avidyā because it is destroyed by vidyā. He follows the theory of multiple jīvas as distinguished from that of a single jīva. When a person attains Self-knowledge, the avidyā in his mind is destroyed and he becomes Pure Consciousness. Īśvara is the indwelling Self and the inner controller for all jīvas. Once a person becomes liberated, he no longer experiences bondage though the world continues to exist, just as a blind man does not experience the world through the power of vision.

In the śruti statement which says that māyā is destroyed in its entirety for the liberated person—भूयश्चान्ते विश्वमायानिवृत्तिः

3 BSSB-MIE- Page 17 of bhūmikā for प्रक्रियाविशेषः (By Dr. Mani Dravid Sastri)

— māyā means avidyā pertaining to that person alone according to Prakāṣārthakāra. When a particular jīva attains videhamukti, the avidyāsaṁskāra in his internal organ is destroyed. In this way the parts of māyā known as avidyā get destroyed when the persons to whom those avidyās pertain attain videhamukti. The question arises whether, in this manner, when all jīvas get videhamukti, māyā will cease to exist. According to Prakāṣārthakāra this cannot happen because the parts of māyā called avidyā are infinite in number and so they can never be exhausted. This view is contradictory to those of other commentators who hold that a time will come when all the jīvas are liberated and māyā ceases to exist.

Māyā does not contradict non-duality of Brahman

The next question is, if māyā is never destroyed, will not the theory of non-duality of Brahman be contradicted? The answer is no, because māyā is mithyā and Brahman is the only reality. Even according to Prakāṣārthakāra māyā and avidyā are not different because avidyā is only a part of māyā, just as the pot-space is not different from the total space.

Objections to the theory of superimposition of ātmā and anātmā

The next objection is: adhyāsa can occur only if the substratum is not known. Superimposition of silver can take place only if the nacre is not known. The ātmā is known to every one as 'I'. The difference between the self and the not-self, namely, body, mind and sense organs, is known to all because no one says 'I am the body'. Moreover, only another substance can be superimposed on a substance. The illusion is in the form of 'This is silver' and not as 'I am silver'. The seen cannot be superimposed on the seer, or vice versa. The ātmā being the seer, nothing can be superimposed on it.

Moreover, there has to be some similarity between the substratum and the superimposed object. One mistakes nacre for silver because they are similar in that they are both bright. No one mistakes nacre for an elephant. Ātmā and anatma are totally contradictory like light and darkness —

युष्मदस्मतप्रत्ययगोचरयोः विषयविषयिणोः तमःप्रकाशवद्विरुद्धस्वभावयोः
इत्तरेतरभावानुपपत्तौ सिद्धायां तद्वर्माणामपि सूत्रां इत्तरेतरभावानुपपत्तिः

For all these reasons superimposition of the self on the not-self or vice versa is not possible. When a person says 'I am a man', etc, it is only in a secondary sense (gauna), like saying 'This boy is a lion'.

Even though, for the reasons stated above there cannot be superimposition between the self and the not self as such — धर्म्यास, let us consider whether superimposition of the qualities of the one on the other is possible-धर्म्यास, like the superimposition of the red colour of a flower on a crystal. This is also not possible. Even in the case of the crystal there is dharmī-adhyāsa also, because there is superimposition of the reflection of the flower on the crystal. Dharma-adhyāsa is not possible without dharmī-adhyāsa.

Knowledge of difference does not prevent superimposition

Every one is aware of the difference between nacre and silver, still superimposition of silver on nacre does occur. Though the difference between 'man' and 'I' is known, every one says, 'I am a man', though no one says, 'I am the body'. So knowledge of difference does not prevent superimposition.

The other objections to superimposition answered

According to the Advaita theory of anirvacanīya there is ज्ञानाध्यास or superimposition of knowledge, and also अर्थाध्यास, superimposition of the object. In the superimposition of

silver on nacre, one gets the knowledge, 'This is silver'. This is jñānādhyasa. Knowledge is not possible without an object. So Advaita says that there is actually silver in front. This is supported by the fact that the person goes forward to grab the silver. In the same way, the world which is superimposed on the ātmā (Brahman) is accepted as existing, though it has no absolute reality. The first portion of the first sentence in adhyāsabhāṣya⁴ - युष्मदस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरयोः विषयविषयिणोः तमःप्रकाशवद्विरुद्धस्वभावयोः इतरेतरभावानुपपत्तौ सिद्ध्यायां तद्धर्माणामपि सुतरां इतरेतरभावानुपपत्तिः refers to jñānādhyasa. The second portion⁵ - इत्यतः अस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरे विषयिणि चिदात्मके युष्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरस्य विषयस्य तद्धर्माणां चाध्यासः, तद्विपर्ययेण विषयिणः तद्धर्माणां च विषये अध्यासः मिथ्येति भवितुं युक्तम् refers to arthādhyāsa.

It has been established that the reasons given by the opponent for rejecting superimposition are not valid. Every one looks upon his body as himself. The body has birth and death and so the self is also thought to have birth and death. Similarly the qualities of the self are attributed to the body and so the body is very dear, though this is actually a quality of the self. This superimposition is a fact experienced by every one and so it cannot be denied. This identification of the self with the body cannot be considered to be merely secondary (gauna) on the ground that every one knows that he is different from the body because no one says, 'I am the body'. Though the difference between nacre and silver is known to every one, still nacre is sometimes mistaken for silver. This is because of lack of discrimination at the relevant time. It is therefore said in the bhāṣya that because of lack of discrimination between the self and the not-self — इतरेतराविवेकेन, there is ignorance— इतरेतराविवेकेन, and this is the reason for the wrong identification. Moreover, though 'I' and

4 BSSB-MIE - Page 16 - sūtrabhāṣyam

5 BSSB-MIE - Page 16 - sūtrabhāṣyam

'man' are different, no man says, 'I am not a man'. So there is no realization of the difference between 'I' and 'man'. The same is the case when one says, 'I am the doer'. Thus, though the difference is known, there is lack of discrimination between the self and the body and this is the reason for the identification of the two.

The contention of the opponent that both the substratum and the superimposed entity should be substances is not tenable because it is well known from everyday experience that the self and the not-self are looked upon as identical by every one. Such a patent fact cannot be rejected by mere arguments.

Mithyājñāna is split up as mithyā ajñāna, i.e. ignorance which is mithyā, that is, it cannot be described as either real or unreal. This is the reason for the wrong identification. By using the word nimitta after mithyājñāna in the bhāṣya it is pointed out that ignorance is the material cause (upādānakāraṇam) of the superimposition. In Vedāntic terminology, the word nimitta is used to denote the efficient cause and the word upādāna denotes the material cause. But in grammar and also in worldly usage nimitta is used to denote material cause also. In Nyāya several kinds of causes such as samavāyi, asamavāyi, nimitta, are mentioned, but in Vedānta only two causes, nimitta and upādāna, are accepted. For any effect to be produced a material cause is necessary. Illusion (bhramā), being an effect, must have a material cause. In this sentence in the bhāṣya there is no other word to denote the material cause and so the word nimitta has been interpreted by Prakāṣārthakāra⁶ as material cause. The word itaretara- avivekena, meaning, due to non-discrimination between the self and the not-self, has been interpreted as denoting the efficient cause.

6 BSSB-MIE - Page 12- Prakāṣārthavivaraṇam

मिथ्या च तत् अज्ञानं च, तन्निमित्तः तदुपादानः इत्यर्थः

Brahman is the cause through vivarta and nescience through pariṇāma

Brahman is both the efficient and the material cause of the universe, but it is the material cause only through vivarta or transfiguration and not pariṇāma or transformation. Ajñāna is the material cause of the universe by transformation (pariṇāmyupādanakāraṇa). Ajñāna is a defect (doṣa) and so the word nimitta implies that ajñāna is the efficient cause also.

Can the word mithyājñāna be split up as mithyā jñāna also? The answer is no, because the word would then mean adhyāsa itself, but not the cause of adhyāsa.

The question as to whether there is any pramāṇa for ajñāna cannot arise at all. The question itself means that the questioner has ignorance. Moreover, when a person wakes up from deep sleep he says that he slept happily and did not know anything. This clearly shows that there was ignorance during sleep.

The expression⁷ सत्यान्ते मिथुनीकृत्य- combining the real and the unreal— brings out the Advaita theory of अनिर्वचनीयख्याति.

Theories of error (khyātivāda)

There are five well-known theories of khyāti or erroneous cognition, held by the different darśanas. These theories are described briefly below.

1. **Ātmakhyāti**⁸ - is the theory of one school of Buddhism known as Yogācāra. They deny the existence of external objects and hold that it is only internal cognitions that are externalized as objects. According to this theory the illusory object, say, silver, as well as the substratum, nacre, are both non-existent and are only internal ideas. The error consists

⁷ BSSB-MIE - Page 12. - sūtrabhāṣyam

⁸ These theories of error are also covered later on when defining adhyāsa.

in their being perceived as external objects. Just as the nacre is only a form of inner consciousness, so is the illusory silver. Advaita Vedānta rejects this theory. One of the grounds for rejection is that if the substratum, nacre, and the illusory silver are only forms of inner consciousness, then there cannot be any distinction between valid and erroneous perception.

