

THE VOICE OF ŚĀṄKARA  
Śāṅkara-bhāratī



Editor:  
N. Veezhinathan

एषा शाङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसन्दायिनी

*eṣā śāṅkara-bhāratī vijayate  
nirvāṇa-sandāyini*

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

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[ 1 ]

## HOMAGE TO ŚAṅKARA

उपनिषदां सर्वासां  
परमं तात्पर्यमात्मजीवैक्ये ।  
इति तत्त्वं जिज्ञासून्  
बोधितवन्तं नमामि परमगुरुम् ॥

I fall prostrate before Śaṅkara, the pre-eminent Preceptor who has instructed the spiritual aspirants the truth that the ultimate logical significance of the Upaniṣads is that the true nature of the jīva is the self.

(Dr. Rāma Varma Parīkṣit,  
The Maharaja of the Former Princely State of Cochin.)





## THE TEACHINGS OF ŚAṆKARA

N. Veezhinathan

The Upaniṣads identify Brahman as the cause of the world. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* describes Brahman as that from which these beings originate, by which they are sustained and into which they lapse at the time of dissolution.<sup>1</sup> The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* in a section designated *Śāṅdilya-vidyā* defines Brahman as that (*ta*) from which the world arises (*ja*), by which it is supported (*an*) and into which it is reabsorbed (*It*).<sup>2</sup> The same Upaniṣad elsewhere states that these things originate from *ākāśa* alone, i.e. Brahman which is manifest everywhere, and are absorbed in it.<sup>3</sup> Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*<sup>4</sup> points out that an entity from which a thing comes into existence and into which it is reabsorbed is well known to be its material cause, as for example, earth is of paddy, barley, etc. An effect is not noticed to be absorbed into anything other than its material cause. That from which the world emerges is its material cause, and since the world originates from Brahman, the latter is its material cause. In other words, the state of being the

material cause of the world constitutes the definition of Brahman.

A doubt may arise at this stage that the above definition of Brahman is also applicable in the case of *pradhāna* of the Sāṅkhya school. The latter admits *pradhāna* as the cause from which the world arises and into which it returns at the time of dissolution. During the time of its existence after its creation and before its dissolution, the world is supported by *pradhāna*, just as a pot, for example, during the time of its existence is sustained by its material cause, viz. clay. Thus, the definition of the material causality of the world holds good in the case of *pradhāna* too.

The Upaniṣads, however, define Brahman not only as the material cause of the world, but also as its efficient cause. An efficient cause is an intelligent being who makes his choice, resolves it into an intention and puts that intention into effect. *Pradhāna*, being an insentient principle, cannot have these features. Hence the definition of the material and the efficient cause of the world is an exclusive one for Brahman.

The *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* says that "The Self (Brahman) desired 'let me be many, let me be born'."<sup>5</sup> The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, while referring to the creation of the world from Brahman (*sat*), states that



“It deliberated, ‘I shall become many, I shall be born’.”<sup>6</sup> Śāṅkara explains the import of these texts by pointing out that in these texts Brahman is known to be the efficient cause or the agent by virtue of independent action proceeding from deliberation. And it is understood that Brahman is the material cause as well, since the will to become many as expressed in ‘I shall become many’ relates to Brahman itself.<sup>7</sup> Further, the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* states that prior to creation this world with the distinctions of name and form remained in Brahman in such a subtle form that it may be viewed as non-existent, and from Brahman emerged this world in the manifested form. Brahman created itself by itself.<sup>8</sup> Śāṅkara remarks that, when it is said that “Brahman created itself”, it is known that it is the material cause of the world. And when it is said that Brahman created itself by itself, it is known as the efficient cause too of the world. It is both the object and the subject of creation. It is thus both the material and the efficient cause of the world.<sup>9</sup>

There are certain difficulties in viewing Brahman as the material and the efficient cause. A material cause is that which undergoes modification into the form of effect. This implies that it must be composed of parts. But since Brahman is free from any parts, it cannot undergo modification into the form of the effect, and so

it cannot be considered as the material cause. In the same way, it cannot be viewed as an efficient cause; for, an efficient cause, as we have said, is the one who makes a resolve and puts that resolve into effect. Brahman is attributeless consciousness, and so it cannot have these features. The result of this argument is that Brahman cannot be taken as the material and the efficient cause of the world.

The Upaniṣads, however, which affirm that Brahman is both the material and the efficient cause of the world, introduce the principle of *māyā*, identical with *avidyā*, to explain the material and the efficient causality of Brahman.<sup>10</sup> The latter as associated with *māyā*, which is indeterminable either as real or as an absolute nothing, becomes the material and the efficient cause of the world. *Māyā* which is present in Brahman is inspired by the reflection of the latter as it undergoes modification into the form of the world; and so Brahman, by being the substratum of *māyā* whose transformation is the world, is viewed as the transfigurative material cause. Similarly, the modes of *māyā* (*māyā-vṛtti*) inspired by the reflection of Brahman in it are known as desire and resolve, and Brahman associated with these modes of *māyā* is viewed as the efficient cause of the world.



That Brahman is both the material and the efficient cause of the origination of the world, is known from the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*: "That (Brahman) created itself by itself."<sup>11</sup> This text we have explained earlier. There are three Upaniṣadic passages which respectively convey Brahman to be the efficient cause of the origination, sustentation and dissolution of the world. We shall now explain these texts.

The view that Brahman is the efficient cause of the origination of the world is set forth in the fourth section of the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣad*. It is in the form of a dialogue between Bālāki and the king, Ajātaśatru. Bālāki offered to instruct Ajātaśatru on Brahman.<sup>12</sup> When he identified the sun, the moon, the lightning and the like as Brahman, Ajātaśatru rejected, on valid grounds, the contention of Bālāki.<sup>13</sup> When Bālāki became silent, Ajātaśatru told him, "Falsely indeed you promised me 'I shall tell you fully of Brahman',"<sup>14</sup> and proceeded to instruct him on the nature of Brahman by stating that the Self (Brahman) is the one who is indeed the creator (*kartā*) of the beings, which Bālāki has identified as Brahman, or rather of whom this entire world is the effect (*karma*). The king concluded by saying that it is Brahman of such nature that is fit to be realized.

*yo vai bālāke eteṣām puruṣāṇām kartā yasya vā  
etat karma sa vai veditavyaḥ puruṣaḥ.*<sup>14</sup>

According to Śaṅkara, the state of being the creator of the entities pointed out as Brahman by Bālāki cannot be thought of as belonging exclusively and independently to any being other than Brahman. And the word ‘*karma*’ in the text does not refer to either movement, or merit, or demerit; for, neither are they under discussion, nor are they mentioned in the Upaniṣad by name. It means etymologically that which is created or originated (*kriyate iti karma*) i.e. the world.<sup>15</sup> Thus, in the Upaniṣad the fact of Brahman being the efficient cause of the origination of the world is specifically mentioned. This is the subject-matter of discussion under the *Vedānta-sūtra*, ‘‘Because of the indication of the world (by the word *karma*, it—of which this world is the effect—must be Brahman).’’<sup>16</sup>

That Brahman is the efficient cause of the sustentation of the world is referred to in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* in the section entitled *antaryāmi-brāhmaṇa*. It begins by making reference to the one who controls this world and all beings from within,<sup>17</sup> and proceeds to state that ‘‘He who is immanent in the earth, whom the earth does not identify, who controls the earth from within, and for



whom the earth is the body, He is your Self, the internal ruler; and He is immortal.''<sup>18</sup> In the same way, the Upaniṣad says that the internal ruler who is immortal is the controller of water, fire, sky, air, heaven, sun, the jīva, etc. by being immanent in them.<sup>19</sup> It is clear from this that Brahman is the controller of the entire world. The state of being the controller is only the state of being the efficient cause of the sustentation of the world. The Upaniṣadic texts referred to here form the subject-matter of the *Vedānta-sūtra*: "The internal ruler of the celestial beings and other factors (is Brahman), since the characteristics of that (that is, Brahman) are referred to (in the Upaniṣads)."<sup>20</sup>

That Brahman is the efficient cause of the destruction of the world is referred to in the *Kātha Upaniṣad*. Here it is said: "That to which the classes of Brahmins and Kṣatriyas become food and the Lord of Death is condiment, who can know it, thus, where it is?"<sup>21</sup> The significance of this text is: just as for food that is eaten, curd, etc., serve as condiments, in the same way the classes of Brahmins and Kṣatriyas who are eaten by a Being, the Lord of Death serves as a condiment. A condiment—curd, for example—is known to be that which is eaten and which also serves as the means to eat something else, rice (say) with

which it is mixed. The condiment along with the food with which it is mixed is consumed. Similarly, when it is said that the Lord of Death serves as the condiment for the food—the Brahmins and Kṣatriyas—, it is known that the Lord of Death also is eaten and is the means of eating the classes of Brahmins and Kṣatriyas. The Upaniṣad mentions Brahmins and Kṣatriyas to represent the entire world as they support all order and the protectors of all.<sup>22</sup> And the relation between the Lord of Death and the world is similar to the one that destroys and the one that is destroyed. When it is said that the Lord of Death is the condiment of eating, i.e. destroying the world, it is known that the world along with the Lord of Death is consumed, just as the condiment, e.g. curd, is consumed along with the food with which it is mixed. The Being that consumes the world along with the Lord of Death cannot be anything other than Brahman. Thus, Brahman is said to be the efficient cause of the destruction of the world. The Upaniṣadic passage under reference forms the subject-matter of discussion under the *Vedānta-sūtra*. “The one who consumes (is Brahman), because both the movable and immovable (that is, the entire universe) are taken (as its food).”<sup>23</sup>

We have said that the characteristic of being the material and the efficient cause in the case of Brahman



is due to *māyā*; and so it is only an accidental feature to explain Brahman. The essential nature of Brahman is consciousness and bliss.<sup>24</sup>

## NOTES:

1. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (hereafter *TU*), 3.1.
2. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (hereafter *CU*), 3.15.
3. *Ibid.*, 1.4.1.
4. *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya* (hereafter *VSB*), 1.4.25.
5. *TU*, 2.5.2.
6. *CU*, 6.2.3.
7. *VSB*, 1.4.24.
8. *TU*, 2.7.
9. *VSB*, 1.4.26.
10. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, 1.3.
11. *TU*, 2.7.
12. *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣad*, 1.3.
13. *Ibid.*, 4.2 - 18.
14. *Ibid.*, 4.19.
15. *VSB*, 1.4.16.
16. *Vedānta-sūtra* (hereafter *VS*), 1.4.16.
17. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (hereafter *BU*), 3.7.1.
18. *Ibid.*, 3.7.3.

19. Ibid., 3.7.3 - 23.
20. *VS*, 1.2.18.
21. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.2.25.
22. Ibid., Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* on it.
23. *VSB*, 1.2.9.
24. *VSB*, 1.1.2.





## GAUḌAPĀDA

T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph.D.,

1

Gauḍapāda, like most of the classical Indian thinkers, lives in our memories mainly through his work. Tradition regards Gauḍapāda as Śaṅkara's *paramaguru* (preceptor's preceptor). A verse which contains the succession list of the early teachers of Advaita gives the names of those teachers in the following order: Nārāyaṇa, the lotus-born Brahmā, Vasishṭha, Śakti, his son Parāśara, Vyāsa, Śuka, the great Gauḍapāda, Govinda-yogīndra, his disciple Śaṅkarāchārya, and then his four pupils Padmapāda, Hastāmalaka, Troṭaka and the Vārtikakāra (i.e. Sure śvara).<sup>1</sup>

From this list we learn that Gauḍapāda was the preceptor of Govinda who was Śaṅkara's *guru*. The first teacher is Nārāyaṇa, the Lord himself; and the line of succession, which is from father to son upto Śuka, consists more or less of mythical persons. The first teacher of whose historicity we may be sure is Gauḍapāda; and from him onwards we have the rule of

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\* Courtesy: *Preceptors of Advaita*, Samata Books, Chennai.

*sanyāsins* succeeding to the Advaita pontificate. With him commences, according to tradition, what may be called the *mānava-saṁpradāya* in the present age of *Kalī*; he was the first *human* preceptor to receive the wisdom of the One and impart it to his pupils. Ānandagiri in his gloss (*tīkā*) on the *Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā-bhāṣya*, says that the teacher Gauḍapāda in those days spent his time in Badarikāśrama, the holy residence of Nara-Nārāyaṇa, in deep meditation on the Lord, and that the Lord Nārāyaṇa, greatly pleased, revealed to him the Upanishadic wisdom. Bālakṛṣṇānanda Sarasvatī (17th Century A.D.) writes in his *Śārīrakamīmāṁsābhāṣya-vārtika* that there was in the country of Kurukshetra a river called Hīrarāvātī, on whose banks there were some Gauḍa people (people of Gauḍadeśa, the modern North Bengal); that the pre-eminent of them, Gauḍapāda, was absorbed in deep meditation beginning from the *Dvāpara* age; and so, as his proper name is not known to the moderns, he is celebrated by the class-name of the Gauḍas.

Gauḍapāda, after he was blessed with the intuitive wisdom of the Absolute, must have taught those who gathered round him the truth he had discovered and embodied it in a work which came to be called the *Āgamaśāstra* or *Gauḍapāda-kārikā*. It is an exposition of a short but important Upaniṣad called the



*Māṇḍūkya*, which is counted as one of the principal Upaniṣads by all the schools of Vedānta. Besides the *Māṇḍūkyakārikā*, other works are also attributed to Gauḍapāda. They are: a *vṛtti* on the *Uttaragītā*, a *bhāṣya* on the *Sāṅkhyakārikā*, a commentary on the *Nṛsimhottaratāpinyupaniṣad*, a *bhāṣya* on *Durgāsaptaśatī* and two independent Tāntric treatises, viz., *Subhagodaya* and *Śrīvidyāratnasūtra*. Since nothing definite can be said regarding the authorship of these other works, we shall here attempt a study of the philosophy of Gauḍapāda as it is set forth in the *Māṇḍūkyakārikā*.

## 2

Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā*, which is more than a verse-commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, contains the quintessence of the teaching of Vedānta.<sup>2</sup> The work consists of 215 couplets arranged in four chapters. Following the Upaniṣad, the first chapter, Āgama-prakarāṇa, analyses the three *avasthās*, waking, dream, and deep sleep, and finds that the Self which is referred to as the Turiya underlies and transcends these changing states. The second chapter, Vaitathya-prakarāṇa, seeks to establish the illusoriness of the world of plurality, on the analogy of dreams, and through a criticism of creationistic hypotheses. The third chapter, Advaita-prakarāṇa, sets forth the

arguments for the truth of non-dualism, gives citations from scripture in support thereof, and discusses the path to the realisation of non-duality, called Asparśa-yoga. The last chapter, Alātaśanti-prakaraṇa, repeats some of the arguments of the earlier chapters, shows the unintelligibility of the concept of causality through dialectic, explains the illusoriness of the phenomenal world, comparing it to the non-real designs produced by a fire-brand (*alāta*) and pressing into service modes of Bauddha reasoning, and establishes the supreme truth of non-duality which is unoriginated, eternal, self-luminous bliss.

## 3

The central theme of Gauḍapāda's philosophy is that nothing is ever born (*ajātī*), not because 'nothing' is the ultimate truth, as in Śūnya-vāda, but because the Self is the only reality. 'No jīva is born; there is no cause for such birth; this is the supreme truth, nothing whatever is born.'<sup>3</sup> From the standpoint of the Absolute there is no duality, there is nothing finite or non-eternal. The Absolute alone is; all else is appearance, illusory and non-real. They are deluded who take the pluralistic universe to be real. Empirical distinctions of knower and object known, mind and matter, are the result of Māyā. One cannot explain how they arise. But on enquiry they will be found to be void of reality. If



one sees them, it is like seeing the foot-prints of birds in the sky.<sup>4</sup> The Self is unborn; there is nothing else to be born. Duality is mere illusion; non-duality is the supreme truth.<sup>5</sup>

## 4

Gaudapāda expounds his philosophy of non-origination or non-birth in several ways and through many an argument. The reality of the non-dual self he first establishes through an enquiry into the purport of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. Though extremely brief, the *Māṇḍūkya* contains the essentials of Vedānta. For the liberation of those who desire release, says the *Muktikopaniṣad*, the *Māṇḍūkya* alone is enough.<sup>6</sup> The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* begins with the equation 'Om = all = Brahman = self' and proceeds to describe the three states of the self, waking, dream and sleep, as well as the fourth (*Turiya*) which is not a state alongside the others the transcendent nature of the self—the non-dual peace, the *per se*, Gaudapāda makes this declaration of the Upaniṣad basis of his metaphysical quest and seeks to show through reasoning that non-origination is the final truth.

Viśva, Taijasa, and Prājña are the names by which the self is known in the three states, waking, dream, and sleep. Viśva is conscious of the external world, enjoys what is gross and is satisfied therewith. Taijasa

is conscious of what is within,<sup>7</sup> enjoys what is subtle and finds satisfaction there. Prājña is a consciousness-mass without the distinctions of seer and seen; its enjoyment and satisfaction is bliss. The three, Viśva, Taijasa, and Prājña, are not distinct selves. It is one and the same self that appears as three.<sup>8</sup> To show that all the three aspects are present in waking, Gauḍpāda assigns localities to them. Viśva has its seat in the right eye; Taijasa in the mind; and Prājña in the ether of the heart.<sup>9</sup> And the three should also be thought of as identical with the three cosmic forms of the self, Virāt, Hiraṇyagarbha, and Avyākṛta or Īśvara. It is to indicate this identity that the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* describes the Prājña-self as the lord of all, the knower of all, the controller of all, the source of all, the origin and end of beings.<sup>10</sup> The recognition of Viśva, Taijasa, and Prājña in the waking state, and the identification of the three individual forms of the self with the three cosmic forms, are for the purpose of realising non-duality.

The non-dual reality is the Turiya. It has no distinguishing name; hence it is called 'the fourth' (*turiya*).<sup>11</sup> It is the self-luminous self, changeless, non-dual, one without a second. The states that change and pass, with their words and enjoyments, are illusory, products of *Māyā*. *Māyā* is two-fold in its functioning; it veils the one and projects the many. Non-



apprehension of the real (*tattvā-pratibodha*) and the apprehension of it otherwise (*anyathā-grahaṇa*). For the Prājña in the state of sleep there is non-apprehension alone, and not misapprehension. It knows neither the self in its real nature nor the not-self. The Turiya is free from both the aspects of *Māyā*. It is consciousness *per se*, without even 'a trace of ignorance. It is unfailing light, omniscient sight.<sup>12</sup> The metaphysical implication of sleep is that it hides the true, and of dream that it projects the untrue. Viśva and Taijasa are associated with dream and sleep; Prājña is associated with dreamless sleep; for the Turiya there is neither dream nor sleep. Real awakening comes with the realisation of the Turiya, with the transcendence of *Māyā* in its double role of veiling the real and showing up the non-real. When the jīva wakes from the beginningless sleep of illusion, it knows its true nature as un-born, as that in which there is neither sleep nor dream nor duality.<sup>13</sup>

In the Alātaśānti-prakaraṇa,<sup>14</sup> Gauḍapāda teaches the same theory of the three *avasthās*, employing Bauddha terminology, Waking, dream, and sleep are there called *laukika* and *śuddha-laukika*, and *lokottara* respectively. The difference between the first two is that while in the former there are external objects (*savastu*), in the latter there is none (*avastu*):

but in both there is consciousness of duality (*sopalambha*). In the *lokottara* there is neither the external world of things nor the internal world of ideas, and consequently there is no apprehension of duality; ignorance, however, persists. It is only he who knows these three as non-real states that knows the truth. For him there is no duality, nor ignorance, the seed of duality. When the real is known, there is not the world of duality.<sup>15</sup>

## 5

As a result of the inquiry into the *avasthās* it must be evident that the pluralistic world is illusory, as the self alone is real. That the world which we take to be real in waking is illusory, Gauḍapāda seeks to establish in the *Vaitathya-prakaraṇa* on the analogy of the dream-world. Judged by the standards of waking, it will be readily seen that the world of dreams is unreal. A person may dream of elephants and chariots; but on waking he realises that all of them must have been illusory because they appeared within him, within the small space of his body.<sup>16</sup> The dream-contents do not form part of the external world which we take to be real in waking; and so they are illusory. Nor do they conform to the laws of space and time which govern the waking world. In a trice of waking time one may travel far and wide in dream. There is no real going to



the place of dream, for on waking one does not find oneself there. Nor are the objects experienced in dream real, for when the dream-spell is broken one does not see them.<sup>17</sup> Because chariot, etc., seen in dream are non-existent, they are illusory.<sup>18</sup>

The world of waking is in many respects similar to that of dream. The objects of waking are *perceived* as the dream-objects are; and they are evanescent as well, like the contents of dream. What is non-existent in the beginning and at the end, is so even in the present.<sup>19</sup> That is real which is not conditioned by time. *Per contra* that which is conditioned by time cannot be real. Just as the dream-objects are experienced in dream alone neither before nor after, even so the objects of waking are experienced in the state of waking alone. A difference between the two states cannot be made out on the ground that, while the objects experienced in waking are practically efficient, those seen in dream are not; for even the objects of waking experience are fruitful in practice only in that state and not in dream; and the dream-objects are useful in their own way in the state of dream. It is true that the dream-water cannot quench actual thirst, But it is equally true that the so-called actual water cannot quench the dream-thirst either.<sup>20</sup> It may be argued that the contents of dream are unreal because, unlike the

objects of waking, they are strange and abnormal. But when and to whom do they appear abnormal? To him who has returned to waking after a dream. In the dream state itself the contents are not realised to be strange. With perfect equanimity the dreamer may watch even the dismemberment of his own head. We are told that the denizens of heaven have their own peculiarities which to us are all abnormal. Similarly, from the side of waking the dream-contents may seem abnormal; but in themselves they are quite normal.<sup>21</sup> That there is an essential similarity between the contents of dream and the objects of waking may be shown by a closer scrutiny of the two states. In the state of dream, the dreamer imagines certain ideas within himself and sees certain things outside; and he believes that, while the former are unreal, the latter are real. But as soon as he wakes from the dream, he realises the unreality of even the things which he saw in dream *as if* outside. Similarly in waking, we have our fancies which we know to be unreal, and we experience facts which we take to be real. But when the delusion of duality is dispelled, the so-called facts of the external world will turn out to be illusory appearance.<sup>22</sup> Therefore it is that the wise characterise waking as a dream.<sup>23</sup> Just as the dream-soul arises and perishes, the souls of waking come into being and pass away.<sup>24</sup> It is the, self that posits the dream-contents as well as



the external world. The things created in the mind within and those posited in the world without—both these are the illusory imaginations of the Ātman. The difference between the two sets of things is that while the dream-contents last only till the mind of the dreamer imagines them (*cittakālāh*) and are peculiar thereto the objects of the external world are perceived by other subjects<sup>25</sup> as well (*dvayakālāh*), and are cognised through the sense-organs. Illusoriness (*vaitathya*), however, is common to both.<sup>26</sup> In dream as well as in waking it is the mind that moves impelled by *Māyā* and creates the appearance of plurality. As identical with the self the mind is non-dual; but owing to nescience duality is figured and there is the consequent *samsāra*.<sup>27</sup>

Illustrations for illusoriness are to be found even in the state of waking. Just as in the dark a rope which is not determinately known is imagined to be a snake or a streak of water, the self is imagined to be the world through nescience. And as when the rope is known as rope the posited snake, etc., vanish, so also when the self is known as non-dual, that pluralistic world disappears.<sup>28</sup> Like the Palace city of Fairy Morgana (*gandharva-nagara*), the universe is seen but is not real.<sup>29</sup> The things of the world are believed to exist because they are perceived (*upalambhāt*) and because

they answer to certain practical needs (*samācārāt*). But these two reasons cannot make them real; for even the objects like the elephant conjured up by the necromancer are observed and are practically efficient but are not real.<sup>30</sup> One more illustration Gauḍapāda gives in the fourth chapter, viz. the *alāta* or fire-brand. When a fire-brand is moved, it appears to be straight, or crooked, and so on; and when the movement stops, the appearances vanish. They do not really come from the fire-brand in motion, nor do they enter into it when it comes to rest. The patterns of fire that appear with the movement of the fire-brand are illusory; they have no substance whatsoever. Similarly, consciousness appears in manifold forms due to *Māyā*. These do not come out of it, in reality, nor do they return to it; for they are naught.<sup>31</sup> There is no dissolution, no origination; no one in bondage, no one who desires release, no one who is released—this is the supreme truth.<sup>32</sup>

## 6

The establishment of the non-reality of the world by Gauḍapāda does not mean that the great teacher subscribes to the view of ontological unreality (*śūnyavāda*). We have already seen how in the *Āgama-prakaraṇa* he expounds the meaning of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* and shows through an inquiry into the



nature of the three *avasthās* that the Self (*turīya*) is the sole reality. That this is so Gauḍapāda argues through reasoning in the Advaita- prakaraṇa, and cites in support the evidence of passages from other scriptural texts as well.

The self is unlimited like ether, undivided and the same throughout. The *jīvas* are apparent distinctions therein, as pots etc., produce in ether divisions as it were. We speak of a plurality of souls and a multiplicity of material objects, even as we speak of pot-ether, pitcher-ether, and so on. The one Ātman appears as the many *jīvas*, as the same ether seems divided, enclosed in the different things. When the things are destroyed, the distinctions in ether too vanish; so also when the *jīvas* are realised to be manifestations due to *Māyā*, the self alone remains. There is no contingency of the defects of one *jīva* being occasioned in the other *jīvas* or the defects of the *jīvas* defiling the purity of the self. It must be noted that Gauḍapāda's theory is not eka-*jīva*-vāda but ekā-*tma*-vāda. Since the empirical plurality of *jīvas* is recognised, there is not the contingency of the defects of one *jīva* being occasioned in the others or the experiences of one being confused with those of the rest. And by the defilments of the *jīvas* the self is not affected, as dust, smoke. etc., present in the pots or

pitchers do not make other foul. Forms, functions, and names differ from object to object; but there is no difference in ether. Similarly, the jīvas vary in their physical make-up, mental and moral endowment, in station and status; but the self is unvarying, formless, functionless, and nameless. Just as children attribute wrongly dirt, etc., to the sky, the ignorant superpose on the unsullied self defects like birth and death, pleasure and pain. But these are changes that are not real and do not touch the self. The birth of the jīvas and their death, their coming and going, do not alter the Ātman. They are not products of the self, nor are they parts thereof. The non-dual reality is partless; it neither causes anything, nor is caused by anything.<sup>33</sup>

Scripture in many places proclaims the non-duality of the self and deprecates the delusion of duality. Through an inquiry into the five sheaths (*kośas*) that cover the soul, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*<sup>34</sup> exhibits the self as the non-dual bliss, not to be confused with the mutable coverings. In the 'Honey section' of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*<sup>35</sup> the principle behind the cosmic elements is identified with the self which is the substrate of the body and its functions. What is without is within as well. The same 'honey' pervades all beings. It is immortal, the self, Brahman, the all. As the spokes are fixed in the nave of a wheel, so are all



beings centred in the self. Thus scripture declares the non-difference of the jīva from the self and denounces plurality. Difference is illusory; the one appears as many through *Māyā*. "There is no plurality here."<sup>36</sup> "Indra through *māyās* assumes diverse forms."<sup>37</sup> "Though unborn he appears variously born."<sup>38</sup> The *Īśāvāsya*<sup>39</sup> denies birth of the self, and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* asks, "Who indeed could produce him?"<sup>40</sup> Of what is real birth is incomprehensible; and what is unreal cannot even be born.<sup>41</sup>

It is true that in some contexts scripture speaks of creation. Through the illustrations of clay, metal, sparks, etc., creation of the many from the one is described. But this is only to enable those who are dull-witted and middlings to understand the fundamental unity of reality, Śruti declares creation in some places, and non-creation in others. The two sets of passages cannot have equal validity. That teaching should be taken as the purport of scripture which is ascertained through inquiry (*nīścitam*) and is reasonable (*yukti-yuktam*). If birth is predicated of the real, it must be in the sense of an illusion, and not in the primary sense. The self is unborn, sleepless and dreamless, nameless and formless, self-luminous and all-knowing.<sup>42</sup>

## 7

That the self is unborn and that nothing else there is which is born, Gaudapāda seeks to demonstrate through a dialectical criticism of the causal category in the fourth chapter. Causation, like all other relations, falls within the realm of nescience, because on analysis it turns out to be unintelligible. There are two rival views on causation which are totally opposed to each other. The Sāṅkhya theory is that the effect is pre-existent in the cause and is not produced *de novo*. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view is that the effect is non-existent prior to its production. On either of these hypotheses there will not result causation. If the effect is already existent, there is no need for any causal operation; it is meaningless to say that what is existent is born. If the effect is non-existent, it can never be produced; what is non-existent like the barren woman's son is not at any time seen to take birth.<sup>43</sup> Even without their knowing the two rival schools, *satkārya-vāda* and *asatkārya-vāda*, are thus seen to support the view of non-creation or non-origination.<sup>44</sup>

Of what is really unborn the disputants predicate birth. But this is a flagrant violation of the law of contradiction. How can that which is unborn and therefore immortal become mortal? The immortal cannot become mortal, nor the mortal immortal; for it



is impossible for a thing to change its nature. if what is by nature immortal were to become mortal, then it would cease to be changless, and attain artificiality, illusoriness. But this is impossible for what is immortal by nature. The Sāṅkhya thinks that the unborn and beginningless Prakṛti evolves itself into the manifold evolutes that constitute the universe. But this view cannot be justified by any canon of logic. If Prakṛti *becomes* the world it cannot be unborn (*aja*) and eternal (*nitya*). Even to admit that there is a first cause is to confess the failure of causation as a principle of explanation. To add to the confusion the Sāṅkhya says that the effect is non-different from the cause. Now, in the effect born or unborn? If it is born, it cannot be non-different from the cause which is unborn. If it is unborn, then it cannot be called 'effect', as the effect is that which is *produced*. And if the effect is produced and is non-different from the cause, the cause cannot be permanent or unchanging. There is no illustration that could be instanced to prove the production of the effect from the unborn cause. If to avoid this difficulty it be said that the cause too is born, then there should be a cause for that cause a still further cause for that other cause, and so on *ad infinitum*.<sup>45</sup>

The Mīmāṃsakas maintain that the cause and the effect are reciprocally dependent. Merit and demerit



are responsible for producing the body; and the body occasions merit and demerit. The chain of causes and effects is without beginning, each alternating with the other, like the seed and the sprout. Here again we meet with insuperable difficulties. If the antecedent of a cause is its effect and the antecedent of an effect is its cause, then both cause and effect are begun. How can they be beginningless? Moreover, there is a paradox in the very thesis that is proposed. To say that the antecedent of the cause is its effect is like saying that the son begets his father.<sup>46</sup> There must be some definite sequence recognised as between cause and effect. It is no use believing that the two are reciprocally dependent. If the cause and the effect can be indifferently antecedent or consequent, there would be no distinction whatever between them, and to call one a cause and the other an effect would be entirely arbitrary and void of meaning. Now, there are three possible ways of stating the sequence. It may be said that first there is the cause and subsequently the effect takes place (*pūrva-krama*); or it may be held that the effect is followed by the cause (*apara-krama*); or it may be thought that the cause and the effect are simultaneous (*saha-krama*). None of these alternatives is intelligible. That the cause cannot produce the effect we have shown already. If the cause is unborn, it cannot change and therefore cannot produce; if it is

born there is infinite regress. The reverse order too is impossible; for, as we said, it is just like making the son antecedent to the father. The effect by definition is that which is produced by the cause; and if the cause is not there before the effect, how can the effect be produced? And from the unproduced effect how can the cause come into being? The third alternative also is untenable. If what are simultaneous be causally related, there must be such a relation between the two horns of an animal. But as a matter of experience it is well known that the two horns are not so related. This, then, is the crux of the problem. Without settling the sequence, the distinction of cause and effect would be unintelligible. And it is impossible to settle the sequence. In despair, appeal might be made to the illustration of seed and sprout. But a little thought would reveal that these—seed and sprout—cannot serve as illustration. It is only when the causal sequence has been settled that the relation between seed and sprout would become intelligible. Since the latter is a particular falling under the wider relation of cause and effect, it cannot be used as an illustration. It is, in short, *sādhya-sama*, still to be proved.<sup>47</sup>

A thing is not produced either from itself or from another. A pot is not produced from the self-same pot, nor from another pot. It may be urged that pot is



produced from clay. But how is pot related to clay. Is it non-different, different, or both different and non-different from it? If pot is non-different from clay, it cannot be produced, since clay is already existent. If it is different, there is no reason why it should not be produced from another pot or a piece of cloth which are also different. And it cannot be both different and non-different, because of contradiction. Similarly, neither the existent nor the non-existent nor what is existent and non-existent can be produced. It is meaningless to say that what exists is produced. The non-existent cannot be produced even because of its non-existence. The third alternative involves us in contradiction.<sup>48</sup>

It is true that empirical distinctions are observed between knower and known, pain and the source of pain, etc. From the standpoint of reasoning based on relative experience (*yukti-darśanāt*), there is difference as also causal relation governing the differentials. But from the standpoint of the Absolute (*bhūta-darśanāt*) there is no difference and the concept of cause is unintelligible.<sup>49</sup>

## 8

Gauḍapāda admits creation in the sphere of the empirical. But creation, according to him, is neither *de novo* nor transformation of an original stuff. It is of the



nature of *Māyā*, illusory manifestation or transfiguration. The world is not related to the self either as a piece of cloth to the threads or as curds to milk. In fact, no relation is intelligible, The one reality somehow appears as the pluralistic universe through its own *Māyā* (*ātma-māyā*). The complexes that constitute the world are projections, like the dream-contents, effected by the illusion of the Ātman.<sup>50</sup> Things are said to be born only from the standpoint of empirical truth (*saṃvṛti-satya*); they have therefore no permanence. Just as an illusive sprout shoots from an illusive seed, all things arise from *Māyā*.<sup>51</sup>

There are several theories of creation. Some philosophers favour materialistic origins for the world. For example, there are thinkers who attribute the origination of the universe to Time. Theists, however, regard God as the first cause of things. Some of them ascribe to Him efficient causality alone, others both efficient and material causality. The former say that creation is the mere volition of the Lord, while the latter hold that it is His expansion. Some maintain that God creates for the sake of His enjoyment. Others urge that creation is His sport. But how can desire be in God who is *āpta-kāma* and has no end to achieve? In our ignorance we must content ourselves with saying that creation is His nature or *māyā*. Like dream and magic

it is illusory.<sup>52</sup> The non-dual is imagined to be the manifold world. The latter is neither different from the self nor identical therewith. Hence it is declared to be indeterminable.<sup>53</sup>

The philosophers of the different schools characterise the real in different ways and give their own schemes of categories. Each emphasises one particular aspect of reality and holds on to it as if it were the whole. The self has been variously conceived as life, elements, constituents of Primal Nature, things, worlds, Vedas, sacrifice, what is subtle, what is gross, what has form, what has no form, and so on. According to the Sāṅkhyas, there are twenty-five tattvas or principles. To these, the followers of the Yoga system add one more, viz., God. In the view of the Pāsupatas there are twenty-one categories. There are others who make the categories endless in number. All these theories are but the imaginations of their respective advocates.<sup>54</sup> There is only one self which appears as many through self-delusion as it were.<sup>55</sup> First the jīvas are imagined and then the various things, external and internal. The world of souls and things is an appearance superposed on the self, as the snake-form is imposed on the rope-substance in the dark.<sup>56</sup>



The teaching of creation has no final purport. As has been shown already, what is real cannot be really born. If it is said to be born, it must be in the sense of an illusory appearance.<sup>57</sup> Ordinarily it is stated that *saṁsāra* which has no beginning comes to an end when release is attained. But this is figurative language. If *saṁsāra* had no beginning, it could not have an end. If release is attained, it is liable to be lost again.<sup>58</sup> If the universe really existed, it would be destroyed. As we have observed, duality is *māyā-mātra*, mere illusion. Removal of *saṁsāra* and attainment of *mokṣa* are figurative. These have to be taught in language which needs must relate to duality. When the real is known, there is no duality whatever.<sup>59</sup>

## 9

True to its character as an *upadeśa-śāstra*, the *Gaudapāda-kārikā* contains practical teaching at the end of each chapter. The purpose of a *śāstra* is to enable the aspirant to cross the sea of *saṁsāra* and reach the shore of blessedness which is the highest human goal (*parama-puruṣārtha*). The vicious circle of empirical life dependent on the law of cause and effect is evil (*anartha*). This, however, as has been shown above, is a product of *avidyā Māyā*. As long as there is an obstinate faith in causality which is illusory (*āvidyaka*), the chain of birth and death will not cease.



When that false belief is destroyed through knowledge, *samsāra* is removed.<sup>60</sup> The cause of birth and death is ignorance as regards the ultimate truth which is causeless. When this is realised, there is no further cause for metempsychosis, and we attain release which is freedom from sorrow, desire, and fear. Attachment to the non-real is responsible for the illusory wanderings in the wilderness of *samsāra*. When one becomes non-attached through knowledge, one turns back from the false pursuit of the non-real, and reaches the non-dual reality which is homogeneous and unborn.<sup>61</sup>

The real bliss is veiled and the non-real sorrow is projected on account of the perfection of illusory plurality. Enshrouded by the darkness of ignorance, those of immature knowledge (*bālīśaḥ*) dispute about what they consider to be the nature of reality. Some say, it is; some, it is not; others, it is and is not; yet others, it neither is nor is not.<sup>62</sup> All these are *kṛpaṇas*, narrow-minded, who see fear in the fearless,<sup>63</sup> and follow the way of difference, getting themselves engrossed therein. Opposed to these are the great knowers (*mahājñānāḥ*) who are settled in their wisdom about the unborn, unchanging reality.<sup>64</sup>

The knowledge which saves is not that which remains a mere theoretical comprehension, but that

which has become a direct experience. Study of scripture, ethical discipline, detachment from objects of sense and intense longing for release—these are essential for realising the self. The aspirant should learn the purport of the Veda and acquire freedom from passions like attachment, fear, and anger (*vītarāga-bhaya-krodhaḥ*); and he should fix his thoughts on the non-dual reality.<sup>65</sup> Gauḍapāda teaches two methods of concentrating the mind on the non-dual, Praṇava-yoga in the first chapter and Asparśa-yoga in the third. These are to serve as auxiliaries to the knowledge of the Absolute, methods to loosen the cords of ignorance.

