

# *The VOICE of* ŚĀṆKARĀ

śaṅkara-bhāratī



*Editor :*

**S. Ramaratnam**

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

The Voice of Śaṅkara  
is published under the guidance of  
His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Śaṅkarācārya  
of Kāñcī Kāmakotī Pīṭha  
by Ādi Śaṅkara Advaita Research Centre.

*Subscriptions are to be sent to:*

The Administrative Officer  
Ādi Śaṅkara Advaita Research Centre  
Room No. 7 (Second Floor),  
'SANKARALAYAM',  
New No. 66, (Old No. 62),  
Mayor V.R. Ramanathan Salai, Chetpet,  
Chennai - 600 031. Phone : 28366962  
Mobile : 97899 26679  
E-mail : [advaitarc@gmail.com](mailto:advaitarc@gmail.com)  
Website : [WWW.advaitacentre.org](http://WWW.advaitacentre.org)

*Subscription Rates :*

	Indian	Foreign
Annual	Rs. 150	US \$ 20
For two years	Rs. 250	US \$ 36
Life	Rs. 1,500	US \$ 200
Single Copy	Rs. 75	US \$ 10

*The VOICE of*  
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Volume 33 No. 2, 2008

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## CONTENTS

1. Homage to Śaṅkara 1
2. Thus Spake Śaṅkara  
S. RAMARATNAM 2
3. Triple Evidence for the Three-Limbed Dictum  
N. HARIHARAN 6
4. Advaita: Where the Mystics and the Physicists  
Converge  
K. SUNDARARAMAN 37
5. Doxology of Deva-Vidyā Prakāśa  
*(A Theological Reflection of Advaita Vedānta)*  
J. DEVANATHAN 51
6. 'Satyasya Satyam' - An Advaitic Interpretation  
S. BHUVANESWARI 67
7. The Non-Real Scene and the Un-Seen Real  
J. KRISHNAN 81

8. The Ātmavidyā-Vilāsa  
[A Spiritual Autobiography  
of  
Sadāśiva- Brahmendra Sarasvatī]  
Text with Translation  
C. MURUGAN 98
9. On The Five Definitions of *Mithyātva*  
V. M. ANANTHANARAYANAN 106
10. Jīvanmukta And His Social Concern  
S.REVATHY 117
11. Yoga Discipline For overcoming Worldliness  
according to Advaita  
N.VEEZHINATHAN 136



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# 1

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## HOMAGE TO ŚAṅKARA

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॥ श्री ॥

यो वादिनो वशीकृत्य महतो वेद्युक्तिः।  
वेदार्थस्थापनं चक्रे तं वन्दे शङ्कराभिधम् ॥

I offer my salutations to Śaṅkara who, on the basis of reasoning that confirms to the Upaniṣadic teaching, made the disputants feel certain that Advaita is the final import of the Veda.

## THUS SPAKE ŚAṄKARA

S. Ramaratnam

The Indian mind always revels in finding one in many and many in one. Synthesis and analysis formed the parts of almost every field of ancient tradition. Yāska's *Nirukta* is probably the earliest book of synonyms and antonyms, the world has ever known. Such an exercise has a hoary past as is evident from the names of several authors quoted by Yāska. The *Amarakoṣa* is a popular book on synonyms in Sanskrit and it was learnt by heart by every student of Sanskrit in olden days. Likewise the tradition of reciting the 1008 names or at least 108 names of the '*iṣṭa-devatā*' has been in vogue for centuries and it is continued even today as part of daily ritual by devout Hindus throughout the country.

The twelfth *nāma* of the *Viṣṇusahasranāma* is rendered as 'muktānām paramā gatiḥ'. The Lord is the final and the highest abode for the liberated souls. *Mukti* means liberation and the *mukta* is the one who is liberated. *Mukta* is the past passive participle form of the root *muc* (*muñc*) 'release' or 'to give up'. So the word *mukti* can be interpreted as 'one who is released'. Now the question is – released from what? The Vedāntins say that liberation results from getting rid of the bondages of the world. The next question is – whether the bondages, if at all, come to an end at the death of a person? All the traditional systems of Indian Philosophy believe in the transmigration of the soul and the cycle of birth and death. At the death of a person the body perishes, no doubt, but the soul waits for the next birth which is decided on the basis of the *karma* performed in the latest and the previous births. This cycle of birth and death is inevitable. Śaṅkara says in his *Bhajagovinda-stotra*,

*punarapi jananam punarapi maraṇam punarapi jananijathare  
śayanam iha saṁsāre bahudustāre kṛpayā pāre pāhi murāre  
(verse 21).*

'The birth again, the death again and the stay in the mother's womb once again- Oh! Murāri! through your compassion, save me from the cycle of birth and death, which is expansive and is difficult to cross'.

The *Gītā* says:

*vāsāṁsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni gṛhṇati naro' parāṇi  
tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇānyanyāni gṛhṇati navāni dehī (II.22)*



'Just as a man casts off the worn out clothes and wears new ones, so the soul casts off the worn out bodies and takes the new ones'.

Is there any way to end this cycle of birth and death and get liberated? This is the central point of discussion among all the philosophical systems of India. According to Advaita, liberation results from the realisation of the truth that the individual soul is not essentially different from the Supreme soul at the absolute level and that the world around us is only an illusory experience as in a dream. An illusory power of the Supreme soul called *māyā* causes the world to arise. It exists as long as ignorance exists and disappears at the dawn of True knowledge that the world is illusory. Once this Absolute knowledge, that is, *the jñāna*, is gained, there is relief from the cycle of birth and death and the Ultimate Liberation is attained. *Bhakti* towards the '*iṣṭa-devatā*' can lead to the *jñāna* which alone is the path to the liberation.

The other meaning of the root '*muc*' (apart from 'to release') is 'to give up'. Liberation is possible only if a person abandons the attachment to the world and the worldly objects. As far as he clings to the world, the realisation of the non-difference between the individual and the supreme soul is not going to happen. On the realisation of the Ultimate Truth, the individual soul becomes one with the Lord, the Supreme Soul. Hence the Lord is the Ultimate Goal of the liberated souls – *muktānām paramā gatiḥ*. With that, the cycle of birth and death also ends. Once being there, the soul does not have to come back to the world—'*na sa punarāvartate*' say the Upaniṣads. The *Gītā* says, (quoted by Śaṅkara in his commentary).

*yad gatvā na nivartante taddhāma paramam mama (XV.6).*

'It is the Ultimate Abode of mine reaching which one does not return (to the world)'. The *Gītā* again says:

*māmupetya tu kaunteya punarjanma na vidyate. (VIII.16).*

'Having reached me, there is no birth again, O Arjuna'.

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**TRIPLE EVIDENCE FOR THE THREE-LIMBED DICTUM**

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N. Hariharan\*

Nothing supplies so much of grist to the mill of philosophical speculation as the age-old paradigm of the triple categories of *theos*, *anthropos* and *cosmos* - the triad of *Īśvara*, *jīva* and *jagat* of Indian philosophical tradition. As the search-light of inquiry is focused through the prism of this triune system, it gets splintered and bodies forth into an array of ontological systems that are as varied, original and daring as they are colourful. A whole lot of diverse metaphysical insights, spurred by this inquiry, lies extended over a wide spectrum of thought and forms a significant component of the rich metaphysical heritage of humanity.

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\* Sri N. Hariharan, a resident of Madurai is a regular contributor to the Voice of Śaṅkara.



The triad of God, Man and the World constitute the classic triangle in the exciting geometry of philosophical speculation. It is in the field of investigation into this triad and the nature of their mutual nexus as means leading to the *summum bonum* of Self-realisation that *Advaita*, the Everest of Metaphysical Quest, wins, hands down, against other philosophical systems of Vedānta. The conclusive doctrine of *Advaita* on the mutual nexus among the trinity of categories of *Īśvara*, *jīva* and *jagat* is admirably encapsulated in the pithy but profound statement, ‘*Brahma satyam jaganmithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparah*’<sup>1</sup> *Advaita*’s unflawed vision of Brahman as the Non-dual Reality, its audacious and unequivocal censure of *jagat*, the objective universe, as *mithyā* (illusion) and its intuitive envisioning of the Truth of Esoteric Equation between Brahman and *jīva*, as divinely orchestrated by the *mahāvākya* ‘*tat tvam asi*’ in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, are precious nuggets of metaphysical wisdom that have elicited universal acclamation of both scholars and laymen. The laconic declaration that articulates the quintessence of *Advaita* in a nutshell comprises triple statements of profound import. It can be rightly called the three-limbed *magna carta* of *Advaita*. These triple utterances are not pious platitudes repeated *ad nauseum* unthinkingly. They possess the incontrovertible evidence of scriptural revelation (*śabdapramāṇa*), the merit of emphatic corroboration by accordant reasoning (*yukti*) and the stamp of ultimate and supreme certitude arising from personal and intimate spiritual experience (*anubhava*). The Supreme Truth of Non-duality excels all rival theories that swear, at best, by lesser truths and reigns supreme, as it fully satisfies the rigorous



demands of the threefold *pramāṇā-s* viz. *śruti*, *yukti* and *anubhava*.

***Brahma satyam : Evidence of śruti.***

The entire corpus of Upaniṣadic literature bristles with categorical declarations proclaiming the Ultimate Reality and Universality of Brahman. Vedas, being *apauruṣeya* (devoid of human authorship) and essentially divine revelations, eternal and beginningless, constitute the *magna carta* of spirituality. Upaniṣadic utterances possess the eternal merit of infallibility and incontrovertibility. They are known as *śabdapramāṇa* and authoritatively pronounce on themes transcendental. The spiritual inquiry into the Eternal Subject that falls under the exclusive province of Upanisads is beyond the purview of empirical study. In other words, the *Dṛk* (Seer), the eternal and unchanging Subject and Content of spiritual experience, is trans-empirical, super-sensuous and beyond rational thought and intellectual comprehension. Neither the mechanism of mind and intellect nor the apparatus of senses of a human being can possibly probe the mystic secret of the Absolute as they are the offspring of *avidyā*. Labouring under the severe constraints of primal nescience, they cannot smell even a whiff of the chastening fragrance of Brahman which can only be intuited by “The pure in heart and poor in spirit” in a flash of divine illumination. *Yukti* or reasoning can, at best, verify and confirm the validity of Upaniṣadic dicta by employing its tool of syllogistic reasoning. It is the sublime Upaniṣadic lore that supplies its infallible spiritual findings as premises for dialectical reasoning to dissect, analyse,

investigate, compare and cogitate on. The role of *yukti* can only be one of reinforcement and revalidation of Upaniṣadic revelations and never of repudiation of them. For Upaniṣadic revelations possess a hard core of divine authenticity and are not open to skepticism of and defiance by the frail mechanism of *yukti*. In other words, *yukti* cannot but corroborate the validity of Upaniṣadic findings as the latter are, *per se*, of the stuff of Eternal Truth. It is a measure of the supreme glory of Advaita that it is the supreme gospel clearly and cogently articulated by *śruti*, only to be confirmed later by ruthless ratiocination (*yukti*) And the crowning glory of Advaita consists in its lofty spiritual findings culminating and fulfilling themselves in intimate personal experience (*anubhava*) that is, at once, deep and divinizing, unitive and universal. While *śruti* formulates its infallible spiritual findings in a flash of mystic intuition, *yukti* enhances their value by making them shine as burnished gold by heating them in the furnace of intellectual reasoning, and *anubhava* transforms them into gems of intimate personal experience. The gospel of Advaita rests gloriously on the tripod of *śruti*, *yukti* and *anubhava*.

It can be safely asserted that the *Upaniṣadic* texts are fully saturated with the rich import of Advaita. Brahman is hailed in *śruti* as *Saccidānanda* (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss) This significant term, coined by *śruti*, in its unplumbed depths of intuition, to define and designate Brahman, breathes the aroma of Advaita. Non-dual Brahman, being eternal and immutable, is the immutable *Sat* (Existence) behind the flux of ephemeral existents and unsublatable in the three periods of time. (*trikālābādhita*). It is, in the picturesque phrase of



Dr.S.Radhakrishnan, “the Immutable Centre of endless mutations” Existence is the essential nature of the Absolute. The *Bhagavad-gītā* spells out the nature of Reality succinctly when it says, “Of the real there is no non-existence and of the unreal, no existence”<sup>2</sup> (*nā 'sato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ*). Again, Brahman is *Cit* (Pure Awareness) that illumines all phenomena presented to It and eternally abides, in its self-luminous effulgence, even in the context of absence of phenomena. In other words, It is the Unwinking Intelligence, the objectless Awareness (*Cit*) that illumines both the presence and absence of objects. It is the Eternal Light (*nitya caitanya*) that shines for ever, untouched by the vagaries of Time, Space and Causation. Finally, it is also Plenary Bliss undefiled by even an iota of pain incidental to empirical flux. It is the Ocean of Unalloyed Bliss, stable, serene and brimming (*āpūryamāṇam acalapraṭiṣṭham samudram* of *Gītā*'s imagery)<sup>3</sup> on which the illusory waves of petty pleasures and pains, incidental to embodied existence, dance momentarily at the time of ignorance and into which they dissolve and die at the dawn of spiritual wisdom.

Adverting to the Truth of Non-duality of Brahman, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* says, “*satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ Brahma*” “Brahman is Truth, Knowledge and Infinity”.<sup>4</sup> Śaṅkara's comments, on Truth (along with Knowledge and Infinity) being predicated of Brahman as *svarūpa - lakṣaṇa*, are illuminating. What is Truth? Śaṅkara offers an unfailing touchstone to test and find out what Truth is. He says, “Truth (is) that which does not deviate from the nature which is determined to be its own. That which deviates from the nature which is determined

to be its own is called untruth, for by the *śruti* passage, 'Modification (as in the case of a mud-pot) dependent upon speech is only name (and is unreal) and the clay alone is real', it has been determined that that which exists alone is real. Hence the sentence, "Brahman is Truth" makes Brahman independent of all unrealities."<sup>5</sup> (*satyamiti yadrūpeṇa yanniścitaṁ tadrūpaṁ na vyabhicarati tat satyaṁ, yadrūpeṇa yanniścitaṁ tat tadrūpaṁ vyabhicarati, tat anṛtaṁ iti ucyate; ato vikāro' nṛtaṁ "vācāraṁbhaṇaṁ vikāro nāmadheyaṁ mṛttiketyeva satyaṁ"*).<sup>6</sup> *Evam sadeva satyamityavadhāraṇāt; ataḥ satyaṁ brahmeti brahma vikārannivartayati*). Thus., according to Śaṅkara, Truth is the Eternal and Immutable Reality (*sadvastu*). Therefore, Brahman is the material cause.<sup>7</sup> (*ataḥ kāraṇatvaṁ prāptaṁ brahmaṇaḥ*)

But, is Brahman, like clay which is the material cause of a pot, insentient? The term 'Cit' (Consciousness) negates this contingency of Brahman's insentience by predicating Brahman of the nature of Consciousness (*Cit*). Śaṅkara insists that "the word knowledge denotes an abstract idea and since it forms an attribute of Brahman besides truth and infinitude, it does not denote the agent of knowing"<sup>8</sup> Consciousness is Pure and Unconditioned Awareness. It is Objectless Awareness (*caitanya*), abstract and unqualified by the locus wherein it shines. Thus, Brahman is Existence- Consciousness that is, *ipso facto*, infinite. Thus, Brahman is Truth-Knowledge-Infinity. This triad of attributes which form the warp and woof of Brahman sums up the integral, unitary and impartite profile of Brahman that is Plenum of the nature of Truth-Knowledge-Infinity. The identity of the two-fold



portrayals of the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* of Brahman as “*Sat-cit-ānandaṁ*” and “*Satyam-jñānam-anantaṁ*” is admirably revealed by the terse text of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (vii, xxiii, 1) “*yo vai bhūma tat sukhaṁ*” That which is infinite is bliss (*anantaṁ eva ānandaṁ*).<sup>9</sup>

The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* affirms, “*sadeva soṁya idamagra āsīt, Ekamevādvitīyam, Tattejo’ sṛjata’* (In the beginning, my dear, this was Being alone, one only without a second. It created fire).<sup>10</sup> This text clearly implies that the entire gamut of pluralistic Becoming (symbolized by Fire) is an illusory make-believe (*vivarta*) appearing on the Non-dual Ground of Existence due to *Māyā*, the inseparable Power of Brahman. Non-dual Truth that is Brahman is antecedent to everything and hence beginningless. It is the Primeval Seed, the Uncaused Cause of the astounding pageantry of Becoming - of the enchanting play of names and forms. (*nāma-rūpa*).

The *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* speaks of the entire Universe, constituted of the moving and non-moving phenomena, as pervaded and covered by the Divine (Brahman) It says, “*Īśāvāsyaṁ idaṁ sarvaṁ yatkiñca jagatyām jagat*”<sup>11</sup> It certainly means that the empirical flux is nothing but a mighty motion on the Substrate of Reality that is Brahman. The *Gītā* echoes the same idea by employing a picturesque metaphor when the Lord says, “Nothing whatsoever is beyond Me. All this is strung on Me like clusters of gems on a thread.”<sup>12</sup> (*mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcidasti dhanañjaya mayi sarvamideṁ protaṁ sūtre maṇigaṇā iva*). This verse of the *Gītā* is highly suggestive and affords us insights into the different facets of

Brahman. Like the thread that supports, sustains and holds the myriad gems in a coherent unity, Brahman is the Substrate that supports and sustains the rhythm and order of the exciting temporal drama - the soap opera of the flux of empirical phenomena. Like the thread that is not external to the cluster of gems, Brahman is, from a certain angle, not outside the temporal procession. Like the thread that interpenetrates through the diverse gems and lends them the charm of unity, Brahman enters into and interpenetrates through the entire range of inert phenomena and imparts them the glow of sentiency. Unlike the thread that is intermingled with the gems to the point of ceasing to remain outside the string of gems, Brahman is, at once, a zealous upholder of and active participant in the empirical drama and a detached and uninvolved witness of the mutations of mundane show. The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* says, "Brahman projects the universe through the power of *māyā*. Again in that universe, Brahman is entangled through *māyā*."<sup>13</sup> (*asmānmāyī srjate viśvametat, tasminścānyo māyayā sanniruddhaḥ*). Thus, Brahman is, at once, immanent in and transcendent of the pluralistic pageantry.

### ***Brahma satyam : Evidence of yukti***

Advaita hits upon a picturesque and perspicacious *yukti* to prove the imperishability and the consequent ultimacy and absoluteness of reality (*satyam*) of Brahman. It presses into service an ordinary but universal human experience to substantiate its Upaniṣadic axiom of the Absolute Reality of Brahman. Unlike the Western philosophy whose analysis of



human experience is blatantly partial and incomplete, Advaita institutes a total inquiry into the holistic experience of *jīva* and arrives at its momentous and indisputable corroboration of the Upaniṣadic edict of the Non-dual Reality of Brahman. Advaita rightly and insightfully considers the totality of human experience as nothing but the aggregate of experiences gained by *jīva* in his triple states of consciousness viz. waking state (*jāgrat*), dream state (*svapna*) and deep-sleep state (*suṣupti*). While Western philosophy deals exhaustively with the objective realm of waking state, consisting essentially of the vast range of sensory experiences and institutes a deep inquiry into the subtle and baffling phenomena of dream state, it falls short of a holistic quest by its gross negligence and exclusion of deep-sleep state which, in Vedāntic analysis, is of pivotal importance, affording, as it does, deep insights into the esoteric wonderland of the Self. The premises of the trenchant syllogism that Advaita employs to study and analyse the triple states of consciousness are mainly furnished by *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, the shortest and subtlest Upaniṣad and Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā* on it. While the brief but pregnant Upaniṣad articulates the Non-dual Reality of Brahman by analyzing the triple states of consciousness under the stranglehold of Ignorance, the *Kārikā* resorts to the ruthless technique of reasoning to prove and corroborate that Brahman is the unsublatable residuum, the Transcendental Consciousness which is the Substratum on which the illusory play of the triple states of consciousness takes place.



The very name “*Māṇḍūkya*” drops subtle hints regarding the lofty issue it seeks to tackle. The term “*Maṇḍūka*” means “frog”. In a certain sense, the *jīva* is a spiritual amphibian, specifically, a frog that moves mainly by hopping. Like a frog, the *jīva* keeps incessantly hopping from one state of consciousness to the other of the triple states. Now, this frog of *jīva* is a peculiar one in that it oscillates between prolonged hibernation in the tepid waters of primal ignorance (represented by the three states of consciousness) and very rare, vague and momentary peeks into the mystic shore of spiritual intimations (represented by *Turīya* – the Transcendental Fourth Plane of Consciousness). To land on the mystic shore of spiritual experience, the frog of *jīva* will have to tear himself away from the treacherous waters of ignorance and literally “leap-frog” into the sublime shore of spiritual release. The *jīva* shuttles between the three states with ease and facility but comes up against a staggering log-jam, blocking his entry into *Turīya*, the Transcendental State of Consciousness, and the Sphere of the Self. And that log-jam is none other than the wall of Nescience that shuts off the *jīva* from any access to *Turīya*, the Sphere of the Self, by incarcerating him in the prison-house of the three states. As an Upaniṣad that seriously tackles the existential crisis of the frog (*maṇḍūka*) of *jīva*, it is aptly known as *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*.

The touchstone offered by the *Kārikā* to test the truth or falsity of an entity has the supreme merit of scientific precision and thoroughness. How can the truth of Advaita’s

contention, that the *jīva*'s psycho-physical complex (the conglomerate of intellect, mind and senses), functioning variously in the three states of consciousness, is essentially illusory, be corroborated by *yukti*? Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā*, the arch-wielder of *yukti*, furnishes the decisive touchstone in the form of an inexorable dictum. It says, "That which is non-existent in the beginning and in the end, is necessarily so even in the present (i.e., in the middle). The objects, though they bear the mark of the unreal, appear as though real."<sup>14</sup> Śaṅkara's explanation of this *Kārikā* text is illuminating. The great Ācārya says,

"A thing like a mirage, etc. which does not exist in the beginning and in the end, does not exist in the middle either. This is a settled fact in the world. So too, the objects seen in the waking state are unreal, since they did not exist in the beginning and in the end. They are unreal as they, like a mirage, etc., bear the mark of unreality; still they are perceived as though real, by the ignorant who do not know the Self."<sup>15</sup>

As this touchstone is applied to the *jīva*'s psycho-physical system (viz. his intellect, mind and senses) that, being inert and material, is justly bracketed with the "seen" (*dṛश्यम्*), a host of revealing implications emerges. The *jīva*'s psycho-physical mechanism, constituted of the intellect, mind and the senses, is fully and actively available in his waking state (*jāgrad-avasthā*). As soon as the *jīva* leaves the waking state and migrates into the dream state, (*svapna-avasthā*), one component of the psycho-physical apparatus, viz. the sensory



system (*indriyas*) suffers an ephemeral eclipse. Only the psychic aspect (mind-intellect component) of the apparently integral system is available and weaves its extravagant world of dream and fantasy. As soon as the dream state (*svapna-avasthā*) yields place to the deep-sleep state (*susupti*), even the mind-intellect mechanism goes into a state of temporary hibernation. The *jīva* is enfolded in deep slumber and enshrouded in a thick mass of ignorance. Neither the exciting perception of the pluralistic universe (*dvaita-prapañca*) nor the cathartic vision of Non-dual Truth (*advaita-satyam*) is available for the slumbering *jīva*. Is the state of the *jīva*, under the sway of sleep and ignorance, then a state of utter void, a gaping *nihil*? Advaita's inexorable logic exposes the hollowness of the concept of nihilism and upholds the Truth of Plenum - Fullness (*pūrṇam*). Even for the apparent state of utter void to be cognized, there must be a sentient cognizer, a witness. A void without a witness to cognize it is incomprehensible and illogical. The sleeper, as soon as he wakes up, makes a highly significant statement to the effect, "I slept happily; I did not know anything." The initial part of the apparently simple statement, viz. "I slept happily", proves the existence of a sentient witness to the state of happiness during slumber and his persistent abidance in the waking state to recollect his experience of happiness during sleep. It is the inexorable law of life that the experiencer and the rememberer cannot be different but are one and the same. It is the Immutable Self that abides in and through the flux of life and gives it a strand of continuity. The next part of the statement,



viz. "I did not know anything" proves the dictum that the state of void (*śūnya*) cannot be the ultimate and unsublatable experience as it needs and has a sentient witness to apprehend and articulate it. And that unsublatable entity is the Witness-Self, the Unitary Awareness that is eternal and persists through the vicissitudes and vagaries of the three states of *jāgrat*, *svapna* and *suṣupti*. The Self, that is ever self-luminous and self-established, illumines the full-blooded functioning of the psycho-physical system in the Waking State, the eclipse of the sensory system and the fanciful play of the mind in the Dream State and the enveloping thick mass of total ignorance and the resultant complete retreat of the psycho-physical system from the scene in the Deep Sleep State. While the *upādhis* (adjuncts) are finite and changeful, the Self is immutable, imperishable and eternal. The Self is the Eternal Effulgence that lends its glow to the luminaries like the sun, the moon, the stars and the fire and dwarfs their splendour by its divine lustre. So sings a *mantra* in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*. The *mantra* says, "There the sun shines not, nor do the moon and the stars, nor do these lightnings. How (then) can this fire shine? Everything shines after Him that shines. By His light, shines all this".<sup>16</sup> The state of void that, according to *Śūnyavāda*, ensues after the total eclipse and negation of all phenomena, is a forbidding *cul-de-sac*, the hideous state of oppressive nullity, the very antithesis of the Plenitude of Reality, The Plenum of Advaita, the unsublatable residuum, is, on the other hand, the Tremendous Terminus, the exquisite spiritual window that opens out into the loftiest dimension of spiritual experience - the apogee of the Plenary Bliss of Self-experience.



