

7

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ŚAṄKARA



Swami Satchidanandendra Saraswathi

Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya

Holenarsipur - 573 211

1998

Books You Ought To Read

Salient Features of Śaṅkara's Vedānta

Although many books are very popular probably because their authorship has been ascribed to the great Śaṅkara, they contain tenets in conflict with one another and the various doctrines contained in the three groups of works collectively called the 'Prasthāna Trayī', indisputably ascribed to Śaṅkara. As it is not easy for beginners to consolidate and discriminate for themselves the genuine Vedāntic doctrines, an attempt is made by the Swāmiji to solve this problem. **Pages : 110**

Intuition of Reality

Another masterpiece from the pen of Shri Swāmi Satchidānandendra Saraswati, who has very ably illustrated as to how the Vedāntic Knowledge is not mere subtle intellectualism, but it is an 'Intuition' of the Ultimate Reality arising through Divine Grace. The writer has incidentally refuted the oft-repeated assertion that Śaṅkara's philosophy is an out-and-out rationalistic system and that he has provided no place for Īśwara in his Advaita Philosophy. **Pages : 105**

Śaṅkara's Clarification of Certain Vedāntic Concepts

The Upanishads contain two sets of teaching regarding Brahman or Reality, addressed to two different levels of the mind. To the highest grade of the aspirants belongs the disciple who has attained the mental equipment necessary for entering upon the course of study, either in this birth or who possesses an introvert mind as a result of disciplines undergone in his previous lives - qualifying him to grasp the teaching imparted in the Śruti. This class of seekers comprises two grades. The first needs only reminding of the true nature of one's Self by the Śruti through an experienced adept who has himself experienced the truths of Vedānta, while the second requires guidance for the contemplation of the spiritual steps through which one has ultimately to reach that same Self. It is to this class of both the grades that this book is expected to be of some assistance in the study of Vedānta. **Pages : 90**

Adhyātma Granthāvali

**MISCONCEPTIONS
ABOUT
SANKARA**

BY

*SWAMI SATCHIDANANDENDRA
SARASWATHI*

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Publishers' Note

(First Edition)

We feel overjoyed in being able to announce the publication of this comprehensive work on Sankara's views on the Advaita Vedanta. We had temporarily to postpone the publication of 'The Upanishadic Approach to Reality' which had been entrusted to us earlier, for fear that the author may not be able to finish this last work that emerged from his pen owing to the unexpectedly rapid approach of cataract which came in the way of the indefatigable zeal with which his entire life has been dedicated to the task of restoring Sankara's teachings on their pristine purity freed from all later encrustations in the shape of misinterpretations by recent writers.

The publication has been financed by the branch of Karyalaya out of the contributions from generous friends, who, we learn from the secretary, prefer to remain incognito.

Holenarsipur
November, 1973

Y. Narasappa
Chairman, A.P. Karyalaya
Executive Committee

Second Edition

As there was an increasing demand for this enlightening work of Swamiji, which was out of stock, we have pleasure in bringing out this edition.

Holenarsipur
10.12.1998

A. Thandaveshwar
Chairman, A.P. Karyalaya

PREFACE

Earnest students of Sri Śaṅkarāchārya's Advaita system, have reason to be bewildered in their attempt to ascertain his exact teaching about the message of the Upanishads to seekers of the Highest Good universally believed by orthodox followers of the *Sanātana Dharma*, to have been promised by those sacred revelations to man.

This is so neither because of the obscurity of style or the absence of precision of thought expressed in the writings of Śaṅkara himself, nor because of the paucity of explanatory literature on the subject. On the contrary, there are two fertile sources of this confusion. In the first place, Śaṅkara's works are now generally studied and taught by learned Pandits who are mostly guided by popular Sanskrit works relying on one or more of the conflicting sub-commentaries claiming to propound Śaṅkara's thought. And in the second place, neither the professors nor the oriental scholars, who undertake to write on the subject in English, seem to be earnest in entering upon a comparative study of the varying estimates of Śaṅkara presented by the sub-commentaries and the adverse critics of (Śaṅkara) belonging to other schools on the one hand, and in the original works of Śaṅkara, independent of the commentaries on the other, before arriving at any conclusion about the genuine views of that Ācharya.

I have attempted to invite the attention of scholars in general and the Vidwans of our country in particular, to the urgency of such a study, by publishing several pamphlets and books as well as a few elaborate works in Kannada, Sanskrit and English. Owing to my rapidly failing health and eyesight, I have now thought it fit to condense my views within the limited compass of this small book appealing to the thoughtful Vedāntins of our country to consider how far my conclusions are acceptable and to offer their candid opinion in this matter,

so that all the assessments of my humble opinions, may be consolidated in the symposium proposed to be published by the Kāryālaya.

The booklet now presented to Vedāntins for critical appreciation, naturally contains my personal views as a sample of what is expected from the contributors to the forthcoming symposium. (1) I have taken the Sūtra Bhāshya as the chief court of appeal for the obvious reason that it is an exegetical work which comprehends not only Śāṅkara's considered conclusions and lays down the principles by which an interpretation of Advaita-Vedānta, has to be guided, but also because it convincingly shows the critical qualified seeker how the truth of Advaita Vedānta may be intuited as corresponding to the real nature of the Self of each one of us. (2) Quotations from the Gītā-Bhāshya or any other commentary, are drawn upon only to confirm any conclusion based upon the Sūtra-Bhāshya. (3) I have tried to classify the important misconceptions under particular heads, and have produced my vouchers mainly in the form of citations from the Sūtra-Bhāshya. And lastly (4) I have tried to show how Śāṅkara's teachings can be corroborated by the declarations of the only traditional teacher, Sri Gauḍapādāchārya, whose classical work is still available for reference.

I am fully aware that many an item of discussion noticed here, might have been developed and presented as an independent work by itself. But my object was only to list all the important topics in a neat and compact brochure for the ready reference of the critical scholars.

I hope that the Table of contents and the Word-Index will be of some service to the reader in this direction.

Bangalore.
24-10-1973

Author

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ABBREVIATIONS

N. B. - The name of each Upanishad or other work has been contracted into the initial letter or letters and the Bhāshya thereon has been indicated by the symbol 'Bh'. Thus : G-*Gīta* ; GBh-*Gītā Bhāshya*.

अध्या. भा.	Intro	Introduction to Sūtra Bhāshya
ई.	Isa	Īśāvāsyōpanishad
ऐ.	Ai.	Aitareyōpanishad
का.	Kā.	Kāthakōpanishad
के.	Ke.	Kenōpanishad
गी.	G.	Bhagavadgītā
गौ. का.	GK.	Gaudapāda's Kārikās on Māndūkya
छं.	Ch.	Chāndōgyōpanishad
तै.	Tai.	Taittirīyōpanishad
तै. आ.	Tai. Ar.	Taittirīya Āraṇyaka
पा.	P.	Para number of Śaṅkara Bhāshya as in the Karyalaya Publication.
प्र.	Pr.	Praśnōpanishad
बृ.	Br.	Bṛhadāraṇyakōpanishad
भामती	Bhamathi	The Sub-commentary By Vāchaspati Miśra on Sūtra- Bhāshya of Śaṅkara
मां.	Mā.	Māndūkyaōpanishad
मुं.	Mu.	Mundakōpanishad
वे. सू.	VS.	Vedānta-Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa
सू. भा.	SBh.	Śaṅkara's Bhāshya on <i>Vedānta-Sūtras</i>
श्वे.	Sve.	Śvetāsvatarōpanishad

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ŚAṄKARA

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INTRODUCTION

There are a number of misconceptions that have gained currency, both in India and abroad, with regard to the biography, mission in life and the lasting work wrought by the great Śaṅkarāchārya of world-wide fame. And in my humble opinion, any assessment of his Vedāntic System, is bound to lose much of its value, unless these misconceptions are first removed from the public mind by a consensus of opinion of Vedānta-vidwāns and scholars interested in the teachings of the Upanishads.

Except for some poetical or half-poetical legendary works called *Śaṅkara-Vijayas*, written or caused to be written by authors biased towards their own peculiar doctrines or religious practices, long after the departure of the Āchārya, there are no reliable historical accounts of his life or the reforms he effected in society. Even the place and date of his birth or exit, his parentage and the chief incidents in his life, have not been definitely ascertained till to-day.

That he was the founder of the Advaitic System of Vedānta, that he resuscitated some religious sects and placed them on a firm footing, and that he established four different mutts in the four cardinal directions of India with the object of propagating

Vedānta, are some of the prevalent popular beliefs which are yet to be corroborated by indisputable historical evidence.

In these circumstances, it would appear to be best for us to rest content with believing that Śaṅkara still lives in his Vedāntic works, especially in the three classical works in the shape of Bhāshyas on the Upanishads, the Bhagavadgītā and the Vedānta-Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa.

Of these three Institutes of Vedānta collectively known by the name of the *Prasthānatrayī*, the canonical Upanishads, about thirteen in number, form the basic source which Śaṅkara has recognized, as exclusively revealing the nature of Brahman or Reality. One who is of the highest type of qualified aspirants, should be able to see the Truth immediately without any other extraneous assistance from this *Śruti-Prasthāna* alone. But for those who are not up to the mark, the study of the Bhagvadgītā or the *Smṛti-Prasthāna* is also necessary. That work not only explains the Vedāntic teaching concerning Brahman or Ātman compendiously, but also sets forth at length, the needful course of discipline (*Sādhana*) besides the central teaching (*Siddhānta*). Seekers of the middling type, therefore, have to supplement the study of the teaching of the Upanishads by undergoing this course before they are able to see Reality with the direct insight, aimed at in Vedānta. And thirdly, the qualified students of the last class, have to master Badarayana's

Śāriraka Mīmāṃsā also, which has been called the *Nyāya Prasthāna*, that which recommends the method of approach adopted in the investigation of Reality with the aid of *Manana* (reflection on the significance of the Upanishadic teaching) or Vedāntic Reason. It is in this branch of Vedāntic study, where Śaṅkara is at his best not only in making the original source quite intelligible by reducing them to a systematic whole, but also by showing the unique indubitable nature of Vedāntic Vision of Ātman according to his own tradition in contrast to all other systematizations conceivable.

We shall therefore restrict ourselves chiefly to this Āchārya's Bhāshya on the Vedāntic-Sūtras in determining his genuine traditional teaching for the purpose of exposing the various misconceptions rampant among modern interpretations.

ŚAṄKARA'S MISSION IN LIFE

1. That Śaṅkara was commissioned by his Guru to write a Bhāshya on Advaita to counteract other sectarian views, is nowhere vouched for in the accredited classical works of that Āchārya. But for a solitary verse at the end of the commentary on Gauḍapāda's Kārikās, which perhaps may be guessed to have been a reference to his direct preceptor, we have no mention of Gōvinda-Bhagavatpāda, who is believed to have inspired him with any such mission.

2. The belief that Advaita is just one school

of Vedānta which has always been current side by side with the Dvaita of Madhvāchāryā, and the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānujāchārya, is easily disposed of by the consideration of the fact, that Śaṅkara himself refers to numerous Advaitic schools, whose interpretation he has been at considerable pains to refute in his Bhāshyas. While the Bhāshyas of Śaṅkara do refer to the Sāṅkhyas, Yōgas, Vaiśeshikas and other dualistic Darśanas opposed to Vedānta, there is not a single hint either in Śaṅkara's works or in those of any contemporaneous writers, to indicate that Vedāntic schools like the modern Dvaita or Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta, existed at the time of or before Śaṅkara.

3. That Śaṅkara was not the founder of this particular traditional interpretation of Vedānta, can be readily known through his express reference to Gauḍapāda as 'one who knows the traditional way of interpreting the Vedāntas or Upanishads'. अत्रोक्तं वेदान्त-संप्रदायविद्भिराचार्यैः (SBh. 2-1-9), तथा च संप्रदायविदो वदन्ति (SBh. 1-4-14).

4. The theory that the pre-Śaṅkara-Vedānta was more akin to Rāmānuja's System, formulated on the flimsy evidence of certain recent Vedāntic writers like Bhāskara, Yāmunāchārya and Rāmānuja who have cited certain names of ancient Vedāntins, cannot be substantiated, as we have no significant extracts from those writers relied upon by the hostile

critics. On the other hand, we have several Advaitic schools mentioned by both Śaṅkara in his *Sūtra-Bhāshya* and Sureśvara in his *Sambandha-Vārtika* - whose views have been stated and criticized at length from the rational as well as exegetical stand-point.

5. Śaṅkara and Gauḍapāda, have been both charged with having *deliberately imported Buddhistic doctrines* into Vedānta by adverse Bhāshyakāras, and there have been oriental scholars who have tried to show how Gauḍapāda has actually adopted words which have significant meaning only in Buddhistic philosophy, borrowed verses verbatim or adapted them from Buddhistic works and has taken over doctrines like non-origination and the *Chatushkōṭi* dialectic (the logic of the inapplicability of the four possible alternative predicates to the Absolute). And some scholars have gone to the length of supposing that Gauḍapāda was himself *a hidden Buddhist*, as some non-advaitic Vedāntins have styled him. That all this, is the result of a hasty conjecture, has been demonstrated on the strength of available evidence, in my Sanskrit commentary on the Māṇḍūkya,* and the English Introduction to it. The foundation of Gauḍapādā's *ajāti-vāda* no less than that of Śaṅkara (the doctrine of the unborn Brahman) is in the Upanishads themselves, which emphatically declare अजायमानो बहुधा विजायते 'Being never born, He is mayically

* The Māṇḍūkya-Rahasya-Vivṛti, published by the Karyalaya.

born in many ways' (Tai. Ar. 3-18). The phrase अजमनिद्रमस्वप्नम् (G.K. 1-16, 3-36, 4-81) repeatedly occurring in Gauḍapāda's Kārikās, and ascribed by Śaṅkara to 'knowers of Vedāntic tradition' (SBh. 2-1-9), is a clincher on this point, for there is not a shred of evidence to show that the Buddhistic philosophers relied on the examination of the three states of consciousness, to support the doctrine that Reality is non-dual, unborn and free from the sleep of ignorance (*anidram*) and devoid of the dream of misconception (*asvapnam*). As for the Dialectic of four alternatives, the reader should carefully note that while the dialectic aims at showing the impossibility of Causation, Gauḍapāda insists that there is the Revered Lord or Absolute untouched by all the four alternatives (G.K. 4-84).

6. It is a *conjecture* unsupported by any historical evidence, to suppose that Śaṅkara's or even Gauḍapāda's chief aim, was to counteract the influence on peoples' mind, of the prevailing Buddhism. Śaṅkara's Bhāshya proclaims that Vedānta was being misinterpreted by many *Vṛittikāras*, and that his commentaries were intended to restore the traditional way of interpretation. Even in Gauḍapāda's work, the conflicting views of the Buddhists have been relegated to the very last chapter, and it has been shown there that, while some of the Buddhistic speculations come into line with Vedāntic reason *the doctrine of non-dual intuition of Ātman was never*

referred to by the Buddha (नैतद् बुद्धेन भाषितम् G.K. 4-99).

THE UNIQUE FEATURE OF ŚAṄKARA'S WORK

7. It is not right to regard Śaṅkara's as only one more school to offer its own system brought out of the Upanishads by means of the artifice of certain peculiar ways of interpretation, just like any other school ancient or modern ; for quite unlike other commentators on the Vedānta Sūtras, Śaṅkara begins his Bhāshya, with an *Introduction* dealing with *Adhyāsa* - otherwise called *Avidyā* without postulating any theory or acceptance of *Pramāṇas* (the valid sources of right knowledge), and appeals to universal intuition throughout. After conclusively showing how all evils of mundane life, are due to this natural tendency of the human mind, he claims that the main purport of the Upanishads, otherwise known as Vedāntās, is to reveal the wisdom which finally sublates this avidyā or nescience.

The student of Śaṅkara's procedure in interpreting the Upanishads would do well to bear in mind the following axiomatic truth which he puts forward about the validity of the Upanishadic teaching.

न धर्मजिज्ञासायामिव श्रुत्यादय एव प्रमाणं ब्रह्मजिज्ञासायाम्, किं तु श्रुत्यादयोऽनुभवादयश्च यथासंभवमिह प्रमाणम् ; अनुभाववसानत्वात्, भूतवस्तु-विषयत्वाच्च ब्रह्मविज्ञानस्य ॥ सू. भा. १-१-२, २८.

“*Śruti and the other holy works, are not the sole means of right knowledge in the enquiry into the nature of Brahman, as they are in the case of enquiry into the nature of Dharma (religious duty); but Śruti etc. and intuition and other accessories also, are the means here according to the context. For the knowledge of Brahman, has to culminate in intuition and relates to an existent entity.*” SBh. 1-1-2, 28.

No other commentator of Bādarāyaṇa’s Sūtras, has accepted this maxim in his interpretation of the Upanishadic texts.

8. It is not right to say that Śaṅkara postulates a hypothetical avidyā (avidyā-śakti) which has transformed itself into egoity called ahankāra which in its turn, has been superimposed on Ātman or the Self. On the contrary, he maintains - as we have already seen (para 7) - that the beginningless mutual superimposition of the real Ātman and the unreal not-self, is itself the beginningless Avidyā or basic nescience which occasions all the conventions of human life. This hypothetical avidyā, has been taught, in the sub-commentaries (beginning with the *Pañchapādika*) on Śaṅkara’s Bhāshya, with varying theories appended to it, and is responsible for the numerous conflicting interpretations now parading themselves in the garb of Śaṅkara’s Vedānta. Many of the adverse criticisms of Śaṅkara’s Advaita, have sprung up mostly owing to a signal failure to discriminate the original teaching and the doctrines foisted on it by the sub-commentators. A Sanskrit book called the *Pañchapādika-Prasthānam* has been

published by the present writer showing how the non-discrimination of the new doctrines contained in this book from the genuine doctrines, has been a fruitful source of confusion concerning Śaṅkara's Vedānta.

AVIDYĀ AND MĀYĀ

9. **Avidyā and Māyā are not synonymous terms in Śaṅkara-Vedānta.** It is some post-Śaṅkara's Vedāntins who have treated Avidyā and Māyā to be identical (see para 21). Nor has Māyā been even treated as a statement of contradictions involved in our experience of the world and in our knowledge of it, as some are tempted to explain it. The word '*anirvachanīya*' may have been perhaps responsible for the formulation of such a theory (see para 21 sequel). Avidyā is subjective and has been explained by Śaṅkara as the natural tendency of the mind to superimpose the Self and the not-self on each other, while *Māyā* is the name given to *Prakṛti* or name and form in seed form, which gives rise to all the different phenomena.

सर्वज्ञस्य ईश्वरस्य आत्मभूते इवाविद्याकल्पिते नामरूपे तत्त्वान्यत्वा-
भ्यामनिर्वचनीये संसारप्रपञ्चबीजभूते सर्वज्ञस्य ईश्वरस्य माया, शक्तिः,
प्रकृतिः - इति च श्रुतिस्मृत्योरभिलष्येते ॥ सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४४०.

“Name and form, fancied by avidyā as though identical with the omniscient Īśvara, but which are undefinable, as identical with or other than (Īśvara), constituting the seed of

the phenomenal world of mundane life, have been called the *Māyā*, *Sakti* and *Prakṛti* of the omniscient Lord, in both the Śruti and Smṛti” SBh. 2-1-14, 440.

BRAHMAN AND ĪŚVARA

10. Brahman is the *cause* of the birth, sustenance and dissolution of the universe differentiated into name and form, containing numerous agents and experiencers of the fruits of actions (SBh. 1-1-2). From the highest standpoint of Vedānta (*Paramārtha-Dṛṣṭi*), this causality simply means that *the universe, being a superimposition on Brahman, has no existence of its own* apart from Brahman.

From Ślōkas of Gauḍapāda like

स्वतो वा परतो वापि न किञ्चिद्वस्तु जायते ।

सदसत्सदसद्वापि न किञ्चिद्वस्तु जायते ॥ (गौ. का. ४-२२)

where causality is rejected on rational grounds, many have surmised that this is a total rejection of all causality, and that Śaṅkara’s tradition has bodily imported the *ajātivāda* of Buddhists. But the fact is that Gauḍapāda himself accepts the *Māyā-Satkāryavāda* of Vedānta at the *Vyāvahārika* level. Compare ‘मायया जायते’ (‘Is born through Māyā’ - G.K. 3-24), ‘सतो हि मायया जन्म’ (‘of what is, birth through Māyā is possible’ - G.K.3-27).*

* For additional information on this subject, see the author’s *Māṇḍūkya-Rahasya-Vivṛti* (Sanskrit) and the English Introduction to that work.

From the empirical standpoint, however, Brahman[•] is *Īśvara* the Lord, who rules over all the *Jīvas* or individual selves. From this point of view, Brahman is described to be omniscient, omnipotent, and by nature eternally pure, conscious and free. *Some interpreters of Śaṅkara, have been misled by the use of the word Īśvara, which is also used to denote Saguna-Brahman (Brahman with qualities) to be meditated upon. In consequence of this misconception they have invented a theory that knowers of Brahman, become one with the qualified Brahman in the first instance, and that the final merging in the Absolute Brahman, takes place only after all the Jīvas have thus attained this initial freedom. That this doctrine is altogether foreign to Śaṅkara Bhāshya, becomes crystal-clear, when it is observed that Śaṅkara uses the epithets सर्वज्ञः सर्वेश्वरः, सर्वात्मकोऽद्वितीयः 'Omniscient, the Lord of all, the Self of all, the one without a second' (SBh. 2-1-14) to the same Reality which he has styled as 'Īśvara' as also 'Paramesvara' (SBh. 1-1-17)*

11. It is not right to think that this relative term *Īśvara* (Ruler of the selves) applied to Brahman affects its really real nature as the Absolute One without a second. For **Brahman is Īśvara only when we concede the distinction of the Ruler and the ruled from the empirical standpoint.** *Īśvara* is conditioned by *Māyā* (name and form) conjured up by *Avidyā*, whereas *Jīvas* (individual selves) are conditioned by

the associates of the aggregates of the body and the organs, the effect of name and form so conjured up :

तदेवं अविद्यात्मकोपाधिपरिच्छेदापेक्षमेव ईश्वरस्य ईश्वरत्वं, सर्वज्ञत्वं, सर्वशक्तित्वं च ; न परमार्थतो विद्यया अपास्तसर्वोपाधिस्वरूपे आत्मनि ईशित्रीशितव्यसर्वज्ञत्वादिव्यवहारः उपपद्यते ॥ सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४४०.