2. **Asatkhyāti** - This is the theory of the Nihilist school of Buddhism, known as the Mādhyamika school. It says that in illusory perception something non-existent is apprehended as existent. Both the substratum, nacre and the illusory silver are non-existent. This view is rejected by all the Vedic schools, because there cannot be any cognition of what does not exist. The son of a barren woman cannot be seen either in reality or in illusion.

3. **Akhyāti** - This is the theory of the Prābhākara school of Mīmāṃsā. The view held by this school is that there is no positive error in illusory perception; instead, there is only lack of discrimination between the object perceived (nacre) and the object remembered (silver). The nacre is perceived in a general way as 'this' and not as possessing the distinctive feature of nacreness. Silver, which was seen elsewhere, is recollected, but without its association with the past time when, and the particular place where, it was seen. Such recollection is described as recollection of an object robbed of its 'thatness'. In certain other cases, such as 'the conch is yellow', this school explains that two imperfect perceptions arise, one being the visual perception of a conch as such, its real colour (white) being missed" and the other being the visual perception of the yellow colour of the bilious matter which causes jaundice, the relation of the yellow colour to the bilious substance being missed. Thus in all cases of erroneous cognition two distinct cognitions, either a

perception and a recollection or two perceptions, arise, but their distinction is missed.

4. **Anyathākhyāti** - This is the theory of the Naiyāyikas. When nacre is wrongly perceived as silver, the erroneous cognition that arises takes the form 'this is silver'. Here 'this' stands for nacre lying in front of the perceiver, and it is first seen as a white piece and not as nacre, the distinctive feature of nacre-ness being missed either through some defect in sight or because of the particular situation in which the visual perception arises. The visual perception of nacre as 'this' arises in the ordinary way, by contact of the visual organ with the object in front. The real silver-ness that belongs to the real silver existing elsewhere is presented in this visual perception as the attribute of the nacre seen as 'this' in a general way; neither the real silver nor the real silver-ness could be said to be connected with the sense of sight through normal sense-relation; and without such sense-relation being established between the sense-organ concerned and the object to be perceived, perception cannot arise. So the Naiyāyikas hold that the real silver and silver-ness come to be connected with the sense of sight through an extra-normal type of sense-relation. Thus according to the Naiyāyikas, the visual misapprehension of nacre as silver is an extra-normal variety of visual perception.

5. **Anirvacanīyakhyāti** - This is the theory of the Advaitins. According to this the silver seen on nacre cannot be categorized as either real or unreal. The person seeing it thinks that there is real silver before him and that is why he stretches out his hand to grab the silver. Similarly, the universe which is an appearance on Brahman is neither real nor unreal. As in the case of silver, the universe is looked upon by all as real until Brahman is realized. As a result of this superimposition every one says 'I am a man', etc., and 'This is mine'. Thus there are two kinds of adhyāsa.

This superimposition is described as नैसर्गिक which means beginningless. So far the interpretation of Prakāṭārthakāra has been given. In his view the objections raised are answered by the three expressions⁹ इतरेतरविवेकेन, मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तः, नैसर्गिक :

Vivaraṇa¹⁰ and Ratnaprabhā¹¹ consider the objection that there can be superimposition of a particular object such as silver only if the person has previously seen real silver somewhere. He must have knowledge of the superimposed object as a reality. This is not possible in the case of the superimposition of the non-self because the non-self is not real and so he could not have experienced it as real previously. This objection is answered by the word 'naisargika' which means that the adhyāsa is beginningless and in each adhyāsa the experience of a previous adhyāsa is there. Moreover, it is not necessary that he should have knowledge of the real object. Even a person who has seen a snake only in a picture can mistake a rope for a snake.

According to Bhāmatī¹², the expression *itaretara-avivekena* answers the objection. The objection considered is that everyone is aware that the body is different from the self and so superimposition of the body on the self is not possible. The answer is that though the difference is known, there is still lack of discrimination between the two to the extent necessary and so adhyāsa is possible.

Definition, possibility and proof of adhyāsa

In the first part of adhyāsabhāṣya the lakṣaṇa or definition of adhyāsa is given. The adhyāsas such as that of silver on

⁹ BSSB-MIE - Prakāṭārthavivaraṇam Pages 10-13.

¹⁰ PP-MIE - Pages 49-50-vivaraṇam तत्र प्रथमं तावत् अध्यास-प्रवाह-जन्मनः उपादान-कारणरूपेण नैसर्गिकत्वम् ।

¹¹ BSSB-MBDE-Page 10-Ratnaprabha प्रत्यगात्मनि हेतुहेतुमद्भावेन अध्यासप्रवाहः अनादिः इत्यर्थः ।

¹² BSSB-MBDE-Page 9-Bhāmatī इतरेतरविवेकेन । विवेकाग्रहेण इत्यर्थः ।

nacre, etc are not disputed by anyone; only the mutual adhyāsa of the self and the not-self is claimed to be impossible by the other darśanas.

The adhyāsabhāṣya has three parts: definition of adhyāsa, the possibility of adhyāsa, and the proof for adhyāsa. The definition is now taken up.

The question is asked: कौञ्जमध्यासो नाम—'what is this adhyāsa?' This may be taken as a question by a disciple eager to know, or as an objection to the theory of superimposition by an opponent, depending on the tone of the questioner. Both these meanings are intended here.

The answer is: स्मृतिरूपः परत्र पूर्वदृष्टावभासः

The first word in the answer, namely, *smṛtirūpaḥ*, is by way of answer to the disciple. The sentence consists of four parts: *smṛtirūpaḥ*, *paratra*, *pūrvadr̥ṣṭaḥ* and *avabhāsaḥ*. The words *paratra* (elsewhere) and *avabhāsaḥ* (appearance) describe adhyāsa. The words *smṛtirūpaḥ* (of the nature of, or similar to, remembrance) and *pūrvadr̥ṣṭaḥ* (seen or experienced previously) describe the cause of adhyāsa. If a person or thing seen previously somewhere is seen again at another time and place it is recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) and not adhyāsa. If a person sees a cow somewhere and later on sees another cow at a different time and place, that is also not adhyāsa, but it is recognition of the same species. The word *smṛtirūpaḥ* shows that it is not the same as remembrance, but is only similar to remembrance.

Three factors are the cause of adhyāsa —some defect, contact between the eye and the thing in front, and *samskāra* (mental impression of an object seen previously elsewhere). Remembrance is knowledge arising from *samskāra* alone. Knowledge is of two kinds, actual experience (*anubhava*) and remembrance. The experience may be from direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) or the indirect means of knowledge such as

inference, comparison, etc. An experience gives rise to a samskāra. This samskāra is the cause of remembrance. The point of similarity between adhyāsa and remembrance is that both are produced by samskāra. The difference is that, for adhyāsa there should be some defect as one of the causes, but not for remembrance. Contact of the eye with an object is necessary for adhyāsa, but not for remembrance. For adhyāsa of silver on nacre there should be contact of the eye with the object in front, the knowledge that there is an object in front, but not the knowledge of the nacre-ness of the object. If it is pitch dark the object itself will not be seen and then there can be no adhyāsa. So some defect (doṣa), because of which the nacre-ness of the object in front is not known, is necessary for adhyāsa of silver to take place. This definition of adhyāsa brings out both the taṭasthalakṣaṇa and the svarūpalakṣaṇa of adhyāsa. The word smṛtirūpaḥ. I denotes the taṭasthalakṣaṇa and the words paratra avabhāsaḥ. I denote the svarūpalakṣaṇa. What has been said so far is the well known definition of adhyāsa.

Prakaṭārthakāra¹³ gives a different commentary. He takes all the four words together and says all of them together describe the lakṣaṇa of adhyāsa. The word pūrvadr̥ṣṭa-avabhāsaḥ. by itself can refer to mere remembrance also and so there is the defect of over-applicability of the definition if this word alone is used. To avoid this, the word smṛtirūpaḥ. has been added. This indicates that it is like remembrance but it is not remembrance itself. If we say only pūrvadr̥ṣṭa-avabhāsaḥ - the appearance of what was seen before - it could apply to recognition also. Recognition requires previous perception of the particular object, together with the samskāra generated by the previous perception. But recognition is not adhyāsa. So the definition has to be

13 BSSB-MIE- Pages 14-15- Prakaṭārthavivraṇam

प्रश्नस्थलश्याभिधाधि पदमुवादेन गमयितव्यम्।

supplemented by some word which will exclude recognition. The word *paratra-* elsewhere- has been added for this purpose. This shows that what is seen in *adhyāsa* is a thing different from what was seen before. The silver seen is not the same as the real silver seen elsewhere.

