The Basic Tenets of Śāṅkara Vedānta

Written in Kannada by
Swāmi Satchidānandendra Saraswati

Translated By
D. B. Gangolli

Adhyātma Prakāsha Kāryālaya
Holenarsipur, Hassan - 573 211
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1. THE MAGIC JEWEL OF INTUITION

This *magnum opus* explains in detail the subtle and secret teachings implicit in the Māṇḍūkya Upanishad, using the Avasthā Traya Prakriya or the profound methodology implicit in the examination of the three states of Consciousness, viz. waking, dream and deep sleep. This methodology is a sure clincher for the genuine seeker of Self-Knowledge and will be of immense help in Intuiting Ātman or the Self as the very essence of his Pure, Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss, i.e. Sat-Chit-Ānanda Swarūpa. Many doubts and objections which are raised in spiritual circles by scholars and academicians are answered quite clearly so that they get dissolved, so to speak. At the end of the book, an Appendix on ‘Science and Spirituality’ - which is a comparative study of the two formidable ‘sciences’ - running into 83 pages, is given. Price : Rs. 50.

2. THE SCIENTIFIC APPROACH OF ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

A succinct description of the unique methodology that is utilized in and through the Upanishadic lore to expound the Ultimate, Absolute Reality of Brahman or Ātman, as explained by Shri Śaṅkara in his extant, original Bhāshyas on the Prasthāna Trayi, viz. the ten principal Upanishads, Bhagavadgītā and the Vedānta Sūtras (Brahma Sūtras). It will not be euphemistic if it is stated that without the knowledge of the six fundamentals mentioned in this booklet a true seeker of the Reality of the Self or student of Advaita Vedānta will invariably get confused and confounded by the apparently contradictory statements of the Upanishads. The author has used 14 diagrams to drive home the subtle teachings of pristine pure Advaita Vedānta of Ādi Śaṅkara in keeping with the modern trend of audio-visual methods of presentation of a topic.
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This important treatise by the pen of Shri Satchidānandendra Saraswati Swāmīji, of revered memory, was based on 21 days' discourses delivered by the Swāmīji at Dāvana­gere, Karnātaka State, prior to, and during the 'Śhri Śaṅkara Saptāha' celebration held in 1966 at Shri Shivānanda Adhyātma Mandir. These lectures were later serialised in the 'Adhyātma Prakāsha' monthly.

We would like to bring it to the notice of the reader that if he scrutinizes the 21 topics that are taken up for deliberation by the Swāmīji, one each day, then a clear picture would emerge before him to suggest that they are all based on a thematic development of 'Advaita Vedānta' (Nōn-dualism as a spiritual science) from its first principles to its subtlest teachings culminating in one's own Intuitive Experience of Brahman or Ātman here in this very life.

Evidently, the perfect irrefutable methodology based on universal Intuitive Experience adopted by Shri Śaṅkara in and through his extant and edifying Bhashyas has been faithfully propagated by Shri Swāmīji to help the genuine seeker of Vedāntic tenets to shun and shed a purely materialistic outlook on Life and pursue the spiritual path based on Swadharma, ethics, morals and eternal values.

We hope that the discerning and wise among the students of Vedānta would be immensely benefited by this gem written by our beloved Swāmīji.

Bangalore
Date: July 25, 1996

In the service of
Ādi Śaṅkara’s Advaita Vedānta
President,
Adhyātma Prakāsha Kāryalāya
Public Charitable Trust.
PREFACE

In these days of ever-increasing materialism ushered in by the quantum advance in scientific theories and technology, human beings all over the world are predominantly becoming extroverted, with the result a totally materialistic approach to life in general has gripped all ‘educated and enlightened’ people.

Dharma (righteous, religious approach to Life) has suffered a deadly blow, so to speak; the question of Artha (acquisition of one’s assets, possessions) Kāma (righteous desires) in consonance with the canons of one’s religious faith have been forgotten; people in general do not even know what exactly is the real, ultimate goal of Life (Parama Purushārtha).

But, despite all these deep incursions and intrusions of materialism, thanks to the ‘scientific temper’ among the intelligentsia, Man cannot really afford to be irreligious and non-spiritual. For, religion is purely and simply one’s ‘abiding faith’ in an inscrutable Shakti (power) which supports and sustains this expansive multi-faceted universe and all its various creatures. In fact, without this ‘hypothetical’ power called Īśwara (Lord Creator of the universe as also its various creatures) one cannot think of this existence being meaningful, purposeful. It evolves from this method of reasoning, nay discrimination, that this ‘Īśwara’ of Vedānta, the spiritual science par excellence of India, cannot be Paroksha (indirect, mediatory, external to us humans) but Aparoksha (immediate, direct) so as to culminate in everyone’s Intuitive Experience and bring about total conviction, satisfaction to the properly qualified person irrespective of caste, creed, nation, sex etc.