“Thus Īśvara’s Īśvara-nature, omniscience, and omnipotence, are only relative to the limitation due to the conditioning associates called up by Avidyā, whereas from the Pāramārthika standpoint there can be neither Īśvara-nature nor the convention of omniscience etc., in the Ātman who is of the intrinsic nature altogether devoid of all conditioning associates when they are sublated by wisdom” SB. 2-1-14, 440.

OMNISCIENCE OF BRAHMAN

12. It would not be an accurate deduction from the above-cited excerpt, to think that omniscience of Brahman is wholly a figment of avidyā. Brahman may not be the knower of all from the Pāramārthic standpoint, inasmuch as there is really nothing else to be known. But consciousness or the knowing nature itself, is the intrinsic nature of Reality, and as such, can never be alienated from Brahman. Śaṅkara says this in so many words in the following statement :-

यस्य हि सर्वविषयावभासनक्षमं ज्ञानं नित्यमस्ति, सोऽसर्वज्ञः इति विप्रतिषिद्धम् ॥ सू. भा. १-१-५, ६९.

“It is a self-contradiction to hold that He who has eternal knowledge capable of throwing light on everything, is not omniscient”. SBh. 1-1-5, 69.

It goes without saying that this argument might be extended to omnipotence also with equal force ; for while Brahman cannot be supposed to possess a power by virtue of which it can create the world, It may, however, be of the very essence of that power.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

13. It is not right to think that **Bādarāyaṇa's doctrine of the identity of the effect with the cause**, is the same as the kindred doctrine of the Sāṅkhyas. For he stoutly declares that the effect or the universe of sentient and insentient things, is in itself unreal, and has no existence, independent of Brahman the cause. (Vide the Bhāshya on VS. 1-4-14, 2-1-7, and 2-1-14).

EMPIRICAL REALITY OF THE UNIVERSE

14. The universe is not an illusion according to Bādarāyana as explained by Śaṅkara. *Vyāvahāra* (human procedure in common life), has its own criterion for testing reality and unreality. It is the Buddhists who deny reality to external objects. The Vijnānavādin says that the object is identical with the idea, since both of them are experienced together. (सहोपलम्भनियमादभेदो विषयविज्ञानयोः ॥ सू. भा. २-२-२८). Since the independent existence of the outside object, is inconceivable, he concludes, that it is the idea within alone that appears as though it were outside. But Śaṅkara draws our attention to the principle प्रमाणप्रवृत्त्यप्रवृत्तिपूर्वकं हि संभवासंभवौ अवधार्येते, न पुनः संभवासंभवपूर्विके

प्रमाणप्रवृत्त्यप्रवृत्ती ॥ “It is on the evidence or want of evidence of some valid means of knowledge, that we have to determine the conceivability or the inconceivability of the existence of a thing, and not vice versa”.

(SBh. 2-2-28).

It will be noted that from the really real (*Pāramārthic*) standpoint of Vedānta.

अविद्याख्यम् आत्मानात्मनोरितरेतराध्यासं पुरस्कृत्य सर्वे
प्रमाणप्रमेयव्यवहारा लौकिका वैदिकाश्च प्रवृत्ताः, सर्वाणि च शास्त्राणि
विधिप्रतिषेधमोक्षपराणि ॥ अव - ५.

“It is on the presupposition of the superimposition of the Ātman and the un-ātman called ‘avidyā’ that all conventions of Pramāṇas and Prameyas (means and objects of knowledge) and all the Śāstras-whether injunctive and prohibitive, or teaching Mōksha, function.” - Intro. SBh. 5.

Śaṅkara does not, however, deny the **validity of Pramāṇas** in the empirical field, even while he does aver that they can never survive to function after the knowledge of the unity of Ātman.

यावद् हि न सत्यात्मैकत्वप्रतिपत्तिः, तावत् प्रमाणप्रमेयफललक्षणेषु
विकारेषु अनृतत्वबुद्धिर्न कस्यचिदुत्पद्यते । विकारानेव तु ‘अहं, मम’
इत्यविद्यया आत्मात्मीयेन भावेन सर्वो जन्तुः प्रतिपद्यते स्वाभाविकीं ब्रह्मात्मतां
हित्वा । तस्मात्, प्राग्ब्रह्मात्मताप्रतिबोधात् उपपन्नः सर्वो लौकिको वैदिकश्च
व्यवहारः ; यथा सुप्तस्य प्राकृतस्य जनस्य स्वप्ने उच्चावचान् भावान्
पश्यतः, निश्चितमेव प्रत्यक्षाभिमतं विज्ञानं भवति प्राक् प्रबोधात्, न च
प्रत्यक्षाभासाभिप्रायस्तत्काले भवति, तद्वत् ॥ सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४३६.

“So long as there has not been the knowledge of the unity of the real Ātman, the notion of unreality regarding the valid means and objects of knowledge as well as that of the resultant knowledge, never occurs to any one. Every living soul looks upon the effects themselves as ‘me and mine’-related to one another as one’s own Self and something belonging to oneself, disregarding one’s own nature of identity with Brahmātman. Therefore, every secular and Vedic procedure is consistent till awakening to one’s identity with Brahman. This is just like the idea of certainty about the perception striking to a common man, who sees things of various grades of existence in a dream before waking, but never suspects at the time that it might be only a semblance of perception”

SBh. 2-1-14, 436.

THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURE OF ŚRUTI-PRAMĀṆA

15. It is evident that *Vedāntic procedure in teaching the true nature of Brahman - no less than that of enjoining Upāsana, is also entirely within the region of Vedic Vyavahāra*, in contrast with empirical vyavahāra which is restricted to external phenomena. Only, the Upanishads chiefly deal with transcendental truths beyond the ken of all empirical Pramāṇas like sensuous perception.

It would not be proper or fair, however, to treat all Vedāntic Vyavahāra to be on a par with texts dealing with Karma and Upāsana, and to rest content with quoting some Upanishadic text even in the case of texts which purport to determine the real nature of Ātman. For, as we have already seen (para 7, p. 6), the distinctive feature of Śaṅkara’s traditional

interpretation, is that Śruti texts are not Pramāṇa merely on the score of their being Śruti texts, but because they appeal to certain partial intuitions by co-ordinating which the inquirer lands himself at the final universal intuition of Ātman which transcends all Vyavahāra including that of *Śruti-pramāṇya* (validity of Śruti) as a means of right knowledge. Śaṅkara repeatedly quotes the following text as a voucher for this :

यत्र त्वस्य सर्वमात्मैवाभूत् तत्केन कं पश्येत् तत्केन कं जिघ्रेत् तत्केन कं रसयेत् तत्केन कमभिवदेत् तत्केन कं श्रुणुयात् तत्केन कं मन्वीत तत्केन कं स्पृशेत् तत्केन कं विजानीयात्॥ बृ. ४-५-१५.

“Where, however, all has become Ātman alone for this knower, there, what could one see and with what, there, what could one smell and with what, there, what could one taste and with what, there, what could one say and with what, there, what could one listen to and with what, there, what could one reflect upon and with what, there, what could one touch and with what, there, what could one understand and with what ? ”

Bṛ. 4-5-15.

Human procedure of using Pramāṇas to know or deal with objects of knowledge, has been absolutely denied in this text for one who has intuited Ātman as the One without a second. Besides this text which negates all Pramāṇas and their function in general terms, there is a specific passage which Śaṅkara quotes as particularly proclaiming that the Vedas become no Vedas on the plane of the unity of Ātman :

यत्र त्वस्य सर्वमात्मैवाभूत् तत्केन कं पश्येत् (बृ. ४-५-१४)
 इत्यादिना हि प्रबोधे प्रत्यक्षाद्यभावं दर्शयति । प्रत्यक्षाद्यभावे श्रुतेरप्यभाव-
 प्रसङ्गः इति चेत् ; न, इष्टत्वात् । ‘अत्र पिताऽपिता भवति’ (बृ. ४-
 ३-२२) इत्युपक्रम्य ‘वेदा अवेदाः’ (बृ. ४-३-२२) इतिवचनात् इष्यत
 एवास्माभिः श्रुतेरप्यभावः प्रबोधे ॥ सू. भा. ४-१-३, ५१०.

“The text beginning with where all has become Ātman alone for the knowing one, there, what could one see and with what ?” points out how (Pramāṇas) like perception cease to exist when enlightenment dawns.

(Objection :-) If there are no perception and other Pramāṇas, the repugnant conclusion would follow that even the Śruti could cease to be !

(Reply :-) Not so. For it is desirable. (To explain:-) For on the strength of the text which begins with ‘Here the father becomes no father’ and says “Vedas become no Vedas’, we do accept even the non-existence of Śruti when enlightenment dawns.” SBh. 4-1-3, 510

THE USEFULNESS OF THE DISTINCTION OF THE TWO VIEWS

16. This distinction of absolute Reality and *Vyavahara* from the standpoint of empirical life, should be unfailingly borne in mind in order to reconcile the several seeming self-contradictory statements in Śāṅkara-Bhashya. Apparent contradictions with regard to fructifying (*Prārābdha*) karmas, Upāsanās, transmigration, the three states of consciousness, the state of beginninglessness of Samsāra, gradation in Mōksha, the distinction of the

Higher and the Lower Brahman and other doctrines with which the Sūtra-Bhāshya is teemed with, are all resolved when one reminds oneself with the principle on which this important distinction of the two standpoints, is based. Ignoring this distinction, has been mainly responsible for the imputation of incorrect views to Śaṅkara and the unjustifiable criticisms of this school of Vedānta by adverse critics.

THE COMPREHENSIVE SIGNIFICATION OF THE WORD 'ATMAIKATVA-VIDYĀ'

17. *Atmaikatva-Vidyā* or the wisdom of the Absolute Reality, has been sometimes misinterpreted to mean the identity of Brahman and the individual Ātman and the *pratipatti* (intuition) of this *ekatva* (or identity) has been taken to mean immediate experience (*Sākshatkāra*) to be attained through *Nididhyāsana* or a sort of "Bhāvana" (or creative imagination) in accordance with *Śravaṇa* (study of Vedāntic texts) and *manana*. That this is incorrect, is readily seen by observing that Śaṅkara frequently uses the words Ātman, Brahmātman, and Brahman synonymously :-

(१) एवं तावत् वेदान्तवाक्यानां ब्रह्मात्मावगतिप्रयोजनानां ब्रह्मात्मनि तात्पर्येण समन्वितानां अन्तरेणापि कार्यानुप्रवेशं ब्रह्मणि पर्यवसानमुक्तम् ॥

सू. भा. १-१-५, ६४.

[Here the words, Brahmātman, and Brahman are used synonymously. The Vedāntās are declared to have the only purport of teaching Brahmātman]. SBh. 1-1-5-64

(२) आदिशब्दात् 'ऐतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं तत्सत्यं स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो'। 'इदं सर्वं यदयमात्मा', 'ब्रह्मैवेदं सर्वम्', 'आत्मैवेदं सर्वम्', 'नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन' - इत्येवमाद्यप्यात्मैकत्वप्रतिपादनपरं वचनजातम् उदाहर्तव्यम् ॥ सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४३४.

[Here the texts containing the words Ātman, and Brahman are said to teach 'the unity of Ātman' (Atmaikatva)]

(३) 'भोक्ता भोग्यं प्रेरितारं च मत्वा सर्वं प्रोक्तं त्रिविधं ब्रह्म मे तत्' (श्वे. १-१२) इति समस्तस्य भोग्यभोक्तृनियन्तृलक्षणस्य प्रपञ्चस्य ब्रह्मैकस्वभावतामधीयते ॥ सू. भा. ३-२-१३, २८०.

[Here the triple distinction of the experiencer, experienced, and the Ruler, is declared to be taught as being of the nature of One Brahman.]

THE WORDS ADVAITA AND ADVAYA

18. The word *advaita*, has been restricted by some scholars to mean the identity of *Jīva* and *Īśvara*, and *Advaya* has been supposed by them to be a Buddhistic term borrowed and incorporated with Vedānta by Gauḍapāda. That there is no foundation for this theory, is seen from the fact that Gauḍapāda, Śaṅkara and Sureśvara have uniformly used the term *advaita* to mean one without a second, in accordance with the Śruti 'एकमेवाद्वितीयम्' (Ch. 6-2-1) "One without a second". Here is a statement of Śaṅkara from the Sūtra-Bhāṣhya :

नन्वेवम् अद्वितीयश्रुतिरुपरुध्येत । न । अविद्याकृतनामरूपोपाधिकतया
परिहृतत्वात् ॥ सू. भा. ४-३-१४, ५८२.

Here Śaṅkara is justifying the advaitic teaching that Brahman is of two kinds, Higher and Lower. The Śruti which emphatically says that Brahman is without a second, is not nullified by this division of Brahman according to Śaṅkara, because the second or Lower Brahman is only Brahman with the conditioning associates conjured up by avidyā. The reader will note that the 'Advaita' Śruti is invoked here to support, not the identity of Jīva and Īśvara, but only the absolute unity of Brahman or Ātman.

Gauḍapāda similarly writes 'मायामात्रमिदं द्वैतमद्वैतं परमार्थतः ।' "This duality is only māyic, the only Reality being non-dual' (GK. 1-17). The critical reader will do well to note that Gauḍapāda prefers the use of the term 'advaita' whenever he wants to draw the readers attention to the nature of Reality, and has devoted one whole chapter entitled '*Advaita-Prakaraṇa*' for this purpose. He is also careful to use the words 'advaita', and 'advaya' in their primary sense in this very chapter. Compare, for instance, (GK. 3-18). 'अद्वैतं परमार्थो हि द्वैतं तद्भेद उच्यते' (GK. 3-18), and स्वसिद्धान्तव्यवस्थासु द्वैतिनो निश्चिता दृढम्' (GK. 3-17) where 'advaita' (non-duality) is contrasted with 'dvaita' (duality, and there is no question of the non-difference between Jīva and Brahman), and 'अद्वयं च द्वयाभासं मनः स्वप्ने न संशयः । अद्वयं च द्वयाभासं

तथा जाग्रन्न संशयः' (GK. 3-30), where the distinction of two entities, the subject and the object, is denied. The word 'Advaya' primarily means 'not consisting of two constituents'. There is absolutely no justification for the view of those that insist that the word 'Advaya' necessarily implies something exclusively epistemic whereas advaita is ontological. Neither the derivation of the words nor usage of authoritative writers, justifies this distinction. While it is true that at the vyavahāric level where Brahmajñāna is taught, Brahman has to be regarded as ontic and Its knowledge as epistemic, the ultimate Intuition of Brahman is neither ontological nor epistemological, for It is actually Truth and Reality in one and therefore It is both advaitam and advayam in the primary sense of those words.

THE IDENTITY OF THE JĪVA WITH BRAHMAN

19. The doctrine that Paramātman (real Ātman) should be recognised as Jīva's own Self, has been sometimes, misconceived as meaning the recognition of the identity of the individual self with Brahman or the Absolute, and on the basis of this misconception, Śāṅkara has been charged by some orthodox critics with the heresy of preaching the identity of the puny Jīva and the omniscient and omnipotent Īśvara, as well as with the blasphemy of imputing delusion to Brahman (*Bhrānta-Brahma-vāda*).

Śaṅkara, however, has anticipated all such hyper-criticisms by pointing out that Bādarāyaṇa himself has recommended the contemplation on the mutual identity of Jīva and Īśvara in their transcendental aspect on the strength of Aitareya and Jābāla texts (VS.3-3-37). As for the alleged blasphemy, he has clarified his position thus :-

“न हीश्वरस्य संसार्यात्मत्वं प्रतिपाद्यत इत्यभ्युपगच्छामः, किं तर्हि संसारिणः संसारित्वापोहेनेश्वरात्मत्वं प्रतिपादयिषितम् - इति । एवं च सत्या अद्वैतेश्वरस्य अपहतपाप्मत्वादिगुणता, विपरीतगुणता त्वितरस्य मिथ्या इति व्यवतिष्ठते ॥”

सू. भा. ४-१-३, ५१०.

We do not hold that God is taught (in the Śrutis) to be a transmigratory being, but only that it is intended to teach the Divine Nature of Jīva by negating his (apparent) transmigrating nature. From this it has to be concluded that God's characteristics such as being free from sins are real and unaffected, while the opposite nature of the other, is false.

SBh. 4-1-3-510.

THE ESSENTIAL IDENTITY OF THE UNIVERSE WITH BRAHMAN

20. *Ātmaikatva* or the unity of Ātman (or Brahman), is the only absolute truth according to the Śrutis as shown by Bādarāyaṇa interpreted by Śaṅkara, even while the distinction of sentient and non-sentient nature remains quite real from the

empirical standpoint. The universe as an effect is non-different from the cause or Brahman and is essentially one with Brahman. Śāṅkara illustrates this by citing empirical examples thus :

तस्मात् यथा घटकरकाद्याकाशानां महाकाशानन्यत्वम्, यथा च मृगतृष्णिकोदकादीनाम् ऊषरादिभ्योऽनन्यत्वम्, दृष्टनष्टस्वरूपत्वात्, स्वरूपेणानुपाख्यत्वात्, एवम् अस्य भोग्यभोक्त्रादिप्रपञ्चजातस्य ब्रह्मव्यतिरेकेणाभाव इति द्रष्टव्यम् ॥ सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४३४.

“Therefore, it should be understood that all this universe of manifold things such as the experienced and the experiencers, does not exist apart from Brahman, in the same way as pot-ethers and jar-ethers etc., are not distinct from ether in the general, and just as mirage-water etc., are not distinct from a sandy desert etc.,” SBh. 2-1-14, 434.

Here the experiencing selves are illustrated by pot-ethers and experienced things are compared to mirage-water.

THE REAL AND THE UNREAL FROM THE TWO VIEW-POINTS

21. Vedānta recognises that the criterion for the reality of Ātman or Brahman is not the same as that for the reality of empirical objects. Śāṅkara quotes a text in his commentary on Bādarāyaṇa's Sūtra आत्मकृतेः परिणामात् (Brahman is the material cause also of the universe because it is taught that It modified itself as the universe. VS. 1-4-26) :-

सच्च त्यच्चाभवत् । निरुक्तं चानिरुक्तं च ॥

तै. २-६.

“It became the formful and the formless, the defined and the undefined.” Tai. 2-6.

In the sequel of this text, it is stated, “.....सत्यं चानृतं च सत्यमभवत्” “The real became both the real and the unreal”. Brahman is really real whereas the phenomenal world consists of objects distinguished into empirically real and empirically unreal. We should not confound these two divisions, just because the same words, “real” and “unreal” have been employed. Śaṅkara has defined the absolute Satyā (Real) in his Bhāshya on the text सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म “Brahman is reality, consciousness, and infinite” (Tai. 2-1). He says there that the real is that which never changes its self-identity (यद्रूपेण यत् निश्चितं तद्रूपं न व्यभिचरति तत् सत्यम्). In the Sūtra-Bhāshya also it is declared -

एकरूपेण ह्यवस्थितो योऽर्थः स परमार्थः । लोके तद्विषयं ज्ञानं सम्यग्ज्ञानमित्युच्यते ॥ सू. भा. २-१-११, ४२९.

“That which retains its identity throughout is real ; and the knowledge of it they call right knowledge.”

SBh. 2-1-11, 429.

At the same time, he cites empirical objects like mirage-water, suspected poison, and a snakebite in a dream producing ‘real’ effects, when he discusses the possibility of real knowledge of the unity of Brahman., arising even with the help of the Śruti which is unreal from the Pāramārthic view. The criterion of Reality in this latter case, is evidently causal efficiency, and not maintenance of self-identity.

The question therefore arises what sort of *Parīṇāma* (transformation) is meant when the Śruti says that Brahman becomes all this ? Here Śaṅkara answers :-

अविद्याकल्पितेन च नामरूपलक्षणेन रूपभेदेन व्याकृताव्याकृतात्मकेन तत्त्वान्यत्वाभ्यामनिर्वचनीयेन ब्रह्म परिणामादिसर्वव्यवहारास्पदत्वं प्रतिपद्यते । पारमार्थिकेन च रूपेण सर्वव्यवहारातीतमपरिणतम् अवतिष्ठते । वाचारम्भणमात्रत्वाच्च अविद्याकल्पितस्य नामरूपभेदस्य - इति 'न निरवयवत्वं ब्रह्मणः कुप्यति ॥ सू. भा. २-१-२७, ४६४.

“Brahman becomes the subject of all such conventional treatment as transformation into the universe, only in its special aspect of differentiated or non-differentiated name and form, undefinable as that Brahman or other than It, conjured up by avidyā. In its real aspect, however, It remains beyond all such phenomenal activity and unevolved. The truth that Brahman is really impartible, remains unimpinged, since that special aspect superimposed by avidyā is only a play of words.”

SBh. 2-1-27, 464.