Asparśa-yoga is the yoga of transcendence, whereby one realises the supra-relational reality. *Saṅkalpa* is the root of activity and bondage. The mind contemplates objects and gets distracted and shattered with the result that there is no peace or happiness. Acceptance and desistance are motivated by the centrifugal tendency of thought-process. The outgoing mind should be called back and controlled. Controlling the mind is difficult, indeed, as difficult as emptying the ocean drop by drop by the tip of *kuśa* grass. But it is not an impossible task; only it requires relentless effort. If the mind is restrained through discrimination, the end will certainly be reached. One



must remember first that all is misery and turn back from desires and enjoyments. The mind that moves out must be brought to unity. But in this process care must be taken that it does not fall into sleep. When the mind goes to sleep, it must be awakened; when it tries to go out, it must be calmed. When the stormy mind is stilled, there is the thrill of quietude. But one should not revel even in this *yogic* trance. Anything that is *enjoyed* must belong to duality; it cannot be unlimited or lasting happiness. The mind must become non-mind (*amanībhāva*); the relations of subject and object, enjoyer and enjoyment must be transcended. This will come only through the knowledge of the non-dual self. Knowledge and the self are not different. Knowledge is the self or Brahman. Hence it is said that through the unborn (knowledge) the unborn (Brahman) is known.<sup>66</sup> Self-established, the unborn knowledge attains its natural equanimity or sameness. This is called *asparśa-yoga*, the yoga which is pleasing and good to all beings, and which is beyond dispute and contradiction.<sup>67</sup>

The same end may be reached through meditation on OM (*praṇavayoga*). 'Om' is the term indicative of the Brahman-self. It consists of three *mātrās*, *a*, *u*, *m*, and a soundless fourth which is *amātrā*. *A* stands for *Viśva*, *u* for *Taijasa*, and *m* for *Prājña*. Meditation on



the significance of the three sounds respectively will lead to the realisation of the three aspects of the self. The sound 'om' proceeds from and is resolved in the soundless *amātra*. Similarly, the Turiya is the absolute which is unchanging and non-dual, but which appears as many and changing. When the meaning of the soundless culmination of Om is realised, there is leading to or attainment of anything; for the Turiya is no other than real and only self. Thus the Praṇava is to be meditated upon and known. It is the beginning, middle and end of all things. It is the lord established in the heart of all beings. There is nothing before it nor anything after it, nothing outside it nor anything other than it. Understanding the Praṇava in this manner, one attains the supreme.<sup>68</sup>

*Mokṣa* or release is not a *post-mortem* state; it can be realised even here (*iha*), while in embodiment.<sup>69</sup> To speak of it as an attainment or realisation is but figurative. It is the eternal and inalienable nature of the self. He who knows this is released, he is a *jīvan-mukta*. Because he has attained full omniscience and is free from the delusion of duality, there is nothing for him which he can desire.<sup>70</sup> He is not elated by praise nor depressed by blame. He does not offer obeisance to any, nor does he perform any rite. He has no fixed home, and subsists on what comes his way. He lies like

a non-conscious being, and lives as he likes.<sup>71</sup> Though he has no obligations, his conduct can never be immoral. Virtues like humility, equanimity, calmness, and self-control are natural to him.<sup>72</sup> His is the immortal state which is difficult to be seen, very deep, unborn, ever the same, and fearless.<sup>73</sup> He sees the truth everywhere. He delights in the truth and does not swerve from it. He is the truth.<sup>74</sup>

## 10

From the account of Gaudapāda's philosophy given above it will be clear that this great teacher was an Advaitin, the earliest known to us—who in his *Kārikā* laid the foundations of a philosophy which was to become a glorious edifice through the immortal work of Śaṅkara. While making use of logical reasoning and the dialectical method, he does not deviate from the teaching of the Upaniṣhads. Even where he employs Bauddha terminology, he takes care to point out that his system should not be confused with Buddhism. While denying absolute reality to the world, he is firm in proclaiming that the non-dual Brahman-self is the supreme truth. He has no quarrel with any system of philosophy because, in his view, all systems if properly understood are pointers to non-duality. While the dualists oppose one another, the doctrine of non-duality does not conflict with them.<sup>75</sup>



*Ajāti* or the unborn reality is the final goal of all metaphysical quest.

## REFERENCES:

1. *nārāyaṇam padma-bhuvam vasiṣṭham śaktim ca  
tat putra parāśaram ca,  
vyāsam śukam gauḍapadam mahāntam  
govinda-yogīndram athāśya-śiṣyam,  
śrī-śaṅkarācāryam athāśya padmapādam ca  
hastāmalakam ca śiṣyam,  
tam troṭakam vārtikakāram anyān asmad-gurūn santatam  
ānatosmi.*
2. The commentator on the *Kārikā* says: *vedāntārtha-sāra-  
saṅgraha-bhūtam.*
3. III, 48; IV, 71.  
*na kaścij-jāyate jīvaḥ sambhavo 'sya na vidyate,  
etat-tad-uttamaṃ satyam yatra kiñcin-na jāyate.*
4. IV, 28.
5. I, 17, *māyā-mātram idaṃ dvaitam advaitam  
paramārthataḥ.*
6. *Muktikā*, I, 26.
7. The distinctions of 'within' and 'without', it must be remembered, are from the standpoint of waking experience; for it is in this state that inquiry is possible.
8. I, i. *eka. eva. tridhā smṛtaḥ.*
9. I, 2. See commentary.
10. *Māṇḍūkya*, 6.
11. Here again it must be noted that the real is called 'the fourth' from the empirical standpoint; in truth, the category of number is inapplicable to it.



12. I, 12. *turiyaḥ sarvadṛk sadā,*

13. I, 13-16.

14. IV, 37, 88.

15. I, 18. *jñāte dvaitam na vidyate.*

16. II, i; IV, 33.

17. II, 2.

18. II, 3; see *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, IV, iii, 10.

19. II, 6; IV, 31.

*ādāvante ca yan-nāsti vartamāne 'pi tat tathā*

20. II, 7; IV, 32.

21. II, 8. See J. A. C. Murray, B.D.: *An Introduction to a Christian Psycho-Therapy* (T. & T. Clark), p. 252; Waking consciousness is, after all a limited affair, narrowed by the immediacies of the five senses, and concentrated at every moment on but one moving point. In dreams, we seem to enter a wider kingdom, freed from the fears and restraints of normal life, a field where earthly forces and laws are set at naught, and where the whole immensity of the subconscious can have freer speech, and like a rising tide, submerge the petty logics of our daily life.

22. II, 9 & 10, IV, 63-66.

23. II, 5. *svapna-jāgarite sthāne hy ekam āhur manīṣiṇaḥ.* An ancient Chinese sage said: "Last night I dreamt that I was a butterfly and now I do not know whether I am a man dreaming that he is a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming that he is a man.

24. IV, 68.

25. Who are also positions of the supreme Self.

26. II, 11-15.
27. III, 29, 30; IV, 61, 62.
28. II, 17, 18.
29. II, 31.
30. IV, 44.
31. IV, 47-52.
32. II, 32.  
*na nirodho na cotpattir na baddho na ca śādhakaḥ  
na mumukṣur na vai mukta ity eṣā paramārthatā.*
33. III, 3-9.
34. Second vallī.
35. II, v.
36. *Brh. Up.*, IV, iv, 19; *Kaṭha Up.* IV, 11.
37. *Ṛg Veda*, VI, 47, 18; *Brh. Up.*, II, v, 19.
38. *Tait. Ār.* III, 13, 1.
39. *Īśa*, 12.
40. III, 9, 28.
41. GK, III, 11-13, 24-26.
42. III, 14-16, 23, 36.
43. IV: 4. *bhūtaṃ na jāyate kiñcid abhūtaṃ naiva jāyate,*
44. IV, 3-5.
45. IV, 6-8, 11-13.
46. IV, 15, *putrāj janma pitur yathā.*
47. IV, 14-18, 20.
48. IV, 22.
49. IV, 24, 25.
50. III, 10. *saṅghātāḥ svapnavat sarve ātma-māyā-visarjitāḥ,*

51. IV, 57-59.  
 52. I, 7-9.  
 53. II, 33, 34.  
 54. II, 20-29. For details see *The Āgamaśāstra of Gauḍapāda*,  
 edited by Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya, pp. 30-37.  
 55. II, 19. *māyaiṣā tasya devasya yayāyam mohitaḥ svayam*,  
 56. II, 16, 17.  
 57. III, 27. *sato hi māyayā janma yujyate na tu tattvataḥ*.  
 58. IV, 30.  
 59. I, 18.  
 60. IV, 56.  
 61. IV, 78-80.  
 62. IV, 82-84.  
 63. III, 39, *abhaye bhaya-darśinaḥ*,  
 64. IV, 94, 95.  
 65. II, 35, 36.  
 66. III, 33. *ajenā-'jaṃ vibudhyate*,  
 67. III, 31-46, IV, 2.  
 68. I, 19-29.  
 69. IV, 89.  
 70. IV, 85.  
 71. II, 36, 37.  
 72. IV, 86.  
 73. IV, 100.  
 74. II, 38.  
 75. III, 17.





## SADĀŚIVA BRAHMENDRA SARASVATĪ

N. RAGHUNATHAN

Sadāśiva Brahmendra Sarasvatī, the *mahāyogin* and *jīvanmukta*, became a legend in his own lifetime. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw a great flowering of the spirit in the Tamil country, especially in the Tanjore region under the enlightened rule of the Nayak and Maharashtra dynasties. Under the aegis of Śāhaji (1684-1711) flourished a brilliant galaxy of poets and makers of music, scholars and thinkers who were noted alike for their personal purity and acuteness of intellect. Many of them, including it is believed Sadāśiva's father, were settled in Śāhajirājapuram, a royal grant for the encouragement of learning. Great saints sojourned among them, providing the inspiration to the higher life. In Sadāśiva, all the varied talent of that time of awakening seems to have met and blended harmoniously. His output as a poet and writer in the Vedāntic tradition was slender. But he touched the imagination of the people in a unique way, only Bodhendra and Śrīdhara Venkaṭeśa, affectionately known as 'Ayyāvāl', being comparable to him in this respect.

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\* Courtesy: *Preceptors of Advaita*, Samata Books, Chennai.

Many miraculous tales are told about him, but few concrete facts are known. He was the disciple of Paramaśivendra Sarasvatī, the fifty-seventh head of the Kāñchī Kāmakoti Śaṅkarācārya Pīṭha, whose greatness he repeatedly extols. Paramaśivendra seems to have been a contemporary of the great poet Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita (born in 1612 A.D. or earlier); for his disciple Rāmanātha was a contemporary of Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita, the accomplished poet and grammarian, who was a pupil of Nīlakaṇṭha, and won his praise. And Rāmanātha's pupil Nallā Adhvarī, a younger relation of Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita, acknowledges in his *Advaita-rasamañjarī* Sadāśiva as his spiritual preceptor after his Guru Paramaśivendra. So we may take it that Sadāśiva was born about the same time as Rāmabhadra, in the early years of the seventeenth century.

He mastered all the Śāstras at an early age and was a formidable debater. But a mild word of rebuke from his Guru, says tradition, made him a maunī. He spent his time mostly in the secluded peace and charm of the Kaveri banks as an *avadhūta*; only occasionally emerging, to bestow his grace on some fortunate individual such as Malhari Pandita, who requested him to bless his patron Serfoji (1911-29), who was



childless, or Vijaya Raghunātha Tonḍaimān of Pudukkottah, or passing through the country-side like a silent benediction, radiating kindness and compassion. He seems to have lived far beyond the Vedic span of a century and attained beatitude at Nerur near Karur on the Kaveri.

And now for a brief survey of his works: Appayya Dīkshita's works had great influence in that age of intellectual ferment and vigorous polemic. His *Siddhāntaleśa-saṅgraha* is a survey of the development of Advaitic doctrines after Śaṅkara. Sadāśiva made a verse compendium of it, evidently to serve as a refresher to the serious student engaged in *manana*. His commentary, *Kesaravallī* is an integral part of the work. It supplements the text, as well as elucidating it. The verses convey, as the author justly claims, a depth of meaning in simple words. Indeed all his expository work is both concise and lucid.

Of his method in this work we can give but one instance here. The first section of the text treats of a question of Vedic exegetics—whether the study of the Vedānta is enjoined as an *apūrva vidhi*, a *niyama vidhi*, or a *parisaṅkhyā-vidhi*. Three verses are devoted to the statement of the first and the last views and to the conclusion (Vācaspati Mīśra's), which is



that there is no *vidhi* at all involved here. But as there are as many as nine varieties of the view that it is a *niyama vidhi*, the five major ones are set out in as many verses; while the minor varieties are relegated to the commentary, or altogether omitted, as being but derivatives or extended applications. Thus the seventh verse puts forward the *Vivarāṇa* view that the injunction is restrictive, aiming at confining the study of the Vedānta to the traditional mode under a *guru* by a proper *adhikārī*. And the commentary mentions three possible violations of this injunction, which are prohibited by implication. These are (a) that an intelligent man might be tempted to rely on his own powers of mind to intuit the Vedāntic truth, instead of studying and reflecting on it as revealed by the Upanishadic texts; or (b) he might dispense with the guidance of a *guru*; or (c) that a dullard might be content to study Vedānta through uncanonical expositions in the vernacular.

In such summary statement there is naturally no room for scholastic subtleties. But this may have the advantage of highlighting the main threads of argument. This is found to be eminently the case in the *Brahma-tattva-prakāśikā*, the brief but splendid gloss

on the *Brahma-sūtra*. While faithfully adhering to the *Bhāṣya*, Sadāśiva makes no attempt to follow the master into the fascinating by-paths. To take an instance at random, in explaining the *sūtra*, ‘‘It (the Prāṇa) is designated as having five functions, like the mind’’ (ii-iv-ii), Śaṅkara, after examining and rejecting as unsatisfactory a number of alternative reasons why the word ‘five’ in the *sūtra* as applied to mind should be taken literally, concludes that it is intended merely to suggest, not a specific number, but plurality. Sadāśiva skips the discussions and simply states the conclusion, and he brings out the *Bhāṣya* view of the *sūtra* in these pithy words: ‘‘Because of its special and manifold functions, *prāṇa* is subsidiary to the soul, resembling the mind in this respect’’.

The *Bhāṣyakāra* is occasionally laconic when from the context the meaning is fairly clear; as for example in III, ii, 25, especially when it is considered along with the succeeding *sūtras* 29 and 34 where the word *karmaṇi*, which he leaves unexplained, obviously refers to the act of wrapt worship (*samrādhana*), which has the adjuncts (upādhis) of *dhyāna*, etc. In fact the *Bhāmatī* and its sub-commentaries simply pass over the word. But Sadāśiva, following the *Ratnaprabhā*, elucidates *karmaṇi* as *dhyānādyupādhanau karmaṇi*.



Apparently he anticipated that there might be people like Thibaut, who, puzzled by the fact that '*karmaṇi* is as good as passed over by him'', confidently concluded, 'It certainly looks here as if the Bhāṣyakāra did not know what to do with the words of the *sūtra*'.

Commenting on II, ii, 37, the Bhāṣyakāra reviews and refutes the schools that maintain that the Lord is only the efficient cause of the universe, not the material cause. Though he includes the Sāṅkhya and the Yoga in this indictment, and in this is followed by the *Bhāmatī* and its sub-commentaries, Sadāśiva in his gloss does not refer to them but takes the attack as mainly directed against the Māheśvaras. This is in all probability due to his view, set out in his work on the *Yoga-sūtras* (described below) in commenting on the *Yoga-sūtra* IV, 3. His view is that the Sāṅkhya does not recognise Īśvara at all, holding that the subserving of the interests of the *puruṣa* alone is the teleological cause of the restarting of the heterogeneous activities of the *guṇas* in pradhāna after pralaya; while the yogis, though they do regard Īśvara as the final cause, acting in the interests of the *puruṣas*, assign to 'dharma' and 'adharma', the role of efficient cause, which is a rather negative one in this system. If the view here put



forward is right, it should be clear that Sadāśiva could take an independent line when he felt it necessary.

While thus unobtrusively condensing, elucidating, supplementing and qualifying, his main aim in his gloss is to give the student a bird's-eye view of the system. He brings out the coherence of the thought and the cogency of the argument, showing how, as the teaching develops through all its ramifications, the central thesis, the Brahman-ātman equation, is never lost sight of. Particularly helpful is his practice of bringing out the logical connection (*saṅgati*), between *adhyāya* and *adhyāya*, *pāda* and *pāda*, *sūtra* and *sūtra*. His method of exposition is to set out under each *sūtra* the subject, the doubt that necessitates the enquiry, the consequences that would flow from either of two possible conclusions, and the leading arguments in support of the *prima facie* view and the view that is ultimately arrived at. In beautifully simple verses he sets out the kernel of every major section. The *Vṛtti* is thus an ideal handbook for the student.

The *Yogasudhākara*, an extremely valuable gloss on the *Pātañjala-sūtras*, is undoubtedly Brahmendra's work. But this is the one major work of his, in which

he does not anywhere mention Paramaśivendra Sarasvatī as his Guru. He pays homage, instead, to an *unnamed guru*, by whose grace, he says, he got the *vidyā* and, having “churned it in his mind” (*vilōḍya*), wrote this *Vṛtti*. Paramaśivendra Sarasvatī has not left any work on Yoga. The references to Yoga and Kaivalya in his *Dahara-vidyā-prakāśikā* suggest, rather, that his primary preoccupation was with the Upanishadic *vidyās*. Brahmendra may have studied Aṣṭāṅga-yoga under some other *guru*. We need not be surprised that one who attained the summits of Vedāntic realisation should have practised Aṣṭāṅga-yoga, for the Bhagavatpāda repeatedly points out that the Advaitin accepts such teachings of the yoga and other similar ‘*smṛtis*’ as are not opposed to the Vedānta, and often refers to the fruits of Aṣṭāṅga-yoga.<sup>1</sup> But Brahmendra, with his Vedāntic background, and from personal *anubhava*, seems to have reached conclusions regarding ‘*Īśvara-praṇidhāna*’ and the state of Kaivalya, which are not strictly in conformity with the orthodox doctrine as expounded in the Vyāsa Bhāṣya and Vācaspati’s gloss, *Tattvavaiśārādī*. While verse 63 of *Ātmavidyāvilāsa* says that he is transmitting the Upanishadic *vidyās* taught by his guru Paramaśiva, his familiarity with *Pātañjala* yoga is clear from other ślokas.



Modern scholars have been puzzled by the seeming inconsistency between *Yoga-sūtra* I-23 and *Yoga-sūtra*. II-1. 'Īśvara-praṇidhāna' and 'kriyā yoga', terms which occur in the latter *sūtra*, are interpreted by the *Bhāṣya* and the *tīkā* as pointing to the well-known *Gītā* teaching of karma yoga. But 'Īśvara-praṇidhāna' in *Yoga-sūtra* I-23 is taken by them to mean 'special adoration' (*bhakti-viśeṣa*). Brahmendra, however, interprets the term in the same way in both contexts, as meaning loving devotion only. Sadāśiva was a student of the *Bhāgavata* and wrote a *Bhāgavata-sāra*. This probably had a decisive influence on his taking to the *avadhūta* life. He, it seems, made a collection of all the texts bearing on 'Pāramahamsyacaryā'. His interpretation of *kriyā-yoga* seems to be based on the rather specialized and restricted significance that term has in the eleventh skandha (see especially Ch. XX-6 to 9, and Ch. XXVII-1 & 9). Taking all the *yoga-sūtras* bearing on the subject together, he thinks three grades of authorities are distinguished. To him who cannot free himself from the lure of the world, *karma-yoga* is prescribed as part of *niyama* (see comment on II-28, 32 and 45). *Yoga-sūtra* II-1 has in view the man whose mind is rather better controlled though not yet



completely purified. *Yoga-sūtra* I-23, applies to the man who has fully succeeded in that. When the mind is purified by devotion to "the Paramaguru who has in sport assumed an exceedingly winsome form", says Sadāśiva Brahmendra (on *yoga-sūtra* II-1), prema-bhakti, the intensified and exclusive devotion referred to in I-23, comes naturally. Pleased with that, the Lord grants the devotee the one-pointed concentration he yearns for, and that leads in due course, to *kaivalya*.

How exactly this works is thus explained in his comment on I-29. Intense and sustained *praṇava-japa*, which is the praise of the Lord, when accompanied by loving concentration on Him, leads successively to the cessation of verbal activity (including *japa*), the inclining of the mind, by the grace of the Lord, towards quiescence and the detachment of the mind even from Him, for it achieves direct perception of the self (*pratyāsatti*). Recognising the similarity (*sādrīśya*) between the self, "its own master", which in its pristine state is free spirit (*asaṅga-cidrūpa*) and Īsvara, who is eternally and unchangeably that, it reminds the self of its true status; and then, its task done, it sinks down, like fire that has consumed its fuel. When *abhyāsa* and *vairāgya* have

destroyed subliminal impressions, the *pratyak-citi* (pure spirit) shines forth, established, says Brahmendra, in language reminiscent of the Upaniṣads, in its own glory (*sve mahimni nirantaram nirvighnam avatiṣṭhate*). From the above, it will be seen that Brahmendra's view of *kaivalya* is closer to the Vedāntic conception of *mukti*, which is eternal bliss, than that of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga, where it means a passionless and passive isolation for the *puruṣa*.

This impersonal joy that goes with super-consciousness is in fact the key-note of all the creative work of Brahmendra. His poems and songs represent this totality of experience. Flashes of poetry illuminate the philosophical poems, even as mystical ecstasy communicates itself through an unforced lyricism in the *kīrtanas*. And the golden thread of *bhakti* runs through them all.

While in a sense all his poems are in adoration of the Guru, whom he looked upon as his God, the short *Navamaṇi-mālā* is specifically in praise of Paramaśivendra, "who from the purest compassion bestowed on me the dazzling gem of the *Ātmavidyā*". In the *Svapnoditam*, he describes how the duality of seer and seen disappeared, "when by the grace of the



moon, my Guru, I was submerged in the swelling sea of the *cit* and I saw nought but Self''. In the beautiful *Dakṣiṇāmūrti-dhyānam*, he describes the glorious form of the Paramaguru and how He should be meditated upon as the Nirguṇa, the One without a second. But the most important work of Sadāśiva in this class is his brilliant *Guru-ratna-mālikā* in eighty-seven verses which he wrote at the instance of Ātmabodha, his fellow-disciple and successor of Paramaśiva on the Śaṅkara pīṭha. Following the *Puṇyaśloka-mañjarī* of his *parama-guru*, Sarvajña-sadāśiva-bodha, fifty-sixth head of the Kāñci pīṭha, he celebrates that long and brilliant succession of yogis and *jīvan-muktas*.

The age in which Sadāśiva lived was one of keen theological controversy. His own Guru was a master of polemic. In his *Dahara-vidyā-prakāśikā*, and his commentary on the *Śiva-gītā*, Paramaśiva, while paying his homage to Viṣṇu, vigorously maintains the supremacy of Para-śiva, as 'the Paramātmā seated in the heart''. At the same time, as his special contribution to the literature of Nāma-siddhānta, he collected from the Upaniṣads and other sacred texts, in his *Svarūpānusandhāna* which is not yet published, more than a thousand names connoting Brahman, with



extensive commentaries thereon. Of this latter work Sadāśiva offers a selection in his short poem *Ātmānusandhāna*. His heart was drawn to Śiva, “*yoginām paramam gurum*”, even as Appayya’s was; but he remained unshaken in his *Advaitic* conviction, which is incompatible with the kind of sectarian mentality that depreciates Viṣṇu at the expense of Śiva and *vice versa*. His poems on Parameśvara in the *Navaratnamālā*, the *Svānubhūti-prakāśikā* and the *Śiva-mānasa-pūjā* show ecstatic devotion. But in these, as in the *kīrtanas*, his mind passes with effortless ease from surrender to the Divine Personality to absorption in the Bliss of Brahman.

About twenty-five of his *kīrtanas* are available; half a dozen of these sing Rāma, - “He sports within me in the cave of the heart, with Peace, the daughter of Videha, for his companion”. He devotes an equal number of songs to the Vanamālī, Nanda’s darling. And the bliss of the Unconditioned Absolute is celebrated in a dozen songs. It is not possible to explain in words, the charm of songs like “*mānasasañcara re*”, “*sarvam brahmamayam*”, or “*cintā nāsti kila*”. They rain down a gentle influence on the heart, laying all doubts, lulling the ego, and bringing the passionless peace that rejoices the sophisticate and the simple alike.

It is in the *Ātmavidyā-vilāsa*, which enshrines the quintessential experience of the *mukta*, that Brahmendra's soul engages in its loftiest flight. There are two versions—one in sixty-two lovely Āryā verses, which is far better known, and perfect as a pearl; though the other, in forty-six verses, like another poem, the *Bodha-ārya-prakaraṇa* attributed to Brahmendra, is not without flashes of beauty, it is versified philosophy rather than metaphysical poetry.

The *Ātma-vidyā-vilāsa* is a spiritual autobiography, from which the merely contingent and ephemeral have been excluded. The quest, the practice and the perfection are all recorded, not systematically, but with the higher logic of poetry. It is the canticle of praise by the soul that has found itself, returned to its own home, its long odyssey done—the nightmare travail on the phantom sea of *saṅkalpa* and *vikalpa*. To him who knows their use all things are useful. The world of phenomena, when it ceases to be a snare, is a source of delight; the Self-realised is become as a child again.

*tvamaham-abhimāna-hīno*

*modita-nānājanācāraḥ*

*viharati bālavadeko*

*vimala-sukhāmbhonidhau magnaḥ.*



He is a *rasa-jñā*, tasting the eternal sweetness of the *cit*. Nature—“red in tooth and claw” for us—ministers to him, the fine river sand a softer bed than eiderdown:

*vijñāna-nadī kuñja-gr̥he*  
*mañjula-pulinaika-mañjutara-talpe*  
*śete kopi yatīndrah*  
*samarasa-sukha-bodha-vastu-nīstandrah.*

He no longer takes; he gives. Bringing us wisdom and joy like some supernal sun and moon, cooling the consuming fire of passion like the breeze of heaven, he realises for us the transcendent glory that is symbolised by the song of the cuckoo, the dance of the peacock, the serenity of the swan. He knows *samādhi* with and without object, he has practised *tapas* and *vairāgya*; he has borne without resentment the jeers and flouts of the ignorant. But all that is past. He neither praises nor blames, neither rejects nor requests. He is always and everywhere at home, nothing is alien to him. He is the king established in his own kingdom, the Peace that passeth understanding; he who, being nothing, is everything:

*vastunyastamitākhila-viśvavihāre vilīnamanāḥ*  
*rājati parānapeksho rājākhila-vītarāgāṇām.*



It was this *pūrṇatva*, plenitude of light and bliss, that made men say, who had a fleeting vision of that Śuka-like spirit:

*sadāśiva-brahma-rūpam brahmādrākṣam cirepsitam.*

NOTES:

1. Vidyāraṇya in his commentary on *Aparokṣānubhūti*, however, only grudgingly concedes a subordinate and ancillary use for Pātañjala yoga in the case of manda-adhikāris.



## NALLĀKAVI

C. SIVARAMAMURTI

The mellifluous poetry of early Sanskrit poets has almost completely appropriated to itself all attention and appreciation. Among the works of later poets probably Jayadeva's lyrical compositions from the *Gītagovinda* alone have won an unprecedented popularity. But later compositions have generally never evoked the enthusiasm that early poets have always commanded.

Sanskrit, being the language of culture in India embodying the texts in every field of science and thought, has always been cultivated, and enjoyed the patronage of rulers and scholars alike.

Among the later day Sanskrit writers the polymath Appayya Dikshita wrote over a hundred books on a variety of subjects. His nephew Samarapuṅgava Dikshita is the author of *Yātrāpra-bandha*, a beautiful composition. But it is Appayya's grand-nephew Nilakanṭha Dikshita who is the most outstanding for originality of thought and beauty of composition. This was in the seventeenth century when Tirumala Nāyaka of Madurai patronised art and literature. During this period of the Nāyakas of Madurai and Thaṅjāvur

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\* Courtesy: *Preceptors of Advaita*, Samata Books, Chennai.

several poets enriched Sanskrit literature. Rāmabhadra Dikshita and Ratnakheṭa Dikshita are great names. Sadāśiva Brahmendra who composed beautiful songs of devotion and sublime thought wrote a commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* for the benefit of the beginners in the field of Vedānta.

Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkarācārya himself had composed such simple songs as *Bhaja-govindam* for the easy comprehension of difficult thoughts by even the simplest of folk. His poetic presentation of Advaitic ideas in verses like those in *Dakṣiṇāmūrtistotra* is to cater to the taste of intellectually better equipped disciples who are yet not ripe enough to fully comprehend his masterly commentaries on the *Brahma-sūtra*, the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavadgīta*.

It is in this strain that several later day compositions have tried to make difficult philosophic tenets appeal to the layman. There are instances of even allegorical dramas like the *Prabodha-candrodaya* of Kṛṣṇamiśra.

It is in this line of compositions that we have the *Advaitarasa-mañjarī* of Nallākavi who lived in the 18th century. This poet was the author of *Subhadrapariṇayanātaka* and hailed from the village Kaṇḍaramāṇikyā which had also produced earlier the famous poet Uddaṇḍa. Nallākavi also wrote a farce *Śṛiṅgārasarvasvabhāṇa*. Born of Bālachandra Dikshita



he had the good fortune to study at the feet of Paramaśivendra Sarasvatī. He thus came in contact with and obtained the blessings of the most renowned of the disciple of Paramaśivendra, ie., the author of the *Brahmatattvaprakāśikā*, an inimitable *vṛitti* on the *Vedānta-sūtra*. To this satīrthya he specially offers his salutation:

*vedāntasūtravṛttipraṇayana  
suvyaktanaijapāṇḍityam  
vande avadhūtamārgapravartakam  
śrī sadāśivabrahma.*

Nallākavi's authorship of the *Advaitarasamañjarī* is doubted, and it is attributed to Sadāśivabrahmendra, but there appears to be no reason to doubt the explicit statement of Nallākavi as the author of this work and his special respect for Sadāśivendra whom he salutes as he commences his work.

It is as a humble follower in the footsteps of Sadāśivabrahmendra and even Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda himself that Nallākavi composed his *Advaitara-samañjarī* which he himself rightly describes as a sweet pill of immortality to help take in the difficult import of the Upanishads which are the bitter though sure remedy for the malady of the cycle of births and deaths:

*bhavarogasyauśadhamiti pātum  
kaṭumaupaniṣadabhavamasau*

*viracayya amṛtaghutikām  
vitarati nallākaviḥ sudhiyām.*

As in the *Dakṣiṇāmūrtistotra*, *Advaitapañcaka* or *Śataślokī* or *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* or *Praśnot-tararatnamālā* of Bhagavatpāda, the verses in the *Advaitarasamañjarī* individually unravel in a simple but effective way the well-known thoughts and parables expounded in the texts of the Vedānta. His own simple commentary, replete with appropriate quotations from the *Upaniṣads*, Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya*, *Samkṣepa-śārīraka*, *Jñānavāsiṣṭha*, *Pañcadaśa-prakarāṇa*, *Śūtasamhitā*, *Anubhūtiprakāśikā*, *Vārtikasāra* and other books, further clarifies the import of the verses.

Following the lead of Śaṅkara, Nallākavi has this verse:

*adhyāsavisphuradankavidhātmabhedam  
ajñānam āśṛitavataḥ sulabhā na muktiḥ  
ādarśagehamabhitaḥ pratibimbitāntaḥ  
dvāram gatasya na bahirgatirarbhakasya,*

which closely resembles the thought expressed in

*viśvam darpaṇadrśyamānanagaritulyam nijāntargatam  
paśyannātmani māyayā bahirivodbhūtam yathā nidrayā  
yaḥ sākṣātkurute prabodhasamaye svātmānamevādvayam  
tasmai śrīgurumūrtaye nama idam śrīdakṣiṇāmūrtaye.*

Nallākavi is such a staunch Advaitin that he is out for claiming Advaita in what is obviously a



combination of two. He feels that even the distinctly different parts of the body of Gaṇeśa like the elephant's head and human body have come together as one to show the path of Advaita, and in his initial invocatory verse he prays to Gaṇeśa to unravel to him all the truth of Advaita as he manifests Advaita even in his body make-up:

*advaitameva paramārthatayā vivektum  
angīkṛtadvipānarākṛtisanniveśaḥ,  
advaitagocaram aśeṣaviśeṣamantar-  
āviṣkarotu varado mama vighnarājaḥ.*

His simple treatment of his subject to bring home the teachings of the Upaniṣads as in his verse

*śāntyādisādhanavataḥ puruṣottamena  
samprāpyate nijapadam varadeśikoktyā  
corairaraṇyasaraṇim gamitena puṁsā  
deśo niḥo hi tadabhijña giraiva gamyaḥ*

is made very clear in his commentary where he quotes the *Chhāndogya*

*'paṇḍito medhāvī gāndhārānevopasampadyeta  
evameveha ācāryavān puruṣo veda'.*

While offering the truth of great parables in simple verse as in his

*kūṭastha-nitya-sukha-bodhatanoh pratīchaḥ  
bandho vimocanamiti bhramadurvilāsaḥ  
vandhyāsutasya vapurāidiguṇaprapañcaḥ  
tatpañcatā ca sutarām parikalpanaiva*



he scrupulously gives his source by quoting the verse from the *Jñānavāsiṣṭha*—

*cidvyoma kevalam-anantam-anādimadhyam  
brahmaiva bhāti nijacittavaśāt svayambhu  
ākaravāniva pumāniva vastutastu  
vandhyātanūja iva tasyu tu nāsti dehaḥ*

That Nallākavi can give a humorous twist to even a philosophical tenet is clear in his verse—

*viśvam samastamapi vibhramamātrametat  
ātmaiva sannayamananyasukhaprakāśaḥ  
sphūrtyaiva viśvamapi satyamitiṣyate cet  
ko nāma śuktirajatena dhanī bhavenna,*

where the last line cannot fail to bring a smile on the lips of even a rugged philosopher.

The poet discusses the various problems of Advaitic thought in his simple effective verses taking up a theme for each. These are the ones like the *rajjusarpa*, *ghaṭākāśa*, *śuktirajata*, *vandhyā-suta*, to mention a few. He gives telling and clear examples to drive home a truth. The illusion of a circle of fire is only as long as a lit faggot is whirled vigorously to produce that illusion. When it is stopped the circle disappears. It is even so with this illusory circle of births and deaths that make the whole series appear a reality in right earnest till it is stopped by true realisation that puts an end to nodding.

Basing on the *bhāṣya* of Bhagavatpāda

*'tasmānnāvagata brahmātmabhāvasya  
yathāpūrvam saṁsāritvam, yasya tu  
yathāpūrvam saṁsāritvam nāsau  
avagata brahmātmabhāvaḥ'*

Nallākavi says:

*ālolcyatām bhuvanacakramalātacakram  
atyantavibhramavijṛmbhitamasthiram ca  
daivādbhramasya viratau samupasthitāyām  
nālokyate kila pureva punastadeva.*

It is the defect of the eye that perceives the moon twined, tripled or multiplied. Even so it is a lack of true perception that helps one to see diversity where only the one Ultimate exists. Nallākavi in commenting on his verse

*ekopi sannayam anekatayā vibhāti  
bhūmā svakalpitatamaḥpaṭalānuṣaṅgāt  
indurdvitiyarahitopi ca sadvitiya-  
bhāvena bhāti puruṣasya nijākṣidoṣāt*

aptly quotes a well-known passage to illustrate effectively his point

*'nahyayam sthāṇoraparādhaḥ yadenamandho na  
paśyati.'*

He gives the telling example of *citrapaṭa* or a painting with different lines and colours composing different elements of the picture composition in spite of



the divinity of all of which it is after all a canvas all through. Quoting

*'nāsyātmano 'ntar bahīrvā caitanyādanyad  
rūpamasti; caitanyameva tu nirantaramasya  
svarūpam, yathā saindhavaghanasya antarbahiśca  
lavaṇarasa eva nirantaro bhavati na rasāntaram'*

he explains it in his verse

*'ādhyāsikasphuraṇabheda tirohito 'pi  
ciddhāturekarasatām na jahāti jātu  
nānācarācaravicitracaritrato 'pi  
citraḥ paṭo na paṭabhāvampāsyati svam.'*

Ingeniously he explains *rasavad brahma* of Śaṅkara's exposition:

*'bāhyānandasādhanarahitāpyaṅoha  
nireshaṇā brāhmaṇāḥ bāhyarasa lābhādiva  
sānandā drśyante vidvāṁsaḥ;  
nūnam brahmaiva rasaḥ teṣām;  
tasmādasti tat teṣām ānandakāraṇam  
rasavad brahma'*

by fully utilising the double entendre or multiplicity of connotation of the word *rasa* and illustrating the attainment of the divine stream of Gaṅgā instead of the willo' the wisp of a mirage as exactly what is attained by seers who discard the illusion of the outer world for realising Brahmarasa or Supreme bliss.



*viśvam mṛiṣā virasamityavadhūrya dhairyāt  
 āsvādyate munibhirantarasaṁ rasātmā  
 uccāvacam marumarīcīrasam nīrasya  
 samsevyaṁ sumatibhiḥ surasindhupūrah.*

As a contrast he gives the example of the fool who without understanding the true import of the universe as Bliss suffers through his very ignorance. He compares him to a little child who unable to understand the true import of his own shadow on the wall imagines it to be a spirit and shudders:

*ānandavisphuraṇa rūpamapī prapañcam  
 anyam vibhāvya paritāpamupaiti mugdhaḥ  
 dīpādiṣu svavapuṣaḥ paridṛśyamānām  
 chāyām vigāhya parimuhyaṁ kiṁ na bālāḥ.*

Nallākavi describes the attitude of one who has realised the truth in a telling verse where he compares the enlightened one unperturbed by the complexities of the illusory world to the one wide awake recalling his wild dreams but never frightened by the image of wild animals pursuing him:

*mīthyā samullasatu nāma jagadvicitram  
 etāvatāpī mama tattvavido na hāniḥ  
 svapne bhayaṅkaragajādīnīrīkṣaṇepī  
 na svāpnikatvamanusandhato 'sti bhītiḥ.*

The wise one who has realised this truth and is untouched by these illusions can still carry on in this world as usual to fulfil his normal obligations to society

like one who is fully aware that his face is where it is and not in the mirror and yet uses the mirror like any other:

*atyantametadasadityapi ca vyavasyan  
adhyātmadr̥ṣṭirānuvartata eva lokam  
nāstyatra vaktramiti niścayavānapi drāk  
ādatta eva mukuram mukhadarśanāya.*

If such a one prefers often to go into a trance or contemplation it is because of a force of habit as there is nothing more for him to do to attain anything as he has already realised the Truth. In this he is like the emperor who has all that he could wish for but still uses the elephants and horses in his play of chess to win his game just to while away his time and because of a force of habit:

*sarvātmatāmupagato hi munissamādhim  
pūrvānuvṛittamayate samayāpanuttyai  
paryāptasarvavibhavaḥ kṣitipo hi kāla  
niryāpaṇādya juṣate caturāṅgameva.*

Such an enlightened one, free from all volition motivated by desire, is amused by scriptural injunctions and prohibitions; even as one lazy beyond measure and completely averse to action enjoys to hear utterances of 'do and don't'. Such a saint is truly an emperor among sages and his movement at will cannot be questioned as in the case of an emperor at the peak



of his power acting according to the dictates of his mind:

*tattvānucintanaparo munisārvabhaumah  
svacchandato vyavaharannapi nānuyojyaḥ  
sāmrājyametya yathāruci vartamānaḥ  
rājā prajābhiranuyoktum aśakya eva.*

One who has experienced the illusory nature of wordly splendour is not lured by its grandeur just as even a passionate youth is not drawn by the blandishments of a boy acting the heroine:

*prāpañcikastu vibhavaḥ paramādbhuto 'pi  
dhīram na rañjayati drṣṭatādīya tattvam  
strīveṣabhūṣitatanuḥ puruṣo vilāsaiḥ  
tajñam yuvānamapi rañjayitum hi nālam.*

On the other hand, having firmly established his mind in the Truth of the Absolute, the seer has no more any concern for worldly enjoyments like one lofty in spirit blessed with a fortune by great good luck can never lower himself again to miserly beggary.

*antarnirantara nirūḍhanijātmatattvaḥ  
na prāgiva vyasanitām viṣayeṣu dhatte  
bhāgyāt kutaścidapi labdhanidhirmanasvī  
kiṁ pūrvavat kṛpaṇatām urarīkaroti.*

Finally Nallākavi justifies the quotation in his commentary



*āryatā hṛdyatā maitrī*  
*saumyatā samatā jñatā*  
*samāśrayanti tam nityam*  
*antaḥpuramivāṅganāḥ*

by describing how all the great ātmaguṇas or saintly qualities come of their own accord to adorn the seer who has realised the Bliss of the Absolute, just as one who has won over the king as a friend is surrounded and served by the retinue of the royal household—

*adhyakṣitasvamānamalamkriyāvad*  
*ādhyātmikāśśubhaguṇāḥ svayamāviśanti*  
*svadhonite suhṛdi rajani tasya bhṛtyā*  
*ye te'pi ca svayamupetya tamāśrayante.*

In concluding with this verse this brief discussion of Nallākavi's charming poem on Advaita, one cannot help feeling that the one ocular presentation of this thought expressed by the poet is in the personality of our beloved and revered Bhagavatpāda Śrī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī himself, who, having realised the Absolute and beaming with an the ādhyātmika guṇas, is moving amidst us all with no other purpose except that of leading us on to the 'blessed other shore', as he is the embodiment of mercy, and we are the kittens to be carried to safety according to the *mārjārakīśora-nyāya*.



