

ADHYATMA GRANTHAVALI

ADHYATMA Prakashā



**THE UNIQUE
TEACHING OF SHANKARA**

(A Discussion on His Adhyaasa Bhaashya)

Original Writer in Kannada

Sri Swamy Satchidanandendra Saraswathi

Translator :

Sri D. B. Gangolli

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INTRODUCTION

His Holiness Shri Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji had written more than 15 books on Vedanta in English besides editing the book, "Vedanta or The Science of Reality", by the late K. A. Krishnaswamy Iyer. He has also written masterly introduction in English to his own two magnificent Sanskrit works, viz. Mandukya Rahasya Vivrutih and Vedanta Prakriyaa Pratyabhijna. His presentation of Vedanta in a precise, classical style has earned the admiration of several Indian scholars as well as critics from the West. Etre, a quarterly French journal on philosophy, published from Paris, has serialized a couple of translations of Shri Swamiji's works. However, Shri Swamiji confined himself mostly to writing in Kannada to help the common earnest seekers of the land in which he was born. He was also the editor of the monthly Kannada magazine, "Adhyatma Prakasha" for more than 50 years, and it was his ambition to see that the magazine had a section devoted to English articles on Vedanta which, however, was not fulfilled owing to unforeseen circumstances. In fact, for some months he himself wrote some articles specially for the magazine and they were published, but after his demise this English section had to be discontinued. We cherish this desire of publishing various books on pure Vedanta as presented and propounded by Shri Swamiji in English. also.

Shri D. B. Gangolli, a retired journalist of long standing and experience, has been devoting his time and energy for the study and propagation of Shri Swamiji's teachings as outlined in his works. Shri Gangolli was responsible for deciphering a handwritten English manuscript of Shri Swamiji and later editing it in the book form entitled, "The Science of Being".

Shri Gangolli got a deep insight into the methodology, which was implicit in the Upanishadic lore but was almost lost to the world had it not been for the timely appearance of Shri Swamiji on the spiritual horizon and his masterly exposition of this unique methodology adopted in and through the Upanishadic lore. Fascinated by this wonderful methodology as taught by Shri Swamiji through his 170 and odd books in Sanskrit, Kannada and English, Shri Gangolli associated himself with the Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, both at Holenarsipur and Bangalore and took active interest in translating some of Shri Swamiji's Kannada books into English and "The Unique Teaching of Shankara" (A Discussion on His Adhyaasa Bhaashya) is one of them. His maiden attempt at translating one of Shri Swamiji's important works is highly commendable. We are thankful to him for his kind gesture of permitting the publication of his English translation in our monthly magazine, besides sharing the cost of printing along with several of his friends and admirers, including a devotee of Shri Swamiji from Bombay.

We hope that the discerning readers will appreciate our attempt to present Shri Swamiji's enlightening thoughts and teachings to the English-knowing aspirants. We also hope to publish many more such books in English, mainly translations of Shri Swamiji's Kannada books which are acknowledged as his masterpieces by scholars and critics alike.

THANDAVESWAR ARKALGUD
Chairman,
Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya,
Holenarsipur.

Date : 15-8-1983

ERRATA

Page	Line	For	Read
1	10	from above	
		Upanishads	Upanishads,
2	10	„ enthusiam	enthusiasm
5	3	„ Meemaamsan	Meemaamsaa
5	16	„ misery”	misery ?
7	14	„ miserv.	misery.
8	25	„ naturc	nature
9	10	„ in	is
11	5	„ appearances	appearances
11	27	„ wiih	with
14	28	„ recognising. It	recognising It
17	27	„ thanthese	than these
17	29	„ theother	the other
19	7	„ as well	as well as
22	4	„ Adhhyaasa	Adhyaasa
23	3	„ experienee	experience
26	18	„ mposed in	mposed on
27	6	„ what	room what ~
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27	8	„ isAdhyaasa	is Adhyaasa
27	26	„ argument, is	argument is
29	5	„ Bhaayas	Bhaashyas
36	6	„ whatevcr	whatever
36	16	„ knowlcdge	knowledge
42	1	„ innate ingno	innate igno
42	2	„ <i>Atman) (the Ulti-</i>	<i>Atman, the Ulti-</i>
42	25	„ <i>Pramaatrutwaanuprapattou</i>	<i>Pramaatrutwaanupapattou</i>
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53	19	„ All though	Al though
54	16	„ vremode.	removed.

P R E F A C E

Adhyaasa Bhaashya, an introduction by Adi Shankara to his Brahma Sutra Bhaashya, has a pre-eminent position in the Achaarya's works. If the implicit teachings in the Adhyaasa Bhaashya are understood properly, it gives the clue to unravel the secrets and subtleties of the traditional methodology of Adhyaaropa Apavaada Nyaaya or the maxim of Superimposition and Rescission adopted in and through the Upanishadic lore as well as in Shankara's Bhaashyas. This little known methodology is a superb means to gain the intuitive experience of the Self, the Ultimate Reality.

Adhyaasa is an innate, natural and beginningless ignorance of the nature of delusion or misconception and in order to help remove this intrinsic misconception alone all the Upanishads undertake to propound their teachings. This salient fact has been emphasized time and again by Adi Shankara in his Bhaashyas. In spite of this, it is a great wonder that this innate ignorance, denoted by the word 'Avidya', has cast its spell on the present-day Vedaantins who are interpreting the word Avidya to mean the seed form of the world, with the result a situation has arisen which is virtually shaking up the very foundation of Vedaantic teaching and is jeopardizing it.

Protagonists of other schools of philosophy are taking these misrepresentations by these pseudo-Shankarites, who have written many sub-commentaries on Shankara's original Bhaashyas, to be the genuine teachings of the great teacher and are con

-demning them. Some of these present-day Vedaantins are calling Prakriti or Maya as Avidya only and this misrepresentation has led to the misconception that Vedaanta is a philosophical system which teaches us to believe in the scriptural statements and not gain the intuitive experience of the Self here and now. And today Vedaanta has been mixed up with several tenets of Patanjali's Yoga, on the one hand, and the dielectics of the logicians, on the other, and pristine pure Vedaanta as taught originally by Adi Shankara (and even today available fortunately to all true seekers in his extant Bhaashyas) is contaminated and camouflaged. To undo this great damage and injustice done to Shankara's genuine Vedaanta and to help the true aspirants to overcome these formidable obstacles a meticulous study of the fool-proof methodology that is implicit in the original Bhaashyas of the great world teacher, Adi Shankara, is the only solution.

This booklet is being serialized in the monthly magazine, Adhyatma Prakasha, and now it is brought out for the benefit of the earnest students of Vedaanta. I am grateful to the Trustees of the Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, Holenarsipur, Hassan District, for allowing me to associate myself with the Karyalaya's endeavours in propagating Sri Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji's valuable works in Kannada. To the best of my knowledge I have translated our Swamiji's original Kannada book, Adhyaasa Bhaashyaartha Vimarshe, covering the first 36 pages of the original book.

Bangalore

5-10-1983.

D. B. GANGOLLI

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The Unique Teaching of Shankara

(A Discussion on His Adhyaasa Bhaashya)

1. The Need for the Study of Sri Shankara's Original Bhaashyas, Particularly his Adhyaasa Bhaashya

This book is written with the main purpose of providing genuine aspirants the bliss accruing from the discrimination about the teachings of Vedaanta after resolving the knotty problems that are apparent in the commentaries of Sri Shankara on the Prasthaana Trayi, i.e. the ten principal Upanishads the Bhagvadgita and the Vedaanta or Brahma Sutras. The prime purpose and full benefit of this book will be gained by those who have developed a reverence towards Sri Shankaracharya and who have an unflinching and unshakeable faith that by his grace the secrets of the Vedaantic teachings will be apprehended and as a consequence a path to the real goal of life will undoubtedly be gained. Sri Shankaracharya has written his commentaries exclusively for the benefit of such genuine aspirants. In his commentaries he has adopted a language which is very simple and a method which is in consonance with reason and intuitive experience such that there is no difficulty whatsoever encountered in discerning the teachings of the texts. It being so, there is no uncertainty at all about the fact that if the aspirants for emancipation, with a knowledge of Sanskrit and

even a general acquaintance with the scriptures, study the commentaries in the presence of a genuine preceptor, they will be able to understand the purport of the texts without any hindrance.

But in these times many people, who have no knowledge of Sanskrit and have not pursued any path of disciplines helpful in discriminating the Vedaantic teachings, are confused and confounded because though they have read these commentaries with all enthusiasm either in English or in one of the vernacular languages they have misinterpreted the textual contents and have failed to understand properly their true import. Some others are studying these commentaries under the guidance of scholars who have themselves studied several sub-commentaries on Sri Shankara's original commentaries for obtaining success in examinations in Vedaanta courses and for these students there is an obstacle in their path of understanding the true meaning of the original commentary, and that is, the confusion caused by mixing up the mutually contradictory opinions of the various sub-commentaries and those of the original commentaries.

Thus on account of some such reasons many people have not been able to understand the teachings of Sri Shankara's commentaries in their true import and perspective. Among these are several honest and dedicated aspirants, who are further confused by some logical-minded people who put forth the arguments and objections raised by commentators

belonging to other schools (Dvaita and Vishisthaadvaita). Some others, who profess to be Vedaantins with "experience of Truth", terrify true aspirants by advising them that they should not fall into the snare of dialectics and that Vedaanta learnt from people who have no experience of Truth will give rise to evil effects. Thus they are also coming in the way of true aspirants. Hence there is a crying need for studying the original commentaries of Sri Shankara as also for determining the true import of his teachings in keeping with the traditional method based on a comprehensive view of life in its entirety as well as on universal intuitive experience and acceptance.