All misconceptions about Śaṅkara's Vedānta which impute to Brahman a *power called Māyā* in virtue of which It manifests Itself as the universe, are therefore to be accounted for as being due to confounding of the two significations of the word “*Shakti*” and mistaking the Shakti or “potential aspect of the universe of names and forms, for the power of Īśvara”. It is this potency of names and forms that has been declared by Śaṅkara to be a *figment of avidyā* in the quotation cited above. Needless to remind the

reader that the sub-commentators who treat the potential form of this figment of avidyā as *avidyā-shakti*, which, they say, is *undefinable as being or non-being*, (सदसदनिर्वचनीय) and called by another name 'Māyā'. A careful study of the Bhāshya on VS. 1-4-3 would convince the reader that this is no mere conjecture on our part.

GAUḌAPĀDA AND BĀDARĀYAṆA

22. We now come to the consideration of the contrast between Gauḍapāda's Kārikās and Bādarāyaṇa's Vedānta-Sūtras, stressed by some modern critics who suppose that Gauḍapāda occupies a superior position in thinking, inasmuch as he takes the whole range of experience covering all the three states of consciousness and arrives at the impregnable conclusion of *Ajātivāda* (the doctrine of the unborn Brahman), whereas Bādarāyaṇa's is only a theological effort or to interpret "*Janmādi*" causality as expounded by the Upanishads. Readers who have gone through the immediately preceding paragraphs of this booklet, will at once see the shallowness of this hypothesis, for Bādarāyaṇa interprets all Vedāntās and shows how the causation attributed to Brahman, is only a device to convince the student of the essential identity of the so-called effect even from the empirical stand-point. As a matter of fact, Gauḍapāda actually says in so many words (GK. 4-42) that causality is taught by the wise for those who are not prepared to understand the

doctrine of non-causality all at once. He himself accepts the māyic birth of Pure Being and rejects the *asatkāryavāda* (the theory of something non-existent coming into being (Vide G.K. 3-27, 28), we have already shown (para 7, p. 6) that Śaṅkara's Introduction to Vedānta-Mīmāṃsā is specially aimed at pointing out how Avidyā or the mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self, is the presupposition of all Vyavahāra including causation.

THE METHOD OF SUPERIMPOSITION AND RESCISSION

23. Śaṅkara on the Sutras follows strictly in the footsteps of Gauḍapāda, to show how all the Upanishads adopt what is known as the method of *adhyārōpāvāda* or the method of conceding certain facts intelligible from the empirical standpoint at first, and then negating it after the inquirer has been led to the final truth. Gauḍapāda himself sets forth the rationale underlying the method in these words :-

स एष नेतिनेतीति व्याख्यातं निह्नुते यतः । सर्वमग्राह्यभावेन हेतुनाऽजं
प्रकाशते ॥ गौ. का. ३-२६.

Here it is said that whatever has been predicated of Brahman at the commencement of an exposition, is invariably negated by the Śruti at the end by the proposition स एष नेतिनेत्यात्मा (Now this is the Ātman described as 'not this, not this'). Lastly the predicate initially stated as a means to understand the truth,

should never be regarded to be as real as Reality itself. In particular Gaudapāda expressly says :-

मृल्लोहविस्फुलिङ्गाद्यैः सृष्टिर्या चोदिताऽन्यथा ।

उपायः सोऽवताराय नास्ति भेदः कथञ्चन ॥ गौ. का. ३-१५.

“Creation taught in various ways by using the illustrations of clay, iron, and sparks etc., is only a device for the purpose of introducing to the student, the Truth of the Unity of Ātman ; actually there is no difference intended in any way.” G.K.3-15.

Śaṅkara quotes this very Ślōka in his Bhāshya (SBh. 1-4-14) and repeatedly draws our attention to the fact that the Śruti does not seriously purport to teach creation as a fact from the transcendental point :-

न चेयं परमार्थविषया सृष्टिश्रुतिः । अविद्याकल्पितनामरूपव्यवहार-
गोचरत्वात्, ब्रह्मात्मभावप्रतिपादनपरत्वाच्च इत्येतदपि नैव विस्मर्तव्यम् ॥

सू.भा. २-१-३३, ४७१.

“Nor does this Śruti teaching creation, related to Reality as such, for it is only in the sphere of empirical life consisting of name and form conjured up by avidyā. This circumstance also should not be forgotten in this connection.”

SBh. 2-1-33, 471.

REFERENCES TO THE METHOD IN ŚAÑKARA'S WORK

24. That this method of deliberate ascription and subsequent abrogation, has been steadily kept in view in teaching Reality devoid of all specific features,

which being the very Self of the seeker is neither objectifiable by nor in need of any means of knowledge has been stated time and again by Śaṅkara in his Bhāshya :-

यथा अरुन्धती निदर्शने बह्वीष्वपि तारासु अमुख्यासु अरुन्धतीषु दर्शितासु या अन्त्या प्रदर्शयते सा मुख्यैवारुन्धती भवति, एवमिहापि ॥

सू. भा. १-१-१२, ९७.

This extract refers to the customary practice resorted to by Purōhitas (priests) when they have to direct the newly married couple to look at the tiny star *Arundhati*. The method followed usually, is to show some stars very near the actual star and fix their attention upon them successively, each of these stars being called Arundhati for the time being. Finally, the tiny star itself is pointed to and the priest says 'This is the real Arundhati ; I called the other stars by the same name just to lead your eyes towards the actual Arundhati'.

This analogy has been again applied by the commentator when he has to explain why the *Annamaya kōśa* (the sheath of food) or body and other vehicles have been tentatively called by the name of Ātman even while the Śruti purports to teach the innermost real Ātman which alone deserves that name. This same method of deliberate imputation of a characteristic and its subsequent negation, has been referred to in Śaṅkara's Bhāshya, in VS. 1-1-8 also, where he argues that if the Pradhāna had been

tentatively called Ātman in the Śruti "He is Ātman, and thou art that" (Ch. 6-8-7) as insisted upon by the Sāṃkhyas, then the Śruti should have advised the seeker to abandon that idea after the analogy of Arundhati, lest the enquirer should stick to the notion of its reality (तन्निष्ठो मा भूदिति मुख्यमात्मानमुपदिदिक्षुस्तस्य हेयत्वं ब्रूयात् ।) सू.भा. १-१-८, ८३.

WHY THIS METHOD IS ADOPTED BY THE VEDĀNTAS

25. This method is the only one available for teaching the nature of Brahmātman, for the latter is devoid of all specific features and as such, can never be described in positive terms.

That it was a unique feature of Śāṅkara's tradition to recognize this truth even long before Gaudapāda, is evident from a quotation from an untraced author, as found in the Gītā-Bhāshya (on G. 13-13, 14) :-

सर्वतःपाणिपादं तत् सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।

सर्वतःश्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥ १३-१३.

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवाञ्जितम् ॥ १३-१४.

These three lines, being a verbatim reproduction of the Śvetāśvatara (3-16, 17), ascribe the organs of all Jīvas to Ātman and then rescind the ascription in the end. Śāṅkara remarks :

उपाधिकृतं मिथ्यारूपमप्यस्तित्वाधिगमाय ज्ञेयधर्मवत् परिकल्प्य

उच्यते 'सर्वतःपाणिपादम्' इत्यादि ; तथा हि संप्रदायविदां वचनम् -
'अध्यारोपापवादाभ्यां निष्प्रपञ्चं प्रपञ्च्यत' इति ॥

गी. भा. १३-१३, ७९७.

"That the Reality 'is invested with hands and feet' etc., is stated here by presuming as though that were the characteristic of Reality, just to convince the seeker of its existence. *Such indeed is the teaching of those conversant with the right tradition*, for they say **By means of false ascription and rescission, that which is without specific features, has to be explained.**"

GBh.13-13, 797.

As this traditional method has been treated at length elsewhere,* I refrain from entering into details here.

VEDIC VYAVAHĀRA

26. This Vyavahāra is two-fold as already (para 15, p.14) explained. In the first place, *Laukika Vyavahāra* is the human procedure of thinking, speaking, and acting either to acquire what is desired or to avoid what is disliked in common life. And in the second place, *Vaidika-Vyavahāra* relates to (1) injunctions or prohibitions with regard to karmas (religious works laid down in the Vedās) which point to the means of attaining what is liked or avoiding what is not liked in a future birth or in other words, beyond the ken of perception and other means of secular knowledge. There are injunctions of Upāsanaś

* 'How to recognise the method of Vedanta' - published by the Karyalaya.

in the Upanishads also which yield particular results in this or the other world, just like the karmas treated of in the Karma-kāṇḍa (portion of Veda dealing with karmas). These are included in the Jñāna-kāṇḍa or Vedāntas, only because they are psychic activities and like Vedic knowledge, they are also *rahasya* ('secret' in the sense that extrovert minds cannot grasp their nature). The principle *Vedic Vyavahāra*, however, is the teaching of the Upanishads and the effort of seekers to understand it in so far as it relates to Brahman as It is, in the transcendental sense.

This circumstance has given rise to a number of *misconceptions* with regard to the practical nature of Śaṅkara's Vedānta. These misconceptions have arisen chiefly because of not bearing in mind, whether Śaṅkara is speaking from the Vyavahāric point of view or from the Paramārthic point of view.

FUNDAMENTAL AVIDYĀ INVOLVED IN ALL VYAVAHĀRA

27. We may now proceed to cite some instances of such glaring instances of misconception with regard to the fundamental doctrines of Śaṅkara's system.

At the very outset, Śaṅkara draws our attention in his Introduction to the Sūtra-Bhāshya to a natural phenomenon in Laukika Vyavahāra, viz., how it is natural for man to think and act as though there were real facts corresponding to the expressions 'I am so and so' and 'This is mine', quite oblivious of the misconception of the mutual superimposition of the

real Ātman and the unreal not-self involved in this procedure in the face of the extremely opposite nature of the two :-

युष्मदस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरयोर्विषयविषयिणोस्तमःप्रकाशवत्
विरुद्धस्वभावयोः अध्यासो मिथ्या - इति भवितुं युक्तम् । तथापि
अन्योन्यस्मिन् अन्योन्यात्मकताम् अन्योन्यधर्माश्च अध्यस्येतरेतराविवेकेन,
अत्यन्त विविक्तयोर्धर्मधर्मिणोर्मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तः सत्यानृते मिथुनीकृत्य
'अहमिदम्', 'ममेदम्' - इति नैसर्गिकोऽयं लोकव्यवहारः ॥

अध्यासभाष्यम-१.

This apparently innocent proposition has given rise to a curious disagreement among Śaṅkara's followers themselves : "It is but proper to expect that there can be no *adhyāsa* or superimposition (अध्यासो मिथ्या इति भवितुं युक्तम्). Does this proposition represent the *prima facie* view or the cardinal truth itself ? This has been a moot-point among Śaṅkara's critics.

For one who notices the statement that "this is an instance of human behaviour (नैसर्गिकोऽयं लोकव्यवहारः) to proceed on the supposition 'this not-self is me ; and that this same is mine', there would be no difficulty in taking the whole passage as worth its face-value, and interpreting it as meaning that it is a natural bent of the human mind to proceed on this assumption, inspite of the fact that it is a Himālayan blunder to take it for truth. This conclusion is further supported by the subsequent assurance : "This being so, that on

which something else is superimposed, is not affected by the merit or defect of that other even in the slightest degree (अणुमात्रेणापि स न संबध्यते), thus confirming that neither the real Self is in any way tainted by the defects of the unreal not-self, nor the latter raised to a higher status by this superimposition.

AN UNEXPECTED TURN IN THE INTERPRETATION OF ADHYĀSA

28. A misconception that all vyavahāric pheno-menon including that of adhyāsa desiderates a material cause, was responsible for a sub-commentator's twisting this Śaṅkara's crystal-clear statement and founding a sub-school of advaitins who disregarded Gauḍapāda's *Ajātivāda*. That guardian of Śaṅkara's traditional pure non-dualism, had already warned the followers of the tradition thus : सते हि मायया जन्म युज्यते न तु तत्त्वतः ॥ "Illusory birth, is consistent for a really existent entity, but not an actual birth" (GK. 3-27). This Upanishadic truth was set aside when the sub-commentator tortured and twisted Śaṅkara's expression मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तः (by reason of or owing to a misconception) to mean मिथ्याभूतम् अज्ञानम्, तन्निमित्तः तदुपादानः । (*Mithyāj-ñānam* means nescience, which is unreal or undefinable ; adhyāsa is owing to it, that is to say, has that for its material cause). Again, adhyāsa is not merely superim-position, but the adhyasta, *egoity which is superimposed !*

A large section of Śaṅkarites have been

hypnotized by this interpretation and believe to this day that this sub-commentator was a direct disciple of Śaṅkara, although, curiously enough, that the writer himself never expressly claimed to be such !

The fact remains, however that, in the Bhāshyas of Śaṅkara the word *Mithyājñāna* (मिथ्याज्ञान) has been invariably used as an equivalent of Adhyasa and *Mithyapratyaya* (मिथ्याप्रत्यय), *Mithyābuddhi* (मिथ्याबुद्धि) and other words synonymous with it, are exclusively used for Adhyāsa, and *whenever Mithyājñāna has to be accounted for, it is said to be occasioned by want of discrimination, but never as the effect of some material cause called 'avidyā' or 'avidyā-sakti' clouding the Brahman nature of Jīva, as this sub-commentator insists throughout his work. As this has been shown by me elsewhere**, I desist from entering into greater detail here. A single quotation from the *Gītā-Bhāshya* will quite suffice here:

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोः विषयविषयिणोः भिन्नस्वभावयोः इतरेतरतद्धर्माध्यास-
लक्षणः संयोगः, क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञस्वरूपविवेकाभावनिबन्धनः, रज्जुशुक्तिकादीनां
तद्विवेकज्ञाना- भावादध्यारोपितसर्परजतादिसंयोगवत् । सोऽयमध्यासस्वरूपः
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगो मिथ्या-ज्ञानलक्षणः ॥ गी. भा. १३-२६, ८२६.

“(This is) the contact of *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajñā* (the object and the subject) opposed to each other in their intrinsic nature. It consists of the superimposition of mutual identity

* The '*Panchapādikā-Prasthānam*', a Sanskrit work containing a critical appreciation of the sub-commentary ; published by the Karyalaya.

and that of the properties (of these two) owing to want of discrimination between *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajña*. (This is) just like the contact of a serpent, silver etc., within a rope or nacre etc. (a contact of) the nature of misconception, owing to want of discrimination between these two." GBh.13-26,826.

The reader will at once notice how this sentence is a re-echo of the Adhyāsa-Bhāshya making the meaning of the latter clearer if that were needed.

DISPUTES ABOUT AVIDYĀ-ŚAKTI

29. The later doctrine of Avidyā-Śakti as the material cause of adhyasa, has been the mother of still more glaring misconceptions and *disputes about the locus and the object of the hypothetical avidya and the number of avidyas*, at the hands of later speculators. An extract from another sub-commentary will make it patent as to what amount of confusion has been created out of the original disregard for Śāṅkara's teaching that *avyākṛta* or undifferentiated name and form constituting the Universe, is *Māyā* (appearance) invented by avidyā अविद्याकल्पिते नामरूपे तत्त्वान्यत्वाभ्यामनिर्वचनीये संसारप्रपञ्चबीजभूते सर्वज्ञस्येश्वरस्य माया, शक्तिः, प्रकृतिः - इति च श्रुतिस्मृत्योरभिलष्येते ॥ सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४४०.

We shall now quote an extract from a post-Śāṅkara follower of the exponent of the hypothetical *avidyā* referred to above. This sub-commentator says:-

न वयं प्रधानवत् अविद्यां सर्वजीवेष्वेकाम् आचक्ष्महे येनैवम् उपालभ्येमहि ; किं तु इयं प्रतिजीवं भिद्यते । तेन यस्यैव जीवस्य विद्या उत्पन्ना, तस्यैवाविद्या अपनीयते, न जीवान्तरस्य, भिन्नाधिकरणयो-

विद्याविद्ययोरविरोधात् । तत् कुतः समस्तसंसारोच्छेदप्रसङ्गः । प्रधानवादिनां तु एष दोषः । प्रधानस्यैकत्वेन तदुच्छेदे सर्वोच्छेदः, अनुच्छेदे वा न कस्यचित् इत्यनिर्मोक्षप्रसङ्गः । प्रधानाभेदेऽपि चैतदविवेकख्यातिलक्षणाविद्या सदसत्त्वनिबन्धनौ बन्धमोक्षौ, तर्हि कृतं प्रधानेन ; अविद्यासदसद्भावाभ्यामेव तदुपपत्तेः । न चाविद्योपाधिभेदाधीनो जीवभेदः, जीवभेदाधीनश्चाविद्योपाधिभेद इति परस्परश्रयादुभयासिद्धिः - इति सांप्रतम् ; अनादित्वाद्बीजाङ्कुरवत् उभयासिद्धेः । अविद्यात्वमात्रेण चैकत्वोपचारः अव्यक्तमिति च अव्याकृतमिति च ॥ Vāchaspati Mīśra's Bhāmati on SBh. 1-4-3.

It is evident that the author of this sub-commentary also identifies avidyā with *Avyākṛtanāmarūpa* (undifferentiated seed of name and form) called *Māya* by Śāṅkara. He emphasizes that objective avidyās are really numerous and that they have each a Jīva for their locus. It has to be further ascertained by scholars whether this innovation convicts him with the charge of self-contradiction ; for unlike the author of the *Pañchapādikā*, he has interpreted *Mithyājñāna* in Śāṅkara's Introduction to mean superimposition and not avidyā śakti. What is more serious, is that even in the case of *adhyāsa*, this scholarly sub-commentator treats superimposition as an event in time as though time were not itself superimposed ! For, he writes there :

(१) नैसर्गिकः इति । स्वाभाविकः अनादिरयं व्यवहारः । व्यवहारानादितया तत्कारणस्य अध्यासस्यानादिता उक्ता । ततश्च पूर्वपूर्वमिथ्याज्ञानोपदर्शितस्य बुद्धीन्द्रियशरीरादेरुत्तरोत्तराध्यासोपयोगः - इत्यनादित्वात् बीजाङ्कुरवत् न परस्परश्रयत्वम् - इत्यर्थः ॥

(२) जीवात्मा इतरेतराध्यासोपादानः, तदुपादानश्च अध्यासः इति अनादित्वात् बीजाङ्कुरवत् नेतरेतराश्रयत्वम् इत्युक्तं भवति ॥

We shall have occasion to refer to this theory of beginninglessness once again later on.

Post-Śaṅkara sub-commentators have been considerably exercised over determining the locus, object and the effect of avidyā, mostly because of their postulate that it is positive potency clinging to some one and projecting or evolving into the unreal appearance of not-self and the universe. Three different views, viz., (1) that the Jīva alone, or (2) Brahman Itself or (3) Pure Consciousness devoid of the distinction of Brahman and jīvas, constitutes the locus of this avidyā, have been alternatively the dogma of the different schools of sub-commentators, and hot disputes have been raging among the followers of these sub-commentators for defending each one of these alternatives and refuting the other two views. That all this display of speculation is so much labour lost from the genuine Śaṅkara standpoint, is obvious from Śaṅkara's express statement in his Introduction that Avidyā is only a mental mixing up of the Real and the unreal. As for the 'locus' of this avidyā according to Śaṅkara, we would do well to remember what he himself says on this point :

कस्य पुनरयमप्रबोधः - इति चेत्, यस्त्वं पृच्छसि तस्य ते इति

वदामः । नन्वहम् ईश्वर एवोक्तः श्रुत्या । यद्येवं प्रतिबुद्धोऽसि, नास्ति कस्यचिदप्रबोधः ॥ सू. भा. ४-१-३, ५१०.

“If it should be asked ‘And to whom is this avidyā or non-enlightenment ?’ We answer, ‘To you who are asking this question !’

(Objection :-) ‘But I have been declared to be Īśvara Himself by the Śruti !’

(Reply :-) If you are thus awakened, then there is no one to whom the ignorance belongs !” SBh. 4-1-3, 510.

It is obvious that according to this view, the question about a locus for avidyā can arise only at the level of the empirical life, where there is duality. One who raises the question, is himself ignorant of the truth, and so, the question is superfluous at that stage. But when it is known that Brahman or Īśvara is the only Reality, there can be neither any question nor reply concerning anything whatever. Accordingly, Śāṅkara anticipates another objection and shows its futility thus :-

योऽपि दोषश्चोद्यते कैश्चिद् - अविद्यया किल आत्मनः सद्वितीयत्वात् अद्वैतानुपपत्तिरिति, सोऽप्येतेन प्रत्युक्तः ॥ सू. भा. ४-१-३, ५१०.

“And this defect that is imputed to the system by some, may also be deemed to have been warded off by our reply to the question raised above. For they are supposed to hold that Ātman would have a second beside Him in the shape of avidyā ! S Bh. 4-1-3, 510.

[Śāṅkara means to say that it may be granted that duality

is possible only so long as the unity of Ātman is not intuited, but at the transcendental level, there is no duality whatever.]

WHY NO PRAMĀṆA IS NEEDED TO PROVE AVIDYĀ OR ĀTMAN

30. Ignoring the distinction of the vyavahāric and transcendental standpoints, has been the sole reason why some Vedantins have mistaken certain statements of the Bhāshyākāra as expressing his final conclusion regarding Vedānta.

Thus taking the statement प्रमाणप्रवृत्त्यप्रवृत्तिपूर्वकौ हि संभवासंभवौ अवधार्येते 'possibility and impossibility of a fact, are to be concluded according as there is or is not some Pramāṇa (means of knowledge) to prove it' (SBh. 2-2-28) to be a general rule, was perhaps responsible for the sub-commentators to make an attempt to show that their hypothetical avidyā could be 'proved' by means of some or all the canons of evidence. It is the negligence of this distinction, that has induced some adverse critics to charge Śaṅkara with postulating the Absolute Ātman without the support of any Pramāṇa. Both these defendents and opponents of Śaṅkara, have altogether ignored Śaṅkara's appeal to universal intuition in his exposition of Adhyāsa and showing how the convention of the distinction of *Pramāṇas* (means of knowledge) and *Prameyas* (objects of Pramāṇa) itself, pre-supposes Avidyā or Adhyāsa, and how Ātman is

the transcendental Reality demanding no Pramāṇa or any proof. They have failed to appreciate the dictum of Śaṅkara that all attempts to prove or disprove by means of vyavahāric Pramāṇas, draws its very breath from Adhyasa or avidyā, and as such can neither prove avidyā nor disprove the existence of Ātman without any specific features.