***Brahma satyam* : Evidence of *anubhūti* (experience)**

A *brahmajñāni* is the rarest being who has intuited the Non-dual Reality. His experience is transcendental, unitive, profound and universal. The hallmark of a *brahmajñāni* is his unitary perspective utterly bereft of even an iota of rift or cleavage. Śukācārya, the son of Vyāsa, is a shining example of a true *brahmajñāni*. His experience of Non-dual Truth is so consummate that he is congenitally and constitutionally incapable of perceiving even a ripple of discord in the vast ocean of the Truth of Brahman. An episode narrated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* illustrates Śuka's ineffable experience of the Truth of the Absolute. To quote the relevant text of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, "His son, (Vyāsa's son), the master-yogi, seeing Brahman everywhere, has transcended all difference and his mind remains anchored in the One having shaken off the slumber of nescience. He moves about the world unknown, a dolt to all outward seeming. Once, when the sage was going after his son, the celestial nymphs abashed, put on their clothes on seeing him, who was himself clothed. Wondering that they had not done so on seeing his son, he questioned them. They replied, 'you are conscious of the difference of the sexes; not so your son, whose eyes are pure' ".<sup>17</sup> The moment the Truth of Brahman is intuited, fragmentary perspective ends and empirical differences lose their meaning. The purity of Śuka's view (*viviktadr̥ṣṭi*), bereft of the taint of dualism, is the logical corollary of his unitive vision born of his experience of the Truth of the Absolute. Śuka's unitive experience in which separative outlook has



withered is the strongest evidence *anubhūti* can offer for the dictum “*Brahma Satyaṁ Jaganmithyā*” - The universe is illusory: Evidence of *śruti*.

*Śruti* clearly articulates the *Advaitic* doctrine of the illusoriness of the universe. (*jagan mithyātva*). The emphatic enunciation of the gospel of Non-dual Reality by *Sruti* clearly implies the illusoriness of *jagat*. Still, *Śruti*, in many *mantras*, explicitly denies reality to the universe and emphasizes its illusoriness. In a significant imagery, the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* portrays the transience and the relative truth of *jagat* as contrasted with the eternality and the Ultimate Reality of Brahman. The *Upaniṣad* says, “This peepul tree with root above and branches down is eternal. That (which is its source) is certainly pure; that is Brahman and that is called immortal. On that are strung all the worlds; none passes beyond that. This verily is that (thou seekest)”.<sup>18</sup> Śaṅkara’s long and eloquent commentary on this verse is noted for its felicity of diction and fecundity of thought and worth reproducing. The venerable Ācārya says,

“Root above: the root which is the supreme state of Viṣṇu. This *saṁsāra-tree* which consists of everything from the Unmanifested to the unmoving, has its root above. *Vṛkṣa* is so called because of being felled. This (*saṁsāra*) tree consists of miseries of a variety such as birth, old age, grief, death etc.; it assumes a different nature in a moment which too vanishes as soon as it is seen, like jugglery, water in a mirage, or a city made up of clouds in the sky, etc., and at the end, like a tree, it becomes non-existent and is worthless like

the stem of a plantain tree; it is the subject of doubts in the minds of several hundreds of skeptics, its reality not being determined as 'this' by those who aspire after its truth; it has its essence in the root, the supreme Brahman determined in Vedānta; it has sprung from the seed of ignorance, desire, action and the Unmanifested; it has, for its sprout, Hiraṇyagarbha which combines in it both the power of knowledge and activity of the lower Brahman; it has for its trunk the various subtle bodies of all creatures, its power of growth being the outcome of the springing of the waters of desire; it has for its tender buds the objects of intelligence and the senses; its leaves are the *śrutis*, *smṛtis*, logic, learning and instruction; its beautiful flowers are the many deeds such as sacrifice, gift, austerity, etc.; it has various tastes in the form of happiness, sorrow and pain; its endless fruits provide subsistence to living beings; its roots are well-grown, entwined and fixed strongly by the sprinkling of the waters of desire (for the fruits); its nests made by birds, i.e. by all living beings from Brahma downwards, are in the seven worlds beginning with the one called *Satya*, filled with the tumultuous uproar that rises up due to the dancing, singing, instrumental music, jesting, clapping of arms, laughing, pulling screaming, exclaiming 'Oh, Oh', 'Leave me, leave me' etc., which follow from the mirth and grief created by happiness and sorrow of living beings; and it is felled by the sword of dispassion born of the perception of the identity between Brahman and the Self, as proclaimed by Vedānta. This *saṁsāra*-tree, like the



*aśvattha* (peepul) tree, always unsteady by nature and susceptible to shaking by the wind of desire and *karma*, is having its branches downwards in the form of heaven, hell, region of beasts, ghosts, etc., and existing from time immemorial, since it is beginningless.

That which is the root of this *samsāra*-tree is certainly pure and resplendent and of the form of the light of the Self which is Consciousness. That certainly is Brahman, being the greatest of all. That indeed is said to be immortal, i.e. indestructible by nature, being true. Everything else is false, liable to change, existing merely as name and dependent on speech and is therefore subject to mortality. On that Brahman, absolutely true, all the worlds are strung during creation, existence and dissolution - worlds unreal like the city of clouds in the sky or water in a mirage, which becomes non-existent on the perception of the absolute truth. No modification whatsoever passes beyond that Brahman, even as the product (of clay) like pot, etc. does not pass beyond clay etc. This verily is that (thou seekest)".<sup>19</sup>

The same ideas are echoed by a verse<sup>20</sup> in the *Gītā*. The Upaniṣad employs the metaphor of a tree in an imaginative manner to drive home the classic metaphysical theme of the ultimate and sole reality of Non-dual Brahman and of the status of universe as a magic show, a handiwork of *Māyā*, the inseparable Power of Brahman. The tree of *śruti*'s conception is not the normal tree we are familiar with but a mighty, topsy-turvy fig tree. The roots of the tree are "above". What does this term "above" mean? The term refers not so much to the

physical location as to the "status". The roots originate from a "higher" status. The "higher" status that *śruti* speaks of is the Absolute. The roots are *Māyā* or *Prakṛti*. The mighty fig tree is nothing but the vast and endless Becoming, the empirical universe of names and forms (*jagat*). The universe (*jagat*) is the self-expression of the deluding power of *Māyā* which is inseparable from Brahman. While the roots are "above", the branches of the wondrous tree are "below". While Brahman belongs to the higher order of Reality, Ultimate Reality (*Pāramārtikasatyam*), the diversity of the empirical universe symbolized by the branches belongs to the lower order of reality, empirical reality (*vyāvahārikasatyam*). The ephemerality of the empirical universe is implied by the very name of the tree viz. *aśvattha*. 'Aśvattha' means 'that which does not exist till even tomorrow.' The whole symbolism of the *aśvattha* tree with its roots above forcefully represents the truth that the mutable empirical universe is a superimposition, due to *Māyā*, on the Immutable Brahman. The empirical universe with its kaleidoscopic changes and characteristics of perpetual mortality is a puzzling phantom and mystery that eludes precise understanding. The flow of empirical existence is beginningless and insubstantial because it is a cosmic show conjured up by *Māyā*. The fig tree of empirical life bewilders one by its astounding diversity. One should not be mesmerized by its pompous show and irresistible allurements. The enchanting fig tree of the pluralistic universe should be felled, root and branch, by the sturdy axe of detachment. The implication is that the illusion



of the empirical universe along with its source, *Māyā*, should be completely eradicated by a keen sense of discrimination and detachment. *Māyā*, the inscrutable and inseparable power of Brahman, weaves the bewildering web of empirical universe by harnessing the variegated stands of *nāma-rūpa*. As a beguiling handiwork of *Māyā* and an effect (*kārya*) of Brahman, the pluralistic universe is quintessentially illusory and finite. The pageantry of pluralistic universe (*jagat*) is nothing but the phalanx of endless, multi-formed and evanescent waves that originate from the bosom of profound and abiding Brahman-ocean, linger for a while as seemingly distinct entities and merge back into the ocean indistinguishably. The empirical phenomena, constituted of the stuff of *nāma-rūpa*, are the trickery of *Māyā* and an edifice of capital delusion grafted on the Substratum of Brahman. By employing a picturesque metaphor constituted of triple analogies, the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* demonstrates the finitude of *jagat*, a superimposition on Brahman. The Upaniṣad says, "As a spider projects its thread and withdraws, as plants spring up on earth, and as hairs grow on the head and body of a living man, so does the universe emerge from the Indestructible."<sup>21</sup> (I-7)

The metaphor that *śruti* portrays is highly suggestive. Admitting that the universe of multiplicity is a tricky illusion that rests on Brahman due to *Māyā*, the *śruti* speaks of the 'how' of the origin of illusion. The analogy of spider weaving its web out of the raw material produced from its own system emphasises Brahman's unique power of being at once the

material and efficient cause of the universe by wielding the jugglery of *Māyā*. Lest the spider-analogy should lead to the misconception that Brahman, like the spider, has a motive in weaving the fabulous tapestry of the universe, *śruti* likens Brahman's projection of the universe to the spontaneous growth of plants on the earth according to the natural law of growth. Like the exciting drama of the luxuriant growth of flora on the earth, the vast show of empirical play takes place on Brahman. Does it mean that, like the vegetation that grows on the gross and inert earth, the breathtaking efflorescence of the empirical universe takes place on Brahman, that is, earth-like, inert and gross? To deny that contingency, *śruti* likens the emanation of the universe from out of *Brahman* to the natural growth of hairs on a human body that has to be sentient, for, it is well-known that hairs cannot grow on a dead body. Thus, by an ingenious resort to the device of triple analogy, *śruti* drives home the message that the ebb and flow of the mutable universe (*jagat*) on Pure Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, the Immutable Brahman, is transient, ever-varying and basically illusory. The three things, - the spider's web, the plants and the hairs that grow on the body - transient as they are, are archetypal symbols for the illusoriness and evanescence of the universe that appears on Brahman.

### **The universe is illusory - Evidence of *yukti* :**

The rope-snake example (*rajju-sarpa-nyāya*) is a master-stroke of *yukti* in Vedānta to explain and prove the falsity of the empirical universe. The misapprehension of a



piece of rope as snake in twilight is caused by an inscrutable force of ignorance. Right cognition of the rope as the rope ends the snake-illusion. The snake that appears on the rope, albeit real to the viewer in the grip of hallucination, shows itself as essentially illusory and evanescent at the dawn of right cognition. Similarly, Primal Nescience, through its double power of concealment and projection (*āvaraṇa-śakti* and *vikṣepa-śakti*) obfuscates Brahman and conjures up the mighty illusion of the empirical universe on It. The reality of the dream to the dreamer and of the mirage to the faulty perceiver is unexceptionable but breaks down the moment the dream ends and the deceptive mirage is apprehended for what it is. The riotous play of *nāma-rūpa* that is another name for *jagat* is felt as real by bemused *jīvas* but shows up its essential phantom-like nature, the moment Brahman is intuited.

The falsity and finitude of the universe are indisputably proved by an examination of the empirical phenomena. All empirical phenomena right from Brahma down to a clump of grass vary and vanish and are under the sway of Time. Now, subjection to the iron law of Time is, according to Advaita, a distinctive mark of illusoriness. Thus, *jagat*, a byword for flux and finitude, is essentially illusory.

**The universe is illusory - Evidence of *anubhava* :**

Rājaraṣi Janaka, the *brahmajñāni par excellence*, typifies the uncanny power of spiritual wisdom to see through the ruse of pretensions of *jagat* and know it for what it really is viz. a den of delusion. A popular episode in his life illustrates this fact. The story goes thus. Once, Sage Sadānanda,

the preceptor of both King Janaka and a bunch of sannyāsins, waited for King Janaka, his only householder disciple, before commencing his spiritual instruction, even though all his monastic disciples were fully present. The monks were, evidently, piqued by their preceptor's "excessive" and "misplaced" esteem for Janaka, a mere householder, and sat sulking inwardly. The omniscient Sage could read the mind of monks and wanted to impress upon them the spiritual eminence of Janaka. As soon as Janaka arrived for the spiritual class, the Sage created an illusion of the capital city of Mithila, going up in flames. Startled by the sound of crackling fire, the monks turned and looked back only to notice the city in the thick of a mighty conflagration. Fearing to lose even their paltry possessions like their ochre robes, pitcher, etc. they ran to their hermitages to retrieve them from the raging fire. But, Janaka, the householder, looked at the leaping fire for a moment and sat smiling, a picture of ineffable peace and poise, even though it was his own city that was being reduced to ashes. Although a *gr̥hastā* and a king to boot, Janaka, was, quintessentially, a *brahmajñāni* who cared little for worldly possessions as he had the experiential wisdom that they were impermanent and illusory. Transcendental wisdom begets the spiritual insight to see and experience the shadowiness of *jagat* and gain the unshakable conviction that the universe is basically a snare and delusion.

*Jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ* - Jīva is Brahman only, non-different from It - Evidence of śruti.

Nothing proclaims the esoteric equation between *jīva* and Brahman (pithily articulated by the epigram '*jīvo*



*brahmaiva nāparaḥ*”), as crisply as the four *mahāvākyas* (major texts) of Vedānta. While the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* of the *Ṛg-Veda* laconically says, “*Prajñānam Brahma*” (Consciousness is Brahman)<sup>22</sup>, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* of the *Yajur-Veda* chimes in, “*Ahaṁ Brahmāsmi*” (I am Brahman)<sup>23</sup>, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, of the *Sāma-Veda* authoritatively instructs, “That thou art”<sup>24</sup> “*Tat tvam asi*”, even as the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* of the *Atharvaṇa-Veda* categorically states, “*Ayaṁ ātma brahma*” (This Atman is Brahman)<sup>25</sup>. This quartet of aphorisms constitutes a four-walled citadel that jealously treasures and loudly tomtoms the saving wisdom of Advaitic gospel for the redemption of humanity.

Śaṅkara’s commentary on the *mahāvākya* of the *Ṛg-Veda* “*Prajñānam Brahma*” is illuminating. He says, “All that in its entirety is sustained by Consciousness. *Prajña* is Consciousness and that is nothing but Brahman. ...Thus, ‘the universe has Consciousness as its guiding factor’ is to be grasped as before. Or it may mean that the whole universe has Consciousness as its eye. It is the support of the entire universe. Consciousness is therefore Brahman.”<sup>26</sup> It is obvious that Consciousness is nothing but Brahman that manifests itself at two levels viz. macrocosmic and microcosmic. The microcosmic dimension of Consciousness is known as Ātman while its macrocosmic dimension is known as Brahman. Just as even a gram of pure gold is qualitatively non-different from ton of the same, the tiny Spark of Consciousness shining in the *jīva* (Ātman) is non-different from the all-pervading radiance of consciousness (Brahman).



The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* of the *Yajur-Veda* says, “In the beginning this was indeed Brahman. It knew itself only as ‘I am Brahman’. Therefore, it became all”.<sup>27</sup> The Upaniṣad clearly hints that awareness of oneself as the Self or Brahman is the key to “becoming all”. In other words, Self-experience (*ātma anubhūti*) instantaneously leads to awakening into the experience of Universal Consciousness (*brahma anubhūti*). Unitive vision (*svātmatattvānusandhānam*)<sup>28</sup> of Śaṅkara’s conception i.e., Vision of the truth about one’s own Self that, again, is nothing but the vision of the esoteric equation between Ātman and Brahman) is the logical corollary of Self-vision (*svasvarūpānusandhānam*)<sup>29</sup> of Śaṅkara’s conception).

The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* of the *Sāma-Veda* formulates the mystic equation between the Self and Brahman in the popular maxim, “*Tat tvam asi*” (That thou art). The maxim has a distinctly instructional tone about it as it is in fact a teaching addressed and imparted by a teacher to his disciple. The repetition of the dictum again and again by the teacher underscores, at once, the subtlety and importance of the teaching. In the three-limbed *magna carta* of Advaita, the first limb, viz. “*Brahman satyam*” is a pithy and positive promulgation of the Truth of Advaita. The second limb, viz. “*Jagan mithyā*” is a plain and pointed exposure of the essential illusoriness of the universe. It is, however, the third limb of the maxim, viz. “*jīvo’ brahmaiva nāparaḥ*” that, far from being a pedestrian statement, represents an astounding spiritual discovery that launches the *jīva* on to the fast track of spiritual growth. The aphorism “*Tat tvam asi*” effaces the apparent

insignificance of the *jīva*, reminds him of his essential divinity and, in fact, sets him firmly on the trajectory to the *summum bonum* of spiritual awakening. The aphorism is the master-key to unlock the treasure of *Ātman-Brahman* identity and, in its deepest import, affirms that the ignorance-bound *Jīva* and the *Māyā*-sporting *Īśvara* are, shorn of their adjuncts of *avidyā* and *māyā* respectively, essentially identical. The technique of eschewal of the superficial *vācyārtha* and resort to the profound *lakṣyārtha* of the twin terms of *jīva* and *Īśvara*, as prescribed by *jahadajahallakṣaṇā*, lays bare the mystic equation between *Ātman* and *Brahman*. The intuition of this Esoteric Equation is the open sesame to final beatitude.

Śaṅkara's comments on this *mahāvākya* are thought-provoking. He says, "The Self through which all this universe is endowed with its Self, is Itself the source which is called Sat. It is the true i.e. the Supreme Reality. Hence, That alone is the Self of the universe, the inner essence, the principle, the Reality.... Hence, O Śvetaketu, thou art that Sat."<sup>30</sup> Thus, according to Śaṅkara, it would seem that *Sat* (Truth) is, at once, the All- Pervading Reality, the Origin, the Inner Essence (*pratyaksvarūpaṁ*) and principle of the universe. That macrocosmic Reality is identical with the microcosmic Reality that abides in the *jīva* who, in the present context, happens to be Śvetaketu, the disciple.

The fundamental identity of That (Brahman) and Thou (Ātman) is dramatically illustrated by two episodes narrated by Dr.S.Radhakrishnan in his book "*Principal Upaniṣads*" To quote Dr S. Radhakrishnan, "In the *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad*



*Brāhmaṇa* (III.14.1-5) when the deceased reaches the Sun-door, the question is asked, Who art thou? If he answers by a personal or family name, he is subject to the law of *karma*. If he responds, 'Who I am (is) the light thou (art) As such I have come to thee, the heavenly light.' Prajāpati replies: 'Who thou art, that same am I; who I am that same art thou. Enter in.'

Rumi speaks to us of the man who knocked at his friend's door and was asked, 'Who art thou?' He answered 'I' 'Begone,' said his friend. After a year's suffering and separation he came and knocked again, and when asked the same question, replied, 'It is Thou art at the door,' and received the reply, 'Since thou art I, come in O myself' (Mathnavi, I 3056-3065)".<sup>31</sup>

The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad's mahāvākya* categorically declares: "This Self is *Brahman*" (*ayam ātmā brahma*). The "splendour" that is imprisoned in the genetic system is identical with the "splendour" that freely pervades and informs the cosmic system. Śaṅkara, in his commentary says, "The Self dwelling in all beings is seen as One and all beings are seen as existing in the Self. Then alone the meaning of the sruti such as 'He who perceives all beings in the Self ....' (*Īśa. Upa.6*) etc. will be conclusively proved."<sup>32</sup> Again, he significantly remarks, "To expound (and establish) the unity of all Selves is the desired object of all the Upaniṣads".<sup>33</sup>

To discerning minds, Śaṅkara's remark, "The Self dwelling in all beings is seen as One and all beings are seen as existing in the Self" has a host of profound implications. The pregnant observation is, as it were, a double-barrel gun that

shoots down, with a single stroke, the double fallacy of (a) the Sāṅkhyan theory of plurality of selves and (b) the dualist's theory of eternal disparity between God and *jīva* (Brahman and Ātman).

While the first part of the sentence affirms the Nonduality of the Self, the second part, by implying that the Self is the Ground of Existence (the receptacle, as it were, in which all beings are seen to exist), clearly reveals that the Self, in which all beings are seen to exist, is Brahman, the All-Pervading Reality which engulfs, encompasses and interpenetrates the entire gamut of empirical existence and forms its warp and woof... Thus, the Ācārya's remark underscores, at once, the non-duality of the Self (Ātman) and Its identity with Brahman. Ātman is the Ultimate Truth in microcosm, the *piṇḍa*. Brahman is the Ultimate Reality in macrocosm, *aṇḍa*. What is in *aṇḍa* is in *piṇḍa* too. In other words, *piṇḍa* is only the epitome, the minor replica, of *aṇḍa*. This Upaniṣadic idea that informs Eastern mysticism has found its echo in Western mystical tradition also. The eminent physicist, Fritjof Capra makes certain significant remarks on this subject in his book "*Tao of Physics*" (Chapter 18 entitled 'Interpenetration' - Page 329) Capra says, "The idea that each particle containing all the others has not only arisen in Eastern mysticism but also in Western mystical thought. It is implicit in William Blake's famous lines:

To see the world in a grain of sand  
And heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand  
And eternity in an hour.<sup>34</sup>



The above lines of William Blake are only a poetic and imaginative way of articulating the Upaniṣadic wisdom of “seeing the Self in all and all in the Self”

*Jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ* - *Jīva* is *Brahman* only, non-different from it. - Evidence of *Yukti*.

The most popular and telling analogy by which the non-difference between Ātman and Brahman is illustrated is the example of *ghaṭākāśa* (pot-space) and *mahākāśa* (vast or universal space). The space within the pot is delimited and conditioned by the physical precincts of its structure and seems to be different from the all-pervading space. But, when the pot is broken, the pot-space becomes one with the all-pervading space. Pot is a thing with form and needs space for its existence. The tiny pot, though dependent on space for its very existence, contains space and causes an illusion of a distinct pot-space. In point of fact, the distinction between the pot-space and all-pervading space is not real but only a semantic one and may even be considered the result of optical illusion. Likewise, the conditioned Consciousness that the *jīva* is, is ever one with the Universal Consciousness. It is the *upādhis* (adjuncts) like the body-mind-intellect conglomerate that divide and delimit the basically unitary and infinite Consciousness and produces the fiction of a *jīva*. With the liquidation of the BMI complex (that is nothing but the expression of *avidyā*) and the extinction of *ahamkāra* (ego, the pseudo-Self), delimitation of Consciousness ends only to cause the total mergence of the tiny pool of conditioned Consciousness into the ocean of

All-pervading Consciousness. Thus, *ghaṭākāśa-mahākāśa yukti* is an efficacious syllogistic tool that rationally proves the identity between the Soul and the Oversoul.

*Jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ* - *Jīva* is *Brahman* only, non-different from it. - Evidence of *anubhava*.

Śukācārya is the classic prototype of a *brahmajñāni* whose intuition of the Truth of Ātman-Brahman Identity is so consummate that he exemplifies the certitude of Oneness of Existence in a telling manner. The story goes thus: Śuka is an *avadhūta* (the unclad one) in whom even an iota of *bhedabuddhi* (fragmentary or dualistic view) does not exist. One day, as Śuka, reveling in Unitive Consciousness at its peak, wanders, apparently aimlessly, like one demented, his doting father, Vyāsa, afflicted by pangs of separation from his son, follows him, calling "Oh Son, Oh Son" What a wonder! While Śuka does not respond to his father's plaintive calls, the trees, charged with the sense of identification with Śuka's all-embracing universal spirit, respond with gusto saying, "Here I am, father!"<sup>35</sup> This episode that is narrated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* indisputably proves that the theory of *ātman-brahman abheda* is not a figment of imagination, but a Super-sensuous Truth capable of intimate realisation and personal experience.

The three-limbed maxim, "*Brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā, jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ*" may be considered the *magna carta* of Advaita. It is an unimpeachable dictum that is buttressed by the triple evidence of *śruti*, *yukti* and *anubhava*.



