MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ŚAŃKARA

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 Swāmījī 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
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 Updanishadic 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 Āchārya.

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 Bhashya as the chief court of appeal for the obvious reason that it is an exegetical work which comprehends not only Śaṅkara’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-Bhashya or any other commentary, are drawn upon only to confirm any conclusion based upon the Sūtra-Bhashya. (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-Bhashya. And lastly (4) I have tried to show how Śaṅkara’s teachings can be corroborated by the declarations of the only traditional teacher, Sri Gauḍapāda-chārya, 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
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Śaṅkara’s Mission in Life (Paras 1-6)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The Unique Feature of Śaṅkara’s Work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adhyāsa (7) - Śruti and Intuition (7) -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No hypothetical avidyā-śakti (8).</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Avidyā and Māyā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Synonymous (9).</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Brahman andĪśvara</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brahman as the cause of the universe (10) -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brahman as the Ruler (Īśvara) of individual selves (11).</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Omniscience of Brahman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Omniscience and omnipotence refer to the intrinsic nature of Brahman</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Cause and Effect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vedantic view of the relation between cause and effect contrasted with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the views of the Śāmkhyas (13).</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Empirical Reality of the Universe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Universe is not an illusion - Distinction between the empirical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and the transcendental view concerning Pramāṇas (14).</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The Distinctive Feature of Śruti-Pramāṇa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Śruti concerning the nature of Brahman is the Ultimate Pramāṇa in as</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>much as it sublates all convention of Pramāṇa and Prameya including</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the śruti-pramāṇa after the dawn of the intuition of Brahman (15).</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. The Usefulness of the Distinction of the Two Views
Seeming self-contradictions in the Bhāshya are all dissolved and adverse criticisms lose all their force when one reminds himself of the distinction of Paramarthaic and Vyavaharic views (16).

11. The Comprehensive Signification of the word ‘Ātmaikatva-Vidyā’
The term does not denote merely the identity of Jiva and Isvara - Absolute unity of Ātman is what is meant (17).

12. The words Advaita and Advaya
A baseless imputation levelled against Gaudapada in connection with the signification of the two words (18).

13. The Identity of the Jiva with Brahman
What it implies (19).

14. The Essential Identity of the Universe with Brahman
Two examples to illustrate this (20).

15. The Real and the unreal from the two view-points
Pariṇāma or Transformation of Brahman into the Universe (21) - The Potential seed of the world, the so-called Śakti of Isvara (21) - Mistaken for the avidya-śakti by Post Śankaras (21).

16. Gaudapāda and Bādarāyaṇa
The unjustifiable theory put forward by certain critics assigning lower rank to
Badrayana in contrast with Gaudapada with regard to causality (22).

17. The Method of Superimposition and Rescission
Both Gaudapada and Badarayana recognize the method (23).

18. References to the Method in Śaṅkara’s Work
The maxim of the Arundhati Star in the Sutra-Bhashya (24).

19. Why this Method is adopted by the Vedantas
Reference to the method by some ancient Vedantins in Gita Bhashya (25).

20. Vedic Vyavahāra
Vedantic Vyavahara and its two aspects (26).

21. Fundamental Avidyā involved in all Vyavahāra
Mutual superimposition of Ātman and not-Ātman (27).

22. An unexpected turn in the interpretation of Adhyāsa
The compound word mithyājñānānimittah twisted and misinterpreted to mean having for its natural cause (mithya) undefinable avidya-śakti. The Gita-Bhashya in confirmation of the Adhyāsa views (28).

23. Disputes about Avidyā-śakti
The locus and object of avidya - About the number of avidyas - Śaṅkara’s text in the matter (29).
24. Why no Pramāṇa is needed to prove Avidyā or Ātman (30).
25. Misconception about Disembodied-ness (31).
26. Misconception about the Beginninglessness of Samsāra (32).
27. The cause of Waking, Re-birth and Creation (33)
31. Śaṅkara’s Statements regarding the Potency of Distinctions in Sleep and Dissolution (37).
32. Misconception with regard to the identity of Jiva waking up from Sleep (38).
33. The Anology of Seed and Sprout as a Beginningless Series (39).
34. Some Needless Disputations regarding Avidyā and Jīvas
   Relative Priority of avidyas and Jivas (40) - The Upadhi of Jiva in Dream and waking (41) - Sleep and swoon (42) - Is jiva the object of me-notion (43) - Is Jiva like vision of Brahman limited by Upadhi or a reflection of Brahman in Upadhi ? (44) The Witness as many and one according to sub-commentaries (45) -
Controversy about the number of Jivas (46)
Prajna in sleep misinterpreted as mostly ignorant (47).

35. Needless Controversy over the Syntactical Relation of the words in the Text ‘Tat-tvam-asi’
Two opposed views Bādhā-Samānādhikaranya and Primary Samānādhikaranya (48).

36. The Creatorship of Īśvara and the Transmigratory nature of Jīva (49).

37. The Anology of the Pot-Ether and Ether in General
Gaudapada strictly Battered (50).

38. The Relation between Karma-kānda and Jñāna-kānda (51).

39. How Śaṅkara’s Vedanta happens to be misunderstood by other Vedantins (52).

40. Can Upāsanā do away with Avidyā ?(53).

41. How does Jñāna destroy Avidyā ? (54).

42. The Central Philosophy of Śaṅkara’s Tradition of Vedanta (55).

43. How the Majority of Vedantic Schools happened to miss the Importance of Jñāna-Texts (56).

44. Why does Bādarāyaṇa take pains to reconcile Śrūtis teaching creation ? (57).

45. The Importance of the discussion about Īśvara and Jīva (58).

46. Means to Jñāna and Mukti (59).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Criticism of the Doctrine of Combined Practice of Karma and Jñāna (60).</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>The Legitimate Place of Karma and Upāsanā as means to Liberation Kama (61) - Self-control and the means to knowledge (62).</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Moksha in the case of the Meditator and of the Jñānin (63).</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Adhyātma-Yoga (64).</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Adhyātma-Yoga is no Upāsanā (65).</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>The Immediate Means to Knowledge Whether Śravaṇa etc. are enjoined for Samadhi (66).</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Are Pānditya and other means the same as Śravaṇa Etc. ? (67).</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Is a Combined Practice of all the three means absolutely necessary ? (68).</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Śaṅkara’s Verdict as regards the means of Knowledge (69).</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Word Index</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**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- Główna ; GBh- Główny Bhāshya.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intro</td>
<td>Introduction to Śūtra Bhāshya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isa</td>
<td>Isāvasyopanishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ai.</td>
<td>Aitareyopanishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kā.</td>
<td>Kāthakopanishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ke.</td>
<td>Kenopanishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.</td>
<td>Bhagavadgītā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GK.</td>
<td>Gaudapāda’s Kārikās on Māndūkya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch.</td>
<td>Chāndogopanishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tai.</td>
<td>Taittirīyopanishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tai. Ar.</td>
<td>Taittirīya Āraṇyaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.</td>
<td>Para number of Śaṅkara Bhāshya as in the Karyalaya Publication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pr.</td>
<td>Praśnopanishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Br.</td>
<td>Brhadāraṇyakopanishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhamathi</td>
<td>The Sub-commentary By Vāchaspati Miśra on Śūtra-Bhāshya of Śaṅkara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mā.</td>
<td>Māndūkyopanishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu.</td>
<td>Mundakopanishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS.</td>
<td>Vedānta-Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBh.</td>
<td>Śaṅkara’s Bhāshya on <em>Vedānta-Sūtras</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sve.</td>
<td>Śvetāsvataraopanishad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 Bādarāyana.

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 Bhagavadgītā or the Śruti-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 Bādarāyana’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.