MISCONCEPTION ABOUT DISEMBODIEDNESS

31. The reader of Śaṅkara's Bhāshya, will recall how Śaṅkara makes use of this dictum of the superimposition of the body and Ātman again and again, to show how Final Release from the evils of mundane life, is only to recognize one's eternal bodilessness. Thus, in his commentary on the fourth Sūtra after describing the whole gamut of life possible for individual selves, he comes to the conclusion that Śrutis and Smṛtis aided by reason, show that the gradation of pleasure and pain felt by creatures, is all the result of embodiedness due to avidyā and other defects. He quotes the Chāndōgya Śruti which says that being beset with pleasure and pain, is inevitable for an embodied being, and that pleasure and pain can never touch one who is bodiless, thus leading to the conclusion that Final Release or bodilessness is no effect of *Dharma* or religious duty which can only give its result to an embodied being. To an objection that bodilessness might itself be the effect of *Dharma*

or Religious duty, he replies न । तस्य स्वाभाविकत्वात् । “No, for it is the intrinsic nature of one’s Ātman”

Again in the commentary on the same Sūtra, he writes :

शरीरे पतिते अशरीरत्वं स्यात्, न जीवतः इति चेत्, न, सशरीरत्वस्य
मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तत्वात् ॥ सू. भा. १-१-४, ५८.

“(Objection :-) Bodilessness can come only after the falling off of the body and not to one, living.

“(Reply :-) No ; for embodiedness is due to a misconception.’ SBh. 1-1-4, 58.

And after showing at length how embodiedness is only due to a false identification with the unreal body, he concludes -

तस्मात्, मिथ्याप्रत्ययनिमित्तत्वात् सशरीरत्वस्य सिद्धं जीवतोऽपि
विदुषोऽशरीरत्वम् ॥ सू. भा. १-१-४, ६०.

“Therefore, embodiedness being only due to a false notion, it is to be concluded that bodilessness is the nature of a wise one even while living” SBh. 1-1-4, 60.

In the face of this unequivocal declaration supported by intuition and reason, some of the sub-commentators have ventured to proclaim that according to Śaṅkara, *Videha-mukti* (Release after death) is the only release in the primary sense and that *Jīvanmukti* (freedom while the knower of Brahman, is alive), can be only secondary release since he has the body to sustain which a **little portion or residue of avidyā continues** to be till the fructifying karmas are

quite exhausted ! This is most probably because they have been unable to assess a statement of Śāṅkara's found elsewhere in the Bhāṣya :-

एवं धर्माधर्मयोर्बन्धहेत्वोर्विद्यासामर्थ्यात् अश्लेषविनाशसिद्धेः, अवश्यं-
भाविनी विदुषुः शरीरपाते मुक्तिरित्यवधारयति ॥ सू. भा. ४-१-१४, ५२९.

“(The particle ‘*tu*’ in this form is intended) to emphasize that inasmuch as virtue and sin, which are the cause of bondage having been shown respectively not to taint Ātman (in the case of virtuous act), and to be destroyed (in the case of sin), by virtue of Brahma-vidyā), release must necessarily ensue to the knower after his body has fallen off.”
SBh. 4-1-14, 529.

Failing to see that the convention of the eschatological *mukti* is only a concession to the *Vyavahāric view* that man has a body, *the Vyākhyāna schools have succumbed to the belief* that release is really an event in time to be attained after exhausting all karmas.

MISCONCEPTION ABOUT THE BEGINNINGLESSNESS OF SAMŚĀRA

32. The same is true of the belief in the **beginningless nature of samśāra** (transmigratory life). Śāṅkara has given expression to two different views about embodiedness of individual selves, karma, sleep and states of consciousness, birth and death, and creation and dissolution of the world, according as he takes the thought-position of the really real (Paramārtha) or practical life (Vyavahāra). Failure to

note this distinction has been a fertile source of different views concerning all these. We shall briefly notice these differences concerning these doctrines, in the following paragraphs.

THE CAUSE OF WAKING, RE-BIRTH AND CREATION

33. Śaṅkara has argued (in SBh. 1-1-4) that Ātman being devoid of any relation to action, his embodiedness cannot be inferred to have been the result of any previous karma. He denounces the *prima facie* view that the present body may be the result of karma performed in a previous life on the ground that this is an argument in a vicious circle, since embodiedness has to be proved on the presupposition that he is an agent of good and bad deeds, and his being an agent of such actions, has to be concluded by supporting his embodiedness, and since it would be a *regressus ad infinitum* to think that there is a beginningless series of embodiedness and previous karmas to account for it (अन्यपरम्परैषा अनादित्वकल्पना). This is of course from the paramārtha view-point.

Elsewhere, however, the Achārya argues अनादित्वे तु 'If on the other hand, we suppose that transmigratory life is beginningless', there would be no fallacy whatever, since the series of embodiedness and the previous karma accounting for it, may be conceived to be consistent on the analogy of a series of the seed and its sprout.

(SBh. 2-1-36).

It is obvious that this line of argument is based on the view-point of Vyavahāra which takes for granted that birth and death are actual happenings in time. Disregarding this distinction of view-points many doctrinarians - both Śāṅkarites and followers of other traditions - have insisted that there is really avidyā or some other latent cause in sleep, death and dissolution of the universe, which renders life a really real continuous something that rests on the basis of time.

MISCONCEPTION CONCERNING THE STATE OF DEEP SLEEP

34. In conformity with this distinction steadily kept in view, Śāṅkara writes :-

अपि च न कदाचिज्जीवस्य ब्रह्मणा संपत्तिर्नास्ति, स्वरूपस्यान-
पायित्वात् । स्वप्नजागरितयोस्तु उपाधिसंपर्कवशात् पररूपापत्तिमिवापेक्ष्य
तदुपशमात् सुषुप्ते स्वरूपापत्तिर्वक्ष्यते ॥ सू. भा. ३-२-७, २६६.

“Besides, there is no time when Jīva has not become one with Brahman, for one’s intrinsic nature cannot be alienated. Only in view of the seeming foreign aspect which he assumes in dream and waking owing to contact of conditioning associates, it is proposed to say that he attains his own form on the dissolution of that foreign aspect.” SBh. 3-2-7, 266.

As for the want of consciousness of anything in sleep, he says :-

सति संपन्नस्तावत्तदेकत्वात्त्र विजानातीति युक्तम् । सू. भा. ३-२-७, २६६.

“It is but reasonable that the Jīva merged in Pure Being (Brahman) is not conscious because of (absolute) unity.”

In the face of this unambiguous statement a sub-commentator writes :-

अथ तु परमात्मैव नाडीपुरीतत्सृष्टिद्वारा सुषुप्तिस्थानम् ततो विपरीतज्ञाननिवृत्तेः, अस्ति मात्रया परमात्मभाव उपयोगः । तथा हि तावदेष जीवस्तदवस्थानो भवति केवलम् । तत्त्वज्ञानाभावेन समूलकाषम् अविद्याया सकाशात् जाग्रत्स्वप्नलक्षणं जीवस्य व्युत्थानं भवति ॥

भामती ३-२-७, page ६९६.

“If on the other hand, the real Ātman alone be the state of sleep, there is some use inasmuch as misconception is removed, there is **partial oneness** (मात्रया परमात्मभावः) ; for in that case, Jīva would be in that state only so long, **but avidyā not having been removed root and branch** owing to the absence of the dawn of the knowledge of Reality, his return (to the Jiva state) in the form of waking and dream would be possible.”

Bhamati, 3-2-7, page 696.

Comment is needless.

VARIOUS VIEWS CONCERNING DEEP SLEEP

35. A number of misconceptions have assailed Vedāntins of different levels of thought, concerning the state of deep sleep, simply because of ignoring this distinction of Vyavahāra and Paramārtha :-

(1) A famous writer on Advaita Vedānta, committed this mistake when he undertook to examine the three states of consciousness with the sole purpose of demonstrating that Ātman alone as सँवित् (intuition) is really real in as much as all things objectively

experienced in the waking state, are found to be absent in dream and dreamless sleep, while Ātman continues to maintain his self-identity. The writer was not content, however, with showing that Ātman remains intact in all the three states. He insisted that ignorance also continues in sleep as is guaranteed by the waking memory of sleep, in the form 'I did not know anything in sleep'. This was because he forgot to remember that the examination of the three states, was only a device in concession to Vyavahāra, only *Adhyārōpa* or a deliberate superimposition to be rescinded after the sole reality of Ātman has been shown. What is more important is that the waking memory of sleep, is no real memory from the transcendental view, because the three states are not actually happenings in any particular time-series, and that the time experienced in waking cannot be reasonably regarded as the substrate of all the three states.

(2) A noted Bhāshyakāra, also, who undertook to prove that the individual self is always the object of the notion of 'me' has made use of this indefensible argument of trusting the waking memory of deep sleep for the purpose of inferring the continuance of the individual nature of the self.

(3) Another Dvaita Vedātin has gone to the length of employing this waking memory of sleep for proving that not only the individuality of the self, but also that 'time and ignorance' also persist to exist in that state of unconsciousness !

The reader should be able to see that all such vagaries are founded on the dogma that memory is possible even without a corresponding experience antecedent to it in the past.

DIVERGENT VIEWS ABOUT AVIDYĀ IN TRANCE

36. Another misconception of this same ilk, is to believe that all duality due to ignorance, is absent only in the state of *Samādhi* (trance), even while conceding that a trace of ignorance may continue to taint a knower of Brahman in waking till his fructifying karma is exhausted. Some teachers who pursue this line of thought, have conceded that subtle impressions of avidyā lie dormant even in this *Samādhi*. These impressions have to be inferred according to them to be the cause of his coming back to the normal state !

ŚAṄKARA'S STATEMENTS REGARDING THE POTENCY OF DISTINCTIONS IN SLEEP AND DISSOLUTION

37. The readers who must be familiar with the wrong track generally pursued by later Vedāntins with regard to avidyā, will surely be expecting by now that some statement of Śaṅkara's touching avidyā in sleep and samādhi, must have surely allured them to fall into the trap of misconceptions mentioned in the two preceding paragraphs. And he will not be surprised to find that the word *Mithyājñāna* in the following

quotations, has been the source of misapprehension :-

(१) यथा हि सुषुप्तिसमाध्यादावपि सत्यां स्वाभाविक्याम् अविभागप्राप्तौ मिथ्याज्ञानस्यानपोदितत्वात् पूर्ववत् पुनः प्रबोधे विभागो भवति, एवमिहापि भविष्यति ॥ सू. भा. २-१-९, ४२५.

“Just as in deep sleep and Samādhi, there is attained the intrinsic state of absence of distinctions, and yet distinction reappears in waking as before *on account of mithyājñāna not being removed*, so also it may well happen in this case (of dissolution) also !” SBh. 2-1-9, 425.

[One can very well surmise that an interpreter imbued with the idea of *mithyā* (undefinable), *ajñāna* (the theoretical avidyā-śakti), can take this passage to mean that even in deep sleep and samādhi, that ‘śakti’ persists to be in a latent form].

(२) यथा ह्यविभागेऽपि परमात्मनि मिथ्याज्ञानप्रतिबद्धो विभाग-व्यवहारः स्वप्नवदव्याहृतः स्थितौ दृश्यते, एवमपीतावपि मिथ्याज्ञानप्रति-बद्धैव विभाग-शक्तिरनुमास्यते ॥ सू. भा. २-१-९, ४२५

“Just as even in the Supreme Ātman without any distinctions, it is seen in practical life that distinctions based upon Mithyājñāna (or Avidyā of the nature of adhyāsa) function unobstructed even in the period of sustenance of the world as they do in a dream ; so also one may infer the potency of distinctions owing to Mithyājñāna.” SBh. 2-1-9, 425.

Needless to say that the school holding the theory of *avidyā-śakti* clinging to Ātman, may imagine here a voucher for inferring the continuance of that śakti during the dissolution period also.

MISCONCEPTION WITH REGARD TO THE IDENTITY OF JĪVA WAKING UP FROM SLEEP

38. A similar misconception has persisted with regard to the identity of the Jīva awaking from deep sleep. Bādarāyaṇa says in a sūtra (VS. 3-2-10) that the identical Jīva should be concluded to awake after sleep for (1) this Ātman continues to proceed with what he had left half done during the previous day, and (2) remembers what he had experienced in the past. Moreover (3) the Śruti also says expressly that the same Jīva awakes. (4) And fourthly if we suppose that each Jīva becomes finally free from saṃsāra on his becoming one with Brahman during sleep and quite another gets up, that would go against the Veda enjoining karma or Upāsana whose fruit is to be experienced at some distant time.

Here Śaṅkara anticipates an objection : Inasmuch as the jīva has become absolutely one with Brahman, how can we discriminate any particular jīva from others ? Is it not impossible to take the same drop of water after it had been thrown into a sheet of water ? The teacher answers :-

युक्तं तत्र विवेककारणाभावात् जलबिन्दोरनुद्धरणम् ; इह तु विद्यते
विवेककारणं कर्म चाविद्या च - इति वैषम्यम् ॥ सू. भा. ३-२-९, २८२.

“It is in the fitness of things that there being no means of discrimination, the drop of water cannot be taken up ; in the present case, however, we do have a means for

discriminating (the jīva), to wit, karma and avidyā. Hence there is no similarity between the two cases.” SBh. 3-2-9, 282.

A sub-commentator has twisted this Bhāshya to suit his pet theory of avidyā-śakti as follows :

एवमनाद्यनिर्वचनीयाविद्योपधानभेदोपाधिकल्पितो जीवो न वस्तुतः परमात्मनो भिद्यते ; तदुपाध्युद्भवाभिभवाभ्यां चोद्भूत् इव, अभिभूत इव प्रतीयते । ततश्च सुषुप्तादावपि अभिभूत इव, जाग्रदवस्थादिषूद्भूत इव । तस्य चाविद्यातद्वासनोपाधेरनादितया कार्यकारणभावेन प्रवहतः सुविवेचतया तदुपहितो जीवः सुविवेच इति ॥ भामती, ३-२-९.

According to this theory :

“Jīva being imagined to be such because of the conditioning associate which is a species of the beginningless undefinable avidyā, is really not different from the real Paramātman. Owing to the mani-festation or being overpowered by that conditioning associate, he himself seems to be manifest or unmanifest. Hence in deep sleep and the like states, he happens to be overshadowed and in states like waking etc., to become manifest. And that conditioning associate flowing in a stream consisting of avidyā and its impression in the relation of cause and effect being easily distinguishable, the jīva associated with it, can also be distinguished.”

Bhāmāti, 3-2-9.

Needless to say that this supposition of conditioning associate of the avidyā - Vāsanā (impression of avidyā) is directly opposed to Śaṅkara's Bhāshya on Sūtra 3-2-7. न कदाचिदपि जीवस्य ब्रह्मणा सम्पत्तिर्नास्ति etc.

THE ANALOGY OF SEED AND SPROUT AS A BEGINNINGLESS SERIES

39. This theory of a beginningless series of avidyā and its vāsanā (impression) like unto the series of the seed and sprout, has been extended earlier in this same sub-commentary to the adhyāsa itself propounded by Śaṅkara. He says :

व्यवहारानादितया तत्कारणस्य अध्यासस्य अनादितोक्ता । ततश्च पूर्वपूर्व-मिथ्याज्ञानोपदर्शितस्य बुद्धीन्द्रियशरीरादेरुत्तरोत्तराध्यासोपयोगः - इत्यनादित्वात् बीजाङ्कुरवन्न परस्पराश्रयत्वमित्यर्थः ॥

भामती, अध्यासभाष्यटीका, पा. १०.

This is in implication of the word नैसर्गिकः (natural) employed by Śaṅkara as an epithet of Vyavahāra here. The post-Śaṅkaras who thus interpret this term here, of course, overlook the concluding statement of Śaṅkara, when he says एवमयमनादिरनन्तो नैसर्गिकोऽध्यासो मिथ्याप्रत्ययरूपः कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वप्रवर्तकः । using both the words *naisargika* (innate, natural) and *anādi* (beginningless). Further, there is something which renders 'adhyāsa' the very foundation of Śaṅkara's Bhāshya weak ; for according to this sub-commentary, the 'preceding set of intellect or mind), the senses, and the body etc., as foisted by its preceding mithyājñāna (misconception) is employed in each *subsequent adhyāsa* as its cause, thus rendering adhyāsa or superimposition itself an event in time projecting or falsely causing the appearance of the next set of body etc. ! This, of

course, drives the enquirer to the awkward position of presuming himself to be a knower adjudging the place of both 'adhyāsa' and 'body' etc. which occur in a beginningless series on the basis of time !

SOME NEEDLESS DISPUTATIONS REGARDING AVIDYĀ AND JĪVAS

40. As a corollary from what has been said above concerning adhyasa, it follows that it is idle to discuss about the **number of avidyās** or to enter into the discussion about the priority of avidyā or jīvatva, as some post-Śāṅkaras have done. The discussion about the relative merits of *Ekajīvavāda* (the theory that there is only jīva) and *Nanajīvavāda* (theory of many jīvas), is also futile, since from the vyavahāric standpoint, we do believe and behave as if there are actually a number of jīvas. Accordingly, the Bhāshyakāra describes the universe as the sphere of action of numerous agents and experiencers of the fruits of action (अनेककर्तृभोक्तृसंयुक्तस्य प्रतिनियतदेशकालनिमित्तक्रिया फलाश्रयस्य ।) V.S. 1-1-2).

In Sūtra 3-2-9, where Bādarāyaṇa discusses the question whether the same jīva awakes from sleep, he necessarily implies that there are many jīvas in common life. And Śāṅkara remarks :-

सदेव तूपाधिसंपर्कात्, जीव इत्युपचर्यते इत्यसकृत् प्रपञ्चितम् । एवं सति यावदेकोपाधिगता बन्धानुवृत्तिः तावदेकजीवव्यवहारः । उपाध्यन्तरगतायां तु बन्धानुवृत्तौ जीवान्तरव्यवहारः । स एवायमुपाधिः स्वापप्रबोधयोर्बीजाङ्कुरन्यायेन इत्यतः स एव जीवः प्रतिबुध्यते इति युक्तम् ॥ सू. भा. ३-२-९, २७२.

“We have explained at length again and again, that it is Pure Being (Brahman) alone that is spoken of as a *jīva* owing to connection with a conditioning associate. This being so, we talk of one particular *jīva*, so long as bondage continues as attaching itself to one *Upādhi* (conditioning associate). But in the case of bondage continuing to attach itself to another *Upādhi*, the talk of another *jīva* becomes necessary. Inasmuch as one and the same *upādhi* continues both in sleep and waking in the relation like unto that of a seed and its sprout, it is reasonable to think that the same *jīva* wakes.”

SBh.3-2-9, 272.

Elsewhere, while discussing why the *jīva* is often spoken of as *aṇu* (subtle), Śaṅkara says तस्मात्, दुर्ज्ञानत्वाभिप्रायमिदमणुत्ववचनम्, उपाध्याभिप्रायं वा “Therefore, this epithet *aṇu* is applied just because the nature of *jīva* is difficult to ascertain, or because of the conditioning associate (the mind)’ (SBh. 2-3-29, p. 138). And in commenting on the next *Sūtra* he writes :

यावदेव चायं बुद्ध्युपाधिसंबन्धः, तावज्जीवस्य जीवत्वं संसारित्वं
च ॥ सू. भा. २-३-३०, १४०.

“And it is only so long as this connection of the conditioning associate, the mind continues that *jīva* is a *jīva*.”

SBh. 2-3-30, 140.

And in the next *sūtra*, Bādarāyaṇa says, according to Śaṅkara, that even in sleep and in the state of dissolution of the universe, this relation to the mind, continues to be in a latent form, just as capacity to procreate etc., are latent in childhood . Failure to notice that this remark is from the *vyāvahāric* standpoint, may have misled the later Vedāntins to

argue that avidyā itself continues to persist in such states.

Śaṅkara's actual position is, of course, that even the connection with this upādhi, is due to mithyājñāna or Adhyāsa.

अपि च मिथ्याज्ञानपुरःसरोऽयम् आत्मनो बुद्ध्युपाधिसंबन्धः ; न च मिथ्याज्ञानस्य सम्यग्ज्ञानादन्यत्र निवृत्तिरस्ति ॥ सू. भा. २-३-३०, १४१.

"Moreover, it is owing to the mithyājñāna (adhyāsa) that this connection with the mind has come about for Ātman, and there is no sublation of mithyājñāna except by right knowledge." SBh. 2-3-30, 141.

41. Strictly speaking, the three states of consciousness, can be reduced to two states according to the genuine tradition of Śaṅkara. As Gauḍapāda says :-

अन्यथा गृह्णतः स्वप्नो निद्रा तत्त्वमजानतः ।

विपर्यासे तयोः क्षीणे तुरीयं पदमन्श्रुते ॥ गौ. १-१५.

"There is dream for him who takes the truth as something else, and sleep for him who knows not the truth (as it is) ; when the misconception of these two sorts vanishes, one attains the Fourth quarter (the Ātman)." GK. 1-15.