## NOTES

1. *Brahma-Jñānāvalimālā*.
2. *Bhagavadgītā*, II-16.
3. *ibid.* II-70.
4. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II-1-1.
5. Śaṅkara's Commentary on *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II-1-1.
6. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI-1-4.
7. Śaṅkara's Commentary on *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, II-1-1.
8. *ibid.* II-1-1.
9. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VII-23-1.
10. *ibid.* VI-2-1&3.
11. *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*, 1.
12. *Gītā*, VII-7.
13. *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad*, IV-9.
14. *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā*, II-6.
15. Śaṅkara's Commentary on *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā*, II-6.
16. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II-2-15.
17. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Skandha I, Chapter IV. 4-5-6.
18. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II-3-1.
19. English translation by V.Panoli of Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Kaṭha Up.* II-3-1.
20. *Bhagavadgītā*, XV-1.
21. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, I-7.
22. *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, III-1-3.
23. *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, I - 4 - 10.
24. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI - 12 - 3.
25. *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, I - 2.

26. *Aitareya*, 3 III-1-3. English translation by V.Panoli of Śaṅkara's Commentary.
27. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, I-4-10.
28. *Viveka-Cūḍāmaṇi*, 32.
29. *ibid.*,
30. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI-8-7. English Translation by V.Panoli of Śaṅkara's Commentary.
31. *Principal Upaniṣads*, by Dr. S.Radhakrishnan, p.459.
32. Śaṅkara's Commentary on *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, I-3
33. *ibid.*,
34. *Tao of Physics* by Fritjof Capra. Ch.18., p.329.
35. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Skandha I, - Chapter II - 2.



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**ADVAITA: WHERE THE MYSTICS AND THE  
PHYSICISTS CONVERGE**

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K. Sundararaman\*

“Thus the mystic and the physicist arrive at the same conclusion; one starting from the inner realm, the other from the outer world. The harmony between their views confirms the ancient Indian wisdom that Brahman, the ultimate reality without, is identical to Atman, the reality within.”

Dr.Fritjof Capra In *'The Tao of Physics'* (p.338).

The systematic study of mysticism began with William James' famous Gifford lectures *'The Varieties of Religious Experience'* published in 1902. This was followed by Evelyn Underhill's monumental work *'Mysticism'* in 1911. Dr.Fritjof Capra published his work *'The Tao of Physics – An Exploration of the Parallels between Modern Physics and Eastern*

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*Mysticism*' in 1975. William James is basically a psychologist, and he treated religious mysticism on psychological basis; Evelyn Underhill's study of mysticism was largely on the western theological basis; and Fritjof Capra being a physicist did it scientifically. His '*The Tao of Physics*' is both a landmark and a breakthrough in the study of mysticism in a much more broader perspective. He displayed a deeper and profound understanding of eastern mystical traditions than the other two authors. His painstaking research astounded the west that it became hugely influential as if the west was waiting for such a book from a mastermind. '*The Tao*' has since been translated into more than one dozen languages. Capra's classic explorations into the interconnectedness between modern physics and eastern mysticism (Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism) commanded greater credence by virtue of the scientific intellectual background of the author whose commitment to eastern mysticism was none the less to his commitment to theoretical physics.

These three books have brought about a transformation in the western psyché by redeeming it from its erroneous notion thereto held by it that mysticism was something vague, elusive, mysterious, magical and therefore not worthy of scientific scrutiny. Capra observes, "Meditation was no longer viewed with a ridicule or suspicion, mysticism is being taken seriously even within the scientific community"<sup>1</sup>. The result was the realization that the mystical traditions of the East (which Capra calls 'perennial philosophy')"<sup>2</sup> provides the most consistent philosophical background to modern scientific theories not only in the field of physics but also in



other life sciences. How it all has happened is a matter of abiding interest. For this one has to start from Newton.

Newton held the view that 'Space' was absolute and 'Time' was also absolute and both autonomous. As Stephen Hawking observes in his *'A Brief History of Time'*, "both Aristotle and Newton believed in absolute time.... Time was completely separate from and independent of Space" <sup>3</sup>. This theory suffers from an apparent absurdity because there cannot, by warrant of logic, be more than one Absolute. Absolute doesn't admit of any gradation or division".

Further Newtonian cosmology envisioned a highly mechanistic universe functioning under the rigid laws of gravitation. Another great flaw in the Newtonian cosmological theory was that it didn't reckon the concept of 'time' because it propounded only a three dimensional universe of 'space' considering 'time' as a separate entity.

With the advent of Einstein on the scene with his epoch-making theory of relativity followed by quantum theory – the two pillars of modern physics – the inherent flaw in rigorously mechanistic Newtonian cosmological theory was resolved. "Relativity theory and atomic physics shattered all the principal concepts of the Newtonian world view: the notion of absolute space and time. "According to relativity theory space is not three dimensional and time is not a separate entity. Both are intimately connected and form a four-dimensional continuum, 'space-time'. In relativity theory, therefore, we can never talk about space without talking about time and vice versa" <sup>4</sup>. Hawking affirms in his *'Black Holes and Baby Universes'*:

‘The two new theories completely changed the way we think about space and time and about reality itself’. It shows that time is not a universal quantity which exists on its own separate from space.....space-time is not flat, but is curved by the matter and energy in it. This was Einstein’s greatest triumph.”<sup>5</sup> Thus Einstein’s four dimensional space-time continuum replaced the classical Newtonian three dimensional space and time concept and thereby proved that they both coexist (coeval) and not separately autonomous.

Yet another significance of Einstein’s theory was that it involves human consciousness, i.e. the observer as the focal point in the perception of space-time continuum and thus provides for a relativistic framework. According to Heisenberg, another renowned physicist of the twentieth century, “We can never speak about nature, without at the same time speaking about ourselves”<sup>6</sup>; the observer being an integral part of Nature he observes. Further quantum theory unravelled the atom and probed the sub-atomic structures and discovered particles intrinsically dynamic. As Capra reiterates, “quantum theory has thus demolished the classical concepts of solid objects.... and reveals the basic oneness of the universe. It shows that we cannot decompose the world into independently existing smaller units and further the Cartesian partition between I and the world, between the observer and the observed, cannot be made when dealing with atomic matter”<sup>7</sup>.



There is an interesting anecdote that Capra narrates: <sup>8</sup>

Laplace, the great mathematician, set himself the ambitious task of refining and perfecting Newton's calculations in a book which should 'offer a complete solution of the great mechanical problem presented by the solar system, and bring theory to coincide so closely with observation that empirical equations would no longer find a place in astronomical tables. The result was a large work in five volumes called '*Mecanique Celeste*' in which Laplace succeeded in explaining the motions of the planets, moons and comets down to the smallest details, as well as the flow of the tides and other phenomena related to gravity. He showed that the Newtonian laws of motion assured the stability of the solar system and treated the universe as a perfectly self-regulating machine. When Laplace presented the first edition of his work to Napoleon, so the story goes, the later remarked, 'Monsieur Laplace, they tell me you have written this large book on the system of the universe, and have never even mentioned its Creator.' To this Laplace replied bluntly, 'I had no need for that hypothesis' ''.

This is a proof that even the bright brains of the West didn't think, even at the hypothetical level, of an intelligent cosmic principle sustaining this universe with unfailing rhythm. But 'the Vedic seers visualized a rhythmically moving cosmos... the term '*ṛta*' is derived from the root '*ṛ*' to move'.

The image of the cosmic dance of Śiva (also known as Naṭarāja, the king of dancers) as visualized by Indian seers is a spectacular trans-aesthetic, mystic, metaphoric portrayal of *saguṇa-brahmam* (Īśvara) at it's intensely dynamic state.

Capra observes: 'Śiva, the Cosmic Dancer is perhaps the most perfect personification of the dynamic universe.... the dancing Śiva is the dancing universe; the ceaseless flow of energy going through an infinite variety of patterns that melt into one another....modern physics has thus revealed that every sub-atomic particle not only performs an energy dance, but also *is* an energy dance; a pulsating process of creation and destruction...For the modern physicists then, Śiva's dance is the dance of sub-atomic matter. As in Hindu mythology, it is a continual dance of creation and destruction involving the whole cosmos.'<sup>9</sup>

If the 'Big Bang', as attributed by modern cosmologists, caused the creation of this universe, then what caused the Big Bang? What existed prior to Big Bang?. Western cosmologists and physicists have no answer. "Eastern mystics, on the other hand, seem to be able to experience a higher-dimensional reality directly and concretely. In the state of deep meditation, they can transcend the three-dimensional world of everyday life, and experience a totally different reality where all opposites are unified into an organic whole. When the mystics try to express this experience in words, they are faced with the same problems as the physicists trying to interpret the multidimensional reality of relativistic physics."<sup>10</sup>

It would have become clear from the above that the Western science was slowly but steadily tilting towards the



findings of the Eastern mystical traditions and the West started looking at East with a meaningful glance.

Einstein who strongly believed in nature's inherent harmony played a crucial role in this respect. 'God does not play dice' was his famous quip.

With the discoveries of modern physics, there was a paradigm shift in the thinking among the scientific community; they came face to face with a startling revelation that the classical Newtonian view of the universe as merely a colossal cosmic machine was no longer tenable; the universe was not static but the human consciousness interacts incessantly with a subtle, dynamic, organic, homogeneous and expanding universe. Along with it the Cartesian dichotomy was also dethroned with the discovery that mass and energy were interchangeable. Thus the western science was all set towards searching for a unifying force of this cosmic web.

Of all the mystic traditions of the East, the Vedānta more particularly Advaita Vedānta presents a time-tested cosmological vision of unity and its prolific and profound wisdom provides for a comprehensive framework to contemplate on the unifying force of this universe. Vedānta culminates in Advaita as its crowning glory. Advaitic wisdom is the cumulative genius of Indian philosophic contemplation. The philosophy of Advaita is an integral, elegant, edifying rational doctrine as it positively energizes the human psyche to reach for the higher and, yet higher realms of consciousness towards the transcendental order. No human articulation could have ever achieved better in expressing the ineffable. Bringing the transcendental into the framework of empirical cognition is the toughest task which the Vedānta has achieved

admirably well. So in this respect “Advaita Vedānta is the mystical tradition *par excellence*.”<sup>11</sup>

Advaita admits duality and multiplicity only on the phenomenal plane, while in the transcendental plane it is nothing but One, the Brahman, the Absolute. It holds that the whole universe is Brahman which is both cosmic (*niṣprapañca*) and cosmic (*saprapañca*) and also the substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the phenomenal world. Brahman is, therefore, both immanent and transcendent.

Etymologically the word Brahman is derived from the root ‘*brh*’ meaning big, vast and in the extended sense grow, expand. Stephen Hawking observes:

“The discovery that the universe is expanding was one of the greatest intellectual revolutions of the twentieth century”<sup>12</sup>

This is a belated realization of the ageless wisdom of the Indian seers of Vedānta.

Brahman is both the material and efficient cause of the universe because it creates the universe out of itself. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*<sup>13</sup> says:

“In the beginning all this was but the unmanifested (Brahman). From that emerged the manifested. That Brahman created itself by itself. Therefore it is called the self-creator.”

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*<sup>14</sup> affirms:

“The whole manifested universe is verily the Brahman, the Supreme.



The *Chândogya Upaniṣad* <sup>15</sup> makes a lofty declaration:

“All this is verily Brahman”.

The same Upaniṣad <sup>16</sup> elaborates:

“In the beginning this was Existence alone, One only without a second.”

“That (Existence) saw, I shall become many. I shall be born.”

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* <sup>17</sup> further states:

“From that Brahman which is the self was produced space. From space emerged air. From air was born fire; from fire was created water. From water sprang up earth. From earth were born herbs. From the herbs was produced food. From food was born man and so on.”

The *Aitareya Upaniṣad* <sup>18</sup> says:

“Consciousness is Brahman and the whole universe is impelled by Consciousness.”

We find in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* <sup>19</sup> :

“He knew knowledge as Brahman; for, from Knowledge, indeed, spring all these beings; having been born, they are sustained by knowledge; they move towards and merge in knowledge”

He knew Bliss as Brahman, for, from Bliss, indeed, all these things originate; having been born, they are sustained by Bliss; they move towards and merge in Bliss.

Thus the Upaniṣads account for a highly dynamic universe, not a mechanistic one. The supreme Brahman manifests itself

as the universe through its triple eternal cosmic principle *sat - cit - ānanda* (Being - Knowledge - Bliss).

Advaita Vedānta with its spectacular concept of *māyā* admits the empirical realities of Time-Space-Causal sequence that gives rise to the phenomenally pluralistic universe. Under the spell of *māyā*, human consciousness gets inflected due to its interaction with the four dimensional time-space phenomenology and thus presenting a kaleidoscopic view of the universe the one appearing as many. Incidentally time-space set in the body-mind complex creates cause-effect sequence of *karma* to which the individual soul (*jīva*) is subjected to. As Hiriyanna put it: '*Jīva* is Brahman appearing in empirical dress'<sup>20</sup>. The pluralistic universe perceived by the categorizing and discriminating intellect under the spell of *māyā* is not *asatya* (unreal) but *mithyā* (illusory). So *māyā* could appropriately be termed as phenomenal reality or relative reality or empirical reality.

The famous advaitic analogy 'Rope-Snake', in a limited way, is helpful in understanding the abstruse and esoteric concept of *māyā*. The rope, without itself undergoing any change, serves as the substratum for the appearance of the snake. This superimposition (*adhyāropa*) is the cause for apparent transfiguration (*vivarta*) and not transformation of the rope into a snake. This perceptual fallacy experienced by the subjective consciousness lends only to a momentary reality that lasts till it is dispelled by the dawn of right knowledge. The moment the reality of rope is recognized, the illusory appearance of snake disappears. The elimination of snake



from the rope occurs simultaneously with the advent of discriminative knowledge.

So *māyā* operates as long as the mind (subjective consciousness) dwells within the relativistic realm of time-space continuum. The relativistic physics has discovered “space is curved to different degrees and time flows at different rates at different parts of the universe...the notion of linear flowing time is limited to our ordinary experiences and has to be completely abandoned when we extend this experience”<sup>21</sup>

The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*<sup>22</sup> deals critically with this extension of consciousness into the fourth dimension i.e. *turīya* which lies beyond the three preceding states, viz. waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. The plane of *turīya* is a state of transcendental consciousness freed totally from the temporal order of time-space-causality. *Turīya* is said to be “the seer of everything” (*sarvadṛk*), all-pervasive (*vibhuh*) and self-effulgent (*devaḥ*) and therefore does not require to be illumined by any instrument of knowledge. In that most exalted and sublime plane, as Evelyn Underhill puts it, “the soul in ecstasy experiences the Eternal and in complete harmony with the transcended order”<sup>23</sup>. In that mystical state, the soul experiences the all-pervasive reality realizing itself either a part of it (*savikalpa*) or one with it (*nirvikalpa*). The knowledge of Brahman in the state of *Turīya* is therefore supernal and not super-natural. The soul having reached its apex experiences the mystic union with the Divine and the

seers of the Upaniṣad sing in ecstasy 'I am Brahman' (*aham brahmāsmi*)<sup>24</sup>, 'This ātman is Brahman' (*ayaṁ ātmā brahma*)<sup>25</sup>. Śaṅkara's resounding Advaitic dictum in his *Brahmajñāvalī mālā* 'Brahman alone real, the soul is no other than Brahman (*brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ*) is a valid experience of the mystics.

A simple but a pregnant metaphor of a banyan seed was enough for the seer- teacher of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*<sup>26</sup> to impart the wisdom of the Eternal.

Fetch a fruit from the banyan tree;  
 It is this one, venerable sir;  
 Break it;  
 It is broken, venerable sir;  
 What do you see in it?  
 Venerable sir, there are the grains more atomic;  
 Dear son, break one of them;  
 It is broken, venerable sir;  
 What do you see here?  
 Nothing whatsoever, venerable sir;  
 To him, he said, O good looking one,  
 This subtleness which you cannot perceive,  
 Of this subtleness of the size of an atom,  
 O good looking one, stands this huge banyan  
 Tree, Have faith, O good looking one, That  
 Which is this subtle essence, all this has got  
 That as the self  
 That is Truth, that is self,  
 'Thou art that', O Śvetaketu.



Almost following the methodology of an atomic physicist the seer- teacher of the *Chândogya Upaniṣad* wants the seeker to penetrate deeper and still deeper to the sub-atomic level where the physicist and the mystics converge.

The absolute of monism of the Advaita Vedānta thus centuries before anticipated the discoveries of modern physicists and cosmologists.

#### NOTES

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2. *ibid*, p-17.
3. Hawking W. Stephen: *A Brief History of Time* (From the Big Bang to Black Holes), Bantam Books, Toronto, 1987, p.18.
4. Capra, cited above, p.71.
5. Hawking W. Stephen: *Black Holes and Baby Universes and Other Essays*, Bantam Books, Toronto, 1993, pp.62, 65-66.
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7. *ibid*, pp.78&79.
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13. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (hereafter *TU*), 2.7.1.
14. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 2.2.11.
15. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (hereafter *CU*), 3.14.1.
16. *CU*, 6.2.1-3.
17. *TU*, 2.1.1.
18. *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, 3.1.3.
19. *TU*, 3.5.1; 3.6.1.
20. Hiriyanna, M: *Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, Blackie & Son, Bombay 1978, p.160.
21. Capra, cited above, p.197.
22. *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* (hereafter *Mā.U*) 1.10.
23. Underhill, Evelyn: *Mysticism, One world*, Oxford, 2006. Preface, p.xiv.
24. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 1.4.10.
25. *Mā. U*, 2.
26. *CU*, 6.12.1; 6.13.1.



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**DOXOLOGY OF DEVA-VIDYĀ PRAKĀŚA**

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*(A Theological Reflection of Advaita Vedānta)*

J. Devanathan\*

[1]

A hermeneutic turn in Post-Śaṅkara era precisely lies with the polemics of Vidyāraṇya, a venerable Vedāntin who flourished during the early quarters of 14<sup>th</sup> CE hailing from the Vijaya Nagara Empire. Contribution of Vidyāraṇya to Advaita Vedānta is most significant as displayed in his magnum opus, *Anubhūti Prakāśa*, which conveys the quintessence of all Upaniṣadic doctrines. *Anubhūti Prakāśa* mainly elucidates twelve major Upaniṣads in twenty chapters, the last of which deals with *Nṛsimha Tāpinī*. This Upaniṣad belongs to the

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*Atharvaṇa Veda* and is divided into two portions namely *Pūrva Tāpinī* and *Uttara Tāpinī* commented upon by Śaṅkarācārya and Vidyāraṇya respectively. Apart from this Vidyāraṇya makes a concise note on the essentials of this Upaniṣad in the last chapter of *Anubhūti Prakāśa* named *Devavidyā Prakāśa*. This work is a metrical exposition comprises of 156 verses. Vidyāraṇya designs the central theme of *Devavidyā Prakāśa* with the doxology of Lord Nṛsimha wherein he proficiently portrays the theological reflections of Advaita Vedānta. Making a pivotal shift in treating the prime concerns of the Upaniṣad, the author throws light on the method of *Upāsanā* (both *Saguṇa* and *Nirguṇa*) related to Doxastic practices of Nṛsimha Vidyā and delivers the nuances of the *Tāpanīya* Upaniṣad, which is pregnant with its unique subtleties. The entire work participates in enumerating the peripherals of doxastic practices vide, liturgy of Upaniṣads, method of worshipping the deity, evaluating mystic formulae etc while it attempts to augment seminal significance to its mystical contents. With this theological rigour, *Devavidyā Prakāśa* begins to endeavour on the mystic syllable 'OM' - the *Praṇava* and the pre-eminent sacred *Mantra rāja* (King of all Mantras) of Nṛsimha, in the voice of Prajāpati. The character of the sacred syllable serves a harmony between mystic theology and philosophy *per se* within the realms of Vedānta. Both *Praṇava* and the *Mantra rāja* are the eternal principles, regarded as the Ultimate zeal of the four Vedas those which shines with its own highest profundity and brilliance.



*Upāsana* in Advaita Vedānta is the most significant concept which Śaṅkara points out in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* to say 'Upāsana is the uninterrupted flow of the same mental state in regard to an object prescribed by the Śāstras' and more clearly in the *Gītā Bhāṣya*, Śaṅkara defines the term *Upāsana* as 'it is a prolonged state characterized by the flow of oil, after mind takes up a theme as its object (of meditation) in conformity with the Śāstraic prescriptions' (BG XII.3 (1)). *Upāsana* is taken to be two-fold, *Saguṇa Upāsana* and *Nirguṇa Upāsana*. Doxastic meditation on the conditional Brahman ie, *Saguṇopāsana* is the cause for the *Nirguṇopāsana* too as the both are not mutually exclusive by definition. Dharmarājadhvarīndra, in his *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* makes a pivotal note to say 'when the minds are brought under control by the practice of (doxastic) meditation on the conditioned Brahman (*Saguṇa Brahman*) that very unconditioned Brahman, divested of the superimposition of limiting adjuncts, directly manifests itself'. In the earlier portion (*Pūrva*) of *Nṛsimha Tāpiniya Upaniṣad*, Prajāpati prescribes the seekers with the personal worship of Lord Nṛsimha - the *Saguṇa Upāsana*. In the later portion (*Uttara*) of the same Upaniṣad, Prajāpati elaborately teaches the mode of *Nirguṇa Upāsana* in accomplishing the final state of emancipation. Vidyāraṇya tracks on the later portion, envisaging the identity of *Nirguṇa Brahman* with the inner Self, subtlest of all existence<sup>1</sup>. Here *Pranava* is meditated upon as the aggregate of entire Universe and the conglomerate of individual souls and hence is regarded as a pure matter of subjective Consciousness. To begin with



Vidyāraᅇya portrays *Praᅇava* as the object of all contemplation that finally resolves in the true nature of eternal Consciousness, which alone remains to be real. *Mantra rāja* on the other hand in the sacred formula (in *Anuᅇtup* metre - 32 syllables) that formulates the description of Lord Nᅇsimha whose essential nature is non-different from the supreme Brahman. Contemplation on this *Mantra rāja*, as the apotheosis revealed<sup>2</sup> is - *ātmānam mantra rāje dhyāyan ... Brahmarūpo Nᅇsimhaᅇ syād* (DP verse 81). Doxology of *Devavidyā Prakāᅇa* delineates the discrimination of ephemeral world from the Supreme Consciousness discerning the identity of micro and macrocosmic existences<sup>3</sup>.

*Praᅇava* comprises of four quarters, vide, waking (*jāgrat*), dream (*svapna*), deep sleep (*suᅇupti*) and the fourth - the *Turīya*. The first three are known to be the states of existence of individual Self (*Triputi*), conditioned by the respective mental states while the fourth is said to be the absolute state of transcendence. Individual soul vested in the first three states of existence; the *involucra* of the migrating souls ascend in routine order in the pathological cycle of transmigration. This mode of metempsychic migration emerges out from Brahman overspread by *māyā*. Contemplating this strategic scheme of evolution and existence of ephemeral truth condition of empirical Universe and the role of individual souls, through the techniques of *Praᅇavopāsanā* and *Mantrarāja Upāsanā* helps to re-ascend the fontal essence of the non-dual Self as Nᅇsimha himself. *Praᅇava* is composed of three sacred letters (*akᅇarāᅇ*) that are indivisible and inter-related. The three *akᅇarāᅇ* are *A'kāra*, *U'kāra* and *Ma'kāra*. The collective aggregate of the



sounds of these three indivisible *akṣarās* makes the syllable *OM*. The three letters denotes the first phase of phenomenal existence of the individual soul as *Tripuṭi*. A'kāra denotes *jāgrat*, U'kāra the *svapna* and Ma'kāra the *suṣupti*. *OM*'kāra echoes the state of *Turiya* - the fourth. The Sonic correspondence of these three states with respect to the three letters of *OM* is further threefold vide, *vaikharī*, *madhyamā* and *paśyanti* respectively. *Turiya* is connoted with the final state of Sonic reality, the *Para*. Here *vaikharī* is the gross sound aspect, which is the aspect of *Viśva*, the designate of waking state. Similarly *madhyamā* the subtle and *Paśyanti* are the aspects of *Taijasa* and *Prājñā*, the designates of *svapna* and *Suṣupti* respectively. Supreme Self in these aspects are known to be *Vaiśvānara*, *Hiraṇyagarbha* spirit and *Īśvara* in the respective three conditioned states of macrocosmic existence<sup>4</sup>. The aspect of *Vaiśvānara* permeates all beings; the *Hiraṇyagarbha* in the spirit of passions exhibits himself in dreams while the *Īśvara* remains still in mass consciousness and bliss. The distinguished ātman in the final quarter of *Turiya* is united with the *OM*'kara *nāda*, which is attributeless - *Niśśabda*<sup>5</sup>. Maitrī Upaniṣad in detail deals with the concept of the soundless state of each of the above states constitutes of four sub states as Vidyāraṇya says,

'The three states are respectively the experiments of the waking state, dream world and the bliss. In order to elucidate all; Self is distinguished into four equivalent parts'<sup>6</sup> [pp.753].