ŚAŅKARA’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 Madhvācāryā, and the Viśishṭādvaita of Rāmānujācārya, 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 Saṅkhya, Yogas, 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 Viśishṭādvaita 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’. अग्निक्षेत्रेण वेदान्तसंप्रदायविद्ध्राचारम्: (SBh. 2-1-9), तथा च संप्रदायविद्ध्राचारम् वदति (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, Yāmunācārya 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 Gaudapadā’s ajāti-vāda no less than that of Śaṅkara (the doctrine of the unborn Brahman) is in the Upanishads themselves, which emphatically declare "Being never born, He is mayically

* The Māṇḍūkya-Rahasya-Vivṛti, published by the Karyalaya.
born in many ways’ (Tai. Ar. 3-18). The phrase अजमनिध्रमस्वप्नम् (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 Vṛttikāras, 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 (सैताद बुद्धन भाषितम् G.K. 4-99).

THE UNIQUE FEATURE OF ŚAṆKARA’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 श्रुत्याद्वयोऽनुभवादयच यथासंभवमिह प्रमाणं; अनुभवावसानत्वः, भूतवस्तु-विषयत्वाच ब्रह्मविज्ञानस्य।। सू. भा. १-१-२, २८.
"Sruti 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 Sruti 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 (āvidyā-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 ‘anirvachaniya’ 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.

एवं प्रकटः पावना नामविविधाकल्पिते नामरूपे तत्त्वान्वित्वा-भ्यामिनिवचनीये समसामयिकविद्यार्थीहृदे सर्वज्ञत्व इश्वरस्य माया, शक्ति:, प्रकृति: - इति च श्रुतिस्मृत्योपलब्धयेते। सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४४०।

“Name and form, fancied by avidyā as though identical with the omniscient Ishvara, but which are undefinable as identical with or other than (Iśvara), 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

स्वतः वा परतो वापि न किञ्चिद्वस्तु जायते ।
सदसत्सदस्वापि 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 Gaudapāda 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 Saguṇa-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 सर्वज्ञं सबेश्वरं, सर्वात्मकोद्वितीयं: ‘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 अविद्यात्मकोपाधिपरिच्छेदाद्येक्स्ममेव ईश्वरस्य ईश्वरत्वं, सर्वनामल्ले, 
सर्वशक्तित्वं च ; न परमार्थीतो विद्यया अपास्तसवोपाधिपिरवृपे आत्मनि 
ईश्चित्रीशिव्यसर्वज्ञत्वादिव्यवहारः उपपत्ति ॥ 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 Paramārthīc 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 सर्वविषयावभासनक्षमम ज्ञानं नित्यमस्ति, सोऽसवर्जः इति 
विद्यातिषिद्दम् ॥ 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 Śāṅkhyas. 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 Bādarārayana 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 Vijnānavādīn says that the object is identical with the idea, since both of them are experienced together. (सहोपलभन्नियमादभेदो विषयविज्ञानयोः। सू. भ. 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 प्रमाणप्रद्यप्रद्यप्रपूर्वकं द्वि संभवासंभवो अवधायतेऽ न पुनः संभवासंभवपूर्विके.
"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.

"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 Moksha, 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.

“यावद हि न सत्यात्मैकत्वप्रतिपत्ति: तत्वत् प्रमाणप्रमेयफललक्षणेषु\nविकारेषु अनृत्तवबुद्धिन्म कस्यचितुत्पदते \nविकारानेव तु ‘अहं, मम’\nइत्यविद्या आत्मात्मीयेन भावेन सवेः जन्तु: प्रतिपद्यते स्वाभाविकी महाभाषात्\nहित्वा \nतस्मात्, प्राग्न्याभासात्त्वप्रतिवा उपपत्ति: सवो लौकिको वैदिकशः\nव्यवहारः ; यथा सुप्रत्य प्राकृतस्य जनस्य स्वने उच्चावचानू भावानू पश्यत;\nनिश्चितमेव प्रत्यक्ष्याभिमांतं विज्ञानं भवति प्राकृ प्रवेदात्, न च\nप्रत्यक्ष्याभासााभिप्रायस्तत्त्वकाले भवति, तद्थतं।। सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४३६.
THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURE OF ĀTMAN

“...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 Upāsanās, 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 सर्वात्मात्मैवाभूतं तत्क्षनं कं पश्येत् तत्क्षनं कं जिज्ञेश्वरूपमेव तत्क्षनं कं रस्येत् तत्क्षनं कमभिबद्धेऽति तत्क्षनं कं शृणुयात् तत्क्षनं कं मन्न्वदुः तत्क्षनं कं स्पृशेत् तत्क्षनं कं विज्ञानीयात । .... ||

Br. 4-5-15.

"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? .... "

Br. 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:
The text beginning with where all has become, Atman 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 Śaṅkara-Bhashya. Apparent contradictions with regard to fructifying (Prārābdha) karmas, Upāsanās, transmigration, the three states of consciousness, the state of beginninglessness of Saṃsāra, gradation in Moksha, the distinction of the
Higher and the Lower Brahman and other doctrines with which the Śūtra-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 Brahma 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 Nīdīdhyāsana 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 Brahma synonymously:

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

सू. भा. १-१-५, ६४.

[Here the words, Brahmātman, and Brahma are used synonymously. The Vedāntās are declared to have the only purport of teaching Brahmātman].

SBh. 1-1-5-64
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 ‘एकमेवाधितलयम्’ (Ch. 6-2-1) “One without a second’. Here is a statement of Śaṅkara from the Sūtra-Bhāshya:

(२) आदिशब्दात् ‘ऐतदात्मायमिदं सर्व तत्सत्यं स आत्मा तत्वामि
श्रेयंतकेतो।’ ‘इदं सर्वं यदयमात्मा’, ‘ब्रह्मवेदं सर्वम्’, ‘आत्मवेदं सर्वम्’,
नेव नानास्ति किज्ञचन’ - इत्येवमाद्यप्यात्मैकत्वप्रतिपादनपरं वचनजातम्
उदाहरत्वयम्॥

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

(३) ‘भोक्ता भोग्यं प्रेतितां च मत्ता सर्वं प्रोक्तं त्रिविंधं ब्रह्मं मे तत्’
(श्री. १-१२) इति समस्तस्य भोग्यभोक्तिकृत्यतृत्क्षणस्य प्रपञ्चस्य
ब्रह्मकस्वभावतामधीयते॥

[Here the triple distinction of the experiencer, experienced, and the Ruler, is declared to be taught as being of the nature of One Brahman.]
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 हृदयम्महत् 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-Prakāraṇa’ 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 परमार्थाय हि हृदं तद्विदेह उच्यते’ (GK. 3-18), and स्वसिद्धान्तव्यवस्थासु हृदिदीतनितिनिश्चितं 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 ‘अद्वैतं च हृदयाभासं मनः स्वप्ने न संशयः। अद्वैतं च हृदयाभासं
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, Śaṅkara 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 संसारांत्मातः प्रतिपाद्यत इत्यभ्युपगच्छाम्", कि तर्क संसारिकः संसारिल्लापोहनेश्वराल्मतः प्रतिपिपादिषितम् - इति। एवं च सत्या अद्वैतेश्वरस्य अपहतपापत्वादिगुणता, विपरीतगुणता त्वितरस्य मिथ्या इति व्यवहिष्ठते।”

Sū. Bh. 4-1-3, 510.