Bādarāyana (VS. 3-2-3) treats the creation of dream-objects in dream as wholly Māyā, according to Śaṅkara's interpretation of the Sūtra (VS. 3-2-3) and there is not even the smell of reality in their appearance. The dream objects are, comparatively speaking, quite unlike those in waking, for the latter

are governed by the laws of space and time, and are not sublated like dream objects, in any other state. Again, Bādarāyaṇa according to Śaṅkara, says, that perception of external objects in dream and other kindred states, for there is a difference between waking experience and experience in these states (वैधर्म्याच्च न स्वप्नादिवत् - वे. सू. २-२-२९). In explaining the meaning of this aphorism, Śaṅkara says that besides being sublated or unsublated, there is a further difference between these two : अपि च स्मृतिरेषा यत् स्वप्नदर्शनम्, उपलब्धिस्तु जागरितदर्शनम् - सू. भा. २-२-२९, पा. २५०) "Moreover, this experience of dream is only memory, while the experience of waking is perception." Again, there are some Śrutis which teach that the Jīva goes to the dream-state taking the mental impression, and Śaṅkara also writes :

तद्वासनाविशिष्टः स्वप्नान् पश्यन् मनःशब्दवाच्यो भवति ॥

सू. भा. १-१-९, ८५.

"Being imbued with the impression of that perception, he sees dreams and is called by the name of *"manas"*."

SBh. 1-1-9, 85.

Forgetting to note that all this is from the vyāvahārika standpoint, later interpreters of Śaṅkara, have supposed this to be his last word in the matter ; they are ready to forego even the pāramārthika view, and suspect that there may have been some influence of Buddhism in treating both dream and waking as if they were on an equal footing. Śaṅkara, himself,

however, has already anticipated this and sounded a note of warning :

प्राक्तु ब्रह्मात्मत्वदर्शनात् वियदादिप्रपञ्चो व्यवस्थितरूपो ; भवति सन्ध्याश्रयस्तु प्रपञ्चः प्रतिदिनं बाध्यत इत्यतो वैशेषिकमिदं सन्ध्यस्य मायामात्रत्वमुदितम् ॥ सू. भा. ३-२-४, २५९.

“Before the intuition of one’s identity with Brahman, the diverse world consisting of ether etc., continues to be identical as it is, while that experienced in dream is sublated daily. So this statement about the wholly mayic nature of dream is only relative.” SBh. 3-2-4, 259.

The reader is here expressly warned against believing that the waking world is absolutely real, since as the effect superimposed on Brahman, it has been declared by the Śruti to be a name and mere play of words (see para 19 and SBh. 2-1-14).

42. It is clear that according to the genuine Śaṅkara’s tradition, swoon and other kindred states of unconsciousness, howsoever they may differ empirically owing to their origin and effect on life, are all on a par with deep sleep. It is therefore wrong to believe that there is only partial merging in Brahman in these states. A sub-commentator writes thus on this subject :

तस्मात्, सुषुप्तमोहावस्थयोः ब्रह्मणा संपत्तावपि सुषुप्ते यादृशी संपत्तिः न तादृशी मोहे इत्यर्धसंपत्तिरुक्ता । साम्यवैषम्याभ्यामर्धत्वम् ॥

भामती, ३-२-१०, पा. ६३९, ६४०.

“So, in the *mugdha* state or swoon, even while there is merging in Brahman, it is not quite that kind of merging as it is in the case of deep sleep ; and that is why it is said to be partial merging. It is half, because of similarity and dissimilarity.”
Bhāmati, 3-2-10, page 639, 640.

It is not surprising that this writer makes this observation, in the face of the express declaration of Śaṅkara :

‘न ब्रूमो मुग्धेऽर्धसंपत्तिर्जीवस्य ब्रह्मणा भवति इति’ ॥

सू. भा. ३-२-१०, २७५.

“We never say that the Jiva is only half merged in Brahman in swoon.”
SBh. 3-2-10, 275.

It is evident that the distinction of the two states from the Vyāvahāric standpoint, has been confounded with the discussion of the states with a view to determine the nature of Absolute Reality. The reader will remember in this connection how all the three states are really māyic as Śaṅkara has elsewhere (SBh. 2-1-9) pointed out on the authority of the traditional teacher Gauḍapāda.

43. Adhyāsa, as we have already seen, according to Śaṅkara, is only a natural tendency of the mind to mistake one thing for something else which it is not (अतस्मिस्तद्बुद्धिः). In the case of the adhyāsa or the mutual superimposition of the Self and the not-self, this tendency is the reason, giving rise to the mistaken distinction of the knowership, agency and the experiencing nature in the Self.

This superimposition may be subdivided into two kinds. In the first place, there is the mutual superimposition of the subject 'me' अस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचर - (the object of the notion of me) and the objective constituents of the aggregate of the body, the senses and the mind, as well as certain objects external to the aggregate. Here the mistaken transference of the properties of the individual self and of the not-self to each other, takes place even while one knows that these objects are obviously distinct from one's self. This is the case, for instance, when a person feels that he himself is benefitted or is the sufferer when one's son or daughter, wife or relative is so affected. The superimposed self in such cases, has been called the secondary self (*Gauṇātman*) while "one's" own aggregate of the body and the senses mistaken for the self, has been styled the false Ātman (*mithyātman*). This *mithyātman* may be the body as in the case of one's feeling 'I am fat' or 'I am lean', 'I jump, I walk' etc. ; or it may be senses as for instance, when one feels 'I am blind' or 'I am deaf'. Or else it may be the mind also with its various modifications as when one thinks and says 'I desire', 'I will it', 'I doubt it' or 'I have ascertained it'.

And in the second place, there is the mutual superimposition of the real inmost changeless Self as the Witnessing Consciousness and the *me*, the seat and object of the notion of *me*, with its numerous modifications (एवमहंप्रत्ययिनमशेषस्वप्नप्रचारसाक्षिणि प्रत्यगात्मन्यध्यस्य, तं च

प्रत्यगात्मानं सर्वसाक्षिणं तद्विपर्ययेणान्तःकरणादिष्वध्यस्यति). Here this Witnessing Self is the eternal subject in so far as all egos with their belongings (such as the body) become known only with the aid of Its intrinsic light.

Some sub-commentators have contended that even the Jīva is not really the object of the 'me' - notion, but has been so spoken of by Śāṅkara, only because he becomes fit for discussion in the empirical field (व्यवहारयोग्य) in that notion. This is only a distinction without difference. For this Jīva has been considered by Bādarāyaṇa in both of these two aspects, viz., that as Jīva, he is the very same supreme Ātman unchanged (परस्यैवात्मनो जीवभावेनावस्थानम् SBh. 1-4-22) and that Jīva is only a semblance of the real Ātman (आभास एव चैष जीवः परमात्मनो जलसूर्यकादिवत् प्रतिपत्तव्यः) not actually the same nor a distinct entity (न स एव साक्षात्, नापि वस्त्वन्तरम् - SBh. 2-3-50, 302).

In whichever aspect Jīva is presented, it is clear that he must be considered empirically speaking, to be as real, as the Pramāṇas and prameyas (means and objects of right knowledge). At that level of thought, it has to be conceded that there are innumerable jīvas, all of equal rank of reality, and nevertheless, they are all one with Brahman transcendently speaking.

44. Elsewhere Śāṅkara writes :

नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वभावे कूटस्थनित्ये एकस्मिन्नसङ्गे परमात्मनि

तद्विपरीतं जैवं रूपं व्योम्नीव तलमलादि परिकल्पितम् ॥ सू. भा. १-
३-१९, २६९.

“In the Supreme Ātman, ever pure, ever conscious and ever free in nature, absolutely changeless, One and untainted by anything else, has been conjured up the jīva form quite opposed to this in nature, just as a surface and dirt are fancied to pertain to the sky”. SBh. 1-3-19, 269.

The simile of ether in general pot-ether etc., has been used again and again in the Sūtra Bhāshya to illustrate the identity of Jīva with Īśvara in spite of the apparent difference recognized from the empirical point of view (SBh. 2-1-22, p.209).

It is therefore, really surprising to find that different followers of sub-commentators, have internecine wordy war-fare with one another dividing themselves into conflicting camps of (1) the *avachhinna-vāda* (theory advocating the limitation of jivas by the mind), (2) *pratibimba-vāda* (the theory insisting that jīvas are reflections of Ātman in avidyā), and (3) *ābhāsa-vāda* (the theory that believes the jīva is only a semblance of Paramātman). This needless internal fight has been the result of ignoring that ancient Vedāntins Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara had cited such illustrations only to clarify the teaching of the absolute unity of Ātman, and not to formulate any one definition of jīva-nature. This would become evident to anyone who carefully pursues the following statement of Śaṅkara :-

न हि दृष्टान्तदार्ष्टान्तिकयोः क्वचित् कञ्चिद्विवक्षितांशं मुक्त्वा
सर्वसारूप्यं केनचिद्दर्शयितुं शक्यते । सर्वसारूप्ये हि दृष्टान्तदार्ष्टान्तिक-
भावोच्छेद एव स्यात् ॥ सू. भा. ३-२-२०, २८७.

“Nobody can insist on likeness in all respects between an illustration and the thing illustrated ; for if there should be an all-round similarity, and not merely in a particular point of comparison intended, the very relation of the illustrated and the illustration would cease to be there.”

SBh. 3-2-20, 287.

The above-cited statement is in the context of an illustration given in the Śruti to clarify the teaching that the jīva is really of the nature of Ātman as Pure Consciousness devoid of all specific features and that his seeming nature as invested with features, is only due to conditioning associates as in the case of a reflection of the Sun.

45. The doctrine of one and the same Witnessing Ātman as the Self of all creatures, has been proclaimed in the Śruti (Sve. 6-11) and Śaṅkara challengingly declares that this Ātman is taught neither in the portion of the Vedās treating of injunctions (*Vidhi-kāṇḍa*) nor recognized in any one of the speculative systems (*tarka-samaye*), and he unequivocally identifies this Witness with Īśvara (SBh. 2-3-41), कर्माध्यक्षात् सर्वभूताधिवासात् साक्षिणः चेतयितुरीश्वरात्).

It passes one's understanding how in the face of this declaration, some of the followers of the sub-commentaries could imagine that, the Jīva-sākshis (!)

were many in number while the Īśvara-sākshi (?) is one alone.

46. We have already seen how (para 38) according to Śaṅkara, Bādarāyaṇa has argued that the same Jīva who went to sleep awakes to transmigrate according to his karma. The implication of the plurality of Jīvas in this Sūtra is justified by Śaṅkara as due to conditioning associates (उपाध्यन्तरगतायां तु बन्धानुवृत्तौ जीवान्तरव्यवहारः । सू. भा. ३-१-९).

Yet post-Śaṅkara advaitins have entertained different views as to whether *Ekajīva-vāda* (the theory of single Jīva) or *Nānājīva-vāda* (the theory of many Jīvas) is the more correct one !

47. Another grievous blunder more culpable than the pluralization of the Witness, is the woeful misinterpretation of the epithet **Prājña** found in the Śruti. This significant name given to the Witness of deep sleep in the Māṇḍūkya, can never be misunderstood by any one who notices the other epithets which are used in juxta-position with it. एष सर्वेश्वर एष सर्वज्ञ एषोऽन्तर्याम्येष योनिः सर्वस्य प्रभवाप्ययौ हि भूतानाम् ॥ (मां. ६.) And yet some have ventured to give the derivation of the word as प्रायेण अज्ञः (mostly ignorant) just to make it fit in with their pet theory that there is avidyā (ignorance) in sound sleep ! And this in defiance of Bādarāyaṇa's express use of the term to denote Īśvara and Śaṅkara's commentary thereon in accordance with

Śruti. We shall just cite the Sūtras, and the Śruti along with the Bhāshya for the reader's information :-

(१) वदतीति चेन्न प्राज्ञो हि प्रकरणात् ॥ वे. सू. १-४-५.

(२) तद्गुणसारत्वात् तु तद्व्यपदेशः प्राज्ञवत् ॥ वे. सू. २-३-२९.

(३) सुषुप्तौ तावत् 'अयं पुरुषः प्राज्ञेनात्मना संपरिष्वक्तो न बाह्यं किञ्चन वेद नान्तरम्' (बृ. ४-३-२१) इति शारीरात् भेदेन परमेश्वरं व्यपदिशति । तत्र पुरुषः शारीरः स्यात्, तस्य वेदितृत्वात् । प्राज्ञः परमेश्वरः । सर्वज्ञत्वलक्षणया प्रज्ञया नित्यमवियोगात् । तथोक्तान्तावपि 'अयं शारीर आत्मा प्राज्ञेनात्मनाऽन्वारूढ उत्सर्जन् याति' (बृ. ४-३-३५) इति जीवात् भेदेन परमेश्वरं व्यपदिशति ॥

सू. भा. १-३-४२, ३२९.

Comment is needless. The Sūtras set Prājña in contrast with Jiva. And Śaṅkara says expressly that the Śrutis invariably refer to Īśvara when they use the word Prājña.

NEEDLESS CONTROVERSY OVER THE SYNTACTICAL RELATION OF THE WORDS IN THE TEXT 'TAT-TVAM-ASI'

48. Another needless controversy among the followers of the sub-commentators, is about the relation of *tvam-padartha* and *tat-padārtha* (the Jīva and Īśvara) in the proposition *Tat-tvam-asi* ('That thou art' as it is usually rendered). Is it an apposition of the two words in their primary sense (*Mukhya Samānādhikaranya*) or an apposition implying the sublation of Jīva's nature (*bādhā-samānādhikaranya*) ?

That this difference of opinion is wholly

needless, may be readily seen when one considers the following statements in Śaṅkara's Bhāṣhya :

‘अपि च तत्त्वमसि’ इत्येतद् वाक्यं त्वंपदार्थस्य तत्पदार्थभाव-
माचष्टे । तत्पदेन च प्रकृतं सद्ब्रह्म ईक्षितुं, जगतो जन्मादिकारणम्
अभिधीयते, ‘सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म’, ‘विज्ञानमानन्दं ब्रह्म’, ‘अदृष्टं द्रष्टुं
..... अविज्ञातं विज्ञातृ’, ‘अजमजरममरम्’, ‘अस्थूलमनण्वहस्व-
मदीर्घम्’ - इत्यादिशास्त्रप्रसिद्धम् । एष व्यावृत्तसर्वसंसारधर्मकः
अनुभवात्मकः ब्रह्मसंज्ञकस्तत्पदार्थो वेदान्ताभियुक्तानां प्रसिद्धः । तथा
त्वंपदार्थोऽपि प्रत्यगात्मा श्रोता देहादारभ्य प्रत्यगात्मतया संभाव्यमानः
चैतन्यपर्यन्तत्वेनावधारितः । तत्र च येषामेतौ पदार्थौ अज्ञानसंशयविपर्यय-
प्रतिबद्धौ तेषां ‘तत्त्वमसि’ इत्येतद् वाक्यं स्वार्थे प्रमां नोत्पादयितुं शक्नोति,
पदार्थज्ञानपूर्वकत्वाद् वाक्यार्थस्य । येषां पुनर्निपुणमतीनां नाज्ञानसंशय-
विपर्ययलक्षणः पदार्थविषयः प्रतिबन्धोऽस्ति ते शङ्कुवन्ति सकृदुक्तमेव
तत्त्वमसिवाक्यार्थमनुभवितुम् ॥ सू. भा. ४-१-२, ५०६.

[It should be noted, incidentally, that अज्ञान (absence of knowledge), संशय (doubt) and विपर्यय (misconception), are the only obstacles that are in the way of right knowledge of Ātman. ‘Avidyā-śakti’ which is postulated by sub-commentaries as one enveloping the Brahmic nature and projecting the transmigratory nature of the self, is nowhere mentioned by Śaṅkara in this connection.]

It is evident that the true nature of Brahman or *Tat-padārtha* is to be determined by using the principles of interpretation enunciated in the *Pūrvamimāṃsa* of Jaimini, and that there is no question of

any choice between the primary meaning or secondary meaning there. In the case of *Tvam-padārtha* or *Jīva*, the Śruti itself guides us in determining the final entity Chaitanya (Pure Consciousness) as intended by the word. So it stands to reason that the text requires the examination of *Jīva* nature till we finally land at the actual entity which is identical with Brahman known through a study of the Śāstra.

It is therefore to be concluded that Śāṅkara sides with those who hold that the samsāric nature of the *Jīva*, is to be sublated before we can intuit the Identity taught by this and other such propositions.

This is not a rare inference from Śāṅkara's explanation of the text, 'That thou art' cited above. Here are extracts from the Sūtra-Bhāshya wherein Śāṅkara himself says so, in so many words :-

(१) यावद् हि अविद्या न निवर्तते, तावद् धर्मादिगोचरत्वं जीवस्य जीवत्वं च न निवर्तते । तन्नवृत्तौ तु प्राज्ञ एव 'तत्त्वमसीति' श्रुत्या प्रत्याय्यते ; न चाविद्यावत्त्वे तदपगमे च वस्तुनः कश्चिद् विशेषोऽस्ति ॥

सू. भा. १-४-६, ३५१.

Here Śāṅkara says that *Prajñā* or *Īśvara* is the same *Īśvara*, and nothing more nor less. The nature of *Jīva* is only superimposed by *Avidyā*, on whose disappearance 'it is *Prajñā* Himself, that is taught by the Śruti 'That thou art'.

(२) आभास एव चैष जीवः, परस्यात्मनो जलसूर्यकादिवत्

प्रतिपत्तव्यः । आभासस्य चाविद्याकृतत्वात् तदाश्रयस्य संसारस्य
अविद्याकृतत्वोपपत्तिरिति । तद्व्युदासेन च पारमार्थिकस्य ब्रह्मात्मभावस्य
उपदेशोपपत्तिः ॥ सू. भा. २-३-५०, १६८.

Here we are told that the Jīva is only a semblance of Paramātman, like the reflection of the sun etc. Hence all transmigratory life pertaining to that Jīva is also reasonable to be supposed as due to Avidyā, and consequently the teaching of his identity with Brahman by negating the Saṃsāra becomes quite reasonable.

(३) न हीश्वरस्य संसार्यात्मत्वं प्रतिपाद्यत इत्यभ्युपगच्छामः । किं
तर्हि, संसारिणः संसारित्वापोहेन ईश्वरात्मत्वं प्रतिपिपादयिषितमिति ।
एवं च सत्या अद्वैतेश्वरस्य अपहतपाप्मत्वादिगुणता, विपरीतगुणता तु
इतरस्य मिथ्या इति व्यवतिष्ठते ॥ सू. भा. ४-१-३, ५१०.

Here it is expressly affirmed that Īśvara is not taught to be identical with Jīva, but only by negating the saṃsāric nature of Jīva, the latter is intended to be taught as being one with Īśvara. Īśvara's description as being free from all defects is real, whereas the Jīva's being of the opposite nature, is unreal. This is the distinction to be recognized here.

THE CREATORSHIP OF ĪŚVARA, AND THE TRANSMIGRATORY NATURE OF JĪVA

49. This disposes of the difficulty arising out of the teaching that Īśvara is the creator of the universe

and as such precluding the possibility of His being identical with the Jīva who is transmigrating in the empirical world. How can there be identity of the omnipotent Īśvara with an individual creature like the Jīva ? This objection does not hold water, for, as Śaṅkara says :-

नन्वभेदनिर्देशोऽपि दर्शितः 'तत्त्वमसि' इत्येवंजातीयकः । कथं भेदाभेदौ विरुद्धौ संभवेयाताम् ? नैष दोषः । आकाशघटाकाशन्यायेन उभयसंभवस्य तत्र तत्र प्रतिष्ठापितत्वात् । अपि च यदा 'तत्त्वमसि' - इत्येवंजातीयकेन अभेदनिर्देशेन अभेदः प्रतिबोधितो भवति, अपगतं भवति तदा जीवस्य संसारित्वं ब्रह्मणश्च स्रष्टृत्वम् । समस्तस्य मिथ्याज्ञान-विजृम्भितस्य भेदव्यवहारस्य सम्यग्ज्ञानेन बाधितत्वात् । तत्र कुत एव सृष्टिः ?

सू. भा. २-१-२२, ४५६.

Here we are told that the Vyāvahāric difference between Īśvara as a creator and Jīva as mere creature, is due to the conditioning associate of Jīva (in the shape of the body and senses), and therefore the difference between the two, may be justified on the analogy of ether in general and a pot-ether. But when the absolute unity of Ātman is intuited in the light of the teaching in such text as 'That thou art', there is neither the creator nor the transmigratory Jīva different from each other.

THE ANALOGY OF THE POT-ETHER, AND ETHER IN GENERAL

50. The analogy of the pot-ether, given as an

illustration of the simultaneous unity of Ātman as well as the Vyāvahāric difference between Īśvara and Jiva, had been already used by **Gauḍapāda**, the knower of the right Vedantic tradition (वेदान्तसंप्रदायवित्) as he has been styled by Śaṅkara. That adept in Vedānta, has shown how this illustration is aptly applicable to explain all the differences in empirical life :-

(१) आत्मा ह्याकाशवज्जीवैर्घटाकाशैरिवोदितः ।

घटादिवच्च संघातैर्जातावेतन्निदर्शनम् ॥ गौ. का. ३-३.

This ślōka is given in illustration of how Paramātman appears to be born as many jīvas and their conditioning associates in empirical life, without affecting his absolute monistic nature. The ether (ākāśa) is the first product issuing forth from Brahman. It remains as ether and yet has transformed itself into pots and pot-ethers, thus accomodating itself to the convention of the differences of (1) ether in general, (2) pots as conditioning adjuncts of pot-ethers, and (3) a number of pot-ethers.

(२) रूपकार्यसमाख्याश्च भिद्यन्ते तत्र तत्र वै ।

आकाशस्य न भेदोऽस्ति तद्वज्जीवेषु निर्णयः ॥ गौ. का. ३-६.