## THE PHILOSOPHY OF ADVAITA

[Based on the study of the *Śāyaṇa-bhāṣya* on the  
*Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka-Prapāhikas*, 7-9]

### GOD AND SOUL

C.L. Ramakrishnan

In the three schools of Vedānta, namely, Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita there is a trinity - God, Soul and the World each having its own rights. The difficulty, of course, has been to show how these three are capable of interacting with one another - the very difficulty which the Advaitin has sought to overcome by interpreting all three as illusory manifestations of the single transcendental Spirit - Brahman.

Before we descend into details regarding the nature of God, soul and the world, it is essential to discuss the theory of *māyā* or *avidyā*. Brahman, is the only spiritual self-luminous Being without any attributes and any personality. It is absolute in the sense that there exists nothing apart from it really. Hence it must be admitted that there is a principle that accounts for the appearance of Brahman as God, soul



and the world. And that principle is *māyā* or *avidyā* which too is not real; for, if it were real, then there would be the existence of a second reality apart from Brahman which would impair the absolute nature of Brahman.

This *māyā* or *avidyā* is revealed in our perceptual experience of the form 'I am ignorant' and also in the *Upaniṣad*-s. An analysis of the perceptual experience 'I am ignorant' shows that *māyā* or *avidyā* is not absence of knowledge; on the other hand, it is an altogether different entity. It may be argued that *māyā* which is identical with *avidyā* is only absence of knowledge. This contention is wrong because absence of knowledge would never come within the range of perceptual experience. It is thus: in order that there may arise the perceptual cognition of absence of an object, what is necessary first and foremost is that there must be the cognition of the thing whose absence is to be cognized. For example, the perceptual cognition of the absence of pot on the floor presupposes the recollection of the pot. Unless the pot is recollected there is no possibility of the rise of the perceptual cognition of the absence of the pot. When viewed in this light, if there should be the perceptual cognition of the absence of knowledge, what is required is that there must be the cognition of the knowledge which is



the thing that is negated. If we have the knowledge of the knowledge whose absence is to be cognized, then knowledge itself is verily present and so there is no possibility of its absence being cognized. If, however, knowledge whose absence is to be cognized is not known, then also there is no possibility of the absence of knowledge being cognized. On this ground it must be admitted that absence of knowledge would never come within the range of perceptual experience. *Māyā* or *avidyā*, however, is the content of the perceptual experience of the form 'I am ignorant'. And the content, as has been explained, cannot be absence of knowledge but something different from it. In other words, it is not an *abhāvapadārtha* but a *bhāvapadārtha*. It must be noted here that when it is said that it is a *bhāvapadārtha* it should not be construed that it is a *bhāvapadārtha* like pot, etc. It is because *bhāvatva* means *sattva* and *abhāvatva* means *asattva*. And *sattva* stands for non-sublatibility at any point of time. *Asattva* means absolute nothing, that is, incapability of coming within the range of perceptual cognition as existent. When viewed in this light, *māyā* or *avidyā* cannot be viewed as a *bhāvapadārtha* or *sat* because it is subject to sublation at the dawn of the knowledge of Brahman. It cannot be viewed as an *abhāvapadārtha* or *asat* as it comes within the range of perceptual experience of the form 'I am ignorant'. It is

on this basis it is said that *māyā* or *avidyā* is indeterminate or *anirvacanīya* either as *sat* or *asat*.

The *Nṛsimhottaratāpinyupaniṣad* -

*māyā ca tamorūpā anubhūteḥ tadetat jaḍam mohātmakam  
anantam tuccham rūpam asya asya vyañjikā nityam  
nityanivṛttāpi mūḍhaiḥ ātmaiva draṣṭā asya sattvam  
asattvam ca darśayati siddhatvāsiddhatvābhyām  
svatantrāsvatantratvena.<sup>1</sup>*

specifically refers to the concept of *māyā*.

Our author explains the import of the above text by citing passages from the *Pañcadaśī*. We shall deal with those passages now.

Śrī Vidyāraṇya in the *Citrādīpa*-section of his *Pañcadaśī* states:

*māyā ceyam tamorūpā tāpanīye tadīraṇat  
anubhūtim tatra mānam pratijajñe śrutih svayam<sup>2</sup>*

It has been stated in the *Tāpanīyopaniṣad* that *māyā* is darkness or *tamas*. *Tamas* is not absence of light but is something different from it. Further *māyā* is the content of the experience of everyone of the form 'I am ignorant'.



*jaḍam mohātmakam tacca iti anubhāvayati śrutiḥ  
ābālagopam spaṣṭatvāt ānantyam tasya sā abravīt<sup>3</sup>  
acidātmaghaṭādīnām yatsvarūpam jaḍam hitat  
yatra kuṅṭhībhaveḍbuddhiḥ sa moha iti laukikāḥ<sup>4</sup>*

The *Tāpanīya* text declares *māyā* to be insentient and also of the nature of delusion. It is insentient in the sense it is not manifested of its own accord. Since it is located in the pure consciousness, that is, the true nature of the individual soul, it is manifested by the latter. Further, pot, etc., are insentient and are occasional (*kādācitka*). Hence they must have a cause and that cause must be of the nature of pot, etc. The latter are insentient and so their cause, namely, *māyā* too is insentient. *Māyā* is of the nature of delusion in the sense that it makes one incapable of distinguishing between what only seems to be and what actually is true or false. Further since *māyā* is an object of universal experience of the form 'I am ignorant', it is said to be *ananta* or all-pervasive.

*ittham laukikadr̥ṣṭyā etat sarvaiḥ api anubhūyate  
yuktidr̥ṣṭyā tu anirvācyam nāsadāsīditi śruteḥ<sup>5</sup>*

Thus *māyā* is experienced by everyone in ordinary life. An objection may be raised that if *māyā* comes within the range of the experience of everyone then it would be similar to pot, etc., and as



such it cannot be removed by knowledge. It is answered that when subject to logical analysis, *māyā* turns out to be indeterminable and hence could be removed by the knowledge of Brahman.

The *Rg-veda* passage -

*na asadāsīt na sadāsīt tadānīm tama āsīt* <sup>6</sup>

While referring to the causal form of the world, that is, *māyā* at the time of dissolution refers it to be neither *sat* or real nor *asat* or an absolute nothing. *Māyā* is not *sat* or real as it is sublated by the knowledge of Brahman. Nor is it an absolute nothing; for, unlike an absolute nothing it comes within the range of perceptual experience of the form 'I am ignorant'. Since *māyā* is not actually present, it is ever-removed but it is removed *as it were* by the knowledge of Brahman. At the dawn of the knowledge of Brahman, *māyā* ceases to manifest and from this standpoint it is said to be *tuccha* or an absolute nothing. But during the time of phenomenal existence it is manifested and on this ground it cannot be said to be an absolute nothing. And at this stage it is taken to be real by the non-inquiring mind and is taken to be indeterminable by the inquiring mind, It is with this in view Śrī Vidyāraṇya states:

*tucchā anirvacanīyā ca vāstavī cetyasau tridhā  
jñeyā māyā tribhīrbodhaiḥ śrautayauktikalaukikaiḥ<sup>7</sup>*

*Māyā* is looked upon in three ways: (1) from the stand-point of the knowledge of Brahman it is an absolute nothing; (2) from the stand-point of reasoning it is indeterminable; and, (3) from the stand-point of ordinary experience it is real.

*asya sattvam asattvam ca jagato darśayatyasau  
prasāraṇācca saṅkocāt yathā citrapaṭaḥ tathā<sup>8</sup>*

Just as the artistically worked cloth when unrolled displays manifold pictures drawn thereon and when rolled up withholds them from sight, in the same way *māyā* which brings in evil with its power of projection presents the expansive world in the states of waking and dream and withdraws it within itself in the state of deep sleep and at the time of dissolution. Thus it is known that *avidyā* has two functions of projecting the world and withdrawing it within itself.

*Māyā* has two more characteristics - dependence and independence.

*asvatantrā hi māyā syāt apratīteḥ vinā citim  
svantrāpitathaiva syāt asaṅgasya anyathā kṛteḥ<sup>9</sup>*

The manifestation of *māyā* depends upon its false relation to the pure consciousness. In this sense *māyā*



is dependent upon the pure consciousness. It is independent in the sense that it projects the pure consciousness which manifests it as soul and as God and the world.

According to the *Nṛsiṃhottaratāpinyupaniṣad*, *māyā* is something different from absence of knowledge; it is insentient; it is of the nature of delusion; it is taken to be real by the non-inquiring mind and indeterminable by the inquiring mind. It is an absolute nothing from the stand-point of the knowledge of Brahman.<sup>10</sup>

*Māyā* has pure consciousness as its locus as well as its content. In regard to the content of *māyā* all post-Śaṅkara Advaita writers are unanimous in holding that pure consciousness is the content. This is as it should be. It is because the content of *māyā* is that which is concealed by it. And *māyā* could conceal that alone which is self-luminous. According to Advaita, Brahman alone is the self-luminous principle and everything apart from it is inert by nature. When it is said that *māyā* conceals Brahman what is meant is that it gives rise to empirical usages such as 'Brahman does not exist', 'It is not manifest', etc. This may be explained as follows: the fruit of concealment is only the obscuration of contingent luminosity. And the

obscuration gives rise to empirical usages such as 'The object does not exist', etc. Contingent luminosity is possible only in the case of pure consciousness which is Brahman. And it alone can be concealed and thereby could be viewed as the content of *māyā*. An inert object does not have luminosity by itself on the ground that it is inert. It is located in the consciousness conditioned by it. And the latter is concealed by what is known as *tūlājñāna* or a derivative of *māyā*. Consequently the object superimposed upon the consciousness conditioned by it *appears* to be concealed. When the sense of sight, for example, comes into contact with the object, mind too comes out through the sense of sight, reaches the place of the object and undergoes modification in the form of the object. This modification is known as *vṛtti*. And the consciousness reflected in it is known as the knowledge of the object. It removes the *tūlājñāna* present in the consciousness conditioned by the object. Now the object is in direct contact with the consciousness underlying it and is manifested thereby. Thus we could explain the concealed nature of an object by the concealment of its underlying consciousness by the *tūlāvidyā*. The point that is of relevance here is that no object has luminosity by itself and as such there is no possibility of its being concealed either by *māyā* or its derivative - *tūla-*



*avidyā*. It comes to this that Brahman - the pure consciousness alone could be concealed by *māyā* and as such it is the content of the latter.

In regard to the locus of *māyā*, there are two different views held in the post-Śaṅkara period. Vācaspatimiśra is of the view that the locus of *māyā* is the soul. He argues that the locus of *māyā* must be one from which the true nature of Brahman is concealed. It is from the soul that the true nature of Brahman is concealed as it is only the soul which has the experience of the form 'The true nature of Brahman is not manifest to me' or 'I am ignorant of Brahman'. This shows that *māyā* is located in the soul.

Vācaspatimiśra further argues that *māyā* is spoken of as present in the pure consciousness, that is, Brahman by Śrī Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* -

*tadadhīnatvāt arthavat*<sup>11</sup>

He states -

*avidyātmikā hi bījaśaktiḥ avyaktaśabdanirdeśyā  
parameśvarāśrayā māyāmayī mahāsusuptiḥ*<sup>12</sup>

This means that the primal power is illusory by nature; it is designated by the term *avyakta* in certain

*Upaniṣad*-s; it is located in Brahman (*paramēśvarāśrayā*); it is of the nature of *māyā* and deep sleep.

Vācaspatimiśra while interpreting the above text in his commentary *Bhāmatī* states that *māyā* is related to Brahman in so far as it serves as the auxiliary cause in making Brahman as the cause of the world and in so far as it has Brahman as its content. It is only in this sense it is said by Śrī Śaṅkara that *māyā* is located in Brahman and not in the sense that Brahman is the locus of *māyā*. It is because it is unintelligible that *māyā* which is of the nature of ignorance could be present in Brahman which is of the nature of knowledge or pure consciousness.

*jīvādhikaraṇāpi avidyā nimittatayā viṣayatayā  
ca īśvaramāśrayate iti īśvarāśrayeti ucyate,  
na ādhāratayā vidyāsvabhāve brahmaṇi tadanupapatteḥ*<sup>13</sup>

To sum up: according to Vācaspatimiśra, the soul or *jīva* is the locus of *māyā*.

Prakāśatman in his *Vivaraṇa* is of the view that it is Brahman - the pure consciousness that is the locus of *māyā* and not the soul. His arguments may be summarised as follows: one on coming back to the waking state has the recollection of the form 'I slept happily and I did not know anything when I was



asleep'. Being recollection, it must be based upon prior experience. And this shows that there must have been the experience of happiness and also of *māyā* in the state of deep sleep. The experience 'I did not know anything' at the time of deep sleep cannot be absence of knowledge. It is because, as we have explained earlier, absence of knowledge cannot come within the range of perceptual experience. The recollection 'I did not know anything when I was asleep' which points to the perceptual experience in the state of deep sleep cannot, therefore, be absence of knowledge but something different from it and it is *māyā*.

Now the state of deep sleep is characterized by the absence of the functioning of all instrument of cognition including the mind. The mind provisionally merges in *māyā* then and as such we do not have the distinct manifestation of the soul as 'I' in that state. In the absence of the manifestation of soul in its distinct form as 'I' there is no possibility of the manifestation of *māyā* too, if the soul were admitted to be the locus of *māyā*. There is, however the manifestation of *māyā* then in the absence of the manifestation of the soul as 'I'. It is precisely on this ground it must be held that the soul cannot be the locus of *māyā*. In the state of deep sleep, two factors exist and they are the pure consciousness which is bliss by nature and *māyā*. And

excepting the pure consciousness nothing could serve as the locus of *māyā* then. It comes to this that pure consciousness alone serves as the locus of *māyā*.

The question arises at this stage as to how are we then to account for the recollection of the form 'I did not know anything when I was asleep' which presupposes the experience in the deep sleep state and which has for its content 'I' or the soul, and which thereby suggests that there is the manifestation of the soul as 'I' in that state. The result of this argument is that there is the manifestation of the soul as 'I' in the state of deep sleep and it serves as the locus of *māyā*.

It is answered that in the state of deep sleep there is not the manifestation of the soul as 'I'. What exists then is the pure consciousness and *māyā*. Therein arise the modes of *māyā* of the forms of the bliss-element of the pure consciousness and of *māyā* itself. The consciousness reflected in these modes of *māyā* is known as the experience of bliss and of *māyā*. This experience being but a mode of *māyā* ceases to exist at the end of the deep sleep state and leaves out its trace or latent impression or *saṃskāra*. This gives rise to the recollection during the waking state of the bliss-element and of *māyā* which were experienced in the deep sleep state. And in so far as the 'I'-element in the



recollection 'I slept happily and I did not know anything when I was asleep' is concerned, it is a case of perceptual experience. It is thus: the pure consciousness is reflected in the mind. The nature of a reflecting medium is to reveal an object as if it is present in itself. The mirror, for example, reveals the face and while doing so reveals it as if it is present in itself. In the same way, when the mind at the beginning of the waking state becomes active, reveals the consciousness and while doing so reveals it as if it is present in itself. The blend of the mind and the consciousness revealed by it is the soul or is the content of the 'I'-cognition. Thus when the mind reveals the pure consciousness it reveals it along with *māyā* as if it is present in itself. Since the blend of the mind and the consciousness revealed by it is the soul, there is the manifestation of *māyā* as present in the soul. Strictly speaking it is present in the pure consciousness alone.

To sum up: according to Prakāśātman the locus of *māyā* is pure consciousness alone.<sup>14</sup>

Our author adopts the view of Prakāśātman and states that *māyā* by being located in Brahman - the pure consciousness enables the latter to acquire the characteristic of being the cause of the world. This

*māyā* is said to be the power of Brahman in the *Śvetāśvatara* text -

*te dhyānayogānugatā apaśyan devātmaśaktim  
avagūṇaiḥ nigūḍhām* <sup>15</sup>

This text means: 'the Sages absorbed in meditation discovered the *creative power* present in the self-luminous consciousness (*devātmaśakti*) inextricably blended with the three strands of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The expression *devātmaśakti* means that it is only the self-luminous principle that ascribes existence and manifestation to *māyā*. The expression *svābhāvikī* means that it does not exist elsewhere than in Brahman.<sup>16</sup>

*Māyā* owing to its association with the pure consciousness acquires a two-fold power - the power of veiling and the power of revealing. By the former power it conceals the unconditioned aspect of the pure consciousness and by the latter, it projects the illusory world, God and the souls. Our author cites the following verse from the *Pañcadaśī* to substantiate this view.

*kūṭasthāsaṅgam ātmānam jagatvena karoti sā  
cidābhāsasvarūpeṇa jīveśāvapi nirmame* <sup>17</sup>



'This *māyā* projects the immutable and the supra-relational Brahman as the world and as reflected images in the form of God and souls.

*Māyā* is identical with *avidyā*. Śrī Śaṅkara in his commentary on the Brabma-sūtra -

*tadadhīnatvāt arthavat*<sup>18</sup>

states that *avidyā* which is the primal cause of the world is sometimes referred to as *avyakta* and at other times as *ākāśa*, *akṣara* and *māyā*.<sup>19</sup> From this it is known that according to Śrī Śaṅkara the words *avidyā*, *avyakta*, *akṣara* and *māyā* are synonymous.

Our author too maintains the identity of *māyā* and *avidyā*. He states that the characteristic of being indeterminable is common to both *māyā* and *avidyā*.<sup>20</sup> Further our author states that the text of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* -

*taratyavidyām vitatām hr̥di yasmīnniveśite  
yogī māyām ameyāya tasmai vidyātmane namaḥ*<sup>21</sup>

which means 'Salutations to the one who does not come within the range of any proof, who is of the nature of consciousness and by whose immanence in the heart the *yogin* transcends *māyā* that is *avidyā*' identifies *māyā* with *avidyā*.<sup>22</sup>

Following Prakāśātman the author of the *Vīvarāṇa*, our author states that the revealing-phase of the primal power is known as *māyā* and the veiling aspect of it is known as *avidyā*. The latter aspect conceals the true nature of Brahman.<sup>23</sup>

It may be added here that God, according to Advaita, is eternally aware of His identity with the pure consciousness. As such the veiling-phase of the primal power known as *avidyā* is not active in His case. But God perceives the world projected by the revealing-phase of the primal power known as *māyā* and He perceives it that it is nothing more than an apparent diversification within Himself. Thus the revealing-phase of the primal power known as *māyā* is active in the case of God. It is with this in view that Śrī Śaṅkara in his commentary on the Brahma-sūtra -

*viśeṣaṇabhedavyapadeśābhyām ca netarau*<sup>24</sup>

states that *māyā* is the limiting adjunct of God.

In the case of the soul, the veiling-phase of the primal power known as *avidyā* is active, as the soul under the influence of the latter, has lost sight of its identity with its true nature which is pure consciousness and thereby undergoes transmigration. This is the



reason why Śrī Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* -

*tadadhīnatvāt arthavat* <sup>25</sup>

states:

*muktānām ca punaḥ anutpattiḥ,  
kutaḥ, vidyayā tasyāḥ bījaśakteḥ  
dāhāt, avidyātmikā hi bījaśaktiḥ* <sup>26</sup>

This text means:

'the released souls do not. experience cyclic existence any more. It is because, by knowledge, the root-cause of cyclic existence, namely, *avidyā* is destroyed'.

Here *avidyā* is stated to be the limiting adjunct of the soul. This is as it should be; for, *avidyā* is only the veiling-phase of the primal power and it is active in the case of the soul.

It must be noted here that the revealing-phase of the primal power is active both in the case of God and of the soul by projecting the illusory world. But the veiling-phase is exclusively operative in the case of the soul.

*Māyā* which has for its content the pure consciousness is removed by the knowledge of Brahman - the pure consciousness.<sup>27</sup> The knowledge also must be immediate or perceptual, as *māyā* which is to be removed is perceptual. And the immediate knowledge of Brahman is nothing but the mental state in the form of the true nature of the soul, namely, Brahman inspired by the reflection of the latter in it. Such a mental state arises from the major texts of the *Upaniṣad*-s according to Prakāśātman, and from mind, according to Vācaspatimiśra.

*Māyā* is responsible for the projection of Brahman as God and soul. Some post-Śaṅkara Advaitins view both God and the soul as reflected images of Brahman in *māyā* and mind respectively. Some others hold that the soul alone is the reflected image of Brahman in *māyā* and its product-mind and God is Brahman - the pure consciousness itself which owing to its relation to the reflecting media, namely, *māyā* and mind and also to the reflected image acquires the adventitious characteristic of being the original. According to this view, the pure consciousness that is associated with the characteristic of being a reflected image (*pratibimbatva*) is the soul and the pure consciousness that is associated with the characteristic of being the original (*bimbatva*) is God. Yet another group of



Advaitins maintains the view that the soul is the pure consciousness conditioned by *māyā* and mind and God is the pure consciousness that transcends the limiting adjuncts, namely, *māyā* and mind. We shall explain these views and identify the view which our author advocates.

Sarvajñātman in his *Samkṣepaśārīraka* states that the pure consciousness reflected in *māyā* which is identical with *avidyā* is God and the pure consciousness reflected in mind is the soul.

*upādhiḥ ajñānam anādisiddham*  
*tasmin cidābhāsanamīśvaratvam*  
*tadanvitacitpratibimbakam syāt*  
*udīryate śuddhacideva bimbam* <sup>28</sup>

'*Avidyā* which is beginningless serves as the limiting condition. The pure consciousness is reflected in it; and the characteristic of being a reflected image in *avidyā* is known as the state of being God. And the consciousness associated with this characteristic is God. And the pure consciousness that transcends *māyā* or *avidyā* is the pure Being'.

*upādhiḥ antaḥkaraṇam tvamarthe*  
*jīvatvam ābhāsanamatra tadvat*

*tadanvitā cit pratibimbamevam*

*ananvitām tām iha bimbamāhuḥ*<sup>29</sup>

'The mind is the limiting condition. The pure consciousness is reflected in it; and the characteristic of being a reflected image in mind is known as the state of being the soul. And the consciousness associated with the characteristic is the soul. And the pure consciousness that transcends the mind is the pure Being'.

Vidyāraṇya in the *Tattvaviveka* section of the *Pañcadaśī* states that the reflected images of the pure consciousness in *māyā* and *avidyā* are respectively known as God and the soul. He does not view that *māyā* and *avidyā* are two distinct principles. He views them as two aspects of one and the same primal power which may be termed *prakṛti* that consists of the three strands of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. He further argues that *māyā* is that aspect of *prakṛti* wherein the *sattva-guṇa* is predominant and *avidyā* is that aspect of *prakṛti* wherein the *rajo-guṇa* and the *tamo-guṇa* are predominant. The reflected image of the pure consciousness in *māyā* is God and that in *avidyā* is the soul.



*sattvaśuddhyaviśuddhibhyāṃ māyāvidye ca te mate  
māyābimbo vaśīkṛtya tām syāt sarvajña īśvaraḥ*<sup>30</sup>  
*avidyā vaśagastu anyah*<sup>31</sup>

God who is the reflected image of the pure consciousness in *māyā* has the latter under His control. And soul which is the reflected image of the pure consciousness in *avidyā* is under the control of the latter.

The above way of viewing God too as a reflected image in *māyā* forces us to the conclusion that God being a reflected image would be affected by the defect of the veiling-phase of *māyā*. This is as it should be; for, the nature of a reflecting medium - mirror (say) is to present its defects like impurity, etc., upon the face that is reflected. Hence the pure consciousness which constitutes the essential nature of God is to be admitted as concealed from God by the veiling-phase of the reflecting medium - *māyā*. The result would be that God cannot be viewed as one who is always aware of His identity with His essential nature. In other words, God cannot be viewed as an omniscient entity.

Sarvajñātman seems to have felt the above difficulty and so he favours the theory according to which the soul alone is the reflected image of the pure consciousness in *māyā* that is identical with *avidyā*.

Being a reflected image, it is absolutely under the control of the reflecting medium. And the pure consciousness that acquires the adventitious characteristic of being the original in view of its relation to the reflecting medium and the reflected image therein is God. And the consciousness that underlies both God - the pure consciousness that is associated with the characteristic of being the original and the soul - the pure consciousness that is associated with the characteristic of being the reflected image - is the Pure Being.<sup>32</sup> It must be added here that Prakāśātman in his *Vivaraṇa* adopts this view.<sup>33</sup>

Vācaspatimiśra is of the view that there could be reflection only in the case of those entities which have material shape and that too in an entity which too have a material shape. Brahman - the pure consciousness is free from any material shape and *māyā* and mind which are admitted to be the reflecting media are also devoid of any material shape. As such there is no possibility of reflection of Brahman - the pure consciousness in *māyā* and mind. He, therefore, advocates the view that the soul is the pure consciousness conditioned by *māyā* and mind and God is the pure consciousness that transcends *māyā* and mind.<sup>34</sup> It may be added here that this view is based upon the text of the *Brahmabīndūpaniṣad* -



*ghaṭasamvṛtamākāśam nīyamāne ghaṭe yathā  
ghaṭo nīyeta nākāśam tadvajjīvo nabhopamaḥ*<sup>35</sup>

This text means:

‘As when a pot is moved the pot alone is moved and not the ether enclosed in the pot, so too is the analogy of the individual soul with the ether’.

The followers of the *Vīvarāṇa* school argue that the contention of Vācaspatimiśra that in order that an entity may undergo reflection it must have a material shape and the medium in which it is reflected also must have a material shape is wrong. It is because sound which does not have a material shape is noticed to have reflection in the form of echo in the ether conditioned by the cave; and, ether too does not have a material shape.<sup>36</sup> Further the theory that Brahman undergoes reflection is based upon the text of the *Brahmabindūpaniṣad* -

*eka eva hi bhūtātmā bhūte bhūte vyavasthitaḥ  
ekadhā bahudhā caiva drśyate jalacandravat*<sup>37</sup>

This text means:

‘The one Being appears to be many in different bodies like the one moon which appears to be many in water filled up in several vessels’.

The views of Prakāśātman and Vācaspatimiśra are known as *pratibimba-vāda* and *avaccheda-vāda* respectively.

Our author while interpreting the Taittirīya text -

*yadidam kimca, tat sṛṣṭvā tadevānuprāviśat*<sup>38</sup>

states:

*yathā kaścit pumān gṛham nirmāya tatra praviśya  
ābhyantare sthitaḥ upalabhyate, evaṁ brahmāpi  
ākāśādi kāryam sṛṣṭvā tasya antaḥ praviṣṭamiva  
hṛdayapuṇḍarīke avasthitāyām buddhau draṣṭṛ śrotṛ  
vijñāṭṛ ityevaṁ viśeṣavadupalabhyate*<sup>39</sup>

This means: 'just as a person having constructed a house enters into it and is noticed to be present inside, in the same way, Brahman - the pure consciousness having projected the world (through *māyā*) appears *as it were* to have entered into it and is distinctly manifested as the one who has the perceptual cognition - visual, auditory, etc., and also as the agent of actions when immanent in the mind inside the body of the beings'.

It must be noted here that in the case of the person who enters into the house, entry is actually the activity of moving inside the house as the person concerned is



a limited entity. In the case of Brahman, however, entry can only be viewed as figurative as it is an unconditioned principle. And while explaining the *Taittirīya* text referred to above, our author cites extensively from the *Vārttikasāra*<sup>40</sup> of Vidyāraṇya. And the following verse -

*sūryo yathā udapātreṣu praviṣṭo bahireva san  
tathā ātmāpi apraviṣṭaḥ san praviṣṭa iva lakṣyate*

which he refers to is significant as it enables one to identify the view of our author. This verse means: 'just as the sun remaining in the sky is viewed as having entered into vessels filled in with water, in the same way Brahman too without actually undergoing the activity of entering appears to have entered into the beings created by it'. From the analogy of the sun reflected in the waters which our author gives we can deduce that he prefers the reflection-theory or the *pratibimba-vāda*.

Brahman is of the nature of consciousness or knowledge. It is not the substratum of knowledge. But when it acquires the state of being the original and thereby the state of being God, it becomes the substratum of all-comprehending knowledge. In other words, it becomes omniscient. We shall explain this in some detail.

In his commentary on the *Īkṣatyadhikaraṇa*, Śrī Śaṅkara states:

*yatprasādād̐dhi yogināmapi atītānāgataviṣayam  
pratyakṣam jñānam icchanti yogaśāstravidāḥ  
kimu vaktavyam tasya nityasiddhasya īśvarasya  
sr̥ṣṭisthitisam̐hrtiviṣayam nityajñānam bhavatīti<sup>41</sup>*

This text means:

'those who know the import or the science or *yoga* affirm that it is by the grace of God, the *Yogin*-s acquire the immediate knowledge of the things of the past and of the future. When such is the case, it goes without saying that God possesses eternal knowledge in regard to the creation, sustenance and destruction of the world'. From this it follows that God - the pure consciousness that has attained to the state of being the original - is omniscient or is the substratum of all-comprehending knowledge.

It may be said that this view that God possesses all-comprehending knowledge is not sound. It is because knowledge according to Advaita is the mental state or the modification of the mind which is inspired by the reflection of consciousness in it. And it is possible in the case of the soul only and not in the case of God, on the ground that it is only in the case of the former, the



mind serves as the limiting adjunct and not in the case of the latter. In the case of the soul, the mind which is its limiting adjunct comes out of through the sense-organ which is in contact with an object and undergoes modification in the form of that object. In this modification which is known as *vṛtti*, the consciousness is reflected. It is the blend of the *vṛtti* and the consciousness-element that is known as the knowledge of the object. The soul thereby becomes the substratum of knowledge and is viewed as the knower. Mind, however, does not serve as the limiting adjunct of God and so the latter cannot become the substratum of the modification of the mind that is inspired by the reflection of consciousness in it. This means that God cannot become the substratum of knowledge even. When such is the case, there is no possibility of His becoming the substratum of omniscience or all-comprehending knowledge.

The above objection is answered by our author by stating that one must make a two-fold classification of knowledge into modification of mind and modification of *māyā*. He argues that just as the mental state or the modification of the mind which is inspired by the reflection of consciousness in it is termed 'knowledge', in the same way, the modification of *māyā* too when

inspired by the reflection of consciousness in it is to be viewed as knowledge.

Our author proceeds to say that in the case of God, *māyā* serves as the limiting adjunct. Since *māyā* is all-pervasive, its modification relates to all the things of the present and the consciousness reflected therein is perceptual in nature. And the modification of *māyā* relating to the present world gives rise to latent impression or *samskāra*. The latter exists in *māyā* and when they are revived, *māyā* transforms itself into the form of past things. And, the consciousness is reflected in the modification of *māyā* and it is mediate and is of the form of recollection. So the knowledge of past things which is mediate and which God has is only of the nature of recollection.

In the same way, future things remain in a latent form in *māyā*. Prior to creation, *māyā*, in accordance with the merits and demerits of the souls, gets itself transformed into the form of all the objects that are to be created. In that transformation of *māyā* or *māyā-vṛtti* consciousness is reflected and it is only mediate. Thus in respect of future things, knowledge of God is inferential character. Our author thus explains omniscience in the case of God in terms of *māyā-vṛtti* or the modification of *māyā*.<sup>42</sup> It may be added here



that this view is identical with the one advocated by Prakāśātman in his *Vivarana*.<sup>43</sup>

Śrī Śaṅkara has stated that God is omniscient by making a reference to the *Yogin-s* who become omniscient by the grace of God.<sup>44</sup> And while making a reference to the omniscience of the *Yogin-s*, he has stated that that omniscience or all-comprehending knowledge is perceptual in regard to the objects of the present, past and future. And if we extend this line of explanation to the analogue, we arrive at the conclusion that God's knowledge is perceptual in regard to present, past and future things. Our author following Prakāśātman has stated that God's knowledge is all-comprehending no doubt; but it consists in the immediate knowledge of the present world, inferential cognition of the future world and recollection of the past world.

Like knowledge, the desire and resolve to create the world on the part of God are also the modifications of *māyā*. Thus Brahman - the pure consciousness which is free from all attributes comes to be associated with the attributes of desire, etc., when it attains to the state of God by remaining as the original (*bimba*).

Our author deals with the nature of the soul in an elaborate manner.

The text -

*satyam jñānam anantam brahma* <sup>45</sup>

describes Brahman as real, as of the nature of consciousness and as infinite. It further proceeds to state -

*yo veda nihitam guhāyām parame vyoman,  
so śnute sarvān kāmān saha, brahmaṇā vipaścīti.* <sup>46</sup>

This text means: he who realizes Brahman immanent in the mind which is termed *guhā* that is present inside the space in the lotus-like heart as his true nature experiences the objects of desire simultaneously by remaining as Brahman.

When it is said that he who realizes his true nature to be Brahman experiences all the objects of desire simultaneously, what is meant is that the knower of the truth remains satisfied by realizing that his true nature which is Brahman is the factor that manifests all objects of desire. <sup>47</sup>

It is said that Brahman is immanent in the mind in the sense that Brahman is distinctly manifested as 'I' only by being reflected in the mind. Strictly speaking Brahman attains to the state of the soul by being associated with the three bodies, namely, the causal



body, the subtle body and the gross body. Of these, the causal body is *māyā* or *avidyā*. This is described as the causal body because it is the source of everything including the subtle body and the gross body. Of these, the subtle body known as *liṅgaśarīra* consists of seventeen factors. These factors are the five organs of knowledge, *buddhi*, *manas*, the five organs of action and the five vital airs. *Buddhi* is that mode of internal organ which stands for certitude and *manas* is that mode of internal organ which stands for desire and doubt. Our author identifies these seventeen factors thus:

*jñānendriāṇi pañcaiva tathā karmendriyāṇyapi  
vāyavaḥ pañca buddhiśca manaḥ saptadaśam  
viduḥ<sup>48</sup>*

The gross body known as *sthūlaśarīra* comes into being from the quintuplicated elements, namely, space, air, fire water and earth.

These three bodies – the causal, the subtle and the gross when expanded further are viewed as five sheaths concealing the true nature of Brahman. And these five sheaths are: the sheath of food (*annamayakośa*), the sheath of vitality (*prāṇamayakośa*), the sheath of consciousness (*manomayakośa*), the sheath of self-consciousness

(*vijñānamayakośa*), and the sheath of bliss, (*ānandamayakośa*).

The manas along with the organs of knowledge constitutes the sheath of consciousness (*manomayakośa*). The *buddhi* along with the organs of knowledge constitutes the sheath of self-consciousness (*vijñānamayakośa*). The group of vital airs along with the senses of action constitutes the sheath of vitality (*prāṇamayakośa*). *Māyā* or *avidyā* which is referred to as the causal body is the sheath of bliss. And the physical body is termed the sheath of food (*annamayakośa*).

Of these five, the *prāṇamaya*-, the *manomaya*-, and the *vijñānamaya - kośa*-s together constitute the subtle body. The physical body is the *annamaya-kośa* and *māyā* or *avidyā* is the *ānandamaya-kośa*. These are referred to as sheaths because like a sheath which envelops the knife, these envelop Brahman - the pure consciousness.

It follows from the above that Brahman attains to the state of the soul only as associated with these five sheaths. As such all these constitute the limiting adjuncts of the soul. Yet it is usually said that mind is the limiting adjunct in view of the fact that Brahman is distinctly manifested as 'I' or the soul only in mind.



Thus taking into consideration the distinct manifestation of Brahman in mind as 'I', the mind is said to be limiting adjunct of the soul - the content of the cognition 'I'.

Further, it is only on the basis of the relation which is a false one between Brahman - the pure consciousness and mind there arise the cognitions of 'I' and 'mine' in respect of the physical body, sense-organs, etc. It is on this ground also it is said that mind serves as the limiting adjunct of the soul.

Brahman - the pure consciousness is associated with *māyā* or *avidyā*. And this association is brought about by *māyā* itself. To the question as to how *māyā* which is an insentient principle could get itself related to *Brahman*, our author answers by citing a passage from the *Pañcadaśī* which is as follows:

*durghaṭaikaividhāyinyām māyāyām kā camatkṛtiḥ*<sup>49</sup>

This means: 'nothing is strange in the case of *māyā* whose innate nature is to bring about the relation between two incompatible things'.

That *māyā* exists in Brahman - the pure consciousness is evident from the perceptual

experience 'I am ignorant'. And this we have explained earlier.

In the stage of deep sleep, there exists the pure consciousness and *māyā*. All other factors provisionally merge in *māyā* then. The pure consciousness associated with *māyā* and the latent impression of the other factor is the experient of the deep sleep state and is known as *prājñā*. In the state of dream, the pure consciousness is associated with *māyā* and the subtle body. It is known then as *taijasa*. And in the state of waking, the pure consciousness is associated with *māyā*, the subtle body and the gross body. It is known then as *viśva*. *Viśva*, *taijasa* and *prājñā* are the three phases of the soul whose true nature is pure consciousness that is identical with Brahman.

The five sheaths that envelope the pure consciousness constitute *māyā* or *avidyā* and its effects, namely, the physical body and the subtle body. *Māyā* as has been said earlier consists of three strands of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Of these, it is the *tamo-guṇa* that constitutes the physical body that serves as the sheath of food: (*annamaya-kośa*) and so inertness is noticed in it and not the power of activity (*kriyāśakti*) or the power of knowledge (*jñāna-śakti*). The *rajo-guṇa* constitutes the *prāṇmaya-kośa* and so the power



of activity is noticed therein. The *sattva-guṇa* characterizes the *manomaya*, *vijñānamaya*-, and *ānandamaya-kośa*-s. The *sattva-guṇa* associated with the *tamo-guṇa* characterizes the *manomayakośa*. That is why the characteristics that pertain to the *tamo-guṇa* such as passion hatred, etc., are noticed in it. The *sattva-guṇa* associated with the *rajo-guṇa* characterizes the *vijñānamaya-kośa*. That is why agency in respect of sacred activities in the form of performance of sacrifices, etc., and secular activities in the form of farming, etc., are noticed in it. It is the pure *sattva-guṇa* that constitutes the *ānandamaya-kośa*.<sup>50</sup>

The *Upaniṣad*<sup>51</sup> enables the aspirant to identify his true nature which is pure consciousness by first directing his mind from external objects to the physical body (*annamaya*), from the physical body to vital force (*prāṇamaya*), from the vital force to the mind (*manomaya*), from mind to the intellect (*vijñānamaya*) and from the intellect to bliss (*ānandamaya*).

Our author in this connection states that man by nature falsely identifies himself with his son and others and has the false notions that he is fortunate or unfortunate if his son and others experience happiness or misery<sup>52</sup>. Śrī Śaṅkara in his *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya* states:

*putrabhāryādiṣu vikaleṣu sakaleṣu vā  
prāpte ahameva vikalahaḥ sakalo veti  
bāhyadharmān ātmanyadhyasyati.*<sup>53</sup>

The son and others are distinctly noticed to be different from the father. And yet there is the false cognition of 'mine' toward them. This is the reason why the son and others are referred to as *gaunātmā* or one's self in a figurative manner.<sup>54</sup>

Thus in order to enable the aspirant to concentrate his thoughts upon the pure consciousness, the *Upaniṣad* first fixes his attention upon his physical body by diverting his mind from external objects like the son, the friend or others whom he falsely imagines to be his self. The *Upaniṣad* instructs rather provisionally that the physical body is the self.<sup>55</sup>

When the aspirant has thus been instructed that the physical body which is more inward than the son and others constitutes the self, he becomes freed from the false cognition that the son and others constitute the self.