Sri Shankara has at several places in his commentaries or Bhaashyas on the ten principal Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita expounded the Vedaantic teachings about the Ultimate Reality and the practice and disciplines needed to intuit that Reality. He has explained the method of determining the true meaning of these Vedaanta texts based on ratiocination in his Brahma Sutra Bhaashyas. Though the name 'Brahma Sutra' is in vogue now, Sri Shankara has not used it in his works, but the two names, 'Shaareera Meemaamsa' and 'Vedaanta Meemaamsa Shaastra' are to be found in his Bhaashyas. The reason for using these names are found in the introductory text, 'Adhyaasa Bhaashya', to that work; In this present booklet this very Adhyaasa Bhaashya alone is being fully explained in the form of questions

and answers. In the opinion of Sri Shankara all the Upanishads undertake to propound the Truth solely based on the axiom, " Adhyaaropa Apavaada Nyaaya". And to understand the secrets of this axiom the Adhyaasa Bhaashya of Sri Shankara is the only beacon light.

II. The Purport of the Upanishads

Question : What do the Upanishads undertake to teach ?

Answer : To this Sri Shankara has given the following reply in his Adhyaasa Bhaashya : "Thus this Adhyaasa (misconception or delusion) which is without beginning and end, natural and of the form of a misconception creates a sense of agency and enjoyership—this truth is perceptible to all people. In order to help get rid of this delusion of Adhyaasa, which is the cause for all mundane miseries, by means of attaining the knowledge of the non-dual Self or Atman all the Vedaantas (Upanishads) begin (to teach)".

Question : What is meant by Vedaanta ?

Answer : The Upanishads are called by another name of "Vedaanta". Because they are found at the end of the Vedas as also they teach the final Truth of the Vedas, these Upanishads are called "Vedaantas". The system of teaching the Truth based on these Upanishads is called "Vedaanta Darshana". In order to teach the tenets of this school Baadaraayanaa,

chaarya has composed aphorisms like "Athaato Brahma Jijnaasaa" etc. and this text is known as "Vedaanta Meemaamsan Shaastra", meaning the text which discusses and determines the meaning of the sentences of the Vedaantaas. Briefly this is called "Vedaanta". The prime purpose of Vedaanta is indicated by Sri Shankara in his sentence which was quoted above.

Question : What is the prime purpose served by Vedaanta ?

Answer : The prime purpose is the attainment of the knowledge of the non-dual Atman (Self) which eternally destroys Adhyaasa or the delusion, the root cause for the mundane miseries of all people. What is the true nature of this misery ? What is this misery ? What is the root cause for this misery ? What is the essential nature of this destruction (of this misery) ? By what can this destruction of misery be brought about ?- all these subtle truths can be known only from the Upanishads. Those who understand the teachings of the Upanishads will find their misery destroyed once for all. If a person suffering from a disease finds out the proper answers to questions like - what is his disease ? What is the cause for the disease ? How could this cause be destroyed? What are the means by which this destruction can be achieved ? - then he can attempt to get the proper treatment to get rid of the disease completely. In the absence of this knowledge the person may take medicines recommended by several people

and may not get rid of the disease. If he undergoes the treatment recommended by people without the proper knowledge there is a possibility of his disease being aggravated. Even if the medicine gives the patient a temporary relief there is no assurance that the disease will not recur. Similarly, there is a disease of the form of misery common to all humanity ; there is also a root cause for this disease and there is also a remedy which uproots this cause once for all. A person who has understood these matters can gain the benefit of acquiring his essential nature by destroying the misery with its root cause, just as the patient regains his health by getting rid of the (adventitious) disease. Hence the teachings of the Vedaantas or Upanishads which provide the proper answers to all such queries should be necessarily deliberated upon and understood.

Question : Which is this disease of the form of misery common to all people ?

Answer : Agentship and enjoyership are (together) this misery indeed. All people have this sense of agentship and enjoyership of the nature of - "by doing this I will obtain this which I will enjoy". **This alone is the basic misery.**

Question : The sense of agentship and enjoyership is there in people quite naturally, is it not ? To say that this is an illness is ridiculous ! Man is endowed with the faculty of knowing what can be achieved and by what means, that is to say, he has the knowledge that "to obtain this, this is the means ;

to avoid this, this is the way” and hence for him it would be proper if he gets rid of a thing which is the cause for an undesirable effect and if he procures something which is the cause for a desirable result. But if the sense of agentship and enjoyership itself is the misery, then life’s purpose will mean only to remain as insentient and inanimate as sand and stone. Is it not ?

Answer : We have not refuted the fact that people constantly endeavour to obtain what is desirable and to get rid of what is undesirable, because of their sense of agentship and enjoyership. But the doership continuing like the flow of river Ganges brings in its wake tiredness or fatigue and hence is itself a source of misery. Once having obtained what is desirable or having avoided what is undesirable, there is no certainty that we will not have any more things desirable or undesirable ; in fact, such things keep on coming to us and this indeed is in every one’s experience. Besides, among people what is desirable to one may be undesirable to another ; what is desirable to one now may in due course become undesirable to him only and this fact is known to every one. It being so, no one can say that this kind of slogging on incessantly for obtaining desirable things and avoiding undesirable things is in itself the prime purpose of life. Is it not ? No one has given a serious thought to find out the reason for this natural tendency towards obtaining what is desirable and avoiding what is undesirable ; as long as this

sense of agentship and enjoyership persists one cannot trust that any one can possibly rid himself of this proclivity towards acquisition of desirable things and avoidance of undesirable things.

Further, till now we have considered all these facts taking it for granted that these agentship and enjoyership belong to our essential nature. But these in truth do not belong to our essential being and the cause for believing that we are of the nature of agents and enjoyers is Adhyaasa (misconception) alone. This truth is taught in Vedaanta. If the matter is considered from the Vedaantic viewpoint the judgement will be that these (agentship and enjoyership) do not really belong to our essential nature of Being. If this is the truth, then it will be evident that the sense of agentship and enjoyership itself is the misery and if there is any means of getting rid of this misery it would be proper to pursue that objective.

Question : What is meant by Adhyaasa ? How is it the cause for the sense of agentship and enjoyership ?

Answer : Adhyaasa means to take (misconceive) one for the other mutually between Atman or the Self, who is our essence of Being and Anaatman or not-Self, which is not our essential nature (of Being). This Mithyaapratyaya or misconception is inborn in people. This is Anaadi or beginningless, that is, it cannot be ascertained that this misconception first manifested itself at such and such a time ;

it is Ananta or endless, that is, it cannot be imagined that this will end at such and such a time. This misconception without desiderating any cause manifests itself in all people in their state of indiscrimina- tion and unwariness as also quite naturally. As a result of this Adhyaasa alone all of us entertain a sense of agentship and enjoyership, which is percep- tible, that is, it is in our experience. Hence it should be discerned that this agentship and enjoyership is the misery and Adhyaasa (misconception) in the cause for that misery. For this reason alone the Upanishads are there to teach the means of getting rid of this Adhyaasa.

III. Adhyaasa or Misconception is in One's Experience.

Question : Here a doubt arises. What is that which is not our essential nature but yet we have taken (misconceived) it as "I"? Is there ever a possi- bility of misconceiving what is not myself as "I"? "I" itself is our essential nature, and what is not myself is being treated or dealt with by all of us as you, they, that and them etc. only. Is there a possi- bility of even a rank ignorant person taking (mis- conceiving) what can be known as "I" as "you"? How ridiculous it is to say that people have miscon- ceived in the manner - "this wall is myself", "this animal is myself", "you are myself", "he is myself", "this is myself" ! If this "Adhyaasa" itself which

is of the nature of misconception does not exist, to imagine that it is the cause for people's sense of agentship and enjoyership is a statement of something improbable. Is it not ?

Answer : This is not so improbable as you have known it to be. In Vedaanta this Adhyaasa which is said to be the root cause of all misery is not a fantasy; this is in the experience of all of us. To wit, look ; this our body, sense organs and mind - all these are objects to our perception, that means, they are things which are objects to our Consciousness. You have yourself stated that it is not proper to consider things like a wall, animal, you, he, this, that etc. which are externally visible, i.e. things that are objects of our Consciousness, as "I". Is it not ? All of them are objects to our Consciousness and hence it is proper indeed not to consider them as "I". In that case, will it be proper to consider that body, senses and mind which are similarly objects to our Consciousness, which is of the nature of Intuition or knowledge as "I" ? This has to be deliberated upon. Another point. These our body, senses and mind - they do not continue to be the same ; they grow, get emaciated, wither away and get fatigued. Thus that thing which does not persist as it is and keeps on changing its essential nature is dealt with or treated as a false appearance (Mithyaa Drishya), unreal appearance (Anrita Drishya) or illusory appearance in Vedaanta. If a nacre shines like silver, can that appearance be considered as true silver ? It

should not be. Similarly, it will be proper only if those things which do not exist as they appear to be and keep on changing are called illusory, false and unreal. On the other hand, Atman or the Self - i.e. our true essence of Being - illumines these false apperances by means of Its essential nature of Pure Consciousness - intuitive experience - and makes them known to us, but at the same time ever remains as It is. Therefore It is called Satva or the Reality. Thus though misconceiving mutually the real Atman and the unreal non-Atman or not-Self, one for the other, is determined to be wrong, there is no doubt whatsoever that we mix up these two in our form called "I" and are carrying on all our dealings or transactions. When we say - "I have become weak; I will regain my health with the help of medicine", do we not transact the body itself to be the "I" ? The body is not our essential Being, but yet we transact with it saying, "I have become weak"; my essential nature of Being is not this body, even so in the dealing, "I have become weak" - we invariably mix up our essential nature and this fact is in every one's experience. Is it not ? Similarly, all people necessarily mix up their essential nature of Self or Atman with each of their senses as well as mind quite naturally in carrying out their transactions. For example, by mixing up one's essential nature of Atman or the Self with the eyes the transaction of "I am seeing" is being carried out. Hence "Adhyaasa" (misconception) is a thing which is in every one's experience only and is not improbable as you have stated. As a result of

this Adhyaasa alone we entertain the sense or notion of agentship and enjoyership - that is, the notion of "I will do this, and enjoy this". This is also in every one's experience only.