This ślōka says that the several names, forms and activities do differ in empirical life, and yet the unity of Ātman remains intact, just as for practical purposes, pots, jars, pitchers etc. differ and yet ether as such, remains intact in the face of these apparent differences.

(३) मरणे संभवे चैव गत्यागमनयोरपि ।

स्थितौ सर्वशरीरेषु चाकाशेनाविलक्षणः ॥ गौ. का. ३-९.

This verse illustrates how Ātman remains the same in spite of the Vyāvahāric conventions of birth, death, movement and staying in all the bodies.

THE RELATION BETWEEN THE KARMA-KĀṆḌA AND THE JÑĀNA-KĀṆḌA

51. One important distinction between the procedure of Vedic teaching adopted in the Karma-kāṇḍa and that in the teaching about Brahman in Vedānta, should be steadily kept in mind in order to avoid misconceptions. As Śaṅkara says :

(१) नित्यान्यधिगतानि कर्माणि, उपात्तदुरितक्षयार्थानि, काम्यानि च फलार्थिनां, पूर्वस्मिन् ग्रन्थे ; इदानीं कर्मोपादानहेतुपरिहाराय ब्रह्मविद्या प्रस्तूयते ॥

तै. भा. अव, १.

“Obligatory Karmas have been studied in the previous portion for wiping off sins accumulated in the past, and Kāmya Karmas also for the benefit of those that desire to attain fruits (of karmas).”

Introduction, Tai - 1.

(२) सर्वथाप्यस्ति आत्मा देहान्तरसंबन्धीत्येवं प्रतिपत्तुः देहान्तर-गतेष्टानिष्ट प्राप्तिपरिहारोपायविशेषार्थिनः तद्विशेषज्ञापनाय कर्मकाण्ड-मारब्धम् । न त्वात्मनः इष्टानिष्टप्राप्तिपरिहारेच्छाकारणम् आत्मविषयम् अज्ञानं कर्तृभोक्तृस्वरूपाभिमानलक्षणं तद्विपरीतब्रह्मात्मस्वरूपविज्ञापनेना-पनीतम् ॥

बृ. भा. अव, ५.

“Karma-kāṇḍa was undertaken for the benefit of one who

believes that there is certainly an Ātman, who is to be connected with another body and who is desirous of attaining what is desired and of warding off what is disliked in connection with that body, only to reveal the appropriate means of attaining what is liked and of warding off what is disliked. But the reason of desiring to attain what is liked and of warding off what is disliked, that reason of the nature of believing in one's being an agent and experiencer of the fruits of action, that reason viz. wrong knowledge, has not been removed by revealing one's opposite nature of being Brahmātman." Intro Br., 5.

Evidently Karma-kāṇḍa, according to Śaṅkara, extends the range of the result of empirical life relating to the present birth, to future births in this world and to the other world and restricts itself to reveal the means of attaining what one desires to attain there also. The *Jñāna-kāṇḍa*, on the other hand, proposes to reveal to the dispassionate souls, the means of rubbing off avidyā the very root of desire, by revealing the real nature of the Monistic Ātman who is the only Reality Absolute.

This avidyā, as we have already seen (para 27), is the superimposition of the unreal not-self on the real Self. The illustration of the rope-snake which he often adduces, as the reader is aware, is intended to show how this mutual superimposition of the Ātman and the unreal not-self, does not confer any virtue upon the not-self and cannot taint the Ātman either (तत्कृतेन दोषेण गुणेन वा अणुमात्रेणापि स न संबध्यते). We have also seen (in para 47) how in the discussion of the epithet Prājñā ascribed to Īśvara, in contrast to jīva on account of

this superimposition or avidyā, does not affect Ātman in the least. There also Śaṅkara writes ‘न त्वहिबुद्धिकाले तदपगमकाले च वस्तुनः कश्चिद्विशेषोऽस्ति’ (सू. भा. १-४-६, पा. १५४.), ‘Just as there is no change in the nature of rope either at the time of one’s falsely believing it to be a snake or when one’s delusion has been dispersed.’

Elsewhere, Śaṅkara writes :

अपवादो नाम यत्र कस्मिंश्चिद्वस्तुनि पूर्वनिविष्टायां मिथ्याबुद्धौ निश्चितायां पश्चादुपजायमाना यथार्थाबुद्धिः, पूर्वनिविष्टायाः मिथ्याबुद्धेर्निर्वर्तिका भवति । यथा देहेन्द्रियसङ्घाते आत्मबुद्धिः, आत्मन्येवात्मबुद्ध्या पश्चाद्भाविन्या ‘तत्त्वमसि’ इत्यनया यथार्थबुद्ध्या निवर्त्यते ॥

सू. भा. ३-३-९, ३३१.

“Apavāda or rescission in the case of apposition, occurs when a subsequent idea faithful to the nature of an object, happens to sublate a previous false notion attached to it ; as for example, when the false notion of the self attached to the aggregate of the body and the senses, is removed by the correct notion of Ātman belonging to the genuine Ātman himself, this subsequent idea being born out of the teaching ‘That thou art’.”

SBh. 3-3-9, 331.

This distinction between the two portions of the Vedās, steadily kept in view throughout Śaṅkara’s exposition of Vedic-vyāvahāra, accounts for his uniform tirade in almost all his Bhāshyas against the Jnāna-karma-samuchchaya-vāda of certain Vedāntins who either ignored the nature of the genuine knowledge of Brahman, or confounded it with Upāsana.

HOW ŚAṄKARA'S VEDĀNTA HAPPENS TO BE MISUNDERSTOOD BY OTHER VEDĀNTINS

52. Criticisms of Śaṅkara by adverse Bhāshyakāras of Vedānta-Sūtras, may be said to be mainly due to a misconception resulting from their inability to appreciate this distinction of the two vyavahāras. Bādarāyaṇa as interpreted by Śaṅkara, keeps these two view-points wide apart throughout the Śaṅkara-Mimāṃsa. Śaṅkara frequently draws our attention to this distinction, lest the two views be mixed up. Let us take, for instance, the following two Sūtras discussing the consistency of the definition of Brahman as the cause of the universe :-

(१) भोक्त्रापत्तेरविभागश्चेत् स्याल्लोकवत् ॥ वे. सू. २-१-१३.

“If it should be objected that the distinction of the experiencer and the experienced, would cease to be since the experiencing ego and the experienced objects would become identical, we reply this distinction can well remain intact, as may be seen from illustrations in common life.” VS. 2-1-13

Here the objection is that since the universe is an effect of the primary cause Brahman, according to the Advaitin, there would be a repugnant identification of both the experiencing ego and objects to be experienced. The reply is that the distinction may still be kept up even on the advaitin's view ; for there is an illustration based on experience in common life :-

समुद्रादुदकात्मनोऽनन्यत्वेऽपि तद्विकाराणां फेनवीचीतरङ्गबुद्बुदा-

दीनाम् इतरेतरविभागः, इतरेतरसंश्लेषादिलक्षणश्च व्यवहारः उपलभ्यते ; न च समुद्रादुदकात्मनोऽनन्यत्वेऽपि तद्विकाराणां फेनतरङ्गादीनाम् इतरेतर-भावापत्तिर्भवति ; न च तेषामितरेतरभावानापत्तावपि समुद्रात्मनोऽनन्यत्वं भवति ॥ सू. भा. २-१-१३, ४३२.

The Advaitin's reply is :-

“Foam, a wave, a wavelet, a bubble etc. are distinct from one another, while they are one with the sea as water, and none of the effects is identical with another. So also, the experiencer, experience, and the experienced objects, may well be distinct from each other even while they are each one with Brahman as the material cause.” SBh. 2-1-13, 432.

This reply is from the view-point of vyāvahāra, but from the higher view of Paramārtha, the next Sūtra has abandoned this view. Śaṅkara accordingly explains it thus :-

अभ्युपगम्य चेमं व्यावहारिकं भोक्तृभोग्यलक्षणं विभागं ‘स्याल्लोकवत्’ इति परिहारोऽभिहितः ; न त्वयं विभागः ‘परमार्थतोऽस्ति’ ; यस्मात् तयोः कार्यकारणयोरनन्यत्व अवगम्यते ॥ सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४३३.

“Conceding this empirical distinction of the experiencer and the experienced, it has been said that this distinction may well be maintained as it is seen in the world ; but this distinction is not really real, for there is really non-difference between the two.” SBh. 2-1-14, 433.

At the close of this Bhāshya on this Sūtra Śaṅkara writes :-

सूत्रकारोऽपि परमार्थाभिप्रायेण ‘तदनन्यत्वम्’ - इत्याह । व्यवहाराभिप्रायेण तु ‘स्यल्लोकवत्’ इति महासमुद्रस्थानीयतां ब्रह्मणः

कथयति । अप्रत्याख्यायैव कार्यप्रपञ्चं परिणामप्रक्रियां चाश्रयति
सगुणेषूपासनेषु उपयोक्ष्यते इति ॥ सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४४१.

“The author of the Sūtras also says there is non-difference in view of the Paramārtha (Transcendental Reality). Having the empirical view in mind, however, he says that such a distinction is possible as we see that it obtains in the world. And without negating the world of effects at all, he adopts the method of parināma (evolution) also, so that it might be usefully employed in the interpretation of Upāsanās.”

SBh. 2-1-14, 441.

Not realizing that Bādarāyaṇa takes his stand on the axiom that **Brahman or the Universal Self is self-established Truth and Reality in one, and that the distinction of pramātru, pramāṇa and prameya, is itself nourished by the light of that Pure Consciousness**, some have made bold to doubt that very Reality, alleging that the Brahman without specific features, has no support of any pramāṇa !

CAN UPĀSANA DO AWAY WITH AVIDYĀ ?

53. Some Schools of Vedānta have not only insisted that Śrutis present Brahman only as the object of Upāsanā, but that upāsanā is the only Vidyā that is capable of destroying avidyā. This doctrine is the outcome of a **double misconception**. In the first place, they have rushed to the conclusion of the mutual identity of jñāna and upāsanā, simply because verbs derived from both the roots विद् (vid) and उपास्

(upās) have been interchanged in certain texts enjoining Upāsanā (meditation). Śāṅkara also recognizes this circumstance when he says विद्युपास्त्योश्च वेदान्तेषु अव्यतिरेकेण प्रयोगो दृश्यते and has cited two passages (Ch 2-1-4, 3-18-1) as vouchers for this.

But he would not fall a prey to the temptation of conceiving that avidyā also could be destroyed by Upāsanā, for according to his tradition, real jñāna is something quite different from Upāsanā, in so far as it is the result of a pramāṇa which has some existent thing for its object. And unlike upāsanā, it is dependent neither on a person's will nor on any injunction, but as common sense tells us, is always in conformity with the nature of its object. (ज्ञानं तु प्रमाणजन्यम्, प्रमाणं च यथाभूतवस्तुविषयम् । अतो ज्ञानं कर्तुमकर्तुमन्यथा वा कर्तुमशक्यम्, केवलं वस्तुतन्त्रमेव न चोदनातन्त्रम्, नापि पुरुषतन्त्रम्).

HOW DOES JÑĀNA DESTROY AVIDYĀ ?

54. Strictly speaking, even jñāna cannot be said to destroy avidyā in the literal sense of the word, for

(१) न हि क्वचिद् साक्षात् वस्तुधर्मस्य अपोद्गी तृष्टा कर्त्री वा ब्रह्म-विद्या, अविद्यायास्तु सर्वत्रैव निवर्तिका दृश्यते । तथा इहापि अब्रह्मत्वम् असर्वत्वं च अविद्याकृतमेव निवर्त्यतां ब्रह्मविद्याया ॥

बृ.भा. १-४-१०, १५१.

Here we are reminded that, in all cases, vidyā (knowledge) is seen to remove ignorance only, but it

can never actually remove an existing property of a thing or create some property afresh.

(२) ज्ञापकं हि शास्त्रं न कारकम् इति स्थितिः ॥

बृ. भा. १-४-१०, १५६.

Here we are reminded that the Śāstra or Upanishad is only *jñāpāka* (revealer) but not *Kāraka* (creator) and so no authority of Śāstra can be invoked to prove that knowledge actually does effect something.

(३) तथा 'सदेवेदं सर्वम्', 'ब्रह्मैवेदं सर्वम्', 'आत्मैवेदं सर्वम्', 'नेदं द्वैतमस्ति अब्रह्म' - इति ब्रह्मण्येकत्वविज्ञानं न विधातव्यं ब्रह्मणि अविद्याधारोपणायाम् असत्याम् ॥ बृ. भा. १-४-१०, १५२.

Here we are told that the very fact that the holy revelation emphasizes that Brahman or Ātman as Pure Being is the All, presumes that there is **Avidyā or superimposition** on Brahman in life.

(४) मोक्षस्य इदानीमिव निर्विशेषत्वे तदर्थाधिकयत्नानुपपत्तिः शास्त्रवैयर्थ्यं च प्राप्नोतीति चेत् ; न, अविद्याभ्रमापोहार्थत्वात् । न हि वस्तुतो मुक्तामुक्तत्वविशेषोऽस्ति ; आत्मनो नित्यैकरूपत्वात् । किंतु तद्विषयाऽ-विद्याऽपोह्यते शास्त्रोपदेशजनितविज्ञानेन । प्राक् तदुपदेशप्राप्तेः तदर्थश्च प्रयत्न उपपद्यते एव ॥ बृ. भा. ४-४-६, २७४.

Here we learn that a person is the same Brahman even before he gets final release. Yet the knowledge of this fact, has got to be acquired through the

teaching of the Śāstra ; only avidyā has got to be removed, and the enquirer has to make an effort to remove it.

(५) अविद्यावतः, अविद्यानिवृत्त्यनिवृत्तिकृतो विशेष आत्मनः स्यात् - इति चेत्, न ; अविद्याकल्पनाविषयत्वाभ्युपगमात् । रज्जुषर-शुक्तिकागगनानां सर्पोदकरजतमलिनत्वादिवददोषः इत्यवोचाम ॥

बृ.भा. ४-४-६, २७४.

Here it is declared that there is no specific difference caused in the ignorant person, on account of the removal or non - removal of avidya, in the same way as there is nothing new happening in the actual nature of a rope, barren soil, nacre and sky when the wrong knowledge treating them as a snake, mirage water, silver, or dirty surface, is removed.

[The theory of an actual birth of something undefinable (*anirvachaniya*) in these cases of misconception ; is quite foreign to Śaṅkara's tradition.]

(६) तिमिरातिमिरदृष्टिवत् अविद्याकर्तृत्वाकर्तृत्वकृतः आत्मनो विशेषः स्यात् इति चेत्, न ; 'ध्यायतीव, लेलायतीव' इति स्वतोऽविद्याकर्तृत्वस्य प्रतिषिद्धत्वात् । अनेकव्यापारसन्निपातजनितत्वाच्च अविद्याभ्रमस्य ॥

बृ. भा. ४-४-६, २७४.

Here the objection that at least the difference of knowing and not-knowing, should be admitted in Ātman at these two stages, has been met by appealing to the S'ruti which negates the not-knowing by

likening it to dream-knowledge. One seems to think and act 'as it were' ; and so one is not really ignorant. This can be readily seen when it is observed that this wrong knowledge (avidyā) so called is the result of the many functions of the body, senses and the mind, and does not really pertain to Ātman.

(b) विषयत्वोपपत्तेश्च । यस्य चाविद्याभ्रमो घटादिवद् विविक्तो गृह्यते स नाविद्याभ्रमवान् ॥
 बृ. भा. ४-४-६, २७४.

Here is another reason which serves as a clincher. One who sees avidyā as an object, in the same way as one who perceives an object, cannot be surely treated as being actually ignorant of himself. Ignorance is seen to appear and disappear ; so it is an object of knowledge. It is therefore surely wrong to think that the knower is the locus of this object, Avidyā.

The above excerpts must suffice to show that the teaching of Final Release by the knowledge of Ātman through the removal of avidyā, is purely a device used for the purpose of rescinding some other teaching which tentatively grants the existence of avidyā, and therefore that the removal of avidyā, is only from the empirical standpoint. From the transcendental point of view, therefore, the Śruti says 'ब्रह्मैव सन् ब्रह्माप्येति' (बृ. ४-४-६). "Being Brahman itself, one is dissolved in Brahman through knowledge", while in the case of meditation it says 'देवो भूत्वा देवानप्येति' (बृ. ४-१-२) 'One becomes a god and merges in gods'.

एष म आत्माऽन्तर्हृदये एतद् ब्रह्मैतमितः प्रेत्याभिसंभवितास्मीति ॥

छां. ३-१४-४.

“This is my Ātman inside the heart, this is Brahman ; I am going to become one with It after departing hence.”

Ch. 3-14-4.

THE CENTRAL PHILOSOPHY OF ŚAṄKARA'S TRADITION OF VEDĀNTA

55. The history of the vicissitudes of Vedāntic thought, may well be regarded as a veritable battle between a majority of Vedāntic Schools who mostly maintained that the Upanishads being an integral part of the Vedas, should be expected to lay down some injunction with or without Brahman as subservient to it, and a minority of Vedāntins who stood by assertive texts which seem to proclaim that the knowledge of Brahman leads a seeker to the highest goal of life independently of any religious duty to be performed whether in conjunction with such knowledge or even exclusively. Following in the footsteps of Gauḍapāda, Śaṅkara interprets Bādarāyaṇa as fully endorsing the main doctrines of the followers of this latter school.

The reason why the later Vedāntins following the subcommentaries, and the Bhāshyakāras of other systems, failed to see eye to eye with Śaṅkara lies partly in their want of attention to the line of argument adopted in Śaṅkara's elaborate commentary on the *Samanvaya Sūtra* (VS. 1-1-4) and partly to

their instinctive allegiance to the efficacy of *pramāṇas* and, what is more, in their ignoring the place of *anubhava* (intuition) and *anubhavānusāri tarkah* (reasoning in consonance with intuition) adopted in the Upanishads. Śaṅkara's comment on the aphorism 'अरूपवदेव हि तत्प्रधानत्वात्' (वे. सू. ३-२-१४) deserves pointed attention in this connection :-

'अस्थूलमनण्वह्रस्वमदीर्घम्' (बृ. ३-८-८), 'अशब्दमस्पर्शमरूप-
मव्ययम्' (का. १-३-१५), 'आकाशो ह वै नाम नामरूपयोर्निर्वहिता ते
यदन्तरा तद्ब्रह्म' (छां. ८-१४-१), 'दिव्यो ह्यमूर्तः पुरुषः स बाह्याभ्यन्तरो
ह्यजः' (मुं. २-१-२), तदेतद् 'ब्रह्मापूर्वमनपरमन्तरमबाह्यमयमात्मा ब्रह्म
सर्वानुभूः' (बृ. २-४-१९) - इत्येवमादीनि वाक्यानि निष्प्रपञ्चब्रह्मात्मत्व-
प्रधानानि, नार्थान्तरप्रधानानि इत्येतत् प्रतिष्ठापितं 'तत्तु समन्वयात्' (वे. सू.
१-१-४) इत्यत्र । तस्मात्, एवञ्जातीयकेषु वाक्येषु यथाश्रुतं निराकारमेव
ब्रह्म अवधारयितव्यम् । इतराणि त्वाकारवद्ब्रह्मविषयाणि वाक्यानि, न
तत्प्रधानानि ; उपासनादिविधिप्रधानानि हि तानि । तेषु असति विरोधे
यथाश्रुतमाश्रयितव्यम् । सति तु विरोधे तत्प्रधानानि अतत्प्रधानेभ्यो बलीयांसि
भवन्ति - इत्येष विनिगमनायां हेतुः, येन उभयोष्वपि श्रुतिषु सतीषु
अनाकारमेव ब्रह्म अवधार्यते, न पुनर्विपरीतम् इति ॥

सू. भा. ३-२-१४, २८१.

'It is neither gross nor subtle, neither short nor long' (Br.), 'Without sound, without touch, without colour, undecaying' (Ka. 1-3-15), 'That indeed, which is known as Ākāśā (Ether), is that which differentiates name and form ; that which is distinct from these two, that is Brahman' (Ch. 8-14-1), 'The puruṣa indeed, is transcendental, formless,

He is verily, unborn both within and without' (Mu. 2-1-2), 'Now this Brahman is without anything antecedent, and without anything consequent, without anything interior or without anything exterior ; this Ātman intuiting everything, is Brahman' (Br. 2-5-19) - texts like these mainly purporting to teach the absolute nature of Brahman without manifoldness, and nothing else, it has been conclusively shown in the Sūtra 'Tat tu samanvayāt', 'But it has really the Śāstra alone for its source' (VS. 1-1-4). Therefore in texts of this kind, Brahman has to be accepted and taken to be, of the very nature as revealed in these, that is, as being emphatically without specific features. As for the other set of sentences, teaching Brahman with specific features, these do not mainly purport to teach that (the real nature of Brahman), for their aim chiefly is to enjoin upāsanā. So their express teaching (about) Brahman, should be accepted only in so far as there is no clash (between the two teachings) ; but when there is any clash (with the other set of teachings, this principle has to be observed in deciding our choice, viz, that texts having it as their main purport are preferable to those that have it not. That is why Brahman is concluded to be without any specific feature and not otherwise, even while there are texts teaching both (form and no form)."

SBh. 3-2-14, 281.