Unlike the physical, empirical sciences which concentrate and converge upon the external, objective world at
large and consider Man - or for that matter, all creatures, nay the whole creation - as a product of creation and a prey to the elemental forces, the spiritual science of Vedānta, which is more 'scientific' (rational) than all sciences founded by the human intellect put together, takes us in a 'quantum jump' to Intuition (Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss) which gratuitously happens to be everyone's very core of Being, the Self (called in Vedāntic parlance Ātman, Brahman).

This treatise, written in Kannada by Shri Satchidanandendra Saraswatī Swāmījī, of revered memory, way back in 1966, deals with 'the basic tenets of Advaita Vedānta' as expounded by Ādi Śaṅkara in his extant Bhāṣyās. It depicts and delineates the rudiments of 'Non-dualism' and is sure to root out many a misconception prevalent in the minds of leading scientists, let alone the intelligentsia, the scholars and the academics. A casual scrutiny of the 21 topics dealt with herein will shed a tremendous but profound light on certain unknown regions of our so-called 'Knowledge'.

I am thankful to the authorities of Adhyātma Prakāsha Kāryālaya for permitting me to translate this magnum opus of revered Swāmījī, and I am hereby surrendering to the Kāryālaya Trust all copyrights of this book as in the past; I am also grateful to Shri H.N. Rangaswami and Shri Dileep B.K. for helping me in proof-reading of the manuscripts.

Even if a few ardent students of Ādi Śaṅkara's pristine pure Advaita Vedānta are benefited by this treatise I will deem it as fulfilment of my purport.

Bangalore
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D.B. Gangolli
(Translator)
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THE BASIC TENETS OF ŚĀNKARA VEDĀNTA

I Preparation for Vedāntic Knowledge

Vedāntic knowledge vis-a-vis all the empirical knowledges may be very terse and subtle, but proportional to one’s progress in the spiritual practices he has achieved, the subject-matter of abstruse Vedāntic teachings may be expected to be discerned by the ardent seeker.

We may attempt to know Vedānta, the spiritual science of one’s own Self as the Absolute, Ultimate Reality, either through the commentaries on the Upanishads or through discussions based on arguments for and against a topic. The fact that during brief discourses or lectures both these methods are not suitable at all need not be gainsaid. Further, to endeavour to know Vedānta on the strength and support of empirical valid means like Pratyaksha (perception), Anumāna (inference) etc., as also by means of logic which goes into the question of analysing the validity of the means themselves are invariably unsuitable; for, the Vedāntic Reality is not within the purview of any Pramāṇas (valid means of cognition or knowledge) whatsoever. Neither in the Upanishads nor in the Bhagavadgītā there is any scope whatsoever given, or provided for, any hope of knowing the Absolute Reality...
through any Pramāṇas. On the contrary, in both these canonical texts of Vedānta it has been very clearly mentioned that - “The Absolute Reality of Paramāṇan or the Supreme Self is Aprameya (That which cannot be comprehended or grasped by any empirical valid means of cognition).”

In that case, how at all can we cognize this Reality? To this question the answer lies in the Śruti sentence: “वेदमानविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थः” (Mundaka 3-2-6) - which conveys the meaning - ‘By means of Vedāntic or Upanishadic Intuitive Knowledge this Reality can be distinctly known.’ The word Veda means that Sādhana (valid means or instrument) which can convey the knowledge of an Artha (entity) which cannot possibly be comprehended by the empirical valid means like Pratyaksha and Anumāna etc. In fact, this Absolute Transcendent Reality can be cognized by means of the Veda (scripture) alone which is Apourusheya (of non-human i.e. divine origin). The word Vedāntas (used in the plural) means Upanishads; since to a large extent they are to be found towards the end portion of Āranyakas, which are the concluding sections of the Vedas, they might have been given this nomenclature. But, just as declaring - ‘This alone is the final judgment’ - this Tattwarājñāna (Intuitive Knowledge of the Absolute Reality) is Itself the final proclamation of the Knowledge engendered by the Vedas; in order to assure or affirm a fearlessness of the type - ‘If this Intuitive Knowledge of the Reality accrues neither is there anything whatsoever remaining to be known, nor is there anything remaining to be done’ - this spiritual teaching delineated here is fit to be called Vedānta.
We will herefore try to explain as to how such a Jñāna (Intuitive Knowledge of the Absolute Reality) can possibly be attained. But, first of all, we should give up all false notions or misconceptions that we at present entertain with regard to this Vedāntic Jñāna. Since it is Jñāna which is Atindriyavishayaka (of an entity beyond the comprehension or purview of the senses), it cannot be possible ever to comprehend It by means of our senses. Besides, for all the three categories of Karma (rituals, rites), Upāsana (mental meditations) and Jñāna (Intuitive Knowledge) that have been mentioned in the Vedas the resultant fruits stipulated are all invariably beyond the comprehension of the senses. For the Karmas mentioned in the Vedas the name of Dharma is also given. That has to be performed by means of the body alone in a predominant sense. The Vedas themselves teach us about Upāsanas, which are to be performed by means of the mind (psyche). Because of the reason that Upāsana also can be performed, cannot be performed or can be performed totally according to one’s own whims and fancies - just like Karma - Upāsana too, in a particular sense, is verily Karma (i.e. psychic action). Although Karma means ‘action’, here in this context we assume the meaning of the word Karma to be the rites and rituals stipulated in the scriptures ; in the same way, the word Upāsana also should be taken to mean the meditation as stipulated in our scriptures. For both these actions there may be Dṛishta Phala (visible fruits accruing here in this life) or Adṛishta Phala (fruits invisible or accruing in other worlds or births) accruing. Because of the reason that for the relation between Karmas and their fruits as
also for the relationship between *Upāsanas* and their fruits, the *Śāstras* alone are the authoritative sources to know, these subtle relationships cannot possibly be known or discerned by means of *Pramāṇas* like Pratyaksha, *Anumāṇa*, etc. In these instances exclusively the *Śāstras* (i.e. *Vedas*) are the valid sources of guidance. Hence only those people who firmly and sincerely believe in the tenets of the *Śāstras* may possibly attain the stipulated fruits.