IV. The "I" Notion Innately Associated with the Body, Senses and Mind is Misconception Alone.

Question: In this matter also there is a doubt: We call the body, the senses and the mind as "I" only for name's sake, knowing full well that they are separate from "me"; because they are either helpful or harmful means or instruments only we call them as "I" and not because of a belief that the body etc. alone are really the "I". In addition to calling these body etc. as "I", there is also the transaction - 'these are mine'. Is it not? Don't we also transact in the forms - 'my body has become weak', 'my eyesight has become dim', 'my hearing capacity has decreased'? Another point. The "I" who lives by using all these is different from all of them - this fact is certainly known to every one or all intelligent people. Who among us ever calls our essential nature of "I" as "you"? Has any one ever transacted in the form - 'I am this', 'I am he'? Is there such a probability at all? No. Therefore, our essential nature which we know as "I" - "I", is as it is; hence that thing certainly is not the result of Adhyaasa. I see with the eyes; if a shining thing is seen by the eyes I imagine that it may be silver; I walk with my legs

towards that thing and even as I think of picking it with my hands, if it is known to be nacre, immediately the curiosity that I had about that thing becomes less. Thus the senses and the body being my instruments, I am the 'agent' who uses them ; I am the enjoyer who uses the objective things either for getting rid of my pain or misery or gaining pleasure. In all these where does this Adhyaasa of the nature-of misconception come at all ?

Answer ; As long as we take our "I" itself to be our essential nature what you have said is true. But where have you seen this "I" form, which is separate from the body, the senses and the mind, existing independently ? Only if these (i.e. body, senses and mind) are there, the notion of "I" will be there. Where is our experience of the notion of "I" even without these (i.e. body, senses and mind) being there ? Therefore, 'I-body' 'I-the senses situated in the body', 'I-the mind functioning within the body'-all these are mixed up by people and for that reason alone they carry on the transactions of the forms of "I" and "mine". This fact will have to be admitted. As there is no distinct knowledge as the basis for this transaction, it is not a secondary dealing carried out just as a formality, but it is Adhyaasa alone of the form of misconception. This is evident here. This, Sri Shankara has himself written in his commentary on Sutra 1-1-4 of Vedaanta Meemaamsa. The meaning of that sentence is given briefly here : "One who knows the fact of the separate existence of an animal

which is the perceptual significance of the word 'lion' as also which is its predominant meaning; and one who knows about the existence of a man with the characteristics of the lion, like cruelty, courage etc., apart from this (existing animal), to that same person alone the perceptual significance of the word 'lion' as applied to a man will become secondary in significance, but to a person who does not know this difference between the two (i.e. the lion and the man) the perceptual significance of the word cannot become secondary. In the case of this latter type of a person (who does not know the difference) the perceptual significances of words, fit for particular things, are born in another thing owing to delusion only but they cannot be called as of secondary significance. This is analogous to the example—in dusk if it is not clearly known that a thing is a stump of tree, then in that thing the perceptual significance of the word 'man' is born but this is a delusion".

Now another consideration : With regard to your statement—'I use my body, senses etc, either for gaining pleasure or avoiding pain or misery'—how did you determine that pleasures and pains are attached or related to our essential nature ? It is true that when there is mind these pleasures and pains are born in the mind. But have you ever experienced these pleasures and pains in our essential nature of Atman or the Self after recognising. It to be devoid of the mind ? If not, does it not amount to that this decision or judgment to the effect that the pleasures and

pains are related to our essential nature of Atman or the Self is also this “Adhyaasa of the form of misconception” alone ?

V. Our Atman or Self is of the Essential Nature of Witness.

Question : To your question I have a counter-question. Who has ever seen any where Atman or the Self devoid of this form of “I” ? Those who say ‘I have seen’ point out that Atman or the Self is of the form of “I” only. Is it not ?

Answer : This question is proper indeed from the empirical point of view, because in our dealings we all have identification with this “I” form of Atman alone with the adjuncts of the body, senses etc. Let alone common people, some scholars (people with the knowledge of the scriptures) too are saying that Atman or the Self is “Aham Pratyaya Gamyā” i.e. one who is the object of the knowledge of “I” only. But in the Upanishad another form of Atman apart from this “I” form is propounded. “One God alone is hidden in all the objects ; He is all-pervading, the Atman or the Self who is the innermost in all the things” (Swe. 6-11). – thus the Upanishad is stating.

Question : Now it is all right ! In our empirical dealings we believe that in each one of us there is one Atman or the Self. We also believe

that that Atman is a doer and enjoyer. That being the case, for our respective acts we alone are responsible. We alone are the enjoyers of the fruits of those acts. All these facts are reconciled. Because it is not determined as to what the essential nature of this Atman is, you are saying that our empirical dealings are carried out as a result of this Adhyaasa of the nature of misconception, is it not ? Further, if the scholars are saying that Atman is the object of the "I" notion, that also can be said as proper only. For, after death also if there exists an Atman apart from the body, senses etc. to enjoy the fruits of one's acts, then only that Atman will perform acts to enjoy those fruits, is it not ? Leave alone the statement of the scripture, in the world especially, no one has even a trace of the Atman who is apart from the "I" form of Atman. Under the circumstances, to say that the knowledge of the "I" form is "Mithyaa Pratyaya" or a misconception and that the pleasures and the pains that occur to that form of ours which all of us call "I" "I" are also only 'Adhyaasa' or 'misconception' is contradictory to people's experience, is it not ?

Answer : What we have stated viz. that this Pure essential nature of Atman or the Self is mentioned in the Upanishads, is true. But there is no need for us to believe that there exists such an essential nature of Being because of the only reason that it is mentioned in the Upanishads. As Sri Shankara, the commentator (Bhaashyakaara), has again deliberated upon this essential nature of Being in the commentary

on the fourth aphorism of the Vedaanta Meemaamsaa Shaastra, we will scrutinise this there. Just now it is enough if we know this much : Desiring, willing, doubting, determining etc.—such qualities appear in Atman who is the object of the “I” notion. Among those qualities when one appears the others are not there, but there is a form of being of ours which knows both the manifestation as well as disappearance of these (qualities) and this fact is in the experience of all of us. When we are in deep sleep, the form of “I” is not seen by any one of us there ; neither has any one ever experienced these qualities of desiring, willing etc., nor is there any such possibility. This fact also is in the experience of all of us. No one among us believes that our essential nature of Being itself does not exist in deep sleep. Therefore, it is evident that the form which is the basis of and which appears as the object of the “I” notion is not our essential nature of Being. Sri Shankara has discussed about this deep sleep later on in his commentary in this text. We can see more details of this discussion in that context. Let it be ; anyway it is evident thus that this “I” form is not related to our real Atman or the Self. Even so, people are inevitably mixing up this form and its various conceptual forms of desiring, willing etc., with the Witnessing Principle, which is inner than these and is of the essential nature of Atman, and are misconstruing them one for the other. Only then they are carrying on their empirical dealings with the “I” notion and this fact is

evidently in consonance with every one's experience, is it not ?

VI. The Varieties of Adhyaasa

Question : In that case, this Adhyaasa which you are referring to, from where and how far is it extending ?

Answer : The purport of the discussion about Adhyaasa made by us so far is written in the present text (Adhyaasa Bhaashya) by Sri Shankara in the following concise manner :

“Adhyaasoa Naama Atasmin Tadbuddhirityavoachaama |
Tad Yathaa - Putrabhaaryaadishu Vikaleshu Sakaleshu Vaa
Ahameva Vikalaha Sakalaa Vaa, Iti Baahyadharmaan Aatmani
Adhyasyati | Tathaa Dehadharmaan Sthooloaham, Krishoaham,
Gauroaham, Tishthaami, Gatchaami, Langayaami Cha Iti |
Tathaa Indriyadharmaan Mookaha, Kaanaha, Kleebaha, Badhi-
raha, Andhoaham Iti | Tathaa Antahkaranadharmaan Kaamasa-
nkalpavichikitsaadhyavasaayaadeen | Evam Ahampratyayinam
Asheshaswapracharaasaakshini Pratyagaatmanyadhyasya Tam
Cha Pratyagaatmaanam Sarvasaakshinam Tadviparyayena
Antahkaranaadishu Adhyasyati ||

Here the manner of Adhyaasa has been described step by step from the outside to our interior being till we reach our real essential nature of Atman. We should pay special attention to the first statement viz. “Adhyaasa means the notion of a thing in another thing which it is not”. Because, here what we are

deliberating upon is a particular view of knowledge. This viewpoint or outlook is born in all of us quite naturally. To wit, because there is a strong identification with (or attachment towards) one's wife, children etc. in the manner "they are mine", one feels that their well-being and security is one's own, the prosperity gained by them is one's own as well the misery suffered by them is one's own - thus people by their innate feeling alone get exhilarated or depressed in their minds. If it is properly examined, there is no possibility of the changes that occur in things or persons appearing outside oneself occurring in oneself. No one among the common people feels the auspicious and inauspicious effects of others' wives or children as their own; even in the case of one's wife and children if for some reason hatred is developed, or if one embraces asceticism (Sannyasa Ashrama) because of one's sense of renunciation, then this kind of attachment towards them (i.e. wife and children) does not arise. This fact is known to all. Even so, when there are some ups and downs affecting one's wife and children, house or property, wealth etc., people feel as if there are some coming and going changes in themselves. This is one Adhyaasa or misconception. As this can be easily understood by all, this has been first stated here. Then as regards one's body's qualities-if the body becomes bulky, one believes that one self has become bulky; if it becomes emaciated, one believes that one self has become emaciated; if its complexion is white, one believes that one self is having white complexion

and if it stops, walks or jumps, one believes that one self has stopped, walked or jumped. Even if any one says : "You are not the body, even if it is yours nothing has really happened to you", people do not believe it ; even if they externally profess without contradicting reason, within themselves they have a steadfast belief that all the coming and going changes of the body occur to them only. Similarly, they superimpose on themselves the qualities of the senses and feel that " I am dumb, blind, eunuch, deaf " etc. Who does not know this ? If we go deeper and deliberate, people believe that the qualities of the inner instrument (mind), viz. desiring, willing, doubting and determining etc., are all their own.