HOW THE MAJORITY OF VEDĀNTIC SCHOOLS HAPPENED TO MISS THE IMPORTANCE OF JÑĀNA - TEXTS

56. It is easy to guess why so many interpreters have been misled to lay emphasis on the Upāsanā texts in preference to those that exclusively teach jñāna. The śrutis themselves use verbs derived from the roots 'upās' and 'vid' indiscriminately to indicate

both meditation and knowledge and there are texts recommending knowledge which may be mistaken for injunctions. Compare for instance 'आत्मेत्येवोपासीत' (बृ. १-४-७), 'One should think upon Him as Ātman exclusively', 'विज्ञाय प्रज्ञां कुर्वीत' (बृ. ४-४-२१) 'Knowing Him alone, the discriminating one should try to get perfect consciousness' and 'सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म तज्जलानिति शान्त उपासीत' (छां. ३-१४-१), 'All this is verily Brahman for it is born, is dissolved and moves in Brahman', and there are extracts which begin with verbs derived from one of the roots 'vid', or 'upās' and close with the other form to denote one and the same meditation as Śaṅkara has himself pointed out :-

विद्युपास्त्योश्च वेदान्तेषु अव्यतिरेकेण प्रयोगो दृश्यते । क्वचिद् विदिना उपक्रम्य उपास्तिना उपसंहरति । यथा 'यस्तद्वेद यत्स वेद स मयैतदुक्तः' (छां. ४-१-४) इत्यत्र 'अनु म एतां भगवो देवतां शाधि यां देवतामुपास्से' (छां. ४-२-२) इति । क्वचिच्च उपासिना उपक्रम्य विदिना उपसंहरति । यथा 'मनो ब्रह्मेत्युपासीत' (छां. ३-१८-१) इत्यत्र 'भाति च तपित च कीर्त्या यशसा ब्रह्मवर्चसेन य एवं वेद' (छां. ३-१८-३) इति ॥

सू. भा. ४-१-१, ५०३.

Again, there are Śrutis teaching that those that meditate upon Brahman, are taken by a divine guide to Brahman, and also there are Śrutis describing Brahman as possessing various forms - such Śrutis for instance as teach that Brahman has four quarters (चतुष्पात्), sixteen discs (षोडशकलाः), and all the three

worlds for its body (त्रैलोक्यशरीरम्) all of which might be explained as due to Brahman's super - normal powers or to conditioning associates, as has been maintained by many a pre-Śaṅkara Vedāntins.

All these circumstances, it is easy to conjecture, may have weighed with the ancient Vṛttikāras, no less than the later Bhāshyakāras imbued with ideas relating to karma yielding results mostly in another world, when they jumped to the conclusion that jñāna (knowing) referred to in the Vedas must be some species of religious mental duty enjoined.

WHY DOES BĀDARĀYAṆA TAKE PAINS TO RECONCILE ŚRUTIS TEACHING CREATION ?

57. One more seeming riddle to be solved in Bādarāyaṇa's work, may be noted here before we close this section.

Bādarāyaṇa, according to Śaṅkara, first gives the definition of Brahman, as 'the cause of the origination, sustentation and dissolution of this universe' (V. S. 1-1-2) and declares that this is the only cause uniformly taught in all the Upanishads, and not the non-sentient Pradhāna (primordial seed of matter) or the Paramāṇus (atoms) - inferred by the Sāṅkhyas and Vaiśeshikas.

After showing by means of typical examples how this uniformity is observed, he takes up for discussion certain passages which are seemingly in conflict with one another as regards the nature of the

cause as well as the order of creation of the effects such as the ether (Ākāśa). While explaining the meaning of the Sūtras, Śāṅkara writes :-

न च कार्यविषयेण विगानेन कारणमपि ब्रह्म सर्ववेदान्तेष्वविगीतमधि-
गम्यमानम् अविवक्षितं भवितुमर्हति ॥ सू. भा. १-४-१४, ३६७.

“True, there is to be found some disharmony about the creation of the effect

But merely because of the divergence regarding the effects, it cannot be that even Brahman uniformly known to be the cause from all the Upanishads, is not their import intended.”

SBh. 1-4-14, 367.

Here, evidently, the Bhāshya grants for arguments’ sake that there is disharmony in the teaching concerning the effects. In the immediately succeeding sentences, however, he adds :-

“There may well be divergence regarding the effects for they are not the real subject - matter undertaken to be taught here. (To explain :) This detail of creation etc. is not proposed to be seriously taught here. There is no purpose seen to be served by it, as promised by the Śruti ; or as conceivable ; for it can be readily seen that they form one whole along with texts teaching the nature of Brahman.”

The Sūtra above cited unequivocally points to the only tradition with which Bādarāyaṇa sides. For he proclaims that Brahman taught as the cause, is uniformly the one subject - matter in all the Upanishads, while the effects serve the one purpose of leading the enquirer to that cause. Śāṅkara has adduced the Mīmāṃsīc principle of interpretation

फलवत्संनिधौ अफलं तदङ्गम् (The Śruti which promises some good result to the knower of what is taught, is the one that is to be considered as the principal teaching, while the one that is taught without such a promise, should be considered as subservient to it). The Śruti, as pointed out by Śāṅkara, expressly recommends that the effects should be taken only as the means to ascertain the Cause (तेजसा हि सौम्य शुद्धेन सन्मूलमन्विच्छ). The Āchārya not only refers to the Śruti (वाचारम्भणं विकारो नामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम्), thus demonstrating that Śruti emphasizes the exclusive reality of the causes, but also appeals to the traditional teaching when he writes :-

मृदादिदृष्टान्तैश्च कार्यस्य कारणेनाभेदं वदितुं सृष्ट्यादिप्रपञ्चः श्राव्यत इति गम्यते । तथा च संप्रदायविदो वदन्ति - 'मृल्लोहविस्फुलिङ्गाद्यैः सृष्टिर्या चोदिताऽन्यथा । उपायः सोऽवताराय नास्ति भेदः कथञ्चन ॥' (गौ.का. ३-१५) इति । ब्रह्मप्रतिपत्तिप्रतिबद्धं तु फलं श्रूयते 'ब्रह्मविदानोति परम्' (तै. २-१), 'तरति शोकमात्मवित्' (छां. ७-१-३), 'तमेव विदित्वाऽतिमृत्युमेति' (श्वे. ३-८) इति । प्रत्यक्षावगमं चेदं फलम् ॥

सू. भा. १-४-१४, ३६७.

“Besides, we can easily see that the details of creation etc. are taught in the Śruti, only to reveal the non-difference of the effect from the Cause with the aid of illustrative examples like the clay. And that is what those conversant with the tradition, say 'The creation that is taught in diverse ways with illustrations like those of clay, iron sparks, is only a means to introduce the listener to the right teaching. Really there is, no difference whatever' (GK. 3-15). There is, on the other hand, the fruit accruing from the knowledge of Brahman,

promised in Śrutis like Tai. 2-I, Ch. 7-1-3 and S've. 3-8. Moreover the benefit of this knowledge, is directly intuited also." SBh. 1-4-14, 367.

It is evident that Śaṅkara is anxious to emphasize that teaching creation etc. has no other purport than this clarification of the absolute unity of Brahmātman, and that this is the only conclusion to be drawn not only from their express declaration that this is so, but also from a text (Ch. 6-1-4) proclaiming that the universe as an effect of its cause Brahman, is in itself unreal, a mere play of words (वाचारम्भणं विकारो नामधेयम्) as is seen in common life in all instances of material causes and their effects (मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम्). But the question is, why should Bādarāyana take pains to reconcile apparent disharmony among Śrutis teaching creation, if, as Śaṅkara avers, creation is not something seriously intended to be taught in the Śrutis ?

This objection forgets the distinction between *paramārtha* (transcendental Reality) and *Vyavahāra* (practical life), which both Bādarāyana and Śaṅkara have steadily kept in view. It is only from the *pāramārthic* standpoint that Śaṅkara refuses to assign the same value to the texts teaching creation as he attaches to texts teaching the real nature of Brahman. Otherwise, he keeps all distinctions of practical life quite intact. (see para. 16). Critics of Śaṅkara's technique, would do well to remind themselves repeatedly what he has definitely declared about the standard of reality with regard to all *vyavahāras* :

सर्वव्यवहारानामेव प्राग् ब्रह्मात्मविज्ञानात् सत्यत्वोपपत्तेः ‘All conventions of practical life, may consistently continue to be real before the intuition of the nature of Brahmātman’ (SBh. 2-1-14). Accordingly, Śāṅkara writes in his introduction to the section on the discussion of consistency in Vedāntic teaching concerning creation as follows :-

वेदान्तेषु तत्र तत्र भिन्नप्रस्थाना उत्पत्तिश्रुतयः उपलभ्यन्ते ।
केचिदाकाशस्य उत्पत्तिमामनन्ति, केचिन्न । तथा केचिद्वायोरुत्पत्तिमामनन्ति,
केचिन्न । एवं जीवस्य प्राणानां च । एवमेव क्रमादिद्वारकोऽपि विप्रतिषेधः
श्रुत्यन्तरेषूपलक्ष्यते । विप्रतिषेधाच्च परपक्षाणामनपेक्षितत्वं स्थापितम् ।
तद्वत् स्वपक्षस्यापि विप्रतिषेधादेव अनपेक्षितत्वमाशङ्क्येत - इत्यतः
सर्ववेदान्तान्तर्गतसृष्टिश्रुत्यर्थनिर्मलत्वाय परः प्रपञ्चः आरभ्यते ॥

सू. भा. २-३-१, ८८.

“In the different Upanishads, there are to be found texts dealing with creation with different approaches (to the subject). Thus some mention the origination of ether (ākāśa), while others do not ; likewise, some mention the origination of air (vāyu), while other texts do not. So also with regard to the individual selves (jīvas) and *prāṇas* (vital force and the organs). In the same way, there is found to be disharmony with regard to the order and other matters touching creation in the other Upanishads. It has been concluded that other systems are to be discarded on account of inconsistency. And so, it may be suspected that our case too should be discarded on this very ground of inconsistency ; so, the detailed discussion in the sequel is begun to show how the teaching of Śrūti with regard to creation, is free from all defects.” SBh. 2-3-1, 88.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DISCUSSION ABOUT ĪŚVARA AND JĪVA

58. The same is the case with regard to the lengthy discussion concerning Jīva and Īśvara. Questions about (1) the birth (VS. 2-3-17, 18), the size (VS. 2-3-19....32), agency (VS. 2-3-33....40), dependency on Īśvara (VS. 2-3-43....53) of the Jīva ; and (2) God's want of precaution in creating the universe (VS. 2-1-21 to 23), creation without the needful materials (VS. 2-1-24, 25), transformation into the universe (VS. 2-1-26), Omnipotence (VS. 2-1-30, 31), motive in creating the world (VS. 2-1-32, 33), and partiality and mercilessness (VS. 2-1-34, 35, 36). All these are to be justified in the strictly non-dualism of Śāṅkara, when we remember what he has said with regard to the relation of Īśvara and Jīva in Vedānta :-

(१) तदेवमविद्यात्मकोपाधिपरिच्छेदापेक्षमेव ईश्वरस्य ईश्वरत्वं, सर्वज्ञत्वं, सर्वशक्तित्वं च । न परमार्थतो विद्यया अपास्तसर्वोपाधिस्वरूपे आत्मनि ईशित्रीशितव्यसर्वज्ञत्वादिव्यवहारः उपपद्यते ॥

सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४४०.

[It is only owing to the conditioning associate projected by avidyā that the convention of the Ruler and the ruled, obtains.]

(२) एवं परमार्थावस्थायां सर्वव्यवहाराभावं वदन्ति वेदान्ताः सर्वे । तथेश्वरगीतास्वपि 'न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः । न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥ नादत्ते कस्यचित् पापं न चैव सुकृतं

विभुः । अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥' (गी. ५-१४, १५)
इति ॥ सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४४१.

[From the transcendental standpoint all conventions of the distinction of Īśvara and Jīva, are negated in the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgītā.]

(३) व्यवहारावस्थायां तूक्तः श्रुतावपि ईश्वरादिव्यवहारः 'एष सर्वेश्वर एष भूताधिपतिरेष भूतपाल एष सेतुर्विधरण एषां लोकानामसंभेदाय' (बृ. ४-४-२२) इति । तथा चेश्वरगीतास्वपि 'ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति । भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥' (गी. १८-६१) । सूत्रकारोऽपि परमार्थाभिप्रायेण 'तदनन्यत्वम्' इत्याह । व्यवहाराभिप्रायेण तु 'स्याल्लोकवत्' इति महासमुद्रस्थानीयतां ब्रह्मणः कथयति । अप्रत्याख्यायैव कार्यप्रपञ्चं परिणामप्रक्रियां चाश्रयति सगुणेषूपसनेषु उपयोक्ष्यते इति ॥

सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४४१.

[These extracts show that the Śrutis no less than the Gītā and Bādarāyaṇa's Sūtras, teach the distinction of Īśvara and Jīva, at the level of vyavahāra, so, that it may be useful for the treatment of Upāsanās.]

Even while dealing with empirical distinctions of Īśvara and Jīva, and questions like creation, Śaṅkara is careful enough to warn the reader against confounding them with the transcendently real :-

न चेयं परमार्थविषया सृष्टिश्रुतिः, अविद्याकल्पितनामरूपव्यवहार-
गोचरत्वात्, ब्रह्मात्मभावप्रतिपादनपरत्वाच्च - इत्येतदपि नैव विस्मर्तव्यम् ॥

सू. भा. २-१-३३, ४२१.

“Besides, this Śruti teaching creation does not relate to

absolute Reality, for it only refers to the convention of name and form conjured up by avidyā and purports mainly to teach the nature of Brahmātman. This too should never be forgotten.”
SBh. 2-1-33, 421.

This should convince any one who surveys Bādarāyaṇa's work as a whole as to how he grants the reality of all the empirical distinctions of objective phenomena, like those of individual souls and Brahman as Īśvara, the Ruler of all from the vyāvahāric standpoint, even while he maintains the sole reality of Brahman from the transcendental point of view, as proclaimed by him (in sūtra 2-1-14) according to Śaṅkara. Evidently, therefore, critics who charge Śaṅkara with predilection for *Māyāvāda*, the doctrine of believing in the illusory nature of all empirical distinctions, are labouring under an unpardonable misconception.

MEANS TO JÑĀNA AND MUKTI

59. Just as the empirical distinction of the real and the unreal and that of truth and error, has been kept intact while teaching transcendental Reality and Truth in Bādarāyaṇa's work according to Śaṅkara, Karma and Upāsanā have been assigned their own legitimate place in the empirical sphere. It is therefore either prejudice or some misconception which has led some critics to believe that this Āchārya, has a predilection for saṅyāsa, the fourth order of the life of a twice-born person, and consequently disparages karmas and upāsanās prescribed in the Śāstras. That

Bādarāyaṇa and Śaṅkara, actually regard both Karmas and Upāsanās as worthy of consideration as Jñāna itself, would be evident to any one who takes the trouble of studying the large portion of the Vedānta Sūtras devoted to both these from the third pada of the third chapter of the Śarīraka up to the close of that work.

CRITICISM OF THE DOCTRINE OF COMBINED PRACTICE OF KARMA AND JÑĀNA

60. That a portion of the fourth pada of the third chapter (VS. 3-4-1 to 17) has been devoted to the discussion of the *Jñānakarma-samuchchaya-vāda* (the doctrine insisting that the combined practice of jñāna and karma was compulsory for aspirants of final Release), is perhaps due to the prevalence of schools which subscribed to that doctrine during Bādarāyaṇa's time, and up to the time of Śaṅkara. The refutation of this doctrine, is to be found invariably in almost all Bhāshyas ascribed to Śaṅkara, whether on the Upanishads, the Bhagavadgīta or the Vedānta Sūtras. Śaṅkara's main contribution to Vedānta is, as we have already seen, to have convincingly explained how the main purport of the Upanishads, is the knowledge of Brahman as the only means leading to the intuition of eternal freedom of Ātman from saṃsāra.

It is only to demonstrate the exclusive efficacy of Vedāntic knowledge in leading to Final Release, that

Bādarāyaṇa as interpreted by Śaṅkara brings in, the question of the fourth order of life (saṅyāsa) for discussion. In the Sūtra 3-4-17, Bādarāyaṇa draws our attention to the fact that Vidyā (knowledge of Brahman) is seen to be taught to aspirants in āśramas other than that of the house-holders, and as such it cannot be consistently expected to be combined with karma.

THE LEGITIMATE PLACE OF KARMA AND UPĀSANĀ AS MEANS TO LIBERATION

61. Whether Final Release desiderates Karma and Upāsanās at all in any way, is subsequently discussed by the author of Śārīraka. There are two Sūtras on this subject : 'अत एव चाग्नीन्धनाद्यनपेक्षा ॥' ३-४-२५ (And that is why there is no need of sacrificial fire and fuel etc., - VS. 3-4-25), and 'सर्वपेक्षा च यज्ञादिश्रुतेरश्ववत् ॥' ३-४-२६ 'And there is need of all these, because of the Śruti teaching *yajñā* (sacrifice) etc., as in the case of a horse' (VS. 3-4-26). Śaṅkara explains the meaning of the second aphorism as follows :-

ननु विरुद्धमिदं वचनम् अपेक्षते चाश्रमकर्माणि विद्या नापेक्षते चेति ।
नेति ब्रूमः - उत्पन्ना हि विद्या फलसिद्धिं प्रति न किञ्चिदन्यदपेक्षते, उत्पत्तिं
प्रति तु अपेक्षते । कुतः ? यज्ञादिश्रुतेः । 'अश्ववत्' इति योग्यता-
निदर्शनम् । यथा च योग्यतावशेन अश्वो न लाङ्गलाकर्षणे युज्यते, रथचर्यायां
तु युज्यते । एवम्, आश्रमकर्माणि विद्यया फलसिद्धौ नापेक्ष्यन्ते, उत्पत्तौ च
अपेक्ष्यन्ते इति ॥

सू. भा. ३-४-२६, ४६९.

“(Objection :-) Surely, this is self-contradictory that knowledge desiderates and yet does not desiderate the karmās of the (house-holder’s) Āśrama !

(Reply :-) We say ‘this is not so’. For, knowledge which has dawned, does not desiderate anything else for producing its result, but it does desiderate (these rites) for its own production. The expression ‘As in the case of a horse’ illustrates fitness. Just as a horse is not employed for drawing a plough, but is employed for the purpose of driving a carriage in view of its fitness, so also, the karmas of the householder’s āśrama, are not needed for yielding the fruits of knowledge while they are needed for manifesting knowledge.”

SBh. 3-4-26, 469.

62. It must be noted, however, that Śaṅkara gives no quarter to the doctrines of the combined practice of karma and knowledge for attaining release. For, while he insists that karmas are necessary for the production of Vidyā, he expressly says that the directly immediate means of knowledge, are only self-control (*śama*) and other psychic items of discipline :-

स्मृतिष्वपि भगवद्गीताद्यासु अनभिसन्धाय फलमनुष्ठितानि यज्ञादीनि मुमुक्षोर्ज्ञानसाधनानि भवन्तीति प्रपञ्चितम् । तस्मात् यज्ञादीनि शमदमादीनि च यथाश्रमं सर्वाण्येवाश्रमकर्माणि विद्योत्पत्तौ अपेक्षितव्यानि । तत्रापि ‘एवंवित्’ इति विद्यासंयोगात् प्रत्यासन्नानि विद्यासाधनानि शमादीनि, विविदिषासंयोगात्तु बाह्यतराणि यज्ञादीनि इति विवेक्तव्यम् ॥

सू. भा. ३-४-२७, ४७१.

“Not only in the Śrutis, but also in Śmṛtis like the Bhagavadgītā, it has been explained at length, how sacrifices etc. when performed without any desire for the enjoyment of

their fruits, become means for the attainment of knowledge. Therefore, both Yajña etc., and self-control etc., should be resorted according to the stage of life (of the seeker), for the origination of knowledge. And as between these two sets of means, a distinction should be observed, viz, that control of the mind, and other means are more proximate, for they have been enjoined in connection with vidyā (knowledge) in the text beginning '(tasmāt evamvit)' (Br. 4-4-23), whereas sacrifice and other means have been enjoined in connection with *vividishā* (desire to know) in the text '*tametam vedānuvachanena brāhmanā vividishanti yajñena*' (Br. 4-4-22), are remote." SBh. 3-4-27, 471.

MÖKSHA IN THE CASE OF THE MEDITATOR AND OF THE JÑĀNIN

63. Bādarāyaṇa's position, according to Śaṅkara's tradition with regard to the result of Brahmōpāsānā, must be distinguished from what a majority of other schools of Vedānta, who uniformly believe that Final Release itself is to be attained through Upāsānā alone :-

समाना चासृत्युपक्रमादमृतत्वं चानुपोष्य ॥ ४-२-७.

"And the process of departure, is common (to both) up to the beginning of the path and the immortality is one without burning up (ignorance etc.)" SBh. 4-2-7.

This sūtra according to Śaṅkara', says, that while the mode of graduated departure of the meditator is the same as that in the case of ordinary persons, the meditator takes to the path of the gods and proceeds to Brahmālōka to get Amṛtatva (immortality or release). To the objection that immortality being the

goal of the knower of Brahman, there cannot be any occasion for him to stay in the 'bhūtas' along with tejas, or to resort to any 'path' to reach immortality, Bādarāyaṇa here replies that this immortality is only relative and not the genuine Release to be attained when all avidyā is burnt up, and so there is nothing repugnant here.

Another Sūtra rules out the possibility of any departure of the life-forces in the case of the genuine knower of Brahman.

स्पष्टो ह्येकेषाम् ॥ ४-२-१३.

In the previous Sūtra the objection was brought forward that even in the case of actual knower of Brahman, we need not suppose that his life - forces do not depart from his body merely because the text says 'न तस्य प्राणा उत्क्रामन्ति' ('his vital airs do not go out' Br. 4-4-6), for this same text according to the Mādhyandina version, reads 'न तस्मात् प्राणा उत्क्रामन्ति ।' thereby clearly saying that the prāṇas, do not part from the embodied one, and so, the meaning is that all those prāṇas accompany him when he departs.