Now in the case of *Vijñāna* (Intuitive Knowledge about the Absolute Reality) taught in the Vedāntic texts, that is also invariably known from that very source of the *Śāstras* alone; but its fruits are such which accrue to all of us here and now itself to culminate in our Intuitive experience. When the Vedāntic text says: “You are verily Brahman” - the person who is fully qualified for such Intuitive Knowledge will cognize its true significance in this very life and he will experience the fruit during the present span of life itself - thus the *Śāstra* is declaring. How at all can a fruit which is said to be beyond the purview or reach of the senses become visible in one’s experience here and now? Even the *Śāstra* - how can it possibly signify or convey the Intuitive Knowledge of an Absolute Reality beyond the ken of the senses? How at all we too can possibly attain such an abstruse Knowledge? These relevant questions may arise here. Proper answers to these queries will become discernible as and when we proceed in our deliberations (in the light of *Śāstraic* teachings). But for the time being, we may believe in the fact that man has been endowed with a power and strength of cognizing or Intuiting such
an Absolute Reality beyond the purview of the senses. When man was in an uncultured and uncivilized state he did not know how to read and write; in fact, when the aborigines first learnt the art of reading and writing they must have been flabbergasted. But now those very human beings - most of them - have become literate and highly intellectual. They are capable of conveying or communicating their opinions to others through writing. Why, they are even capable of studying Śāstras or scientific literature formulated by others and thereby acquiring that scientific knowledge. Is this not true? In the same way, if we make a sincere and dedicated effort to divine this Vedāntic Intuitive Knowledge, handed down to humanity by great ancient sages and seers, we can surely believe that we too can possibly acquire such a Knowledge. If the Vedas signify this superlative power, beyond the ken of the senses, which is lurking in all of us, why should we not make an ardent effort to Intuit it?

For the Vedāntic philosophy there are three types of canonical, authoritative texts, viz. Śruti (Upanishads), Smṛiti (personal works by seers or sages like Bhagavadgītā) and Purāṇa (ancient mythologies or epics like Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata). For those who have faith in these texts they become beacon lights to guide them in the spiritual path. Just as in our workaday transactions we have to have unstinted faith to dig up a well in order to get water, then to sow the seed and wait for getting the harvest, similarly here too in this spiritual path or life only to those who are brimming with faith Jñāna will accrue. This Viññāna is attained unfailingly even by common people of this modern age if only they have un-
flinching faith in the Śāstras and the traditional preceptors.