In the same way, the inner instrument called " Ahamkaara " or the ego, which is the basis for the " I " notion, and all the changes that are taking place in this Ahamkaara, though one can discern that oneself is beyond and apart from these and is always witnessing them, are superimposed on one's Witnessing Principle to be misconceived as the essential nature of one's own Atman or the Self.

What is stated so far is the one side of the coin of Adhyaasa. Similarly, the other side of this coin is that although one is of the essential nature of the Witness and is quite apart, one misconceives that one is of the innate nature of " I " as also of the innate nature of the senses etc. Not only has one conceived that " the Antahkarana itself is myself ; I am myself

the Antahkarana ", but also the Self, which is identified with and has become one with the Antahkarana through Adhyaasa, is being superimposed on the senses, and after mixing up the latter, the Self is being superimposed on the body. In this total Adhyaasa, at a particular time that which arises in the mind is itself the "I" - feeling in this manner alone has become man's intrinsic habit. Thus is the greatness of this misconception that is natural to man !

VII. Doubts About Adhyaasa and Their Solutions.

Question : Even after you have explained in such detail the fact that the feeling of "I" and "mine" is Adhyaasa, misconception, the notion of a thing in another which it is not - is not being apprehended by the mind ! Atman and un-Atman - both these are of natures which are completely opposite. One is a subject, conscious or sentient which knows every thing ; another an object which cannot be illumined (or objectified) by itself ; one is an object to the notion of "I" ; the other besides being an object to knowledges of the form of "this", "that", it can be taken as a thing in front and fit to be addressed as "you" also. In addition to this, in your opinion Atman is real ; un-Atman is unreal, Anrita, false. Is it proper to say that people misconceive one as the other - things which are totally of opposite qualities in this manner ? That they superimpose one thing on another mutually appears to be contrary to reason only !

Answer : True. It appears indeed to the mind of common people that 'because it is contrary to Yukti or reason it should be stated that there is no Adhhyasa'. This alone is written by the Bhaashyakaara (Sri Shankara) in his first sentence viz. "*Adyaasoa Mithyaa Iti Bhaavitum Yuktam*" - meaning, "It should appear that the fact that they superimpose (one on another) is not true ."

But the truth is that there is Adhyasa and that is in consonance with (every one's) experience. This we have shown already . It is never proper to try to show as false by means of Yukti or reasoning what is in consonance with every one's experience. "Yukti" really means "to conjoin one experience with another". To try to appropriate somehow what is not in experience or what is opposed to experience is irrational or unreasonable, perverse dialectics. In the statement, "Between the two children of a barren woman the elder is a dullhead, the younger is intelligent", when the question as to "how does this aspect of elder and younger arise" is asked by some one, if an answer in the form of a logical argument to the effect - "Between the two one has to be elder and the other younger, is it not?" is given, then it would amount to an effort to appropriate an argument to something which is not to be found in experience ; because, here in this context, although it is not seen in experience that a barren woman begets children, it has been assumed that she has and then the argument is put forth, "You are

not here - this I will establish by reason (argument)" - In this statement there is an attempt to put forward a reason or an argument contrary to experience, for the experience that 'only because that man is in front I am able to talk to him' is shunned and an argument is put forth here. In the same manner, because the Adhyaasa or mutual superimposition of Atman and un-Atman is in every one's experience, it is not proper also to attempt to show that it is opposed to reason.

Question : While giving an example for Adhyaasa the Bhaashyakaara (Sri Shankara) has given these two following examples which are in the experience of people : '*Shuktikaa Hi Rajatavada-vabhaasate*'—"The nacre alone is appearing as silver" ; "*Ekaschandraha Sadviteeyavat*"—"One moon alone appears to be alongside of the second moon". Both these must be admitted to be examples of our misconception which disappears after once being a delusion. Because, the delusion of knowing a distinct shining nacre to be silver occurs once in time ; that (delusion) does neither exist before seeing the nacre nor after the true knowledge that it is not silver dawns. Similarly, to some one person after he suffers from a defect in his sight the delusion of two moons appearing occurs. Before that it does not exist, nor does the second moon appear after the cataract is removed. In the same way, as the delusion of the nature of the mutual Adhyaasa (superimposition) between Atman and un-Atman is an effect, it can be taken as having occurred once. Is it not ?

Answer : This doubt is not proper. Because, there is no established rule whatever that the illustrated should be like the illustration alone in all respects. In the statement : "His son is like his image only" -to raise a doubt in the manner-"the image of the face falls on the mirror and if the son is the father's image, here which is the mirror?" is not proper. Because, this illustration is mentioned keeping in mind the implication alone that he (son) is like the father, just as the image appears as the object in form only. Similarly, in the present context also people think the body, senses etc., which are not Atman or the Self, to be Atman. The fact that people think Atman, who does not have the qualities like withering away etc., unlike the body, senses etc.,-to be having such qualities like withering away etc.. is alone relevant here. The point that to know that which it is not is common to both these. For this much semblance, there is no defect in calling this as "Adhyaasa". The misconceptions of the type of the nacre and silver are with beginning, while the Adhyaasa mutually between Atman and un-Atman is without beginning-thus in this respect, though there is difference, there is similarity between the two in respect of the point that they are misconceptions.

Question : Another doubt : " Adhyaasa " means to superimpose on a thing that which it is not, to misconceive it to be something else. Misconceiving is also a delusion, is it not ? In that case, when did this delusion arise ? And what is the cause for it ?

Without any cause delusion of the nacre-silver (the silver that appears in the nacre) does not arise ; that delusion arises because that nacre shines as silver alone. But in the present context Atman is not like un-Atman ; He is of a nature opposed to that (un-Atman) alone. Even so, how is this delusion brought about ? In the same way, the delusion of "two moons" has been caused by the defect of the cataract of the eyes. But in the present instance, for the delusion of misconceiving Atman to be un-Atman or un-Atman to be Atman to occur who has got any defect of the type of the cataract of the eyes ? If it is not there, how could this delusion have occurred ? – such a doubt arises.

Answer : "Adhyaasa" is an act, a dealing; therefore, it should occur at a particular time—this conception alone has given room for this doubt. It is not proper at all to think that all that is stated with the aid of predicates or verbs must have originated or begun in time. In the statement—"there the hill stands", because the word 'stands' denotes the action of standing, the statement does not purport to mean that the hill which was hitherto sitting or roaming about is now standing. If it is stated that "Bharata, who is seen in the picture, is receiving the wooden sandals from Rama", the meaning to the effect that the action or dealing of Bharata receiving (the wooden sandals) is taking place need not be taken.

In the same manner, the purport of writing in the Bhaashya that Adhyaasa is 'of the form of

misconception' is to be understood. Pratyaya means knowledge ; it is true that it appears through a certain thought occurring at the time of knowing the external objects. Even so, there is no restriction whatsoever for the misconception – Mithyaa Pratyaya -about Atman to be beginningless. By nature alone such a misconception exists in the minds of people and not that it is a certain thought that has originated at any time whatsoever. For this reason alone it is called Mithyaa Pratyaya 'Roopa' – meaning, 'like the misconception'.

Similarly, just because it is stated that 'people have misconceived Atman and un-Atman one for other', to take it that the action of misconceiving has begun at a certain point of time is not relevant at all. Besides, "Atman is real, un-Atman is unreal" – this is the truth taught, is it not ? If un-Atman is superimposed in or misconceived in Atman-i.e. just as the people are taking the nacre as silver if they have thought Atman to be un-Atman through delusion – then just as, although the nacre-silver (the silver of the nacre) is a false appearance, there is real silver existing separately, the un-Atman which is misconceived in Atman should also exist independently somewhere else, is it not ? – in this way also one can doubt ! That is also not proper, because here the illustration of the nacre-silver has been given only to state that Atman has been wrongly understood as un-Atman and not to discuss the remaining aspects (of the illustration). For this reason only, the rea-

soning of the types of - (1) just as there is similarity between the nacre shining like silver, there is no such similarity between Atman and un-Atman ; just as there is the defect of the cataract in the eye for the second moon to be seen, here there is no defect in any one ! - cannot be sustained. There is no room what soever for these kinds of chicanery (pettifogging-after it is shown that there is Adhyaasa or misconception in every one's experience.

Question : In these illustrations of the nacre-silver, the second moon, the thing in which there is superimposition as well as the thing which is superimposed - both these are objects.i.e. they are objects appearing to our knowledge. Therefore there is a possibility of knowing one as the other through delusion. But in the illustrated, Atman is the subject, one who knows ; un-Atman is the object. That being the case, how is it possible to misconceive one for the other ?