Bādarāyaṇa, however, demolishes this supposition by quoting a parallel passage (Br. 3-2-11) from the same Upanishad wherein all the prāṇas are said to dissolve themselves in this very body and in consideration of this express statement it is but right that even in the text which has the reading 'न तस्य प्राणा उत्क्रामन्ति' we should apply the word it's (तस्य) to the

body alone to which the negation is expected to apply and not to the embodied self as imagined by the advocates of the *Prima facie* view. Śaṅkara adds, in the Bhāshya on this Sūtra that in view of this passage commencing with 'अथाकामयमानः' (and now the one who is devoid of all desires) in contrast to the ignorant person whose departure and going to the other world have been already described cannot be reasonably twisted to mean that even the desireless wise person has to undergo departure from the body and goes to some place which he has already achieved. Moreover, he points out, that there are Śrutis like 'अत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते' he attains Brahman here alone' (Kā. 6-14) which expressly declare that there is no need for any movement or departure from the body in the case of the wise one.

ADHYĀTMA - YŌGA

64. The use of the words *Yōga* and *Dhyāna* by Śaṅkara and Bādarāyaṇa, has led some writers on Vedānta, to confound these items of discipline with those used in Patanjali's system. As a matter of fact there is no shred of evidence to support this surmise. In his Bhāshya (on VS. 2-1-3) Śaṅkara expressly warns the students of Vedānta against identifying Vedic Sāṃkhya and Yōga with what is denoted by those words in the systems of Kapila and Patanjali. Bādarāyaṇa himself has refuted the logic of the Nirīśvara Sāṃkhya of Kapila (VS. 2-2-1 to 2-2-10)

and against confounding any resemblance of Sāṃkhya teaching in certain texts where texts teach Brahman as a matter of fact (from Sūtra VS. 1-1-5 to 1-4-27) and in the concluding Sūtra 1-4-28, he says that with the lengthy refutation of the Sāṃkhya, all other systems including the Yōga of Patanjali, may be deemed to have been discarded. Śaṅkara has the following observation to offer in this connection :-

सतीष्वपि अध्यात्मविषयासु बह्वीषु स्मृतिषु साङ्ख्ययोगस्मृत्योरेव निराकरणे यत्नः कृतः । साङ्ख्ययोगौ हि परमपुरुषार्थसाधनत्वेन लोके प्रख्यातौ, शिष्टैश्च परिगृहीतौ, लिङ्गेन च श्रौतेन उपबृंहितौ । 'तत्कारणं साङ्ख्ययोगाधिपन्नं ज्ञात्वा देवं मुच्यते सर्वपाशैः' (श्वे. ६-१३) इति ।

निराकरणं तु न साङ्ख्यज्ञानेन वेदनिरपेक्षेण योगमार्गेण वा निःश्रेयस-मधिगम्यत इति । श्रुतिर्हि वैदिकादात्मैकत्वविज्ञानात् अन्यत्रिःश्रेयस-साधनं वारयति 'तमेव विदित्वाऽतिमृष्युमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ।' (श्वे. ३-८) इति । द्वैतिनो हि ते साङ्ख्या योगाश्च नात्मैकत्वदर्शिनः ॥

सू. भा. २-१-३, ४०७.

“Even while there are many Smrtis relating to Ātman, attempt has been made here to refute the Sāṃkhya and Yōga Smrtis alone ; for Sāṃkhya and Yōga have earned world-wide fame as the means for attaining the highest goal of human life and are accepted by those versed in Śāstra, and they have also the implied support of the Śruti 'Knowing that Cause attained through Sāṃkhya and Yōga, knowing that Shining One, one is freed from all the bondages'". (Sve. 6-13).

Their refutation, however, is attempted here, because neither through the knowledge of Sāṃkhya nor through the

practice of Yōga, independent of the Veda, can the Highest Good be attained. The Śruti, as is well-known rejects all other sources as means to the Highest Good except the intuition of the One absolute Ātman, for it says 'There is no other path to attainment than (this knowledge)' (Sve. 3-8). The Sāṃkhyas and the yōgas, are all dualists, and not seers of the Absolute Unity of Ātman." SBh., 2-1-3, 407.

What actually is meant by the words *Sāṃkhya* and *Yōga*, is thus clarified by Śaṅkara :-

यत्तु दर्शनमुक्तम् 'तत्कारणं साङ्ख्ययोगाभिपन्नम्' इति । वैदिकमेव तत्र ज्ञानं ध्यानं च साङ्ख्ययोगशब्दाभ्यामभिलष्यते प्रत्यासत्तेः - इत्यवगन्तव्यम्

॥

सू. भा. २-१-३, ४०७.

"As for evidential text cited by the opponent, it has to be concluded that the Vedic intuition and contemplation alone, are denoted by the words *Sāṃkhya* and *Yōga*, for these are the more proximate references." SBh. 2-1-3, 407.

[The word *Sāṃkhya* as referring to Vedic intuition is more naturally to be expected to have been referred to, than the discrimination of the Prakṛti and Puruṣa taught by Kapila's Smṛti and likewise, Vedic contemplation on Ātman is more likely to strike the mind of a Vedic student than the 'Dhyāna' leading to Samādhi (trance) as taught by Patanjali.]

Naturally then, when the Śruti uses words like '*avyakta*' (unmanifest - Kā. 3-11), one-pointed *buddhi* (Kā. 3-12), these words should be taken in the Vedic sense of 'the potential seed of the Universe dependent on Paramātman (avyākṛta)' and the discipline of *adhyātma-yōga* (Ka. 2-12) and not to Kapila's Pradhāna or to Patanjali's Ekāgravṛtti needed for Samādhi.

We shall now take up the words 'Yōga' and 'Dhyāna' as used by Śaṅkara and Bādarāyana. Śaṅkara refers to the word Yōga in his Bhāshya (on. 1-4-9), in connection with Adhyātma-Yōga as follows :-

वैष्णवस्य परमपदस्य दुरवगमत्वमुक्त्वा तदवगमार्थं योगं दर्शयति ॥

सू. भा. १-४-१, ३३७.

“After having stated how the Highest Abode of Vishṇu (or the truth about the Absolute Reality) is hard to know, he explains Yōga as the means of intuiting It.” SBh.1-4-1, 337.

The description of the Yōga itself, is as follows :-

यच्छेद् वाङ्मनसी प्राज्ञस्तद्वच्छेज्ज्ञान आत्मनि ॥

ज्ञानमात्मनि महति नियच्छेत् तद्वच्छेच्छान्त आत्मनि ॥ का. १-३-१३.

Śaṅkara explains the process in these words :-

एतदुक्तं भवति । वाचं मनसि संयच्छेत्, वागादिबाह्येन्द्रियव्यापारम् उत्सृज्य मनोमात्रेण अवतिष्ठेत । मनोऽपि विषयविकल्पाभिमुखं विकल्पदोषदर्शनेन ज्ञानशब्दोदितायां बुद्धौ अध्यवसायस्वभावायां धारयेत् । तामपि बुद्धिं महति आत्मनि भोक्तरि अग्र्यायां वा बुद्धौ सूक्ष्मतापादनेन नियच्छेत् । महान्तं तु आत्मानं शान्ते आत्मनि प्रकरणवति परस्मिन् पुरुषे परस्यां काष्ठायां प्रतिष्ठापयेत् इति च ॥

सू.भा. १-४-१, ३३७.

“This is the gist : ‘One should restrain speech in the mind’, that is, one should renounce the functions of the organ

of speech and the other external senses, and should rest identifying oneself with the mind. And noting the evil effect of thinking on external objects, one should withdraw whenever he observes a tendency on its part to incline towards such thinking and should merge it in that which is denoted by the word '*jñāna*', that is, in the intellect or the faculty of determination. And that intellect in its turn, one should merge in '*Mahat-Ātman*', the experiencing self, or it may be, the first-born Buddhi (of Hiranyagarbha) by rendering it more subtle. This 'Great Ātman', should be finally settled in Śānta - Ātman (the Ātman devoid of all multiplicity) who is being taught in the present context, the Supreme Reason, the final Goal."

SBh.1-4-1, 337.

It is obvious that this Yōga, is only the practice of retreating from and retracting one's natural tendency of extrovertness, and finally intuiting one's eternal identity with the Absolute Ātman, and has nothing to do with the suppression of the modifications of the mind (चित्तवृत्तिनिरोध) taught by Patanjali, which is to be refuted later on (in VS. 2-1-3).

The word '*dhyāna*' which some are likely to take for Upāsana in all contexts, is to be found in Bādarāyaṇa's Sūtras 'आध्यानाय प्रयोजनाभावात्' (VS. 3-3-14) which undertakes to appraise the teaching of the Katha text (Kā. 3-10, 11) dealing with the series of more and more subtle entities culminating in Purusha (Ātman). The subject for discussion is to decide whether the Śruti (Kā. 3-11) has the serious import of emphasizing each one of the successive links (such as the Manas, the Buddhi & c.) as greater than the

immediately preceding one. Śaṅkara explains Bādarāyaṇa as meaning to assert that Puruṣa alone is here meant to be emphasized as the most supreme entity in the series and interprets the word *Ādhyāna* thus :

आध्यानपूर्वकाय सम्यग्दर्शनाय इत्यर्थः । सम्यग्दर्शनार्थमेवेदं हि इह
आध्यानमुपदिश्यते, न तु आध्यानमेव स्वप्रधानम् ॥

सू. भा. ३-३-१४, ३४१.

'The word '*Ādhyānaya*' in the Sūtra means for the sake of right knowledge ; for, contemplation is taught here as a means for right vision and not in and for its own sake.'

SBh. 3-3-14, 341.

It will be noted that Bādarāyaṇa according to Śaṅkara, refers here to *Adhyātma-Yōga* itself as a means to direct intuition, and not as an injunction of some *Upāsana*.

ADHYĀTMA-YŌGA IS NO UPĀSANĀ

65. There is really little or no doubt about the *Adhyātma-Yōga* to suspect that it may be a kind of *Upāsana* or meditation (exercise of some mental volition) ; for the Śruti itself says in so many words, that it is an instance of concentrated attitude of *Buddhi* for the purpose of visioning *Ātman* : 'दृश्यते त्वप्रयया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ।' (Ka. 3-12) 'He is seen by one-pointed buddhi by those who are habituated to look at subtle entities' (Ka. 3-12) and then sets forth the details of the process. The same is the case with the *Dhyāna-Yōga* taught in the *Bhagavadgītā* ; for

there also we find that one who is engaged continuously in dhyāna, sees (G. 6-29) the same Ātman in all creatures and those creatures in that Ātman 'सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि । ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥' (गी. ६-२९). So we may be sure that it is a clear instance of misconception to suppose that this Yōga is a kind of Upāsana.

THE IMMEDIATE MEANS TO KNOWLEDGE

66. We may now pass on to consider the nature and function of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* taught as means to *Darśana* or Vision of Ātman by Yājñavalkya to his spouse Maitreyi as found in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad. We need to digress here to discuss the vexed question of whether or not these have been enjoined. While there has been a notable conflict between two sub-commentaries of Śaṅkara regarding this matter, Śaṅkara himself has expressly proclaimed that the text containing participles, implying injunction are only seemingly such. (विधिच्छायानि वचनानि). Their real aim is to turn the seeker back from the natural tendency to go outwards towards the external objects on the part of the aggregate of the body and the senses, and to urge one to set up a stream of thoughts towards the Ātman within. 'तमात्यन्तिकपुरुषार्थवाञ्छिनं स्वाभाविककार्यकरणसङ्घातप्रवृत्तिगोचराद् विमुखीकृत्य प्रत्यगात्मस्रोतस्तया प्रवर्तयन्ति ।'

But, then, there is another Sūtra in Śaṅkara's Bhāṣhya thereon, which uses the word 'Samādhi' which has misled some to succumb to the view that a compromise with the Yōga system of Patanjali is also recommended here by Bādarāyana according to Śaṅkara. The wording of the Sūtra is 'समाध्यभावाच्च' (सू. भा. २-३-३९). 'And because there would be no samādhi (if the individual self were not an agent' - VS.2-3-39). The Sūtra, literally taken, could of course mean that Samādhi is necessary for the Vedāntic knowledge of Ātman. But Śaṅkara's commentary leaves no doubt as to what is actually meant :-

योऽप्ययमौपनिषदात्मप्रतिपत्तिप्रयोजनः समाधिरुपदिष्टो वेदान्तेषु
 'आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः' (बृ. २-४-
 ५), 'सोऽन्वेष्टव्यः स विजिज्ञासितव्यः' (छां. ८-७-१), 'ओमित्येवं
 ध्यायथ आत्मानम्' (मुं. २-२-६) इत्येवंलक्षणः, सोऽप्यसत्यात्मनः कर्तृत्वे
 नोपपद्येत ॥ सू. भा. २-३-३९, १५०.

In this excerpt, there is the unequivocal statement of Śaṅkara that all these texts recommend samādhi (contemplation) needed for intuiting the Ātman taught by the Upanishads. The very first of the texts quoted here, contains Yājñavalkya's recommendation of śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana as the means for the vision of Ātman. We have no inkling anywhere of the eight steps of Pātanjala-Yōga in this or in any one of the texts cited here.

ARE PĀNDITYA AND OTHER MEANS THE SAME AS ŚRAVAṆA ETC. ?

67. As impermissible as this equation of śravaṇa etc. with the steps of Pātanjala-Yōga, is the identification of *Pānditya*, *bālyā*, and *mauna* taught in another text with śravaṇa etc. That text in full reads as follows :

तस्माद् ब्राह्मणः पाण्डित्यं निर्विद्य बाल्येन तिष्ठासेत् । बाल्यं च पाण्डित्यं च निर्विद्याथ मुनिरमौनं च मौनं च निर्विद्याथ ब्राह्मणः ॥

(बृ. ३-५-१).

‘Therefore a Brahmana should try to stay in boyhood after having exhausted learning (pānditya) and having exhausted boyhood and learning, he should be a *muni*, and having exhausted Mauna (contemplation) and non-mauna, he would be a (real) Brahmana.’ Br. 3-5-1.

On the face of it the text refers to one who has already known Brahman and has nothing to do with śravaṇa and other means, as a cursory reading of Śaṅkara’s Bhāshya on VS. 3-4-47 would make it clear. The reader may look at the commentary on the text itself, and assure himself, if that be necessary at all, that the context is quite different from the one in which Yāñavalkya’s exhortation to his wife occurs.

IS A COMBINED PRACTICE OF ALL THE THREE MEANS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY ?

68. One more misconception about Śravaṇa and

we shall close this topic. Are all the three means of knowledge beginning with śravaṇa, obligatory for all seekers of jñāna ? Two sub-commentaries answer the question in the affirmative. All the three are necessary for attaining jñāna, knowledge of Ātman, according to both of these interpreters. But as to which of these three is the principal and immediate means, there is a dissension between the two schools, nididhyāsana being most necessary according to one sub-commentator while śravaṇa is the only means to which the other two are subservient, according to another. Śaṅkara, however, differs from both of these views and unambiguously declares as follows :

(१) मनननिदिध्यासनयोरपि श्रवणवदवगत्यर्थत्वात् ।

This is in reply to a contemporary commentator on the Sūtras, who supposed that the injunction of manana and nididhyāsana implies that śravaṇa alone is unable to produce jñāna. Śaṅkara says that both the subsequent recommendations of means are only for direct intuition just like śravaṇa, and so he implies that they are needed for those who are unable to attain jñāna by the single means of śravaṇa.

This is made crystal-clear elsewhere by him :-

(२) येषां पुनर्निपुणमतीनां नाज्ञानसंशयविपर्ययलक्षणः पदार्थविषयः प्रतिबन्धोऽस्ति, ते शक्नुवन्ति सकृदुक्तमेव तत्त्वमसिवाक्यार्थमनुभवितुमिति । तान् प्रति आवृत्त्यानर्थक्यम् इष्टमेव ॥ सू. भा. ४-१-२, ५०६.

[This sentence has been already cited once (in para 48, page 58) and needs no comment.]

Yet the sub-commentator who is biased in favour of *nididhyāsana* (or meditation) as the immediate indispensable means, ventures to interpret even this express statement to mean -

सकृदुक्तमेवेति । श्रुत्वा मत्वा क्षणमवधाय प्राग्भवीयाभ्यासजात-
संस्कारात् इत्यर्थः ॥ वा. भा. पा. १३३.

Any reader who has even an elementary knowledge of Sanskrit, can see for himself that 'सकृदुक्तमेव तत्त्वमसिवाक्यार्थमनुभूय' (having intuited the Entity taught in the proposition 'That thou art' only once) cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be taken to mean 'श्रुत्वा मत्वा क्षणमवधाय' (having listened to, reflected upon, and carefully concentrating upon it for a moment.' This glossator, of course, believes in continued practice of *nididhyāsana*, as absolutely necessary before the dawn of what he calls the *Sākshātkāra* (realization) of Ātman.

ŚAṆKARA'S VERDICT AS REGARDS THE MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE

69. We should not close this section dealing with the consideration of the means to the knowledge of Brahman and Final Release, without reproducing one compact statement of Śaṅkara. The reader will do well to ponder over the meaning of this verdict of that Āchārya and to remind himself of Śaṅkara's final conclusion in the matter, whenever he is confronted with any conflict of views on the part of Śaṅkarites

or with adverse critics owing allegiance to other schools.

तस्मात् विद्यासंयुक्तं नित्यम् अग्निहोत्रादि, विद्याविहीनं च उभयमपि मुमुक्षुणा मोक्षप्रयोजनोद्देशेन, इह जन्मनि जन्मान्तरे च प्राग् ज्ञानोत्पत्तेः कृतं यत्, तद् यथासामर्थ्यं ब्रह्माधिगमप्रतिबन्धकारणोपात्तदुरितक्षयहेतुत्वद्वारेण, ब्रह्माधिगमकारणत्वं प्रतिपद्यमानं श्रवणमननश्रद्धातात्पर्याद्यन्तरङ्गकारणापेक्षं ब्रह्मविद्यया सह एककार्यं भवतीति स्थितम् ॥ सू.भा. ४-१-१८, ५३७.

“Therefore, this is the final conclusion : Obligatory Karma such as Agnihoatra whether combined with Vidyā (meditation), or not combined with Vidyā, practised either in this or a previous birth, by any one longing for release before the dawn of knowledge, with a view to reach the goal of release, becomes in proportion to its efficacy, the cause of the destruction of accumulated sins which obstruct the knowledge of Brahman, and through indirectly co-operating with the proximate aids such as śravaṇa, Manana, faith and intent devotion culminates in bringing about the one effect namely Brahma-Vidyā leading to release.” SBh. 4-1-18, 537.

CONCLUSION

70. We have so far taken a rapid survey of the most important topics of the Śāṅkara-Mīmāṃsā of Bādarāyaṇa, according to Śaṅkara regarding which there are likely to be, and as a matter of fact, there have arisen divergent views, not only among the followers of adverse schools, but also among those that owe their allegiance to Śaṅkara's tradition itself. These differences of opinion are, due mostly to, not attaching the needful importance (1) to the distinction of the empirical standpoint and the transcendental

standpoint on the one hand, and (2) to the Vedāntic devices adopted in the Upanishads for the purpose of teaching the nature of the Absolute Reality, which do not lend themselves to be expounded in the language of empirical life. The disregard of the most important distinction between the principles of approach to be adopted in the study of the previous Mimāṃsā of Jaimini, and those to be borne in mind by the students of Vedānta-Mimāṃsā of Bādarāyaṇa, has been mainly responsible for the great many misconceptions about Śāṅkara's line of reasoning. Not a few of the misconceptions pointed out in these paragraphs, owe their origin to interpretations ignoring these points which Śāṅkara has made a sustained effort to stress in his exposition of Bādarāyaṇa's work.

Before bringing this work to a close we would advise the earnest student of Śāṅkara's teachings carefully to observe the following Rules during the course of study :-

1. Do not allow yourself to be bewildered or to become desperate merely because this system happens to be the most misunderstood, twisted and distorted by the several professedly 'followers' of the Āchārya himself or just because it happens to be the most maligned by hyper-critics who have not digested the train of argument followed here. Apply the Basic Rules of interpretation, and then you begin to realize it as the one dispensation of the Highest truth.

2. Read the original for yourself as far as possible.

3. Be careful to accept any translation only after convincing yourself about its truth in all respects. Remember

that Śaṅkara always para-phrases any idea that looks odd at first sight and harmonizes it with intuition.

4. Remember that according to the Upanishads Reality is your inmost Self.

5. Have an experimental faith, and pray for guidance 'सत्यं प्रपद्ये', 'धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्'.

6. Prove everything by direct universal intuition and by reasoning based on such intuition as far as possible.

7. There will be no self-contradiction, if you constantly remember the distinction of the two stand-points-Empirical and Transcendental.

8. 'Let Śaṅkara interpret Śaṅkara'. The teacher is never tired of repeating the most important teachings in different words.

9. Remember that neither quotations nor dry logic without the support of Intuition, can establish the truth of contradictory doctrines from the transcendental stand-point nor of any empirical fact without any pramāṇa (means of valid knowledge). 'वस्तुनि विकल्पाभावः', 'प्रमाणप्रवृत्त्यप्रवृत्तिपूर्वकौ संभवासंभवावधार्येते, न पुनः संभवासंभवपूर्वके प्रमाणप्रवृत्त्यप्रवृत्ती'.

10. Remember that the truth of Śaṅkara's Advaita is never established by any logical refutation of one or more Dvaitic Systems. The nearer you come to intuit the Truth of Advaita, the more will you be convinced that Śaṅkara's teaching comprehends, assimilates and transcends all genuine truths of Dvaitic Systems. 'अविवादोऽविरुद्धश्च' (G.K. 4-2).

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