A person sees a cow at a particular time and place. Later on he sees an animal resembling a cow, but not another cow. This is not *adhyāsa*. To prevent this being taken as *adhyāsa* the word *pūrvadr̥ṣṭaḥ* has been introduced. So what is seen in *adhyāsa* must be what was seen earlier and not something similar to it. When nacre is seen as silver, what is seen is silver and not some other substance which resembles silver. Thus the *adhyāsa* is caused by the *samskāra* of the previous perception of silver. The silver seen in the *adhyāsa* is however *mithyā* and not the real silver seen earlier. It is different from what was seen earlier, but it is thought to be the same.

Bhāmātī view¹⁴: *Avabhāsaḥ*. It means knowledge which is discarded later on when found to be wrong.

What has been said above applies equally to *jñānādhyāsa* (superimposition of cognition) and to *arthādhyāsa* (superimposition of object). In nacre-silver illusion there is the cognition 'This is silver'. This is *jñānādhyāsa*. The person says 'There is silver here'. That is, he sees silver as actually existing before him. The object, silver, is thus actually present according to him. This is *arthādhyāsa*, i.e. the object, silver, appears there. The word *smṛti:* can be split up as *smāryate iti smṛti:*, in which case it applies to the object and consequently to *arthādhyāsa*. It can also be split up as *smaraṇam iti smṛti:* in which case it applies to the cognition of silver and therefore to *jñānādhyāsa*.

¹⁴ BSSB-MBDE- Page 11- Bhāmātī अवसन्नोऽवमतो वा अवभासः।

Defect, contact of the eye with the object, and samskāra —these three are the nimittakāraṇa, efficient cause, of adhyāsa. Ignorance of the nacre is the defect.

Thus the lakṣya (definition) of adhyāsa has been given. The lakṣya (what is intended to be defined) is-अतस्मिन् तद्बुद्धिः seeing a thing where it is not.

The purpose of lakṣya is to distinguish a particular thing from other things. For example, a person sees a cow before him. He can know that it is a cow only if he knows the lakṣya of a cow. If he does not know, he will see it only as some animal. The lakṣya for the moon is 'That which is most resplendent is the moon'. Only a person who knows this definition can identify the moon in the sky. This is the svarūpalakṣaṇa. The pramāṇa (valid means of knowledge such as the eye) is necessary, but it is not sufficient to identify any object. In addition, knowledge of the definition (lakṣya) of the object is also necessary.

The different darśanas give different definitions for adhyāsa. These are known as khyāti. Five of these are well known. These have been described earlier. In the bhāṣya three of these are referred to¹⁵.

The first definition referred to in the bhāṣya is,
तं केचित् अन्यत्र अन्यधर्माध्यासः इति वदन्ति --

"Some say that it consists in the superimposition of the attributes of one thing on another". This is the definition according to ātmakhyāti of the Yogācāra school of Buddhism as well as according to anyathākhyāti of the Naiyāyikās. Both these theories have been described earlier .

The second definition referred to in the bhāṣya is¹⁶,

केचित् तु यत्र यदध्यासः तद्विवेकाग्रहनिबन्धनो भ्रम इति -

¹⁵ BSSB - MIE - Pages 16-17 - sūtrabhāṣyam

¹⁶ BSSB - MIE - Pages 16-17 - sūtrabhāṣyam

“But others assert that wherever a superimposition on anything occurs, there is in evidence only a confusion arising from the absence of discrimination between them”. This is akhyāti which is the theory of the Prābhākara school of Pūrvamīmāṃsā. This has also been dealt with earlier.

Śaṅkara points out that, in addition to perception and remembrance there should be another knowledge of the form ‘This is silver’ and this is illusion (bhramā). So akhyātivāda is not valid.

According to the Tattvadīpana commentary on Vivaraṇa this definition is that of Sāṅkhyā. This is based on the view that Śaṅkara must have referred to the Sāṅkhyā view because he considers the Sāṅkhyās to be the principal opponents of Advaita.

The third definition is¹⁷— अन्ये तु यत्र यदध्यासः तस्यैव
विपरीतधर्मत्वकल्पनां आचक्षते इति-

“Others say that the superimposition of anything on any other substratum consists in attributing some contradictory qualities to that very substratum”. This is the theory of asatkhyāti held by the Mādhyamika school of Buddhism. It says that in illusory perception something non-existent is apprehended as existent. Both the substratum, nacre and the illusory silver are non-existent. This view is rejected by all the Vedic schools, because there cannot be any cognition of what does not exist.

However, according to Brahmavidyābharaṇa¹⁸ this is the definition of Advaita itself.

¹⁷ BSSB - MIE - Pages 16-17 - sūtrabhāṣyam

¹⁸ BSSB -MSESE - Page 65 - Brahmavidyābharaṇam

एवं मतान्तरेषु अस्वासस्य सूचयित्वा स्वमतं उपसंहरति- अन्ये तु—
अधिष्ठानस्य शुक्तघादेः विषमस्तत्ताकरजताद्यात्मकता अनिर्वचनीयता आचक्षत इत्यर्थः।

After referring to these three definitions, Śaṅkara points out that according to all schools, "there is no difference of opinion on the point that in adhyāsa one thing appears as something else"¹⁹ — सर्वथाऽपि तु अन्यस्य

अन्यथर्मावभासतां न व्यभिचरति.

Thus this is a feature of adhyāsa which is accepted by all. Such a definition is therefore comprehensive and cannot be disputed by anyone.

All schools of philosophy accept adhyāsa. The difference is only in the method of explaining how it happens. There are five main theories in this respect, as described earlier. The theory of Advaita vedānta is anirvacanīya-khyāti. In the bhāṣya two examples of adhyāsa are given²⁰

-शुक्तिका हि रजतवदवभासते, एकश्चन्द्रः सद्वितीयवत्--

A piece of nacre appears as silver, and one moon appears as many. The nacre appearing as silver is called *nirupādhika-adhyāsa*, i.e. superimposition without an *upādhi* or limiting adjunct. This is the kind of adhyāsa because of which one says, 'I am a man'. In this adhyāsa the self is identified with the human body. The moon appearing as many due to reflections in many pots of water is called *sopādhika-adhyāsa*, superimposition with a limiting adjunct. Here the limiting adjunct is the medium of reflection, namely the water. This is the kind of adhyāsa by which the one non-dual pure consciousness appears as innumerable jīvas, because of being reflected in innumerable subtle bodies. Adhyāsa creates differences such as Īśvara and jīvas in the one and only pure consciousness. The suffix 'vat' added to 'rajata' in the bhāṣya indicates that the silver is anirvacanīya, i.e. it cannot be categorized as either real or unreal. This indescribability has necessarily to be accepted. Appayya

¹⁹ BSSB - MIE- Pages 16-17 - sūtrabhāṣyam

²⁰ BSSB - MIE - Pages 16-17 - sūtrabhāṣyam

Dikṣita gives an example in his work Parimala²¹. We see a man coming towards us from a distance. We say, 'This man looks like Devadatta'. Here the word 'like' does not indicate similarity, but doubt as to whether the man is Devadatta or not. In 'rajatavat' also, the suffix 'vat' added to 'rajata' does not mean that what is seen is like silver. It indicates the indescribability of the silver seen. By the use of the suffix 'vat', Śaṅkara rejects all the other theories about adhyāsa.

Is the silver real or false? If it is real, is the silver actually present in front, or is the silver existing somewhere else? We cannot say that the silver is present here because when we go near and examine we find that there is no silver. If it is silver existing somewhere else (as held by the theory of anyathākhyāti), it cannot be seen because there is no contact between the eye and the silver. If the opponent says, that it can be seen even without eye-contact it will mean that anything anywhere can be seen by us, which is absurd. If the opponent says that the silver is seen due to some defect (and not by the eye), it will mean that it can be seen even when the eyes are closed. If the opponent says that the eyes have to be kept open to see the nacre, and if by keeping the eyes open one can see even an object far away, then it is not a defect but a blessing. Defect is what prevents the thing on which it operates from performing its function. If there is some defect in the eyes, nothing will be seen. The defect cannot make him see what cannot be seen with good eyes. So silver which is elsewhere cannot be seen.

Seeing in the case of the moon double is not due to a defect. What the defect does is to prevent the person from seeing that there is only one object. The reason for seeing

²¹ BSSB - CSSE - Page 34 - Parimalam

यथा सादृश्यवाचिन इवशब्दस्य वशेनच दूरात् अगच्छन् देवदत्तवत्
भाति इत्यादिप्रयोगात् उत्कटककोटिकसंशयरूपा तद्वात्म्यासंभावना अपि अर्थः।

double is ajñāna or ignorance according to Advaita. So it is anirvācya. Defect is the reason for not seeing the moon as only one, and ajñāna is the reason for seeing the moon as two. Because of defect the nacre is not seen as nacre, and because of ignorance it is seen as silver. The defect may be in the object, or in the person seeing it, or in the conditions prevailing at the time. The Nihilist Buddhist says that the objects seen are non-existent. This cannot be, because what is non-existent cannot become an object of perception. So the silver is neither real nor unreal.