Answer : This also is an objection raised predominantly based on dialectic. After it is established that it is Adhyaasa on the strength of universal experience, to argue in the manner - 'how dit it come about ? It should not have !' on the strength of dialectic, it can never be proper. Even then, if a counter-argument, is shown against this argument, then there will arise faith to the effect that it is not improbable after all for Adhyaasa to have been there; it also might have been there. Thereafter if it is substantiated by universal experience there will be all the

more strength of veracity attached to the teaching. For this reason, Sri Shankara has stated a solution for this also : “ *Na Taavadayam Ekaantenaavishayaha | Asmatpratyayavishayatwaat* ”. In this sentence of Sri Shankara there are two parts; this is the first part. There is no hard rule at all that this Atman is never an object, for He is an object to ‘Asmatpratyaya’ – the notion of “I”. The wise common people as well as Meemaamsakas (followers of Jaimini’s school of Purva Meemaamsa giving predominance to the Karma Kaanda of the Vedas) and such other exponents of the scriptural texts have accepted the fact that the essential nature of Atman or the Self appears as an object to the “I” notion or knowledge. It is possible to superimpose on that Atman the qualities of the body, the senses etc. Because, here Atman is also an object, and old age and death etc. are also objects; therefore, one object can be superimposed on another object, is it not ? This is the meaning of this convincing statement.

(Here the word ‘Adhyaasa’ is a technical term. This is ‘seen to be variously called “Adhyaaroopa”, “Bhraanti”, “Vikalpa” in the Bhaashyas. For all usages like misconceiving, superimposing, to get deluded in such and such a manner, distorting – the only meaning is understanding wrongly, conceiving a thing which is not there. Thus that which is conceived is called ‘Adhyastha’, ‘Adhyaaroapita’, ‘Vikalpita’ (or ‘Vikalpa’) ; that in which (any other

thing) is conceived is called by the word 'Aaspada' in the Bhaashya. The word 'Adhisthaana' is used in the Vyaakhyaanas or sub-commentaries on Sri Shankara's Bhaashyas by post-Shankara Vedaantins, but in the Bhaayas (of Sri Shankara) this word 'Adhisthaana' is seen to have been used in the senses of 'Aadhaara' or support, 'Shareera' or the body. If the Jijnaasus or aspirants keep this fact in mind, then there will be no confusion).

What is stated above is not the final solution of the teaching of the truth, because the teaching of Vedaanta is only that Atman is not an object to any conception or notion. In this regard Sri Shankara's final statement is as follows :

"Aparoakshatwaatcha Pratyagaatmaprasiddhehe | Na Chaayamasti Niyamaha Purovaasthita Eva Vishaye Vishayaantaramadhyasitavyamiti | Apratyakshepi Hi Aakaashe Baalaaha Talamalinatwaadi Adhyasyanti | Evam Aviruddhaha Pratyagaatmanyapi Anaatmaadhyasaha |

"Pratyagaatman or the innermost Atman is familiar because He is most intimate alone" - the purport of this statement must be clearly understood after one-minded ratiocination. Because, our absolutely essential nature which is called 'Brahman' in the scriptures is described in the Brihadaaranyaka Upanishad 3-4-1 as "Brahman, who is directly and intimately intuited, who is Atman innermost among all things". It is the Transcendental Reality of our Being without any interval or recess in between, what

is not objective or external; that is innermost among all the selves that we have believed to be our form. Therefore, It is self-established. For that reason alone, sufficiently enough, it is possible to misconceive un-Atman in this Atman as well as to superimpose Atman or un-Atman. There is no rigid rule at all that just as people misconceive a snake in a rope or a man in a stump of a tree, they misconceive in an object in front alone another thing. For, the sky is not seen by anybody as an object which is in front; even so, all people think that 'the sky is polluted at the bottom' and believe that there is a lower region for the sky and there is pollution of the sky. The fact that people conceive in one familiar thing another familiar thing alone is seen in life. In the same manner, it is probable to misconceive in our innermost Atman - although He is never an object - the form of "I" as well as the qualities of the body, the senses etc. As Atman who is "Asmatpratyaya Vishaya" (i.e. who is known by the "I" notion) is accepted in other schools of philosophy as one in whom people superimpose the qualities of the body, the senses etc. this solution is first (tentatively) stated. Just as, although old age and death etc., which are the qualities of the body, are objects, the followers of other schools of philosophy have accepted them to have been misconceived in Atman who is the subject or knower and who is the object of the "I" notion (Ahampratyayagamyā), similarly agentship, enjoyership, pleasure and pain etc. can be misconceived in the self-established Atman though He is not

an object. To point out this implication, this first or preliminary solution has been stated. This should be clearly understood. Anyway, it is established now that the mutual misconception between Atman and un-Atman is not contrary to reason. The fact that this is seen in every one's experience also should not be forgotten here.

VIII. The Cause for Avidya

Question : Even after you have stated that Adhyaasa is established as being beginningless I am not able to understand the cause for misconceiving my Atman, who is pure and of the essential nature of Consciousness, as of the form of un-Atman. To say that one who is of the essential nature of absolutely innate or innermost Consciousness has without any cause misconceived oneself and is carrying on transactions as "I" and "mine" looks to be impossible only, is it not ?

Answer ; To this, at the outset, an answer is written in the Bhaashya : " Itaretaraavivekena Atyantaviviktayoardharmadharminoah Mithyaajnaananimittaha Satyaanrute Mithuneekrutya 'Ahamidam Mamedam' Iti Naisargikoayam Loaka Vyavahaaraha."

Atman, His qualities; un-Atman, its qualities — these are totally different. Atman is " real " and of the essential nature of Consciousness, un-Atman comprising the Antahkarana i.e. mind etc.

which are unreal, 'Anrita', like the unreal and false appearances projected by dream and magic, and their qualities – because people have not discriminated between these two, they mix up both of them and carry on transactions as "I" and "mine" and to do so is natural to them ; this is not a misconception that has occurred once in time. To argue that this Adhyaasa is conceived at a particular point of time is utterly ridiculous. Because, time also is un-Atman only, unreal only ; therefore, that is also superimposed. This being so, "then", "now", "in future" – if such qualities are superimposed on Adhyaasa, then that itself will be another Adhyaasa only. What else can it be ?

For this natural (Naisargika) transaction the cause means misconception alone, Adhyaasa only ; why is this misconception deluding us ? - Because, we have not known the Truth ; because, we have not known the true nature of Atman and un-Atman which are totally and eternally different. Just as it is natural to carry on the transaction by misconceiving the rope as snake because the truth of the rope is not apprehended, similarly this natural empirical transaction of beginningless delusion has taken place.

It does not seem to be probable that Atman who is of the essential nature of eternally Pure Consciousness does not know Himself ! – this is not a proper doubt. People, who do not have the capacity of determining the nature of a thing after discrimination, suffer because of misapprehension and this

belongs to their nature only. There is no reason for any wonder whatsoever in this. For those who do not have a discriminative knowledge of the scriptural texts there is no belief at all to the effect that there is a transmigratory (one who begets other births) Atman who is separate from the body, the senses etc.; only after studying the scriptural texts dedicatedly the knowledge about merits and demerits, other worlds and other future births will be apprehended by the mind. Mathematics, astrology, physics, electricity, psychology, the ethical science, medicine, music, art, sculpture – such empirical sciences – even their knowledge is gained only after learning them. Therefore, *it should be determined that because there is no discrimination between Atman and un-Atman, there is misconception with regard to Atman, and the consequent empirical transaction has arisen.*

**IX. Is the Characteristic of Adhyaasa
Acceptable to all the Schools ?**

Question : Have the protagonists of schools other than Vedaantins accepted the teaching that the misconception alone about Atman is Adhyaasa ?

Answer : Hitherto we have deliberated upon this topic based on universal experience and reason in consonance with the universal experience. Therefore, there is no necessity whatsoever to ascertain whether the mutual Adhyaasa or misconception

between Atman and un - Atman is acceptable to the protagonists of other schools. The protagonists of other schools have expressed different opinions about the question - how does Adhyaasa or misconception arise ? - in the manner : 1. Some say that Adhyaasa arises because of conceiving the qualities of one thing in another thing; 2. Some say that this delusion takes place because of not distinguishing between two things; 3. Some others say that when in the same object qualities which are alien to it - qualities which are not in it - are conceived to be there, then this Adhyaasa takes place. Such different opinions exist. Whatever it may be, the fact that one thing appearing as having the qualities of another, this alone is Adhyaasa and this fact is implicit indeed in the opinions of the followers of all schools. We have already mentioned that Sri Shankara has, in order to point out that in the world the experience of people also is akin to this only, given the two illustrations of: "The nacre itself appears like silver", "One moon alone appears as if it is alongside a second moon".

**X. The Essential Natures of Vidya (Knowledge)
and Avidya (Nescience or Ignorance)**

Question: What is the relationship between what we have discussed hitherto about Adhyaasa and what is taught in the Upanishads as Atmaikatva Vidya or the knowledge of the non-duality of Atman ?

Answer : What we have described so far as Atman and un-Atman – the Adhyaasa, which is of the form of imagining one as the other because of not distinguishing between the essential natures and qualities of these two (Atman and un-Atman), alone is called “Avidya” by the knowledgeable. Distinguishing these two in the manner – the essential nature of Atman is real and though the essential nature of un-Atman is false it appears as if it is real, to determine these as they are – this alone is called “Vidya” by them. Just because we have not determined the essential natures of these and have imagined one to be another, there is no change whatsoever in either Atman or un-Atman. For that reason alone – Sri Shankara has written: *“Yatra Yadadhyaasaha Tatkrutena Doashena Gunena Vaa Anumaatrenaapi Sa Na Sambadhyate”* – *“That which is superimposed on or misconceived in what – the latter is not affected in the least by the resultant defects or qualities.”* This is a very important judgment. By the water of the mirage imagined to appear in the desert the sand of the desert is not turned into mire; by the silver imagined in the nacre that nacre does not get any more value – is it not ? If this fact, which is very clear, is kept in mind, then there will be conviction to the effect that in Atman, who is of the essential nature of being non-dual and absolutely Real, the unreal qualities of agentship, enjoyership, pleasure and pain etc. of un-Atman are misconceived, and just because of that reason, in Atman there arises no defect whatsoever ; even when such Adhyaasa has

occurred Atman remains as eternally of the essential nature of Pure Consciousness. Because in Ahankaara (ego), senses and body etc. Aatmatva or innate identification as oneself - that is, people have identified Ahankaara, senses and body etc. as "I" - has been misconceived, there is no better quality whatever adduced to them. Thus even when the Pure Consciousness of Atman is superimposed on them (i.e. ego, senses and body) these latter are false, insentient appearances only - this fact is also determined. Besides, it is also determined that Atman who appears in different forms endowed with different bodies, senses etc. has really not become many Atmans because of this Adhyaasa ; He remains even now as one and only Atman. This alone is Atmaikatva Vidya or the knowledge of the non-dual Atman (the Absolute or Ultimate Reality).