Having thus enabled the aspirant to concentrate his mind upon the physical body, the *Upaniṣad*<sup>56</sup> proceeds to instruct him that the vital air - the chief constituent of the *prāṇamaya-kośa* which is more inward than the physical body constitutes the self.



It may be noted here that both the son and others on the one hand and the physical body on the other are not the true self. The former comes under the category of the *gauṇātmā* in the sense that they are figuratively viewed to be the self; and, the latter comes under the category of *mithyātmā* in the sense that there is always the cognition of 'I' and 'mine' in respect of it as there is no knowledge of distinction between the physical body and the self. Our author in this connection cites a passage referred to by Śrī Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*; and the passage is:

*gauṇamithyātmano' sattve putradehādibādhanāt  
sat brahmātmāhamiti evam bodhe kāryam katham bhavet*<sup>57</sup>

This text means: how could there be activities - sacred or secular, when by the knowledge of Brahman of the form 'I am Brahman', the false cognition of 'I' (in respect of the physical body which is the *mithyātmā*) and that of 'mine' (in respect of the son and others which constitute the *gauṇātmā*) are removed?

Our author concedes to the fact that the physical body is instructed to be the self rather provisionally. It is because the cognition of the physical body which is an aggregate of the five elements is different from the latter. There is an invariable relation that that which is a cognition is different from the object of the cognition.

Since the physical body is the object of cognition, it cannot be viewed as having consciousness as its essential nature. On this ground it cannot be the true self.<sup>58</sup>

The vital air too cannot be reckoned as the true self. It is because the text -

*etasmāt jāyate prāṇaḥ manaḥ sarvendriyāṇi ca  
kaṁ vāyurjyotirāpaḥ pṛthvī viśvasya dhāriṇī*<sup>59</sup>

states that the vital air, mind, the sense-organs etc., proceed from Brahman. Since the vital air is said to be subject to origination it is subject to destruction too. And being thus non-eternal it cannot be viewed as the self. The text of the *Upaniṣad* cited above is the subject of discussion in the first *adhikaraṇa* of the fourth *pāda* of the second *adhyāya* of the *Brahma-sūtra* and our author records it.<sup>60</sup>

The *Upaniṣad*<sup>61</sup> then proceeds to instruct the aspirant that the mind which is the predominant factor of the *manomaya-kośa* is the self. It must be noted here our author says, that the mind - one phase of the internal organ is the instrument of cognition and of action, while the intellect - the other phase of the internal organ is the agent or actions and the substratum of cognition.<sup>62</sup> It is by being identified with



the internal organ in its two-fold phase of mind and intellect, the pure consciousness attains to the state of the soul by coming within the range of the cognition 'I', makes it choice, resolves it into an intention and puts that intention into an effect. It is because of the false identification with the internal organ in its two-fold phase, the pure consciousness is adventitiously endowed with the characteristics of being an agent, enjoyer and a knower - the characteristics that pertain to the internal organ and thereby experiences cyclic existence. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text -

*dhyāyatīva lelāyatīva* <sup>63</sup>

is specific in stating that the pure consciousness which does not have the quality of thinking and that of moving, thinks *as it were* and moves *as it were* from this world to another by being identified with the internal organ. There could not be identity between the consciousness and the internal organ in view of the fact that the former is self-luminous and the latter, inert. And so the identity is false or *mithyā*. This we shall deal with in the sequel.

In order to remove the false notion that the intellect is the self, the *Upaniṣad* <sup>64</sup> directs the aspirant to the *ānandamaya-kośa* which is *māyā* and in the mode of which the bliss-form of the pure

consciousness is reflected. And this reflection of the bliss which is experienced in the deep sleep state is recollected when one comes back to the waking state in the form of 'I slept happily'.

In order that there may arise the notion that this *ānandamaya-kośa* constitutes the self or the ultimate reality, the *Upaniṣad* states -

*brahma puccham pratiṣṭhā* <sup>65</sup>

Our author states that the word *puccha* which primarily signifies the tail does not suit the context. Hence it must be taken to convey the sense of the substratum or *ādhāra*. This is as it should be; for, the *ānandamaya* which is only the pure consciousness associated with *māyā* consisting of the latent forms of the subtle body cannot be the pure self and as such it requires a substratum which is the ultimate reality transcending *māyā*.<sup>66</sup>

The text -

*sa ya evamvit, asmāḷlokāt pretya. etam anna-  
mayamātmānam upasaṁkrāmati. etam prāṇamayam-  
ātmānam upasaṁkrāmati. etam vijñānamayamātmānam  
upasaṁkrāmati.*<sup>67</sup>



states that he who has realized Brahman which is referred to as the *puccha* of the *ānandamaya* after having withdrawn his mind from the son and others leaves out the false notion of self caused by *māyā* in the *annamaya-*, *prāṇamaya-*, *manomaya-*, *vijñānamaya-*, and the *ānandamaya-kośa-s*.

The word *pretya* in the text means *pratyāvṛtṭya*, that is, having withdrawn one's mind from the external objects like the son and others.<sup>68</sup> And the word *upasaṁkrāmati* means that one becomes freed from the false notion that the *annamaya*, etc., constitute the self.<sup>69</sup>

To sum up this part of the discussion: the soul according to Advaita is pure consciousness, that is, Brahman reflected in *māyā* and its effect - the internal organ in its two phases of mind and intellect.

The nature of the soul is discussed in eight *adhikaraṇa-s* of the *Brahma-sūtra-s* in the third section of the second *adhyāya*. Our author sets forth the views presented therein.

To begin with, it is said that the text of the *Chāndogyopaniṣad*<sup>70</sup>

*jīvāpetam vāva khalu idam mriyate  
na jīva mriyate*

states that the soul does not cease to exist but it is only the body that passes away. The soul is figuratively spoken of as having come into existence or as having ceased to exist on the basis of its relation to and the disjunction from the physical body. The ceremonial purification like the *jātakarma* has relevance to the body with which the soul is associated at the time of birth.<sup>71</sup>

It is objected that the soul is subject to origination as it is mentioned so in the text of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* -

*yathā agneḥ kṣudrā visphulingāḥ vyuccaranti  
evameva asmāt ātmanaḥ sarve prāṇāḥ*<sup>72</sup>

This text means: just as sparks of fire emanate from the fire, in the same way the group of objects of enjoyment emanates from Brahman (*ātmā*).

The Mādhyandina recension of the same text states:

*sarva ete ātmāno vyuccaranti*<sup>73</sup>

specifically states that the souls spring forth from Brahman. From this it is clear that the soul is subject to origination.



The text of the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*<sup>74</sup> -

*yathā sudīptāt pāvakāt visphuliṅgāḥ  
sahasraśaḥ prabhavante sarūpāḥ  
tathā akṣarāt vividhāḥ somya bhāvāḥ  
prajāyante tatra caiva apiyanti*

states that just as sparks of fire emanate from the fire and lapse back into it, in the same way the souls arise from Brahman and lapse back into it. From this it is known that the soul is subject to origination as well as destruction.

The above contention is wrong. The Upaniṣadic texts such as -

(1) *na jāyate mriyate vā vipāścīt.....  
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yam purāṇaḥ*<sup>75</sup>

refer to the soul as eternal. Further the texts -

- i) *tat tvam asi;*<sup>76</sup>
- ii) *aham brahmāsmi;*<sup>77</sup> and,
- iii) *ayamātmābrahma*<sup>78</sup>

speak of the identity or more strictly the non-difference of the soul from Brahman. Brahman is eternal and the soul which is stated to be non-different from it cannot but be eternal.

Again the Upaniṣadic text -

*anena jīvena ātmanā anupraviśya  
nāmarūpe vyākaravāṇi*<sup>79</sup>

which states that Brahman associated with *māyā* has made the resolve to distinguish the objects it has created into names and forms by becoming immanent in them in the form of the soul specifically refers to the fact that Brahman itself is the soul by being immanent in the objects it has created.

From the above it follows that any reference to the origination and the destruction of the soul must be understood as related to the origination and the destruction of the physical body. The texts of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* -

- i) *prajñānaghana eva etebhyaḥ bhūtebhyaḥ  
samutthāya tānyeva anuvinaśyati;*<sup>80</sup> and,
- ii) *avināśī vā are ayam ātmā*<sup>81</sup>

are significant. The first text primarily means that the soul which is of the nature of consciousness attains origination by the origination of the elements that have undergone modification in the form of the body-mind complex and is destroyed following the destruction of these elements by the knowledge of Brahman. The



second text means that the soul is indeed imperishable. Thus the two texts predicate the mutually contradictory features of perishability and imperishability in respect of the soul. And the contradiction must be resolved in the following way. Brahman - the pure consciousness associated with the state of being a reflection in *māyā* and the body-mind complex is the soul. The adjectival part, namely, the state of being a reflection is indeterminable and the substantive part is real. When there arises the direct knowledge of Brahman, *māyā* and the body-mind complex are removed, and the state of reflection caused by it is also removed. The first text cited above refers to the removal of the state of reflection. The second part refers to the substantive part which is real. It comes to this that according to Advaita, the state of being a soul is indeterminable while the essential nature of the soul which is pure consciousness is real.

Our author in support of the view presented above cites as authority the following text from the *Vaiyāśakīyānyāyamālā*.

*brahmādvayam jātabuddhau jīvatvena viśet svayam  
aupādhikam jīvajanma nityatvam vastutaḥ śrutam*<sup>82</sup>

The next question our author discusses in regard to the nature of the soul is whether it is of the nature of

consciousness or not. This question arises because in the state of deep sleep, it is argued, there is no consciousness. On this ground it is said that the soul could not be considered as consciousness by nature.

Our author argues that since the *Chândogya* text -  
*anena jīvena ātmanā anupraviśya nāmarūpe*  
*vyākaraṇāni*<sup>83</sup>

specifically states that Brahman - the pure consciousness is immanent in the beings in the form of the soul. Hence the soul is of the nature of pure consciousness only. In the state of deep sleep, consciousness is never lost. It is because it remains as the witness of the state of deep sleep and *māyā*. If this position is not admitted, then in the absence of consciousness in the state of deep sleep we cannot account for the recollection of the form 'I slept happily and I did not know anything when I was asleep' which one has after coming back to the waking state. Hence it must be held that in the state of deep sleep too there is consciousness. The only thing is that there is no distinct manifestation of the soul as 'I' in the absence of the internal organ which has provisionally merged in *māyā* then.



The question now arises as to why then there is not the manifestation of the world characterized by duality in the form of activity, productive factors and the fruit. It is answered that it is due to the absence of the world then. The *śruti* text -

*yadvai tanna paśyati paśyan vai tanna paśyati  
na hi draṣṭuḥ drṣṭeḥ viparīlopo vidyate avināśitvāt  
na tu taddvitīyamasti tato anyat vibhaktam  
yat paśyet*<sup>84</sup>

states that what is said by the unenlightened one that the soul does not manifest or perceive anything in the state of deep sleep is not correct. The soul sees then but it is only erroneously viewed as not seeing then. It is because the consciousness which is the essential nature of the soul is never lost then, as it is eternal. But the unenlightened one is under the erroneous notion that the soul has lost its nature of consciousness because the world which is characterized by duality and which is to be manifested has merged in *māyā* then. Hence unlike in the state of waking, in the state of deep sleep there is the absence of the knower, the objects to be known and the activity of knowing which could be manifested by the soul. The essential nature of the soul, namely, consciousness exists then. Only the state of being a soul is not present, as the internal

organ which gives rise to the notion of the soul as 'I' has provisionally merged in *māyā* then. It comes to this that the soul is of the nature of consciousness.

Our author cites the passage from the *Vaiyāsakīya-nyāyamālā* in support of the view presented in the foregoing paragraph. And the passage is -

*brahmatvādeva cidrūpaḥ*  
*cit susuptau na lupyate*  
*dvaitādr̥ṣṭiḥ dvaitalopāt*  
*na hi draṣṭuḥ iti śruteḥ*<sup>85</sup>

The next question our author discusses is in regard to the size of the soul. It is argued that the soul is atomic in size on the following grounds:

(i) The text -

*eṣa aṇurātmā cetasā veditavyaḥ*<sup>86</sup>

states that the soul is atomic in size and is to be realized by the (pure) mind.

(ii) The text -

*sa yadā asmāt śarīrāt utkrāmati*  
*sahaiva etaiḥ sarvaiḥ utkrāmati*<sup>87</sup>



states that when the soul departs from the body it does so along with the sense-organs.

(iii) The text -

*ye vai ke ca asmāt lokāt prayanti  
candramasameva te sarve gacchanti*<sup>88</sup>

declares that the souls which have performed meritorious deeds reach the world of the moon.

(iv) The text -

*tasmāt lokāt punaraiti asmai  
lokāya karmaṇe*<sup>89</sup>

states that the soul after experiencing the fruits of its *karma* in the other world returns to this world to experience the remnants of its karma.

From the above it is clear that the activities of ascent to the other world of reaching it and of descent from there are possible in the case of the soul only when it is atomic in size. If it were all-pervasive, then the above activities would not hold good. Further the first text cited above directly states the soul to be atomic in size.

It is answered that the soul in its essential nature is all-pervasive. Yet, as reflected in and identified with the internal organ which is not all-pervasive, the soul too is viewed to be not all-pervasive. Hence the atomic size and the activities of ascent, etc., are intelligible in the case of the soul which is associated with the internal organ.

The aphorism -

*tadguṇasāratvāt tadvyapadeśaḥ prājñavat*<sup>90</sup>

states that the soul is referred to as atomic in size, an agent and an experient on the basis of the qualities of the internal organ with which it is identified. This is similar to Brahman which, although all-pervasive, is referred to as atomic in size for the purpose of meditation in the text -

*aṇīyān vrīhervā yavādvā*<sup>91</sup>

Our author in this connection cites the passages from the *Vaiyāsakīyanyāyamālā* in support of this contention. And the passages are:

*jīvo 'ṇuḥ sarvago vā syādeṣo 'ṇuritivākyataḥ  
utkrāntigatyāgamanaśravaṇāccāṇureva saḥ  
sābhāsabuddhyaṇutvena tadupādhitvato 'ṇutā  
jīvasya sarvagatvam tu svato brahmatvataḥ śrutam.*<sup>92</sup>



The next question that our author discusses relates to the agency on the part of the soul. The Sāᅅkhya school is of the view that it is only the intellect or the *buddhi-tattva* that is the agent. The Puruᅅa, being a supra-relational entity, cannot be an agent. It, however, becomes the experient by being reflected in the mode of intellect. Agency is present in the intellect only. But it is taken to be present in the Puruᅅa on account of non-discrimination between the Puruᅅa and the intellect and the non-discrimination is due to the reflection of the Puruᅅa in the intellect. Hence the usage 'I am the agent' which involves reference to the Puruᅅa as an agent is only a figurative one similar to the usage 'Devadatta is a lion'.<sup>93</sup>

The above view of the Sāᅅkhya school is unsound. It is because the intellect is decidedly known to be an instrument and that which is an instrument like an axe can never be the agent. Further if the intellect were the agent, then we must assume some other factor as the instrument. It may be argued that there is no need for an agent at all. This also is not correct. It is because the sacred activities in the form of sacrifices, etc., prescribed in the ritualistic section of the veda, and of vedantic study, etc., prescribed in the Upaniᅅadic section and also the secular activities like farming, etc., depend upon an agent. Hence there must be an agent;

and, since the intellect cannot be an agent, the soul alone is to be admitted as the agent.

Further Jaimini in his Pūrvamīmāṃsā-sūtra -

*śāstraphalam prayoktari tallakṣaṇatvāt*<sup>94</sup>

states that the fruit conveyed by the injunctive text pertains to the agent of the sacrifice as the nature of an injunctive text is such that it would give rise to the knowledge of the means of the fruit which the agent of the sacrifice experiences. It is only the soul that experiences the fruits of actions and so it alone must be the agent.

The author of the *Brahma-sūtra-s* too affirms that the soul is the agent of actions. The aphorism -

*kartā śāstrārthavatvāt*<sup>95</sup>

states that the soul is the agent of actions as only then the vedic texts such as 'One shall perform *agnihotra*' and the like would become significant. If the soul were not an agent, then the above texts would be rendered purportless. On this ground the soul must be admitted to be an agent.<sup>96</sup>

Our author cites the relevant texts from the *Vaiyāsakīyanyāyamālā* in support of the above view.



The passages are:

*jīvo 'kartā atha vā kartā, dhiyaḥ kartṛtvasambhavāt  
jīvakartṛtayā kim syāt ityāhuḥ sāṅkhyamāninaḥ  
karaṇatvāt na dhīḥ kartrī yāgaśravaṇalaukikāḥ  
vyāpārā na vinā kartrā tasmāt jīvasya kartṛtā*<sup>97</sup>

The next question that is considered by our author is whether agency on the part of the soul is intrinsic to it and therefore real or adventitious and therefore illusory or indeterminable. The discussion regarding this question is necessary because if agency were intrinsic and therefore real in the case of the soul, then it cannot be removed and so even by the pursuit of the means of liberation, liberation which consists in the removal of agency cannot be achieved. For that which is real can never be removed.

Further the *Chāndogya* text -

*tat tvam asi*<sup>98</sup>

speaks of the non-difference of the soul from Brahman. This text could not be taken as referring to the non-difference of the soul as such from Brahman. It is because the soul as such is known to be an agent, and it cannot be non-different from Brahman which is not an agent. Hence this text must be taken to mean that

the essential nature of the soul is non-different from Brahman. And its essential nature is pure consciousness and not agency. So agency noticed in the case of the soul must be taken as not intrinsic to the soul but as only adventitious.

Further the text -

*asaṅgo hyayam puruṣaḥ*<sup>99</sup>

states that the soul in its essential nature is suprarelativational and thus negates any relation to agency on the part of the soul.

To sum up: agency on the part of the soul is only an adventitious feature.

When it is thus known that agency is only an adventitious feature in the case of the soul, the question arises as to what is the extraneous cause that makes the soul acquire it. The text of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* provide the answer thus:

The text -

*yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati taditarḥ  
itaram jighrati taditaraḥ itaram paśyati*<sup>100</sup>

states that where there is duality *as it were* than one sees another. This text by using the expression *as*



*it were* implies that duality is illusory and it is only under the realm of *māyā* or *avidyā* there arises the characteristics of agency, enjoyership, etc., on the part of the soul.

And the text -

*yatra tu sarvam ātmaiva abhūt tat  
kena kaṁ paśyet, etc.,*<sup>101</sup>

states that when one is liberated and when everything has become one's self then whom one could see and through what means? This text implies that the one who is liberated becomes free from agency, etc.

Further the text -

*yo 'yam vijñānamayaḥ prāṇeṣu hṛdyantarjyotiḥ  
puruṣaḥ sa samānaḥ san ubhau lokau  
anusañcarati dhyāyatīva lelāyatīva*<sup>102</sup>

states that the pure consciousness which is immanent in the heart is identified with the intellect, goes to the other world, comes back to this world and it thinks *as it were* and moves *as it were*. This text uses the expression *as it were* in respect of the activities of the soul and thereby conveys that they are not real but are false due to the identification of the soul with the intellect that acts.

In the same way, the text -

*ātmendriyamanoyuktam bhoktetyāhuḥ manīṣiṇaḥ*<sup>103</sup>

states that the wise men declare that the experient, namely, the soul is only a blend of pure consciousness and the body-mind complex. From this it is known that the characteristic of being an experient too is not natural to the soul but is only adventitious.

It comes to this: the *Upaniṣad-s* convey that the characteristics of being an agent and an experient on the part of the soul are only adventitious.

Summarizing the views of the *Upaniṣad-s* the author of the *Brahma-sūtra-s* in the aphorism

*yathā ca takṣobhayathā*<sup>104</sup>

states that agency on the part of the soul is only adventitious and not real. This is explained on the basis of the analogy of a carpenter. The latter when he works with his tools is an agent and he feels pain on account of doing work. But when he does not work with his tools he is a non-agent and he does not experience pain that may arise by doing work. Similarly, the soul when associated with the internal organ in its two phases of mind and intellect in the states of waking and dream is an agent. And in the state



of deep sleep when it is free from its relation to the internal organ, it is no longer an agent. It follows that the soul becomes an agent when the internal organ is operative and it remains as a non-agent when the internal organ ceases to function. From this we can deduce that agency on the part of the soul is due to its association with the internal organ. And agency, therefore, is false or indeterminable. When the soul attains the knowledge of Brahman, *māyā* or *avidyā* will be removed and consequently the relation of the soul to the internal organ too will be removed. The soul would cease to be a soul as it would remain in its true nature as Brahman which is liberation.

Our author cites the verse from the *Vaiyāsakīya nyāyamālā* which summarizes the above in an epigrammatic manner by stating that just as a crystal acquires the red colour owing to its proximity toward the China-rose, in the same way, the essential nature of the soul acquires the characteristic of agency owing to its proximity to the internal organ. And like the red colour in the crystal, agency too in the soul is not real but is only illusory or indeterminable. And the verse is:

*asaṅgo hīti tadbādhāt sphaṭike raktateva tat  
adhyastam dhīcakṣurādikaraṇopādhisannidheḥ* <sup>105</sup>

The next question that our author discusses in regard to the nature of the soul is whether the soul acts independently by depending upon God. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text -

*yaḥ vijñāne tiṣṭhan vijñānādāntaraḥ  
yo vijñānam antaro yamayati*<sup>100</sup>

states that God is the internal ruler of the soul. From this it follows that it is God who directs the soul to act.

An objection suggests itself at this stage. If God were admitted to direct the soul to act, then He would be subject to partiality and cruelty. Some souls perform good deeds and others commit interdicted actions. This implies a disposition on the part of God to favour some souls by directing them to perform good deeds and to experience their pleasant fruits and a positive pleasure in inflicting injury upon other souls by directing them to commit interdicted actions and thereby experience misery. Hence we must admit that God does not direct the souls to act. Further it is known in ordinary experience that the souls act as directed by desire or *kāma*.

The above objection is answered by saying that God must be understood on the analogy of rain for all



the seeds to grow. And in order that the individual seeds may grow up into small or large creepers it is the specific variety to which the seeds belong that is the specific cause. In the same way, God is the general cause of all effects - past, present and future. And it is the individual merits and demerits of the souls that serve as the basis for God to direct the souls to perform good acts and to commit interdicted actions. It is in this sense the text of the *Kauṣītakī-Upaniṣad* -

*eṣa hi eva sādhu karma kārayati tam  
yam ebhyaḥ lokebhyaḥ unniniṣati,  
eṣa hi eva asādhu karma kārayati tam  
yam adho ninīṣati*<sup>107</sup>

which states that God makes those whom He wishes to lead to the higher worlds do good deeds and He makes those whom He wishes to lead to the abyss of hell do evil deeds must be understood. The contention that it is only desire that prompts the soul to act and not God is wrong because desire too is under the control of God. Hence it is God who directs the souls to act in accordance with their past *karma*.

The passages from the *Vaiyāsakīyanyāyamālā* which our author has recorded in support of the above view are:

*pravartako 'sya rāgādih īśo vā rāgataḥ kṛṣau  
 dr̥ṣṭā pravṛttiḥ vaiśamyam īśasya prerane bhavet  
 sasyeṣu vr̥ṣṭivat jīveṣu īśasya aviśamatvaḥ  
 rāgaḥ antaryāmyadhīnaḥ ata īśvaro 'sya pravartakaḥ* <sup>106</sup>

The next question which our author discusses in regard to the nature of the soul is the relation between the soul and God. It has already been said that God is the pure consciousness which serves as the original or *bimba* like the sun or the moon; and, the souls are like the reflected images of the sun or the moon in the waters in several pots. Just as the original sun or the moon is not affected in any way when their reflected images are noticed to be undergoing movement because of the movement in the water, in the same way, God - the original will never be affected in any way by the experience of misery or pain by the souls - the reflected images. Further when one reflected image of the sun or the moon undergoes movement when there is movement in the water - its reflecting medium, the other reflected image of the sun in the still water in another pot does not undergo movement. In the same way, when one soul - the reflected image experiences misery or pain, the other soul is not influenced by it.

Strictly speaking, the essential nature of God and of the souls is one and the same, that is, pure



consciousness. It is only in the realm of *māyā* or *avidyā* there is a distinction *as it were* between the two. Our author states:

[*jīvānām ca*]

*ekadhā bahudhā caiva dr̥ṣyate jalacandravat  
eka eva tu bhūtātmā bhūte bhūte vyavasthitah  
iti ābhāsatvam avagamyate. Jīvānām ca parasparam  
anekajalapātrasthabahusūryapratibimbavat  
vyavahāravvyavasthā sutarām upapadyate*<sup>109</sup>

Our author next discusses the destiny of the soul.

It has been said that the soul is the agent of actions and the experient of the results of actions. It has also been said that the soul acts as directed by God in accordance with its past *karma*.

The fruits of *karma*-s carried out by the souls in their innumerable previous lives fall under two categories:

- (1) accumulated (*sañcita*); and,
- (2) fructified (*prārabdha*).

Of these, *sañcita-karma* comprises of the merits and demerits which the soul has accumulated in its innumerable previous births. The *prārabdha-karma* is a portion of the *sañcita-karma* that has become ripe

and has started yielding forth its fruit in the form of the present body.

Apart from these two, there is another variety known as *āgami-karma* which comprises of the fruits that would result from the fresh activities of the soul in its present birth. It must be noted here that these fruits will be added to the *sañcita-karma*.

When the *prārabdha-karma* which has given rise to the present body is exhausted, the latter falls off; and, if the portion of the *sañcita-karma* that is meritorious in character becomes ripe enough to yield forth its fruit, then the soul associated with the vital air, the sense-organs and the five fundamental elements would reach the heaven through the path of the manes (*pitryāna*). If, however, the portion of the *sañcita-karma* that is sinful in character becomes ripe at the time of death, then the soul will either be born as an insect or as bird or as mosquito or it reaches the hell. If the soul in its present life pursues the path of meditation upon God, then it would reach the world of Hiranyagarbha through the path of Gods (*devayāna*) wherein attaining the direct knowledge of Brahman it would attain liberation along with Hiranyagarbha at the end of the cosmic age. If the soul pursues vedāntic study, reflection and meditation and attains the direct



knowledge of Brahman here itself, then it is liberated here and now.

Now we shall set forth the path of manes.

The text of the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* -

*atha ya ime grāma iṣṭāpūrte dattam iti upāsate,  
te dhūmam abhisambhavanti, dhūmād rātrim rātreḥ  
aparapakṣam, aparapakṣāt yān ṣaḍdakṣinaiti māsān  
tān na ete samvatsaram abhiprāpnuvanti māsebhyaḥ  
pitṛlokam pitṛlokādākāśam ākāśāt candramasam eṣa  
somo rājā taddevānām annam tam devā bhakṣayanti*<sup>110</sup>

states that the house-holder who lives in villages and who is exclusively devoted to the performance of *agnihotra* and other rites prescribed in the *veda*-s, and who engages himself in the digging of wells and of tanks and who makes gifts both in sacrifices and outside proceeds after death through the path of manes to heaven. The gross body perishes here; and, the soul associated with five fundamental elements and vital air and sense-organs proceeds to heaven. The path through which it reaches the heaven is presided over by (i) the deity ensouling the smoke; (ii) the deity of the night; (iii) the deity of the darker fortnight; (iv) the deity ensouling the six months during which the sun moves southwards; (v) the world of manes; (vi) *ākāśa*;

and, (vii) the heaven. The one who has reached the heaven serves as the means of enjoyment for the deities. This means that such a soul serves the deities in the heaven. This path through which the soul reaches the heaven is known as the path of the manes.

The text of the *Chândogyopaniṣad* -

*tasmin yāvat sampātam uṣitvā atha  
etameva adhvānam punar nivartante*<sup>111</sup>

states that the soul after having experienced the fruits of its *karma* in the heaven comes back to the earth to experience the fruits of the portion of its accumulated karma (*sañcita-karma*). This portion of *sañcita-karma* is known as *anuśaya* and the soul associated with it is known as *anuśayin*.

The path through which the soul which is known as *anuśayin* returns to this world is set forth in the *Chândogya* text -

*yathā itam ākāśam ākāśāt vāyum vāyurbhūtvā  
dhūmo bhavati dhūmo bhūtvā abhram bhavati  
abhram bhūtvā megho bhavati megho bhūtvā pravar-  
ṣati te iha vrīhiyavā oṣadhivanaspatayaḥ  
tilamāṣāḥ iti jāyante ato vaikhalu durniṣ-  
prapataram yo yo hi annamatti yo retaḥ siñcati  
tadbhūya eva bhavati.*<sup>112</sup>



This text means: the souls from the heaven return to *ākāśa*, from *ākāśa* to air, and having become air, they become smoke; and having become smoke they become *abhra*, that is, that which contains water; having become *abhra*, they become *megha*, that is, what which pours down water. Having become the *megha*, they rain; then they are born as rice and barley, herbs and trees, sesamum and beans. Henceforth the exit becomes extremely difficult, for whoever eats the food and sows the seed, he becomes like unto him.

It is said here that the *anuśayin* becomes *ākāśa* and the like. It is, however, not possible for an object to take another form. Hence, our author states when it is said that the *anuśayin* becomes *ākāśa* what is meant is that he becomes so subtle like *ākāśa*.<sup>113</sup> And when it is said that he becomes air, what is meant is that he is under the control of air.<sup>114</sup> And when it is said that he becomes smoke, *abhra*, and *megha*, what is meant is that he becomes associated with these.<sup>115</sup>

The above text states that till falling down with rain, the descent of the soul - the *anuśayin* takes place in a short time. After this it takes longer time for the *anuśayin* to reach the condition of rice, barley, etc., and much longer time to emerge as a human being. It

is thus: the *anuśayin* having fallen down with rain may reach the rivers and from there, the sea. It will again be drawn by the rays of the sun and may fall again as rain upon deserts or stony places. At long last it may fall upon a fertile land and come out as rice, barley, etc. The *anuśayin* will be in contact with the latter. And when eaten by human beings, the rice, barley, etc., with which the *anuśayin* is in contact, are transformed into male energy. And when presented in a mother's womb, the *anuśayin* enters it and is born as associated with the bodies developed from the embryo. And the body which the *anuśayin* takes will be in accordance with its *anuśaya*.<sup>116</sup>

The path through which the soul reaches the heaven and the path through which it returns to the earth and is born again involves the celestial world (*dyuh*), rain (*parjanya*) earth (*pṛthivī*), man (*puruṣa*) and woman (*yoṣit*). These five are to be meditated upon as 'five fires' (*pañcāgnī*) and this meditative exercise is known as *pañcāgni-vidyā* and those who pursue meditative exercises upon God reach the world of Hiraṇyagarbha through the path of Gods which we shall explain now.

The path of Gods is described in the *Chāndogya*, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, and the *Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad*-s.



And the path consists of the presiding deities. The order of the presiding deities is variously presented in the *Upaniṣad-s*.

The order of the presiding deities in the path of Gods given in the *Chāndogyopanīṣad* is:

(1) Light (2) Day (3) Bright fortnight (4) Six months when the sun moves northwards (5) Year (6) Sun (7) Moon (8) Lightning.<sup>117</sup>

The order of presiding deities in the path of Gods given in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text is:

(1) Light (2) Day (3) Bright fortnight (4) Six months during which the sun moves northwards (5) Divine world (6) Sun (7) Lightning:<sup>118</sup>

The order of the presiding deities in the path of Gods given in the *Kauṣataki Upaniṣad* is:

(1) Agni (2) Vāyu (3) Varuṇa (4) Āditya (5) Indra (6) Prajāpati.<sup>119</sup>

It is evident from the above that the order of the arrangement of the deities given in each of the three texts differs from one another. Since the path described in the above three texts is one and the same as the destination to be reached is the same, the specific order

of arrangement of the deities must be ascertained. Our author following the author of the *sutra-s* fixes the order of the deities thus:

1] All the texts mention *agni* first. The *Kauṣītakī* text mentions *vāyu* next to light. The *Chāndogya* and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* place day next to *agni* or light.

Another text of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* <sup>119</sup> places *vāyu* before the sun. This is as it should be; it is because the sun moves in the path provided by *vāyu*.<sup>120</sup>

2] The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* text<sup>121</sup> places the divine world after months. But the *Chāndogya* text<sup>122</sup> mentions year after month. Since year is only an extension of month, it must be placed after month.

3] The *Kauṣītakī* text<sup>123</sup> refers to Varuṇa; and, he should be placed after lightning. It is because Varuṇa - the deity of waters is naturally connected with lightning.<sup>124</sup>

4] Indra and Prajāpati should be placed successively after Varuṇa on the ground that the *Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad* <sup>125</sup> mentions so.

The order of the arrangement of the deities in the path of Gods is:



(1) Light (2) Day (3) Month (4) Year (5) the divine world (6) Vāyu (7) Sun (8) Moon (9) Lightning (10) Varuṇa (11) Indra; and, (12) Prajāpati.

Here just like Vāyu, the sun, the moon, Varuṇa, Indra and Prajāpati, light, day, month, year, the divine world and lightning are to be treated as the deities presiding over them respectively.

The soul is led by one deity to the other and when the presiding deity of the lightning takes charge of the soul, an *amānava-puruṣa*, that is, the one who does not come under the domain of the creation of Manu comes and leads it to the world of Hiraṇyagarbha.

The text of the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* -

*candramaso vidyutam tatpuruṣaḥ  
amānavaḥ sa enān brahma gamayati*<sup>120</sup>

states so.

The person who does not come under the domain of Manu leads one who meditates upon the conditional Brahman to the world of Hiraṇyagarbha. This is as it should be. It is because that which is not attained hitherto alone could be attained. Since Brahman being one's self is ever attained there is no possibility of its

being attained. Hiranyagarbha, on the other hand, is located in the *Satyaloka* and so he can be attained. And so he who meditates upon the conditioned Brahman after the fall of his body proceeds in the path of Gods and reaches the world of Hiranyagarbha.<sup>127</sup> The one who has reached the world of Hiranyagarbha could create by his mere will the objects he desires.<sup>128</sup> He will remain embodied or unembodied. If he is embodied he will not be affected by the body, because it is only the relation to a body that arises out of one's *karma* that would affect the soul. The body which one takes in the world of Hiranyagarbha is not a product of *karma*.<sup>129</sup> And he may take by his mere will as many bodies as he likes. And each body will be animated by the one who has assumed the bodies.<sup>130</sup> In short, he who has reached the world of Hiranyagarbha becomes God-like. This, however, does not extend to the cosmic activity such as creation, sustentation and destruction of the world.<sup>131</sup>

The text of the *Kūrmapurāṇa* -

*brahmaṇā saha te sarve samprāpte pratisaṅcare  
yugasyānte kṛtātmānaḥ praviśanti param padam*<sup>132</sup>

states that the one who has reached the world of Hiranyagarbha attains the realization of his identity



with Brahman - the pure consciousness there and is liberated alongwith Hiraṇyagarbha at the end of the cosmic age. This process of attaining liberation is known as *krama-mukti*.<sup>133</sup>

It must be noted here that in the case of one who has attained the knowledge of his identity with Brahman here itself, *māyā* or *avidyā*- is removed and all his accumulated merits and demerits will be removed. In the case of one who meditates upon the conditioned Brahman, *māyā* or *avidyā*- is not removed and so his *karma*-s which are based upon *māyā* also are not removed. They have been cast away by him at the time of leaving his body here; and, they are attached to his relatives, friends or foes.<sup>134</sup>

To sum up:

according to Advaita, God and soul are only the pure consciousness associated with the characteristic of being the original and the characteristic of being a reflected image respectively. These two characteristics are illusorily projected by *māyā* or *avidyā*. God is always aware of His identity with His true nature - the pure consciousness. It is only the soul which under the influence of *māyā* or *avidyā* and the body-mind-complex which are the limiting adjuncts has lost sight of its identity with its true nature, performs *karma* and

undergoes transmigration; or, it performs meditation upon God, reaches the world of Hiranyagarbha and attains liberation there. If it performs *karma* without any attachment towards its fruits, it becomes eligible to pursue vedāntic study, reflection and meditation, attains the knowledge of its identity with Brahman here and now.

## NOTES:

1. *Nṛsimhottaratapinī Upaniṣad*, 9.
2. *Pañcadaśī* (hereafter *PD*), 6.125.
3. *Ibid.*, 6.127.
4. *Ibid.*, 6.127.
5. *Ibid.*, 6.128.
6. *Ṛg-Veda*, 10.129.
7. *PD*, 6.130.
8. *Ibid.*, 6.131.
9. *Ibid.*, 6.132.
10. *Vedārtha-prakāśa* (hereafter *VP*), *Bhāṣya* on the *Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka* from 7th to 10th *Prapāṭhaka* by Sāyaṇa. Poona: Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series, 36. 1927. pp. 568-70.
11. *Brahma-sūtra* (hereafter *BS*), 1.4.3.
12. *Śaṅkara's bhāṣya* (hereafter *SB*) on 1.4.3.
13. *Bhāmatī* on *Ibid.*
14. *Vīvaraṇa* (hereafter *V*). Commentary on the *Pañcapādikā* along with *Bhāvaprakāśa* by Nṛsimhāśrama. Madras



- Government Oriental Series, Vol. CLV. Madras, 1958.  
p.97.
15. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, 1.3.
  16. *VP*, p.564.
  17. *PD*, 6.133; *VP*, p.569.
  18. *BS*, 1.4.3.
  19. *ŚB* on *BS*, 1.4.3.
  20. *VP*, p.578.
  21. *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, 5.7.14.
  22. *VP*, p.499.
  23. *V*, p.173; *VP*, p.459.
  24. *ŚB* on *BS*, 1.2.22.
  25. *BS*, 1.4.3.
  26. *ŚB* on *BS*, 1.4.3.
  27. *VP*, pp.459-460.
  28. *Samkṣepa-śārīraka* (hereafter *SS*), 3.277.
  29. *Ibid.*, 3.278.
  30. *PD*, 1.16.
  31. *Ibid.*, 1.17.
  32. *SS*, 2.176.
  33. *V*, pp.287, 294.
  34. *Bhāmatī* on *ŚB* on *BS*, 2.1.4; 2.3.13 and 3.2.3.
  35. *Brahmabindu Upaniṣad* (hereafter *BBU*), 13.
  36. *Siddhāntaleśa-saṅgraha* (hereafter *SLS*) with the commentary *Kṛṣṇālaṅkāra*. Secunderabad: Śrī Appayya Dikṣitendra Granthāvali-Prakāśana-samiti. 1973. pp.94-95.

37. *BBU*, 12.
38. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (hereafter *TU*), 2.6.
39. *VP*, p.623.
40. *Ibid.*, p.627.
- See also *Vārttikasāra*. Benares: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series No.205. 1915. p.52.
41. *ŚB* on *BS*, 1.1.5.
42. *VP*, p.670.
43. *V*, p.646.
44. See Note No.41.
45. *TU*, 2.2.1.
46. *Ibid.*, See also *VP*, p.562.
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*, p.606.
49. *PD*, 6.134; *VP*, p.569.
50. *VP*, p.599.
51. *TU*, 2.1.1.
52. *VP*, 561.
53. *ŚB* on *BS*, 1.1.1.
54. *VP*, pp.454-55.
55. *Ibid.*, p.576.
56. *TU*, 2.2.1.
57. *VP*, p.594; *ŚB* on *BS*, 1.1.4.
58. *VP*, p.595.
59. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (hereafter *MU*), 2.1.3.
60. *VP*, p.595.
61. *TU*, 2.3.1.