Now an objection is raised: how can a thing be both real and unreal, or different from real as well as different from unreal? The answer is given by taking an example. An animal cannot be both a cow and a buffalo. But it can be different from both cow and buffalo. It can be a horse. Similarly, a thing can be different from both real and unreal.

Vivaraṇa²² says there is no scope for any such question because the silver is anirvacanīyam.

Another objection is: The man who thinks it is silver goes forward to grab it. That means that he thinks it is real silver. So it cannot be anirvacanīyam. It must be real silver, existing elsewhere. Or, he may not know that it is anirvacanīyam and may think it is real silver. That is why he tries to grab it.

The answer to this is: The desire to grab the silver arises because he sees it as real silver. He need not know for certain that it is real silver. Otherwise even if the silver is real he will not proceed to take hold of it because he cannot be sure beforehand that it is real. He will be able to know whether it is real or not only if he goes forward and takes it in his

22 PP-MIE - Page 101- Vivaraṇa- सत्यस्य वस्तुनो मिथ्यावस्तुसंभेदोऽवभासमानो
माया मिथ्याऽन्निर्वाचनीयस्यातिः, अघ्यस एवायं इत्यर्थः।

hand and examines it. If the opponent says that he will proceed to take the silver only after knowing definitely that it is real, there will be the defect of mutual dependence because only after he knows that it is real he will try to take it and only after taking it he will know for certain whether it is real or not. So we must say that the knowledge that it is silver is sufficient to make him proceed to take it, and knowledge that it is real silver is not necessary. So merely because he desires it and attempts to take hold of it, it cannot be said that he has known it as real silver. But if he already knows that it is false, he will not make any attempt to take it. From all this it follows that the silver cannot be described as either real or unreal.

The next objection is: The knowledge of any object comes only through a *pramāṇa*. So when silver is seen in an illusion it is wrong to conclude that there is silver in front. But you, Advaitin, assert that there is silver by merely seeing silver in an illusion. What is the *pramāṇa* for this assertion?

The answer to this is: A cognition cannot arise unless there is an object. (Only the *Vijñānavādī* school of Buddhism says that there are no external objects and that only an inner idea appears as an external object). The silver alone is sublated subsequently and not the cognition of silver. The cognition is therefore real and so there must be an object for this cognition. This object cannot therefore be called non-existent. Nor can we call it real because it is sublated subsequently. So it is *anirvacanīyam*.

Next objection: You (Advaitin) say that the universe is *mithyā*. So how can there be the distinction of correct knowledge and illusion in the world?

The answer is: The silver seen in an illusion is sublated later, but the real silver is not sublated during the whole lifetime of the person. Though the silver seen in an illusion

and the real silver are both *mithyā*, there is a difference in the manner of the rise of the knowledge of its illusoriness. If the person who sees the nacre-silver does not realize its illusoriness throughout his life, he will continue to believe that it is real. So the test to know whether a thing is real or *mithyā* is whether the sublating knowledge has arisen or not. There is another difference between illusory silver and real silver. *Bhramā* is caused by ignorance. Though real silver is also *mithyā*, the cause of its appearance is ignorance of Brahman and the substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*) is Brahman itself. For the illusory silver appearing on nacre the cause is ignorance of Brahman limited by nacre and the substratum is Brahman limited by nacre. In both cases the *bhramā* will cease only when the particular substratum is known.

So from the empirical standpoint we describe a thing as real when it has the unconditioned Brahman as its substratum and we describe a thing as illusory when it has Brahman limited by some object (such as nacre in the case of silver) as its substratum. Thus there are three levels of reality, *pāramārthika* (absolute), *vyāvahārika* (empirical) and *prātibhāsika* (illusory).

Now the opponent raises an objection: If you say that the silver was there during the period when the illusion lasted, then how can it be said that it was never there during all the three periods of time? If, for example, there is a book on the table now, and it is removed subsequently, it cannot be said that it was never there in all the three periods of time.

Answer: The silver is not there, as real silver in all the three periods of time. It is never *vyāvahārika* (empirically real) silver.

Opponent: You did not see real silver. You saw only illusory silver. So what you should say is that illusory silver

is not there in all the periods of time. But what you are denying is the existence of real silver. That means that you saw one thing and you are denying the existence of another thing.

Answer: If there is a book on the table there is the relationship of contact between the book and the table, but there is no relationship such as *samavāya* (inherence) between the book and the table. So even when there is a relationship of one kind, there can at the same time be absence of relationship of another kind. Only a relationship of the same kind cannot be asserted and denied at the same time, and not relationships of two different kinds. Similarly here there is absence of real silver at the same time as there is presence of illusory (or false) silver.

Question: A person who has seen the illusory silver says subsequently, on knowing that there is only nacre, that there was no silver at all there. Nobody says that silver was there and has gone subsequently. So it cannot be said that he experienced indescribable (*anirvācya*) silver earlier.

Answer: Sublation is of two kinds: (1) Both the silver and its cause, ignorance, are removed, (2) The silver is known to be false, but the ignorance has not gone. The second kind of sublation occurs when a reliable person comes and says that there is no silver there. In this case the ignorance which made the silver appear is not removed, but the silver is known to be false. However, the object in front continues to look like silver, but the person believes the word of the reliable person that it is not silver. The first kind of sublation happens when the person who saw the silver realizes that the object in front is only nacre. In this case the ignorance of nacre, which was the cause of the appearance of silver, is also destroyed. In such a sublation he cannot at all think that there was silver previously.

The knowledge of the substratum" nacre, destroys even the saṁskāra of the illusion. So even the remembrance that silver was seen in the illusion disappears because the cause of such remembrance, namely, the saṁskāra, is no longer there. But he will remember that he had such an illusion, though he will not remember that he saw silver there. The saṁskāra for remembering 'I saw silver', and the saṁskāra for remembering 'I had an illusion that I saw silver', are different. While the former saṁskāra is destroyed by the knowledge of the substratum, the latter is not destroyed. So there is only remembrance of the knowledge of the illusion and not remembrance of silver. Remembrance of an object and remembrance of knowledge are different. So he cannot remember the silver, but he can remember the knowledge of the illusion. There can therefore be no valid objection to the statement that there was silver .

The suffix 'vat' indicates that the silver was indescribable as real or unreal and that it was mithyā.

There are four pramāṇas for this indescribability, namely, pratyakṣa, anumāna, arthāpatti, and śruti.

Pratyakṣa - From the statement 'The silver I saw was false', it follows that false silver was there. Thus there are two kinds of silver, real silver and false silver.

Arthāpatti - If it is said that false silver was also not seen, then it could not have been seen as silver at all. But it was seen. Therefore false silver was seen.

Śruti -The statement in the Veda, 'Then there was neither real nor unreal; but there was tamas'. This statement means that tamas was neither real nor unreal, but it was there. This proves that there can be something which is not describable as real or unreal. Therefore the silver seen is neither real nor unreal nor both, but it is different from both real and

unreal. This has been brought out by the suffix 'vat'. Thus indescribability is established.

Now another question is raised: The self is not an object according to you (Advaitin). Adhyāsa can happen only on an object such as nacre, rope, etc. When a person sees nacre as silver he says, 'This is silver' and not 'I am silver'. It therefore follows that there can be no adhyāsa on the self. The self is pure knowledge itself. It cannot become an object of knowledge.

The answer is: The self can be an object. It cannot be said that the self cannot at all be an object, because it is the object of the concept 'I'. In this concept there are two parts: one is the internal organ (antahkaraṇa), and the other is the pure consciousness. If we leave out the internal organ what is left is consciousness, which is the same as the self. So the self is also an object of the concept 'I'. The pure consciousness without an upādhi is no doubt not an object of knowledge, but with the internal organ as the upādhi it is an object.

Opponent: You say that the self with the upādhi of the internal organ is an object. The self gets an upādhi only because of adhyāsa. That means that the self becomes an object only because of adhyāsa and only if it is an object there can be adhyāsa on it. There is thus the defect of mutual dependence.

The answer to this is: The adhyāsa of the internal organ on the self is beginningless. There is a continuous succession of adhyāsas. It is like the seed and the sprout. So the defect of mutual dependence does not come in.

Moreover, the self need not be an object for adhyāsa to take place. Even without being an object it can be the substratum of adhyāsa. In the adhyāsa of silver on nacre, what is necessary for adhyāsa is that the nacre should be cognized as 'this'. If there is no such cognition there can be

no adhyāsa. Nacre is not self-luminous and so it can be cognized only by a mental modification (vṛtti). The self is self-luminous and so it does not need another cognition to become known. The word 'aparokṣatvāt' in the bhāṣya means that the self is directly perceived and is self-revealing. An object is first seen through the visual organ. That gives the knowledge in the form, 'There is this object'. Then the person says, 'I see this object'. It is only because the self shines in every cognition that a person is able to say that he sees the object. This proves that the self shines by itself.