The equivalent parts in each state are *jāgrat-jāgrat*, *jāgrat-svapna*, *jāgrat-suṣupti* and so on. Endeavouring each of these states by the *Upāsanā* becomes mandatory for all seekers of truth. Waking state is where the knowledge of empirical transactions and its object contents are known through the association of sense organs. The *Viśva* - the knower, experiences the gross objects of the phenomenal world. The state of awareness constitutes of nineteen functional inlets of the waking soul, namely five organs of knowledge, five organs of actions, five vital forces along with fourfold internal factors - *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahamkāra* and *citta*. The macrocosmic Being of these constituents is the deity to be worshipped here.

‘The deity to be worshipped is *Vaiśvānara* who has seven limbs namely head, eyes, mouth, vital airs, middle portion, abdomen and still lower part - the feet.’<sup>7</sup>

*Śruti* calls for the worship of *Vaiśvānara*; one who splendors with the colors of Universe and its appearance; one who throws lustre of knowing Brahman, one who sheds wealth on all directs, one who sustains the vital force of the Self and one who pervades the vast. *Vaiśvānara* is derived from the sense *Viśva+Nara* meaning, he who guides all persons penetrating in them. He is worshipped with seven limbs from head to two feet and hence called *pradeśamātraḥ*. *Vaiśvānara* who is the God who resides in all is not different from one’s own Self and hence he is called *Abhivimānaḥ*<sup>8</sup>. Muthukrishna Sastri in his commentary<sup>9</sup> to this part says that the deity of the gross waking



state controls the awareness which is operative in four equivalent fragments of existence namely *jāgrat-jāgrat*, *jāgrat-svapna* etc.

The second emanation or the second figment of *sūkṣma śarīra* is the deity Hiraṇyagarbha the macrocosmic aspect of dream state whose individual correlate is *Taijasa*. In this state the sense organs cease to operate and that the impressions accrued during the waking state reverberates to project animations known as *svapna*. Hiraṇyagarbha the presiding deity has seven limbs, as Śaṅkara enumerates them to be, heaven as head, sun as vision, fire as face, air as breath, sky as body, sea as lower regions and earth as feet. With five sense organs, senses of actions and vital forces with other four aspects of *antaḥkaraṇa* constitute the mouth. Hiraṇyagarbha in this form is worshipped by the *sādhaka* will attain the *viveka jñāna* and a passionless mind. Finally the one present in deep sleep is the third quarter which is presided by *Īśvara* whose individual aspect of *Prājñā*. There is no sense operation in this state and hence there exists no empirical transactions at all. Mind and other sense organs resolve to unmanifest state in the *Kāraṇa avasthā* of *Īśvara*. *Prājñā* merged in *Īśvara* remains as mere witness rejoicing the mass bliss. This *Īśvara* is worshipped with the seven limbs and he who knows this *Īśvara* comprehends all existence in its causal form. The knower is blessed with the intuitive cognition to re-orient differences to subtle causal state of existence. Worshipper of *Īśvara* himself becomes a *Sarvajñā* - all knower. The fourth state is not a letter but the syllable by itself representing the fourth state of *Turīya* - the unknowable, unspeakable into

which the world passes away, transcending all dualities. The knower or worshipper of this transcendental knows this knowing this coming the knowledge of that by itself. The knower no more knows while the known is not known for itself.

## [2]

*Turiya* in the waking state is known as *Otā*; in the dream state it is known as *Anujñāta*; for in the state of deep sleep it assumes the designation as *Anujñā* and while in *Turiya*, *Turiya* takes the name *Avikalpa*. *Avikalpa* is the supreme state of final emancipation. He who investigates on this state of final release discerns Brahman as the only reality that penetrates into all phenomenal realities. One, who sees himself as immediate and direct Self in terms of Upaniṣadic dictum '*Aham Brahmāsmi*', is known by the name *Anujñāta*. *Anujñā* is one who transcends the subject-object relation that he is no more a knower of Brahman. Being established in *Nirviśeṣa Caitanyam* in the state of pure existence-Consciousness-bliss is known as *Avikalpa (Niḥseṣamāyā hīnah)*<sup>10</sup>. The *Avikalpa* is the last state of supreme ultimate which is immutable and immortal. The three previous designations of *Anujñāta*, *Anujñā* and *Otā* are superimposed on the *Avikalpa*. The deities of these states are constituted in Lord Nṛsimha, who alone remains in the transcendental state of *Avikalpa*, claims the *Uttara* portion of *Nṛsimha Tāpinī*. *Avikalpa* dimension of Nṛsimha is meditated upon as *Īśāgrasa*. *Īśāgrasa* is the essence of the esoteric Nṛsimha *Tattva* laid for the purpose of *Upāsanā*. This *Īśāgrasa* assumes different roles at various levels of *Upāsanā* as *Svarāt*,



*Svayam Īśvarah* (*svambhu*) and *Svapprakāśah*. This role of *Īśāgrasa* connotes the state of *Upāsaka* in the *jāgrat*, *svapna* and *Suṣupti*<sup>11</sup>. *Otā* in the *jāgrat avastha* is *svarāt* where the Self is concealed with names and forms. The consciousness here is the *sthūla Prājñā*. *Anujñāta* of *svapna* takes the name *svayam Īśvarah* where the Supreme ātman enters in its own projections (*vikṣepa*). This is the *sūkṣma Prājñam*. *Anujñā* is the third state in the *Suṣupti avastha*, which remains as *Prājñānaghanam* or the mass consciousness, just as the fire that remains dormant after consuming the object of its target<sup>12</sup>. *Devavidyā Prakāśa* deems the worship of Lord Nṛsimha as the sole mode of *Upāsanā* that which aids to accomplish the progressive liberation. The all-pervading *Praṇava* is made as the seat (*daharākāśa*) of Lord Nṛsimha while the body of the *Upāsaka* is mentioned to be the field of worship. There are six main power centers in the psycho-physical field known as *Piṇḍa aṇḍa* in Tantric terminology, which significantly presents the six points of worship, each of which is presided by a particular *Devatā*.

‘The mystical circle beneath the abdomen, navel, heart, space between the eye brows in the form of a lotus having twelve petals and the place over and above this is the form of lotus having six petals’ [pp771]

The deities presiding over these points are, in order, *Agni*, *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, *Rudra* and *Ānanda*. Nṛsimha is installed in the great throne of the fiery *Praṇava*. The Lord is associated with four main factors of the great seat of *Praṇava*. These four factors are Earth presiding over letter (*mātrka*) A of *Praṇava*



governing the Ṛg Veda, honoured by the sub deities *Vasus*, *Gāyatri* and *Gārhāpatya* in the navel part. Secondly, the *Akāśa* presiding over the *mātrka U* of *Praṇava* governing the *Yajur Veda* honoured by the sub-deities *Viṣṇu*, *Rudras*, *Triṣṭubh* and *Dakṣina* in the region of heart. Next is the *mātrka U* of *Praṇava*, presided by *Svarga* governing the *Sāma Veda*, honoured by the sub deities *Ādityas*, *Rudras*, *Jagatī* and *Āhāvanīya* located between the eye brows. Lastly the world of *Soma* presided by syllable *OM* governing the *Atharva Veda*, honoured by the sub deities *Maruts*, *Virāj*, *Agni* and the Supreme intellect. This seat is known as *Mahā pīṭa* where Lord *Nṛsimha* is installed for worship <sup>14</sup>. Lord *Nṛsimha* is worshiped along with the *mātrka Devatas* of *A*, *U* and *M* as *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Rudra* respectively. *Sarveśa* is deity of the syllable *OM*. *Sarveśa* who presides over the syllable is free from all adjuncts. *A'kāra* of *OM* ' *Kāra* signifies the witness of intellect that which is primal unborn causal entity. This state is described with the terms, *Ajatvāt*, *amaratvāt*, *ajaratvāt*, *amṛtatvāt*, *abhayatvāt*, *aśokatvāt*, *amohatvāt*, *anāsanāyatvāt*, *apipāsatvāt*, *advaitatvāt* etc. The *U'kāra* refers the same Lord as *Sākṣi* - the witness, who dwells in all beings, and is one who is worshipped with the following descriptions vide, *utkr̥ṣtatvāt*, *utpādakatvāt*, *utpraveśṭṛtvāt*, *utthāpayitṛtvāt*, *udraṣṭṛtvāt*, *udutpathāvarakatvāt*, *udutgraśatvāt*, *ududbrantatvāt* and *uduttīrnavikṛtitvāt*. Likewise, the implied sense of *M'kāra* is associated with the identity of Self and Supreme Self, described as *Mahatvāt*, *mānatvāt*, *muktatvāt*, *mahādevatvāt*, *mahesvaratvāt*, *mahāsatvāt*, *mahācitvāt*, *mahanandavāt* and



*mahāprabhutvāt*. He who knows this esoteric essence attains *Svarājya siddhi* the state of Bliss and pure existence devoid of body and senses. Maitri Upaniṣad, elaborates on the *Parā* and *Aparā* aspects of *OM* 'kāra Advaitic position seems to regard that the highest aspect is denoted as *amātra*, the boundless transcendental state of *Praṇava* which Śaṅkara categorically remarks 'OM is both the lower and higher Brahman; when from the highest stand point, the sounds and the quarters disappears in the soundless *OM*'. A similar view is shared even in *Prapañcasāra Tantra* where Śaṅkarācārya in the *Praṇavakalpa* (chapter XIX) treats the nature of *OM* 'kāra identifying it with Viṣṇu that enhances the vision to visualize one's own Self, which remains immutable and impartite. Here Śaṅkara points out five states of consciousness namely, *jāgrat*, *svapna*, *suṣupti*, *Turiya* and *Tadātitha*. The last state is the state of *Mukti* termed *śānta*, which is beyond *Turiya*. *Jāgrat* is the *bīja* - the seed, *svapna* the *bindu*, *suṣupti* is the *Nāda*, *Turiya* is the *śakti* while *Turiyātīta* is the *śānta* where the prior states merges in unity (*bindum nāde tamapi śaktau śaktim tataiva śāntakhye* - *Prapañcasāra Tantra* XIX.43). The Sonic coherence corresponding to these *mātrkas* of *Praṇava* as mentioned earlier are *vaikharī*, *madhyamā*, *paśyanti* and *Parā*. Vidyāraṇya however regards the state of *Parā* to denote *śānta*, which he calls *Sākṣi*. The *devatās* involved in the *Nṛsimha Upāsana* are appraised either with distinctions or with identity with main deity <sup>15</sup>.

In case of distinctions, they are only with respect to the conditional adjuncts - *aupādhika bhedās*. The result of

*Upāsanā* undoubtedly ends with the total non-difference without an iota of any duality. Vidyāraṇya makes this a notable point to say,

‘The differences such as ‘I am different from God’ and ‘God is different from me’ etc are dissolved in the meditative worship of Lord Nṛsimha’<sup>16</sup>

The word *Nṛ* stands for the inner Self, which is the real nature of the individual soul. The word *Simha* stands for the Supreme soul or the pure existence Consciousness. The compound word *Nṛsimha* holds the true import of identity (*aikya*) as the final goal - *parama prayojana*. The very uttering of the name *Nṛsimha*, as Prājapati repeatedly emphasizes in this *Devavidyā*, reveals the primary import of Upaniṣadic *mahā vākyas*. *Nṛsimha* as the non-dual Brahman presents himself to one who meditates upon him with highest devotion and tranquil mind. The *OM*'kara and the *Mantrarāja* mantras potentially establish the non-dual pure Consciousness in the *Upāsakas*. Each of the eleven sacred words<sup>17</sup> in the pre-eminent formula of *Mantrarāja*, shines with the esoteric import that collectively annihilates the nescience. Construing the meaning of this *Mantrarāja* takes the *Upāsaka* beyond the ephemeral realms towards the transcendental state. The first mantra of the fifth *Khāṇḍa* in the *Uttara Nṛsimha Tāpini* clearly establishes the import of *Mantra rāja* as it mentions ‘the letter *A* of *OM* corresponds to each of the 11 *pādas* of *Mantra rāja* to convey a unique sense, as *A*'kāra of *Praṇava* completely pervades the *Mantra rāja* and so does the *U*' *kāra* and *M*' *kāra*. The syllables of *Praṇava* connote the most powerful, valiant,



greatest, all pervading, effulgent, facing all directions, most terrifying, most auspicious, that which ruins death, most pleasant and the only reality aspects of *Mantra rāja*. Vidyāraṇya celebrates *Mantrarāja* as a solemn affirmation of Supreme bliss, which is the highest similitude to the eternal Consciousness, the appellation of the Supreme Self. Just as the bliss being shadowed in the black ammonite image (*Sālagrama*) that serves as image of Viṣṇu <sup>18</sup>, so does the *Mantrarāja* is echoed in the Sonic reality (*śabda Brahman*) identified with Lord Nṛsimha <sup>19</sup>. Vidyāraṇya makes pellucid note on the meaning of *Mantrarāja* thus,

‘I am capable of destroying all dualities, do not allow any impediment; am all pervasive Lord, Self luminous free from any real relation to *avidyā* and its effects, the annihilating factor of bondage.... of nature of bliss, the substratum of every being and one in whom *avidyā* is has been destroyed’ <sup>20</sup> [pp778]

The Supreme soul commands over the individual soul, which is two fold vide, collective and particular<sup>21</sup>. The individual soul has mind as the limiting adjunct, which is called the *Karyopādhi* while *Īśvara* is *māyā sahitha*. *Īśvara* is the resonance of *OM’ kāra* - the *Nāda* which is the *Turīya*, the non-dual transcendental state <sup>22</sup>. The vibrant sound of pre-eminent *Mantrarāja* must be meditated upon identical with that of *Pranava* that reveals the identity of ātman and Supreme Self. Vidyāraṇya teaches this method of meditation and mind control where he says,

'As long as the mind is steady therein, one must remain in that position. Then when the mind swerves from that one must again pursue meditation upon it. Having prostrated to the non-dual entity by uttering the sacred formula, and then uttering the *Praṇava* one must remain steady'<sup>23</sup>

Even when uttering the *Praṇava* in purity of mind, the utterance of *M' kāra* of *OM* must be firmly rooted in one's self<sup>24</sup>. *M' kāra* catalyses the intensity of *Spanda* - the vibration helps to reveal the identity of cosmic and individual aspects of existence. Meditating on the essence of Upaniṣadic dictum (like *Tattvamasi*, *Aham Brahmāsmi* etc) is prescribed in association with the above method<sup>25</sup>. The power of *māyā* constituted by these three *guṇās* possesses the *yonitvam* to sprout out multifarious existences in different gradations. The phenomenal world that is seen by our very eyes is illumined by the conscious self-effulgent *ātman*, while the former has no independent existence. What is seen to be objective is created when it is seen and what is not seen never existed. This is the *Dṛṣṭi Sṛṣṭi* concept, which Vidyāraṇya brings to light here is to show that *ātman* is to be mediated upon as the *Sākṣi* for the mind, which is the storehouse for all latent impressions and one who knows the former different from the later with the knowledge of their realities, becomes Brahman himself. This *Upāsana* in particular makes the mind free from the 'three strands of *guṇas*; *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*'. The phenomenal world that which did not exist before creation and which has no existence after dissolution can have no intermediate existence as well. The soundless *Turiya* is



delineated to be the ultimate abode. The doxastic process of Advaitic meditation involves gradual merging of one stage into the succeeding one by identification until the soundlessness is reached <sup>26</sup>.

### NOTES:

1. Verses 3 & 4, Dr.Misra G, '*Devavidyā Prakāśa*' (hereafter DP), see Chapter XX of '*The Anubhūti Prakāśa of Vidyāranya*' University of Madras, 1992.
2. DP V6 '*Dhyayatvā Brahma sarvamātma Brahmeti vai samāret*'
3. *Ibid*, V82 '*Vivekayogau samproktau....praṇave mantra rāje ca*'
4. *Ibid*, V84-85ab
5. *Ibid*, V63 '*atmānam vivacyata yunjita Praṇave tat*'
6. *Ibid*, V21
7. *Ibid*, V23
8. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (V.15-18)
9. Muthukrishna Sastri, '*śrutisamyojini Tīka*' - comm. on *Anubhūti Prakāśa*, Advaita Sabha, Trichy, 1984.
10. DP V40-43
11. *Ibid*, V73
12. *Ibid*, V73-77, also see *Nṛsimhottara Tāpinī* -2 '*yathā dahyam dagdhva agniḥ*'
13. *Ibid*, V91
14. *Ibid*, V94-95

15. DP V100
16. *Ibid*, V89
17. *Ugram, Vīram, Mahā Viṣṇum, Jvalantam, Sarvatomukham, Nṛsimham, Bhīṣaṇam, Bhadram, Mṛtyumṛtyum, Namāmi and Aham* - the eleven *pādas* of *Nṛsimha Mantra Rāja*.
18. Cf pp167, Gough.A.E, '*The Philosophy of Upaniṣads*', London, 1913.
19. *Nṛsimha Purāṇa, 'śabda Brahma svarūpāya Brahma rūpa dharāyaca; Brahmanē Brahmarūpāya padmanetrāya vai namaḥ!*
20. DP V113cd - 114ab '*ugre vire mahaviṣṇāvujjvale sarvatomukhe. Nṛsimhe bhīṣaṇe bhadre mṛtyumṛtyau na maiyajā.*'
21. *Ibid*, V150
22. *Ibid*, V104 '*NādasTuriyastu OM' kāraḥ tasyānte sphuradadvayam*'
23. *Ibid*, V106
24. *Ibid*, V16-18
25. *Ibid*, V138
26. Guy L. Beck, '*Sonic theology: Hinduism and Sacred Sound*' , MLBD, Delhi, 1995



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**'SATYASYA SATYAM' - AN ADVAITIC  
INTERPRETATION'**

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S. Bhuvaneshwari<sup>#</sup>

**Introduction**

The Ajātaśatru brāhmaṇa<sup>1</sup> of *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* reveals the 'secret' name of Ātman, the Absolute Truth as '*Satyasya Satyam*', which may seem to suggest a dichotomy between the transcendental truth and empirical truth culminating in dualism. The Upaniṣadic method of superimposition found in Uktha<sup>2</sup> brāhmaṇa concludes with negation in *Mūrtāmūrta*<sup>3</sup> brāhmaṇa, revealing *Satyam Brahman*. In Uktha brāhmaṇa the gross body is described as a mass with name and form

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\* Based on the Classes on *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* conducted by Svāmi Paramārthānanda.

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which is titled 'satyam'. The *prāṇa* in the gross body is given the name 'amṛtam'. The ontological exposition of gross and the subtle body is mentioned as *prāṇā vai satyam teṣāmeva satyam*, which is commented in the following two brāhmaṇa-s. Thus, these three sections <sup>4</sup> are analysed here from the view point of Advaita to arrive at the implication of the 'secret' name 'Satyasya Satyam'. Ānandagiri <sup>5</sup> extracts the content of these three brāhmaṇa-s.

In his introductory commentary to Ajātaśatru brāhmaṇa, Śaṅkara differentiates the content of knowledge from the content of nescience that is the purport of the Upaniṣads. The non-dual nature of Self, declared in the *mahāvākya*, is the content of knowledge whereas the content of nescience is knowledge of plurality as reality. Śaṅkara contrasts the *prāṇa* or *amṛtam* based on the conditioning factors, which is one and varied. *Prāṇa* in the microcosm, the content of nescience is of two kinds:

(i) *Antaḥprāṇa* - the subtle body is both luminous and immortal. It is luminous since it illuminates the gross world and is immortal since it survives the gross body.

(ii) *Bāhyapṛāṇa* - the gross body is non-luminous and mortal. It is non-luminous due to its incapacity to illumine the gross world and mortal as it is subject to birth and death.

In the macrocosmic universe, *prāṇa* manifests as *Virāt*, *Vaiśvānara* and *Hiraṇyagarbha* and this difference is due to the conditioning factors.



The *prāṇa* manifesting at the microcosm and the macrocosm is Saguna Brahman considered as the highest truth by Gārgya, who met King Ajātaśatru to teach this highest truth. Ajātaśatru initially received this teaching but later declared the truth to be other than the Saguna Brahman. Gārgya unaware of this submits to Ajātaśatru in order to gain the knowledge of Nirguna Brahman. The method of teaching the absolute truth is a progression from known to unknown, namely, '*avasthā traya sākṣī*'. Śaṅkara presents Gārgya as *pūrvapakṣa* since he knows the content of nescience and Ajātaśatru as *siddhānta* who taught the content of knowledge.

## I

Ajātaśatru reveals the nature of Ātman as the substratum from which all beings originate, are sustained and unto whom all resolve, like thread originating from a spider (the material world is non-different from Brahman) and like sparks emitting from fire (essential oneness of material cause and effect). This Ātman is given a secret name (*tasya upaniṣat*) '*Satyasya Satyam*'; the former '*Satyam*' is explained as *prāṇa* and latter '*Satyam*' as absolute truth than *satya prāṇa*.<sup>6</sup>

### **Tasya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya**

Śaṅkara answers the question raised with reference to '*tasya*'<sup>7</sup> as denoting Brahman or Jīvātmā. Two different views are presented and the Advaitic standpoint is explained:

**View 1** - The word 'Ātmā' (II.1.20) refers to Jīvātmā and the special name qualifies Jīvātmā. Ajātaśatru, who proceeded to teach the highest truth to Gārgya, approached a sleeping person and revealed that Ātmā (individual self) is the cause of

the universe. Since the word 'Brahman' does not occur in this brāhmaṇa, the word Ātmā is to be understood as referring to Jīvātmā, the doer and enjoyer, who is the cause of this universe. The *Upaniṣad* (II.1.20) itself reveals that the bound individual self and not Brahman as the creator of this universe. The *mahāvākya* 'I am Brahman' also refers to the bound individual self.

**View 2** - '*Satyasya Satyam*' which is the secret name of Brahman is different from Jīvātmā. In the analysis of deep sleep state, Ajātaśatru focused on the abode of Jīvātmā during sleep. The Jīvātmā, during deep-sleep abides in the heart-space. This implies that the unbound, infinite Brahman is the abode of bound Jīvātmā during deep-sleep. Moreover, Ajātaśatru had used the pronoun 'tat'<sup>8</sup> after introducing the abode of Jīvātmā in sleep, who is Brahman or Paramātmā. Paramātmā who is different from Jīvātmā is referred to as the cause of the universe. In this view, the *mahāvākya* is treated as mere glorification (*arthavāda*) and ignored.

Śaṅkara dismisses the above views. According to the first view, the limited individual is considered as the cause of the universe and the all-pervasive, omniscient Paramātmā is rejected. In the second view, the omniscient Paramātmā who is considered as the creator of the universe is different from the individual self. The *Siddhānta* arrived at is that the omniscient Paramātmā who is non-different from the limited individual self is the cause of the universe. On this statement of identity between the omniscient and the individual self, two issues are raised by the opponent.



**Refutation of Advaitin's Aikyavāda**

1. The limitation of the individual self is experienced and the omniscient nature of the Paramātmā is declared in the scriptures. If Advaitin claims, identity of the individual self with that of Paramātmā, then, Paramātmā would become bound. (*Paramātmā saṁsāri*).

2. If it is argued that the all-pervasive Paramātmā is non-different from the individual self and therefore the individual is not bound, then the teachings of the scriptures becomes redundant. (*śāstropadeśa ānarthakyaṁ*).

3. The Bhedābhedavādin<sup>9</sup> replies: Clay, the cause of pot, is different from pot and at the same time since clay cannot be separated from pot, clay is non-different from pot. Clay and pot are not synonymous as there is difference in their name, form and utility. There is identity and difference between the cause (clay) and effect (pot). In the same manner, Jīvātmā and Paramātmā are both identical and different. The relation is that of difference and non-difference. Jīvātmā cannot be separated from Paramātmā being an effect and Jīvātmā cannot be identical with Paramātmā due to distinct characteristics.