62. *VP*, p.606.
63. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (hereafter *BU*), 4.3.7.
64. *TU*, 2.5.1.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *VP*, p.618.
67. *TU*, 2.8.5.
68. *VP*, p.652.
69. *Ibid.*; See also *ŚB* on *TU*, 2.8.5.
70. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (hereafter *CU*), 6.11.3.
71. *Vaiyāsika-nyāya-mālā* (hereafter *VNM*), Printed along with *Śaṅkara Bhāṣya, Ratna-prabhā, Bhāmatī* and *Nyāya-nirṇaya*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1996. p.524. See also *ŚB* on *BS*, 2.3.17.
72. *BU*, 2.1.23.
73. *Ibid.*
74. *MU*, 2.1.1.
75. *Katha Upaniṣad* (hereafter *KU*), 2.18.
76. *CU*, 6.8.7.
77. *BU*, 1.4.10.
78. *Ibid.*, 2.5.19.
79. *CU*, 6.3.2.
80. *BU*, 4.5.13.
81. *Ibid.*, 4.5.14.
82. *VP*, p.631; See *VNM*, p.525; *BS*. 2.3.17.
83. *CU*, 6.3.2.
84. *BU*, 4.3.23.
85. *VP*, p.631; *VNM*, p.528.

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86. *MU*, 3.1.9.
87. *Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad* (hereafter *Kau.U.*), 3.3.
88. *Ibid.*, 1.2.
89. *BU*, 4.4.6.
90. *BS*, 1.3.29.
91. *CU*, 3.14.3.
92. *VP*, p.632; *VNM*, p.530.
93. *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, 20.,.
94. *Pūrvamīmāṃsā-sūtra*, 3.7.18.
95. *BS*, 2.3.33.
96. *Ibid.*
97. *VP*, p.633; *VNM*, p.542.
98. *CU*, 6.8.7.
99. *BU*, 4.3.15.
100. *Ibid.*, 2.4.14.
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Ibid.*, 4.3.7.
103. *KU*, 3.4.
104. *BS*, 2.3.40.
105. *VP*, p.633; *VNM*, p.545.
106. *BU*, 3.7.22.
107. *Kau.U.*, 2.8.
108. *VP*, p.633; *VNM*, p.551.
109. *VP*, p.634; *VNM*, p.554.
110. *CU*, 5.10.3, 4.
111. *Ibid.*, 5.10.5.
112. *Ibid.*, 5.10.5-6.



113. *VP*, p.637.  
 114. *Ibid.*  
 115. *Ibid.*  
 116. *Ibid.*  
 117. *CU*, 5.10.1-2.  
 118. *Kau. U.*, 1.3.  
 119. *BU*, 5.10.1.1  
 120. *VP*, p.519.  
 121. *BU*, 6.2.15.  
 122. *CU*, 5.10.2.  
 123. *Kau. U.*, 1.3.  
 124. *BS*, 4.3.3.  
 125. *Kau. U.*, 1.3.  
 126. *CU*, 4.15.6.  
 127. *BS*, 4.3.7.  
 128. *CU*, 8.2.1; *BS*, 4.4.8.  
 129. *BS*, 4.4.10-12.  
 130. *BS*, 4.4.15.  
 131. *Ibid.*, 4.4.17.  
 132. *Kūrma-purāṇa*, 1.2.269.  
 133. *BS*, 4.3.10.  
 134. *CU*, 8.13.1., *Kau. U.*, 1.4.



## PRACTICAL EFFICIENCY OF THE ILLUSORY

S. Revathy

According to Advaita, Brahman itself without undergoing any change whatsoever appears as the world through *avidyā*. It alone is real and the world is indeterminable either as real or as an absolute nothing. It is illusory. The objects of the world are classified as empirically real (*vyāvahārikasatya*) and apparently real (*prātibhāsikasatya*). Those which are annihilated only by the knowledge of Brahman are empirically real and the objects of the waking state excepting shell-silver, mirage and the like fall under this category. Those which are annihilated by the knowledge other than the knowledge of Brahman are apparently real and the objects of the dream state and shell-silver, mirage, etc., of the waking state are placed within this category. The dream objects are removed not by the knowledge of Brahman but by the knowledge of the waking state and shell-silver and mirage, by the direct knowledge of their respective substratum, namely, shell and sandy desert.



Now the following objection is raised: just as the apparently real silver and the sheet of water of the mirage in view of their indeterminable nature, do not have practical efficiency as is appropriate to, well-known silver and water, in the same way, empirically real objects too, in view of their indeterminable nature, cannot have practical efficiency.<sup>1</sup> It must be noted here that this objection is based upon the contention that whichever is practically efficient must be absolutely real. The objects of the world like pot, etc., are practically efficient and hence they must be real. Hence the theory that the objects of the world are illusory does not hold good.

Advaitins are of the view that it is true that silver that appears in a shell or the water of a mirage do not have practical efficiency as is appropriate to well-known silver and water respectively. The reason is that they are removed in the waking state itself the moment the true nature of their respective substratum is known. But the water seen in dream does have practical efficiency of the nature of bathing, etc., as is appropriate to well-known water in the waking state. It is because dream-water is not at all destroyed in the state of dream itself. The point that is of importance here is that the dream-water, although indeterminable, does have practical efficiency of the nature of bathing,

etc. Hence the rule that whichever is practically efficient is real lacks correspondence in the case of dream-water which, as we have seen, is practically efficient but not absolutely real.<sup>2</sup>

It might be contended that it is not mere practical efficiency that is the criterion of reality, but practical efficiency which is absolutely real that is so. In the case of dream-water, practical efficiency is not real and so it does not point to the reality of the dream-water. Hence there is no lack of correspondence to the rule that whichever has real practical efficiency is real.<sup>3</sup>

The above contention is rejected on the ground that even in the waking state practical efficiency of the nature of bathing in regard to water is admitted to be only illusory and not absolutely real. For if it were so, there will be two real entities — one Brahman and another practical efficiency, and hence the non-dual nature of Brahman would be contradicted. If it were an absolute nothing, then it can never be an object of experience. Practical efficiency is experienced and on this ground it is not absolute nothing. It cannot be real and an absolute nothing at once. Hence it is indeterminable.<sup>4</sup>

Thus there is no absolutely real practical efficiency pertaining to any object whatsoever. And so the



invariable relation that whichever has real practical efficiency is real is not sound. It must, therefore, be said that the invariable relation is of the form that whichever has practical efficiency is real. And this invariable relation, as has been proved earlier, lacks correspondence in the case of dream-water.<sup>5</sup>

Advaitins hold that an object and practical efficiency in regard to it — these two possess the same grade of reality. Dream-water is apparently real and in the dream state itself if does have practical efficiency of the nature of bathing, etc., which too is apparently real. The water in the waking state is empirically real and its practical efficiency which too is empirically real. It comes to this: just as dream-water which is apparently real possesses practical efficiency which too is apparently real, in the same way, objects which are empirically real possess practical efficiency which too is empirically real.<sup>6</sup> This view is based upon Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* wherein it is stated:

“So long as the knowledge of Brahman has not arisen, the entire complex of phenomenal existence is taken as true even as the phantoms of a dream are considered to be true until the sleeper awakes”.<sup>7</sup>

To sum up: as in dream, practical efficiency is of the same grade of reality as that of the object.

So far we have set forth the view that empirically real objects do have practical efficiency which too is empirically real on the analogy of dream objects which are apparently real and which possess practical efficiency that is apparently real.

Advaitavidyācārya, however, argues that practical efficiency possessed by the apparently real objects of dream is not only apparently real but empirically real too. He makes a distinction between two kinds of practical efficiency in the state of dream — one which is sublated by the waking state and another which is not so. The former is apparently real and the latter, although related to the dream state, is empirically real.<sup>8</sup> He makes his position explicit by stating that the damsel and the snake in dream respectively give rise to happiness and fear which are not at all sublated by the waking state. In the latter no one has the experience of the sublation of happiness and fear caused by the dream objects in the form 'At the time of dream, I did not have happiness or fear'. On the contrary one has the experience of happiness, fear, etc., along with the effects of mental satisfaction, quaking of the body, etc. It follows that happiness, etc., which continue in the



waking state is empirically real and it must be so in the dream state too.<sup>9</sup>

The above position may be reduced to the form of a syllogistic argument which is as follows:

‘‘Happiness, fear, etc., belonging to dream state are empirically real; it is because they are not sublated by waking state and because they continue to exist in the waking state too’’.<sup>10</sup>

Another ground on the basis of which Advaitavidyācārya proves that happiness, fear, etc., that belong to the dream state are empirically real is as follows: since desire and aversion have for their content happiness and fear respectively which are (empirically) real, and since people have desire again for the dream whose sphere is the object that produces happiness, and aversion to the dream which is not of that nature, happiness and fear produced by the dream objects must be empirically real.<sup>11</sup>

To sum up this part of the discussion: just as happiness, fear, etc., caused by the objects of the waking state are empirically real, in the same way, happiness, fear, etc., caused by dream objects too are empirically real. Thus when even an apparently real

object of the dream state could give rise to happiness, fear, etc., which are empirically real, it goes without saying that the objects of the waking state which are empirically real could very well give rise to empirically real effects. In other words, they could have practical efficiency.<sup>12</sup>

The Dualistic school of Vedānta contends that it is not the object of dream which is illusory that causes fear, etc., in which case it can be said that even an illusory object can have practical efficiency. But it is only the *knowledge* of the dream object that causes fear, etc. And knowledge is real. So in the state of dream, effects which are empirically real are caused not by the illusory object but by knowledge which is empirically real. Hence the assertion that in dream, effects which are empirically real are noticed to arise from illusory objects is not sound.<sup>13</sup>

Advaitavidyācārya argues that the knowledge of the dream objects which produces fear, etc., possesses two characteristics, one the characteristic of being knowledge [*jñānatva*] and the other, the characteristic of being associated with the objects like snake, etc. If knowledge of the dream objects in its aspect of being knowledge [*jñānatva*] causes fear, then even the knowledge of pot, as it possesses the characteristic of



being knowledge, could cause fear.<sup>14</sup> This, however, is not the case. If, however, the knowledge of the dream objects, in its aspect of being knowledge as associated with the objects like snake, etc., causes fear, then such a knowledge is illusory only, as it comprehends illusory objects,<sup>15</sup> Knowledge in its essential nature is real; but as associated with the illusory objects it is illusory. Hence the knowledge of dream objects is not real as the Dualistic school maintains. It is illusory by having dream objects as its content. Thus even if we admit that it is only knowledge of the dream objects that causes fear, etc., then also only an illusory object, namely, knowledge that causes fear. It comes to this that in dream effects which are empirically real arise from illusory objects only.<sup>16</sup>

It might be contended that the mere immediacy of the content of dream produces happiness, fear, etc. And immediacy being of the nature of the witness-cognition (*sākṣī*) is real. Hence it is only from knowledge, that is, the witness-cognition which is real, there ensues real effects of happiness, fear, etc. It comes to this that it is only a real object that has practical efficiency in the dream state and not an illusory object as the Advaitin thinks.<sup>17</sup>

Advaitavidyācārya rejects the above contention by stating that it cannot be so in view of the fact that

witness-cognition is uniform by nature and so the effects of happiness, fear, etc., that are said to result from such a cognition must also be uniform. But it is not so. In the dream state, different grades of happiness and of fear are experienced as in the waking state. In the latter, happiness that arises by the tactual perception of a damsel is greater than the one that arises from the visual perception of her. In the same way, the fear that arises by the tactual perception of a serpent, is greater than the one that arises from the visual perception of it. This difference in happiness and fear cannot be due to the mere immediacy of the objects. It is because the latter being uniform cannot give rise to varying degrees of happiness, etc. Hence it must be held that the difference in happiness, etc., is due to the immediacy of objects that are associated with the mental states arising through the functioning of sense of sight, sense of touch, etc. This explanation must be extended to the case of dream cognition too. The result of this argument is that although immediacy of the objects of dream is identical with the witness-cognition which is uniform, yet it is only the latter whose objects which are associated with the mental states arising from the sense of sight, sense of touch, etc., that is responsible for the different grades of happiness, fear, etc. And the witness-cognition of objects that are associated with mental states in dream



is indeterminable. It is only from such an indeterminable entity and not from a real entity there arises practical efficiency that is real.<sup>18</sup> Advaitavidyācārya concludes that in dream apparently real factors give rise to empirically real effects. This means that the former have practical efficiency. When such is the case, the objects of the waking state which are empirically real can very well have practical efficiency that is empirically real.

So far Advaitavidyācārya's view that from apparently real objects of dream empirically real effects ensue. Some of the followers of Advaitavidyācārya confirm the above view by stating that in the waking state too practical efficiency that is empirically real ensues from apparently real objects. For example, darkness is assumed by one who enters a room where there is light which illumines the objects there and which is seen by other persons present there. The darkness assumed by the person is apparently real; but it conceals the objects present there in respect of that person and is removed when a lamp is brought in. Thus the assumed darkness has such practical efficiency as is appropriate to well-known darkness. It is, therefore, clear that this view confirms that of Advaitavidyācārya that practical efficiency having empirical reality is noticed even in the case of objects

which have only apparent reality.<sup>19</sup> Such practical efficiency can very well be had in respect of objects that have empirical reality.

The merits of the view of Advaitavidyācārva would appear most clearly when it is contrasted with the other views which are recorded in the *Siddhānta-leśa-saṅgraha*.

One view is that what subserves practical efficiency such as drinking, etc., is bare existence of water and not the reality thereof. Hence an object need not be real in order to have practical efficiency.<sup>20</sup>

An objection that may be raised in this connection is that if bare existence of water has practical efficiency, then even the water of the mirage which has bare existence would have practical efficiency as is appropriate to well-known water.<sup>21</sup>

This objection is answered by saying that the water of the mirage has bare existence no doubt; but it does not have practical efficiency, as bathing, etc., because it does not possess the class-characteristic — waterness.<sup>22</sup>

It may be asked that if the class-characteristic — waterness does not exist in the water of the mirage, then how is it referred to as 'water'?



This question is answered thus: the water of the mirage arises from the latent, impressions born out of the earlier experience of the empirically real water which is designated by the word 'water'. Hence the water of the mirage too is designated by the word 'water'. This is the view of Jñānaghanapāda - the author of the *Tattvaśuddhi*.<sup>23</sup>

The second view proceeds on the basis of the criticism of the earlier view which holds that the water of the mirage does not possess the class-characteristic — waterness. According to this view the class-characteristic — waterness must be admitted to be present in the water of the mirage to account for the activity toward it on the part of one who needs water. But it cannot have practical efficiency as is appropriate to well-known water because it is destroyed when its substratum is known specifically.<sup>24</sup>

Now the question arises as to why the well-known water alone has practical efficiency and not the water of the mirage, although both possess the characteristic of water-ness (*jalatva*).

It is answered that that object which is generated only by *avidyā* would have practical efficiency. When viewed in this light, the water of the mirage cannot have practical efficiency because it is not generated

only by *avidyā* but also by some other defect like the defect in the sense-organ. The well-known water is generated by *avidyā* only and so it is practically efficient.<sup>25</sup>

There are certain difficulties in regard to the above two views. According to the first view, the water of the mirage does not have practical efficiency as it is devoid of the class-characteristic — waterness. In this connection it may be said that dream-water too cannot have the class-characteristic of waterness as it is similar to the water of the mirage. But, as has been said earlier, the dream-water has practical efficiency that is not only apparently real but empirically real too. Hence the assertion that an object in order that it may have practical efficiency must possess the class-characteristic lacks correspondence in the case of dream-water and so it is unsound.

According to the second view the class-characteristic — waterness is present in the water of the mirage. But the latter does not have practical efficiency because it is caused by some defect other than *avidyā*. This view is wrong on the ground that dream-water too is caused by a defect, namely, sleep which is other than *avidyā*. As such it should not have practical efficiency. But, as has been shown already, it



does have practical efficiency. So the explanation offered by the advocates of the second view also seems to be not sound.

We may, therefore, conclude by stating the view of Advaitavidyācārya that dream objects too which are apparently real have practical efficiency that are empirically real. So the objects which are empirically real can very well have practical efficiency that is empirically real. The water of the mirage, the shell-silver and the like do not have practical efficiency as they are sublated in the waking state itself.

To sum up: practical efficiency is possible even in the case of objects that are illusory. Hence the objects of the world which are noticed to have practical efficiency can very well be illusory and need not be real.

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1. *Kṛṣṇālakāra* (hereafter *KA*), p.274.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Siddhāntaleśa-saṅgraha* (hereafter *SLS*), pp.274-5. See also *KA*, p.275.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *SLS*, p.275; *KA*, p.275.

7. Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* on the *Brahma-sūtra*, 2.1.14.
8. *KA*, p.275.
9. *SLS*, p.275. See also *Advaita-siddhi* (hereafter *AS*), p.1287.
10. *KA*, p.275.
11. *SLS*, pp.275 - 76; *KA*, p.275.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *SLS*, pp.276. Vide also, *Nyāyāmṛta*, p.278.
14. *KA*, p.276; *AS*, p.278.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *SLS*, p.276.
18. *KA*, p.276.
19. *SLS*, pp.276-77.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. *SLS*, pp.276-77; *KA*, p.278. Vide also; *Tattva-suddhi*, p.127.
24. *KA*, p.278.
25. *SLS*, pp.278-79.

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## REASON IN ADVAITA

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This paper is concerned with demonstrating the use of reason in Advaita discipline. How it proposes to set about this task is indicated below.

In Advaita, reason is not a means of establishing the ultimate truth; it is not a *pramāṇa*. Scripture (*śruti*) is the only *pramāṇa* for the truth of non-duality. *Yukti* can aid *śruti*, but is not an alternative to *śruti*.

Reason does not aid scripture directly. Scripture establishes the truth. Reason indicates the direction in which to look for truth, but not by pointing to truth as such. Its actual function is to expose and eliminate untruth. The elimination of what is not the truth paves the way for the discovery of truth; in fact it is a necessary condition for the latter.

Reason eliminates untruth at two stages in the Advaita scheme of discipline, firstly, as a part of *śravaṇa*, before the instruction on the principal texts of the Upaniṣads, the mahāvākyas, and subsequently, as *manana*, after the instruction on the mahāvākyas, But there is a difference in the way in which reason



accomplishes this task in the two stages. And the present paper will attempt to bring out the part played by reason in both the stages.

*Śravaṇa*, or the study of the sacred texts, itself proceeds in two stages, the first stage being based on reasoning and the second on the mahāvākyas. The first stage prepares the ground for the second. The mahāvākyas convey the teaching that the ultimate reality is the non-dual Brahman and that the true self of man is non-different from this. The student who is steeped in the notion of duality must be prepared for correctly understanding this truth. He is therefore patiently and carefully taken through arguments based on analogical reasoning, which serve, on the one hand, to discriminate the Self (Ātman) from the not-Self (*anātman*) and, on the other, to show that what is not the Ātman (namely the world of duality) is non-real. This particular role of reason is called *śodhana*. The fundamental concepts familiar to dualistic thinking, namely God (Īśvara), soul (*jīva*), and nature (*jagat*), are analysed, and their analysis prepares the ground for the hypothesis that the ultimate reality is spiritual and non-dual.

There are large portions of the Upaniṣads themselves which by rational argumentation prepare the ground for the proper understanding of the import

of the mahāvākyas. Exponents of Advaita down the centuries have added considerably to the arguments aiming at the same end. The arguments advanced may vary or even conflict with one another in respect of detail, but what is important is that they converge on the conclusion that the final reality is nothing but the non-dual Brahman. And this they do by showing the inconceivability of the opposite. The paradoxes and contradictions that are shown to riddle the dualistic view suggest that non-duality must be the truth. Now we shall put forward the essence of these arguments with such additions as will be helpful.

The ultimate truth rendered probable by means of analogies is confirmed by the mahāvākyas. The hearing of the mahāvākyas by itself is capable of inducing the immediate knowledge (*aparokṣa-jñāna*) of Brahman, provided there are no obstacles thereto. But obstacles to it are more often present than not, and when they are present, the hearing of the mahāvākyas yields only mediate knowledge (*parokṣa-jñāna*). It is only when the obstacles are removed, that the hearing of the mahāvākyas, which goes on concurrently with the process of removing the obstructions, produces immediate knowledge.

The obstacles to the immediate knowledge of Brahman are of three kinds. The first is the doubt that



the truth of non-duality, indirectly suggested by rational inquiry, may after all be baseless (*pramāṇāsambhāvanā*). The mediate knowledge resulting from the mahāvākyas itself dispels this doubt. But there are still two other obstacles. One is the doubt that the truth of the non-dual Brahman established by scripture may not after all be the sole truth, as there are other doctrines which likewise claim to be based on valid pramāṇas (*prameyāsambhāvanā*). Then again there are deep-rooted habits of thought associated with the dualistic view of reality, which are incompatible with the Advaita truth learnt from scripture (*viparītabhāvanā*). To remove these two classes of obstacles the discipline has to proceed through the stages of *manana* and *nididhyāsana*, respectively.

*Manana* is constant reflection upon the secondless reality known through study, with the aid of arguments subserving the teaching of the Upaniṣads. (*mananam tu śrutasyādvitīyavastunaḥ vedāntānugūṇayuktibhiḥ anavarataṁ anucintanam.*)<sup>1</sup> The object of *manana* is to refute rival theories of reality and thereby produce the conviction that the teaching of Advaita alone is true. *Manana*, thus, is the stage at which reason comes into play for the second time in the scheme of discipline. As in its earlier operation, namely before the instruction on the mahāvākyas, here

also the role of reason is indirect: it consists in exposing untruth. But the method of reasoning here is different from what it follows in the earlier stage. The method involved in the earlier stage may be roughly described as inductive, as it consists in analysing the concepts of common knowledge and suggesting through their unsoundness the hypothesis of non-duality. In the present stage the method may be roughly described as deductive, as the aim is to defend the truth already confirmed by scripture against rival theories, by means of arguments based on the premises furnished by scripture.

It would be difficult, however, to represent the two stages of reasoning separately. For one thing, it may involve repetition of instances, although from two different starting-points. For another, it would take us beyond the aim of the present paper, which is confined to focussing attention on the meaningful nature of the *vyāvahārika*. It has therefore been thought convenient to combine the dual role of reason and present it under four separate heads, each representing a particular standpoint from which reason may be exercised. The sub-divisions of this paper will thus be (i) epistemology, (ii) ontology, (iii) psychology, and (iv) cosmology. Under each head, while attempting to show how reason points to the Advaita view, we shall try to show in appropriate contexts how rival theories of reality go wrong.



## I

## EPISTEMOLOGY

1. THE TRIPLE FACTOR (*TRIPUṬI*) IN  
KNOWLEDGE

The analysis of knowledge reveals three indisputable factors in it: (1) a knowing subject, (2) a known object, and (3) the means of knowing.

*The Distinction between the Subject and the Object*

Knowledge always implies one who knows and something which is known. The distinction between the subject and the object is the ultimate presupposition of all knowledge. Advaitins hold that one and the same thing cannot be both the subject and the object of knowledge. The very notion of the object, or the thing known, implies its distinction from and dependence on a knowing subject. The object is dependent on a subject for being known. It exists, but cannot reveal itself. Hence we conclude that it is insentient (*jada*). Similarly, the term 'subject', or 'knower', would lose all meaning, if it did not imply an object distinct from it to be known. Obviously, the subject cannot itself be the object. What knows must be other than what is known. But the subject exists, and, in addition, reveals not only the object, but also itself. It is a centre of consciousness (*caitanya*). It is not

dependent on anything else for revelation. Thus the object is characterized by mere existence (*sat*) and the subject by existence and consciousness, *sat* and *cit*.

### *The Scope and Status of the Object*

What is the scope of the object of knowledge? Whatever is knowable is the object of knowledge. It is obvious that the whole of the external physical world is knowable and hence the object of knowledge. There are knowable elements in ourselves also.<sup>2</sup> Of course, it is evident that the physical body is knowable and hence the object of knowledge. But it is not so obvious that the mind also is a knowable phenomenon. For this reason, some logicians, Western as well as Indian, mistake the mind to be the subject of knowledge, whereas it is really an object. That the mind cannot be the subject will be shown in the sequel. But our present point is that the mind, like the body, is an object of study. Otherwise, the science of psychology would not have evolved. We are aware of our thoughts, feelings, and volitions.<sup>3</sup> However, the mind is not knowable in the same way as physical objects. Physical objects are cognized through the instrumentality of the senses and the mind. But the mind itself is cognized by the subject without the instrumentality of anything else. The mind is like a lamp, which enables us to perceive objects and at the same time is directly perceived by us. Just as



other objects revealed through the mind depend on an intelligent subject for being known, the mind also like a lamp depends on an intelligent subject for being known.<sup>4</sup> Since it is knowable, the Advaitin recognizes the mind to be of the same class as the physical world, that is as falling within the realm of the object.

The fact that the object of knowledge, whether it is a physical object or a mental state, is dependent on the subject or consciousness for being revealed does not mean that it is dependent on consciousness for its existence also. But the Yogācāra school of Buddhism denies objective existence to physical objects and reduces them to terms of what it regards as the subject, namely the mind. The question whether the mind is the subject is a separate one and has been treated of in the sequel. The only question to be discussed here is whether the object of knowledge has an existence independent of the subject's consciousness.

The Yogācāras say that the existence of a physical object cannot be proved, because we can never separate the object from our consciousness of it. We never know it apart from our consciousness. That is to say what the object in itself is we can never know. All that we have is the *idea* of the object. We have no right to suppose that beyond and behind the idea there is an object corresponding to it in the external world. The idea alone is real.

In criticism of this theory, the Advaitin points out that, in as much as we are conscious of the object, we have to grant that it exists in its own right; for, if it did not exist objectively, it would not have been possible for us to form an idea of it in the mind. In every act of perception we are conscious of some external thing corresponding to the idea, whether it be a post or a wall or a jar or a piece of cloth, and that of which we are conscious cannot but exist.<sup>5</sup> Of a non-existent, like a sky-lotus or a circular square, no idea is possible.

The subjectivist makes the existence of the object dependent on its cognition. An object exists because it is cognized by somebody and in so far as it is cognized by him, i.e. as an idea in his mind. To use Berkeley's famous formula, *esse est percipi*—existence is a matter of perception. But the Advaitin points out that it is cognition which depends on the existence of the object; for cognition is possible only of those objects which exist. Berkeley's formula will have to be inverted to represent the correct position. According to Śrī Śaṅkara, the formula of existence is 'whatever is apprehended by perception or some other means of cognition exists; whatever is not apprehended by any means of cognition does not exist.' (*yat hi pratyakṣādīnām anyatamena api pramāṇena upalabhyate tat sambhavati. yat tu na kenacidapi pramāṇena upalabhyate tat na sambhavati.*)<sup>6</sup> Hence the



possibility of cognition should rather be taken as an indication of the existence of the object than as the cause of its existence.

The Yogācāras say that we have only ideas corresponding to objects. Subjective notions appear like something external. But that we have ideas corresponding to objects itself implies a distinction between objects and ideas. If there were no objects independent of ideas, the ideas could not be said to correspond to objects,<sup>7</sup> and the expression 'like something external' would have no meaning.<sup>8</sup> Hence the invariable concomitance of the idea and the object is proof of their causal relation and not of their identity.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the variety of our mental impressions can be accounted for only by positing the objective existence of a variety of objects.<sup>10</sup> That the object exists independently of the idea is also shown by the fact that while our particular cognitions, such as that of a pot or a cloth, vary, cognition as such remains the same.<sup>11</sup>

Apart from these theoretical objections, a theory like the Yogācāra's strains common sense too much. We cannot easily bring ourselves to believe that the cognition of a chair or a table is the cognition of a mere mental state. What is worse, such a view would bring daily life to a standstill. We carry on our day to day activities on the assumption that the objects that we

see, touch, hear, and so on are not mere ideas, but are as real as ourselves who see, touch, and hear, and exist outside our consciousness, though connected with our consciousness.

The Yogācāras make out that the objects of our waking experience are of a class with the objects of dreams and illusions—purely subjective. They forget the important difference between the two orders of objects, viz. that, while there are others to vouch for the fact that the objects of waking exist in their own right, none can vouch for our dreams and illusions. The fact that the same object, say a table, which I perceive is perceived by other centres of consciousness also<sup>12</sup> is evidence to show that the table exists independently of my consciousness. If it is objected that these selves themselves are mere ideas in my mind, it could be replied by others that I myself do not exist except as an idea in their minds. But this is a position which no one will be prepared to grant. And, if we grant the existence of other selves like us, we are bound to give credit to their common testimony. Hence Śrī Śaṅkara declares that the object has a reality apart from and independent of the cognition by the subject.<sup>13</sup>

Now, it is not only the physical objects that are objective, i.e. exist independently of the subject.



Mental states also are objects of knowledge. Hence, according to Advaita, they too are objective. We cannot reduce them to terms of the subject. That is to say mental states happen independently of our cognition of them, although, to be cognized, they are dependent on the cognizing self.

Hence, the object of knowledge, whether it be a mental state or a physical thing, is objective, that is distinct from our knowledge of them. We have therefore to admit that all objects are objective and not subjective.

### *The Scope of the Subject*

What is the proper subject of knowledge? The subject is the centre of consciousness. But it cannot be the mind, for the mind is knowable. If the mind or mental states were identical with the subject, they would never be known at all. What is known cannot itself be the knower. The schools of Buddhism other than the Madhyamika, i.e, those that believe in the reality of the mind, viz. the Yogācāra, the Sautrāntika, and the Vaibhāṣika, identify the subject in knowledge with the mind. Apart from the reason we have stated above, this position is impossible in the light of the general Buddhistic tenet itself that nothing is permanent including the mind.

The mind is simply a series of mental states. If, then, the mind is the subject, how can any knowledge at all belong to the subject? In his commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* II, 2. 28 Śrī Śaṅkara points out the difficulty that two ideas which occupy different moments of time and pass away as soon as they have been apprehended cannot apprehend or be apprehended by each other. (*api ca dvayoḥ vijñānayoḥ pūrvottara-kālayoḥ svasamvedanena eva upakṣīṇayoḥ itaretara-grāhya-grāhakatvānupapattiḥ.*) Hence the changing mind cannot itself be the subject of knowledge. While the object may go on changing, the subject certainly must be identical with itself. Otherwise, the facts of remembrance, recognition, and so on of various objects cognized at different places and times would be unaccountable.<sup>14</sup> Thus, if the subject goes on changing, no knowledge can belong to it. Even the knowledge that everything is momentary would be impossible, if the subject were momentary.<sup>15</sup> The Buddhistic position, therefore, is self-stultifying. Our point is not that the mind is changeless—for no one can deny that the mind undergoes change—but that the subject is a constant factor other than the mind. For this reason, the Advaitins make a distinction between *jīva* and *jīvasākṣī*.

The *jīva* is consciousness identified with the knowable elements, namely the mind, or the internal



organ (*antahkaraṇa*), and, through it, the body. The *jīvasākṣī*, or witness-self, is pure consciousness merely hidden by these adjuncts. It is the *jīvasākṣī* that is the subject. It knows the constituents of the *jīva* as well as the objects of the external world. The *Bhagavad-gītā*<sup>16</sup> designates them '*kṣetra*' and '*kṣetrajñā*', respectively. *Kṣetra* and *kṣetrajñā* are distinguished on the principle that what knows must be other than what is known. The dictum has been given by Śrī Śaṅkara as follows. 'All that is knowable is *kṣetra*, and the *kṣetrajñā* is exclusively the knower.' (*Jñeyam ca sarvam kṣetram jñātaiva kṣetrajñaḥ.*)<sup>17</sup> Since a quality is knowable, no quality can be ascribed to *kṣetrajñā*. In reply to a contention that misery and ignorance belong to the *kṣetrajñā*, i.e. Ātman, Śrī Śaṅkara points out that the position of the contender is self-stultifying. If these were the property of the Ātman, they would not have been known. And if they are not known how could they be asserted to belong to the *kṣetrajñā* (or Ātman)? (*yadi ātmanaḥ dharmāḥ avidyāvattvam duḥkhivādi ca katham bhoh pratyakṣam upalabhyate, katham vā kṣetrajña-dharmāḥ.*)<sup>18</sup>

The *jīva* and the *jīvasākṣī* are represented by the expressions 'me' and 'I', respectively. The *jīva*, the 'me', includes the knowable and non-spiritual elements, like the body and the internal organ. And

what knows this is the 'I', the *jīvasākṣī*. While the *jīva*, the 'me', is an object of knowledge, the *jīvasākṣī*, the 'I', cannot be known in the empirical sense, i.e. as an object of knowledge. What we call self-consciousness is strictly the consciousness of the 'me', the *jīva*. This is evident from the common expression 'I know myself', where the 'me' is the object and the 'I' the subject. The 'me' is the realm of ideas about external objects. It is easy to confuse the idea with the subject. But in as much as it is known, the idea too is an object and must be clearly distinguished from the witnessing subject.<sup>19</sup> And as for the existence of the witnessing Self, it is self-proved and cannot therefore be denied.<sup>20</sup> It reveals itself as the subject in every cognition. It is thus self-luminous (*sva-prakāśa*).

It is for the above reasons that while agency and enjoyership are said to belong to the *jīva*, the self in association with the *antahkaraṇa*, knowership is ascribed to the *jīvasākṣī*, the pure witnessing self. Activity and enjoyment imply change in the agent and enjoyer. But knowledge implies that the knower remains identical. Hence the subject of knowledge cannot be the same as the subject of action and enjoyment. Since the internal organ is a constituent of the *jīva*, the *jīva* undergoes change, and hence activity and enjoyment have been ascribed to it. But pure consciousness, or *jīvasākṣī*, cannot change, and so knowledge must belong to it only.



*The Relation between the Subject and the Object*

The subject and the object are distinct, but not separate. The essential condition of knowledge is that the subject and the object must be in relation to each other. If they are separate, no knowledge can arise. They cannot be brought together even temporarily for the sake of knowledge, if they are not already connected. So the subject and the object must be in essential relationship. The very fact that knowledge is possible shows that they are, in fact, related.

Realists, like the Naiyāyikas, accord a fictitious independence to the object. They hold that there is no essential connection between the subject and the object. The differences between them are absolute. So much so, each is in its own separate world. Occasionally, they somehow meet and give rise to knowledge. The Advaitin steers clear of this view as he does of subjectivism. If it is true that the subject and the object are in separate worlds and have no binding connection with each other, we fail to see how they can ever meet at all. And, if they can never meet, no knowledge whatsoever would be possible. Even the knowledge that the object is unrelated to the subject would have been impossible if this position were true. Hence the realistic view stands self-condemned. The very fact that the realists are able to say something

about the object proves that the object is in essential relation with the subject. If the object were a real limit to the knowing subject, we would not be able to know that it is a limit. The subject and the object have, no doubt, their difference. But the very fact that the subject is conscious of its difference from the object shows that it is somehow related to the object.

What is the nature of the connection between the subject and the object? A connection is established only through qualities common to both. But the subject and the object are diametrically opposed in nature. The subject is intelligent (*cit*) and the object is non-intelligent (*acit*). It is true that both of them are existent (*sat*), but this is not sufficient for knowledge. A little reflection will show that common qualities between the subject and the object are brought about through the false superimposition of the qualities of each on the other. That the attributes of the subject are superimposed on the object is seen in our constructing an idea corresponding to the object. That, again, the attributes of the object are superimposed on the subject is seen in the fact that in knowledge consciousness is particularized in a specific centre, as revealed by the expression 'I know'. It is on this illusory association of subject and object that all empirical knowledge is based. Śrī Śaṅkara says, 'The means of right knowledge cannot operate unless there be a knowing



personality, and the existence of a knowing personality is not possible without (the self) falsely regarding the body, the senses, and so on as identical with or belonging to itself. ....Nor does anybody act by means of a body on which the nature of the self is not superimposed.' (*dehendriyādiṣu ahaṃ-mamā-bhimāna-rahitasya pramāṭṛtvānupapattaḥ pramāṇa-pravṛtṭyanupapatteḥ..... na ca anadhyastātma-bhāvena dehena kaścit vyāpriyate.*)<sup>21</sup>

Even for an illusory superimposition, there must be a real basis. What, then, is the basis of the mutual super-imposition of the subject and the object? The fact that we are *conscious* of the relation between the two shows that consciousness is not really localized in the subject, but over-reaches the difference between the subject and the object. The subject is a conscious entity. But consciousness as such is not the subject, but the ground on which the subject and the object are distinguished and related. That pure consciousness does not involve the subject-object relation is evident in deep sleep. Then there is neither subjective nor objective awareness. But awareness as such persists, as is evidenced by the facts of self-identity and recognition. The lamp reveals objects. Even when there are no objects, the lamp is still there to show that there are no objects. Pure, or distinctionless, consciousness persists even when the notions of

subject and object cease to be. Hence pure consciousness is the basis of both the subject and the object.<sup>22</sup>

The undifferentiated consciousness appears as the subject and the object as a result of ignorance (*avidyā*). How exactly ignorance produces this phenomenon cannot be satisfactorily explained, as no real explanation is possible of what is merely illusory. Yet, to meet the demands of the inquisitive intellect, the Advaitin offers a provisional explanation. He postulates three limiting factors (*upādhi*) to consciousness. They are the internal organ (*antahkaraṇa*), the modification of the internal organ (*vṛtti*), and the particular object (*viśaya*). There is no distinction in consciousness as such. But in false association with these adjuncts, or upādhis, consciousness apparently modifies into three factors, the knower, the means of knowledge, and the known object. That is to say the differences between the upādhis are superimposed on consciousness, and we speak as if there is a distinction between consciousness as the knowing subject, as the means of knowledge, and as the known object. Consciousness in association with the internal organ appears as the subject of knowledge, the cognizing consciousness (*pramāṭṛcāitanya*). In association with the *vṛtti*, consciousness appears as the process, or means, of



knowledge, the cognitive consciousness (*pramāṇacaitanya*). Associated with particular objects (*viṣaya*), which may be either physical objects or mental states, it serves as the object of knowledge (*viṣayacaitanya*). Empirical knowledge is the result of this apparent three-fold modification of consciousness (*tripuṭī-bhāva*).<sup>23</sup> It is necessary at this stage to explain each of these modifications.

### *Pramāṭṛcāitanya*

This is the ultimate consciousness determined by the internal organ (*antahkaraṇa*). What is the internal organ? The internal organ is the connecting link between the Ātman and the organs of sense. It is not itself a sense organ. It is distinct from the organs of sense which are external to it. The function of the internal organ is to receive and arrange the material that is brought to it through the senses. Like a mirror, which has the power to reflect, it reflects objects presented to it through the senses and, what is more, becomes conscious of them. However, this power to reflect is acquired by it from the Ātman. The internal organ partakes of the physical world. Hence, by itself, it has no power to illumine objects.

It may be asked where is the necessity for the internal organ. Would not the conjunction of the Ātman, the sense organ, and the external object be

sufficient to produce perception? The Advaitin's answer is that, if there were no *antaḥkāraṇa*, there would either be perpetual perception or perpetual non-perception.<sup>24</sup>

Let us suppose that the only requisities for perception are (1) the Ātman as the subject of knowledge, (2) the presence of the object to be perceived, and (3) the senses in proper condition. So long as these are present, there should be perpetual perception of the objects. But the fact is that even though these conditions may be present, one may fail to perceive. The sense organs may be in contact with an object, and yet one may not perceive. One may not see, though the eye may meet the object; one may not hear, though the ear may receive the sound. If, on the contrary, one does not grant that the mere conjunction of the Ātman, the senses, and the objects can effect perception, in the absence of a sufficient cause of perception, one would have to admit that perpetual non-perception would be the result. But neither is this observed. Given the Ātman, the senses, and the objects, perception sometimes takes place and sometimes does not. This fact can be explained only by positing the existence of a fourth factor, the *antaḥkāraṇa*, on whose attention perception takes place, and on whose non-attention perception does not take place.<sup>25</sup> The validity of the assumption is



evidenced by the common experience of ours that, when we are absent-minded, we do not perceive, though the objects may be presented to the senses. The Upaniṣad refers to this and declares that, therefore, there is a mind apart from the external organs.<sup>26</sup>

The *antaḥkaraṇa* undergoes modifications of form, and these modifications, known as *vṛtti*, serve to reveal the objects of knowledge. The *vṛttis* of the internal organ are of four kinds, and when in each of these, the internal organ has a distinct name and form. When it has the mode of indetermination, or doubt (*saṁśaya*), it is called *manas*; when it has the mode of determination (*niścaya*), it is called *buddhi*; in the mode of self-consciousness (*garva*), it has the name *ahaṁkāra*; and in the mode of remembrance (*smaraṇa*), it goes by the name *citta*.<sup>27</sup>

The internal organ differs from individual to individual; and so cognition by one does not imply or involve cognition by all. Its functions within varying limits which are determined by the past conduct of the individual to whom it belongs.