Moreover, from the fact that ignorance is known, it is clear that the self is self-luminous. Every one knows what he does not know. So every one experiences his ignorance. This also proves that the self is self-luminous.

The Prābhākara school of Pūrvamīmāṃsā does not accept the self to be self-luminous. According to it, knowledge is self-luminous. In any cognition the self who is the knower, the object known, and the knowledge are simultaneously revealed. They admit that ignorance is not self-revealing. So, since ignorance is also known, they have necessarily to admit that the self is self-luminous.

Now a question is raised by the opponent. What is meant by saying that the self is self-luminous? Does it mean that the self illumines itself and others, or does it mean something else? The Buddhists say that knowledge becomes an object for the same knowledge. In the knowledge of pot both knowledge and pot are objects. Objects are revealed by light and light itself is revealed by the same light. This is not accepted by Advaita. The viṣaya or object of knowledge and the viṣayī, the knower, can never be the same. 'Self-luminous' means that it does not need any other consciousness to reveal it, but it is not correct to say that it illumines itself also. The self is always the knower and never the object.

Earlier, when it was said that the self is not absolutely a non-object (aviṣaya), what was meant was that it could have objectiveness attributed to it (āropitaviṣayatva) and not that it could be an object in the true sense.

The conclusion is that the self is necessarily self-luminous and it need not be an object for there to be adhyāsa. Adhyāsa of the non-self on the self is therefore possible.

The opponent raises another objection. Adhyāsa can take place only if the thing on which there is superimposition is in front of the person who experiences the illusion. Superimposition can occur only on an object which is in front. The self is the person himself and so it cannot be in front of him. There can therefore be no adhyāsa on the self.

The answer is: There is no invariable rule that adhyāsa can occur only on an object in front. Ākāśa (ether) is not perceptible by the sense organs. Still blueness is superimposed on it. The Tārīkika says that ākāśa is the abode of sound and so it is known only by inference. It is therefore not perceptible as an object in front even according to the Tārīkikas. In spite of this, it is a well known fact that blueness is superimposed on ākāśa. Similarly adhyāsa is possible on the self though it cannot be perceived as an object in front. By the use of the word 'api' after 'apratyakṣa' in the bhāṣya the Ācārya indicates that the view that ākāśa is apratyakṣa is not accepted by Advaita. According to Advaita ākāśa is known directly by the witness-consciousness itself.

The Bhāṭṭas hold that ākāśa can be seen by the eye. This is rejected by Advaita on the ground that, if ākāśa which has no form or colour can be seen by the eye, it should also be possible to know it by the sense of touch even though it does not have the quality of touch.

This is countered by the argument that since one has to open the eyes to see ākāśa, it is perceivable by the eyes.

The answer to this is that one has to open the eyes to see the blue colour and not to see ākāśa. We can see with the eyes only things which are limited in size and not what are unlimited, like ākāśa and the form of Īśvara. What we see with the eyes is not ākāśa but avakāśa or empty space. If a thing can be seen by the eye, its absence should also be seen by the eye. The rule is that the absence of a thing is known by the same sense-organ by which its presence is known. So if we say that there is no avakāśa or empty space, it means that its absence is seen by the eye. So a person has to open his eyes only to see that no object with form is there and not to see empty space. Avakāśa (empty space) is different from ākāśa (ether). An empty space disappears when an object is put there, but ākāśa remains unaffected. To know that a quality is or is not there, we have to know its abode; for example, to know smell we have to know its abode, such as a flower. So when we say that there is no sound in a particular place, we have to say that there is no sound in this particular part of ākāśa. It is not necessary that the abode should be known by the same organ by which its quality is known. Smell is known by the olfactory organ, but the flower is known by the eye. We know sound by the ear, but its abode, ākāśa, need not be known by the ear. It is known by the witness-consciousness.

All the objections raised against the possibility of superimposition of the not-self on the self have been refuted in the preceding paragraphs and superimposition has been established.

Superimposition of the not-self on the self is the cause of such notions as 'I am a man', 'I am a doer and an enjoyer', etc. The Ācārya says in the bhāṣya that the adhyāsa of this nature is called avidyā by the learned. And the

determination of the nature of the reality by discrimination is called vidyā²³ तमेतमेवंलक्षणमध्यासं पण्डिता अविद्येति मन्यन्ते। तद्विवेकेन च वस्तुस्वरूपावधारणं विद्यामाहुः।

It is only the superimposition of the not-self on the self that is called avidyā and not other superimpositions such as that of silver on nacre, or snake on rope. It is only for getting rid of this avidyā that the śāstra has to be studied. In the Yogaśūtra avidyā is defined as looking upon the not-self as the self²⁴. So by the term 'learned people' those who are learned in the Yogaśūtra are meant. This sentence should not be taken as referring to mulāvidyā or as saying that there is no difference between avidyā and adhyāsa. It only means that yogis refer to what we call adhyāsa as avidyā. It is called avidyā because it is destroyed by vidyā. According to Advaita, adhyāsa can be called avidyā because avidyā is the material cause of, adhyāsa, just as a pot made of clay can be called clay. Eradicating this avidyā is the main purpose of the śāstras. The word 'prahāṇāya' is used to show that adhyāsa should be destroyed along with its cause. Mūlāvidyā does not by itself do any harm. It is adhyāsa that is the cause of all evil. It can be got rid of only by knowing the real self. The wrong identification will be removed only when the substratum, the pure self, is realized. It is only the knowledge arising from the mahāvākyas that is called vidyā. All other knowledge falls under the category of avidyā. The pure self is not at all affected by avidyā. It is not affected by the merits or defects of what is superimposed on it by avidyā.

The mutual superimposition of the self and the not-self is the basis for all activities in the world. Without this

23 BSSB-MIE - Page 26 - sūtrabhāṣyam

24 PYS-BVPE- Page 146- Patañjali yoga sūtra - ch. 2, śsūtra 5 -

अनित्य-अशुचि-दुःख-अनात्मसु नित्य- शुचि-सुख- आत्मख्यातिः अविद्या ।

superimposition there can be no activity. All the scriptures operate only with this superimposition as the basis. Not only the karmakāṇḍa but even the jñānakāṇḍa or Vedānta is meant only for persons with this adhyāsa. This adhyāsa is necessary for all the six valid means of knowledge (perception, inference, comparison, verbal testimony, presumption, and non-apprehension).

A doubt arises. Superimposition is wrong knowledge (bhrānti). If that is the basis for the valid means of knowledge, how can they be accepted as valid? Even if such wrong knowledge is the basis for the worldly means of knowledge, how can the śāstra have superimposition as its basis? The object of the śāstra is to remove superimposition. So it is contradictory to say that śāstra itself operates only because of superimposition.

The answer to this is: In the world a person undertakes any action only when the desire to acquire or get rid of something arises in him. Such a desire arises only after he has got knowledge of the favourable or unfavourable nature of that thing. So a person has first to become a knower or pramātā. Such a knower prompts his body to act in order to fulfill his desire. The body is the instrument of the knower. The pure self cannot be a knower. To become a knower and to perform action the superimposition of the subtle and gross bodies is necessary. Knowership and action are possible only for one who has the notions of 'I' and 'mine' with regard to the sense-organs and the body. Unless he becomes a knower his sense-organs cannot function. In deep sleep he has no identification with the senses and the body and so he is not a knower. Here the term 'senses' includes the mind also. In deep sleep there is no identification with the mind. In the dream state there is superimposition of the mind only. In dream the vāsanās in his subtle body produce various experiences for him. But

these experiences are not caused or prompted by him as a knower. So these are not the activities of the senses. He can be called a knower only when he prompts the senses and the body to action. In the waking state his consciousness is directed outwards. In dream there is superimposition of the subtle body alone. Only when the self is associated with the senses there can be action.

Prakaṭārthakāra raises another question²⁵. Soldiers fight a battle but the victory or defeat is attributed to the king though the king does not participate in the fighting. Similarly why cannot the senses function without prompting by the self. The answer is that the king pays wages to the soldiers and provides other amenities to them. He thus indirectly prompts them to fight. So also, the self has to be associated with the senses in order to make the senses function.

Then another question arises. Superimposition of the senses alone is sufficient. What is the need for the superimposition of the gross body also? The answer to this is that the senses cannot function without the gross body as locus. The senses are part of the subtle body, but they have corresponding physical organs in the gross body such as the eyes, ear, nose, etc. These are called golaka. Without these the senses cannot function. When the subtle body departs from the gross body on death it is carried to other worlds by various deities. The sense-organs in the subtle body cannot then do anything because they are no longer located in the gross body. They can function only through the golakas in the gross body. A person who has no identification with the gross body cannot have such notions as 'I am a knower, doer, enjoyer, etc'. It is only when there

25 BSSB-MIE - Page 27 - Prakaṭārthavivaraṇam

ननु यथा योषेषु वृध्यमानेषु सन्निधिभागेण राज्ञो योद्धृत्वं व्यवहियते —
राज्ञोऽपि द्रव्यादिद्रव्यसम्बन्धविशेषेणैव जयादिफलभागित्वं इत्यर्थः ।

is superimposition of the gross body on the self that one can say 'I am so and so', etc. The self can become a knower only if there is identification with the subtle as well as the gross bodies. Without the person becoming a knower the senses cannot function. Knowledge of Brahman arises only to a person who is a *pramātā*, i.e., one who identifies himself with the two bodies. Not only the *karmakāṇḍa* but also the *jñānakāṇḍa* is only for one with the superimposition of the two bodies. The object of the *śāstra* is to destroy *adhyāsa*, but it can be studied and practised only by a person who has identification with the two bodies.