XI. Adhyaasa is Established by Intuition

Question : By what means should this Adhyaasa be cognised ? If that is established by some means, then only it can be determined that all else is misconceived in Atman as well as that Aatmatva or the notion of identification as one's own essential nature is superimposed on or misconceived in the un-Atman, is it not ?

Answer : By the deliberation made so far it is already established that all else is misconceived in

or superimposed on Atman. Therefore, it becomes self-evident that Pramaanas or all means (instruments) of knowledge which are un-Atman are misconceived only as a result of Avidya or ignorance about one's essential nature as Atman. That being the case, it is not proper to proceed to determine the nature of Adhyaasa or misconception on the strength of Pramaanas or the means which are the products or effects of Adhyaasa.

Question : What is this ? There is no evidence or means to know Atman, so also no evidence or means to know un-Atman, so also no evidence or means to know the mutual Adhyaasa or superimposition between Atman and un-Atman – it amounts to saying all this ! In that case how at all was it determined that there is mutual Adhyaasa or superimposition between Atman and un-Atman ?

Answer ; Without forgetting what is deliberated upon so far, if it is carefully and cautiously contemplated in the mind this doubt will vanish. *1. Atman is self-established, is innately subjective—this fact must be first thoroughly understood. Atman does not desiderate any Pramaana or the right means to know ; no means, whatever, of knowledge can establish the truth of Atman, because the Pure Consciousness of Atman alone is illumining all means of knowledge or Pramaanas. 2. The Pramaanas themselves are established by intuition which is of the nature of the Pure Consciousness of Atman.*

Similarly, 3. *Adhyaasa also - meaning the lack of discrimination between Atman and un-Atman-i.e. the misconception of the nature of mutual superimposition (between Atman and un-Atman) is also established by Intuition.* 4. *Atman is non-dual alone and the knowledge of the non-duality of Atman, to wit, the knowledge that in Him there is really no relation whatsoever of the un-Atman, also is to be cognised by Intuition, the essential nature of Atman, only.*

Question : Now another doubt arises. All scientific treatises delineate their teaching accepting certain means of knowledge alone. All of us are declaring that what is determined or established by right means alone is proper knowledge and what is not established thus or that knowledge which is contrary to this is wrong knowledge. There is nobody who tries to determine whether the Pramaanas or the right means of knowledge are themselves established by right means or not. Just as to see a lamp there is no need of another lamp, in the same way to determine whether the Pramaanas or right means are proper or wrong there is no need at all for another support. If there is no Pramaana or right means at all, how can the deliberation be carried on? It is certain that people will ask the question whether the tenets of Vedaanta Shaastra are adduced by right means (Pramaanas) or not if it proceeds to teach without taking into account the right means of knowledge or Pramaanas. Therefore, how at all can any truth be established without the right means whatever ?

Answer : Don't be afraid. We have not refuted at all the fact of benefits accruing from the right means of knowledge. For the common transactions of people as well as for the scientific texts (Shaastras) which determine the truth of external things objectified by our perceptive knowledge per force need the right means like perception etc. In fact, people are using such means for that function. It is also true that for Aastikas or believers that the Veda is the right means, the Meemaamsa Shaastra or the ritualistic portion of the Vedas uses the right means of Shabda or the statements of the experienced Rishis or sages in order to ascertain the truth of extra-sensory topics like religious duties (Dharma), irreligious acts (Adharma), heaven (Svarga) etc. But to determine the essential innate nature of Atman or the Self there is no need of any right means ; nor is it possible at all to determine the truth of Atman by objectifying Him. This has been already established. Besides, the right means, even while they depict the essential nature of things which are their objects, do so by creating the perceptive experience of the respective object only. For example, after we have known that 'this is an earthen pot' through the perceptual means, no one ever goes in search of another means to ascertain whether this perceptual experience that 'this is an earthen pot' is itself proper or not. Therefore, *it is evident that the Pramiti or the perceptual (intuitive) experience (Anubhava) of an objective substance is established without desiderating any right means.* In the same manner, to ascertain whether 'this is the

right means or not' intuitive experience alone is the court of judgment. Other than this intuitive experience what else can ever let us know whether such and such is the right means or not ? Nothing else can ever do so. Further, no one ever seeks any Pramaana or right means to determine the truth of Pramaatru or the agent who uses the right means. For this reason alone Sri Shankara later on in Sutra Bhaashya 2-3-7 has stated thus : "*Na Hyaatmaa Aatmanaha Pramaanamapekshya Siddhyati | Tasya Hi Pratyakshaadeeni Pramaanaani Aprasiddha Prameyasiddhaye Upaadeeyante*" - "Atman (the essential nature of Being as the Self) to Himself is not established with the aid of any right means ; for His sake the perceptive means etc. are utilised in order to ascertain the objects which are not known, is it not ? ". Therefore, it is evident that *to establish the truth of Pramaatru or the perceiver also there is no need of any right means. Just as you have said, the Pramaana is also not established by another Pramaana ; that is also, like the Pramaatrutwa or agentship or perceivership, established by intuitive experience* Another point. *If the fact that all the empirical dealings of Pramaatru (perceiver), Pramaana (the right means of perception) and Prameya (the perceived external object) are transactions spearheaded by Avidya or ignorance of the true nature of Atman, is kept in mind, then the question - 'what is the Pramaana or the right means for Avidya or this innate ignorance ?' does not arise at all.*

Therefore, the statement that Avidya is established by Intuition and not by Pramaana or empirical means is quite proper.

XII. The Dealings of Pramaana and Prameya are in the Region of Avidya.

Question : What is determined by the right means of knowledge alone is believed to be real by the people, is it not ? That being so, how is it proper (reasonable) to say that the dealings of the right means of perception, (the perceived objects) etc. is through Avidya or ignorance ?

Answer : Here this doubt has arisen because you have forgotten the technical significance or meaning of the word 'Avidya'. The notions, viz. 1. 'That knowledge born out of the right means or Pramaana is Vidya or right knowledge' ; 2. 'The knowledge which is the object of improper means (Apramaana) - i.e. lack of knowledge, doubtful knowledge, misconceived knowledge - that knowledge of a thing which is the object of these aforesaid three qualities is Avidya', entertained in empirical dealings are not false. But *in Vedaanta the word 'Avidya' is technically used with the (special) meaning of mutual Adhyaasa or super imposition of Atman and un-Atman. Here both the Vidya (right knowledge) and the Avidya (improper or misconceived knowledge) which arise in the empi-*

rical dealings are treated as Avidya (innate ignorance of the essential nature of Atman) (the Ultimate Reality) alone ; the determination of the essential true nature of Atman or the Self alone is called Vidya, the right knowledge. Just as in the dream both the conceptions distinguished as 'this is the right knowledge' and 'this is the false knowledge' are included in the dream alone and from the standpoint of the waking they both become Avidya alone or false knowledge alone, similarly when viewed from the standpoint of the non-dual nature of Atman or the Intuitive vision of non-dual Self, both the knowledge born out of Pramaana or the right means and the knowledge which is not produced by proper means or which is contrary (opposed) to that by right means are Avidya only. There is no contradiction at all in stating this fact.

Let us now try to determine how the whole range of empirical dealings using the right means are through Avidya or this innate ignorance (of the nature of superimposition or misconception between Atman and un-Atman) alone, with the help of the following statement by Sri Shankara :
' Dehendriyaadishu Aham Mamaabhimaanarahitasya Pramaatrutwaanuprapattou Pramaanapravruttyanupapattehe ' - 'After making this composite statement, Sri Shankara has himself explained the import of the statement. Here it is self-evident that because the fact, that the Pramaanas (the right means) etc. are projected by Avidya or innate ignorance, is itself to

be established, Sri Shankara has not exemplified or illustrated any Pramaanas or right means whatsoever in this statement. The reason is, proceeding to determine the veracity or true nature of a Pramaana by another Pramaana alone gives room for the logical defect of 'Aatmaashraya' (proceeding to establish one by oneself). In the statement - 'I am telling the truth, because I am myself saying like that' - it amounts to one proceeding to establish one's own qualifications and hence it becomes unsustainable. Similarly, to try to determine the true nature or veracity of one Pramaana or right means with the help of another Pramaana alone is as ridiculous as saying : 'I sat on my own shoulders'. Therefore, Sri Shankara has not illustrated here any Pramaana whatsoever ; it should be understood that he has implied that intuitive experience alone is the basis for the device used here. The gist of the explanation by Sri Shankara is : The senses alone are called Pratyaksha Pramaana or direct means and the intuitive experience born out of them alone is called Pratyakshajnaana or direct knowledge or perceptive knowledge. All the Pramaanas or means of knowledge like Anumaana (guessing), Upamaana (illustration), Shabda (the word or statement of a reliable person), Arthaapatti (the maxims of the type of - if a man is supposed to be fasting but does not lose weight, then it is deduced that he must be eating surreptitiously), Anupalabdhi (if a thing is not available anywhere in the world it is deduced that it does not ever exist) - follow in the wake of the sensory

perceptions, and hence it is evident that all the dealings of using Pramaanas or right means of knowledge is born out of the sensory perception. For those senses the body is essential as the abode. Therefore, before saying that I am using the senses as the Pramaanas or right means there must be the Adhyaasa or superimposition of the nature of 'I am the body'. Only after all these conditions are fulfilled one is called *Pramaatru or the perceiver*, is it not? Therefore, *Pramaatrutwa or perceivership is born out of Avidya or innate ignorance of the nature of Adhyaasa or superimposition of the body and the senses on Atman; hence, it is evident that the Pramaana Vyavahaara or the empirical dealings of using right means born out of Pramaatrutwa or perceivership is the resultant of Avidya or innate ignorance.*

Question : Why should it not be assumed that when people are indulging in the dealings of perception etc. they do so inspite of knowing that they are apart from the body, the senses etc. ? Why should it be taken that they carry on the transactions by being so stupid as to consider that they are the bodies and the senses are possessed by them ?