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. Śaṅkara illustrates this by citing empirical examples thus:

तस्मात् यथा घटकरकाद्याकाशानां महाकाशानन्यत्वम्, यथा च
मूगतृषिकोदकादीनाम् ऊषरादिभ्योजनन्यत्वम्, दृष्टनष्टस्वरूपत्वात्, स्वरूपे-
णातुपाख्यत्वात्, एवम् अस्य भोग्यभोक्त्रादिप्रपञ्चजातस्य ब्रह्मतिर-
रेकेिणाभाव इति दृष्टव्यम्।।

Sū. Bh. 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. Śaṅkara quotes a text in his commentary on Bādarāyaṇa’s Sūtra आत्मकृते 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। निस्कृत चानिन्हुं च।।

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, “....सत्वं चानूः च सत्यमभवति ....” “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 ज्ञानमन्तः ब्रह्म “Brahman is reality, consciousness, and infinite” (Tai. 2-1). He says there that the real is that which never changes its self-identity (यथौपेण यत् निर्विचारं तदूपं न व्यभिचारस्ते तत् सत्यम्). In the Sūtra-Bhāshya also it is declared -

एकरूपेण ह्यवस्थितो योऽर्थः स परमार्थः । लोकेः तद्विषयं ज्ञानं सम्यगज्ञानमित्युच्यते ॥

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 Pāramārthich 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 \textit{Parin\=\text{a}ma} (transformation) is meant when the \textit{Sruti} says that Brahman becomes all this? Here Śaṅkara answers :-

\begin{quote}
\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
अविद्याकल्पितेन च नामरूपलक्षणेन रूपमेदेन व्याकृतत्वायाकृतत्मके
तत्त्वान्यतःव्यामनिर्वचनीयेन ब्रह्म परिणामादिसर्वव्यवहारात्मकं प्रतिपद्ते ।
पारमाधिकेन च रूपेण सर्वव्यवहारात्तीतमपरिणतम् अवतिष्ठते ।
वाचार्यवर्णमात्रत्वाच्च अविद्याकल्पितस्य नामरूपमेदस्य - हि न
निरवयत्वं ब्रह्मण: कुप्ति ॥
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
\end{quote}

“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 unimpressed, 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 \textit{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 "\textit{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 \textit{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*, (सद्वनिर्विष्ट) 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 *adhyātyāpavāda* 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 :-

≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡≡

S eva nityānta eva vijnāyate nīhantu yetaḥ । sarvamgraḥbhaavān hetunāraja

prakāśate || g. ka. 3-26.

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 नेतिनेतीति व्याख्यातं निन्दते यतः । सर्वमग्राहभावान हेतुनारजं प्रकाशते || g. ka. 3-26.

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

\begin{quote}
муллопавискуллингдзы: सूचियं चोदिलाण्यथा ।
उपाय: सोडवताराय नास्ति भेदः कथज्जन ॥ गौ. का. 3-१५.
\end{quote}

“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 Śloka 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:

\begin{quote}
न चेतं परमार्थविषया सृष्टिश्रुति: । अविद्याकल्पितनाममरूपव्यवहार- 
गोचरल्यातु, ब्रह्मात्मभावप्रतिपादनपरत्वाच्य इत्येतदिष्टि नैव विस्मर्तव्यम् ॥
सू.भा. २-१-३३, ४७१.
\end{quote}

“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 ŚAŃKARA’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 :-

\[
\text{यथा अरुन्थती निदर्शनि बहीष्णपि तारासु अमुख्यासु अरुन्थतीषु दशितासु या अन्त्या प्रदर्श्यते सा मुख्यैवारुन्थती भवति, एवमिहापि} \ldots \text{।।}
\]

Sū. Bh. 1-1-12, 97.

This extract refers to the customary practice resorted to by Purūḥits (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 Sāṅkhyas, 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 (तत्रिष्णे मा भूविदिति मुख्यमात्मानुपपदिदिशुस्तस्य हेयत्वं ब्रूयात्)। सू.भ. 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 Śaṅkara’s tradition to recognize this truth even long before Gauḍapāda, is evident from a quotation from an untraced author, as found in the Gītā-Bhāshya (on G. 13-13, 14) :-

सर्वंपाणिपादं तत् सर्वतोपक्षिपितरोमुखम्।
सर्वंश्रुतिमल्लोकं सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति॥ १३-१३।
सर्वंद्रियगुणाभासं सर्वंद्रियविवर्जितम्॥ 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. Śaṅkara remarks:

उपाधिकृतं मिथ्यारूपमयप्रसिद्धिवििधामाय ज्ञेयधर्मवत् परिकल्प्य
"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 Upāsanās

* '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 :-

युष्मदस्मत्तत्वत्वयायो चरयोविषयविषयविषयो:स्तमः प्रकाशस्वतः
विरूद्धवधायोऽस्तमः प्रकाशस्वतः
तथापि
अन्योन्यस्वतः अन्योन्यात्मकताम् अन्योन्यात्मकाण्यार्थम्
अत्यन्तः विविधयोर्थ्यधर्मिणोऽपिमिथ्यावज्जननिमित्तः
तत्त्वानृते मिथुनीकृत्य
‘अहमिदम्’, ‘ममेदम्’
इति नैसांगिकोऽयं लोकायतवर: ॥
अध्यासभाष्यम्-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 भवितं 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 (नैसांगिकोऽयं लोकायतवर:;) 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 Himalayan 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 (अणुमात्रेयापि स न संबंधते), 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: सतो हि मायया जन्म युम्यते न तु तत्तत्वः। “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 मिथ्याभूताम् अज्ञानम्, तत्त्रिमितः तदुपादानः। (*Mithyājñānam* 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* (mithyājñāna) has been invariably used as an equivalent of Adhyāsa and *Mithyāpratyaya* (mithyāpratyaya), *Mithyābuddhi* (mithyābuddhi) 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 liērē

**(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 Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña. (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 adhyāsa, 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 Śaṅkara’s teaching that avyākṛta or undifferentiated name and form constituting the Universe, is Māyā (appearance) invented by avidyā āśvityākālāpyate nāmamūrte tattvānyatvaśāmyamānirvañcitaṃ संसारप्रपन्नवीजम्भुते सर्वज्ञात्वंशकार्य मावा, शक्ति: प्रकृति: - इति च श्रुतिस्मृत्योभिंलयेते ॥ सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४४०।

We shall now quote an extract from a post-Śaṅkara follower of the exponent of the hypothetical avidyā referred to above. This sub-commentator says:-
It is evident that the author of this sub-commentary also identifies avidyā with *Avyākṛtanāmarūpa* (undifferentiated seed of name and form) called *Māyā* by Śaṅkara. 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 Śaṅkara’s Introduction to mean superimposition and not avidyā sakti. 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) नैर्गिकः इति । स्वाभाविकः अनादिर्यं व्यवहारः ।

Vāchaspāti Miśra’s Bhāmati on SBh. 1-4-3.
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 पुनरंयमप्रबोधः - इति चेतु, यस्तवं पृष्ठसि तस्य ते इति
"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 Isvara Himself by the Sruti!'

(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 Isvara is the only Reality, there can be neither any question nor reply concerning anything whatever. Accordingly, Śaṅkara anticipates another objection and shows its futility thus :-

योगपि दोषरचोदते कैशचिद - अविद्या किल आत्मन: सहितीयत्वात्
अद्वैतानुपपत्तिरिति, सोऽप्येतेन प्रत्युक्तः ॥ सू. भा. 4-१-३, 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.

[Śaṅkara 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 PRAMĀNA 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 प्रमाणप्रवृत्तिप्रवृत्तिपूर्व्को हि संभवासंभवो अवधायः ‘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 defendants 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 Adhyāsa 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 Bhashya, 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 Śūtra after describing the whole gamut of life possible for individual selves, he comes to the conclusion that Śrutiś and Smṛtiś 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 Chāndogya 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:

शारीरे पतिते अशारीरत्वं स्यात्, न जीवतः इति चेतु, न, सशारीरत्वस्य मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तत्वात्॥

“(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 सशारीरत्वस्य सिद्धं जीवतोपि विदुषोशशारीरत्वम्॥

“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 Śaṅkara’s found elsewhere in the Bhāśya:—

एवं धर्माधर्मयोर्योर्हेतहर्विविद्यासामाध्यतू अस्लेषविनाशसिद्रेः, अवश्यं-
भाविनी विदुषः 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 Vākhyāna 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 SĀṂṢĀRA

32. The same is true of the belief in the beginningless nature of sāṁsāra (transmigratory life). Śaṅkara 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 denounced 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 (अन्यपरम्परेष्ठा अनादित्वकालयना). 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 viewpoint of Vyavahāra which takes for granted that birth and death are actual happenings in time. Disregarding this distinction of viewpoints many doctrinarians - both Śaṅkārītes 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, Śaṅkara writes:

अपि च न कदाचिं जीवस्य ब्रह्म वृत्तिः संपत्तिनास्ति, स्वरूपस्यानपायित्वात्। स्वस्पन्दिगगित्वायोस्तु उपाधिसंपर्कवशात् पररूपायपत्तिमित्रवेष्ट्यतुप्लासात् सुभुते स्वरूपायपालित्वक्ष्यते।। 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 संपत्तिस्तावतंदेकत्वात् 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." SBh. 3-2-7, 266.
In the face of this unambiguous statement a sub-commentator writes:

अथ तु परमात्मेव नादीपुरोहितसृष्टिधारा सुप्रस्तश्चाय सतीत्वार्थस्मात् ततो विपरीतज्ञाननिवृत्ते; अत्ि मात्रया परमात्माभाव उपयोगः। तथा हि तावदेष जीवस्तदवस्थानो भवति केवलम्। तत्त्वज्ञानाभावेन समूलकाष्ठम् अविद्याया सक्षात् जाग्रत्वपनलक्षणं जीवस्य व्युत्थानं भवति॥

भामति 3-2-7, page 696.