The *Ācārya* further says that the behaviour of even the person who has mastered *Vedānta* is not different from that of animals in the matter of worldly dealings²⁶ पश्चादिभिश्चाविशेषात्.

Though he has acquired discrimination, it is only *parokṣa* (indirect) and it is obscured during worldly dealings. In deep sleep also there is no difference between a learned man and one who is not learned.

When a cow sees a person coming towards it with a stick it infers that he is coming to attack it and runs away. When a person comes with grass in his hands it infers that the person comes to feed it and goes towards him²⁷ —

यथा हि पश्चादयः शब्दादिभिः श्रोत्रादीनां सम्बन्धे सति शब्दादिविज्ञाने प्रतिकूले जाते ततो निवर्तन्ते, अनुकूले च प्रवर्तन्ते। यथा दण्डोद्यतकरं पुरुषमभिमुखमुपलभ्य मां हन्तुमयमिच्छतीति पलायितुमारभन्ते, हरिततृणपूर्णपाणिमुपलभ्य तं प्रत्यभिमुखीभवन्ति। एवं पुरुषा अपि व्युत्पन्नचित्ताः क्रूरदृष्टीनाक्रोशतः खड्गोद्यतकरान् बलवत उपलभ्य ततो निवर्तन्ते, तद्विपरीतान् प्रति प्रवर्तन्ते। अतः समानः पश्चादिभिः पुरुषाणां प्रमाणप्रमेयव्यवहारः।

Thus the animal uses both direct perception and inference to decide what to do. In other words, it is also a knower

26 BSSB-MIE- Page 29 - sūtrabhāṣyam

27 BSSB-MIE- Page 30- sUtrabh ~ yaf!1

(pramātā) because of adhyāsa. Thus there is similarity between even learned persons and animals in the matter of worldly dealings.

Now it may be asked: What has been said is true of worldly dealings. But what about actions performed in accordance with the injunctions of the Vedas? The answer is that adhyāsa of the bodies is necessary for these also. A person performs a yajña for attaining heaven. For this he must know that he has an ātmā different from the gross body, because he knows that the gross body cannot go to heaven. But it is not necessary for him to know that the atma is unattached, free from hunger, thirst, etc and does not transmigrate, as stated in Vedānta. If he has acquired this knowledge, then he will not do any karma for going to heaven, etc. Moreover, he should identify himself as a Brāhmaṇa for whom alone some of the rituals are prescribed. Thus adhyāsa is necessary for a person to engage in any action including those prescribed in the Vedas. Until a person realizes that he is the pure self, the śāstras are applicable.

It has been established that there is mutual superimposition between the self which is pure consciousness, and the not-self consisting of the body, mind and senses. Such a superimposition is essential for a jīva to become a knower (pramātā). Only if the jīva becomes a pramātā he can experience objects through the sense-organs. Only then he becomes a seer, hearer, thinker, etc. Even for the śāstra to be applicable there has to be superimposition. For performing the rituals laid down in the Vedas for attaining heaven the person should know that there is a self which is different from the gross body and which will continue after death. But he need not know the real nature of the self as described in Vedānta. If he knows the real nature of the self it will be an obstacle to his performing the rituals laid down in the Vedas because there is nothing

to be attained by such a person. Rituals are laid down based on caste such as Brāhmaṇa, etc., āśrama, age, etc. So a person has to identify himself as a Brāhmaṇa or a grhastha, etc., to perform rituals. All these relate to the body. Such identification is possible only if there is adhyāsa of the body on the self.

Superimposition has been defined in the bhāṣya as the cognition of one thing as some thing else. Nacre is cognized as silver, rope as snake, etc. The consequence of the mutual superimposition of the self and the not-self is that when a person's wife, son, etc., is happy he is also happy. When they are unhappy he is also unhappy. He thus attributes to himself the joys and sorrows of those near and dear to him. Similarly he attributes to himself the qualities of his gross body such as stoutness, etc., the qualities of his senses such as blindness, deafness, etc., and the qualities of his mind such as thinking, deciding, etc. Wife, son etc., who are external to the body are known as gaṇa-ātmā. The body, mind and senses are known as mithyā-ātmā.

Here Prakāṣārthakāra raises a question and answers it²⁸. A person sees in himself the joys and sorrows of his wife, son etc. That means that he sees what is somewhere else as present in himself. Does this not amount to anyathākhyāti? The answer is, no. What he sees is not what is somewhere else, such as the good health or illness of some one else. It is another feeling caused by his wife's or son's condition. So it is not anyathākhyāti.

Can the attribution of the qualities of the body, mind and senses to the self be said to be anyathākhyāti? Here also the answer is, no. The material cause of the body is not only

28 BSSB-MIE- Page 33 - Prakāṣārthavivaraṇam हर्षशोकादिमिथ्याभिमानकार्यदर्शनात् अन्यथाख्यात्यापातात् । आत्माविद्या हि साकल्यादिदर्शनलक्षणनिमित्तसन्निधानात् मिथ्यात्वाकारेण विपरिणमत इति रहस्यम् .

the five elements but also the nescience relating to the particular jīva. Since nescience is anirvacanīyam, its effect, the body, is also the same. In this view māyā is the totality and individual nescience is a part of it. The body is not something already existing elsewhere but it has come into existence from the individual nescience. So anyathākhyāti is not applicable.

As stated above, the material cause of the body is the five elements together with the nescience of the particular jīva. If we say that the nescience alone is the material cause, then the body should disappear when the nescience ceases, just as the illusory silver ceases to exist when ignorance of the nacre is removed. The body merges in the elements on death.

Now another question arises. Since the nescience which is one of the material causes of the body is still there on death, how can the body merge in the elements? This is answered by taking the analogy of a cloth. When all the threads are removed there will be no cloth though threads, which are the material cause of cloth, still exist. So the effect can cease to exist even if the cause is not destroyed. The effect, cloth, ceases to exist because the conjunction (samyoga) of the threads, which is one of the causes of the cloth, has ceased to exist.

The qualities of the senses are also superimposed on the self. The senses can function only when the corresponding organ in the body, known as golaka, is in good condition. When the presiding deity withdraws its blessing to the corresponding golaka, the particular sense ceases to function.

The qualities of the mind such as thinking, etc., are also attributed to the self. The entity referred to as 'I' is the blend of the self and the two bodies. The witness of all its acts is the self.

The difference between the body of a living being and a stone is clearly seen. The former is sentient while the latter is inert. The sentiency of the body is because of the superimposition of the self, which is pure consciousness, on the body. There is a difference between this superimposition and the superimposition of silver on nacre. In the latter the silver alone is seen and the nacre is hidden, though it is seen as 'this', that is, as some object in front. But in the case of the superimposition of the self on the body, both the consciousness and the body are seen to be present at the same time. There is mutual *adhyāsa* in both the cases. In the case of nacre appearing as silver there is mutual superimposition between the object in front which is cognized only as 'this' without the nacre-ness being known, and the silver. This is known as *svarūpādhyāsa*. In the case of the superimposition of the self on the body, the qualities of the self, namely, existence, luminosity, and being loved (*asti, bhāti, priyam*) are attributed to the body and so the body appears to exist, to be conscious and to be the object of love. The other two qualities of the body, namely, name and form, belong to *māyā*. This superimposition of the self on the body is known as *samsargādhyāsa*, because only the qualities of the self are superimposed.

The existence of superimposition is proved by the theories held by other schools also. The Cārvākas consider the body to be the self. This is only because of the superimposition of consciousness on the body. The Buddhists consider the internal organ to be the self. This again means that consciousness is superimposed on the internal organ. The Naiyyāyikas say that what is referred to as 'I' is the self because of the presence of consciousness. Thus mutual superimposition of the self and the not-self is perceived by all. This *adhyāsa* is also *mithyā*. It is the cause of the notion that the self is an agent and enjoyer. It is thus the cause of

all suffering. It has to be removed along with its cause, avidyā, by knowledge of the self. For removing the obstacles to the rise of self-knowledge three means are laid down. These are hearing, reflection, and meditation.