Answer : This will become clear when it is examined how people indulge in the transactions of perception etc. Sri Shankara has clarified this by a statement : "*Pashvaadibhishchaavisheshaat*", meaning, just as the creatures, birds and animals are carrying on their empirical transactions. The creatures, birds

and animals proceed forward if, after the knowledge of an object is gained through the means of the senses, they feel 'this is desirable'; if they feel 'this is undesirable' they recede. For example, if the creatures etc. notice a man holding in his hand green grass, they proceed towards him, but if they notice a man holding aloft a big stick, they recede away from him. However, there is no restriction that when they behave in this manner it should be really green grass or one who holds aloft the big stick should be a real man only. We have seen birds which proceed to peck at grapes drawn in a picture with a view to eating them or looking at a doll made in the shape of a man and erected in a field, the birds fly away from there, is it not? Therefore, it is clear that the behaviour of creatures, birds and animals is not based on discriminative knowledge. *Similarly, it has to be concluded that because it is seen that human beings too proceed forward towards a tin plate piece to pick it up expecting it to be a rupee coin, recede from a rope seen from a distance as a snake and indulge in such other transactions. human beings also, like the creatures, birds and animals, by nature have the behaviour of proceeding forward towards a thing, thinking it to be good, and of receding from a thing, thinking it to be bad. Therefore, it has to be concluded that for human beings the dealings of the nature of proceeding forward and receding which are born out of perceptions etc. are at the time of those transactions carried on through a lack of discrimination and only naturally,*

just like the dealings of the creatures, birds etc. only. Hence it can be surmised that just as the dealings born out of the knowledge of the object (Prameya) are the result of a lack of discrimination, in the same way the dealings of the form of agent-ship and enjoyership which are caused in the nature of the perceiver are also caused by a lack of discrimination.

XIII. Scriptural Transactions Are Also Prompted By Avidya Only.

Question :. It may be true in the world the dealings of proceeding forward (Pravrutti) and receding (Nivrutti) of common people are through a lack of discrimination. But why should it be concluded that the discriminative examiners of external things also similarly carry on transactions? Are there no great people who equipped with the learning of the physical sciences have acquired the knowledge of earth, water, wind and space and thereby made new discoveries? Is it proper to say that those great people, who have learnt from the scriptural texts about the superior fruits accruing to them in other worlds mentioned in the Vedas and who are performing the stipulated rites as the means for attaining those fruits, are also ignorant people? Can it be said that such a scriptural text, which teaches about such extra - sensory fruits, is also meant for ignorant people ?

Answer : We did not say at all that there are no people who have discovered objects after inquiry, using discrimination. There is no restriction or rule that even knowledgeable people of any calibre when they enter into transaction they do so using discrimination alone. Some people may entertain such a desire of entering into transactions in that manner before they undertake those transactions; but no one can say that while such people are in the process of carrying out those transactions their progress is in consonance with their discrimination. If it were so, there would not have been people who were drowned in the sea along with the ships which they constructed, people who tumbled down from the aeroplanes and people who were dazed after flying in the air when they travelled higher beyond their capacity. Let it be; it is certain that even for those who have somewhat discriminated about the perceived object there is per force innate ignorance (Avidya) about their essential nature of Atman or the Self in empirical dealings.

Further, even those who have acquired belief that in heaven etc. they will attain the exquisite fruits and thereby who acquired the knowledge through belief (in the Shaastras or scriptural texts) that their essential nature of Atman is separate from their body, senses etc. have not truly intuited the essential nature of Atman or the Self. Because, even those people do not have the true knowledge of the essential nature of Atman as taught in Vedaanta. Sri Shankara

has written as follows with regard to this question viz. How is this essential nature of Atman, as taught in Vedaanta ?- "*Ashanaayaadyateetam, Apetabrahma. kshatraadibhedam, Asamsaaryaatmattwam*".

The following are the sentences of the Vedaantas (Upanishads) containing the characteristics indicated in the above statement : 1. *Yoashanaayaapipaase Shoakam Moaham Jaraam Mrutyumatyeti*" (Bri. 3-5-1). 2. "*Brahma Tam Paraadaad Yoanyatraatmanoa. Brahma Veda, Kshatram Tam Paraadaad Yoanyatraatmanoa Kshatram Veda, Loakaastam Paraaduryoanyatraatmanoa Loakaan Veda, Devaastami Paraaduryoanyatraatmanoa Devaan Veda Bhootaani Tam. Paraaduryoanyatraatmanoa Bhootaani Veda, Sarvam Tam Paraadaad Ydanyatraatmanaha Sarvam Veda.*" (Bri. 3-4-6)

Atman does not have the characteristics or qualities of vital force of the nature of hunger and thirst; He does not have the mental qualities of the nature of grief and attachment; nor does He have the bodily qualities of the nature of old age and death. Because His essential nature has transcended the body, vital force (Praana) and mind, these qualities or characteristics are superimposed on or misconceived in Atman by the ignorant people, just as (ignorant) people misconceive blue colour in the sky and believe that 'the sky is blue'. This is the meaning of the first scriptural statement.

One, who believes that the Brahmin caste really exists apart from Atman or the Self independently, will be shunned by that Brahmin caste ; similarly one who believes that the Kshatriya caste really exists apart from and independently of Atman will be discarded by that Kshatriya caste; one who believes that the other worlds to be attained by performing rites and rituals are apart from and independently of Atman will be discarded by those other worlds; one who believes that the deities, invoking whom sacrifices are carried out to achieve the fruits of actions or rites, are existing apart from Atman will be discarded by those deities; one who believes that the animals which are needed for offering in sacrifice are existing apart from Atman will be discarded by those animals; why talk more, one who believes anything whatsoever exists apart from Atman will be discarded by all those things ; seeing that ‘this man is alas knowing all of us, who are of the essential nature of Atman, to exist apart from Atman!’ all those things will deprive him of the prime fruits. The truth is that all is Atman alone; to believe that in that Atman the differences of the castes of Brahmin, Kshatriya etc. exist in reality is the result of ignorance. This is the meaning of the second scriptural statement (above).

Thus in the Ultimate Reality of Atman, which is taught by Vedaanta i.e. which can be known or apprehended only through the teachings of the Upanishads, there are really no castes, no rela-

tionships with body, vital force and mind, no categories of the nature of action, means of action and fruits of action at all. There is no rule or restriction that those who have understood this truth will perform acts or Karma ; because, from this knowledge of Atman or the Self no utility can accrue to actions or Karma. Not only that. This knowledge (of the Self) is also opposed to the agentship of an action or Karma. Why will one who has understood that ‘ I am not a Brahmin, not a Kshatriya etc.’ perform Karmas or rites stipulated for Brahmins etc. ? Will the person, who has got the conviction that Karma or rite is not real, the conventional accessories needed to perform this Karma or rite are also not real and the fruit that accrues from this rite is also not real, even condescend to look at the rite or Karma ? Or even if he is performing a rite from the point of view of onlookers, can that be called a rite? It will have to be accepted that from the transcendental or absolute standpoint, because one has in essence become the Brahman or the Self he is truly not a Karmi or performer of rite at all. Refer to the commentary of Sri Shankara on the verse : “*Brahmaarpanam....*” in the Gita (4-24).

Anyway,, it is evident that the scriptural text belonging to the Karma Kaanda also is meant for those ignorant people only who do not know the essential nature of Atman. Therefore, it is established that the empirical dealings of the form of right means of knowledge and the object of knowledge,

whether they are secular or scriptural, both are being carried out through Avidya or innate ignorance (of the essential nature of Atman or the Self) alone.

XIV. The Greatness of Vedaantic Knowledge

Question : Just as you have said, if it is asserted to be true that besides the empirical dealings the Vaidika or scriptural transactions (like the rites, sacrifices etc.) also are born out of Avidya or innate ignorance, then the Vedaanta Shaastra or the Upanishadic lore in the Vedas (pertaining to the teaching of knowledge of Atman or the Self) will remain as projected by Avidya only like ritualistic texts (of the Vedas) and it would then amount to saying that that portion is meant for the ignorant only ! In that event, what will be the greatness of the Upanishads?