"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 परमात्माभावः) ; 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 Jīva 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 सचि (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 Bhashyakāra, 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!

**ŚANKARA’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 सुपुष्पितसमाध्यादावपि सत्यं स्वाभाविक्याम्
अविभागप्राप्ती मिथ्याज्ञानस्यानयोदितत्वात् पूर्ववत् पुन: प्रबोधे विभागो भवति,
एवमहापि 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 mithyājnāna 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-sakti), can take this passage to mean that even in deep sleep and samādhi, that 'sakti' persists to be in a latent form].

(२) यथा ह्विभागेौपि परमात्मनि मिथ्याज्ञानप्रतिस्व स्वभावोऽविभागः
व्यवहारः स्वपनवद्याहत: स्थितिः दृश्यते, एवमपीतावपि मिथ्याज्ञानप्रतिस्व
बद्धविभाग-शक्तिरुपमस्यते।।

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 Mithyājnāna (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 Mithyājnāna."

SBh. 2-1-9, 425.

Needless to say that the school holding the theory of avidyā-sakti clinging to Ātman, may imagine here a voucher for inferring the continuance of that sakti 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 विवेककारणाभावातुः जलबिन्दोरुपदृश्यते । इह तु विद्यते विवेककारण कर्म चाविद्या च इति वैष्ण्वयम् ॥ सू. भा. 3-२-९, 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
MISCONCEPTION WITH THE IDENTITY OF JĪVA

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 Bhāṣya to suit his pet theory of avidyā-śakti as follows:

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.”

Bhāmati, 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 Bhāṣya on Śūtra 3-2-7. न कदाचिदिषि जीवस्य ब्रह्मण सम्पत्तिनांस्यि 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:

Vyavahārunādātityā tatkāraṇasya abhyāsasya anādītōka. Tatvēch purvēpurvē-miśyājñānopaḍāsāntasya buddhistīyānārāśīārādērūtātāryāśopyo: ityānādītātātī bijādaṅkurvṛttā parśparāśrayatvāmātyātātātī. II

Bhāmatī, abhyāsabhāṣyātīka, p. 10.

This is in implication of the word naisargikā (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 āvamyaṇādītānto naisargikōdabhyāsā miśyāpaṭyāmyṛtyā: karttāvāmbokūrvarvātāntāt. using both the words naisargika (innate, natural) and anādī (beginningless). Further, there is something which renders ‘adhyāsa’ the very foundation of Śaṅkara’s Bhāṣya 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 adhyāsa, 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-Śaṅkaras 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 (अनेककर्तृभक्तसंयुक्तस्य 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 Śaṅkara remarks:-

सदेव तौपाधिसंपकाति, जीव इत्युपचर्वति इत्यसकृत प्रस्पन्चितम् । एवं सति याबदेकोपाधिगता बन्धानुवृत्ति: ताबदेकजीवव्यवहारः । उपाध्यात्मत्वात्यायं तु बन्धानुवृत्ती जीवनात्मव्यवहारः । स एववायुधिष्ठी: स्वायप्रबोधोपीञ्जिकाधकुस्यायेन इत्यत: स एव जीवः प्रतिबुध्यते इति युक्तम् ।। सू. भा. 3-२-९, 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 तत्सात्, दुर्जीविविद्वि:प्रायमिदप्रमुखवाचनम्, उपाध्याष्ठिका: 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 Śūtra he writes:

यावदेव चायं बुद्धिपदिःसंबन्ध:ं, तावज्जीविः जीवत्वं संसारित्वं
च ||

सू. भ. 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 śūtra, 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.

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 :-

“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 Śūtra (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 (वैधमाण्ड्य न स्वप्नादिवित् - 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: अति च स्मृतिरेषा यत्तू स्वनदर्शनम्, 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 स्वप्नानु परशयनु 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:

"Before the intuition of one’s identity with Brahma, 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 Brahma, it has been declared by the Sruti 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 Brahma in these states. A sub-commentator writes thus on this subject:

SBh. 3-2-10, p. 639, 640.
“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 ब्रूयो मुग्धेश्यसंपत्तिज्ञस्य ब्रह्मणा भवति इति’।

Sū. Bh. 3-2-10, 275.

“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 (अत्स्मिस्ततुद्विद्वि). 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' (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 superimpostion 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 (एवमहःप्रत्यविनमशेषस्त्राचारसाक्षिणि प्रत्यगात्मन्यध्यस्य, तं च
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 Śaṅkara, only because he becomes fit for discussion in the empirical field (व्यवहार्योग्य) 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 (परस्पृहार्थतमो जीवभावेनावस्थानम् SBh. 1-4-22) and that Jīva is only a semblance of the real Ātman (आभास एवं चैष जीवः परमात्मनो ज्ञेसूर्यकांदिवत् प्रतिपत्तिः:) not actually the same nor a distinct entity (न स एव साक्षात् नापि वस्तुतर्म् - 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 transcendentally speaking.

44. Elsewhere Śaṅkara writes:

नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वभावे कूटस्थानित्ये एकस्मिनंसङ्गे परमात्मनि
“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 persues the following statement of Śaṅkara :-
MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ŠAṆKARA

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 Šaṅkara 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 सर्वभूतातिविवासात् साक्षिण: चेतनितुरीश्वरात् ......).

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 (उपाध्यात्तरादाय तु बन्धानुवृत्तौ जीवान्तरस्यवहारः | सू. भा. 3-१-९).

Yet post-Śaṅkara advaitins have entertained different views as to whether Ekajīva-vāda (the theory of single Jīva) or Nānajīva-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 सर्वेष एष सर्वज्ञ एषोपन्तरस्यवहारः योनि् सर्वस्य प्रभवाययौ हि भूतानाम् || (मां. ६.) And yet some have ventured to give the derivation of the word as प्रावेण 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
Sruti. We shall just cite the Sūtras, and the Śruti along with the Bhāṣya for the reader's information:–

(1) वदन्तीति चेत्र प्राज्ञो हि प्रकरणात् ॥ वे. सू. १-४-५.
(2) तद्गुणसार्त्थत् तु तद्व्यपदेशः प्राज्ञवत् ॥ वे. सू. २-३-२९.
(3) सुपुर्वति तावत् ‘अयं पुरुषः प्राज्ञनात्मना संपरिष्कर्तो न बाह्य किमचन वेद नात्तरम्’ (बृ. ४-३-२९) इति शारीरसात् भेदेन परमेश्वर व्यपदिशति। तत्र पुरुषः शारीरः स्मात, तस्य वेदित्वात् । ततु भाष: परमेश्वरः। सर्वज्ञत्वलक्षणया प्रज्ञा नित्यमिवियोगात्। तथोक्तान्वापि ‘अयं शारीर आत्मा प्राज्ञनात्मनाःनवालु उल्लसर्वन् यति’ (बृ. ४-३-३५) इति जीवात् भेदेन परमेश्वर व्यपदिशति।

सू. भा. १-३-४२, ३२९.