Śaṅkara refutes the Bhedābhedavādin by dividing the above argument into three possibilities:

Possibility 1 - There are innumerable lumps of clay and one such lump is modified into a pot. Similarly, there are many Paramātmās (*jāti*) from which Jīvātmā is produced from one Paramātmā. That Paramātmā which is the cause of an individual soul is related non-differently and other Paramātmā-s continue to be different from this Jīvātmā. This is explained: If  $P_1$   $P_2$   $P_3$

$P_4$   $P_5$   $P_6$  .....  $P_n$  are Paramātmā *jāti* and if  $P_5$  is the cause of  $J_1$  (Jīvātmā) then  $P_5$  and  $J_1$  are identical.  $J_1$  is different from  $P_1$  to  $P_4$  and  $P_6$  to  $P_n$ . This possibility is untenable due to non-existence of such a Paramātmā *jāti*.

Possibility 2 - Paramātmā modifies to become Jīvātmā, just like milk modifies to become curd. This possibility is also ruled out since Paramātmā is all-pervasive, not subject to modifications.

Possibility 3 - A part of Paramātmā modifies to become Jīvātmā (*ekadeśavikāra*) and in such a case both difference and identity relation is plausible. This possibility is also unacceptable since Paramātmā is partless and eternal.

Regarding the third possibility, the *Bhedābhedavādin* further argues that beings emerge from Brahman like sparks emitting from fire. This instance reveals *bheda-abheda* relation and hence the third possibility is acceptable.

Śāṅkara replies: If it is conceded that Paramātmā has parts (*sāvayava*) Paramātmā will be subject to modification and destruction. This is untenable since the co-existence of parts and eternity in the same locus is contradictory. Moreover, there are certain norms in interpreting an example, especially those cited in the scriptures. While analyzing an example given by the scriptures, firstly, the 'uniqueness' indicator factor is to be maintained. Secondly, the unique knowledge gained from the scriptural example should not contradict the worldly experience and thirdly, scriptures cite worldly examples to reveal the transcendental reality. Thus, in the case of 'spark-



fire' instance the intention is to reveal the oneness of their essential nature, that is, both fire (cause) and spark (effect) are essentially one with the same characteristics namely, heat and light. Thus, the Upaniṣad reveals the identity of individual with the macrocosm through the 'spark-fire' example. In case one perceives plurality it is due to the conditioning factors, the essential nature is non-dual.

*Bhedābhedavādin* argues: If Advaita-knowledge is the purport of the scriptures then four untenabilities arise in such an interpretation. They are as follows:

1. The individual self is experienced as bound and limited. Such a bound individual cannot be of the nature of Brahman. If this is the teaching of the scriptures then there is the defect of self-contradiction. (*svārthaviḥatikatvaṁ*).
2. Karmas become redundant due to non-existence of bound individual self. (*aprāmāṇyaṁ*).
3. Plurality and differences experienced in the world cannot be accounted for. (*pratyakṣa pramāṇa virodha*).
4. The differences between individual souls are because of varied qualities. Such experiences cannot be validated. (*anumāna pramāṇa virodha*).

Śaṅkara dismisses the above four untenabilities pointed out by *Bhedābhedavādin*.

1. Upaniṣad is consistent and non-contradictory in revealing non-dual Brahman. The description of bound individual selves should be considered as *anuvāda vākya*.

2. The karmas described in Vedapūrva deals with means and ends relationship between karma and its results. This portion does not declare duality as real or false. Hence karma section cannot contradict the knowledge imparted by the Vedānta. Vedapūrva is a valid source in revealing the means-end relationship of action and its results.

3. Experience of plurality is not a proof for plurality. For instance, division of space is experienced in an enclosed area but actually space is one indivisible entity. Moreover, perceptual difference in self is not possible since self is imperceptible.

4. The contradiction with regard to inference pointed out is refuted in two stages:

(i) The plurality of selves is inferred without explaining who performs the action of inference.

(ii) Since inference is based on perception, the reason or *hetu* cannot be known from imperceptible self.

Thus, *tasya upaniṣat satyasya satyam* is the 'secret' definition of Jīvātmā who is non-different from Paramātmā, and this witness principle of the three states of experiences is the cause of the universe. The statement *prāṇā vai satyam teṣāmeva satyam* is commented in the following sections.

## II

The *prāṇa* upaniṣad or the secret name of *prāṇa* is 'śiśu'. Śaṅkara justifies this secret name. As a child is free from extrovertedness, the vital air is free from defects in



the form of attachment and hatred. Vidyāraṇya in his *Vārttikasāra*<sup>10</sup> substantiates such a justification.

The mantra<sup>11</sup> describes *prāṇa* or *śiśu* as associated with four aspects:

- a. *Prāṇa* is in the body (*ādhāna*)
- b. *Prāṇa* is located in head where there are seven sense organs (*pratyadhāna*).
- c. *Prāṇa* is tied to a pole (*sthūṇā*)
- d. The rope is *annam* or 'food'.

While defining '*Satyasya Satyam*', the word '*satyam*' firstly refers to *prāṇa* and *prāṇa* was described as '*prāṇā vai satyam*'. In this section, *prāṇa* is defined as an assemblage of instruments for action (*kāryakaraṇasaṅghāta*). This amounts to saying that *prāṇa* is real, that is, the microcosm and the macrocosm are real. This disproves the knowledge of Advaita. Thus, the word '*satyam*' in relation to *prāṇa* is examined in the *Mūrtāmūrta brāhmaṇam*<sup>12</sup>. Vidyāraṇya in his *Vārttikasāra*<sup>13</sup> states that the word *satyam* reveals Brahman alone, and *prāṇa* is an incidental, relative truth only.

The statement '*prāṇā vai satyam*' do not intend to explicate that *prāṇa* is real. The world consists of gross (*mūrta*) and subtle forms (*amūrta*). The universe in gross and subtle nature is said to be '*satyam*'. The word '*Satyam*' is split as '*sat*' referring to the gross universe and '*tyam*' referring to the subtle universe.<sup>14</sup> The world is '*satyam*' on the ground that it consists of gross and subtle forms; it is unreal, as the word '*satyam*' denotes unreality, being an aggregate of '*sat*' and

'*tyam*'. Upaniṣad does not directly declare the unreality of the world, but later while revealing Paramātmā, the Upaniṣad negates the gross and the subtle universe. That which is sublated is unreal. Since the world is negated by the Upaniṣad the world is said to be unreal. The negation of the gross and the subtle universe is done through the famous statement; '*neti, neti*'. Thus, by the application of the method of superimposition and negation, the unreality of the world is proved.

The gross and the subtle universe are classified and named as follows:

<i>Mūrta</i> (gross)	<i>Amūrta</i> (subtle)
<i>Martyam</i> (Perishable)	<i>Amṛtam</i> (Relatively imperishable)
<i>Sthitam</i> (Limited)	<i>Yat</i> (Not limited)
<i>Sat</i> (known by sense organs)	<i>Tyat</i> (imperceptible by sense organs)

*Vāsanās* or the impressions of past experiences registered in the mind belong to the subtle universe. These impressions also are negated while the subtle universe is negated. Upaniṣad mentions '*puruṣasya rūpaṁ*'<sup>15</sup> intending that impressions belong to the mind. In this context, Śaṅkara points out the fallacies of three schools and arrives at the meaning of the word '*Puruṣa*' as the mind, the dependent matter to which the impressions belong.

### **Puruṣasya rūpaṁ bhāṣya**

1. Yogācāra explains that the word '*puruṣa*' refers to self which is nothing but a series of cognition and the '*rūpaṁ*' refers to the impressions. This view of Yogācāra is



unacceptable since according to Advaita, the Self is of the nature of eternal consciousness.

2. The Nyāya school refers to the word '*puruṣa*' as the self and '*rūpaṁ*' as quality. For Advaitin, the Self is devoid of qualities and the qualities experienced belong to the mind.<sup>16</sup>

3. According to the Bhedābhedavādin, the word '*puruṣa*' refers to the individual self and the word '*rūpaṁ*' denotes varieties of experiences. Śaṅkara dismisses this view as fallacious. If individual self is considered to be the meaning, then, the question that arises is whether the individual self is different, identical or part of Brahman. In all the three cases, there is inconsistency as shown below:

a. If the individual self is different from Brahman, then the Vedic statements revealing identity will become redundant.

b. If the individual self is identical with Brahman, then it would mean that Brahman possesses impressions, like the individual self. The limitations of the individual self will be experienced by Brahman. Moreover, the impression or *vāsana* is categorized under subtle universe. If *vāsana* is to be categorized in a third division then it contradicts the statement '*dve vāva brahmaṇo rūpe*'.<sup>17</sup>

c. If the individual self is said to be a part of Brahman, this contradicts the Vedic statement that declares self as partless. Moreover, that which has parts is subject to modification and hence non-eternal. Brahman is devoid of modifications and is eternal and hence cannot have individual self as its part.

The view of Sāṅkhya that impressions belong to the mind which exists independently is untenable. In that case, the Upaniṣad cannot negate a matter that is independent. Since upaniṣad negates matter, the view of Sāṅkhya is not acceptable. Moreover, if independent matter is negated then independent Consciousness also is subject to negation. The mind cannot be an independent matter. Thus, the word '*puruṣa*' refers to mind, the dependent matter and the word '*rūpaṁ*' means impressions. The impressions belong to the mind which is categorized under subtle universe that is negated later as '*neti*'.<sup>18</sup>

### **Satyasya Satyam**

After the superimposition of gross and subtle universe and explication of the 'first' *satyam*, Upaniṣad negates the 'first' *satyam* to reveal the 'second' *satyam*. The transcendental reality is revealed by the method of negation.

Śaṅkara points out that, since Brahman gets limited through positive definitions, Upaniṣad adopts the method of negation to reveal Brahman. Brahman cannot be defined through words. (*śabda pravṛtti nimitta abhāvāt*). The significance of negating by the word '*neti neti*' twice is explained by Vidyāraṇya.<sup>19</sup>

The residual factor after the dismissal or negation of the gross and subtle universes is the Witness Consciousness (Brahman) which is *Satyasya Satyam*. Upaniṣad justifies the revelation of Brahman in negative denotation, as there is no other better way of revealing Brahman. (*nahi neti iti etasmāt*



*anyat param asti*) and concludes that the secret name of Brahman is *Satyasya Satyam*. Sureśvara in his *Vārttika* concludes this *Brāhamaṇam* describing the method of negation.<sup>20</sup> The efficacy of '*neti neti*' revealing the non-dual nature of Brahman is depicted by Maheśvara Tīrtha in his *Laghu Saṅgraha*,<sup>21</sup> a gloss on *Vārttikasāra*.

### NOTES

1. Brhadāranyaka (hereafter *BU*) II.1.20.
2. Ibid I.6.3.
3. Ibid II.3.
4. Ibid II.1,2 and 3.
5. Brhadāranyaka vārttika - ṭīkā II.1. Invocatory verse:  
सत्त्वं सत्यस्य यद्ब्रह्म मूर्तामूर्तविलक्षणम्। चिदेकतानं तदहमपूर्वानपरात्मकम्॥
6. *BU* II.1.20.
7. *BU* II.1.20.
8. II.1.17.
9. The School which considers a cause-effect relation between Īsvara and Jiva.
10. शिशुबद्धिषयासङ्गरहितः प्राण इष्यते। वागादीनामिव यतो विषयाऽस्य न दृश्यते॥ vārttikasāra (hereafter *VS*) II.2.6.
11. *BU* II.2.1.
12. *BU* II.3.
13. सत्यस्य सत्यमित्येतन्नाम ब्रह्मावबोधकम्। प्राणा आपाततः सत्याः सत्त्वं ब्रह्मैव वस्तुतः॥*VS* II.1.142.
14. द्वे वाव ब्रह्मणो रूपे मूर्ते चैवामूर्ते च मर्त्ये चामूर्ते च स्थितं च यच्च सच्च त्यच्च।

15. *BU* II.3.6.
16. अविद्या चेदनिर्वाच्या तथा लिङ्गस्थवासनाः। आरोप्यन्तां यथाकाममलिङ्गेऽपि विदात्मनि॥*VS*  
II.3.50
17. *BU* II.3.1.
18. This interpretation is based on the statement *dakṣiṇe akṣān puruṣa*, *BU*II.3.5.
19. अथवाऽत्रेति शब्दादी द्वौ जीवेशोपाधिवाचिनौ। नकाराभ्यामुपाधी द्वौ निषिद्धय ब्रह्म लक्ष्यते॥*VS*  
II. 3.97.
20. अभिधाभिधेयसम्बन्धमङ्गीकृत्य यतोऽक्षरे। न वदित्दपिशब्दोऽत्र साक्षाद्ब्रह्मणि वर्तते॥ *BUV*.  
II.3.242.  
मूर्तामूर्तात्मकं सत्यं प्राणादेः कार्यरूपिणः। तस्याप्येतत्परं सत्यं यत्रेतीत्यवधारितम्॥ *BUV*. II.3.246.  
अतोऽव्याकृतयाथात्म्यं व्याकृतेनोपदिश्यते। सत्त्वस्य सत्वमिति तन्नान्यथा व्यपदेशभाक्॥ *BUV*.  
II.3.251.
21. यथाऽहंब्रह्मेतिवाक्यस्थब्रह्मपदस्य जगत्कारणत्ववाचिनस्तदुपलक्षितचिन्मात्रलक्षकम् एवं मूर्तामूर्तादिप्रपञ्च  
वाचकस्येतिशब्दस्य तद्विशेष्यब्रह्मस्वरूपमात्रलक्षकत्वमित्यर्थः॥ *Laghu Saṅgraha* II.3.95.



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**THE NON-REAL SCENE AND THE UN-SEEN REAL**

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**J. Krishnan**

According to Advaita, the world given in perception is non-real (*mithyā*) and the self which transcends both speech and the mind is the real (*sat*). The word "Advaita" belongs to a class of compounds in which component members designate something else. Accordingly, it means "that wherein there is absence of duality" (*na vidyate dvaitam yatra*). The word "dvaita" signifies the state of being manifold and when applied to the world it suggests both numerousness and diversity in its forms, features, qualities, characters, and aspects. The negative particle "nañ" negates the existence of "dvaita" or duality. In order that the word "Advaita" should not be understood as merely signifying the absence of duality

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(*na vidyate dvaitam*), it is taken to refer to the substratal reality wherein there is absence of duality. It may be added here that one of the names of Buddha recorded in the *Amarakośa* is “*advaya-vādī*”, i.e., the one who advocates the theory of “*Advaita*”.<sup>1</sup> According to Buddha, the momentary consciousness too, the series of which constitutes the soul, does not exist. He does not refer to the substratum wherein there is the absence of the series of the momentary consciousness. Therefore, according to him, the word “*Advaya*” means mere “absence of duality”<sup>2</sup>. Herein lies the fine shade of difference between the “*Advaya-vāda*” of the Buddha, and the “*Advaita-vāda*” of Śaṅkara. Śureśvara in his *Vārttika* on Śaṅkara’s *bhāṣya* on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* states that the word “*dvaita*” means the state of being manifold, and the expression “*advaita*” points to its negation in a substratum.<sup>3</sup> It follows that the word “*Advaita*” stands for the principle which is the absolute opposite of duality. Yājñavalkya, when asked by Gārgī to describe the substratum wherein *ākāśa*, i.e. “*avidyā*” is located, answers that it is “*akṣara*” or the immutable entity and it is neither gross (*asthūlam*) nor minute (*anaṇu*), etc.<sup>4</sup> Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his *Advaita-ratna-rakṣaṇa* states that the words *asthūlam*, *anaṇu*, etc. must be taken in the sense of that where there is the absence of gross object, minute object, etc.<sup>5</sup> These words do not merely convey the absence of grossness, etc., but point to the substratum of their absence. And that substratum is the self which is *Advaita*, i.e. which is free from all phenomenal elements comprising the world. This text presents the reality as the substratum of the absolute non-



existence of diversity in all its forms, and thereby suggests that it is like nothing, unlike everything, and is free from internal differences.<sup>6</sup>

Another text of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, “*salila eko draṣṭā advaitaḥ*”,<sup>7</sup> states that the self is as clear as limpid water (*salilaḥ*). It is free from difference from objects of the same kind (*ekaḥ*) and also from objects of dissimilar kind (*advaitaḥ*), and it is self-luminous consciousness. This text, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī states, imparts us the knowledge that the self is always of this nature and any other form cannot be treated as real.<sup>8</sup> Yet another text of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *mṛtyoḥ sa mṛtyum āpnoti ya iha nāneva paśyati*,<sup>9</sup> reproves the cognition of duality by stating that duality does not exist really; yet, he who perceives duality will experience phenomenal existence in an unending fashion. Here the text uses the word “*iva*” which means “*as it were*” with reference to the world characterized by duality and points out that the cognition of duality is the cause of transmigratory existence. It thereby implies that cognition of the self as non-dual is the means to liberation.<sup>10</sup>

The *Chāndogya* text, *sadeva saumya idam agra āsīt, ekameva advitīyaṁ*<sup>11</sup> affirms the non-dual nature of the self, the pure being, and the non-real nature of the world. The first part of the text conveys that the Being (*sat*) is associated with the world. The complement of the text states that the Being, i.e. the self is non-phenomenal even then. It is one (*ekam*) only (*eva*) without a second (*advitīyaṁ*). The word “*ekam*” signifies the absence of difference from like objects, and the word *advitīyaṁ*, the absence of difference from dissimilar



objects. Madhusūdana points out that these two words themselves point to the self as free from any relation to the world. Yet, there may linger a doubt in the mind of an uncultivated person that the self possesses one-ness (*ekatva*) as its quality, and there is the substance-attribute relation between the two. In the same way, one may think that it has internal differences like the *prakṛti* of the Sāṅkhya school. In order to obviate these doubts, the particle “*eva*” implying “exclusion” is used. Thus from the complement of the text, “*ekam eva advitīyam*”, it is known that the self is non-dual in the sense that there exists nothing really apart from it.”<sup>12</sup> In the first part of the text, the self is said to be associated with the phenomenal world. And, in the second part, it is stated that it is free from any relation to it. This part of the text refers to the absence of the world. The absence and its counter-positive in one and the same substratum at the same time accounts for the non-real nature of the counter-positive. In the present case, the world and its non-existence are said to be present in the self at the same time. Hence the world is non-real. Further, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text, *neha nānāsti kiñcana*,<sup>13</sup> conveys the absence of the world in general in Brahman. The text, “*na tadaśnāti kiñcana*”,<sup>14</sup> affirms that the self neither pervades, nor is pervaded by anything. When it is said that it neither pervades anything, its relation to the world is negated. And when it is said that nothing pervades it, the relation of the world to it is negated. From this it may be gathered that the self is supra-relational, non-dual, and consciousness by nature. It is absolutely real, i.e. it is unsublated for all time. The world is non-real in the sense that



it is unsublated for a little while. There cannot be any real relation between the two because of their total incompatibility. Sureśvara observes:

There cannot be any real relation between the Self and the not-self, i.e. the world. The former is immutable and supra-relational, and the latter is subject to change and also relational in nature. <sup>15</sup>

From this it is evident that the self is uniform by nature, and is absolutely real; it is free from any relation to the world. It is the substratum of the erroneous cognition of the world and also of the negation of the world. Śaṅkara in his *Adhyāsa-Bhāṣya* states that the excellence or the defect that pertains to the content of the erroneous cognition does not affect the substratum even in a slightest manner. <sup>16</sup> Sarvajñātman, a younger contemporary of Śaṅkara states:

The barren land does not contain the river full of water that is superimposed on it by the deer out of thirst. Similarly the river full of water that is superimposed upon the barren land by the deer does not come into contact with the barren land. <sup>17</sup>

That the world is merely an appearance of the Self and that it is erroneously cognized therein and as such has no independent existence apart from it is known from the texts of the Upaniṣads which declare that the world is Brahman or Ātman, or the *Puruṣa*. The texts are: “*sarvaṁ khalu idaṁ brahma,*” <sup>18</sup> “*atmaiva idaṁ sarvaṁ,*” <sup>19</sup> “*brahmaiva idaṁ sarvaṁ,*” <sup>20</sup> “*idaṁ sarvaṁ yadayaṁ ātmā,*” <sup>21</sup> and “*puruṣa evedaṁ sarvaṁ*” <sup>22</sup>. In these texts, we find that the expressions “*idaṁ khalu*” or “*idaṁ sarvaṁ*” which mean “all this”, and

the words Brahman, or Ātman, or Puruṣa, having similar case-endings are juxtaposed to one another. There is a co-ordinate relation between the two. It is not to convey the identity between the meanings of the two expressions; for, the Self which is the meaning of the expression "Brahman", or Ātman, or Puruṣa is of the nature of sentience, and the world which is the meaning of the expression "all this" is insentient. In view of their mutually exclusive nature there cannot be any identity between the two. Hence the co-ordinate relation between the above expressions is taken in the sense of sublation or "*bādhā*". These texts must be interpreted like the statement "what was (taken to be) a post is a man". The terms constituting this statement, viz 'a 'post' and 'a man' stand in co-ordinate relation to each other. This co-ordinate relation cannot be in the sense of identity between the meanings of the terms. viz. the post and the man, as it is opposed to perception. Hence, it is taken in the sense of sublation (*bādhā*). The import of the statement, therefore, is "what appeared to be a post is only a man, and there was really no post at all". In other words, when it is said that the post is a man, what is intended is not the identity of the two as such, but the sublation of the prior cognition of the post. Similarly, the Śruti texts cited above convey that what appears to be the world is only the Self, and there is really no world at all. The world has no independent reality apart from the self wherein it is superimposed, and hence its appearance will not contradict



the non-dual nature of the Self. Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra* says:

The use of words 'all' and 'Brahman' in co-ordinate relation in the text "All this indeed is Brahman" (CU,3.51.1) is meant for the denial of the world in the self and not for proving that the self is of the nature of the world of diverse forms.<sup>23</sup>

From this it follows that the world is superimposed on the self and it is non-real. The self, therefore, is acosmic or *niṣprapañca*. The *Chāndogya* text "*vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam*"<sup>24</sup> declares that the effects are not real. The word *vikārah* stands for the effects such as pot, etc. The term *ārambhaṇam* means that "by which pot, etc. are being referred to". The word *vācā* means "by the expression such as "the pot exists", the cloth exists.," and the like. Pot, etc., are being referred to by words and they do not really exist. For, they cannot be proved either as existent or non-existent in their respective causes prior to their production; nor could they be identical with or different from their causes. The question arises as to how then there is the usage "the pot has come into existence from clay" which involves reference to the difference between the cause and the effect. The Śruti text answers this question by stating that it is *nāmadheyam*. This means that the verbal usage involving reference to the difference between the cause and the effect is just nominal; it is devoid of any substance. In other words, like the effect, the causal relation too is indeterminable. If it is asked as to what then is real, it is answered *mṛttikā iti eva*

*satyam*. The particle “*iti*” is used in the sense of a qualifying attribute (*prakāra*) too. Here the qualifying attribute is the state of being the material cause. The expression “*mṛttikā iti*” signifies clay as qualified by the state of being the material cause. It alone (*eva*) is real. The particle (*eva*) excludes reality in the case of the effects. It must be noted here that although clay, etc. are said to be real, when compared with their effects, yet they are not admitted to be real or unsublated for all time. For, the Upaniṣad speaks of everything apart from the self as undergoing sublation at the dawn of Self-realization. The Self, however, is taken to be absolutely real, i.e. unsublated for all time, as it is free from any factor that could stultify it. In order to emphasize the exclusive reality of the Self which is the cause of the world, and the absolute non-reality of the effect, viz the world, the Śruti text “*vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam*”, etc., provides as examples the reality of clay, etc., and the non-reality of the effects such as pot and the like. Vidyāraṇya points out:

The Śruti text has said by way of example, the non-reality of the effect, and the reality of clay which is the substratum of pot.<sup>25</sup>

Thus the *Chāndogya* text “*vācārambhaṇam vikārah,*” etc., sets forth the non-reality of the world.

The *mūrtāmūrta-brāhmaṇa* section of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* too explains the nature of the world as non-real. It opens with the statement that “The Self has two forms- corporeal and non-corporeal”.<sup>26</sup> Earth, water, and fire fall under the first category, and air and space, under the



second one. Brahman is thus described as associated with the world. The Upaniṣad then denies of Brahman these two forms by stating “Then there is the instruction, “Not this, not this”<sup>27</sup> It itself explains the import of this text “Not this, not this” by saying “There is no other instruction apart from this one, viz. “Not this, not this.”<sup>28</sup>

It may be asked as to how the Upaniṣad could deny the two forms after ascribing them to the self. The Upaniṣad itself provides the answer by declaring that the secret name of the Self is real of the real.<sup>29</sup> By way of explaining this, the Upaniṣad says, “The *prāṇas* are real: of these, the self is the reality”<sup>30</sup> Here the word “*prāṇāḥ*” signifies the sense organs. It is indicative of their respective objects too. Thus it stands for the whole world which is said to be real. And compared with it, it is said that the self is more real. Reality is unsublatedness. In respect of it, there can be neither superiority nor inferiority excepting by way of being unsublated for all time and of being unsublated for a little while. Hence the Self which is said to be the real of the real is unsublated for all time, while the world which is stated to be real is unsublated for the time being. In other words, the self is absolutely real and the world is provisionally so. Reality that is noticed in the case of pot (say) of the form “The pot is real” (*ghaṭaḥ san*) is not natural to the pot. It is derived from the Self wherein the object is superimposed. The reality of Brahman, however, is natural to it. From this we know that

the world whose reality is dependent upon the reality, i.e. the self is non-real by itself.