Answer : True The scriptural texts pertaining to the teaching of Moksha or Emancipation are also projected by Avidya only. For that reason alone Sri Shankara has written in the following manner : "*Tametamavidyaakhyam Aatmaanaatmanoo-ritaretaraadhyaasam Puraskrutya Sarve Pramaanaprameyavyavahaaraa Loukikaa Vaidikaascha Pravruttaaha, Sarvaani Cha Shaastraani Vidhipratishedha Moakshaparaani* " "

The meaning of the sentence is : "The secular as well as Vaidika or scriptural transactions involving

right means of action and the objects, as also the scriptural texts which propound injunctions and prohibitions as well as Emancipation have been started on the basis of the Adhyaasa or misconception between Atman and un-Atman called the Avidya or innate ignorance about (the true, essential nature of) Atman and un-Atman. Let it be any kind of transaction, it is in the realm of Avidya or innate ignorance only and not in the Ultimate Reality. Even so, as regards the Vedaantas or Upanishads, which are called the texts teaching Emancipation, there is one greatness and that is: Even after the ritualistic texts have taught the principles of the rituals, the qualified person who has heard those texts is truly left with the agentship and the doership. Hence for him the tasks of procuring the materials for the rites and rituals as stipulated in the scriptural texts, performing those rites and obtaining the fruits still remain. *But after the dawn of the intuitive knowledge of Brahmaatman or the unity of Brahman and Atman as taught in the Upanishads, the above-said agentship as well as the conception that the action, the means of action and the fruits of action are real—all these will not remain.* From the standpoint of the Jnaani or the knower of the essential nature of Atman even the scriptural texts also have become the projections of Avidya alone. Because he has attained the non-dual intuitive knowledge of Atman of the nature of intuiting 'all this is Atman alone', he has attained the sense of fulfilment. Please refer to the commentary

of Sri Shankara on the verse - "*Vedaavinaashinam*" (Gita 2-21).

XV. How is the Non-Dual Knowledge of Atman Obtained ?

Question : You have stated that Avidya is the cause for misery as well as that all Vedaantas or Upanishads have been formulated to teach the knowledge of the non-dual Atman in order to banish that misery. Between these two, which is the main goal for the Upanishads ? Is it removing Avidya or is it to teach the non-dual reality of Atman ?

Answer : The main goal is removing the Avidya or innate ignorance alone. Because, Atman or the essential nature of the Self is our innate Being alone. He is familiar only. This has been already stated. Even so, there is a belief among common people that Atman is objective - apart from us. Though He is one only, people have the belief that 'Atmans are many'. All though He is devoid of mundane existence only, people have the belief that He is of the nature of an agent and enjoyer. Although He is the *Paramaatman* or the Ultimate Reality called *Parabrahman* taught in the Vedaanta, people have the notion that He is someone apart from themselves. Therefore, removing Avidya which is the root cause for these misconceptions alone is the goal or purpose of the Upanishads. If the nature of un-Atman which

is superimposed (on Atman) or misconceived (in Atman) is removed, then it means that the knowledge of non-dual Atman - the intuitive knowledge that Atman alone is the Ultimate Reality - will dawn by itself.

Question : In the empirical world without gaining the knowledge of an object the ignorance about it does not vanish. If one person has taken a rope to be a snake, even when a knowledgeable person tells the other that 'this is not a snake', the former person will not know certainly what it is. Even after the knowledgeable person tells the other that 'this is not a snake, it is a rope', until the person himself directly sees that, the Avidya or ignorance of the form of the appearance like a snake would not be removed. Similarly, here also it seems to be proper that first the scriptures must teach the knowledge of the non-dual Atman only; accordingly one has to attain this knowledge and then only the Avidya or innate ignorance will completely be removed.

Answer : On the strength of an example or illustration to adopt a device is not proper. Because, a rope is not our Atman; it is different from our essential nature of Being ; between it and ourselves there is the mediate space and hence, that which is covering that (object) - removing it will become necessary. That thing is an object which is outside or external to us and hence it becomes necessary to know it through the right means of perception.

Therefore, it is quite proper to say that merely by stating that 'it is a rope, not a snake' the correct knowledge about the thing will not be got. In the present context Atman is our core of Being; He is not separate from us; He is not distinct from us; there is no intervening thing between Him and us which acts as a cover; He is our very core of Being only without any intermediacy and is very immediate or intimate. He is not an object (Prameya), and not one who can be known by the usage or transaction of any right means (Pramaana); He is of the essential nature of an eternal, immediate, Pure Consciousness or Intuition who illumines even the right means of knowledge (pramaanas). Therefore, here there is the necessity of removing the Avidya or innate ignorance which is the object for the essential nature of Atman alone and not any necessity whatsoever of creating the direct knowledge of Him.

Question : In that case, it means only that the Avidya or innate ignorance has enveloped or covered Atman, is a hindrance to Atman, is it not ? If there is no Avidya, wherefrom does the necessity of removing it arise ? Under these circumstances, how is it proper what is said to the effect that there is no hindrance whatsoever to Atman ?

Answer : If it is said that there is ignorance (Avidya) about Atman, it does not mean that it (Avidya) is covering Atman Himself and is a hindrance to know Him. For people who are engrossed in

objects seen outside only there is no time to apprehend their own essential nature as Atman, that is all. Please refer to the commentary of Sri Shankara on the Gita verse - "*Nishthaa Jnaanasya Yaa Paraa*" (Gita 18-50). Even to a person who says that 'I have the delusion of ignorance' the Avidya or ignorance is an object, he is looking at it only, objectifying it by means of his essential nature of Pure Consciousness. Therefore, there is no change whatsoever caused by Avidya in the essential nature of Atman. Please refer to the commentary of Sri Shankara on the sentence : "*Brahmaiva San Brahmaapyeti*" - Having been Brahman or the Ultimate Reality he merges in Brahman" (Bri. 4-4-6). It being so, just as the sentence- 'You are the tenth man' - i.e. among ten people, to an idiot, who was counting the other nine men only leaving himself out, when another man makes it known with the help of the sentence - 'You are that tenth man' - when the Upanishad teaches - "that Brahman alone thou art" (Ch. 6-8-7), the most qualified aspirant will attain the intuitive knowledge of Atman merely with the help of that sentence. To the others, the Ultimate Reality will have to be taught by negating the misconception or superimposition of un-Atman alone. *Here by the intuitive knowledge of Atman does not mean the objective knowledge as of a rope etc. gained through the right means (Pramaana); it is establishing oneself or taking a firm stand or identification in the essential nature of Atman or the Self by negating the superimposition alone. This will be taught in the explanation of the first aphorism.*

**XVI. The Relationship Between the
Brahma Sutras and The Upanishads.**

Question : How can it be known that in all the Upanishads the non-dual nature of Atman is propounded by means of negating or removing the superimposition?

Answer : This is determined in this Shaareeraka Meemaamsaa or popularly known as Brahma Sutras. Sri Shankara has written his commentary (on Brahma Sutras) in order to establish this fact and here in the introductory form he has at the outset delineated the essential teachings of all Upanishads or Vedaantas, using only Yukti or rational devices and intuitive experiences.

Question : What is meant by Shaareeraka Meemamsaa Shaastra ?

Answer : Shaareeraka means the Jeeva or soul who is in the body; because this text determines after discriminative reasoning that the really essential nature of this Jeeva is the Ultimate Reality of Atman, this text has gained the name of "Shaareeraka Meemaamsaa". It has another name of "Vedaanta Meemaamsaa Shaastra" also. Vedaantas means Upanishads - this we have already stated. If all the sentences of the Vedaantas (or the Upanishads) are collected together and their meanings reconciled, then it is known that they have the one purport of teaching the non-dual intuitive knowledge of Atman alone. Therefore, in this text the sentences of Vedaantas are taken up for rational discrimination. Hence for that reason the name, "Vedaanta Meemaamsaa Shaastra". Thus Sri Shankara himself has stated in his commentary.

Question : Why is it that all have not accepted this opinion which determined or established thus in consonance with rational devices or methods and intuitive experiences ?

Answer : Even before Sri Shankara wrote his commentary on these aphorisms (Brahma Sutras) several people had written their commentaries on these in accordance with their respective doctrines. There were different opinions among all of them regarding the main purport of the Upanishads. Sri Shankara wrote his own commentary in order to prove that the opinions or interpretations of Sri Gaudapaadaachaarya etc. belonging to his tradition alone fit in in all respects to the Upanishadic teaching. Merely on the basis of this the opinions or interpretations of people of other traditions were not thrust into a corner. Although their traditional (authoritative) texts are not extant today, they have been infiltrated in camouflaged forms into the sub-commentaries on Sri Shankara's Bhaashyas or sub-commentaries. These sub-commentaries also are mutually contradictory and protagonists of schools other than the non-dualistic school have taken a hotchpotch of all these sub-commentaries to represent Sri Shankara's Vedanta of non-duality and have condemned these latter opinions (in the sub-commentaries) in their new commentaries on the Brahma Sutras. This book has been written in order to clarify for the sake of true aspirants the pure, genuine methodology of Sri Shankara.

4. Salient features of Shankara Vedanta

Presents matter and method of genuine Sankara Vedanta in a small compass.

5. Sankara's clarification of certain vedantic concepts

This book contains a systematic account of the clarification of certain vedantic concepts as presented in sankara's classical writings, especially in his Sutra-Bhashya.

6. Essays on Vedanta

Contains the most important and essential ideas in the Upanishads and the method of approach adopted for teaching vedantic truth.

7. The vision of Atman

Atman to be seen, reflected upon by reasoning and contemplated upon, based on intuitive experience. The different aspects of the three means of intuitive knowledge are explained.

8. Intuition of Reality

A very valuable addition to the lore of Advaita Vedanta in English "Kamakoti Vani".

9. Misconceptions about Shankara

Brings all criticisms on Vedanta to an unanimous agreement about the genuine tradition of Shankara's Vedanta.

10 The Science of Being

This work deals with the 6th Chapter of Chandogya Upanishad and presents in a nutshell the true Nature of Science of Being.

Note : Serial No. 1 & 3 to 10 are all by H. H. Sachidanandendra Saraswathi Swamiji besides the following other works like Avastharaaya or The Unique Method of Vedanta, Minor Works of Sri Sankaracharya and Isavasyopanishad (With Sankars Bhashya). His Masterely elaborate introductions to his important Sanskrit works in English viz., Mandukya Rahashya Vri-vrithihi, and Vedanta Prakriya Prathya Bhigna form a class by themselves.