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

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 realtion of tvam-padartha and tat-padārtha (the Jīva and Īśvara) in the proposition Tat-tvam-asī (‘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 Bhāṣya:

‘अपि च तत्त्वसिं’ इत्येतदृ वाक्यं तत्त्वदार्थस्य तत्त्वदार्थभाव-माचिः । तत्त्वदेन च प्रकृतं सद्ब्रह्म ईशितू, जगतो जन्मादिकारणम्
अभिधीयते, ‘सत्यं ज्ञानमन्तं ब्रह्म’, ‘विज्ञानमन्तं ब्रह्म’, ‘अदृष्टं द्रष्टृ
………… संविज्ञाति विज्ञातू’, ‘अजमजरममरम्’, ‘अस्थूलमनवहस्व-मदीर्धम्’ - इत्योदिताश्चप्रसिद्धम् । ..... एष प्रावृत्तसर्वसंसारसार्थमकः
अनुभवात्मकः ब्रह्मसंज्ञकसत्त्वदार्थो वेदान्ताभिभुक्तानां प्रसिद्धः । तथा
तत्त्वदार्थोपिन प्रत्यगतां श्रोतां देहादार्थियो प्रत्यगतंतया संबाध्यमानः
चैतन्यपर्यत्तलेवत्तङ्गावधारितः । तत्र च येषामेव पदाधिह ज्ञानसंसारशयविपर्यय-प्रतिबद्ध्वै तेजसम् ‘तत्त्वसिं’ इत्येतदृ वाक्यं स्वर्धम् प्रमां नोत्यादृश्यें शक्तोति,
पदार्थज्ञानपूर्वकंज्ञातद् वाक्यार्थस्य । ..... येष्ठं पुनर्निजन्ति न्यायां ज्ञानसंसार-विपर्ययवल्क्षण: पदार्थविषय: प्रतिबन्धस्तिः तेशनुक्तिः सकृदुकुमेव
tतत्त्वसिवाक्यार्थमनुभवितम् ॥

[It should be noted, incidentally, that ज्ञान (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-padartha* is to be determined by using the principles of interpretation enunciated in the Pūrva-mimāṃsa 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 Šaṅkara 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 Śaṅkara’s explanation of the text, ‘That thou art’ cited above. Here are extracts from the Śūtra-Bhāṣya wherein Šaṅkara himself says so, in so many words :-

(१) यावद हि अविद्या न निवर्तते, तावद धर्मादिगोचरत्वं जीवस्य जीवत्वं च न निवर्तते। तत्रिवृत्तिः तु प्राज्ञ एव ‘तत्त्वमसीति’ श्रुत्या प्रत्यायते; न च चाविद्यावत्वे तदपगमे च वस्तुन्म: कश्चिद् विशेषादिश्वति।

२०५. भ. १-४-६, ३५१.

Here Šaṅkara 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 जलसूर्यकादिवतः
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 Samsāra becomes quite reasonable.

Here it is expressly affirmed that Īśvara is not taught to be identical with Jīva, but only by negating the sāṃsāric 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.

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:—

नन्यभेदनिदेशोधि दर्शित: ‘तत्त्वमसि’ इत्येवंजातियकः। कथं भेदाभेदी विरूः संभवेयाताम्। नैष दोषः। आकाशढंताकाशात्यायेन उभयसंभवस्य तत्र तत्र प्रतिष्टापितत्रत्। अपि च यदा ‘तत्त्वमसि’-इत्येवंजातियकेन अभेदनिदेशेन अभेद: प्रतिबोधितो भवति, अपगतं भवति तदा जीवस्य संसारितं ब्रह्मणश्च सष्टूत्त्रम्। समस्तस्य मिथ्याज्ञान-विजृष्टितस्य भेदव्यवहारस्य सम्यक्षज्ञानेन बाधिष्टतः। तत्र कुते एव सृष्टि:?

२४६ सू. भा. २-१-२२.

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 Jīva, had been already used by Gauḍapāda, the knower of the right Vedantic tradition (वेदांतसंप्रदायविविधतः) 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 ह्याकाशव्यज्ञीवैर्घ्याकाशीयिवेदितः
 घटादिवन्य संधातैजशंतावेतनिद्विद्वेदस्म।।

This slōka 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 accommodating 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) रूपकार्यसमाख्यारच भिद्यन्ते तत्र तत्र वै

आकाशस्य न भेदोगस्ति तद्विज्ञीवेषु निर्मयः।। 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.
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 Vedāṇta, should be steadily kept in mind in order to avoid misconceptions. As Śaṅkara says:

(१) नित्यान्यधिगतानि कर्माणि, उपात्तुरितक्षयार्थानि, काम्यानि च फलार्थिनां, पूर्वस्मिनु 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 देहान्तसंवधीत्येवं प्रतिपतु: देहान्तर-गतेष्टानि तथ्यप्रतिपरिहारोपायविशेषाधिन: तत्विकाण्डविभाष्यम् । न त्वात्मन: इष्टानिष्टप्राप्तिपरिहारेच्छाकारणम् आत्मविभयम् अज्ञानं कर्तृभक्तस्वरूपाभिमानलक्षणं तद्विपरीतब्रह्मात्मस्वरूपविज्ञापननावने-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 (तत्क्रृतेन दोषेण गुणेन वा अगुणात्मकेष्य स न संबध्यते). We have also seen (in para 47) how in the discussion of the epithet Prājña 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
tadagamakale च वस्तुन: कश्चिद्विशेषोऽधिष्ठिति’ (सू. भ. 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 कस्मिन्सिद्धस्तुनि पूर्वनिविष्टाया मिथ्याबुद्धे
निषिद्धाया पर्यावपुःजायमाना यथार्थबुद्धे:, पूर्वनिविष्टाया: मिथ्याबुद्धे-
निवर्तिका भवति। यथा देहेन्द्रियसङ्ग्धते आत्मबुद्धे:, आत्मन्येरात्मबुद्धे
पर्यावाकल्या ‘तत्त्वमसि’ इत्यन्या यथार्थबुद्धे निवर्तिते।

सू. भ. 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.
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-Mimāmsa. 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) भोक्त्रापत्तेविभागशेत् स्यात्लोकवत् ॥ व. 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 :-

समुद्रादुदकात्मनोजन्यतेष्वपि तद्विकारणां फैनवीचतरंड्गबुद्धुदा-
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:-

"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:-

"Śुत्रकारोपि परमार्थभिभाष्येण 'तदन्त्यत्तम' - इत्याह। व्यवहारभिभाष्येण तु 'स्यल्लोकवत्' इति महासुद्दशःशानीयतां ब्रह्माणः।"
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 Upāsanas.”

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 Śrūṭis 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). Śaṅkara also recognizes this circumstance when he says विद्यार्थ्योश्च वेदान्तेषु अव्यतिरिक्तं प्रयोगों दृष्टयते 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. (ज्ञानवृत्तमकर्तुर्मम्व वा कर्तुर्मशक्तम्, केवलं वस्तुतन्मेव न चोदनातन्म, नापि पुरुषतन्म).

**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 क्रियं साक्षात् वस्तुर्ममस्य अपेक्षा दृष्टा कर्तश्र-विद्या, अविद्यायास्तु सर्वत्र निवर्तिता दृष्टयते। तथा इहापि अविद्यात्मम असर्वत्र च अविद्यावृत्तमेव निवर्ततां ब्रह्मविद्या।

बृ.भा. १-२-१०, 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.

(2) ज्ञापकं हि शास्त्रं न कारकम् इति स्थितिः ॥

२. भा. १-४-१०, १५६.

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

(3) तथा ‘सदेवेदं सर्वम्’, ‘ब्रह्मेवेदं सर्वम्’, ‘आत्मेवेदं सर्वम्’,
‘नेवं द्वैतमस्ति अज्ञतं’ - इति ब्रह्मण्येकत्वविज्ञानं न विधातव्यं ब्रह्मणि
अविद्याध्यायोपणायम् असत्याम् ॥

२. 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.