Hearing is the determination, by the application of the six characteristic signs, that the purport of the entire Vedānta is the non-dual Brahman. The six signs are (1) the beginning and the conclusion, (2) repetition, (3) originality, (4) result, (5) eulogy and (6) demonstration- उपक्रमोपसंहारः, अभ्यासः, अपूर्वता, फलं, अर्थवादः, उपपत्तिः

Hearing removes *pramāṇa-asambhāvanā*, or the doubt about the *pramāṇa*, i.e., the doubt whether the upaniṣadic text which is the *pramāṇa* purports to teach about Brahman or not.

Reflection is examining what has been heard, by making use of arguments in a constructive manner. Reflection removes the doubt whether Brahman and the *jīva* are identical or not. This doubt is called *prameya-asambhāvanā*.

Meditation is keeping the mind fixed on the thought of Brahman, uninterrupted by any other thought. Meditation is intended to remove wrong notions such as 'The universe is real'; 'The difference between Brahman and *jīva* is real', which are contrary to the teachings of the upaniṣads, by concentrating the mind on the self. By this, *anātmavāsanā* is removed and *ātmavāsanā* is established. Such wrong notions are known as *viparītabhāvanā*.

Thus the purpose of hearing, reflection and meditation is the removal of obstacles in the form of doubts and wrong notions that stand in the way of the dawn of Self-knowledge.

For a person who does not have these obstructions mere upadeśa of the mahāvākya by the Guru is sufficient. Others will need one or more of these three steps, depending on

the nature and intensity of the obstructions. If self-knowledge does not come in this birth it will come in a future birth after the obstructions are removed.

The identity of jīva and Brahman is the subject-matter of all the upaniṣads. The purpose of the upaniṣads is the total removal of the mutual superimposition of the self and the not-self along with its cause.

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1. BSSB-MIE- Brahmaṣūtra Śāṅkarabhāṣya - Mahesh Institute Edition with Prakāṭārthavivarana, Bhāṣyabhāvaprakāśikā, and Nyāyanirṇaya.
2. BSSB-MBDE- Brahmaṣūtra Śāṅkara Bhāṣya - Motilal Banarsidas Edition with Ratnaprabhā, Bhamatī and Nyāyanirṇaya.
3. BSSB-CSSE- Brahmaṣūtra Śāṅkara Bhāṣya - Chowkhamba Series Edition with Bhāmatī, Kalpataru and Parimalam.
4. BSSB-MSESE- Brahmaṣūtra Śāṅkarabhāṣya - Madras Sanskrit Education Society Edition with Brahmavidyābharana.
5. PP-MIE- Pañcapādikā- Mahesh Institute Edition with Vivaraṇa, Tattvadīpana and Rjuvivarana.
6. PYS-BVPE- Patañjali Yogasūtra (Bharati Vidya Prakasan) with Tattvaviśārada and Yogavārtikam.



THE TEXT - *TAT TVAM ASI* :
ITS INTERPRETATION

N .Veezhinathan*

Self-realization or the direct experience of the identity of the true nature of the jīva as the Self results from the texts like "*tat tvam asi*." These texts are referred to as *mahā-vākyas* or great sayings in the sense that they impart us the knowledge of the partless ultimate, viz. the Self. The second interpretation of the sūtra, "*śāstrayonitvāt*," by Śaṅkara is that *Śāstra* or scripture is the only pramaṇa or the means of knowing the Self. We have earlier said that by the word, "*Śāstra*," it is only the *mahā-vākyas* that are primarily meant, and other scriptural texts are useful in arriving at the knowledge of the Self in an indirect way. We shall now explain the process through which the text, "*tat tvam asi*," gives rise to the knowledge of the Self. The terms, "*tat*" and "*tvam*", primarily signify Īśvara who is the *bimbatva-viśiṣṭa-caitanya*, and the jīva which is the *pratibimbatva-viśiṣṭa-caitanya* respectively. There cannot be any relation of identity between

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these two on account of their inherent opposition. To avoid this logical impasse, we have recourse to secondary signification. The two terms, through *jahat-ajahat-lakṣaṇā*, convey the substantive part (*viśeṣya*), viz. the consciousness-element in both the senses by leaving out the mutually contradictory adjectival parts (*viśeṣaṇā*) of *bimbatva* and *pratibimbatva*. The text as a whole signifies the identity of Ātman and Brahman- the true nature of the jīva and of Īśvara respectively. It must be noted here that this identity is not conceived as other than the Self and predicated of it. It itself is the Self. This is the traditional mode of interpretation of the texts like "*tat tvam as'ī*."

Dharmarāja in his *Vedānta-paribhāṣā* asserts that the view that the *mahā-vākyas* are to be interpreted secondarily has been presented by the ancient preceptors of Advaita by way of concession or rather unwillingly (*abhyupagama-vāda*), and it is not finally acceptable. His arguments in this connection may be stated as follows: The adjectival parts of the primary senses of the words, "*tat*" and "*tvam*" are no doubt mutually opposed precluding the possibility of relating them as identical. But, their substantive parts are in perfect agreement with each other, and so there is no logical impasse in treating them as identical. We can lay aside the adjectival parts as having no relevance to the understanding of the significance of the text, and take into consideration the substantive parts which are identical with each other. We need not adopt secondary signification in respect of the words, "*tat*" and "*tvam*" to arrive at the cognition of the substantive parts of their primary senses by excluding the adjectival ones, as they are known through primary signification itself.

It may be contended that the exclusion of the adjectival part itself is the equivalent of secondary signification. Dharmarāja rejects this contention by pointing out that there are several instances where the adjectival features of the

primary senses of the words are rejected without resorting to secondary signification. In this connection, he refers to four sentences: (1) "The pot (is) non-eternal" (*ghaṭaḥ anityaḥ*); (2) "The pot (is) in the house" (*gehe ghaṭaḥ*); (3) "The colour (is) in the pot" (*ghaṭe rūpam*); and, (4) "Bring the pot" (*ghaṭam ānaya*). The interpretation of these statements, Dharmarāja argues, involves the elimination of the adjectival parts of the primary senses of the words constituting them, and the retention of their substantive parts. The point to be noted here is that *jahat-ajahat-lakṣaṇā* is not adopted to achieve this purpose. A brief explanation will be helpful.

The first sentence, "The pot (is) non-eternal," predicates non-eternity with reference to the significance of the word, "pot", which is the pot, the substantive, as qualified by "pot-ness", the adjectival feature. The predication of non-eternity, however, holds good only of the substantive, the pot, and not of "pot-ness". We, therefore, exclude "pot-ness" and hold the statement to be true, in its primary sense, of the substantive, the pot.

The second sentence, "The pot (is) in the house," is intended to convey the substratum-superimposed relation (*ādharma-ādheya-bhāva*) between the senses of the words, the house and the pot. The adjectival parts of their senses, viz. pot-ness and house-ness, cannot be regarded as the substratum and the superposed respectively. So, they are left out and the substantives, viz. the house and the pot, are known to be linked with each other through the above-said relation.

Exactly similar consideration applies to the third statement, "The colour (is) in the pot". The adjectival part "pot-ness" cannot serve as the substratum of the adjectival part, colour-ness. They are, therefore, set aside, and the substantive, viz. the pot, is cognized as the locus of the other substantive, viz. the colour.

In the fourth sentence, "Bring the pot," the adjectival feature, pot-ness, cannot be related to the activity of bringing. Hence, it is given up, and the substantive, viz. the pot is related to it.

In none of these cases, Dharmarāja argues, secondary signification is adopted to get at the knowledge of the substantive parts of the primary senses through the exclusion of the adjectival ones. The point that is of relevance here is that the elimination of the inapt feature does not amount to the adoption of secondary signification. When viewed in this light, Dharmarāja concludes, the text, "*tat tvam asi*," need not be interpreted secondarily.¹

Acyutakṛṣṇānanda records this view in his commentary, *Śrī Kṛṣṇacarāṇa-bhūsaṇa*, examines it thoroughly, and points out logical and scriptural contradictions in it.² The main thesis of Dharmarāja, he says, is that the words, "*tat*" and "*tvam*" need not be interpreted secondarily to get at the knowledge of the substantive parts of their primary senses by discarding the adjectival ones. To justify this, he has cited several statements which, according to him, could be interpreted without recourse to secondary signification. This means that the substantive part of the primary sense of the word in each of these sentences is understood by being isolated from the adjectival part without adopting *jahat-ajahat-lakṣaṇā*.