The *Vedānta-sūtra*, “*tadananyatvaṃ āraṃbhanaśabdā dibhyaḥ*”<sup>31</sup> describes the relation between Brahman and the world as *ananyatvaṃ*. Śaṅkara explains the term as “non-existence apart from” (*vyatirekeṇa abhāvaḥ*). It means that the world has no independent existence apart from the Self. This may be stated in a generalized form that the effect does not exist apart from its material cause. The world, being only a phenomenal appearance of the Self, through *avidyā* and not an actual emanation from it, cannot have any substantial relation to it. According to Vācaspatimiśra, *ananyatvaṃ* means only the negation of difference or separateness but not affirmation of identity.<sup>32</sup> There cannot be any identity between the Self which is a sentient being with the world which is insentient. From this it follows that the relation between the self and world is neither difference (*bheda*), nor identity (*abheda*), nor difference-cum-identity (*bhedābheda*). It is *durnirūpa* or inexplicable. The experience and the corresponding expression “The pot is real” (*ghaṭaḥ san*) involves reference to the superimposed identity (*ādhyāsikatādātmya*) between the Self and the pot.

It may be objected that we cannot conclude that the world is *mithyā*, as it is opposed to perception. The latter in forms like “The pot is real” (*ghaṭaḥ san*) comprehends the reality of the objects of the world. Sarvajñātman in his *Saṅkṣepaśārīraka* states that there is no conflict between perception and the *mithyātva-śruti*. It is thus: A *pramāṇa* is



that which makes known an unknown object, i.e. an object veiled by *avidyā*. This definition is applicable only to the Upaniṣads whose content is Brahman. It is because, the latter alone, by being self-luminous, can be veiled. Everything else is inert and needs no cause for being veiled. It follows from this that the Upaniṣads alone give the knowledge of the unknown entity, i.e. Brahman which is veiled by *avidyā*. Hence they alone can be termed *pramāṇa* in the strict sense of the term. Perception, on the other hand, has a semblance of a *pramāṇa*. Its object e.g. pot cannot be concealed by *avidyā* as it is inert by nature. But the consciousness delimited by the pot which could manifest the pot is veiled by *tūlāvidyā* or modal ignorance which is a derivative of *mūlāvidyā* or primal nescience. The consciousness delimited by the pot, thus being veiled by *tūlāvidyā* could not manifest the pot. Perception gives rise to a mental state in the form of pot which, by being inspired by the reflection of consciousness in it, removes the *tūlāvidyā*. The consciousness delimited by the pot manifests itself then, and manifests the pot too. It is this function of perception that answers to its validity in ordinary experience. Since perception does not manifest pot, etc. directly in the manner in which the Upaniṣads manifest Brahman, it is called *pramāṇa-ābhāsa*, i.e. the one which has a semblance of the *pramāṇa*. And a *pramāṇābhāsa* can never contradict a *pramāṇa*, viz. the Upaniṣads.

Some other preceptors hold the view that perception gives rise to the knowledge of the form "The pot is *sat*" (*ghaṭaḥ san*). The *sat*-element here does not stand for the reality of pot. On the other hand, it stands for the genus or the universal (*sattā-jāti*), or spatio-temporal relation, or the

essential nature of the object itself. These can be explained as follows:

(i) The *sat* element is constant in the cognitions such as *ghaṭaḥ san*, *paṭaḥ san*, etc. while the objects vary. On this ground it can be admitted that the *sat*-element is the genus or the universal, viz., the *sattā-jāti* present invariably in all the objects.

(ii) The perceptual cognition of the form "The pot is here and now" (*iha idānīm ghaṭaḥ asti*) has for its content the relation of a particular place and time to the pot. And it is exactly this spatial and temporal relation of the pot that is referred to by the word *asti* which stands for the word *sat*.

(iii) The cognition and the corresponding usage "The pot does not exist" (*ghaṭaḥ na asti*) have for their content the absence of pot. The expression *nañ* refers to absence, while the word *asti* which stands for *sat* refers to the essential nature of the object concerned;

From this it is known that the *sat* cognized through perception stands for the universal *sattā-jāti* or spatial and temporal relation or the essential nature of an object. And none of these is in conflict with the non-real nature of an object conveyed by the *mithyātva-śruti*. The Advaitin who advocates the view that the objects are *mithyā* on the authority of the *mithyātva-śruti* do not deny in the case of pot, for example, its generality, or its spatial and temporal relation, or its essential nature. What he denies is unsublatedness for all time in respect of objects. If the *sat*-element cognized in perception stands for unsublatedness, then there will be conflict with the *mithyātva-śruti* which conveys that the objects



of the world are subject to sublation. Since it is not so, there is no conflict between perception and the *mithyātva-śruti*.

Another view is that perception comprehends the objects as *sat* or unsublated. Yet there is no conflict with the *mithyātva-śruti*. It is because unsublatedness is two-fold as unsublatedness for all time, and unsublatedness till there arises the knowledge of Brahman. The former is opposed to *mithyātva* and it pertains to Brahman only. The latter is not opposed to *mithyātva* and it pertains to the objects of the world. Thus perception cognizes the objects of the world to be *sat* or unsublated till there arises the knowledge of Brahman. *Mithyātva-śruti*, on the other hand, conveys that the objects of the world do not have unsublatedness for all time. And hence there is no conflict between the two.

Some preceptors argue that perception comprehends the objects of the world as real; and, so perception and the *mithyātva-śruti* are in conflict with each other. But, just as the subsequent knowledge revealing the true nature of a barren land arises only by invalidating the knowledge of a mirage which arose earlier, so also the knowledge from the *mithyātva-śruti* arises only by invalidating the perceptual cognition which arose earlier. It must be noted here that perception which gives us the knowledge of the reality of objects is contradicted by the *mithyātva-śruti* which conveys that the objects of the world are not real. But, when contradicted, there does not arise the contingency of the perceptual cognition becoming devoid of

any content. It is because objects having empirical reality are provided as the content of the perceptual cognition.<sup>33</sup>

So far, the discussion regarding the non-real nature of the world. The world is non-real in the sense that it will be sublated at the dawn of the knowledge of Brahman. The substratum of the sublation of the world which is characterized by duality is Brahman, i.e. Advaita.

Brahman, the substratum of the negation of the world is unseen, i.e. it is not known. The *Kena Upaniṣad*<sup>34</sup> states that Brahman is that which is not an object of cognition. That alone can be viewed as known or the object of cognition, which is manifested by the self reflected in the mental state (*vṛtti*). In the case of pot, for example, there arises the mental state of its form owing to contact of sense of sight with it. The mental state becomes inspired by the reflection of the Self in it, and it is known as the cognition of pot. It removes the modal ignorance, the derivative of *avidyā* present in the consciousness conditioned by the pot. The consciousness-element in the mental state is known as *phala*. This, for the time being, becomes one with the Self conditioned by the pot, and the pot is revealed by it. The pot is thus *phala-vyāpya* and is designated as 'object' or as the one that is known. In the case of the Self, on the other hand, the mental state which arises from the great sayings of the Upaniṣads, which is inspired by the reflection of Consciousness in it, and which is known as Self-realization, removes *avidyā*. The self, being of the nature of self-luminous Consciousness manifests of its own accord. The Consciousness-element in the mental state which is *phala* is not required to reveal the self. The latter,



being thus not *phala-vyāpya*, is not designated as “object” or as the one that is known. Brahman cannot be known. It can only be realized as identical with one’s true nature. The Upaniṣadic texts are valid in respect of Brahman in the sense that the mental state which arises from them and which is inspired by the reflection of the Consciousness in its removes *avidyā* thus enabling the Consciousness to manifest of its own accord.

To sum up: the Self which is real is not seen, and the world which is seen is not real.

### NOTES

1. *Amarakośa*, 7.14,
2. *Nyāyaratnāvalī* (hereafter *NR*) of Brahmānanda, a commentary on the *Siddhānta-bindu* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, Chaukhambhā Sanskrit Samsthan, Varanasi, 1990, p.110.
3. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad-bhāṣya-vārttika*, (hereafter *BVBV*), 2 Vols. Mahesh Research Institute, Varanasi. 1990, Vol.II, p.120.
4. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* (hereafter *BU*) 3.8.8.
5. *Advaita-ratna-rakṣaṇa*, (hereafter *AR*) published along with the *Advaita-Siddhi*, the *Laghucandrikā*, the *Viṭṭaleśīya* and the *Siddhi-Vyākhyā*, Parimal Publications, Delhi, 1997, p.2,
6. *Ibid*,
7. *BU*, 4.3.32.

8. *AR*, p.4.
9. *BU*, 4.4.19.
10. *AR*, p.6.
11. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (hereafter *CU*), 6.2.1.
12. *AR*, pp 4-5.
13. *BU*, 4.4.19.
14. *Ibid.*, 3.8.8.
15. *BUBV*, 2.1.305.
16. *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*.
17. *San̄kṣepaśārīraka* (hereafter *SS*). ed. by N. Veezhinathan, Madras University Philosophical series, No.18, University of Madras,3.25.
18. *CU*, 3.14.1.
19. *Ibid*, 7.25.2.
20. *Nṛsimhottaratāpinī Upaniṣad*, 7.
21. *BU*, 2.4.6.
22. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (hereafter *ŚU*), 3.15.
23. *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya* (hereafter *VSB*), 1.3.1.
24. *CU*, 6.1.4.
25. *Pañcadaśī* (hereafter *PD*), 13.38.
26. *BU*, 2.3.1.
27. *Ibid*, 2.4.6.
28. *Ibid*.
29. *Ibid*, 2.1.20.



30. *Ibid.*,
31. *Vedānta-sūtra*, 2.1.14.
32. *Bhāmatī* on VSB, 2.1.14.
33. *Siddhāntaleśasaṅgraha*, Śri Appayya Dikṣitendra Granthavali  
Prakāśan Samiti, Secunderabad, 1973, pp.27.
34. *Kena Upaniṣad*, 1.4.

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**THE ĀTMAVIDYĀ-VILĀSA**

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[A Spiritual Autobiography of  
Sadāśiva- Brahmendra-Sarasvatī]

Text with Translation

C. Murugan\*

[1]

चिन्मुद्रितकरकमलं चिन्तितभक्तेष्टदं विमलम्।  
गुरुवरमाद्यं कंचन निरवधिकानन्दनिर्भरं वन्दे॥

I offer my salutations to the pre-eminent primeval preceptor - the one who is ineffable, whose lotus-hand has the *cinmudrā* pose, who is full of absolute bliss, who is pure by being free from the veiling power of *avidyā*, and who vouchsafes to his devotees what is prayed for (by them).

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[2]

वटतरुनिकटनिवासं पटुतरविज्ञानमुद्रितकराब्जम्।  
कंचन देशिकमाद्यं कैवल्यानन्दकन्दलं वन्दे ॥

I prostrate in homage before the primal preceptor, the transcendental one, who resides beneath the banyan tree, whose lotus-hand having the *cinmudrā* pose imparts the supreme knowledge (of the true nature of the *jīva* as the Self), and who is a fresh sprout of bliss which is of the nature of liberation.

[3]

निरवधिसंसृतिनीरधिनिपतितजनतारणस्फुरन्नौकाम्।  
परमतभेदनगुटिकां परमशिवेन्द्रार्यपादुकां नौमि ॥

I prostrate (in reverence and submission) before the sandals of the blessed Paramaśivendra — the sandals which, like a craft, enable the spiritual aspirants to cross over swiftly the ocean of transmigratory existence characterized by unending cycle of births and deaths, and which, like a magical pill endowed with supernatural powers, are alleviative in their actions by confuting the views of other schools of thought.

[4]

देशिकपरमशिवेन्द्रादेशवशोद्भुद्धदिव्यमहिमाहम्।  
स्वात्मनि विश्रान्तिकृते सरसं प्रस्तौमि किञ्चिदिदम्॥

I, whose intrinsic spiritual supremacy is revealed by the power of the instruction given by my adored preceptor, Paramaśivendra, begin to set forth my plenary experience in choice words in order that I may repose in tranquillity in my own Self.

[5]

निरुपमनित्यनिरीहः निष्कलनिर्मायनिर्गुणाकारः।

विगलितसर्वविकल्पः शुद्धो प्रबुद्धश्चकास्ति परमात्मा॥

The Self manifests as pure consciousness by being free from any variety. It is incomparable, eternally free of any activity, and partless. And, it does not have any (real) relation to avidyā and is attributeless.

[6]

स्वाविद्यैकनिबद्धः कुर्वन् कर्माणि मुह्यमानः सन् ।

दैवाद्विधूतबन्धः स्वात्मज्ञानात् मुनिर्जयति॥

He, whose true nature was concealed by avidyā and who (thereby falsely regarding himself as an agent of actions and an experient of the results of actions) was engaged in the performance of actions (and by that means was undergoing cycle of births and deaths), now shines supreme as a Sage having, by God's grace, overcome avidyā by the direct knowledge of his true nature as the Self.

[7]

मायावशेन सुप्तः मध्ये पश्यन् सहस्रशः स्वप्नान्।

देशिकवचः प्रबुद्धः दीव्यत्यानन्दवारिधौ कोऽपि॥

He who, under the influence of avidyā, was in a state of prolonged deep slumber (characterized by loss of awareness of his true nature) and who dreamt during this period



countless dreams of lives (marked by a series of births and deaths), when awakened by the instruction of his preceptor has become the nameless one and revels in his true nature, the seamless bliss.

[8]

प्राकृतभावमपास्य स्वीकृतनिजरूपसच्चिदानन्दः।

गुरुवरकरुणापाङ्गात् गौरवमासाद्य माद्यति प्राङ्गः॥

Having got rid of the characteristics of being an agent, an experient, and a knower which are falsely presented by prakṛti, i.e. avidyā upon his true nature, and having regained his original form, viz., the Self which is real, consciousness, and bliss, the wise one has attained spiritual eminence and remains in a state of speechless rapture. All this is due to the compassionate glances of his preceptor – the Lord Spiritual.

[9]

श्रीगुरुकृपया सच्चित्सुखनिजरूपे निमग्नधीर्मौनी।

विहरति कश्चन विबुधः शान्ताहन्तः नितान्तमुदितान्तः॥

By the grace of the revered preceptor, the wise one is wholly absorbed in his true nature, the Self which is real, consciousness, and bliss owing to intense meditation upon it. Freed from the notion of "I", he rejoices, with extreme mental exaltation, in his own Self.

[10]

गुरुवरकरुणालहरीव्यतिकरभरशीतलस्वान्तः।

रमते यतिवरः एकः निरुपमसुखसीमनि स्वैरम्॥

The one peerless ascetic with his mind having become serene and tranquil as a result of his nearness to the waves of grace flowing from the distinguished preceptor revels at will in the region of matchless bliss.

[11]

श्रीदेशिकवरकरुणांरविकरसमपोहितान्तरध्वान्तः।

विहरन् मस्करिवर्यः निरवधिकानन्दनीरधावास्ते॥

The renowned ascetic whose avidyā has been dispelled by the rays of the sun in the form of the grace of his preceptor remains by sporting in the boundless ocean of bliss.

[12]

जनिविपरीतक्रमतः बुद्ध्या प्रविलाप्य पञ्चभूतानि।

परिशिष्टमात्मतत्त्वं पश्यन्नास्ते मुनिः शान्तः॥

[The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.1.1] states; “From the Self which is the true nature of the jīva (Ātman) there arises space; from space, air; from air, fire; from air, waters; and from waters, earth”]. Adopting the sequence reverse to the one of creation, the sage discerns that each preceding element has no independent existence apart from the succeeding one. In this process, he identifies that the last one; viz., the space



has no independent existence apart from the Self. With undisturbed tranquillity, he remains by experiencing the Self which is the substratum of all the elements.

[13]

जगदखिलमसारं मायिकमेवेति मनसि मन्वानः।

पर्यटति पाटिताशः प्रगलितमदमानमत्सरः कोऽपि॥

Ascertaining by the power of the intellect that the entire world given in perception has no intrinsic worth and is illusory, some one, i.e. the sage with no name and form wanders about with his passions effaced and the ignoble qualities such as egoism, self-esteem, and ill – will exterminated.

[14]

नात्मनि किञ्चिन्माया तत्कार्यं वास्ति वस्तुतो विमले।

इति निश्चयवानन्तः हृष्यति आनन्दनिर्भरो योगी॥

Deeply convinced of the fact that the Self which is pure and simple is free from any real relation to māyā or its effects, the yogin lives in a state of rapture accompanied by a feeling of intense mental exaltation.

[15]

त्वमहमभिमानहीनः मोदितनानाजनाचारः।

विहरति बालवदेकः विमलसुखाम्भोनिधौ मग्नः॥

Possessing childlike qualities (such as innocence, simplicity, and straight forwardness), and winning over thereby the admirations of all, the unparalleled one, freed from the false notions of “I” and “thou”, and immersed in the ocean of bliss, pure and simple, exults therein.

[16]

अवधूतकर्मजालः जडबधिरान्धोपमः कोऽपि।

आत्मारामः यतिराट् अटवीकोणेषु अटन्नास्ते॥

The prince among ascetics, rid of all his accumulated merits and demerits, enjoys spiritual felicity and wanders about in the outskirts of the jungle like the one deficient in the power to see and hear and lacking in intelligence.

[17]

शान्त्या दृढोपगूढः, शान्तसमस्तान्यवेदनोदारः।

रमते रसज्ञ एको रम्ये स्वानन्दपर्यङ्के॥

The ineffable one having a deep sense of beautitude and spiritual greatness by being freed from other sensations (as heat, cold and the like), rejoices in the lovely-couch of his own bliss closely embraced by unclouded tranquillity.

[18]

उन्मूलितविषयारिः स्वीकृतवैराग्य सर्वस्वः।

स्वात्मानन्दमहिम्नि स्वाराज्येऽस्मिन् विराजते यतिराट्॥

Having overcome his foe, viz. the empirical pleasures (derived from the contact of sense organs with their respective objects), possessing absolute detachment (from worldly objects) as his prime wealth, the prince among ascetics shines forth in the transcendental majesty of his Self which is bliss.

[19]

सवितर्यपि शीतरुचौ चन्द्रे तीक्ष्णेऽप्यधो बहृत्यग्रौ।

मायिकमिदमिति जानन् जीवन्मुक्तो न विस्मयो भवति॥



Even if the sun appears as cool, the moon as fiery, and the flames are shooting down from the fire, the enlightened one never gasps in wonderment, as he has discerned all this to be the illusory projection of avidyā.

[20]

अज्ञानवैरिविजयी प्रज्ञामातङ्गमस्तकारूढः।

विहरति संयमिराजः सम-रस-सुखधाम्नि सर्वतो रम्ये॥

Seated on the neck of the elephant in the form of the intuitive knowledge of the Self, and having (thereby) vanquished the enemy in the form of avidyā, the prince among ascetics sports in the expanse of the unconditioned bliss which is pleasing at all times.

[21]

शान्ताहङ्कृतिदोषः सुसमाहितमानसः कोऽपि।

पूर्णेन्दुशिशिरभावः राजति आनन्दसत्यचिद्रसिकः॥

Someone who is very much collected, who is free from the blemish in the form of the false notion of "I", who experiences the Self which is real, consciousness, and bliss, and whose thoughts are as cool as the moon, shines forth supreme.

[22]

तिष्ठन् परत्र धाम्नि स्वीयसुखास्वादपरवशः कश्चित्।

क्वापि ध्यायति कुहचित् गायति कुत्रापि नृत्यति स्वैरम्॥

He is the sage rapt in adoring contemplation of the Self at sometimes, sings somewhere, and dances at some place. He is engrossed in his true nature which is bliss and is absorbed by it. He remains as the Self by transcending the empirical world.

[To be continued]

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**ON THE FIVE DEFINITIONS OF MITHYĀTVA**

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V. M. Ananthanarayanan\*

The world, according to Advaita, is an appearance in Brahman. It has no independent reality apart from it. It derives its existence and manifestation from Brahman which is *sat*, that is, unsublatable at all time. Hence we have the experience and the corresponding expression of the form "The Pot is real" (*ghaṭaḥ saḥ*). And the reality that pertains to the pot which has the false identity with Brahman is *vyāvahārika-satyatva*, that is, unsublatability till the rise of the knowledge of the substratum, namely, Brahman.

The world does not have any independent reality. And the reality that pertains to it is empirical in nature. In this sense it is said that the world is non-real. Another term for non-reality is indeterminability (*anirvacanīyatva*) or falsity (*mithyātvā*).

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The concept of *mithyātva* that pertains to the world is defined in five different ways by the preceptors of Advaita. The five definitions are:

- (i) *sad-asad-vilakṣaṇatvaṃ*;
- (ii) *pratipannopādhanau traikālika-niṣedha-pratīyogitvaṃ*;
- (iii) *jñānanivartyatvaṃ*;
- (iv) *svasamānādhikaraṇāntyantābhāvapratiyogitvaṃ*; and,
- (v) *sadviviktatvaṃ*.

Of these, the first one is framed by Padmapāda, the second and the third are by Prakāśātman, the fourth one, by Citsukha and the fifth one by Ānandabodha. Brahmānanda in his *Laghucandrikā* has identified these, thus:

*ādyam syāt pañcapādyuktam tato vivaraṇodite  
citsukhīyam caturtham syāt antyam ānandabodham  
iti pañcavidham proktam mithyātvam dhvāntanāśakam*<sup>1</sup>

We shall explain these definitions successively.

### I. *sad-asad-vilakṣaṇatvaṃ*<sup>2</sup>

That which has the absence of *sattva* as well as the absence of *asattva* is *mithyā*. *Sattva* is defined as unsublatability in the three divisions of time – past, present and future. *Asattva* is defined as the state of being not manifested as *sat* in any substratum. The absence of both constitute the definition of *mithyātva*. The shell-silver is sublated by the cognition of the form ‘This is shell’ or ‘This is not silver’. Hence it does not have the characteristic of *sattva*. It is manifested as existent in the cognition ‘This is silver’. So it does not have the characteristic of *asattva*. Thus the absence of *sattva* and *asattva* is present in the shell-silver

and so it is *mithyā*. In other words, the silver that appears in a shell cannot be characterised as real, that is, as possessing the characteristic of *sattva*; nor can it be characterised as *asat*, that is, as possessing the characteristic of *asattva*. It is the absence of being the substratum of both *sattva* and *asattva* that constitutes the *mithyātva* of silver.

This definition is based upon the *śruti* text –

*na asadāsīt no sadāsīt tadānīm tama āsīt* <sup>3</sup>

which refers to *tamas* or *ajñāna* or *avidyā* as neither *sat* or *asat*. It may be added here that *avidyā* which is the transformative material cause of the world is *mithyā*. The world which is its effect cannot be but *mithyā*. Padmapāda in his *Pañcapādikā* defines *ajñāna* as *mithyā* and explains the significance of the word as *anirvacanīya*, that is, neither as real or as an absolute nothing. <sup>4</sup>

## **II. pratipannopādhau traikālika-niṣedha-pratīyogitvam**<sup>5</sup>

An entity is *mithyā* if it is the counter-positive (*pratīyogin*) of its absence in the three divisions of time in the substratum wherein appears. In the ‘this’-element of shell, there is the appearance of silver; and, by the cogition ‘This is shell’ or ‘This is not silver’, it is sublated. Thus it is ascertained that there is the absence of silver in the substratum wherein it appeared. The silver is thus the counter-positive of its absence in the substratum wherein appeared. It is, therefore, *mithyā*.

When viewed in the above light, the world appears in Brahman and it is sublated by the knowledge of Brahman. Thus by the knowledge of Brahman there arises the knowledge of the absence of the world in Brahman. The world thus is the



counter – positive(*pratiyogin*) of its absence in the substratum – Brahman wherein it appears. Hence it is *mithyā*.

It may be added here that the absence of the world is real. It should not be thought that if the absence of the world is real, then there would arise contradiction with the fundamental position of Advaita that Brahman alone is real. It is because the world is superimposed or falsely presented upon Brahman, and its absence is but its being reduced to its substratum – Brahman. It is only when we admit an entity as real and as different from Brahman, there would arise conflict with the basic position of Advaita that Brahman alone is real. <sup>6</sup>

It might be said that if the absence of the world were real by being identical with Brahman, then the world too which is the counter-positive of its absence would be real. It is because if the absence of an entity is real, then that entity also must be real. The result of this argument is that there will be two real entities – one, Brahman and another, the world and so the position of Advaita that there is only one reality will be contradicted.