It is when screened by the *antaḥkaraṇa* that consciousness functions as the subject in empirical knowledge (*pramāṭṛcaitanya*). This is the *jīvasākṣī*, or witnessing self. We have already referred to its distinction from the *jīva* or the empirical ego. The *jīva*

is the ultimate consciousness particularized, or made contingent, by the internal organ, but the *jīvasākṣī* is the same consciousness merely hidden by the internal organ. While the internal organ enters into the constitution of the *jīva*, it remains outside the *jīvasākṣī* screening it, as it were. In the former case it is an attribute (*viśeṣaṇa*), in the latter case it is a limitation (*upādhi*).

### *Viśayacaitanya*

This is the ultimate consciousness determined by the object cognized. Knowledge requires a subject and an object as distinct from each other. In order that the same consciousness may appear as subject and object, two independent adjuncts are required: the internal organ and the object cognized. Just as consciousness has to be limited on the subjective side by the internal organ, it has to be limited on the objective side by the object cognized, which may be a physical thing or a mental image. The variety of our cognitions can be accounted for only by positing the objective existence of a variety of objects, each limiting the undifferentiated consciousness according to its own specific nature.

### *Pramāṇacaitanya*

What is the process by which knowledge arises? As in the case of other empirical problems, no fully



satisfactory solution to this problem is possible. The Advaitin is aware of this, but yet he offers an explanation with a view to utilizing the opportunity to suggest that the ultimate reality is non-dual.

Although we cannot fully explain how the cognitive process takes place, we can at least discern in it two general features. One is that all empirical knowledge is a process of revelation rather than of acquisition. The other is that the mind is actively at work in the formation of empirical knowledge. Let us explain.

According to Advaita, empirical knowledge is the manifestation of the undifferentiated consciousness under limitations imposed by the internal organ, the modification of the internal organ, and the external object. That which is manifested is beyond time and space, reason and relations. But the manifestation is subject to all such limitations. It is temporal and occurs through individual minds. It involves relations like those of subject and object, substance and attribute, subject and predicate, concept and precept, and so forth. A comparison with classical Western philosophy might be helpful in clarifying the Advaita theory.

Empiricists, like Locke and Mill, hold that the mind is devoid of all knowledge to start with. It has been compared to a clean slate (*tabula rasa*), a blank

sheet of paper, and a dark room. From total ignorance we build up our knowledge bit by bit. Just as light enters a dark room through doors and windows, the material of knowledge has to enter the mind from without through the sense organs. We have to go on building up our knowledge from scraps of information that come from outside. The various means of knowledge, like perception and inference, furnish plenty of such information and thus add to the stock of our knowledge.

On the contrary, idealists like Bradley and Bosanquet think that the mind is not without any knowledge whatsoever to begin with. They say that there can be no transition from the state of ignorance to the state of knowledge. What we generally do is to connect new ideas with old, what we do not know with what we already know. Consider the case of analogy, for instance. We effect the connection between the new and the old by discovering some points of resemblance between them. This procedure implies that the mind is already in possession of some knowledge. If the mind were a blank, it would be impossible to make the transition to the state of knowledge. 'Given our perceptive state and our mental equipment the judgement follows' says Bosanquet.<sup>28</sup> Again he says '...the judgement pulls out like a telescope, exhibiting fresh parts within it, as it passes into inference'.<sup>29</sup> As



Plato holds, the transition is not from ignorance to knowlege, but from knowledge to greater knowledge.

The idealistic position is, no doubt, more plausible than the empiricist. But it does not go far enough. It does not bring out the full implication of the discovery that the mind is already in possession of some knowledge. Hence it meets with a difficulty. In order to explain the acquisition of new knowledge, we have, no doubt, to assume that the mind already possesses some knowledge. But how can we explain the knowledge that the mind possesses at the first moment after birth? Most logicians no answer to give. Plato, of course, has his own answer.<sup>30</sup> He replies at the knowledge which we possess at the first moment after our birth has to be traced to the ante-natal state. The human soul before its embodiment was ranging freely in the world of ideas, and with that experience it enters into the conditions of this bodily existence.<sup>31</sup> All knowing, therefore, is a matter of remembering. New knowledge is connected with the old experiences that belong to the ante-natal state and which are being remembered. This explanation is all right so far as the knowledge that we acquire in this bodily state is concerned. But the same question is bound to arise with regard to the experiences of the ante-natal state. Plato has no answer to give with regard to this. He has

only transferred the difficulty from one set of things to another set of things.

The difficulty can be overcome only by admitting that knowledge is the very nature of the self. Just as a salt crystal is through and through saltish, the human soul is consciousness all compact.<sup>32</sup> The analysis of the process of knowledge thus reveals the true nature of the self. It is this inner light of consciousness that manifests itself through the sense organs. In his *Dakṣiṇāmūrtyaṣṭakam* Śrī Śaṅkara gives poetic expression to this idea. When a lamp is placed inside a pot having many holes, the light streams out through the holes. In the same way, the knowledge that is the self streams out through the various sense organs, like the *eye*, the ear, and so on.<sup>33</sup> The various *pramāṇas* serve as vehicles for the revelation of consciousness under the limitations of empirical life. The process of interpretation which the *antaḥkāraṇa* undertakes in each is not for 'effecting entry for a light' that is 'supposed to be without', but for providing a suitable outlet for the 'imprisoned splendour' that is within.<sup>34</sup>

The other important feature of knowledge to which we referred earlier is that the mind is not passive. According to Advaita, the *antaḥkāraṇa* is actively at work in the formation of knowledge. Empirical knowledge is the result of the mind's



interpretation of the object that it meets. We do not acquire ready-made knowledge. Without mental construction, no knowledge is possible. This is evident from the fact that no knowledge is formed during deep sleep when the *antaḥkaraṇa* is temporarily at rest. The constructive activity takes place through a modification of the internal organ, known as *vṛtti*. This roughly corresponds to what in Western logic is called a category of the understanding. We have already referred to the four kinds of *vṛttis*. The mind undergoes a modification, or *vṛtti*, according to the nature of the material that has to be interpreted.

Whatever be the means through which we acquire valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*), the cognitive process exhibits the two fundamental features explained above. However, they are most apparent in the case of sense perception (*indriyajanya pratyakṣa*), as it is here that we have knowledge at its simplest. Hence a brief account of this *pramāṇa* with a view to illustrating these two features would be appropriate at this juncture.

According to Advaita, perception is the direct consciousness of objects brought about by the actual contact of the object of perception with the percipient. What is required for perception is a certain identity, or unification, between consciousness determined by the

object and consciousness determined by the *vṛtti*.<sup>35</sup> This unification, or contact, is effected either through the mediation of a sense organ or without such mediation. Thus Advaita recognizes two primary kinds of perception, one caused by the exercise of a sense organ (*indriyajanyarṛt*) and the other that is not so caused (*indriyājanyam*). Perception of physical objects belongs to the former category, while perception of mental states, like desire, satisfaction, and so forth, belong to the latter kind.

Sense perception is described in the following manner. When any of our senses, say, sight, comes into contact with an object, say, a jar, existing out there in space, the internal organ undergoes a modification. The *vṛtti*, or the modally transformed *antaḥkāraṇa*, steams forth through the concerned sense organ (the eye in the present case) to the object and assumes the form of some quality of the object, like its shape or colour. We have, then, the perception of the object in that particular attribute. As we know, the *antaḥkāraṇa*, though by itself powerless to illumine objects reflects the knowledge that is constitutive of ultimate consciousness. Hence, as a result of the out-going activity, or attention (*avadhāna*), of the *antaḥkāraṇa*, we have the perceptive cognition of the object. Consciousness flows with the *vṛtti* towards the object,



and when it unites with consciousness determined by the object, there is illumination of that particular aspect of the object whose form the *vṛtti* has assumed. If the *vṛtti* assumes the form of the colour of the object, we perceive the colour. If it takes on the form of the weight of the object, we perceive its weight. And, similarly, the several properties of the object fall within our cognition according to the specific form assumed by the *vṛtti*. These outgoing *vṛttis* have been compared to rays of light. But, like rays of light, the *vṛttis* extend only upto a certain distance, and this accounts for our non-perception of remote objects.

The Advaita account of sense perception marks an improvement on the theories of some of the Western thinkers. We have already referred to the general view of the empiricists and some of the idealists regarding knowledge. Regarding perception, these two schools differ on the question of the need for the constructive activity of the mind. The empiricists, who regard the mind as a *tabula rasa*, believe that perception consists in the mere passive reception of impressions from the external world. Idealists like Kant and Hegel call attention to the significant part played by the mind in giving rise to knowledge. The Advaitin agrees with Kant in that 'without conceptions perceptions would be blind'. The common fact that when one is absent-minded or deeply engrossed in something, one may

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actually hear a sound or see an object and yet not notice it, illustrates this truth. But the Advaitin differs from both Kant and Hegel in regard to the procedure which the mind adopts for interpreting the sensations.

According to both Kant and Hegel, the mind interprets the sensations which come from the object. The interpretation is done in terms of the categories of the understanding. But Kant looks upon the categories as external to the mind and at its possession like a bunch of keys. A little reflection would however show that the categories cannot be separate from the mind. Hegel corrects this mistake and treats the categories as constitutive of the mind. The mind itself takes different forms in order to suit the nature of the material which requires to be interpreted. Hegel's view is good so far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. How does the mind decide which category would be most natural to the sensations received? Naturally, in the light of its previous knowledge. But the origin of this original knowledge will have to be explained. This is the difficulty that we have already seen in the idealistic position. The difficulty can be overcome only by admitting that the order of experience is the reverse of what we have referred to. Instead of sensations coming from the object and the mind interpreting them, the mind illumined by knowledge which is the nature of the Self itself goes forth and interprets the sense object.



This is the Advaita position. The position has been aptly summed up by stating that it is not the object which comes to the subject, but it is the subject, in a sense, that goes to the object in order to apprehend it.<sup>36</sup>

The Advaita view has its own merits even on the scientific side. It can explain the connection between physical vibrations and mental states, which is the central difficulty of most Western theories of perception. The activity, according to the latter, is primarily on the object side. When a jar is presented to sight, the light waves proceeding from it impinge on the eye, and an inverted image of it is formed on the retina. When this is followed by the stimulation of the optic centres of the brain, we perceive the jar. But we fail to understand how the inverted image of the object formed on the retina is transformed into the mental picture or idea of the tangible upright object, out there in space. Western psychology, having created a gulf, a big gap, between the physical vibrations occurring in the sense mechanism and the mental act of perception of the object, is unable to bridge it.<sup>37</sup> Such a difficulty does not arise when we recognize that the physical vibrations are not the material which is transformed into the mental act of perception, but that they are only the media through which the mental act of perception takes place. The higher cannot be explained in terms of

the lower, but the lower can certainly be explained by the higher.

On the metaphysical side, the importance of the theory cannot be exaggerated. It signifies that consciousness as delimited by the *antaḥkaraṇa* and consciousness as delimited by the object are, in essence, non-different. This non-difference of consciousness is manifested by the *vṛtti* going out through the senses, pervading the object, and assuming the form of the object. Consciousness is the common basis which sustains the illuminating *antaḥkaraṇa* as well as the illumined object. Not only perception, but every form of cognition can be reduced and traced to the single ultimate source of consciousness.

## 2. THE ROLE OF THE CONCEPTS IN THE FORMATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Empirical knowledge is the result of the mind's interpretation of what is presented to it. The mind, in its interpretative function, employs certain concepts, such as time, space, and causality. There is no doubt that the knowledge that we get by employing these concepts is useful in that it is the basis of all our endeavours, popular and scientific. Our practical activities as well as our scientific investigations proceed on the assumption that reality involves



distinctions based on time and space and that distinct objects are organized in terms of causality, purposiveness, etc. But what is useful, or practically efficient, need not necessarily be true. An examination of these concepts will reveal to us the limitations of rational knowledge, the inability of thought to comprehend the ultimate reality, and the consequent need for the supra-rational approach of intuition, or integral experience.

The raw material of rational knowledge is sensory experience. As Kant said, conceptions without perceptions are empty. Hence whatever is not open to perception cannot be an object of thought either. We thus find our knowledge circumscribed in the first instance within the perceivable or phenomenal world. Sensations must have a basis. There must be something that affects our senses and supplies the matter of our knowledge. Otherwise, sensation is unexplainable. We have, therefore, to distinguish between the reality-in-itself and the reality as it appears to us, the noumenon and the phenomenon. What we know is only the phenomenon. The thing-in-itself, which is super-sensible, is unknowable by the mind. On this the Advaitin agrees with Kant. But it is not unrealizable, according to the Advaitin. Though it cannot be known through the intellect, it can be experienced by transcending thought.

Of the phenomenal world, the world of appearance, we can, no doubt, have universal and necessary knowledge. In fact, it is this certainty that is the basis of all our endeavours. Science sees order in the phenomenal world, and that is why scientific predictions and applications are possible. But we must remember that scientific knowledge is knowledge of the phenomenal world only. The whole basis of science is perceptual experience. If we examine the conditions of sense perception, we can see how the rational method can never hope to know the ultimate reality.

### *The Diversifying Concepts*

We receive sensations like colour, sound, hardness, etc., but we perceive objects and events. This is possible only because all our sensations are given in space and time. Space and time belong to the subject as its forms of sense-perception. They are the mould into which all sensations are run. They are the fundamental concepts that come into play in our understanding of the world. They are responsible for breaking up the unity of the content of perception and giving us experience in terms of separate and successive images. It is impossible to think of anything without thinking of it as existing in a particular time and in a particular place. The constitution of our mind



is such that we are compelled to see the world in terms of successive and separate images. We are compelled to think of events in terms of past, present, and future, and of objects in terms of size, shape, etc. It is thus that we get the notion of a world of diversity.

Since, thus, the mind predetermines how we shall see the world, it is evident that the intellectual approach cannot reveal the true nature of reality. The observer plays a large part in determining the phenomena he observes. The scientists who have established the theories of relativity and quantum have revealed that it is impossible to get at and understand nature without interfering with it in the very process of understanding it. Sir James Jeans suggests that the mind imprisoned in the notion of space-time may be forcing a reality which is outside the space-time framework into that framework, so that what we know of reality may well be illusory. 'Just as the shadows on a wall form the projection of a three-dimensional reality into two dimensions, so the phenomena of the space-time continuum may be four-dimensional projections of realities which occupy more than four dimensions, so that events in time and space become

no other than a moving row  
of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go.'<sup>38</sup>

No wonder, science has not been able to grasp what the ultimate reality is. To quote Jeans again,

'Many would hold that, from the broad philosophical standpoint, the outstanding achievement of twentieth-century physics is not the theory of relativity with its welding together of space and time, or the theory of quanta with its present apparent negation of the laws of causation, or the dissection of the atom with the resultant discovery that things are not what they seem; it is the general recognition that we are not yet in contact with ultimate reality. To speak in terms of Plato's well-known simile, we are still imprisoned in our cave, with our backs to the light, and can only watch the shadows on the wall.'<sup>39</sup>

According to the Advaitin, the illusoriness of time and space consists in the fact that, while they are subjective, modes of our understanding, they are, and have to be taken as objective factors for purposes of empirical knowledge. All our activities depend on the notion of time and space as objective realities. The fact that we mistake what are purely subjective for objective realities is due to the ignorance inherent in the intellectual approach. Space and time are products of ignorance, or *māyā*, (*māyā-kalpita*).<sup>40</sup> The subjective character of time and space is indicated by the following instances.

(1) We can think of events in time and objects in space, but not of time or space as such. The



movements we observe, as in a clock, serve us as a measure of time, but do not enable us to know what time is. Similarly, the position and configuration of objects serve as a measure of space, but do not enable us to know what space is.

(2) The usual test for the objectivity of a phenomenon is the common testimony of all people regarding its existence. The rope, which at one time appears to me as a snake, exists independent of my consciousness, as it is vouched for by other centres of consciousness. But the 'snake' exists for a moment in my consciousness only, as it is not testified to by anybody else. Now, when we consider whether men are unanimous in their pronouncements regarding time and space, we find that they are very much not. The sense of time and space varies very greatly according to the different positions of the observer and with his different mental dispositions. We can find many instances even in ordinary life regarding such variations. Thus a person engrossed in work may not feel the passage of an hour, while another waiting for something may experience the same as a greatly lengthened duration. A person hurrying to catch the train may feel the distance to the station longer than another taking a stroll in the same direction. There are innumerable stories in the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* which

vividly illustrate the great variations in the notions of time and space in different observers.

(3) The analysis of what have been called physical time and space, as distinguished from psychological time and space, actually reveals their subjective character. For Newton, space and time were independent and absolute. But the theory of relativity has revealed that space and time are not fixed, or absolute, entities. They are relative not only to the measure adopted by the observer, but also to each other.

In pre-Einsteinian days it used to be thought that there was an absolute time, which would go on for ever and had no beginning. Similarly, space was absolute, infinite in all directions, and in it things existed and moved. This was because it was forgotten that the measurement of time in terms of days and years and the measurement of space in terms of measurements of distances on the surface of the earth were purely conventional. The theory of relativity has revealed that the measures of time and space that we adopt are purely matters of convenience and have nothing to do with truth. Man's measure of time or space may be quite different from that of an observer on another planet, moving in a different orbit, at a different distance from the sun, and at a different velocity. The



notion of one cosmic time for the whole universe has been exploded. 'Each piece of matter', says Bertrand Russell, 'has its own local time'.<sup>41</sup> He observes: 'It is found convenient not to take any actual motion as *defining* the measure of time, but to adopt a compromise measure which makes physical laws as accurate as possible. It is this compromise measure that serves the purposes for which Newton invoked "absolute" time. There is no reason, however, to suppose that it represents a physical reality, for the choice of a measure of time is conventional, like the choice between the Christian and the Mohammedan eras. We choose, in fact, the measure which gives the greatest attainable simplicity to the statement of physical laws, but we do so on grounds of convenience, not because we think that this measure is more "true" than any other.'<sup>42</sup> Hindu cosmology corroborates this discovery of modern science. There are said to be different measures of time, human and divine. About the metrical properties of space, Russell observes: 'Astronomers, in their popular books, astound us first by telling us how immensely distant many of the nebulae are, and then by telling us that after all the universe is finite, being a three-dimensional analogue of the surface of a sphere. But in their less popular books they tell us that measurement is merely conventional, and that we could, if we chose,

adopt a convention which would make the furthest known nebula in the northern hemisphere nearer to us than the antipodes are. If so, the vastness of the universe is not a fact, but a convenience. I think this is only partially true, but to disentangle the element of convention in measurement is by no means easy.<sup>43</sup>

The old notions of the fixity of space and time have been further undermined by the discovery that space and time are not independent of each other. Consider time—we can measure it only by motion in space. It is not possible to measure time without resorting to signs, marks or signals in space—‘such as the burning of a candle, the operation of the sand-glass, the shadow of the sun-dial, water-clocks, mechanical clocks, and chronometers’. As for space, measurement of space, i.e. the distance or direction between two bodies, can be true only for the moment during which the measurement is taken. This is because bodies are likely to alter their shape, size or position. The idea of ‘a distance or direction at a given moment’ assumes that time is a series of fixed moments. But to take such a view of time is to project the notion of space into time, to assume the very thing you want to measure. Further, time is a continual flow. The spatial picture of the time-process as a string of moments is no more true of the time-process than a series of still-pictures in a



movie is of a real horse-race. Space has therefore been called 'a cross-section of Time'.<sup>44</sup> It is thus clear that we cannot think of either time or space without projecting on it the notion of the other. 'All events are space-events and all points in Space are point-events.'<sup>45</sup> When we think of space as an objective reality, we have necessarily to think of it in terms of the idea of time. And when we think of time as an objective reality, we cannot think of it except in terms of the notion of space. We can have only a temporal view of space and a spatial view of time. Neither space nor time is, therefore, objective and absolutely real.

If, then, time and space are illusory projections of the mind, and are not objective realities, our common view of the real world as falling into successive and separate images is not correct. Reality-in-itself must, then, be beyond temporal and spatial differentiation, and hence non-dual.

This hypothesis is confirmed by scripture. In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II, I, 1) it is said that from Ātman space came into existence, and from space, air, from air, fire, from fire, water, and from water, earth. Analysis would show that while air, fire, water, and earth exist both in time and space, time is beyond space and Ātman beyond even time. Space is the evolute of Ātman, which is the cause, The effect is

temporally posterior to the cause, and so time must be presupposed between Ātman and space. Space, being a product, is limited in time. But—as Śrī Śaṅkara states in the commentary on this passage—Brahman is not thus limited in time, like space, since it is not a product. (*na evaṁ brahmaṇaḥ ākāśavat kālataḥ api antavatvaṁ, akāryatvāt.*)

### *The Unifying Concepts*

We have seen that the notions of time and space are responsible for giving us a view of reality as characterized by diversity. But, having created a diversified view, thought seems to be dissatisfied with it. It cannot readily accept the notion of disjointed particular facts. It therefore tries to compose the differences between facts and bring them back to a unity by relating them with one another. Concepts like causality and purposiveness come into play at this stage.

But thought never really succeeds, nor can succeed, in recapturing the original unity. To bring the facts into relation with one another is not to transcend the realm of distinctions. Relation implies distinction between the relata. Consequently, although the concepts of causality, purposiveness, etc., enable us to build a systematic body of knowledge which is a useful basis for our practical endeavours, they cannot, by



their very nature, ever enable us to discover the ultimate reality which lies beyond the relational level. We may illustrate this point by briefly examining just two of these concepts which are widely employed to relate facts, namely causality and purposiveness.

Two questions can arise with regard to any event— *how* does it happen?; *why* does it happen? The question 'how' is the question relating to the cause of the event, and the question 'why' to the purpose served by it. The notion of cause implies that it is another event antecedent to the effect, and the notion of purpose implies something to be attained in the future. Thus, in trying to explain an event in time, we look into its past as well as into its future. But, actually, the question 'how' is more prominent in some cases, and in others, the question 'why'. So we commonly restrict ourselves to the explanation of the cause in some cases and to that of the purpose in some others. We say, for example, that the fire caused the smoke or that a man's actions are motivated by the ideal of service. The two modes of explanation work well within a limited sphere and are of immense value to practical life.

The knowledge of the causes of events enables us to carry on our day to day activities. What is more, it enables the scientist to deal with phenomena, and thus

helps not only the progress of applied science, or technology, but also of pure scientific investigation. The concept of purpose plays an equally important role in our practical endeavours. We believe that the structure of any object has a necessary relation to its function. It is on this view that we design anything, like a house or a typewriter. This view also enables us to explain why the structure or the behaviour of anything is what it is. But difficulties arise when the application of these concepts approaches the limits of the phenomenal sphere.

### *Causality*

We know that the terms cause and effect are relative. An event which is the cause of another event requires to be explained in terms of its own antecedent. But the attempt to explain each event in a series by its antecedent takes us on in an infinite regress. Such a line of reasoning is quite unavailing. If, in order to get over this regress, we draw the line somewhere and say that any particular event in the series is itself uncaused while causing the subsequent one, we compromise with logical consistency. While we assert that every event must have a cause, we have no reason to suppose an uncaused cause. If a particular event in the series could be uncaused, why not all the rest? And, in that case, where is the question of causality? Further, if we



are seriously after truth, no arbitrary limit ought to be put on our line of inquiry. Hence the notion of a first cause is illogical and unscientific. Thus, either we have an infinite regress or we arbitrarily create a first cause. This inner contradiction in the casual concept only shows the inadequacy of the intellectual method to comprehend the ultimate reality.

Although by employing the causal concept we cannot discover the ultimate reality, an analysis of the relation between the material cause and the effect will help us to discern what the reality is not.<sup>46</sup>

Does the effect exist in the material cause before production or not? According to the Nyāya system, causation is the creation of a totally new thing, a thing which is totally non-existent in the cause. According to Sāṅkhya, the production of the effect is the manifestation of what is implicit in the cause. Of these two views, the latter is more plausible. If the effect were a new creation (*ārambha*), and therefore unrelated to the cause, it might be produced out of anything. There would be no need to seek for particular material causes to produce particular effects. Hence the effect is not a totally new thing, but the evolution (*pariṇāma*) of what is implicit in the cause.

The Sāṅkhya view, or *pariṇāmavāda*, implies that the cause undergoes a change in producing the effect.

The question can be asked, in what consists the change. Is it a change in substance or only a change in form? If it were regarded as a change in substance, we would be going back to the Nyāya view, or *ārambhavāda*, for, in that case, the effect would be a new thing altogether. So we say the substance remains the same; only the form changes. But is a change of form a real change? It would be a real change, if the form had a status of its own. But we know that the form of a thing has no existence apart from the substance to which it belongs. Form is but a state of the material, or substance, and cannot be separated from the latter even in thought. Hence there can be no change in form without a change in substance. But we have already said that causation does not involve any change in substance. Therefore we have to conclude that the change in form which we perceive is not a real change. It is only apparent. We cannot deny the perception of change. But we cannot rationally accept change as real. We have therefore to conclude that causation is simply the apparent modification of one thing into another. Since there is no actual change, there is in reality no effect at all. The effect is illusory. But the basis of an illusory presentation must be relatively real. Hence the cause, which is the substrate for the appearance of the effect, occupies a higher ontological status than the effect. In the sense that the effect is an appearance of



the cause, the effect has no existence apart from its basis, the cause. This view of causation is the *vivartavāda* of Advaita. There is no doubt that this view is strikingly different from the conventional view of causality, and it is not possible to act upon it in our daily life. But since the analysis of the concept of causality logically leads to this view, we are to understand that the ultimate reality is beyond actual change, or modification, and that the whole world of change is but an appearance of that reality. This is the ultimate implication of the causal category.

### *Purposiveness*

There are three grades of phenomena to which the teleological explanation could be applied. Firstly, there is the inanimate world. Scientists as a class are averse to attributing purposes to natural phenomena like earth-quakes, cyclones, etc. They would consider that the question 'why' does not properly belong to inanimate nature. But there is really no justification for dismissing that question from the study of the inanimate world. Explanation in terms of antecedent causes does not make the complete explanation of any phenomenon. Purpose is equally important. There is no doubt that, being insentient, inanimate nature is incapable of having a purpose of its own. But the question of extrinsic purposes cannot certainly be

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ruled out in its case. It may be helpful to inquire whether inanimate nature in any way subserves the purposes of sentient beings.

When we come to the organic, or sentient, world, purpose becomes intrinsic, as organic beings are capable of self-motivation. Hence, although generally opposed to the teleological point of view, scientists are willing to accept, at least provisionally, the teleological mode of explanation in organic phenomena. Darwin, for instance, freely availed himself of the concept of purposiveness to explain the wonderful devices by which the cross-fertilization of flowers is secured. It would be no good to explain organic phenomena solely as the result of antecedent circumstances. There would be no point in crediting organic beings with life and intelligence if we are not prepared to grant that their activities are directed by inner urges, the pull of ideals and purposes, rather than by the sheer pressure of external circumstances. Environmental conditions may provide the occasion for activity on the part of organic beings by manifesting their wants, but the explanation would not be satisfactory unless we take into account the aims which fulfil those wants. Confronted by a danger, an animal might run for life, but what really explains the activity is the urge for survival, and not the danger itself. In fact, if there were no purpose to be fulfilled, external conditions would



have no effect on a living being, as for instance, the offer of food fails to attract an animal which is just fed. It may be that a sentient being is conscious or unconscious of a purpose. A man is conscious of his organic needs. He is also able to formulate higher ideals. But a lower animal or a plant may act by blind instinct. In any case, if we do not take into account purposes and ideals, we cannot satisfactorily explain the activities of any sentient being.

Like causality, the concept of purposiveness is useful so far as it goes. It enables us to understand growth or movement to the extent of being able to deal with it. But it cannot stand the strain of being extended beyond the phenomenal level. We must remember, especially in the case of human beings, that one purpose may subserve another in a continuous chain. The achievement of an end may itself serve as the means to the fulfilment of another end. So we have to conceive of immediate and remote purposes. For example, a state may provide vocational education which would lead to gainful employment. Employment opportunities may be necessary in order to ensure a decent standard of living. A standard of living may be maintained in order to avoid social tensions and ensure peace. And so on and so forth. Thus purpose is not a static, but a dynamic phenomenon. Our purposes are constantly getting wider and wider. We

cannot think of any final purpose without arbitrarily drawing the line at a certain point. Just as the concept of causality leads to infinite regress, the concept of purposiveness leads to infinite progress. And the idea of infinite progress is not any the less irksome than the idea of infinite regress. Sheer endlessness in either direction is not a satisfactory idea.

Further, progress is not an objective fact. It is simply the mental projection on the objective plane. That progress is a purely subjective and fanciful notion is evident when we consider the fact that no two people are agreed as to what progress is. One may think of progress in terms of economic prosperity, another may think of it in terms of leisure and security of life, and so on. The so-called evidence for progress is, therefore, deceptive. There is no certainty about social progress. Progress in history is the historian's interpretation of events in terms of his own idea of progress. One may feel more secure about one's own progress, but there is nothing in the concept of purposiveness as such to guarantee that one's criterion of progress will remain the same.

On account of these limitations, the concept of purposiveness can never take us to the knowledge of the ultimate reality. However, the analysis of the concept, which reveals its limitations, indirectly



suggests that the ultimate reality must be beyond the realm of wants and achievements. Whatever is newly achieved is also likely to be lost or become unessential and, therefore, cannot partake of reality.

*The Transition from Empirical to Metaphysical  
Knowledge*

Our examination of the concepts that come into play in the formation of knowledge would have enabled us to see how, on account of the limitations of these tools of knowledge, the intellect can never hope to unravel the mystery of the ultimate reality. This does not mean that a true intellectual can avoid the problem of ultimate reality. An uncompromising search for truth cannot admit of any arbitrary limit. Hence every line of scientific inquiry is bound to pass over into metaphysics. No matter with what aspect of the universe we begin dealing, at the farthest stage the mind is bound to bump against the problem of ultimate reality. That the mind is not capable of solving the problem is no bar to its making an attempt in the direction. And as to the result of the attempt, though it is not directly beneficial, it is not indirectly useless. Though it does not show what reality is, it lights up, however feebly, the direction in which to search for reality and the means by which we can arrive at it. This is the experience of every great scientist who has followed the intellect to the end of its tether.

Dr. A.C.B. Lovell observes as follows in his Reith lectures for 1958. 'Although our instruments probe so far out into space and so far back in time we have no final answer to the ultimate problem of the conditions which existed when the universe was created, or indeed if there was an epoch measurable in human time-scales when the conditions in the universe were significantly different from those we observe today. In these considerations we pass from the realm of scientific observation to philosophical speculation, and in that respect our age is similar to all that have gone before. There is, however, one very important difference. Today our telescopes are so powerful that they probably penetrate to the limits of the observable universe. We may therefore be near the limit of our scientific knowledge of the universe as regards its extent in time and space and the cosmological implications of the observations now in progress have assumed an unparalleled significance.'<sup>47</sup> To say that we are near the limit of scientific knowledge is not, however, to mean that the intellect in its search for truth will stop at that limit; for Lovell observes, 'If I were pressed on this problem of creation I would say, therefore, that any cosmology must eventually move over into metaphysics for 'reasons which are inherent in modern scientific theory.'<sup>48</sup>



## 3. TRUTH AND ERROR

*Knowledge and Reality*

In empirical life we make a distinction between our knowledge of a thing and the thing itself. Knowledge (*jñāna*) and reality (*sat*) represent two different standpoints from which we may refer to any phenomenon. From the standpoint of knowing we distinguish between true and false knowledge (*pramā* and *apramā*); and from the standpoint of reality we distinguish between real and non-real objects (*sat* and *asat*, or *satya* and *anṛta*). The problem of truth and the problem of reality have their bearing on each other, as they refer to the same phenomenon from two standpoints.

*The Criterion of Truth*

In Advaita epistemology, falsity or error (*bhrama*) is examined with a view to forgoing a criterion for determining the ultimate truth.

Of the six *pramāṇas*, scripture (*śruti*) alone is free from error. The other five sometimes lead to erroneous knowledge. Of these, perception is self-dependent, but the other four (inference, analogy, presumption, and non-cognition) depend in some way or other on perception. Error which sometimes happens in these springs from error in the perceptual element involved

in them. Hence, as the source of error is in perception, perceptual error has been examined in the various systems.

Knowledge always has a content. It is about something. This is as true of wrong knowledge as it is of right knowledge. Erroneous knowledge is also knowledge, not the absence of it, and as such it must have an object. What is the status of the object of error? The first point that the Advaitin would require us to note is that the object of error is not non-existent, or unreal. What *is* absolutely unreal, or non-existent, like a sky-flower or a hare's horn, can never be an object of knowledge—even erroneous knowledge. But the fact is that an object of illusion like a rope-snake or a dream-lion is actually cognized, and positive consequences follow the cognition. And in so far as it is cognized, the object of an erroneous knowledge must be granted to be not unreal.

What, then, is the distinction between true and false? Common practice would be of guidance to us in determining this. We mistake a rope for a snake. Why do we call this knowledge an error? It is because the object we thought of as a snake is sooner or later discovered to be merely a rope. That is, the cognition of the 'snake' is contradicted by the cognition of the rope. The 'snake' endures only as long as its cognition



lasts. It is, therefore, *dr̥ṣṭa-sr̥ṣṭa*, i.e. created by the perceiver. It did not exist before it was cognized by the individual concerned, for, if it did exist, others at least would have perceived it. And it disappears with the disappearance of its cognition by the individual. It is, therefore, a 'private' object in the sense that it is cognized by an individual for a brief moment. On the contrary, we regard the cognition of the rope as true, for it is not sublated in this way. The rope exists prior to being cognized by any particular individual, as testified to by others, and continues to do so afterwards. It is, therefore, a 'public' object and is called *Īśvara-sr̥ṣṭa*, i.e. created by God.

The distinguishing mark of error, therefore, is that it is sooner or later contradicted by the rest of our experience. From this nature of error we can draw the criterion of truth. Provisionally we may say that truth is what harmonizes, or coheres, with the whole system of our knowledge. But this way of stating the criterion is not satisfactory. Firstly, there may be more than one system of knowledge, like the world of science, the world of art, the world of morals, and so forth. What is true in one of them may not be true in another. Truth, therefore, will be relative to our different universes. If truth must be uniform, the different systems of knowledge must be got up in one

comprehensive system, viz. the unity of all existence. This is nothing but the knowledge of Brahman. But to say that truth is that which coheres with the whole system of knowledge implies a prior knowledge of the whole system. The whole system of knowledge is *Brahma-jñāna*. This, ordinarily speaking, we do not have. How then can we really apply the criterion of coherence in judging any piece of knowledge? Secondly, the coherence notion implies the reality of diversity, but if and when the whole system of knowledge, viz *Brahma-jñāna*, is attained, all variety turns out to be false.<sup>49</sup>

For these reasons the Advaitin prefers to state the same criterion of truth in negative terms. Instead of saying that knowledge is true if it coheres with the whole system of knowledge, he says that it is true only when it is not contradicted by the rest of our experience, that is when no part of its content has to be discarded as false. In his commentary on passage II, 16 of the *Bhagavad-gītā* Śrī Śaṅkara states the criterion of truth as follows. That is (said to be) real, of which our knowledge never varies; and that to be unreal, of which our knowledge varies.' (*yadviṣayā buddhiḥ na vyabhicarati, tat sat; yadviṣayā vyabhicarati, tadasat.*) In his commentary on passage II, I, 1, of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* Śrī Śaṅkara expresses the same idea in the



following manner. '... that is true whose nature by which it is cognized remains constant. That is non-true whose nature by which it is cognized varies...' (*...yadrūpeṇa yanniścitam tadrūpaṃ na vyabhicarati, tat satyam. yadrūpeṇa yanniścitam tadrūpaṃ vyabhicarati, tadanṛtam...*) Thus truth consists in non-contradiction (*abādhitatva*).<sup>50</sup>

The criterion of truth when stated in negative terms as above is free from the defects noticed in the coherence notion. In his commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* III, 2, 3, Śrī Śaṅkara adduces reasons as to why the content of dreams is non-real. The initial explanation is in positive terms. The criterion employed is the fulfilment of the conditions of space, time, and causality (*deśa-kāla-nimitta-sampattiḥ*). Since dream objects do not fulfil these conditions, i.e. since they do not cohere with our waking experience, they cannot be real. The more important criterion, namely non-contradiction (*abādhah*), is applied next. The objects seen in dream are contradicted in the waking state, and moreover the dream itself refutes what it creates, as its end often contradicts its beginning.

### *The Theory of Error*

In common life, a piece of knowledge is taken as true so long as it is not contradicted by any other knowledge. In the example of the rope-snake illusion

the cognition of the 'snake' is taken to be true until it is contradicted by the subsequent experience of the rope. After the contradiction the cognition of the rope is regarded as true and the previous cognition of the 'snake' as false. But what guarantee is there that the knowledge of the rope will remain uncontradicted for ever? Obviously, there can be no such guarantee. It follows from this that the distinction between true and false knowledge within our ordinary experience is relative. One order of cognition is regarded as true as long as it is not contradicted by a higher order of cognition, and it becomes false after such contradiction. The object of erroneous knowledge is not absolutely unreal, as it is the object of a cognition. Nor is it absolutely real, because the cognition of which it is the content is sublated by subsequent experience. Since the object of error cannot be described as either real or unreal in the absolute sense, the Advaita theory of error is called *anirvacanīya khyāti*, the apprehension of the inexpressible'.

Broadly, we may distinguish between 'private' and 'public' knowledge—knowledge of the *prātibhāsika* and that of the *vyāvahārika* orders of existence; respectively. The dream cognition is taken as true while it lasts, and it begins to be called false when it is sublated by the waking cognition. Compared



to our 'private' universe, our 'public' universe is real, as the latter does not suffer contradiction so easily as the former. The latter is vouched for by other people. But who knows that people are not entertaining a common illusion? The world of common experience may after all be false. The history of science gives us many instances of 'public' views suffering contradiction at some time or other. Till Galileo proved that the earth revolved round the sun, it was commonly believed that the earth was the centre of the solar system. Earlier scientific theories are very often contradicted wholly or partially by subsequent theories. Since a 'public' view is as open to contradiction as a 'private' view, we cannot afford to be quite confident about the reality of the world. The waking experience is taken as true while it lasts, but, in fact, it has been revealed as false in the case of those who have been privileged to experience Brahman.

### *The Absolute Truth*

Is there, then, no absolutely true knowledge? So far as our ordinary knowledge goes, we can find none. Here comes the need for scripture. Scripture uniformly tells us that Brahman-experience is uncontradicted and uncontradictable by any other experience. By the very nature of the case, the knowledge of Brahman cannot be contradicted by the knowledge of anything

else; for there is nothing apart from Brahman. Thus Brahman is the only absolute reality, the *pāramārthika sattā*, and the knowledge of Brahman is the only absolutely true knowledge. But at this stage the distinction between knowing and being vanishes, like all other distinctions. To know Brahman is to be Brahman.