A careful analysis of these sentences, however, shows that the primary sense of each word in these sentences enters into syntactical relation with a congruous sense *as such* without any need for the separation of its substantive part from its adjectival one. Acyutakṛṣṇānanda interprets the sentences as follows: In the sentence, "The pot (is) non- eternal," non-eternity is predicated not of the bare substantive, the pot, but of the pot as the substratum of pot-ness (*ghaṭatva-*

sāmānādhikarāṇya). Pot-ness too thus forms part of the sentence-sense. The second sentence, "The pot (is) in the house," means that the house qualified by house-ness is the substratum of the pot qualified by pot-ness (*gehaṭva-viśiṣṭa-vṛttiḥ ghaṭatva-viśiṣṭaḥ*). In the same way, the statement, "The colour (is) in the pot," signifies that the colour qualified by colour-ness is present in the pot qualified by pot-ness (*gehaṭva-viśiṣṭa-vṛttiḥ ghaṭatva-viśiṣṭam*). The sentence, "Bring the pot," conveys the sense that the pot qualified by potness is the object of the activity of bringing (*ghaṭatva-viśiṣṭam ānanyanakarma*). From this it is clear that the substantive part as qualified by the adjectival one of the primary sense of each word in these sentences enters into syntactical relation with an appropriate sense. There is no need for isolating the substantive part from the adjectival one. Dharmarāja, however, is under the mistaken notion that there is such a need and that need is fulfilled without recourse to *lakṣaṇā*; and, on that basis, he has argued that the substantive parts of the senses of the words, "tat" and tvam" could be known by excluding the adjectival parts from the substantive ones without adopting the mode of *jahat-ajahat-lakṣaṇā*. But, his argument, as has been shown by Acyutakṛṣṇānanda, has no force.

The question arises: Where then is *lakṣaṇā* to be adopted? Dharmarāja answers this by saying that it should be adopted in the interpretation of sentences like "The pot (is) eternal" (*ghaṭaḥ nityaḥ*). Here, the predicate, eternity holds good only of pot-ness which is an adjectival feature. In order that it may enter into relation with the predicate, it is to be presented as a substantive. This requires the rejection of what appears as the substantive, viz. the pot. It is here *lakṣaṇā* needs to be adopted. The word "pot" through *jahat-ajahat-lakṣaṇā* signifies "pot-ness" by excluding the substantive, the pot. "Pot-ness" now appears as a standing something as

a substantive - the something that appears as a qualification - thereby enabling it to get connected with the predicate. When viewed in this light, he argues, there is no compulsion of necessity to adopt *lakṣaṇā* in the case of the words, "tat" and "tvam", as the substantive parts of their primary senses themselves are related to each other. The question of presenting the adjectival parts as substantives does not arise at all, in which case alone we may have to adopt *lakṣaṇā*.

Acyutakṛṣṇānanda rejects this contention of Dharmarāja thus: The verbal cognition that arises from the sentence, "The pot (is) eternal," has for its content the relation of eternity to pot-ness and not to the pot. Hence, the pot, the substantive element must be discarded, and pot-ness, the adjectival feature, must be retained at the level of understanding the significance of the word "pot". This is possible only by adopting *jahat-ajahat-lakṣaṇā*. The word "pot" through this mode of signification conveys the sense of "pot-ness" to the exclusion of the pot. "Pot-ness" thus conveyed appears as a substantive *as a matter of course*. It is not with the purpose of presenting it as a substantive secondary signification is adopted.

Dharmarāja holds the view that the chief aim in adopting *lakṣaṇā* in the present case is to make "pot-ness" appear as a substantive, as only then it could have harmonious relation with the predicate. But, this view, Acyutakṛṣṇānanda says, is wrong. It is not an invariable rule that an adjectival factor could get related to a predicate only if it is scaled down to the level of a substantive. "Pot-ness" in the present case is adjectival to the pot and it can very well enter into relation with the predicate by retaining its adjectival character. This point Acyutakṛṣṇānanda explains as follows: The Naiyāyika has framed a rule that affirmation or denial is indeed applicable to a qualified entity (*viśiṣṭa*). In case it could not

have harmonious relation with the substantive element, then it will have a clear bearing upon the adjectival one:

*saviśeṣaṇe hi vidhiniṣedhau, sati viśeṣye bādhe
viśeṣaṇam upasaṁkrāmataḥ.*

The sentence, "The pot (is) eternal," can be interpreted in the light of this rule thus: the affirmation of eternity with reference to the pot, the substantive is unintelligible. So, in the natural course of things it would apply to the adjectival part, "pot-ness". What Acyutakṛṣṇānanda wishes to emphasize is this: "pot-ness", by continuing to exist as an adjectival feature, could get related to the predicate. To fulfil this purpose it need not be presented as a substantive by resorting to *lakṣaṇā*, as Dharmarāja thinks. In fact, Dharmarāja need not admit *lakṣaṇā* at all in the case of the word, "pot," to get at the cognition of "pot-ness" to the exclusion of the pot, as he could very well interpret the text in the light of the rule formulated by the Naiyāyika.

It should not be thought that Acyutakṛṣṇānanda does not favour the adoption of *jahat-ajahat-lakṣaṇā* in the case of the word, "pot," in the sentence, "The pot (is) eternal." He does accept it, and his criticism is directed to the view of Dharmarāja that the sole purpose of adopting this mode of *lakṣaṇā* is to present as substantive that which is apprehended as an adjectival feature. According to Acyutakṛṣṇānanda, the purpose of this kind of *lakṣaṇā* is rejection of what is irrelevant, and retention of what is relevant. In the case of the words, "tat" and "tvam", *jahat-ajahat-lakṣaṇā* should be adopted to exclude the adjectival features of their primary senses, as they do not contribute to the understanding of the import of the text, "tat tvam asi". Dharmarāja has claimed that we can treat the adjectival features as irrelevant and hold the statement to be true, in its principal sense, of the substantives alone, without any need to adopt secondary

signification. This claim has been proved to be false. Moreover, in order that the irrelevant factors of the primary senses of the words may not form the subject-matter of verbal cognition, what is required is their exclusion *practically* and not *theoretically* as Dharmaraja conceives. And, practical exclusion would result only by adopting *jahat-ajahat-lakṣaṇā* in the case of the words, "tat" and "tvam".³

Having thus pointed out inherent logical difficulties in the view that the text, "tat tvam asi." could be interpreted without recourse to *lakṣaṇā* in the case of the words, "tat" and "tvam", Acyutakṛṣṇānanda proceeds to show that it is in conflict with scriptural teaching too. He refers to four texts which are as under:

1. The Self alone (*eva*) is fit to be realized;⁴
2. Oh the aspirants of liberation, realize merely (*eva*) the Self;⁵
3. One transcends *samsāra* by realizing That (i.e. the Self) alone (*eva*);⁶ and,
4. The Self should be realized solely (*eva*) as pure identity.⁷

These texts comprise the particle, "eva" meaning "emphasis", and are categorical in asserting that the Self is to be realized to the exclusion of everything else that is alien to its nature. If the adjectival features of the primary senses of the words, "tat" and "tvam" are not eliminated *practically* by the adoption of *jahat-ajahat-lakṣaṇā*, then they too will be manifested as the content of verbal cognition of the Self as multiform in nature, and this is against the spirit of the sruti texts referred to above.

Further, a word could convey through primary signification only that sense which is *saviśeṣa*, i.e. the one

having the characteristic features such as generic attribute (*jāti*), quality (*guṇa*), activity (*kriyā*), or relation (*sambandha*)⁸. The Self, however, is *nirviśeṣa*, i.e. the one free from any of these characteristics. The words of the sruti texts, therefore, are inefficacious in conveying it through primary signification. It is in this sense, the text of the *Kena Upaniṣad*, "That which is not expressed by words, but through which words are manifested; that, verily, know thou, is the Self,"⁹ and the text of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, "The Self is beyond the reach of words,"¹⁰ are to be understood. The Upaniṣads, however, convey the Self through secondary signification, and it is in this sense we have to interpret the text of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, "(Oh Sāṅḍilya), I ask you about the Person (i.e. the Self) who could be known only from the Upaniṣads."¹¹ We have thus seeming statements, one stating that the Self is the content of the Upaniṣads, and the other proclaiming that it transcends the limits of very fundamental consistency or congruity that seem to be incompatible could be validated only by admitting that the Upaniṣads convey Self through secondary signification and not through the primary one. From this it follows that the contention of Dharmarāja that the identity between the substantives of the senses of "tat" and "tvam", known through primary signification is intelligible does not hold good; for, the substantives - the consciousness-element in the sense "tat" and "tvam", as has been explained, cannot be primarily signified.

To sum up this part of the discussion: the words, "tat" and "tvam" convey, through *jāhat-ajāhat-lakṣaṇā*, the consciousness-element in their primary senses, viz. Īśvara and the jīva. The text as a whole signifies the identity between the two. It is this identity which is the partless ultimate that is its logical significance.

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संसाराध्वनि तापमानुकिरणप्रोद्भूतदाहव्यथा-
 खिन्नानां जलकाङ्क्षया मरुभुवि भ्रान्त्या परिभ्राम्यताम् ।
 अत्यासन्नसुधाम्बुधिं सुखकरं ब्रह्माद्वयं दर्शय-
 न्त्येषा शङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसन्दायिनी ॥

*saṁsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodhbhūtadāhavyathā-
 khinnānām jalakāṅkṣayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā paribhrāmyatām
 atyāsannasudhāmbudhiṁ sukhakaram brahmādvayaṁ
 darśayant-
 yeṣā 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.