It is answered that there is no invariable rule that if absence is real, then its counter-positive also must be real. The absence of silver in the shell is real but its counter-positive – the silver is not real. In the same way, the absence of the world in Brahman is real but its counter-positive, namely, the world is not real. <sup>7</sup>

This definition is framed on the basis of the *śruti* text –

*neha nānāsti kiṃcana* <sup>8</sup>

which states that there is no duality whatsoever in Brahman.

### III. *jñānanivartyatvam mithyātvam* <sup>9</sup>

Every object exists in a two-fold form; one, in the gross form and another, in the latent form. The gross form of pot (say) may be destroyed by breaking it and yet it would continue to exist in a latent form in its cause, namely, *avidyā* which is the transformative material cause of every object. And this form will be removed by the removal of *avidyā* by the knowledge of Brahman. Even if the pot continues to exist in its gross form yet it will be removed by the knowledge of Brahman. Hence knowledge brings about the removal of both the gross and the subtle form of an effect. The effect is thus the counter-positive of the absence caused by knowledge; and, it is *mithyā*. Thus *jñānanivartyatva* means the state of being the counter-positive of the absence of both the gross and the subtle form that is caused by knowledge.

The shell-silver is the effect of the *tūlājñāna* present in the consciousness conditioned by the 'this'-element. By the knowledge of the form 'This is shell', the silver along with its cause is removed. The silver thus is the counter-positive of its absence caused by knowledge and so it is *mithyā*.

This definition is based upon the *śruti* text –

*tathā vidvān nāmarūpādvimuktaḥ* <sup>10</sup>

which means that the knower of the truth becomes free from name and form, that is, the world. Here with reference to the one who has the knowledge of Brahman, the removal of the world is predicated of. It is the *vidheya*. The factor with reference to which something is predicated of is the *uddeśya*.



Here it is with reference to the one who has the knowledge of Brahman, the removal of the world is predicated of. Hence the one who has the knowledge of Brahman is the *uddeśya*. In the instances where there is the *uddeśya-vidheya-bhāva* relation, it is noticed that the delimiting factor of the characteristic of being the *uddeśya* (*uddeśyatāvacchedaka-dharma*) causes the *vidheya*. For example, when it is said 'one who has wealth is happy' (*dhanavān sukhi*), it is with reference to the one who has wealth, happiness is predicated of. Here the *uddeśya* is the one who has wealth (*dhanavān*). The state of being the *uddeśya* (*uddeśyatāvacchedaka-dharma*) is wealth. And it is noticed to be the cause of happiness which is the thing that is predicated of. In the present case, the one who has the knowledge of Brahman is the *uddeśya*. The state of being the *uddeśya* is the knowledge of Brahman. It is the *uddeśyatāvacchedaka-dharma*. And it causes the removal of the world. Hence from the *śruti* text cited above, the removal of the world is known to have been caused by the knowledge of Brahman; and, it is framed in the form of the definition –

*jñānanivartyatvaṁ mithyātvaṁ*

The world is the counter-positive of its absence caused by knowledge. And it is *mithyā*.

#### ***IV.svasamānādhikaraṇāntyantābhāvapratiyogitvaṁ*** <sup>11</sup>

The word *sva* in the definition stands for the absence of shell-silver. Its counter-positive is the shell-silver. Its substratum is the shell. Therein exists the absolute non-existence of the shell-silver. And its counter-positive is the silver. The state of

being the counter-positive exists in the silver and it is *mithyātva*.

Madhusūdana presents the above definition in the following way:

*svāśrayniṣṭha-atyantābhāva-pratīyogitvaṃ vā mithyātvaṃ.* <sup>12</sup>

According to this definition, the word *sva* stands for the shell-silver. Its substratum is the shell. The absolute non-existence of silver exists therein. Its counter-positive is silver. The state of being the counter-positive that exists in the silver accounts for the *mithyātva* of the latter.

It may be said that there is hardly any difference between the second and this definition. But it must be noted that according to the present definition, the shell-silver is *mithyā* because in each and every substratum wherein the silver appears, there is the absolute non-existence of silver. In this case, the appearance of silver is the *vyāpya* or the less pervasive one, and the absolute non-existence of silver is the *vyāpaka* or the more pervasive one. But the second definition states that silver is false because wherever there is the absolute non-existence of silver is the *vyāpya* and the appearance of the silver is *vyāpaka*. In other words, according to the fourth definition of *mithyātva*, what appears in a substratum is the *viśeṣya* or the substantive feature and the state of being the absolute non-existence in that substratum is the *viśeṣaṇa* or the adjectival feature. According to the second definition, however, the absolute non-existence is the *viśeṣya* and the character of appearing in the substratum of absolute non-existence is the *viśeṣaṇa*. It may be added here that excepting



this change in the *viśeṣya-viśeṣaṇa-bhāva*, this fourth definition does not materially differ from the second one.

#### **V. *sadviviktatvam***<sup>13</sup>

*Mithyātvā* consists in being different from the real. And reality is not defined here as in the first definition, to be unsublatability at all times. On the other hand, it is defined as *pramāṇasiddhatva*. This means that reality or *sattva* is the state of being the content of knowledge that has arisen from an instrument (*karaṇa*) that is free from any defect. Such a knowledge is the knowledge of Brahman which has arisen from the *śruti* texts such as *tat tvam asi* and the like. The content of this knowledge is Brahman. And that which is different from Brahman is *mithyā*. The knowledge of the world is derived from the defect *avidyā*, as the world is only the transformation of *avidyā*. It is only the knowledge of Brahman that has not arisen from any defect. The world is different from the content of that knowledge and hence it is *mithyā*. From this it is known that an object is *mithyā* if it is the content of the knowledge that is derived from some defect.

It may be said that this definition is over-applicable in the case of an absolute nothing (*asat*) as the latter too is different from Brahman (*sadvivikta*). To obviate this defect, the definition must be understood in the sense that that which is different from *asat* and also from *sat* is *mithyā*.

It will be seen from the above that this definition too does not materially differ from the first definition. The only difference between the two is that *sattva*, according to the first definition, is unsublatability at all times, while according

to the present definition it is the state of being the content of knowledge that has arisen from an instrument that is free from any defect.

An analysis of the five definitions set forth above shows that there is no essential difference between the first and the fifth definition and also between the second and the fourth definition. In the first definition, the feature, viz. the state of being different from *sat* is predicated of with reference to the world. If it is asked as to why this feature is predicated of with reference to the world, it must be answered that it is because the world is subject to sublation. Hence in order to explain the state of being different from *sat* that pertains to the world, we have to explain the concept of sublatability (*bādhya*tva).

In the same way, in the fifth definition the difference from *sat* which is the content of the knowledge that arises from the instrument that is free from any defect is predicated of with reference to the world. If it is asked as to why difference from *sat* of this nature is predicated of with reference to the world, it must be said that the world is the content of the cognition that arises from the defects such as *avidyā*, desire, merits and demerits (*karma*) and as such the cognition is erroneous. If it is asked as to why the cognition of the world is erroneous, it must be said that its content is subject to sublation. Thus according to the fifth definition of *mithyā*tva too, in order to explain the state of being different from *sat* that pertains to the world, we have to explain the concept of sublatability (*bādhya*tva).

The concept of sublatability in regard to an object is explained as the absence of the object in the substratum



wherein it appears; or it is the removal of the gross and the subtle form of the object by the knowledge of Brahman. These two constitute the substance of the two definitions of *mithyātvā* given in the *Vivaraṇa*.

## NOTES

1. LC., p.206.
2. AS., p.48.
3. *Rgveda*, 10.29.
4. *mithyājñānanimittāḥ - mithyā ca tat ajñānañca mithyājñānam. mithyeti anirvacanīyatā ucyate*, pp., p.26.
5. *pratipannopādaḥ abhāvapratiyogitvameva mithyātvam nāma*, V.,pp.174-175.
6. *prapañcaṇiṣedhādihikāraṇībhūtabrahmābhinnatvāt niṣedhasya tāttvikatve api na advaitahānikaratvam*, AS., pp.96-97.
7. *na ca tāttvika-abhāvapratiyogināḥ prapañcasya tāttvikatvāpattiḥ tāttvika-abhāvapratiyogini śukti-rajatādaḥ kalpīte vyabhicārāt*, Ibid., pp.97-99.
8. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.4.19.
9. AS., p.160.  
*Vide: ajñānasya svakāryeṇa vartamānena pravilīnena vā saha jñānena nivṛttiḥ bādhaḥ*, V.,178.
10. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 3.2.8.
11. *sarveṣāmeva bhāvānām svāśrayatvena sammate. pratiyogitvamatyantābhāvam prati mṛṣātmatā ...*, TP,p.67.
12. AS., p.182.
13. *ibid.*, p.195.

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**JĪVANMUKTA AND HIS SOCIAL CONCERN**

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Of the different schools of Vedānta, the concept of *Jīvanmukti* is unique to the Philosophy of Advaita. The other schools do not admit it, and even question it, on the basis of the argument that this is a contradiction in terms. It is according to them, unreasonable to postulate that while the *jīva* is embodied or imprisoned as it were, it is also in a released state (*mokṣa*) at the same time. Release or *mokṣa* can occur only with the destruction of the body, which is called “*videhamukti*”. But Advaita asserts that this state of being released for the *jīva* while yet embodied is possible and more than that to keep the tradition of passing the knowledge gained through self-realisation, this state of *Jīvanmukti* should logically also be admitted.

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This concept holds that while the *jīva* strives to attain the direct knowledge of Brahman - the ultimate transcendental reality beyond the spacio-temporal confines, it is not necessary that with the attainment of this knowledge, the fall of the body of the realised soul should also be co-terminus. No doubt, the *jīva* strives to attain this knowledge which is in itself release or *mokṣa* - so says the śruti texts such as ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मैव भवति, ब्रह्मभावश्च मोक्षः, अत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते...etc., but having attained it, to exhaust the *prārabdha karma* that has commenced yielding result in the form of the present body, the *jīva* has to continue to reside in the body. The time-interval between rise of the direct knowledge of Brahman and the fall of the physical body of the *jñāni* is the state of *jīvanmukti*, however small or infinitesimal it may be. One who is in that state is a *jīvanmukta*.

The usual example cited is the potter's wheel which continues to spin, even after the effect (pot) of the action, namely, the spinning of the wheel has been achieved. More than anything the state of liberation while, embodied is admitted because it is experienced says, Sarvajñātman in his *Samkṣepaśārīraka*. As the shadow of duality is experienced, it is also accepted. And the trace of *avidyā* (*avidyāleśa*) is upheld to account for the shadow of duality. And these views are based on one's experience.

जीवन्मुक्तिस्तावदस्ति प्रतीतेः द्वैतच्छाया तत्र चास्ति प्रतीतेः।

द्वैतच्छायारक्षणायस्ति लेशः तस्मिन्नर्थे स्वानुभूतिः प्रमाणम्॥ SS.4.43

This view is based on Śāṅkarabhāṣya wherein he states that one's experience of the realisation of Brahman and also the embodied state at the same time cannot be questioned by the other.



अपि च नैवात्र विवदितव्यं ब्रह्मविदा कञ्चित्कालं शरीरं ध्रियते इति। कथं  
हि एकस्य स्वहृदयप्रत्ययं ब्रह्मवेदनं देहधारणं च अपरेण प्रतिक्षेपुं शक्येत।

The text of the *Muṇḍaka* 'क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे' [2.2.8] and the *Gītā* text 'ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा' (BG.4.37) speaks of destruction of all karmas in the case of a realised soul. But it must be added here that the knowledge of Brahman cannot remove the *prārabdha-karma*. Thus the rise of this knowledge regarding Brahman will not, destroy *prārabdha-karma*. But the accumulated merits and demerits (*sañcita*) will be annihilated. No future merit or demerit would accrue, as the realised soul would not perform any karma with a sense of agency and whatever he does will not bind him.

To the one who is in the realm of *avidyā*, the *jīvanmukta* may appear to perform some activities. But from the standpoint of the *jīvanmukta* it is only the mind that performs activity. This is the essence of the *Gītā* texts -

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः।

अहंकारविमूढात्मा कर्ताऽहमिति मन्यते॥

तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागशः।

गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्ते इति मत्त्वा न सज्जते॥ BG 3. 27-28

It comes to this that in order that the *prārabdha-karma* may be experienced there is the need of the physical body. On these grounds the state of *jīvanmukti* stands to reason.

According to Advaita, although the *jīva*'s real essence is Brahman, yet, owing to its unaccountable association with *māyā-avidyā* which is beginningless, the real self assumes an individuality characterised by a body, mind and intellect. Hence it is called the empirical self. It is an apparent limitation of the

real self through its association with a particular body and mind. It is neither the agent nor the experient of the results of actions. Due to ignorance it forgets its divinity and behaves like a finite, limited and miserable creature. It thinks of itself as an isolated individual opposed to other individuals, as having its own interest and purposes which are in conflict with the other selves. It is precisely for this reason that the empirical self is often called the embodied self or the individual soul. Thus the most distinctive characteristic of an individual is the assumption of a body. He is *saśarīra*. It is with this in view that Śaṅkara states

सशरीरत्वस्य मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तत्वात् BSB. 1.1.4.

The realised soul on the other hand although is present in the body does not have the false notion of 'I' or 'mine'. Hence he is *aśarīra* having no attachment to the body in which he continues to live. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text - 'तद्यथा अहिनिर्ल्वयनी वल्मीके मृता प्रत्यस्ता शयीत, एवमेव इदं शरीरं शेते। अथ अयमशरीरः अमृतः प्राणः ब्रह्मैव तेज एव' (BU, 4.4.7) states that just as the slough shed by a serpent lies on the ant-hill with the serpent having no attachment towards it, so also the realised soul is *aśarīri* as he has no attachment to the body in which he continues to live. The *Chāndogya* text -

न ह वै सशरीरस्य सतः प्रियाप्रिययोरपहतिरस्ति।

अशरीरं वा व सन्तं न प्रियाप्रिये स्पृशतः ॥ Ch.U., 8-12.1.

states that *saśarīratva* consists in the soul having the false notion of identity with the physical body. It is said to be *aśarīra* in the sense that it does not have the false notion caused by *mithyājñāna*. Śaṅkara states:



तस्मात् मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तत्वात् सशरीरत्वस्य, सिद्धं जीवतोऽपि विदुषः अशरीरत्वम्।

The *Kāthopaniṣadic* text 'अशरीरं शरीरेषु अनवस्थासु अवस्थितम्' [2.22] also specifically states that the soul in its true nature is free from any relation to the body - either gross or subtle.

No one becomes a *jīvanmukta* overnight. Śaṅkara in his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* states:

जन्तूनां नरजन्मदुर्लभं अतः पुंस्त्वं ततो विप्रता

तस्माद्वैदिकधर्ममार्गपरता विद्वत्त्वमस्मात्परम्।

आत्मानात्मविवेचनं स्वनुभवः ब्रह्मात्मना संस्थितिः

मुक्तिः नो शतकोटिजन्मसुकृतैर्पुण्यैर्विना लभ्यते॥ Verse.2.

Very freely rendered into English it means:

'For all beings a human birth is difficult to obtain, more so as a male body; rarer than that is to be born as men of spiritual birth; rarer still is the attachment to the part of Vedic religion; higher than that is erudition in the scriptures; discrimination between the self and the not-self; realisation and continuing in a state of identity with Brahman- these come next in order. This kind of mukti is not to be attained except through the well earned merits in the innumerable previous births'.

Here each succeeding state is a progressive transition from the earlier one. Lord Kṛṣṇa also states in the *Gītā* while thousands of human beings may endeavour to acquire this knowledge through mental purification, very few realise the Supreme Self as identical with their inner self.

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥ BG.7.3

There are various stages one has to cross before reaching this stage. There are many obstacles in the way too. In the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, sage Vāsiṣṭha in his dissertation to Śrī Rāma, speaks of three stages that precede the rise of *jīvanmukti* which is said to be the fourth stage.

Stage 1: The first stage is characterised by the attainment of intense desire to get liberated. This is possible by the performance of one's allotted duties obligatory as well as optional by offering their fruits to God. Śaṅkara in his *Aparokṣānubhūti* says:

स्ववर्णाश्रमधर्मेण तपसा हरितोषणात्।

साधनं प्रभवेत्पुंसां वैराग्यादिचतुष्टयम्॥ Verse.3.

Thus action relating to one's stage and class of life performed without attachment to its fruit and as an offering to God, cleanses one's heart. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his Introductory verses of his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* advocates the performance of actions without any attachment to the fruits thereof and performed as an offering to God.

निष्कामकर्मानुष्ठानं त्यागात्काम्यनिषिद्धयोः।

तत्रापि परमो धर्मः जपस्तुत्यादिकं हरेः॥

Introductory Verse GD.12. C.on BG.

This gives rise to the discernment between the eternal and the non-eternal (*nityānityavastuviveka*) followed by absolute detachment towards objects of enjoyment here and in a hereafter (*ihāmutrārthaphalabhogavirāga*). This in turn leads to control of mind, external senses, asceticism, fortitude, concentration and faith (*śamādiṣaṭkasampatti*). These culminate in the intense desire to get liberated (*mumukṣutvam*) from the transmigratory existence.



Stage 2: The second stage involves Vedāntic study and reflection (*śravaṇa* and *manana*) which are the dual constituents of *jñānayoga* which is mixed with *bhakti*. Vedāntic study under a preceptor removes the false notion (*pramāṇāsambhāvanā*) that the Upaniṣadic texts do not teach non-dual reality. *Manana* or reflection consists in arguing within oneself on the basis of reasoning with a view to ascertain that the Upaniṣadic teaching is valid and it is not stultified by the view-points of the other schools of thought. This enables the aspirant to get over the false notion (*prameyāsambhāvanā*) that the Upaniṣadic teachings may not after all be true.

Stage 3: The aspirant now gets into the third stage of intellectual conviction that the Upaniṣads teach non-dual reality, as identical with his true nature and that, that teaching is not contradicted by any other proof, or school of thought. Yet one is not able to realise within oneself the truth of the Upaniṣads as one's mind is still afflicted by old habits of thought or *vāsanā* in the form of 'I' and 'mine'. To overcome this one pursues *nididhyāsanā* which is a conscious mental effort to check the sense organs and mind from comprehending the external objects; with a view to maintain the continuum of the knowledge of Brahman, arisen from *śravaṇa* and *manana*.

These three stages are known as *jāgradavasthā*. It is because, as in the waking state, the world of duality is presented as real in these stages. In the *Yoga-Vāśiṣṭha*, Vāśiṣṭha says to Śrī Rāma

भूमिकात्रितयं त्वेतत् राम जाग्रदिति स्मृतम्।  
जाग्रतीवात्र विस्पष्टं भेदबुद्धयनुवर्तनात्॥

Nirvāṇa-Prakaraṇa [YV]126.52.

Stage 4: The fourth stage is marked by the rise of the direct knowledge of Brahman. It is known as *svapnāvasthā* since here the world of duality is manifested like a dream state. In the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*, it is said: चतुर्थी स्वप्न इत्युक्ता स्वप्नाभं यत्र वै जगत्। One who has attained this state is known as *jīvanmukta* and the stage is known as *jīvanmukti*.

जीवन्मुक्तिरितीमां वदन्त्यवस्थां स्थितात्मसंबोधाम्।

बाधितभेदप्रतिभां अबाधितात्मावबोधसामर्थ्यात् ॥ JMV,p.51.

But after any one of the three stages prior to the rise of the direct knowledge of Brahman, if the body of the aspirant falls, he is a *yogabhraṣṭa*. What happens to such a one, who is neither here nor there, asks Arjuna in the *Gītā* and Rāma in the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*.

अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतः योगाच्चलितमानसः।

अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति॥ BG.6.37.

एकामथ द्वितीयां वा तृतीयां वा इतरां च वा।

आरूढस्य मृतस्याथ कीदृशी भगवन्गतिः॥

Sage Vāsiṣṭha replies:

The sins of the previous transmigratory existence of that yogin whose life passes away from his body during any one of the stages of yoga are removed in proportion to the degree of development he has acquired in that stage.



योगभूमिकया उत्क्रान्तजीवितस्य शरीरिणः।

भूमिकांशानुसारेण क्षीयन्ते पूर्वदुष्कृतम् ॥ YV.126.47.

Then he lives in the world of celestial beings and incarnates on this earth again. He is born in the house of some pious, rich, noble-hearted person of blemishless character; or in a family of wise yogins. Having then rapidly passed through the stages of yoga, he has already gone over, he reaches the next higher stage.

भोगक्षयात् परिक्षीणे जायन्ते योगिनो भुवि।

शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे गुप्ते गुणवतां सताम्॥

तत्र प्राग्भवनाभ्यस्तं योगभूमिक्रमं बुधाः।

दृष्ट्वा परिपतन्त्युच्चैः उत्तरं भूमिकात्रयम्॥ YV.126.49-51

In the *Gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa replies Arjuna identically.

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः।

शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते॥

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम्।

एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम्॥

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम्।

यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन॥ BG. 8, 41-43

South India has been very fortunate in having realised souls like Śaṅkara, Sadāśiva Brahmendra, Bhagavān Ramaṇa, Śeśādri Svāmigal, Sage of Kāñci and others. It is with these great personages in view the *Gītā* declares:

अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धः ततो याति परां गतिम्।

बहूनां जन्मनां अन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते॥

वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुलभः। BG. 7.19.

The Jīvanmukta's life has two phases: One is *samādhi* or mystic trance and the other is *vyutthāna* or reversion to empirical life. Arjuna asks the Lord, the characteristics of such an integrated person. He wants to know the signs by which others would recognise him as being merged in Reality. On reversion to empirical life, does his conversation follow the common pattern of praise and blame, motivated as usual by attraction and repulsion? How does he control his body and senses? When he is not doing so how does he conduct himself, how are his efforts directed? How are his talks, physical discipline and actions to be distinguished from those of common men? These are his four questions, one relating to his state of mystic trance and three relating to the *vyutthāna* state.

In response to the first question, the Lord answers that in the state of *samādhi*, he is one with Brahman when the self shines as pure consciousness in its own effulgence.

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते। BG.2.55.

From this stage, on account of *prārabdha karma* he would wake back to reality of his own accord. He is known as *Brahmavidvara*. There is a more advanced stage of *samādhi* from which he would come back to empirical life only when prompted by others. Such a one is known as *Brahmavidvariya*. There is then, the most advanced stage of *samādhi* from which he will never come back to empirical life - either on his own accord or even when prompted by others. Such a one is known as *Brahmavidvariṣṭha*. He alone is referred to as *guṇātīta*, *sthitaprajña*, *viṣṇubhakta* and *jīvanmukta*.



व्युत्तिष्ठते स्वतस्त्वाद्ये द्वितीये परबोधितः।  
 अन्ते व्युत्तिष्ठते नैव सदा भवति तन्मयः॥  
 एवंभूतो ब्राह्मणः स्याद्वरिष्ठः ब्रह्मवादिनाम्।  
 गुणातीतः स्थितप्रज्ञःविष्णुभक्तश्च कथ्यते॥  
 अतिवर्णाश्रमी जीवन्मुक्त आत्मरतिस्तथा।  
 एतस्य कृतकृत्यत्वाच्छास्त्रमस्मान्निवर्तते॥

Introductory Verse *GD*, ev 27-29.

With reference to him Vedic injunctions and prohibitions will cease to operate.

शब्दातीतं त्रिगुणरहितं प्राप्यतत्त्वावबोधम्।  
 निस्त्रैगुण्ये पथिविचरतां को विधिः को निषेधः॥

*Śukāṣṭakam Verse 1.*

It is also with reference to him that the Lord promises in the *Gītā* that He takes care of him when he is in a state of *nirvikalpasamādhi* from which he does not revert to empirical life. The text runs:

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते।  
 तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम्॥ *BG.9.22.*

When in the first two stages of the *nirvikalpasamādhi* on reversion to empirical life the *jīvanmukta* would have as his prerogative, having his fellow beings not swerving from the righteous path. Temperance in speech and control of mind would be his second nature. He will not be unduly elated when praised nor will he be depressed, when censured.

दुःखेषु अनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः।  
 वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीः मुनिरुच्यते॥ *BG. 2.56.*

When his sense-organs come out, he will sit in a solitary place with a view to withdraw them and direct them towards the innerself.

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यः तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ BG.2.58.