(4) मोक्षस्य इदानीमिव निर्विशेषते तदर्थिधिकयत्नानुपपत्ति:
शास्त्रवैश्यर्थ्यं च प्राप्तोतीति चेतुः ; न, अविद्याध्यामापोहार्थतावात् । न हि वस्तुतो
मुक्तामुक्तविशेषोज्जितः ; आत्मो नित्यैकरूपत्वात् । कितव तद्धिष्यात-
विद्याउपोहते शास्त्रोपदेशशजनितविज्ञानेन । प्राकृ ततुपदेशशाप्ते: तदर्थिधच प्रयत्न
उपपहते एव ॥

२. 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, अविद्यानिवृत्तिनिवृत्तिकृतो विशेष आत्मन: स्यात् - इति चेतु, न ; अविद्याकल्पनाविशेषयतळाभ्युपगमात्। रज्जूपर-शुक्लकाग्नानां सपोदर्जतत्मलिनत्वादिवददोष: इत्योचाम।।

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) तिमिरातिमिरदृष्टिवतः अविद्याकृत्वाकृत्त्वाकृतः: आत्मनो विशेषः स्यात् इति चेतु, न ; 'ध्यातीव, लेलायतीव' इति स्वतोदविद्याकृत्त्वस्य प्रतिषिद्धत्वात्। अनेकव्यापारस्त्रिपातजनितत्वाच्छ 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'rutī 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) विषयविधाता ज्ञानं विषयविधाता ज्ञानं

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 Śrutī says ‘ब्रह्माय पुरुषो विभवायति’ (बृ. ४-४-६). “Being Brahman itself, one is dissolved in Brahman through knowledge”, while in the case of meditation it says ‘देवो भूत्वा देवान्यथति’ (बृ. ४-१-२) ‘One becomes a god and merges in gods’.
"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 ŚAÑKARA’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 ‘अरुपवदेव हि तत्तत्तात्त्व्’ (वेद. सू. ३-२-१४) deserves pointed attention in this connection :-

‘अस्थूलमनवहस्वमदीर्ध्यम्’ (बृ. ३-७-८), ‘अशब्दमस्पर्शमरूप-मव्यम्’ (का. १-३-१५), ‘आकाशो ह वे नाम नामस्पर्शयोनिविविहिता ते यदन्तरा तद्न्तरा’ (छाँ. ८-१४-१), ‘दिव्यो हमार्तिः पुरुषः स बाहाम्त्रद्वतो ह्याजः’ (मु. २-१-२), तदेतद् ‘ब्रह्मपूर्वमनवपरमनन्तरमवाहमयमात्मा ब्रह्म सर्वत्वेनुभु’ (बृ. २-४-१६) - इत्येवमादीनि वाक्यानि निष्पर्शवश्यात्मत्व-प्रधानानि, नार्थनिरप्रधानानि इत्येतत् प्रतिपादित ‘ततु समन्यात्’ (वेद. सू. १-१-४) इत्यत। तस्मात्, एवंजातीयेकैव वाक्येषु यथाशृवत् निराकारमेव ब्रह्म अवश्यार्थित्वम्। इतराणि त्वाकारवदृढविश्वासिणि काक्यानि, न तत्तत्त्रानि; उपासनादिविविधप्रधानानि हि तानि। तेषु असति विरोधे यथाशृवत्तांश्रयनित्यम्। सति तु विरोधे तत्तत्त्रानि अतत्त्वानेभ्यो बलियांसि भवति - इत्येष विनिमयमां हेतु:, चेन उभयीष्वपि श्रुतिः सतीषु अनाकारमेव ब्रह्म अवश्यार्थेन, 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 Śūtra ‘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 śrūtis 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 ‘आत्मेत्येवोपासित’ (४-४-१३), ‘One should think upon Him as Ātman exclusively’, ‘विज्ञाय प्रज्ञा कुर्वित’ (४-४-२१) Knowing Him alone, the discriminating one should try to get perfect consciousness’ and ‘सर्व खल्चिदं ब्रह्म तत्ज्ञातनिति शान्त उपासित’ (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 :-

वियुपास्योर्च वेदान्तेवुष अभ्यतिर्वेकण प्रयोगो दृष्टयते। क्रचिद् विदिना उपक्रम्य उपासिना उपसंहरति। यथा ‘यस्येत्य यत्स वेद स मयैतुदुकः’ (३-१-४) इत्यत्र ‘अनु न एतां भगवो देवतां शाधि यथा देवतामुपासे’ (४-२-२) इति। क्रचिच्छ उपासिना उपक्रम्य विदिना उपसंहरति। यथा ‘मनो ब्रह्मेत्युपासित’ (३-१०-१) इत्यत्र ‘भार्ति च तपित च कौत्यन यस्या ब्रह्मवर्णसेन य एवं वेद’ (३-१०-३) इति।

सू. भा. ४-१-१, ५०३.

Again, there are Śrūtis teaching that those that meditate upon Brahman, are taken by a divine guide to Brahman, and also there are Śrūtis describing Brahman as possessing various forms - such Śrūtis for instance as teach that Brahman has four quarters (चतुष्पत), sixteen discs (षोडशाकलः), and all the three
worlds for its body (तैलोक्यशारीरम्) 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 inbued 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 BĀDARĀYĀṆA 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 Sāṃkhyas 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
WHY BĀDARĀYANA TAKE PAINS TO RECONCILE

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

न च कार्यविषये विगाते कारणमपि ब्रह्म सर्ववेदातस्यविगीतमधि-गम्यानाम् अविवक्षितं भवितमहितं। 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.”

SBr. 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 Śūtra 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. Śaṅkara has adduced the Mīmāṃsic principle of interpretation.
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 Śaṅkara, expressly recommends that the effects should be taken only as the means to ascertain the Cause (तेजसा हि सौम्य शुद्धेन समूलमन्विच्छ). The Āchārya not only refers to the Śruti (वाचारभ्रं विकारे नामय नृतिकैत्येव सत्यम्), thus demonstrating that Śruti emphasizes the exclusive reality of the causes, but also appeals to the traditional teaching when he writes :-

मृदादिदृष्टानौशच कार्यस्य कारणानाभेदं बदितुं सृष्ट्यादिदिप्रधनं : श्रव्यत इति गम्यते । तथा च संप्रदायविदो वदन्ति - ‘मृत्योहविस्फुलिद्गाधी: सृष्टियं चोदिताद्यथा । उपायः सोजवताराय नास्ति भेदः कथवचन।’ (गौ.का. ३-१५) इति । ब्रह्माप्रतिपत्तिप्रतिभां तु फलं श्रूयते ‘ब्रह्मविदापनोति परम्’ (तै. २-१), ‘तरंति शोकमात्मचित्’ (छां. ७-१-३), ‘तमेव विदित्वाभितमृत्युमेति’ (श्रे. ३-८) इति । प्रत्यक्षावगमं चेदं फलम्।

सू. भ. 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 Śrūtis like Tai. 2-1, 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 Brahmān, is in itself unreal, a mere play of words (वाचार्यमयः विकारो नामशेषयम्) 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 Śrūtis teaching creation, if, as Śaṅkara avers, creation is not something seriously intended to be taught in the Śrūtis?

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 Brahmān. 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:
MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ŚAṆKARA

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

‘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 prānas (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 Śrutis with regard to creation, is free from all defects.’ SBh. 2-3-1, 88.
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 Śaṅkara, when we remember what he has said with regard to the relation of Īśvara and Jīva in Vedānta: –

(१) तदेवमविद्यात्मकोपाधिपरिच्छेदादेशपेशमेव ईश्वरस्य ईश्वरत्वं,
सर्वज्ञत्वं, सर्वशक्तित्वं च। न परमार्थतो विद्याया अपास्तसावपाधिस्वरूपे
आत्मनि ईश्विश्वित्वसर्वज्ञत्वादिविवहारः उपपद्यते।

सौं. भा. २-१-१५, ४५०।

[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 वेदान्तः सवेच।
तथेश्वरगीतस्ववि 'न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः। न
कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रकर्त्ते।। नादते कस्म्चितपरं न चैव सुकृतं