#### 4. CONSCIOUSNESS-INDIVIDUAL AND COSMIC

Our analysis of knowledge points to Brahman as the sole reality in yet another way. Experience presents us with a world of great variety. But each of us has only a partial and limited view of it. Firstly, we are familiar with just a few things compared with the vast universe which is yet to be known. Our knowledge is limited by space and time. We are not immediately aware of things very far away or which existed long ago or will exist in the distant future. These have to be inferred by us. Secondly, even of the things we know, our knowledge is not perfect. Each of us has his own private view of things, and no one knows the things exactly as they are. We are conscious of these limitations of our knowledge, and consequently are dissatisfied. This dissatisfaction implies that we are vaguely aware of the existence of a consciousness from which nothing is hidden and to which nothing is misrepresented. Just as parts of the universe, not



necessarily as they are, are presented to the individual consciousness (*jīva-caitanya*), the whole universe must be presented exactly as it is to this universal consciousness (*Īśvara-caitanya*). While our knowledge is fragmentary and faulty, the knowledge of the universal consciousness is complete as well as correct.

### *Analysis of Consciousness*

What is the relation between the individual consciousness (*jīva-caitanya*) and the cosmic consciousness (*Īśvara-caitanya*)? Are the two different from or identical with each other? As the *jīva-caitanya* is conscious of its difference from *Īśvara-caitanya*, it cannot as such be identical with the latter. But if the two were wholly different from each other, i. e. if there were nothing in common between the nature of the two, the individual would never be aware of the presence of the cosmic consciousness. The existence of the latter could not even be thought of if it were wholly dissimilar to the *jīva*'s consciousness. Things that have nothing in common can have no connection with each other. But, we have said that our dissatisfaction with the limited knowledge that we have points to the presence of a universal consciousness which knows no limitations.

The content of consciousness differs in the two cases, the whole world being presented to *Īśvara*'s

consciousness and parts of it to the *jīva*'s consciousness. But consciousness is common to both. The *jīvas* consciousness is finite and *Īśvara*'s consciousness is infinite. Can we say that the infinite consciousness of *Īśvara* is an aggregate of all the finite centres of consciousness? Such an aggregate will not be uniform. Further, it will be vitiated by all the limitations to which consciousness is subject in all the *jīvas*. A little reflection will moreover show that consciousness does not admit of plurality. Even in common parlance we do not speak of 'consciousnesses' but only of consciousness. It shows that consciousness is of one consistency throughout. *Śrī Śaṅkara* says that undifferentiated consciousness belongs to the *jīva* and *Īśvara* just as heat belongs to the sparks as well as to fire. (*caitanyaṁ ca aviśiṣṭaṁ jīveśvarayoḥ yathā agni-visphuliṅgayoḥ auṣṇyam.*)<sup>51</sup> Hence the conclusion that inevitably takes shape is that the differences felt by the *jīva* between its own consciousness and that of *Īśvara* are more apparent than real. The differences present in the content of consciousness are wrongly transferred to the consciousness, and we speak as if there is a finite consciousness different from the infinite consciousness.

The relationship between *Īśvara* and the *jīva* is brought out by the analogy of universal space being



delimited by pots, jugs, etc. (*avacchedanyāya*) and by the analogy of the sun being reflected in different shining surfaces (*pratibimbanyāya*). The space delimited by the pot, the space delimited by the jug, and the universal space are all the same. And yet we speak of a difference because of the different limiting adjuncts. Again the various reflections of the sun are not essentially different from the sun itself. They appear as different only because of the reflecting media. In the same way, the jīva's consciousness is non-different from Īśvara's consciousness, But we speak as if there is a difference because of the difference in the adjuncts presented to consciousness.<sup>52</sup>

#### *Analysis of the Content of Consciousness*

Let us turn to another important point in this connection. We know that an object is dependent on consciousness for revelation but not for existence. Hence the parts of the universe presented to the individual consciousness exist outside the consciousness, though connected with the consciousness. The evidence for this is the testimony of other individual centres of consciousness. Now, the important question is this. Can we say in the same way that the whole world which is the object for Īśvara's consciousness exists independently of that consciousness? The world

depends on Īsvara for being known. But does it depend on Īsvara for existence also? As in the former case, the test would be whether there are other centres of universal consciousness to testify to its independent existence. But Īsvara can be only one. If there were more than one Īsvara, Īsvara could not be infinite—it would be like the *jīva* and hence would not serve as the ideal of knowledge for the *jīva*. Now, in the absence of another universal consciousness, we cannot assert that the world has an existence independent of Īsvara's consciousness. On the contrary, we can safely assume that it is dependent on Īsvara's consciousness for its being; for, if it were independent, the existence of Īsvara would to that extent be limited. This does not mean that the world is unreal like the hare's horn. It means that the world has no reality apart from its basis, namely Īsvara's consciousness — just as the water in the mirage has no existence apart from the surface of the desert, not only because it disappears after it is perceived, but also because it is not perceived by its own nature, i.e. apart from the surface of the desert.<sup>53</sup> The world is *dr̥ṣṭa-sṛṣṭa* with reference to Īsvara, i.e. existent in so far as it is cognized by Īsvara. In any case, it is non-real, or other than real. So the ontological status of the world in respect of Īsvara is the same as the ontological status of illusory objects in respect of



us. This is exactly the reason why the world is called *māyā*.

Now, if the whole world of matter which is the object of Īsvara's consciousness is non-real, it follows that so is the part of it which is the object of the *jīva*'s consciousness. This part includes, besides the objects perceived through the senses, the physical body, the senses, and the mind, which form the psycho-physical outfit of the *jīva*. Just as the whole world is described as *māyā*, the portion of the world which is the adjunct of the individual consciousness is called *avidyā*, or *ajñāna*, though the terms are interchangeable. *Māyā*, or *ajñāna*, is spoken of as one and as many according as it is viewed collectively, i.e. with reference to Īsvara, and distributively, i.e. with reference to the *jīvas*. As one, it has been compared to a forest, or a collection of trees, and as many, to the individual trees.<sup>54</sup>

We have said that the differences between individual consciousness and cosmic consciousness are due to the differences between their respective adjuncts. When the adjuncts are proved to be non-real, the non-difference of consciousness is brought into full view. Just as when the pots and jugs are destroyed, the difference between the ether contained in them and the universal ether vanishes, just as when

the different reflecting media are removed, there ceases to be any distinction between the image and the object reflected, when the adjuncts that apparently divide consciousness into the individual and the cosmic are repudiated, consciousness emerges as the single undifferentiated reality.<sup>55</sup> Thus, when the psycho-physical world is shown to be non-real, the identity of *jīva* and *Īsvara* is also revealed. In fact, the notion of the external world and the notion of a separate individual soul (separate from God, from the world, and also from other souls, similarly conceived) are co-effects of one and the same cause, viz. *avidyā*. Hence, to repudiate the one notion is also to repudiate the other.<sup>56</sup>

## ii

## ONTOLOGY

Till now the conclusion that Brahman is the sole reality was sought to be established from the point of view of knowing. It is possible to reach the same conclusion from the point of view of being. That is to say, we may arrive at the concept of Nirguṇa Brahman by analysing the content of knowledge as we did by analysing the form of knowledge.

The content of knowledge is the world of matter. It has two aspects, the outer, consisting of physical objects, and the inner, consisting of psychic, or mental



states. Both aspects are objective, i.e. exist apart from the subject, because they are known. It is for this reason that, according to Advaita, they belong to the same category, namely matter, the only difference being that physical objects are gross and the mind subtle. In the Upaniṣads as well as in Advaita treatises we can find the analysis of both these aspects. The purpose of the analysis is to clarify the real by the progressive elimination of whatever is non-real.

The examination of truth and falsity in knowledge has furnished us with the criterion of distinguishing the real from the non-real. The criterion is non-contradiction or unsublatability (*abādhitatva*). The method of applying this criterion is known as *anvaya-vyatireka* (co-presence and co-absence). It consists in sifting whatever is variable and inconstant from what is abiding and unsublated. In this section we shall deal with the 'objective' approach to reality, that is to say the analysis of the external world.

### *Reality—the Objective Approach*

The objects of common experience are diverse. Each object has its own distinctive features, which give to it a distinct name and form. Thus the pot is different from the cloth, and both are different from the tree. Applying the criterion of unsublatability, whatever is variable and inconstant cannot be real. Hence the

special features by virtue of which the pot is called by that name, that is to say the 'potness' of the pot, because it is not common to all things, is non-real. Similarly, the 'treeness' of the tree is non-real. 'Clothness' is non-real. What is common to all these objects is existence (*sat*). We admit that the pot, the cloth, the tree, all exist. As the persistent and unsublated factor, existence is real, unlike the contingent and varying factors like colour, shape, *jāti*, and so on.

Every fact of experience involves a twofold consciousness—the consciousness of the varying factors such as 'potness' or 'clothness' and the consciousness of the permanent factor, namely existence, or *sat*. Now, as Śrī Śaṅkara has pointed out,<sup>57</sup> the distinction between reality and unreality is indicated by the constancy and inconstancy of our consciousness relating to what is cognized. 'Thus, the object corresponding to our consciousness of pot, etc., is non-real, because the consciousness is temporary; but what corresponds to our consciousness of existence is not non-real, because the consciousness is unfailing.' (*tasmāt ghaṭādi-buddhi-viśayaḥ asat vya-bhicārāt, na tu sad-buddhi-viśayaḥ; avvabhicārāt.*)<sup>58</sup>



Thus the analysis of external objects reveals that all the differences between objects are non-real and that existence, which is the only factor which is uniformly present in all the objects, is the reality. Now the concept of existence has to be clarified.

What is existence, and how does it stand in relation to the objects? Can we suppose that existence is the general quality inhering in all objects over and above their special attributes? Can we say, for example, that the pot has, besides the qualities that go to make a pot, a quality known as existence? The Viśiṣṭādvaitin holds that existence is an attribute (*viśeṣaṇa*) of the objects. A judgement like 'the pot exists' means to him that the pot is characterized by existence, or that existence belongs to it. The Advaitin shows that existence cannot be a quality of objects, but that, on the contrary, it is the basis on which qualities rest.<sup>59</sup>

If existence were a quality, it would not be uniform. The qualities are what determine the nature of an individual object or group of objects as distinguished from the nature of another object or group of objects. The qualities of objects are, therefore, bound to be inconstant. If existence too were a quality, it would be present only in some objects, but not in others. Such a position is unthinkable. The fact is that,

while objects vary by virtue of their qualities, existence is constant in all of them.

Qualities cannot exist by themselves. They can only inhere in something that exists. Now, whatever is dependent cannot be ultimate and unsublated. When a pot is destroyed, the qualities of the pot also disappear. Hence, if existence is regarded as a quality, it will be dependent, and, consequently, will be subject to change. That is, it will not be ultimate and unsublated. But we have already seen that existence is the persistent and unsublated factor in varying objects.

The fact that attributes necessarily inhere in objects and cannot just hang in the air shows that the existence of an object is logically prior to its essence. And since attributes presuppose existence, we cannot infer the existence of an object from its attributes. Hence existence is not itself an attribute of things, but their very prius and presupposition, their foundational assumption. The judgement 'the pot exists' is not an attributive judgement, as the Viśiṣṭādvaitin interprets it. It does not mean 'the pot *has* existence'. According to the Advaitin, it is an identity judgement. It means that the pot is rooted in existence (*sat*); it is nothing apart from existence which is its basis.



In order to understand the position that existence is the very basis of objects, we have to notice the distinction between 'existent' and 'existence'. An existent is what exists. It is the particular object of common experience. Now, because the particular objects have varying qualities, they are non-real as objects. Their differences exist only in name and form. But even for an appearance there must be a real basis. What, then, is the basis for the appearance of diverse existents? The basis of an illusion is what remains after the illusion is exposed. Thus the rope is the basis of the snake-illusion; for, when the snake is shown to be false, what remains in its place is the rope. When objects as objects are proved to be non-real because of their diverse qualities, what remains as the constant and unsublated reality is pure existence (*sanmātra*), i.e. existence as such without reference to anything that exists. Pure existence is, therefore, the substrate of all particularities. By the very nature of the case, pure existence is non-dual; for it is what remains after all duality is negated.

An illusion is not the actual product of the substrate, but what we in ignorance merely superimpose on the substrate. It is only by the superimposition of varying qualities on pure existence that the latter appears as the different existents. The silver

perceived in the nacre is non-different from the nacre in the sense that it has no existence apart from the nacre. It appears as silver only owing to *avidyā*. In the same way, the particular existents, like the pot, the cloth, and the tree, are non-different from *sat* in the sense that they are nothing but mere words considered apart from *sat*, which is their basis.<sup>60</sup> They appear as objects, i.e. with particular names and forms, only on account of *māyā*. It is in this sense that the Advaitin regards a judgement like 'the pot exists' as an identity judgement. It means that the pot is non-different from *sat* in that it does not exist apart from *sat*. All our assertions about particular objects become possible only because of their ground, namely *sat*. In this sense we may say that *sat* is the ultimate subject of every judgement.

It may be of interest to compare the Advaita position stated above with that of Bernard Bosanquet. According to Bosanquet, the real subject in every judgement is always Reality, so that a judgement like 'This flower is red' is really of the form 'Reality is such that this flower is red'. But his reason is that the thing which at a certain time is presented to consciousness and of which we make an assertion is a part of Reality. He regards reality as a whole of which the individual things presented to consciousness are parts. Things



belong together and form the whole system of reality. So much so the nature of any part is determined by the relationships it bears to other parts in the system. '...that which is *in* the focus of attention depends for its quality upon that which is less distinctly or not at all in the focus of attention'.<sup>61</sup> It is for this reason that every judgement is said to refer to reality. For the Advaitin, the reference to reality is for an entirely different reason. According to Advaita, reality is not a whole of parts, or a system. Reality is free from all the three kinds of differentiations. There is nothing similar to it or different from it. And it has no internal variety;<sup>62</sup> System implies distinctions, but we arrive at the notion of pure existence by negating distinctions. Hence reality is not a system of objects, but the substratum on which the distinctions of individual objects are superimposed. The relationship of individual objects to ultimate reality is illusory. Without the substratum, the individual objects cannot appear. So much so, it is not merely the nature, but the very existence of objects that is determined by the ultimate reality.<sup>63</sup> The point is that an object with its own distinctive properties *is*, because of its ground. It will cease to be, apart from the ground.

Thus logical analysis of the being of external objects points to pure existence as the ground of

particularities. But pure existence is not an object of thought, that is it is not known in the same way as a particular existent is known. Thought implies the distinctions of subject and object, but pure existence is the very negation of distinctions. But to say that pure existence is not an object of thought is not to say that it is as good as non-existence. To the Viśiṣṭādvaitin, the concept of existence as such without reference to anything that exists is a bare abstraction as empty as the void of the Mādhyamika Buddhist. But this view is wrong, because, though not an object of thought, existence is not unknown.<sup>64</sup> If *sat* were completely unknown, it would not be involved in judgements like 'the pot is real', 'the cloth exists', and so on. The fact is that our awareness of existence is the basis of our knowledge of existents.<sup>65</sup> And that existence is the ground of particularities is, as we have seen, indirectly suggested by logical analysis. What is made plausible by reason is confirmed by scripture and by direct experience. *Sanmātra* is the ultimate affirmation as vouchsafed in the plenary experience. It is no other than Brahman, the ultimate Reality.

The ontological status of the particular existents is *sadasadvilakṣaṇa*. They are not unreal; for they are perceived. The intellectual conviction that pure existence is the ground of particularities does not by



itself nullify the practical utility of particular existents. So long as pure existence has not been realized, or directly experienced, the whole course of our activities, based on the distinctions between objects, will go on as before the logical understanding of the truth.<sup>66</sup> Hence the particular existents are not unreal. Nor are they real; for the experience of pure existence cancels the experience of the world of distinctions.<sup>67</sup> They are, therefore, indeterminable (*anirvacanīya*). On the contrary, that which underlies the distinctions of name and form, namely Brahman, is absolutely real (*sat*). The objects of the world are mere appearances for the reason that their so-called existence is not their own, but derived from Brahman on which their names and forms are superimposed.

### iii

## PSYCHOLOGY

We defined reality as that which persists unsublated. The analysis of the external world shows us that pure existence is the reality underlying it. A similar analysis of the internal world, applying the same criterion of unsublatability, enables us to find what the reality of our self is.

### *Reality — the Subjective Approach*

There are two aspects in the life of the individual soul, or *jīva*. There is the physical, or biological side

which includes involuntary activities, such as breathing, and there is the mental, or psychological side. The biological activity of the self goes on even when the mind is at rest, as in sleep. The principle by which it works is the vital energy (*prāṇa*), and the medium through which it works is the physical body. The term *jīva* (derived from the root 'jīv', which means 'to continue breathing') primarily stands for the biological aspect of life. But the *jīva* is also referred to as the *kartā*, or agent of actions, and the *bhoktā*, or the experient of results. It is also involved in knowledge, though the subject of knowledge (*jñātā*) is, strictly speaking, the *jīvasākṣī*. Knowledge, action, and enjoyment together emphasize the other aspect of the *jīva*'s personality, namely the mental, or psychological, or conscious. The principle of its psychological function is the mind (*manas*), or the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*). *Manas* is the chief organ of consciousness. It carries on the conscious side of the soul's activity with the aid of the ten organs (*indriya*), five of knowledge (*jñānendriya*) and five of action (*karmendriya*). It coordinates impressions received through the former and acts with the aid of the latter.

The biological activity of the *jīva* is non-real, as it begins with the birth of the body and perishes with the death of the body. Whatever has a beginning and an



end does not exist in the middle either. Hence the body is not the real self of man.

Coming to the psychological, or mental, aspect, this aspect reveals itself in the three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep. And so an analysis of these states will enable us to discover the real nature of the self.

In the waking state we meet with various objects of the external world. We act with reference to them and also enjoy them as the fruits of our actions. But activity and enjoyment presuppose knowledge. We cognize things before we act upon them or enjoy them. Since cognition is fundamental to action and enjoyment, it would be useful to analyse the waking state in respect of the cognitive function of the mind.

In waking life we form a series of particular cognitions. We acquire a knowledge of this object or that or about this or that aspect of the same object. The cognition of one object, say a pot, is different from the cognition of another object, say a cloth. The particular cognitions vary according to the nature of the objects cognized. But a little examination of the particular cognitions shows that consciousness is uniformly present in all of them. Now, judged by the criterion of unsublatability, the particular cognitions cannot be real. Whatever varies is non-real, and whatever is

constant is real. Hence the particular form of each cognition, which depends on the nature of the object, and by virtue of which one cognition is distinguished from another, is non-real. Consciousness as such, or pure consciousness, i.e. consciousness unrelated to anything of which it is a subject, alone is real. That the differences among cognitions are extrinsic to consciousness is evident from the fact that these differences arise from differences in the objects cognized. The particularities of the objects, which themselves exist only in name and form (as seen' in the last section) are superimposed on pure consciousness, and the latter appears as the different cognitions given in waking life. If the particularities of cognition are absent, consciousness would reveal itself as one undivided reality. But such a circumstance can never be expected in waking life. And, so, the distinction between pure consciousness, which is real, and particular cognitions, which are non-real, is not evident in waking life. In the dream state it is partially evident, and in the deep sleep state it is fully evident. Hence, although the objects experienced in the dream state are contradicted by the waking state, and are therefore less real than the objects of waking, from the standpoint of comprehending the real nature of the self, the dream state is considered superior to the



waking state and intermediate between the waking and deep sleep states.

In the dream state the organs become wholly quiescent and unite with the *manas*. In the dream state, therefore, the self is virtually free from the limitations imposed by the body. This relative freedom is evidenced by the fact that the self creates for itself a world of objects not ordinarily met with in the waking life. The self in dream is, therefore, compared to a sword drawn from its sheath.<sup>68</sup> Hence the essential difference between waking and dreaming is that, while in the former the *manas* receives impressions from the outside, which it builds up into ideas, in the latter it fashions a world of ideas by itself unaided by the senses, but using as material the impressions gathered during waking moments.<sup>69</sup> This creation by the mind is only apparent, as the mind is not in contact with the organs. That is why the objects created in dream are repudiated by waking experience.<sup>70</sup>

Now, although the mind is active in dream, it is clear that there is an inner core of reality which the mind leaves untouched. This is evident from the fact that a man is not really bound by the creative activity of the dream state. It is a well-known fact that a man is not followed by deeds done in dreams, such as killing or stealing. Nobody considers himself a sinner for the

sins committed in dreams; nor do people to whom the dream is narrated condemn or shun him. Hence in dreams it is only the mind that is active, and not the real self of man. The real self merely witnesses the creative activities of the mind.<sup>71</sup> In other words, cognition is not associated with action and enjoyment. Consequently, there is a more or less clear distinction between the modification undergone by the instrument of cognition, viz. the mind, and pure consciousness which stands apart as a spectator of particular cognitions: The modifications, because they are varying, are non-real. Pure intelligence, which remains constant, alone is real.

The significance of this feature of dream experience to waking life is that the self in its true nature is neither an agent nor an enjoyer, but only pure intelligence, a witness of action and enjoyment.<sup>72</sup> In waking life cognition is associated with action and enjoyment. The pure intelligence gets wrongly identified with the changing *buddhi*. That is why the consequences of action, of which the cause is the *antahkarana* aided by the organs, are imagined to pertain to the self of man. The self is bound by actions and becomes an agent and enjoyer only because of wrong identification with the *buddhi*. There is no doubt that in dream the detachment of the pure



consciousness from the changing *manas* is not absolute. There is a partial identification of the two as is evidenced by the fact that sometimes a man shouts or weeps on seeing a terrible dream. But as the organs are quiescent, the identification is less complex than in the waking state. Hence the real nature of the self as dissociated from the adjuncts is better understood by the study of the dream state than by the examination of the waking state.<sup>73</sup>

In deep sleep even the partial identification of the self with the adjuncts is absent. In this state there is neither the play of the external world nor that of the impressions of waking. As in dream, the senses do not function. But unlike in dream, even the mind does not function in sleep. Profound sleep is the state in which the modification of the mind (*vṛtti*) is suspended and the mind remains in a subtle seed-like form. Hence all kinds of perception cease in this state, i.e. there is neither the perception of external objects nor that of the modes of the mind. That there is the cessation of all kinds of perception in sleep is evidenced by the verdict of all— 'I did not know anything then'.<sup>74</sup> But this absence of cognition does not mean the absence of the cognizing consciousness.<sup>75</sup> If consciousness were absent during sleep, the person waking from sleep would not have been able to say 'I did not know

anything then'. Consciousness must be present to bear witness not only to the presence of cognition, but to the absence of cognition as well.<sup>76</sup> So we can safely conclude that consciousness continues during deep sleep as before and after it. As Śrī Śaṅkara explains, the absence of the cognizing activity is due to the absence of objects, not to the absence of intelligence, just as the light pervading space is not manifest owing to the absence of things to be illumined, not to the absence of its own nature (*viṣayābhāvāt iyam acetayamānatā na caitanyābhāvāt iti. yathā viyadāśrayasya prakāśasya prakāśyābhāvāt anabhivyaktiḥ, na svarūpā-bhāvāt tadvat.*)<sup>77</sup> The mind being inactive, consciousness is without a content. But the absence of a content does not affect pure consciousness. Though consciousness is not manifest in the ordinary way, that is as the threefold factor of subject, object, and means, it is still present to show that it is free from any content and undivided. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* passage IV, 3, 23 indicates this by saying that, though the self does not see in deep sleep, the sight of the seer is imperishable, and its loss never takes place.<sup>78</sup> The mind, which is absent in sleep, cannot be the real self; consciousness, which is present even when the mind is absent, alone must be the real self.

Deep sleep reveals the independence of consciousness from its adjuncts. The *Praśna Upaniṣad*



passage IV, 2 speaks of the absence of the activities of seeing and so on in the state of sleep. Śrī Śaṅkara explains that this is spoken of with the purpose of declaring the non-attachedness of the self with the adjuncts. (*yaḥ api asau susuptāvasthāyām darśanādivyavahārābhāvaḥ uktaḥ saḥ api ātmanaḥ eva asaṅgatva-vivakṣayoktaḥ...*)<sup>72</sup>

The complete detachment of the intelligence from the adjuncts in sleep is evidenced by the absence of all desire in that state. In the waking and dream states ignorance is active. Hence the objects are, as it were, separated from the self. Their apparent separation creates desire for them in the perceiver. And desire leads to pain. In deep sleep ignorance, being undifferentiated, cannot project the idea of difference. As nothing other than the self, whether physical or mental, is perceived, there are no desires except 'the desire of the self' (*ātmakāmaṃ*). The desire of the self is not the opposite of the desire for objects. Since all objects of desire are nothing but the self, all desires are said to be fulfilled (*āptakāmaṃ*) in the desire of the self. Moreover, the term 'desire' used with reference to the self is only figurative. It has not the conventional meaning of 'desire', which implies something yet to be attained. The meaning of the expression is that the self, which in reality has nothing apart from itself, is free

from desires (*akāmaṁ*) and, therefore, perfectly devoid of grief (*śokāntaraṁ*).<sup>80</sup>

As desire leads to pain, absence of desire is pure bliss. Hence in the state of deep sleep the self enjoys perfect bliss. The evidence for this is the memory of blissful experience in sleep which one has on waking. There is the reflective cognition of that bliss by the person who wakes up from sleep, as expressed in the statement 'I slept happily'.<sup>81</sup>

There is no doubt that, by the very nature of the case, the bliss of sleep cannot be cognized as an object while it is experienced; for the mind does not function in sleep. But it is cognized reflectively through the mind, or the *antaḥkāraṇa*, when one returns to the waking state.

The calm and collected disposition of one who has woken up is the residual impression left on the mind by the bliss of sleep.<sup>82</sup> If the bliss of sleep were dependent on the mind for being known, it would not have left such an impression on the mind when the latter was inactive. This shows that the bliss experienced in sleep is self-luminous.<sup>83</sup>

There is also an indication prior to the condition of sleep of the coming enjoyment of bliss; for, in anticipation of it, the *jīva* runs for this state when it is



weary with experiencing the results of action in the waking and dream states and in order to remove the fatigue.<sup>84</sup> Hence pure bliss is the permanent nature of the self, which becomes manifest during deep sleep when the restrictive association of the mind is suspended.<sup>85</sup>

The self as pure bliss is identical with Brahman, and it is this identity which the *jīva* experiences during deep sleep.<sup>86</sup> But it experiences Brahman quite unwittingly. Although daily we experience Brahman-bliss in sleep, we are unaware of the significance of this experience, because ignorance is not destroyed.<sup>87</sup> Since *avidyā* is present, though in a latent state, the Brahman-bliss is not experienced directly but only as a reflection in the latent *avidyā*.<sup>88</sup> Hence, though experiencing Brahman, we are yet ignorant of what we experience. And by the force of *karma*, which operates on the basis of *avidyā*, the temporary experience of non-difference is disturbed, and we return to the waking state to perceive diversity and experience the mixture of pleasure and pain attendant on it.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, there is no doubt that in deep sleep we experience Brahman-bliss. Śrī Śaṅkara says that the purpose of scripture in mentioning the bliss of sleep (as for example, in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* IV, 3, 32) is to show that bliss constitutes the nature of the

self. (*yadapi tasyām avasthāyām sukham uktam, tadapi ātmanaḥ eva sukharūpatva-vivakṣayoktam.*)<sup>90</sup>

Thus the analysis of deep sleep, which points to pure consciousness, also reveals that pure consciousness is pure bliss. As the only uncontradicted factor in sleep, pure consciousness, which is also pure bliss, is the only reality.

We have seen that pure intelligence is the unsublated reality in each of the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep. But the intelligence underlying one state is not different from the intelligence underlying the others. If that were so, there would be no self-identity at all when a person passes from one state to another. The witness of one state is also the witness of all the states. It is the same self which cognizes the objects of waking, the dreams, and the absence of the two in sleep. We saw that in waking as well as in dream, when various objects come and go, the intelligence which cognizes them remains the same. Hence the particular cognitions are non-real, and pure consciousness alone is real. Similarly, while the three states themselves flit and pass alternately, the pure intelligence (*saṁvit*) which witnesses them all reveals itself as the only constant reality.<sup>91</sup>

In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, passages IV, 3, 15 to 19 describe how the self passes alternately



between the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep, untouched by whatever is perceived in the dream and waking states, and remaining merely as a witness in them as in sleep. That the self is untouched by its apparent experiences in the dream and waking states is shown by the fact that the 'experiences' of one state are not repeated in another state. Hence, even as in deep sleep, in all the three states the self is really unattached with the adjuncts, viz. the body and the mind. The self is the one uniform consciousness which witnesses the activities of these adjuncts in waking and dream and their non-activity in sleep. Thus, when we consider the three states together, the comprehensive view that emerges is that the self is 'by nature eternal, free, enlightened, and pure' (*nitya-mukta-buddha-śuddha-svabhāvatā...*)<sup>92</sup>; the relative existence of the self in the three states is only due to its limiting adjuncts and is superimposed by ignorance.

Thus by the subjective analysis we find that the reality of our self is pure consciousness. Just as a mass of salt is saltish through and through, and not something possessing saltishness, the self is nothing but consciousness.<sup>93</sup> Consciousness is not an attribute of the self. An attribute is what depends on a substance and cannot exist independently. But we have found that while all our experiences in the three states

depend on consciousness, consciousness itself is not dependent on anything else. It shines in its own glory.<sup>94</sup> Thus the self *is* consciousness, and not *has* consciousness.

*The Meeting of the Objective and the Subjective  
Approaches*

By the objective analysis we found that pure existence is the reality underlying the world. And by the subjective analysis we have seen that pure consciousness is the reality underlying the individual soul. Are there, then, two realities, pure existence and pure consciousness? To raise this question is to repudiate the very criterion that we adopted, namely unoblatability. Any distinction is based on inconstant features. But it is on the basis of constancy that we have arrived at reality in each of the paths, objective and subjective. Hence the question is inadmissible. That which is unoblated can only be one. Hence it is the same reality which is described as pure existence from one point of view and pure consciousness from the other.

The objective and the subjective approaches to reality, though pursued independently of each other, cannot but meet at the same goal. The analysis of the external world reveals pure existence to be the only reality. It is found that pure existence is not an object



of thought, like particular existents, because it is the basis of all particular objects. But, as it has been said, it is not unknown, because it is the presupposition of all our particular cognitions of objects. Now, this is not possible unless pure existence were identical with pure consciousness, which is self-revealing. Hence *sat* is *cit*. The analysis of the internal world is carried out on the criterion employed in the objective analysis. *Sat* is defined as that which is unsublated. And our subjective analysis leads to the conclusion that pure consciousness, or *cinmātra*, alone is *sat*. Hence the substrate of the external world is also the substrate of the internal world. This hypothesis is confirmed by scripture. The sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is the most famous instance of the meeting of the 'objective and the subjective approaches to the ultimate reality.

Now, reality which is *pure* existence and *pure* intelligence, i.e. which is beyond particularities in either context, must be infinite (*ananta*). Hence the name Brahman to reality. Being the true self of man, it is also called Ātman. What is infinite must also be of the nature of bliss (*ānanda*). Limitation is privation. Hence infinitude is bliss. That is why in deep sleep, when the limiting intellect is inactive and pure consciousness reveals itself, one is lost in bliss. Hence Brahman is *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*.

iv

## COSMOLOGY

*The Significance of Cosmology*

Advaita is not interested in cosmology for its own sake. If the world is a mere appearance, there is really no point in discussing how it came into being or how it will end. Only to those who are ignorant of the non-dual Brahman does the question of the origin, growth, and dissolution of the world assume any positive meaning. The cosmological discussion, therefore, belongs to *aparā vīdyā*. The Advaitin, however, welcomes the discussion, because it enables him partly to show the limitations of the rational approach to reality and partly to reveal that, in truth, there is neither the creation nor the dissolution of the world, but only its illusory appearance.

There are, in India, three theories in the main regarding the origin of the world, the Nyāya, the Sāṅkhya, and the Vedānta.

*The Nyāya Theory*

From common observation we know that for a thing to be produced two types of causes are required, material and efficient. For a pot to be produced, clay is required as well as the agency of a potter. The Nyāya theory recognizes the operation of both an efficient and



a material cause in the creation of the world. God is the efficient cause, and the primeval atoms of earth, water, fire, and air constitute the material cause.

There are two defects in this theory. (1) The relation between the efficient and the material causes is not properly conceived. Atoms are outside of God and co-exist with him. Īśvara has to work upon a given material. The clay is outside of, that is separate from, the potter. On the analogy of this, atoms are conceived as independent of Īśvara and co-eternal with him. If Īśvara were obliged to work upon a given material, his powers of creation would be limited. He cannot create according to his own plan. He cannot impose on the atoms any form he likes, but only those forms which the nature of the material admits of. Īśvara would not be infinite when face to face with an intractable material independent of him.

(2) The relation, again, between the material cause and the effect, as conceived by Nyāya, is not satisfactory. According to Nyāya, the effect is non-existent in the cause and is produced newly. Origination of effects takes place by the conjunction of the parts, namely the atoms, in which the qualities of the effects are not already present. But how can something come out of anything if it is not already existent in that? And, if anything can come out of

anything in which it is not already present, it amounts to disclaiming the need for a material cause for the production of an effect. The world certainly could not have been created even by God, out of nothing.

### *The Sāṅkhya Theory*

The Sāṅkhya theory of creation is an improvement upon the Nyāya in regard to the material cause. There must have been some primeval matter out of which the world evolved. The huge variety of the world must have been latent in that material cause before it was manifested. The Sāṅkhya calls this *mahat, or pradhāna, or prakṛti*. But Advaita calls it *māyā* for a reason which will be explained later. It is also called *avyakta*, or the unmanifest.

The merit of the Sāṅkhya theory is undermined by its denial of the need for an efficient cause. According to it, the world is born out of *pradhāna* without the agency of any intelligent being. This is unthinkable. How could insentient *prakṛti* by itself produce the world? In common life we observe that insentient things tend towards particular effects only when acted upon by intelligent beings. Clay does not become the pot without the agency of the potter, nor does a chariot move without being drawn by horses. From what is seen we determine what is not seen. The production of the world presupposes activity on the part of the cause.



And since a non-intelligent entity cannot act by itself, the cause of the world cannot be confined to the non-intelligent.<sup>95</sup>

Moreover, it is not observed in the world that things subserving the purposes of men, like houses, couches, etc., are made by any non-intelligent entity without being guided by an intelligent being. We observe, on the contrary, that such things having a design are made by workmen endowed with intelligence. Now, on the analogy of this, when we consider the vast and wondrous design of the world, 'of which the most ingenious workmen cannot even form a conception in their minds', it is clear how futile it is to argue that the world could have been created solely by a non-intelligent entity such as *pradhāna*.<sup>96</sup>

*The Advaita Theory: (1) Brahma-pariṇāma-vāda*

The examination of the Sāṅkhya theory shows that the world requires an efficient cause for its production as much as a material cause. *Prakṛti* must have been acted upon by an intelligent being. Just as clay and similar substances are seen to fashion themselves into various forms if worked upon by potters and the like, so the *pradhāna* also is ruled by some intelligent principle.<sup>97</sup> What could have been the efficient cause of the world, except the universal consciousness which alone knows the whole world? This wonderful

world, with all its order and arrangement, could not have come out of insentient *pradhāna*—or *māyā* as it is called in Advaita—without the agency of *Īśvara-caitanya*. Being insentient, *māyā* is dependent on the cosmic consciousness and cannot act of its own accord. Hence, according to Advaita, the complete explanation of the world is to be found in *māyā* and *caitanya*.

At this stage, we have to make a departure from common experience. The clay is outside of, or separate from, the potter. But *māyā* cannot be separate from *Īśvara-caitanya*. If it were separate from *caitanya*, the creative power of the efficient cause would be limited and contingent. But this is a consequence which directly goes against our conception of the universal consciousness. Thus, if we conceive of the material cause as separate from the efficient cause, the Advaita theory of creation would be subject to the same defect which vitiates the Nyāya theory of creation. Hence *māyā* is not separate from *caitanya*, but together with *caitanya* constitutes the cause of the world. The universal consciousness in association with *māyā* is *Īśvara*, or Saguna Brahman.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (passages VII, 4-5) the Lord refers to these two aspects of his own nature. *Māyā* is called his lower nature (*aparā prakṛti*) and *caitanya*,



his very life, his higher nature (*parā prakṛti*), because it is the latter which controls the former. *Māyā* is also called the *kṣetra*, because it is the matter on which he works, and himself, i.e. *caitanya*, the *kṣetrajña*, because it is he who knows this entire *kṣetra*.

Since *māyā* is part of Īśvara, it is completely under his control just as the magician's spell is completely under his control and does not obstruct his knowledge.<sup>98</sup> Again, since *māyā* is part of Īśvara, Īśvara is the whole and sole origin of the universe.<sup>99</sup> Since Īśvara evolves the world out of himself, he is referred to in the Upaniṣads as the material and the efficient cause of the world rolled into one (*abhinnanimitta-upādāna-kāraṇa*). To convey the idea, the example of the spider weaving its web out of its own body is given in the place of the potter making the pot.<sup>100</sup>

On the analogy of the creation of the things of common experience, we can conceive of three stages in the evolution of the world of names and forms out of the *māyā* element of Īśvara.<sup>101</sup> At one stage, the diversity of the world is unmanifest in *māyā*, as the pots and jugs are in the lump of clay or the branches, leaves, etc., of a tree are in the seed. At another stage, the diversity is fully manifest, i.e. all the latent possibilities have come into full view. There is also an

intermediate stage, when diversity is partially manifest, or in the process of being manifested. When the diversity of the world remains unmanifest in Īśvara, we call it *māyā*. When it becomes manifest, we call it the world (*jagat*).

Any change in the adjunct is commonly attributed by us to the substratum to which it belongs. Since *māyā* is the adjunct of Saguna Brahman, the latter has been said to pass through the unmanifest, the partially manifest, and the fully manifest conditions. The passage of Īśvara through these three states has been compared to the passage of the *jīva* through the three states of deep sleep, dream, and waking. The first stage is when ultimate consciousness is in relation to unmanifest *māyā*. It is in this condition that ultimate consciousness is called Īśvara. It corresponds to Prājña, which is the *jīva* in the state of deep sleep. The second stage is when consciousness is in relation to *māyā* in its partially manifest condition. Ultimate consciousness is then known by three names, Prāṇa, Hiraṇyagarbha, and Sūtrātman. This corresponds to Taijasa, which is the name given to the *jīva* in the state of dream. Lastly, we have consciousness in relation to fully diversified *māyā*. This is known as Vaiśvānara and Virāj, and corresponds to Viśva, or the *jīva* in the state of waking.<sup>102</sup>



Now, on the analogy of the things of the world which have birth, we presume that if the world has a beginning, it must have an end also. Again, on the analogy of common things, we presume that the end of the world is reabsorption into the original cause. When gold ornaments are melted, they do not go into nothingness. On the contrary, they are reduced to the original mass of gold. According to the law of conservation of mass, matter is neither destroyed nor newly created. It is only changed from one form to another. In the same way, *māyā* goes from the unmanifest to the manifest condition and returns from the manifest to its original unmanifest condition. Therefore the world is not destroyed, but must eventually be reabsorbed in Brahman.<sup>103</sup>

The order in which the world is evolved is speculated upon in detail in the Upaniṣads. The subtle elements are first produced. Out of *māyā* evolves ether, from ether evolves air, from air fire, from fire water, and from water earth. Then, by a process of mixing up, these subtle elements become gross elements. The gross elements, again, become the various objects of the world including the bodies of living beings. The order of dissolution naturally will be the reverse of that of creation.<sup>104</sup> The details relating to dissolution are found in the Purāṇas. All living beings

die, and their bodies break up into the gross elements. The gross elements then resolve into their corresponding subtle elements. The subtle elements are then successively withdrawn. Earth is reduced to water, water to fire, fire to air, air to ether, and ether goes back to the original unmanifest condition, *māyā*.