For the question as to how a *jīvanmukta* will experience the objects of the world, Śrī Kṛṣṇa replies that with a mind under absolute control, a *jīvanmukta* will be a witness to happiness or misery that are presented by the *prārabdha-karma*. All these are to instruct his disciples. In the language of Hiriyanna 'the *jīvanmukta* reveals virtues in order that his disciples may realise them'. He is *in* the world but not *of* it.

Since the state of *jīvanmukti* precedes the practice of loving devotion towards God, a *jīvanmukta* in his state of *vyutthāna* cannot help worshipping his personal God. It will be his second nature like compassion, etc. Moreover, no unseen merit will ensue from such worship as a *jīvanmukta* has no future life.

जीवन्मुक्तिदशायां तु न भक्तेः फलकल्पना।

अद्वेषृत्वादिवत्तेषां स्वभावो भजनं हरेः॥

Introductory Verse GD.37 On BG.

Śrī Śuka in the Bhāgavata states that although the *jīvanmuktas* revel in their own self and are free from any knot or bondage yet they lovingly worship God by being irresistibly attracted by His qualities.



आत्मारामाश्च मुनयः निर्गन्था अप्युरुक्रमे।

कुर्वन्त्यहैतुकीं भक्तिं इत्यंभूतगुणो हरिः॥ *ibid.*38.

As far as the *jīvanmukta* is concerned, he has attained everything that should be attained in one's life. The merits ensuing from taking bath in all the holy rivers, by offering land to the needy, by performance of several sacrifices leading to the gratification of the deities - all these ensue, as a matter of course. His ancestors would be liberated from transmigratory existence and he would be venerated by the three worlds. It is because his mind rests in the All Pervasive Reality i.e. Brahman.

स्नातं तेन समस्ततीर्थसलिले सर्वाऽपि दत्ताऽबनिः।

यज्ञानां च सहस्रमिष्टमखिला देवाश्च संपूजिताः॥

संसाराच्चसमुद्धृताः स्वपितरः त्रैलोक्यपूज्योप्यसौ

यस्य ब्रह्मविचारणे क्षणमपि स्थैर्यं मनः प्राप्नुयात्॥

*Sū.S.2.20.45.Q.in JMV.*

His lineage is purified, his mother is a blessed soul and the land in which he resides is considered holy. It is because, his mind has dissolved in Brahman, which is the ocean of bliss and pure consciousness.

कुलं पवित्रं जननी कृतार्था वसुन्धरा पुण्यवती च तेन।

अपारसंबित्सुखसागरेऽस्मिन् लीनं परे ब्रह्मणि यस्य चेतः॥

*Sū.S.2.20.45.Q.in JMV.*

The *Muṇḍaka* text –

यं यं कामं मनसा सञ्चिनोति विशुद्धसत्त्वः कामयते यांश्च कामाः।

तं तं लोकं जयते तांश्च कामान् तस्मात् आत्मस्थं हि अर्चयेत् भूतिकामः॥ 3.1.10.

states that he who wants material prosperity and spiritual felicity shall worship the *jīvanmuktas* as they would grant the several worlds and the several desires that are sought after by them.

In the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*, Rāma asks Vaṣiṣṭha as to why a *jīvanmukta* does not exhibit the yogic powers like roaming in the sky etc. Vaṣiṣṭha replies that the attaining of such powers is not within the sphere of the knower of the self; for verily the knower of the self is rooted only in the self.

नात्मज्ञस्य एष विषयः आत्मज्ञो हि आत्महक् स्वयम्।

LYV,28.3.Q.in JMV,p.218.

The *jīvanmuktas* will not be filled with wonder even if the sun should shed cool rays of light or the disc of the moon emit hot beams or, even if the flame of fire were to shoot downwards.

अपि शीतरुचावर्के सुतप्तेऽपि इन्दुमण्डले।

अप्यधः प्रसरत्यग्नौ जीवन्मुक्तो न विस्मयी॥

LYV,27.66.Q.in JMV,p.220.

No curiosity is roused in him by any of these or other wonderful things as he looks upon them all as so many forces of the Supreme self manifesting themselves in these diverse ways in this world.

चिदात्मनः इमा इत्यं प्रसरन्तीहशक्तयः।

इत्येष्वश्चर्यजालेषु नाभ्युदेति कुतूहलम्॥

LYV,27.67.Q.in JMV,p.220.

There is therefore, a fundamental difference between a *jīvanmukta* who may have *siddhis* unsought and a *siddha* who seeks and possesses powers and who for this very reason is ignorant of the truth.



There is a false notion that service to society would be an impossibility in Advaita as it is not compatible with the concept of non-duality. On the other hand, only with the acceptance of the reality of difference it holds good. The Dvaita school, taking recourse to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text 'यत्र हि द्वैतमिव भवति तदितर इतरं पश्यति, जिघ्रतिव' etc, states that activity is possible only when there is the notion of duality. The complement of the text ... 'यत्र त्वस्य सर्वमात्मैव अभूत् तत्केन कं पश्येत् केन कं जिघ्रेत्'.etc., confirms this view that when everything exists as non-dual consciousness there is no activity whatsoever. However, the Advaitins affirm that duality is only apparent and it is only the apparent perception of duality that leads to activities. Hence it is not proper to consider duality as real on the basis of activities that follow from the notion of duality. Further the second text speaks of absence of activity in the case of a *videhamukta*, from whom the physical adjunct have fallen off. In fact, it adds glory to Advaita that in such a state there is no activity, says Śaṅkara in his *Bhāṣya*-

अलङ्कारो ह्यस्माकं यद्ब्रह्मात्मावगती सत्यां सर्वकर्तव्यताहानिः  
कृतकृत्यता च। *BSB*, 1.1.4.

It is only in the state of *jīvanmukti*, that activity is quite consistent. However, it is not selfish activity but service of the highest order to his fellow beings. The term 'social concern' has a deeper significance than is generally understood. It does not consist simply in developing the idea of alleviating suffering but is becoming obsessed with the idea of relieving misery of mankind at large of all living beings. True and abiding social concern thus emanates out of a commitment to the ideal of

removing the root-cause of misery. Gauḍapāda's concern for the entire humanity which has resulted in offering the Advaitic nectar by churning the Vedic ocean with his intellect as the churning rod, is expressed by Śaṅkara in his Bhāṣya on the Māṇḍūkya kārīkā thus:

प्रज्ञावैशाखवेदक्षुभिदजलानिधेर्वेदनाम्नोऽन्तरस्थं  
 भूतान्यालोक्य मग्नान्यविरतजननग्राहघोरे समुद्रे।  
 कारुण्यादुद्धार अमृतमिदं अमरैर्दुर्लभं भूतहेतोः  
 यस्तं पूज्याभिपूज्यं परमगुरुममुं पादपादैर्नतोऽस्मि॥

Śaṅkara's Commentary on the Māṇḍūkya-kārīkā.

Our land is known as Bharatavarṣā. The word *Bhārata* etymologically means 'men of spiritual enlightenment' that is those who revel in the ultimate reality, the self luminous consciousness. भारूपे ब्रह्मणि रताः- भारताः And this term is metaphorically applied to our land which abounds in such persons of spiritual enlightenment. There have been *jīvanmuktas* and will be in our land for redeeming others by their personal example and precepts. In the *Bhagavadgīta*, Lord Kṛṣṇa says that those who are conversant with the upanisadic teachings (ज्ञानिनः) and have intuitive knowledge of Brahman (तत्त्वदर्शिनः) impart this knowledge to the worthy aspirant when the aspirants draw near to them with reverence.

तद्विद्धि प्राणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया।

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः॥ BG.4.34

A realised soul, if he is not embodied cannot impart knowledge. If one is embodied but has not realised the self he



does not have the competence to impart the knowledge. Hence the *jīvanmukta* - realised soul in an embodied state is absolutely essential in order to preserve and transmit the knowledge of Brahman. In fulfilling his mission as a teacher, he never claims originality but is the proud inheritor of a glorious tradition of transmitting the teaching he has received from his preceptor. Above all, his work results in converting the disciple into the likeness of himself. Śaṅkara in the opening verse of *Śataślokī* says that there is no comparison in all the three worlds for the venerable teacher who bestows knowledge. If we consider the philosopher's stone as an example, it can convert iron into gold but not into the philosophers' stone. The venerable teacher, on the contrary, creates equality with himself in the disciple, that takes refuge in his feet.

Man in the present set up of the complex public life is apt to forget the real purpose of existence and meaning of life and lapse into the craze for material comforts. Man has to be reminded quite often to appreciate and understand the real and eternal values which alone can give him abiding happiness. In order to accomplish this, the realised soul would accelerate the benign tendencies in human nature and channelise them towards the supreme human end - viz, liberation. He will preach but it will be preceded by practice. *Ācāra* exists in him before *pracāra* follows.

The first step in the acquisition of Brahman knowledge consists in purity of mind (*cittaśuddhi*). This again can be

acquired only by the proper discharge of the duties relating to one's stage and class of life (*svadharma*). The neglect of one's duty or performance of duties not suited to one's order and stage of life leads to social disorder, and thereby impede one's spiritual evolution. The *jīvanmukta*, although has transcended all obligations, yet out of compassion for his fellowbeings impose on himself the duty of guiding all members of the society adhere to their *svadharma*, in order to maintain solidarity of society. This is what Gītā calls as *lokasaṅgraha*, doing duties for setting an example, preventing men from swerving into the path of undesirable activity. Gītā adds therein that leaders are followed by the led from a conviction of the rectitude of their conduct. They do not have any independence of thought or action.

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठः तत्तदेवेतरो जनः।

स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥ BG.3.21.

Adhering strictly to the principles of *dharma*, the *jīvanmukta* lives and moves in the society although he is free from duty and could afford to renounce society. Without neglecting the ethical and ritualistic injunctions of the Vedas he persuades and helps his fellow beings to conform to them.

It may be concluded with the firm assertion that a *jīvanmukta* is the only light house and hope for the tottering jivas in the ocean of the cycle of births and deaths, tossed hither and thither by the tidal waves of their *prārabdha karmas*, if we remember that all the śāstras work towards the one and only goal of liberation of each and every jīva from the trammels of transmigratory existence.



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**11**

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**YOGA DISCIPLINE  
FOR OVERCOMING WORLDLINESS ACCORDING TO  
ADVAITA**

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N. Veezhinathan\*

Indian philosophy in general may be said to have arisen out of the need to overcome the suffering found in life. The ancient Indians were mainly concerned with the problem of removing suffering as is revealed by the fact that all systems of Indian philosophy, barring the Cārvāka, are oriented towards *mokṣa* which represents the state of absolute freedom from suffering. *Mokṣa* is for the *jīva* which undergoes transmigration. Hence the conception of liberation in any particular school depends upon the conception of the *jīva* and its relation to such other realities as are recognized in that school. But all schools of thought agree in holding that liberation consists in restoring the *jīva* to its intrinsic nature and the path to it lies through detachment from worldly concerns (*vairāgya*) which could be achieved by rigorous mind-control.



The jīva's lapse from its intrinsic nature is due to its association with the body-mind complex of which the mind is the most predominant factor. The mind and the sense organs that are directed by it, the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says, always proceed outward to perceive sensory objects and not inward.<sup>1</sup> Owing to the overwhelming influence of the mind that is not checked from proceeding outward, the jīva loses sight of its identity with its essential nature, performs good deeds with a view to attain some material gain or commit interdicted actions, experiences their results here and in a hereafter and thus undergoes cyclic existence. It has become worldly, i.e. it is indifferent to the things of the spirit and concentrates on that which satisfies one's desire for pleasure. In other words it is in bondage.

The *Amṛtabindu Upaniṣad* states that bondage is the result of the concern of the mind with external objects and liberation is the fruit of the elimination of this preoccupation.<sup>2</sup> In the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*, Vasiṣṭha affirms that the only means to overcome worldliness is control of one's mind.<sup>3</sup> He adds that the primary endeavour of man should be to acquire absolute control over his mind by forcibly pressing his hands together, aggressively grinding the teeth and violently striking the limbs of his body with his fist thus exhibiting resolute determination to conquer the mind and control it.<sup>4</sup> Janaka has said:

I have identified the one that is active in a stealthy way to conceal my true nature. It is the mind. I have been subjected to worldliness by it for long; and, I shall make it ineffectual.<sup>5</sup>

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* states that for him who can control his mind, the senses are manageable as good horses are for a charioteer; and, he who consequently is of pure heart reaches that goal which he never loses and from which therefore he will never be born again.<sup>6</sup> The *Bhagavad-Gītā* earnestly cautions one to redeem oneself from worldliness by restraining the mind from any interest in any external object. It emphasizes the need for disentanglement from worldly objects and concerns.<sup>7</sup> For, the mind is at once a friend and a foe for the jīva. The mind under control would remain as the friend of the jīva by enabling it to overcome its worldliness and thereby recover its true nature; and when not controlled it would act as its foe by hampering its spiritual progress.<sup>8</sup> The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* identifies control of mind as *yoga* which is the highest state wherein there is the steady control of the senses, as the five senses along with the mind cease from their normal activities and the intellect does not exercise its usual functions.<sup>9</sup> Madhusūdhana Sarasvatī in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā* entitled *Gūḍhārthadīpikā* says that it is on authority of this *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* passage Patañjali has framed the definition of *yoga* as subjugation of mental states or control of mind.<sup>10</sup>

The references made above would show that control of mind or *yoga* is an essential preliminary to overcome worldliness in the case of the jīva. The Yoga discipline is in one form or other accepted in nearly all the systems of Indian thought as an indispensable means of achieving mind-control. We shall set forth first the Yoga discipline and its application on the practical side of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga system and then show the extent of its application on the practical side of Advaita.



The Yoga system admits two ultimates, Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Of these, the former is manifold, while the latter is unitary. Puruṣa is of the nature of consciousness and it is supra-relational. Prakṛti is constituted of the three *guṇa*-s, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These three are not the qualities of Prakṛti; they are the components of it. It is insentient and is ever active. It evolves into *buddhi* or intellect, *ahaṁkāra* or the ego-sense, five subtle elements of sound, touch, smell, colour and taste, *manas*, five senses of knowledge, five senses of action and five gross elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth. Of these, *buddhi*, *manas*, the ten sense organs and the five subtle elements constitute the psychical apparatus; and, *buddhi* is the predominant factor in it. These constitute what is known as the subtle body and it is specific to each Puruṣa. It is more or less a permanent annex to it till liberation is attained. The Puruṣa which is mere consciousness and is immutable becomes the experient of the objects of the world by being identified with the modes of the intellect which arise because of the contact of the sense organs with their respective objects.<sup>11</sup> The cause of the identification of the Puruṣa with the modes of intellect is *avidyā*.<sup>12</sup> *Avidyā* consists in viewing what is transitory to be permanent, impure to be pure, painful to be bliss and the not-self to be the self.<sup>13</sup> It is erroneous cognition. The removal of the association of the Puruṣa with the intellect through the cessation of *avidyā* is liberation.<sup>14</sup> The direct knowledge that the Puruṣa is totally distinct from the *buddhi-tattva* is the means to liberation.<sup>15</sup> In order to achieve this discriminating knowledge Patañjali prescribes the

eight-fold means, viz. *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyānaṁ* and *samādhi*.<sup>16</sup> Of these, the first two, viz. *yama* and *niyama* represent the moral training, while the next three *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyāhāra*, the yogic training, the chief aim of which is to restrain the mind from the physical side. The last three, viz. *dhāraṇā*, *dhyānaṁ* and *samādhi* are different forms of concentration directly aiming at controlling the mind. Here the word *samādhi* signifies conscious *samādhi* which serves as the means to superconscious one.<sup>17</sup>

Of the eight-fold means, *yama* or self-restraint consists of non-injury, truthfulness, abstention from stealing, celibacy and disowning of possessions.<sup>18</sup> *Niyama* or observance consists of purity (both external and internal), contentment, penance in the form of endurance of opposites like heat and cold, pain and pleasure, etc., scriptural recitation and performance of duties as an offering to Īśvara.<sup>19</sup> It may be noted here that *yama* is mostly negative and *niyama* signifies the cultivation of positive virtues. Patañjali recommends the pursuit of the vow of non-injury and other factors constituting *yama* without being restricted to a specific class of beings, place, time and situation and characterizes it as sovereign in nature.<sup>20</sup> *Āsana* is posture which consists in disposition of hands and feet conducive to steadiness and ease for the body.<sup>21</sup> *Prāṇāyāma* means control of breath. It is three-fold as *recaka*, *pūraka* and *kumbhaka*. *Recaka* is exhalation of abdominal air outward; and, *Pūraka* is inhalation of external air inside. Retention of breath inside the body after exhalation



is known as *bāhya-kumbhaka* and after inhalation, *āntara-kumbhaka*. There is the third type of *kumbhaka* which is retention of breath not preceded by either exhalation or inhalation.<sup>22</sup> *Pratyāhāra* stands for withdrawal of the senses from their respective objects.<sup>23</sup> The pursuit of *pratyāhāra* enables one to attain supreme control over the senses. One thereby becomes fit to pursue *dhāraṇā*, *dhyānaṁ* and *samādhi*.<sup>24</sup> *Dhāraṇā* is centering the mind upon an object in a particular locus such as the heart.<sup>25</sup> *Dhyāna* consists of even flow of mental states with reference to the object of *dhāraṇa* itself. But this flow would be intervened by contrary mental states.<sup>26</sup> *Samādhi* is the advanced stage of *dhyāna* wherein there is the continuous flow of mental states relating to the object of *dhāraṇa* and *dhyāna* not intervened by any contrary mental state.<sup>27</sup> It is two-fold as conscious and super-conscious, *sāmprajñāta* and *a-sāmprajñāta*.

The intellect has five stages, viz. restless (*kṣipta*), stupefied (*mūḍha*), distracted (*vikṣipta*), one-pointed (*ekāgra*) and restrained (*niruddha*). Among them, the *kṣipta* is that in which the intellect becomes absorbed in objects owing to the predominance of *rajo-guṇa*; the *mūḍha* is that which is overpowered by drowsiness, laziness, etc. owing to the preponderance of *tamo-guṇa*; *vikṣipta* is that which, although engrossed in objects, becomes occasionally engaged in *dhyāna*. In the cases of the intellect which is *kṣipta* or *mūḍha* there is no possibility of the attainment of *samādhi* or concentration. The *samādhi* that may come to the intellect that is *vikṣipta* is not useful to attain the direct knowledge of

the distinction between the Puruṣa and the Prakṛti as it occurs only occasionally. It would cease to exist like a lamp that is extinguished by a strong wind. The intellect is said to be one-pointed (*ekāgra*) when it is capable of maintaining an incessant flow of its modifications with regard to an object owing to the preponderance of the *sattva-guṇa*. This is known as the state of *saṁprajñāta-samādhi*. Herein there exists the act of *dhyāna* relating to the object that is meditated upon. Patañjali defines this state as:

*tadeva arthamātranirbhāsam svarūpaśūnyam iva samādhiḥ.*<sup>28</sup>

In the state known as *saṁprajñāta-samādhi* the object alone that is meditated upon is manifested. The intellect continues to exist although it is wholly absorbed in the contemplation of the object.

The aspirant who has undergone the first five limbs of *yoga*, viz. *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyāhāra* and whose intellect has become one-pointed would fix his mind upon the gross objects first and then upon the subtle objects beginning with *tanmātra*-s and ending with Prakṛti. The modification of the intellect into the form of *saṁprajñāta-samādhi* is only the subjugation of the intellect in the form of objects and the manifestation of one-pointedness.<sup>29</sup> The yogin who meditates upon the distinction between the Puruṣa and the Prakṛti along with its evolutes at this stage acquires absolute control over every object and also the knowledge of all the modifications – past, present and future. This power is known as *viśoka*, i.e. one which is devoid of sorrow.<sup>30</sup> The yogin attains supreme detachment towards the evolutes of Prakṛti.



It subjugates the latent impression of the state of *samprajñāta-samādhi* too and leaves as residue its latent impressions. This state is known as seedless *samādhi*.<sup>31</sup> It is also referred to as *dharma-megha*.<sup>32</sup> It must be noted here that supreme detachment results from the discriminating knowledge between the Puruṣa and the Prakṛti along with its evolutes. The latter has arisen from the practice of *samprajñāta-samādhi*. Supreme detachment subjugates earlier latent impressions and leaves its own impressions. Hence in the state of *asamprajñāta-samādhi*, the intellect remains with latent impressions only and it does not undergo any modification. The latent impressions also get themselves eliminated as the intellect fully gets merged in the Prakṛti leaving the Puruṣa apart and alone. This distinction between the *asamprajñāta-samādhi* and liberation is emphasized by Nāgeśa in his *Vṛtti* on the *Yoga-sūtra*.

According to Advaita, avidyā is different from erroneous cognition or its latent impression. It is beginningless and is positive in nature in the sense that it is not absence of knowledge. It is indeterminable or *mithyā*. Brahman, the only reality gets itself reflected in avidyā and its product, mind. It is the jīva. The characteristics of the mind, viz. agency (*kartṛtva*), enjoyership (*bhoktṛtva*) and knowership (*pramāṭṛtva*) are falsely presented in the jīva. As long as the jīva is associated with the adjunct, viz. the mind, so long as the jīva, a jīva. In reality, however, there is nothing like jīva-hood apart from what is fancied to be such by reason of this adjunct. The relation of Brahman to the mind which has caused the notion

of jīva has but the indeterminable avidyā as its source; and, this avidyā cannot be removed by anything other than the direct experience of the true nature of the jīva as Brahman. Hence the relation with such a limiting adjunct will not cease so long as the jīva does not acquire self-realization, that is realization of its true nature as Brahman.

In order that the acquisition of self-realization may be possible, Advaitin prescribes *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* as the proximate means. The aspirant must possess control of mind, control of external senses, renunciation in spirit, courage in the form of endurance of opposites like pain and pleasure, heat and cold, etc., power of concentration and faith. There would arise the direct knowledge of the true nature of jīva as Brahman from the texts like *tat tvam asi*, etc. But it is not efficacious in removing avidyā as the mind of the aspirant is confounded by doubt as to whether the Upaniṣads teach the identity of the true nature of the jīva with Brahman (*pramāṇāsambhāvanā*), contrary notion that the teaching of the Upaniṣad may not after all be true (*prameyāsambhāvanā*) and the false notions of "I" and "mine" with reference to the objects that are different from the Self (*viparītabhāvanā*). *Śravaṇa* or Vedāntic study which is a mental activity in the form of inquiry into the import of the Upaniṣads removes *pramāṇāsambhāvanā*. *Manana* which is arguing within oneself on the basis of reasoning with a view to ascertain that the Upaniṣadic teaching is true removes *prameyāsambhāvanā*. *Nididhyāsana* consists in centering the mind upon the truth arrived at from *śravaṇa* and *manana*



to the exclusion of everything else and thereby maintaining in continuous stream the knowledge of the identity of the true nature of the jīva Brahman. And this removes *viparītabhāvanā*. Self-realization which has arisen from the texts such as *tat tvam asi* and the like has now become free from the impediments, viz. *pramānāsambhāvanā*, *prameyāsambhāvanā* and *viparītabhāvanā* and it is efficacious enough to remove avidyā. The removal of avidyā results in the removal of mind and other factors conditioning the jīva. The latter ceases to be a jīva and remains as Brahman.

*Dhāraṇā*, *dhyānam* and *samādhi* are pursued at the time of meditation. The content of meditation is the identity of the true nature of the jīva with Brahman and not the distinction between the Puruṣa and the Prakṛti as in the Yoga system. Further in the *saṁprajñāta-samādhi* there is the manifestation of all the three factors involved in knowledge-subject, object and the knowledge of the latter by the former. According to Patañjali, it is the object meditated upon is all that one is aware of. In the *asaṁprajñāta-samādhi* the identity of the true nature of the jīva with Brahman alone is manifested without the mental state referring to it.

It must be noted here that according to the Yoga system, Prakṛti, the *buddhitattva* and other evolutes are real. And for becoming oblivious of the presence of the *buddhitattva* and other evolutes there is no method other than full restraint or *nirodha* of the intellect. For the Advaitin the intellect and other factors are non-real and they cease to exist at the dawn of self-realization. Hence Yoga as the means of

the control of the modifications of the *buddhi-tattva* is adopted by the Advaitin not to acquire self-realization but to attain concentration of thought.<sup>34</sup>

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The Ādi Śaṅkara Advaita Research Centre was established in 1975 under the guidance and with the blessings of His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī Kāmakoti Pīṭha. The main objectives of the Centre, among other things, are:

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

*samsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodhūtadāhavyathā-  
khinnānām jalakāṅkṣayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā paribhrāmyatām  
atyāsannasudhāmbudhiṁ sukhakaraṁ brahmādvayaṁ  
darśayant-  
yeṣā śaṅkarabhārātī vijayate nirvāṇasandāyīnī.*

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.