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

(3) Vyāhara-vāstvāyāṃ tūt: śrūta-vipakā śrūta-videhāvah: ‘एष सर्वेष्ठ एष भूताधिपतिरेष भूतपाल एष सेविन्धरण एवां लोकानामसंभेदाय’ (भ. ४-४-२२) इति। तथा चेश्चारागीतास्वपि ‘ईश्वर: सर्वभूतानां हृदेशोज्जुन तिष्ठति। भ्रामयनु सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रास्वदानि मायया।’ (गी. १८-६१)। सूत्रकारोऽद्विपि परमार्थाभिभ्रायेण ‘तदन्यथमः’ इत्याद। व्याहाराभिभ्रायेषु तु ‘स्याल्लोकवत्’ इति महासमुद्रस्थानीयता ब्रह्मणः कथयित। अवत्त्वाख्यायेव कार्यप्रपन्नं परिणामप्राक्रियां चायश्यति समुपेष्यपासनेषु उपयोक्षते इति।

सू. भा. २-१-१४, ४४५।

[These extracts show that the Śrutis no less than the Gītā and Bādarāyana’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 transcendentally real:-

न चेत्यं परमार्थविषया सृष्टिश्रुति:, अविद्याकल्पितनामसृष्टिस्ववहः-गोचरत्वात्, ब्रह्मात्माभावप्रतिपादनपरत्वाच्च - इत्येवत्पि 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 Brahmatman. 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 Isvara, 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 Śūtras devoted to both these from the third pada of the third chapter of the Śārīraka 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 Śūtras. 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 चार्निनयनावनपेश्या ॥’ ३-४-२५ (And that is why there is no need of sacrificial fire and fuel etc., VS. 3-4-25), and ‘सर्वपिश्या च यज्ञादिश्रुतेरवचतु ॥’ 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 विरूँद्मिदं वचनम् अपेक्षते चाश्रमकर्माणि विद्या नापेक्षते चेति ।
नेति ब्रूमः - उत्पत्ता हि विद्या फलसिद्ध प्रति न किञ्चिदन्यदपेक्षते, उत्पत्ति प्रति तु अपेक्षते । कुतः ? यज्ञादिश्रुते । ...... 'अश्रवत्' इति योग्यता-
निदर्शनम् । यथा च योग्यतावशेष अश्चो न लाङ्गलाकर्षणे युज्यते, रायचर्यां
तु युज्यते । एवम्, आश्रमकर्माणि विद्या फलसिद्ध नापेक्षते, उत्पत्ति च
अपेक्षते 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 (sama) and other psychic items of discipline :-

“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 evamvīt)’ (Br. 4-4-23), whereas sacrifice and other means have been enjoined in connection with vividishā (desire to know) in the text ‘tametam vedānu-vachanena brāhmanā vividishanti yajīena’ (Br. 4-4-22), are remote.” SBh. 3-4-27, 471.

MŌKSHA IN THE CASE OF THE MEDITATOR AND OF THE JÑĀNIN

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

समाना चासृत्युपक्रमादमृतत्वं चानुपोष्य। 4-2-७।

“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.

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 Śūtra that in view of this passage commencing with ‘अधाकामयायण:’ (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 ‘अन्तः ब्रह्म समसनुते’ he attains Brahman here alone’ (Ka. 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 Śāṅkhya and Yōga with what is denoted by those words in the systems of Kapila and Patanjali. Bādarāyaṇa himself has refuted the logic of the Nīrīśvara Śāṅkhya 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:

"Even while there are many Smṛtis relating to Ātman, attempt has been made here to refute the Sāṃkhya and Yōga Smṛtis 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 Śrutī '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 Sāmkhyas 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 Sāmkhya and Yōga, is thus clarified by Śaṅkara :-

यतु दर्शनमुक्तम् ‘तत्कारण साद्व्रयोगाभिप्रत्य’ इति । वैदिकमेव तत्र ज्ञानं ध्यानं च साद्व्रयोगाभिप्रा ग्यामिलप्यते प्रत्यास्ते: - 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 Sāmkhya and Yōga, for these are the more proximate references.” SBh. 2-1-3, 407.

[The word Sāmkhya as referring to Vedic intuition is more naturally to be expected to have been referred to, than the discrimination of the Prakṛti and Purusha 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 'Yoga' 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 परमपद्यस्य दुरवगमत्वमुक्ताय तद्वगमार्थं योगं दर्शयति II

सू. भा. १-४-१, ३३७.

"After having stated how the Highest Abode of Viṣṇu (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 वायुमनसी प्राणस्तद्यच्छेज्ञान आत्मनि II

ज्ञानमात्मनि महति नियच्छेत् तद्यच्छेज्ञान्त आत्मनि II का. १-३-१३.

Śaṅkara explains the process in these words :

एतदुर्वे भवति I वाचं मनसि संयच्छेत्, वागादिबाह्योद्विकस्यपारम्

उत्सृज्ञ मनोमात्रेण अवतिष्ठेत् I मनोजिनि विषयविकल्पाभिमुखं

विकल्पदोषदर्शनेन ज्ञानशब्दोदितायां बुद्धी अध्यवसायस्वभावायां धारयेत् I

तां बुद्धव महति आत्मनि भोकरि अग्रियायां वा बुद्धी सूक्ष्मतापादनेन

नियच्छेत् I महानं तु आत्मनं शान्ते आत्मनि प्रकरणवति परस्मिन् पुरुषे

परस्यं काष्ठयां प्रतिष्ठापयेत् इति च II

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 Upāsanā in all contexts, is to be found in Bādarāyaṇa's Sūtras 'आध्यात्मिक प्रयोजनाभाव' (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 Bādaraṅaṇa as meaning to assert that Purusha alone is here meant to be emphasized as the most supreme entity in the series and interprets the word Ādhyāna thus:

आध्यानपूर्वकाय सम्यगदर्शनाय इत्यः। सम्यगदर्शनाध्येवेदं हि इह आध्यानमुपदिःयते, न तु आध्यानमेव स्वप्राधानम्।

सू. भा. ३-३-१४, ३४१।

'The word ‘Adhyānayā’ 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 Bādaraṅaṇa according to Śaṅkara, refers here to Adhyātma-Yōga itself as a means to direct intuition, and not as an injunction of some Upāsanā.

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 Upāsanā 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: 'दृष्टयते त्वग्यया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिति:।' (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 Bhagavadagītā; 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। ईक्ष्तं येगुयुक्तात्म चर्चा समदर्शनः।' (Gī. 6-29). So we may be sure that it is a clear instance of misconception to suppose that this Yōga is a kind of Upāsanā.

THE IMMEDIATE MEANS TO KNOWLEDGE

66. We may now pass on to consider the nature and function of śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāśana taught as means to Darśana or Vision of Ātman by Yajñavalkya 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. (विषिध्यायनि चचनानि) . 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. 'तमात्यन्तिकपुरुषार्थवाच्चिन्नः स्वाभाविककार्यार्थसंयतप्रवृत्तिगौचरादृ विमुखोक्त्य प्रत्येकात्मसौत्सत्तवा प्रत्यज्जन्ति।'

(सू. भा. १-१-४, ५२) SBh. 1-1-4, 52.
But, then, there is another Sūtra in Śaṅkara’s Bhāshya 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 ‘समाध्यभावाच्य’ (सू. भा. 2-३-3१). ’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 :-

योध्वयमूपनिषदातमप्रतिपत्तिप्रयोजनं: समाधिरूपदिष्टो वेदान्तेषु 'आत्मा वा अरे दृष्टव्य: श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः’ (बृ. २-४-५), ‘सोज्वेष्टव्य: स विज्ञासितव्यः’ (छां. ८-७-१), ‘ओमित्येवं ध्यायथ आत्मानम्’ (मूं. २-२-६) इत्यवलक्षणं: सोज्पत्यस्तत्वत्मन: कर्तृत्वे नोपपदेत ॥ सू. भा. २-३-३१, 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 śravana, manana and nididhyāsana as the means for the vision of Ātman. We have no inkling anywhere of the eight steps of Pātanjalayōga in this or in any one of the texts cited here.
ARE PĀNDITYA AND OTHER MEANS THE SAME AS ŚRĀVANA ETC.?