These details relating to creation and dissolution by themselves are of no consequence to man's release from bondage. Śrī Śaṅkara says that it is neither observed nor is it heard from scripture that the goal of man in any way depends on these matters. (*na hi tatpratibaddhaḥ kaścit puruṣārthaḥ drśyate śrūyate vā.*)<sup>105</sup> That they are not intended for positive information is clear from the very conflicts from which the various accounts of creation suffer.<sup>106</sup> They are intended, on the contrary, to suggest the superiority of Īśvara over the created world. This is evident from the fact that, although the Vedānta passages relating to creation may be conflicting with regard to the order of the things created, they do not conflict with regard to the creator.<sup>107</sup> Hence Śrī Śaṅkara says that a conflict of statements regarding the world would not really matter, since the creation of the world and similar topics are not what scripture wishes to teach. (*bhavedapi kāryasya vigītatvaṁ apratipādyatvāt. na hi ayam sṛṣṭyādi-prapañcaḥ-pratipipādayiṣitaḥ*)<sup>108</sup> In



whatever way we explain the process of evolution, the conclusion that follows inevitably from the fact of admitting the evolution of the world out of Īsvara is that Īsvara is eternal, unlike the world.

So far as our ordinary experience goes, we find that the evolutes of a substance have only a limited existence, whereas the source has a relatively permanent existence. For example, the ornaments created out of gold come into being at a particular time, and at some time or other they are reduced to a mass of gold again. So the ornaments have a beginning and an end in time. On the contrary, gold as such continues to exist without either beginning or end, whatever the changes that come upon it. When gold is made into ornaments, gold is not destroyed. It continues as the ornaments. Hence it is eternal in the sense that its identity is not destroyed, although it undergoes changes. This relative eternality is what is called *pariṇāminityatva*. Now, on the same analogy, the world which is evolved out of *māyā* and resolved into it has a beginning and an end in time. But *māyā*, which is both the origin and the end of the world, neither begins to exist (*anādi*) nor ceases to exist (*ananta*) at any point of time. It continues to exist, though it repeatedly undergoes changes. The world is within the time-process, but *māyā* is outside of it, since

time itself is a product of *māyā*. It is *parināminitya*, i.e. eternal in the sense that its identity is not destroyed, although it undergoes changes.

Since *māyā* is part of Īśvara and is not outside of him, what applies to *māyā* must apply to Īśvara as a whole. So Īśvara, or Saguna Brahman, is beginningless and endless. As *māyā* in its distributive aspect is part of the *jīva*, the *jīva* too has no beginning or end in time, although it passes through several states. But neither *māyā* nor the *jīva* nor Īśvara is unrelated to time. *Māyā*, the *jīva*, and Īśvara are called eternal only in relation to the created world. *Māyā* comes to an end and the conceptions of Īśvara and the *jīva* get radically transformed when the timeless Nirguṇa Brahman is realized. Nirguṇa Brahman, which is the substratum of the notions of *māyā*, Īśvara, and the *jīva*, alone is eternal in the real sense of the term. Since it is free from *māyā*, the categories of time and change do not apply to it at all. It is *kūṭasthanitya*, eternal without undergoing any change at all. Brahman is called Kūṭastha, or the immutable, because, like the anvil (*kūṭa*), it does not undergo any change though it serves as the support for changes.<sup>109</sup> The ultimate purpose of all Vedānta texts relating to creation is to reveal the real nature of the 'cause' as the non-dual Brahman, the knowledge of which leads to release.<sup>110</sup>



*Difficulties of Brahma-pariṇāma-vāda*

In the traditional method of teaching Advaita, the theory of Brahman evolving the world out of itself is only preliminary to the theory of the appearance of Brahman as the world (*Brahma-vivartavāda*). *Pariṇāma-vāda* is offered as a concession to the ordinary mind in order to enable it to understand the real teaching through stages. One theory of creation may be more plausible than another, but none can overcome certain fundamental difficulties inherent in the very conception of change. Other theories are criticized and a relatively satisfactory theory is offered just to give provisional satisfaction. But once this end is achieved, the student is made to see the difficulties implied in the notion of the actual origin of the world. He is thereby led into the probability of the theory of the illusory appearance of the world.

(1) The distinction between cause and effect is relative. What is the cause in respect of its effect is itself an effect with regard to something else. An uncaused cause, or a first cause, is an unwarranted assumption. If Brahman is the cause of the world, Brahman too must have a cause. But, if we posit a cause to Brahman, it would take away from the infinite character of Brahman, and the process of tracing one cause to another would also be endless. On the contrary, if

Brahman is uncaused, there is no reason why we should not think of the world also as uncaused.

(2) Let us waive the above objections. Let us assume that the world is an effect and that God is the cause of it. But, then, what is the purpose of creation? The answers usually given are not quite convincing.

In the first place, it may be said that to attribute a purpose to God is to make him finite. *Īśvara* is infinite. He has nothing left unachieved. To think that *Īśvara* is motivated by any unfulfilled desire in putting forth the universe is to make him look finite. But, then, we do not find in the world any conscious activity without a proper motive. If *Īśvara* has no purpose, how do we explain creation?<sup>111</sup>

One answer is to say that although God has no purpose of his own, he creates the world for our sake. He creates it so that the souls of different grades may have a suitable environment where they will reap their proper rewards and punishments and get released from bondage. He thus creates the world with a high altruistic motive. (The same altruism is said to be present in the act of dissolution. In dissolving the world, *Īśvara* is actuated purely by the desire to give the transmigrating souls a spell of rest.) This is the view of those who regard *Īśvara* as the operative cause



only, e.g., the Māheśvaras, the Sāṅkhya-Yogins, and the Vaiśeṣikas.<sup>112</sup>

The main objection that might be raised against this view is that even if the Lord is assumed to create the world with an altruistic motive, he cannot be regarded as perfect. Every deliberate action, whether done for one's own sake or for the sake of someone else, springs from some imperfection, some feeling of non-fulfilment.<sup>113</sup>

To avoid this difficulty, Vedānta provisionally suggests that creation is the sport (*līlā*) of the Lord.<sup>114</sup> God does not create the world for the sake of any set purpose, either his own or that of the jīvas. Creation is simply the spontaneous self-expression of his nature and comes to him as naturally as breathing. This does not mean, however that God creates the world in a desultory way. He creates it with due regard to moral justice.<sup>115</sup> He designs the world in such a way that it serves as the stage where the jīvas will reap their rewards and punishments at the proper time and in the exact measure.<sup>116</sup> He creates it with a moral *view*, though not with a moral *aim*. But this cannot be the final explanation, as there are other difficulties yet to be solved.

If it is said that the world is created with a view to requiting the jīva's deeds, the present creation must

have been preceded by another in which the deeds were done. Similarly, that creation itself must have occurred with a view to requiting deeds done in a creation previous to it. Thus each creation presupposes a previous one. By the same logic, each creation necessitates a subsequent one also. At the time of dissolution, the *jīvas* could not have reaped all the rewards and punishments that are due to them. During the period of *laya*, or latency of the world, the *jīvas* lie in a state of rest. In order to provide for the arrears of requital there is need for a fresh creation when the *jīvas* can body forth as the different orders of living beings according to their respective remainders of moral merits. But the next creation, while requiting previous deeds, creates fresh opportunities for *karma*; and, since during the next dissolution there are unrequited remainders, there is, again, need for creation. Thus the creation of the world, which is closely connected with the transmigration of souls, is, like the latter, beginningless and endless.<sup>117</sup> Further, since the pattern of behaviour of the *jīvas* is the same in every cycle of creation, influenced as it is by past behaviour, it follows that the particulars in each creation are exactly the same as in previous creations.<sup>118</sup>



At sūtras II, 1, 35 and 36, the *Brahma-sūtra* employs the argument of a beginningless (and endless) creation against the opponent who questions the possibility of *karma* being the criterion for creation. The argument is of course useful in silencing the critic and is employed there for this specific purpose, but Vedānta does not regard this as the final explanation. The theory of a beginningless and endless series does not satisfy the human reason. It is the tendency of thought to search for the origin and end of every process.

There is another difficulty. The theory of beginningless and endless cycles of creation also involves the idea that creation and dissolution alternate with each other at regular periods. At the beginning of a world-period, or *kalpa*, God creates the world, and at the end of it he resolves it. Why creation takes place at definite intervals is not explained by saying that the act of creation is sportive. The theory of sportive creation (*līlā-vāda*) is at best poetic and figurative and not logical.

Thus, if we regard the world as actually created, no convincing reason can be given as to why there is creation. We are, therefore, led on to conclude that creation must be illusory. We need not be worried over the problem of purpose, if we can understand the true

import of the texts relating to creation. Hence in his commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* II, 1, 33 Śrī Śaṅkara, after explaining the provisional answer that the creative act of the Lord is the spontaneous expression of his nature, finally remarks that we must not forget that the scriptural statement relating to creation does not refer to the highest reality; it refers to the world of activities, which is characterized by name and form called up by ignorance, and it is intended for propounding the truth that Brahman is the ground (self) of everything. (*na ca iyaṁ paramārthaviṣayā sṛṣṭi-Śrutih avidyākalpa-nāmarūpa vyavahārago-caratvat, brahmātmabhāva-pratipādanaparatvāt ca, iti etat api naiva vismartavyam.*)<sup>119</sup>

(3) If we acquiesce in the doctrine of creation, we shall have to face a further difficulty. What happens to Brahman when the world is evolved out of it? Is it affected in any way? The answer to this question depends on the relation between *caitanya* and *māyā*. We have to decide whether there is really a relation or no. If there is no relation, either external or internal, either conjunction (*saṁyoga*) or inherence (*samavāya*), then, of course, what *māyā* undergoes cannot affect *caitanya*. But in the absence of a relation, i.e. if the two are simply juxtaposed, we cannot understand how *caitanya* can activate *māyā*. Our



assumption that *caitanya* makes *māyā* go forth into diverse forms necessitates our thinking of a relation between them. But, if we regard them as related, we cannot escape the consequence that what affects *māyā* must certainly affect *caitanya*. Well, let us accept this consequence. But, then, if *caitanya* undergoes change, it cannot know *māyā* exactly as it is. An efficient cause must know its material fully in order to manipulate it. But a subject in knowledge must remain identical with itself if it must know the object. The object may change, but if the subject also undergoes change, it can never be the witness of the change in the object. A changing subject is no subject at all. Apart from this, Brahman at any rate cannot be admitted to undergo change, for a changing Brahman cannot be infinite.

This is a serious problem that confronts all the advocates of Saguna Brahman as the ultimate reality. The answer that is uniformly advanced by them is that, though *māyā* undergoes change, *caitanya* which activates it somehow remains identical. The relation is represented as one of identity in difference. Various analogies are given to lend plausibility to this view. Śrī Rāmānuja, for instance, says that God is the Soul of which the material objects and individual souls compose the body, just as the soul controls the body from within, so God controls matter and souls. The

soul, we know, is not affected by the bodily changes and imperfections. A man's body passes through different stages in life, like childhood, manhood, and old age, and is subject to disease and death; and yet he remains the same individual in life, and the soul retains its identity after death. Similarly, God is not affected by the changes in the universe. Another analogy employed by Śrī Rāmānuja is that of the king and his subjects. The king is not affected by the pleasures and pains suffered by the subjects consequent on their obeying or disobeying his laws.<sup>120</sup>

Now, although for ordinary practical purposes, we have to admit the co-presence of identity and difference in the same phenomenon, the concept of identity in difference does not stand to reason. We may speak of change in one thing and identity in another thing. But to say that that same phenomenon is both identical and changing is a contradiction. If, to avoid the difficulty, we say that one aspect of the object is identical and the other aspect is changing, the two would be, strictly speaking, not two aspects of one and the same object, but two distinct objects merely juxtaposed. If they are to be regarded as aspects of one object, they should be in some way connected—in which case, any change in one aspect is bound to affect the other. Either we give up the notion of identity in



difference or we cease to assert the unitary character of the phenomenon. We cannot have it both ways. We cannot maintain both change and identity in respect of a thing without driving a wedge in the character of the thing such that it is regarded as a conjunction of two things. Hence to the same Brahman the two qualities of being subject to modification and of being free from it cannot both be ascribed.<sup>121</sup>

The opponent of Vedānta may utilize this difficulty to question the claim that Brahman is the cause of the world. At *Brahma-sūtra* II, I, 26 the objection occurs that Brahman cannot be the cause of the world; for, if the whole Brahman goes into the effect, Brahman will cease to be Brahman, and if only a part of it goes into the effect, we shall have to admit that Brahman consists of parts. But in his commentary on the next *sūtra* Śrī Śaṅkara points out that the aforesaid difficulty only indicates that creation cannot be real; it does not mean that Brahman changes as a whole or that it consists of parts. The Upaniṣads declare that Brahman is beyond change and is also devoid of parts. As regards Brahman, scripture is the only authority. It is true that the Upaniṣads also speak of the creation of the universe out of Brahman. But whereas modification is a matter of sense perception, scripture denies Brahman being an object of the senses. Hence modification cannot

belong to Brahman. It belongs only to the world of names and forms. Thus, as the alleged creation of the world does not touch the underlying reality, namely Brahman, creation is non-real; it is a figment of nescience. Brahman is supposed to become subject to modification only through ignorance. The texts relating to transformation are not meant to establish transformation as a fact; for no fruit is seen to result from such a knowledge. On the contrary, they are meant to establish the truth that Brahman, which is beyond all phenomenal processes, is the self of everything, that being an instruction which has a result of its own. (*na ca iyaṁ pariṇāma-śrutih pariṇāma-pratipādanārthā, tat-pratipattau phalānavagamāt. sarvavyavahārahīna-brahmātma-bhāva-pratipādanārthā tu eṣā tat-pratipattau phalāvagamāt.*)<sup>122</sup>

*The Advaita Theory: (2) Brahma-vivarta-vāda*

*Pariṇāma-vāda* assumes that *māyā* is somehow related with *caitanya*; for without a relation *māyā* cannot go forth into production, as it cannot act of its own accord. But we have just now seen that to admit a real relation between *māyā* and *caitanya* would be to stultify the very concept of Brahman by introducing into it the idea of change and division. Hence we are forced to conclude that there can be no real relationship between *māyā* and *caitanya*.



Now, if the relation between *māyā* and *caitanya* is illusory, it must be because one of the relata is illusory. The question is whether *māyā* or *caitanya* is illusory. The test of non-contradiction will determine this question. Whatever is variable is non-real. That which persists alone is real. *Māyā* is the element of difference and *caitanya* that of identity. While *māyā* contains elements of diversity and undergoes modification, *caitanya* persists unaffected. Hence it is *māyā* which is non-real. Consciousness, or *caitanya*, emerges as the sole reality. It is because of its illusory character that the name *māyā* has been applied to the former. *Māyā* is that which (*yā*) is not (*mā*). The term *māyā* signifies that matter only appears, but is not real. But even an illusory appearance must have a real basis. Since the only entity other than *māyā* is *caitanya*, or consciousness, we conclude that *caitanya* is the basis for the appearance of *māyā*, or matter. The relation between *caitanya* and *māyā*, therefore, is not one of identity *in* difference, but identity *with the appearance of* difference. Identity alone is real. Difference is a non-real superimposition on identity. But, since the term 'identity' is relative to the term 'difference', strictly speaking, it is not correct to describe *caitanya* as identity. It would be more proper to refer to it as non-difference (*advaita*).

Brahman as pure consciousness (*cinmātra*) is unconnected with the idea of creation. It is only as associated with *māyā* that Brahman can be said to evolve the world out of itself. But, since the association is illusory, there is no actual evolution (*pariṇāma*) of Brahman into the world, as of milk into curd. There is only an illusory appearance (*vivarta*) of Brahman as the world, like the appearance of the rope as the snake. Hence Brahman is not in the least affected by the so-called evolution and reabsorption of the world. To quote Śrī Śaṅkara, 'The cause is not affected by the effect and its qualities, because the latter are the mere fallacious superimpositions of nescience, and the very same argument holds good with reference to reabsorption also.' (...*kāryasya taddharmāṇām ca avidyādhyāropitatvāt na taiḥ kāraṇam saṁsṛjyata iti, apītau api saḥ samānah.*)<sup>123</sup>

The meaning of *māyā* also undergoes a revision at this stage. *Māyā* is not the material cause of the *jagat* but only the principle of its appearance. It is the ignorance which makes us think that the world is real and is actually created.<sup>124</sup>

*Māyā*, or the principle of appearance, falsely associates itself with pure consciousness both at the cosmic and at the individual levels. In association with the whole of *māyā*, pure consciousness appears as



Īsvara and in association with parts of *māyā*, it appears as the different *jīvas*. By reason of association with *māyā*, both Īsvara and the *jīva* appear to undergo changes, which actually belong only to the adjunct, *māyā*. Īsvara is associated with the evolution, subsistence, and involution of the universe; and the *jīva* is connected with the parallel states of waking, dream, and deep sleep. The parallelism, to which we have already referred, has been worked out in great detail by some Advaita writers, Sadānanda for instance. The significance of the parallelism is that bereft of *māyā* the distinction between Īsvara and the *jīva* and between their respective experiences would disappear and that, therefore, the essence of the two entities is the same, viz. pure consciousness.

The theory known as *vivarta-vāda* brings out that the cosmic process, consisting of creation, subsistence, and dissolution, is not real. This, however, does not mean that the cosmic process is unreal. Whatever is perceived cannot be unreal. It is true that the cosmic process is not open to the perception of human beings. But it cannot be argued that what cannot be perceived by men is not open to the perception of divine beings, or gods. *Śruti* and *smṛti* declare more than once that just as the obstruction to the manifestation of knowledge becomes successively less in the case of

ordinary creatures from a clump of grass to men, knowledge, glory, etc. become increasingly manifest at each successive stage counting from men themselves to Hiraṇyagarbha. Hence, although the creation and dissolution of the universe are not perceived by human beings, they are known and remembered by gods, like Hiraṇyagarbha.<sup>125</sup> The world process continues to appear real and goes on unimpeded so long as one has not realized the truth that *caitanya* has simply nothing to do with *māyā*. For one who has overcome ignorance, however, there is no more creation and dissolution and no more birth in this world.

#### *The Rationale of the Two-Stage Explanation*

If the concept of Saṅga Brahman and the acts of creation, etc. of the world is non-real, why does scripture describe this at length and discard it later? The answer to this consists first in denying the assumption that it is scripture which puts forward the doctrine of Saṅga Brahman and creation. On the contrary, it is the common mind which, in ignorance, entertains the notion of a qualified Brahman evolving the world out of itself, sustaining it, and reabsorbing it into itself. There are of course other common notions—such as the world emanating from a blind *prakṛti* and that of God making the world out of a given material like atoms—to which we have referred. But



the evolution of the world out of Brahman itself, being relatively the most plausible of the common theories of the world's origin, scripture utilizes it as a stepping stone to the doctrine of Nirguṇa Brahman and the illusory appearance of the world.

That scripture does not intend to teach both the view of Brahman as actually producing the world and the view of it as the substrate of an illusion is evident from the fact that, while it declares that the cognition of Brahman as unchanging leads to release, no authority can be found to show that the cognition of Brahman as transforming itself into the world has such an independent result.<sup>126</sup> Moreover, the introductory and the concluding clauses (*upakrama* and *upasamhara*) of the passages about creation and the like show that such passages are intended only to introduce the teaching of the real nature of Brahman.<sup>127</sup>

The notion of the non-dual Brahman appearing as the world of diversity is too unfamiliar to be understood in the first instance itself. Therefore in discussing the notion of the actual evolution of the world out of Brahman, scripture only intends to take the student carefully from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Śrī Śaṅkara says that scripture cannot speak about an unknown thing without having recourse to conventional words and their meanings.

(*na ca laukika-pada-padārthāśrayaṇa-vyatirekeṇa āgamena śakyam ajñātam vastvantaram avagamayitum.*)<sup>128</sup> He draws attention to the sound principle that the conclusion should be stated after refuting the faulty standpoints. (*nirākṛtasya hi pūrvapakṣam paścāt siddhāntaḥ vaktavyaḥ bhavati...*)<sup>139</sup>

The methodology of the Upaniṣads is summed up by Śrī Śaṅkara as follows. 'In all the Upaniṣads first identity is broached, then by means of illustrations and reasons the universe is shown to be a modification or part or the like of the Supreme Self, and the conclusion again brings out the identity.' (*sarvāsu hi upaniṣatsu pūrvam ekatvam pratijñāya, drṣṭāntaiḥ hetubhiḥ ca paramātmanaḥ vikārāmśāditvam jagataḥ pratipādyā, punaḥ ekatvam upasamharati.*)<sup>130</sup>

Hence *pariṇāma-vāda* is a necessary preliminary to *vivarta-vāda*.<sup>131</sup> No one can properly understand the theory of *vivarta*, or illusory appearance, without having thoroughly thought himself into the difficulties as well as the logical implications of *pariṇāma-vāda*. This is the justification for the discussion in Advaita philosophy of the theory of the actual evolution of the world.

*Pariṇāma-vāda* leads to *vivarta-vāda* in both a negative and a positive way. By showing up its own inner contradictions and paradoxes, it suggests that



creation, after all, is an illusion. We have examined some of these contradictions. We cannot indeed resolve these contradictions at the rational level. But we do transcend them when we realize that the doctrine of creation is but a product of ignorance.

In a more direct way also *pariṇāma-vāda* leads to *vivarta-vāda*. The ultimate significance of the causal category (as we have said elsewhere) is that it shows that the effect is really non-different from the cause. Causation cannot imply any change in substance. Nor can a change in form be regarded as a real change. Hence the evolution of the effect is but an appearance. The cause alone is real. The effect is only a superimposition on the cause. Hence the effect has no existence apart from the cause. It cannot appear without its basis, the cause. So, even if we begin by regarding the world as an actual evolute of Brahman, the ultimate implication of this view is that the world is an appearance and is non-different from Brahman, the only reality. Thus, by means of examples such as that of clay (as in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI, 1, 4-6) scripture intends to teach that the world-effect is really non-different from Brahman, the cause, which is the only reality. An effect, being illusory, is non-different from its cause, not only before 'production', but even after that. Hence scripture declares that the world is

non-different from Brahman before and after 'origination'.<sup>132</sup>

## REFERENCES:

1. Sadānanda, *Vedāntasāra* (M. Hiriyanna's edn), pp. 12-3.
2. *vide BhG.* XIII. 5.
3. *Ibid.*, XIII, 6, and Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary thereon. Regarding everyone of the mental states listed here Śrī Śaṅkara says that, being knowable, it is *kṣetra* (matter): *jñeyatvāt kṣetram*.
4. *BSB*, II. 2. 28. *anyasya avagantuḥ cakṣuḥsādhanasya pradīpādī-prathanadarśanāt. ataḥ vijñānasyāpi avabhāsyatvāvīśeṣāt satyeva anyasmin avagantari prathanam pradīpavat ityavagamyate:*
5. *Ibid.*, II, 2, 28. *na khalu abhāvaḥ bāhyasyārthasya adhyavasātum śakyate. kasmāt? upalabdheḥ. upalabhyate hi prati-pratyayam bāhyo'rthaḥ stambhaḥ kuḍyam ghaṭaḥ paṭaḥ iti. na ca upalabhyamānasya eva abhāvaḥ bhavitum arhati:*
6. *Ibid.*,
7. *Ibid.*, ... *asati viṣaye viṣaya-sārūpyānopapatteḥ:*
8. *Ibid.*, *itarathā hi kasmāt bahirvat iti brūyuh:*
9. *Ibid.*, *ata eva sahopalambha-niyamaḥ api pratyaya-viṣayayoḥ upāyopeya-bhāva-hetukaḥ na abheda-hetukaḥ:*
10. *Ibid.*, II, 2, 30. *arthopalabdhi-nimittā hi pratyartham nānārūpā vāsanā bhavanti:*



11. *Ibid.*, II, 2.28. *apī ca ghaṭa-jñānam paṭajñānam iti viśeṣaṇayoḥ eva ghaṭa-paṭayor-bhedaḥ na viśeṣyasya jñānasya:*
12. *Ibid.*, ... *sarve laukikāḥ upalabhante:*
13. *Ibid.*, *tasmāt artho-jñānayoḥ bhedaḥ:*
14. *Ibid.*, II, 2, 31. *na hi kālatraya-sambandhini ekasmin anvayini asati kūṭasthe vā sarvārtha-darsini deśakāla-nimittāpekṣa-vāsanādhīna-smṛti-pratisamdhānādivyavahāraḥ sambhavati:*
15. *Ibid.*, II, 2, 25. *tatra evaṃ sati ekasya darśana smarāṇa-lakṣaṇa-kṣaṇadvaya-sambandhe kṣaṇikatvābhyupagama-hāniḥ aparihāryā vaināśikasya syāt:*
16. XIII, 1 and ff.
17. *BhGB*, XIII, 2.
18. *Ibid.*, XIII, 2.
19. *sākṣi-pratyayayoḥ ca svabhāva-vaiṣamyāt upalabdhr-upalabhya-bhāvopapatteh: BSB*, II, 2, 28.
20. *svayam-siddhasya ca sākṣiṇaḥ apratyākhyeyatvāt: BSB*, II, 2, 28.
21. *BSB*, *Adhyāsabhāṣya*.
22. *vide*, e.g. *svākāra-vṛtтыupohita-pramāṭṛ-caitanya-sattātirikta-sattākatva-śūnyatve sati, yogyatvam viśayasya pratyakṣatvam: Dharmrājadhvarīndra, Vedāntaparibhāṣā* (ed, S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri), First Pariccheda, 56.
23. *Ibid.*, First Pariccheda, 17.

24. *vide BS*, II, 3, 32, and Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary thereon.
25. *..yasya avadhānānavadhānābhyām upalabdhyanupalabdhi bhavataḥ tat manaḥ: BSB*, II, 3, 32.
26. *Bṛh.*, I, 5, 3: *vide Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary thereon.*
27. *vide Dharmarājādharīndra, Vedāntaparibhāṣā* (ed. S. S. Suryanarayana Sastrī), First *Pariccheda*, 58.
28. *Essentials of Logic*, p. 24.
29. *ibid.*, p. 138.
30. *vide W. T. Stace, A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, pp. 212-17.
31. Wordsworth's poem, 'Ode on the Intimations of Immortality' seems to be based on this idea. *vide*—  
 'Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
 The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
 And cometh from afar:  
 Not in entire forgetfulness,  
 And not in utter nakedness,  
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
 From God who is our home:'
32. *vide Bṛh.*, II, 4, 12.
33. *v.* 4.
34. We read in Browning's 'Paracelsus' as follows.  
 'Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise  
 From outward things, whate'er you may believe  
 There is an inmost centre in us all,



Where truth abides in fulness; and around  
 Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,  
 This perfect, clear perception—which is truth;  
 A baffling and perverting carnal mesh  
 Blinds it, and makes all error: and, 'to know'  
 Rather consists in opening out a way  
 Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,  
 Than in effecting entry for a light  
 Supposed to be without.....'

35. *vide* Dharmarājādhvarīndra, *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* (ed. S.S. Suryanarayana Sastri), First *Pariccheda*, 40.
36. D. Venkataramiah, *Pañcapādikā*, English translation (Gaekwad's Oriental Series, 1948), Introduction, p. xxii.
37. *Ibid.*, Introduction, pp. xxii-xxiii.
38. Sir James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe*, p. 110.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
40. *māyā-kalpita-deśa-kāla-kalanā-vaicitrya-citṛikṛtam*: Śrī Śaṅkara, *Dakṣiṇāmūrtyaṣṭakam*, v. 2.
41. *Human Knowledge, Its Scope and Limits*, p. 290.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 285-86.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 298-99.
44. L. P. Jacks. *Near the Brink*, p. 38.
45. G. T. W. Patrick, *Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 87.
46. *vide* S. C. Chatterjee and D. M. Datta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, pp. 382-84.
47. *The Individual and the Universe*, pp. 2-3.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

49. *vide* M. Hiriyarma, *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, p. 168.
50. *cf.* 'Ultimate Reality is such that it does not contradict itself; here is an absolute criterion F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 136.
51. *BSB*, II, 3, 43.
52. *Ibid.*, I, 2, 20. *ekasya eva tu bheda-vyavahārah upādihikṛtaḥ yathā ghaṭākāśaḥ mahākāśaḥ iti: Muṇḍ. B, III, 2, 7. vijñānamayaḥ ca ātmā avidyākṛta-buddhyādyupādhiṃ ātmatvena gatvā jalādiṣu sūryādi-pratibimbavat iha praviṣṭaḥ deha-bhedeṣu:*
53. *BSB.*, II, I, 14. *yathā ca mṛga-tṛṣṇīkodakādīnām ūṣarādibhyaḥ ananyatvaṃ dṛṣṭa-naṣṭa-svarūpatvāt svarūpeṇa anupākhyatvāt. evaṃ asya bhogya-, bhoktrādi-prapañca-jātasya brahma-vyattirekeṇa abhāvaḥ iti draṣṭavyam:*
54. *vide* Sadānanda, *Vedāntasāra* (ed. M. Hiriyanna), p. 3.
55. *vide* Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, III, 2, 7.
56. *BSB.*, II, I, 14. *bādhite ca śārirātmatve tadāśrayaḥ samastaḥ svābhāvikaḥ vyava-hārāḥ badhitaḥ bhavati...:*
57. *BhGB*, 16.
58. *Ibid.*, II, 16.
59. *vide*, e.g. *Pañcadaśī*, II, 64.
60. *vide* *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, v. 236; *Pañcadaśī*, II, 97.
61. Bosanquet, *Essentials of Logic*, p, 40.
62. *vide* *Pañcadaśī*, II, 21.



63. *vide*, e.g., *Pañcadaśī*, II, 68.
64. *vide Pañcadaśī*, II, 44-5.
65. *vide ibid.*, II, 46.
66. *vide ibid.*, II, 99.
67. *vide Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, v, 226.
68. *vide Brh.*, IV, 3, 9-10, and Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary thereon.
69. *Ibid.*,
70. *Ibid.*, II, 1, 18, and Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary thereon.
71. *Ibid.*, IV, 3, 15, and Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary thereon.
72. *Ibid.*, IV, 3, 16-7. and Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary thereon.
73. *vide Ibid.*, IV, 3, 7.
74. *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, vv. 120-21.
75. Referring to the expression *vināśamevāpīto bhavati*, occurring in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* passage VIII, II, 1, Śrī Śaṅkara says that it means only the annihilation of all specific cognition, not the annihilation of the cognizer. (*viśeṣa-vijñāna-vināśābhiprāyam eva, na vijñātr-vināśābhiprāyam.*): *BSB*, I, 3, 19.
76. *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, vv. 125-26.
77. *BSB*, II, 3, 18.
78. *vide* Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary on this passage.
79. *BSB*, I, 3, 9.
80. *vide Brh.*, IV, 3, 21, and Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary thereon.
81. *vide Pañcadaśī*, XI, 59-60.

82. *vide ibid.*, XI, 74.
83. *vide ibid.*, XI, 37-8.
84. *vide Brh.*, IV, 3, 19; *Chān.*, VI, 8, 2.
85. *vide Pañcadaśī*, XI, 43.
86. *vide Chān.*, VI, 8, 1.
87. *vide Chān.*, VIII, 3, 2. (Referring to this passage. Śrī Śaṅkara says that the term *Brahma-loka* here does not mean 'the world of Brahman', but 'the world which is Brahman'. Hence the import of this passage is that in deep sleep one is identical with Nirguṇa Brahman and not that one goes to the world of Saguṇa Brahman, i.e. *satya-loka*: *BSB*, I, 3, 15.)
- vide also Chān.*, VI, 9, 1-2.
88. *vide Pañcadaśī*, XI, 72.
89. *vide ibid.*, XI, 72 and 75.
90. *BSB*, I, 3, 9.
91. *vide Pañcadaśī*, I, 3-6.
92. *Brh.B.*, IV, 3, 18.
93. *vide Brh.*, IV, 5, 13.
94. *KenaB*, II, 4. *saṁvedana-svarūpatvāt saṁvedanāntarāpekṣā ca na saṁbhavati, yathā prakāśasyā prakāśāntarāpekṣāya na saṁbhavaḥ tadvat:*
95. *BSB*, II, 2, 2. *...pravṛtṭyanupapatteḥ api hetoḥ na acetanam jagat-kāraṇam anumātavyam bhavati:*



96. *Ibid.*, II, 2, 1. *tathā idam jagad-akhilam ..... sambhāvitatamaiḥ śilpibhiḥ manasāpi ālocayitum aśakyam sat katham acetanam pradhānam racayet?*
97. *vide Ibid.*, II, 2, 1.
98. *BhGB*, VII, 25.
99. *BhG*, VII, 6.
100. *vide Muṇḍ.*, I, 1, 7; *Bṛh.*, II, 1.20; *Śvet.*, VI, 10.
101. *vide* Sadānanda, *Vedāntasāra* (ed. M. Hiriyanna), pp. 3-7.
102. *vide ibid.*, pp. 3-7.
103. *vide Pañcadaśī*, VI, 182-85.
104. *vide BS*, II, 3, 14 and Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary thereon.
105. *BSB*, I, 4, 14.
106. *Ibid.*, I, 4, 14.
107. *Ibid.*, *satyapi pratedāntam sṛjyamāneṣu ākāśādiṣu kramādi-dvārake vigāne na sraṣṭari kimcit vigānamasti: BSB*, I, 4, 14.
108. *Ibid.*,
109. *vide Pañcadaśī*, VI, 22.
110. *vide Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*, III, 15 and Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary thereon.
111. *vide BS*, I, 1, 32.
112. *vide BSB*, II, 2, 37.

113. *Ibid.*, *na hi kaścit adoṣa-prayuktaḥ svārthe parārthe vā pravartamānaḥ drśyate:*
114. *vide BS*, II, 1, 33 and Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary thereon.
115. *vide Ibid.*, II, 1, 34 and Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary thereon. *vide Śvet.*, V, 5.
116. *BSB*, I, I, 2. *asya jagataḥ... prati-niyata-deśa-kāla - nimitta-kriyā - phalāśrayasya...:*
117. *vide Ibid.*, II, I, 35-6.
118. *vide Ibid.*, I, 3, 30.
119. *Ibid.*, II, I, 33. cf. *BhGB*, IX, 10.
120. *Śrībhāṣya* II, I, 14.
121. *BSB*, II, 1, 14. *na hi ekasya brahmaṇaḥ pariṇāma-dharmatvaṃ tad-rahitatvaṃ ca śakyam pratipattum:*
122. *Ibid.*, II, 1, 27.
123. *Ibid.*, II, I, 9.
124. *Ibid.*, I, 4, 3. *avidyātmikā hi bijaśaktiḥ...:*
125. *vide Ibid.*, I, 3, 30.
126. *Ibid.*, II, 1, 14. *na ca yathā brahmaṇa ātmaikatva-darśanam mokṣa-sādhnam, evam jagad-ākāra-pariṇāmitva-darśanam api svatantramev kasmaicit phalāyābhipreyate. pramāṇābhāvāt:*
127. *Ibid.*, I, 4, 14. ...*upakramopasamharabhyam tatra tatra brahma- vīlāai| vf1kyai/J siikamekaviikyatiifii gamyamllnalolit:*



128. *Bṛh-B*, II, 1, 20.

129. *Muṇḍ*, B, I, 1. 3.

130. *Bṛh*, B, II, 1, 20.

131. *vivartavādasya hi pūrvabhūmiḥ*

*vedāntavāde pariṇāmavādaḥ :*

Sarvajñātmanamuni, *Samkṣepaśārīraka*, II, 61.

132. *Chān.*, III, 14, 1.

#### ABBREVIATIONS:

*BhG* *Bhagavad-gītā*

*BhGB* *Bhagavad-gītā-bhāṣya* of Śrī Śaṅkara

*Bṛh* *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*

*Bṛh.B* *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* of Śrī Śaṅkara

*BS* *Brahma-sūtra*

*BSB* *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* of Śrī Śaṅkara

*Chān.* *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*

*Kena* *Kena Upaniṣad*

*Kena B* *Kena Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* of Śrī Śaṅkara

*Muṇḍ.* *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*

*Muṇḍ.B* *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya* of Śrī Śaṅkara

*Svet.* *Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad.*



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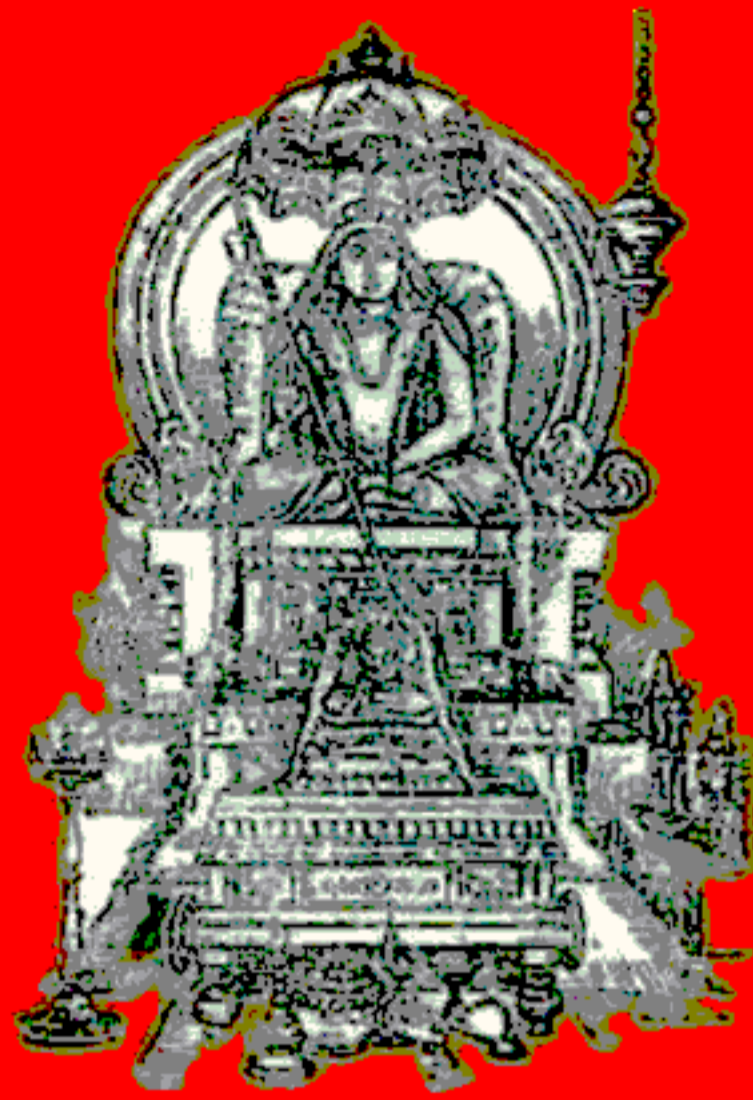
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संसाराध्वनि तापभानुकिरणप्रोद्भूतदाहव्यथा-  
खिन्नानां जलकाङ्क्षया मरुभुवि भ्रान्त्या परिभ्राम्यताम् ।  
अत्यासन्नसुधाम्बुधिं सुखकरं ब्रह्माद्वयं दर्शय-  
न्त्येषा शाङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसन्दायिनी ॥

*samsārādhvani tāpabhānukiranaprodhbhūtadāhavyathā-  
khinnānām jalakāṅksayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā paribhramyatām  
atyāsannasudhāmbudhim sukhakaram brāhmādvayam darsaya-  
ntyēṣā śāṅkara-bhārātī vijayate nīrvāṇa-sandāyīnī.*

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.