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

तस्माद ब्राह्मणः पाण्डित्यं निविद्य बाल्येन तिष्ठातेत्। बाल्यं च पाण्डित्यं च निविद्याय युविर्मौनं च मौनं च निविद्याय 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 Bhāṣya 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) मनननिदिद्ध्यासनयोगी प्रवचनवदवगत्वक्षत्त्वात्।

This is in reply to a contemporary commentator on the Śūtras, 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 पुनर्निपुष्पतीय नाज्ञानसंशयविविधयत्तथाप दृष्टी: पदार्थंविषयः प्रतिबन्धोऽस्ति, तेन शक्तिन्ति सकृत्तुकमेव तत्त्वमसिवायव्यार्थमेव नन्दिनिहवितुमिति तात् प्रति आवृत्त्यान्तर्गत्यम् 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 \textit{nididhyāsana} (or meditation) as the immediate indispensable means, ventures to interpret even this express statement to mean -

\begin{quote}
\textit{सक्रुद्रुतमेवेति। श्रुत्वा मत्त्वा क्षणमवधाय प्रागभवीयाभ्यासजात-संस्कारात् इत्यर्थः।}
\end{quote}

\vspace{1em}

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

### ŠAṆKARA’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 Šaṅkara. The reader will do well to ponder over the meaning of this verdict of that Āchārya and to remind himself of Šaṅkara’s final conclusion in the matter, whenever he is confronted with any conflict of views on the part of Šaṅkarites.
or with adverse critics owing allegiance to other schools.

"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 Brahmā, 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 Śāriraka-Mīmāṁsā 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 Mīmāṃsā of
Jaimini, and those to be borne in mind by the students
of Vedānta-Mīmāṃsā of Bādarāyaṇa, has been mainly
responsible for the great many misconceptions about
Śaṅkara’s line of reasoning. Not a few of the mis-
conceptions pointed out in these paragraphs, owe their
origin to interpretations ignoring these points which
Śaṅkara 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 Śaṅkara’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 प्रपते’, ‘दियो यो न: 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’, ‘प्रमाणप्रवृत्तिप्रवृत्तिपूर्वको संभवाःसंभववधायते, न पुनः संभवासंभवपूर्वके प्रमाणप्रवृत्तिप्रवृत्ती’.

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. ‘अविवादोदिन्दुष्टच’ (G.K. 4-2).
**WORD - INDEX**

(N. B. - Sanskrit Words which are used in the book and italicised are given in this Index. The first number here refers to the Paragraph while the second number refers to the Page of the book. Thus 5-6 Para 5 ; Page 6 )

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit Word</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ajātivāda</td>
<td>5-5, 10-10, 22-26, 28-34.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anidram</td>
<td>5-6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aswapnam</td>
<td>5-6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adhyāsa</td>
<td>7-7, 27-33.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avidyā - śakti</td>
<td>8-8, 28-35, 37-49.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ahankāra</td>
<td>8-8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anirvachaniyam</td>
<td>9-9, 54-78.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advaita</td>
<td>18-19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advaita-prakaraṇa</td>
<td>18-20.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asatkāryavāda</td>
<td>22-27.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adhyārōpāpavāda</td>
<td>23-27.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arundhatī</td>
<td>24-29.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>annamayakōśa</td>
<td>24-29.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avidyā</td>
<td>7-7, 28-35.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avyākṛta</td>
<td>29-36, 64-99.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avyākṛtanāmarūpa</td>
<td>29-37.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adhyārōpa</td>
<td>35-47.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ajñāna</td>
<td>37-49.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anādi</td>
<td>39-52.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anu</td>
<td>40-54.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avachhinnavāda</td>
<td>44-61.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apavāda</td>
<td>51-72.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anubhava</td>
<td>55-81.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anubhavānusāritarkah</td>
<td>55-81.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
avyyakta 64-99.
adhyatma-yoga 64-99.
atmaikatva 20-22.
abhäsavāda 44-61.
ākāśa 50-69, 57-85, 57-88.
adhyāna 64-102.
Īśvara 10-10, 11.
upādhi 40-54.
ekatva 17-18.
kāraka 54-77.
gauñatman 43-59.
chatushkoṭi 5-5.
jīvas 11-11.
janmādi 22-26.
jīvanmukti 31-42.
jñānakānda 51-71.
jñāpaka 54-77.
jñānakarmasamuchhayavāda 60-92.
jñāna 64-101.
tarkasamaya 45-62.
tvam-padārtha 48-64, 48-66.
tat-padārtha 48-64, 48-66.
tat-tvam-asi 48-64.
tat tu samanvayāt 55-82.
darśana 66-103.
dharma 7-8, 31-41.
dhyāna 64-97.
nyāyaprasthāna INTR.-3
naisargika 39-52.
nanājīvavāda 40-53, 46-63.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hindi Word</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>पञ्चपादिका</td>
<td>Panchapādikā</td>
<td>8-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>पञ्चपादिकाप्रस्थानम्</td>
<td>Panchapādikāprasthāna</td>
<td>8-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>परमार्थदृष्टि:</td>
<td>paramārthadrṣṭi</td>
<td>10-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>परमेश्वर:</td>
<td>Paramēśvara</td>
<td>10-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>पारमार्थिकम्</td>
<td>pāramārthic</td>
<td>14-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>परिणाम:</td>
<td>parināma</td>
<td>21-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>परमार्थ: व्यवहाररूप</td>
<td>paramārtha and vyavahāra</td>
<td>57-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>प्रस्थानतयः</td>
<td>prasthānatrayi</td>
<td>INTR.-2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>प्रमाणानि</td>
<td>pramānas</td>
<td>7-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>प्रकृति:</td>
<td>prakrti</td>
<td>9-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>प्रारबधम्</td>
<td>prārabdha</td>
<td>16-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>प्रतिष्ठति:</td>
<td>pratipatti</td>
<td>17-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>प्रतिबिम्बवादः</td>
<td>pratibimbavāda</td>
<td>44-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>प्रमेया:</td>
<td>prameyas</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>प्राज्:</td>
<td>prājña</td>
<td>47-63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>प्राणा:</td>
<td>prāṇas</td>
<td>57-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>पाण्डित्यम्</td>
<td>pānditya</td>
<td>67-105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>बाधसामानाधिकरणम्</td>
<td>bādhasāmānādhiحارanya</td>
<td>48-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>बुद्धि:</td>
<td>buddhi</td>
<td>64-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>बाल्यम्</td>
<td>bālya</td>
<td>67-105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>मननम्</td>
<td>manana</td>
<td>INTR.-3, 17-18, 66-103.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>माया</td>
<td>māyā</td>
<td>9-9, 11-11, 21-26, 29-36, 29-37.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>मायासत्कार्यवादः</td>
<td>māyāsatkāryavāda</td>
<td>10-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>मिथ्या</td>
<td>mithyā</td>
<td>37-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>मन:</td>
<td>manas</td>
<td>41-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>मुग्धस्थिति:</td>
<td>mugdha state</td>
<td>42-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>मिथ्यात्मा</td>
<td>mithyātman</td>
<td>43-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>मुख्यसामानाधिकरणम्</td>
<td>mukhyasāmānādhiحارanya</td>
<td>48-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>मायावादः</td>
<td>māyāvāda</td>
<td>58-91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ŚAṆKARA

mahat-Ātman 64-101.
mauna 67-105.
muni 67-105.
yajña 61-93.
yōga and dhyāna 64-97.
rahasyam 26-32.
laukika-vyavahāra 26-31.

vyavahāra 14-13, 16-17.
videhamukti 31-42.
vidhikānda 45-62.
vividishā 62-95.

Śaṅkara Vijayas INTR.-1.
Śruti-prasthāna INTR.-2.
Śārīraka-mīmāṁsā INTR.-3.
Śakti 9-10, 21-25.
Śruti-prāmāṇya 15-16.
Śravaṇa 17-18, 66-103.
Śruti 18-19.

smṛtiprasthāna INTR.-2
sādhana INTR.-2
siddhānta INTR.-2

Sūtra-Bhāṣya 4-5.
sambandha-vārtika 4-5.
saguṇa-Brahman 10-11.
sākṣhātkāra 17-18, 68-107.
samādhi 36-48, 66-104.
samanvaya-sūtra 55-80.
śama 62-94.
Sāṃkhya and Yōga 64-98.
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