To attain this Self-Knowledge, being born as a human being alone is not enough. As the Śruti says: "नाबिरतो दुर्ज्जितात्राशान्तो नासमाहित: | नाशान्तमानसो चापि प्रजानेनैनमापुपाटु" - (Kaṭha Upanishad 1-2-24) - one should have given up bad habits and behaviour; should have got over (conquered) the deficiencies and defects of the senses; should have got over distractions and disturbances of the mind; should have got rid of defects like Āsura-'swabhāva (diabolic or demoniac propensities of the mind) - as taught in the Bhagavadgītā. One should not misconceive that for attaining this Knowledge an intellect which is capable of mere, vain dialectics is the main means. On the other hand, one should cultivate an Āstikyabuddhi (steadfast faith in the Śāstra and the truths it propounds). Shri Kṛṣṇa has mentioned in the Gītā as to whom the teachings of Bhagavadgītā should not be conveyed in the following manner: "This instruction should not be imparted to one who is not a Tapasvi (who observes austerities and practises meditations), one who does not have any devotion towards Īśwara (the Lord Almighty), one who has not served his preceptor and one who cavils at God." - (Gītā 18-27). In the Praśnōpanishad it is stated that six pupils approached a preceptor by name, Pippalāda, and, after staying and serving him for a long time observing celibacy and strict austerities, got all their questions answered and doubts cleared convincingly. It has been stated there that all the disciples at the end declared that - "Because you have enabled us to get over Avidyā (ignorance), you are yourself our father." Thus only to
such people who entertain an aspiration and burning desire, so to say, to listen to spiritual instructions with unalloyed faith and devotion so as to become worthy ‘disciples of the preceptor’ this sacred *Vedānta Vijnāna* will accrue. Just as to obtain water that is available deep into the ground one has necessarily to dig up a deep well, similarly in order to attain this innermost and subtlest Self-Knowledge it is extremely necessary for the seekers to acquire introversion by controlling the senses. They should then approach a spiritual teacher who is *Śrōṭriya* (well-versed in the traditional methodology of teaching) and *Brahmanishṭha* (one rooted in Self-Knowledge) and listen to his instructions with faith and devotion, and only to such highly qualified students this unique Knowledge will accrue.

Persons devoid of the above-mentioned qualifications will never attain the *Vedāntic Knowledge* irrespective of his other achievements in life. Some people ask questions like - For Vedāntic Knowledge where is the need of faith and devotion at all ? If a person has the intellectual capacity of understanding, is it not enough ? But they do not know the truth behind these two qualifications. Lord Shri Krishṇa has Himself stated that - “Those who have no faith and dedication towards *Nivṛitti Dharma* (religion leading to Liberation) of the essential nature of *Ātmajñāna* (Self-Knowledge) - they cannot attain the divinity ; on the contrary, they will always wallow in the transmigratory life” - (Gītā 9-3). While explaining the meaning of this sentence Shri Śaṅkarāchārya has stated : “Let alone the question of attaining divinity or Self-hood ; even the means or path for it, viz. devotion towards the Lord Almighty, will not accrue to them.”
Therefore, one should give up the vain pride of considering oneself to be an erudite, wise person and should try to acquire the disciplines and spiritual practices meant for Self-Knowledge. To such seekers, in due course of time, by dint of the spiritual preceptor's instructions this Vedāntic Knowledge is sure to accrue.

II. ANCIENT VEDĀNTIC SCHOOLS

We have already emphasized that without getting rid of the various misconceptions with regard to the spiritual science of Vedānta we cannot possibly acquire the qualification or fitness to pursue the Vedāntic Knowledge. It is not possible at all to attain Ātmajñāna (Self-Knowledge) by means of a logically-oriented, extroverted mind. We cannot afford to forget what Shri Śaṅkarāchārya has stressed time and again that the Upanishads have proclaimed the truth that - "Only to those persons endowed with a cultured and controlled mind, this Self-Knowledge has invariably to accrue culminating in their Anubhava (Intuitive Experience)."

Just as we have formulated many a false and weird conception with regard to the spiritual teachings of Vedānta by Shri Śaṅkara, in the same way we have been entertaining many misconceptions with regard to his brief but eventful life's history as also his invaluable contributions towards the welfare and prosperity of humanity in general. We have to get rid of them first, and they are:

(a) There is a deep-seated belief among many people that Shri Śaṅkara put a stop to the intensive propagation
of Buddhism among Hindus and their conversion to that new-born religion and brought them back into the fold of Hinduism. But this is not in keeping with the ground reality. For, even Shri Gauḍapādāchārya, Shri Śaṅkara’s grand-preceptor, who had written his now-famous Māndukya Kārikas, had not given so much importance or prominence to the refutation of Buddhistic tenets. In truth, Shri Gauḍapāda has attempted consistently and predominantly to remove misconceptions entertained by the people of his times with regard to the genuine spiritual teachings of Advaita Vedānta. He has been responsible to drive away completely the one misconception that the Buddhistic doctrines themselves are to be found in the Vedāntic philosophy. Especially in the case of Shri Śaṅkara, he has predominantly refuted the bizarre teachings of the so-called Advaitins of his times who had not adopted or followed the pristine pure, time-tested methodology of Vedānta. While writing his famous Bhāshyas (commentaries) on the ten principal Upanishads which are extant and explicit to this day, he has to a great extent stressed the fact by saying: ‘अल्प ग्रन्था वृत्तिरास्यते’ - meaning, ‘I am writing a commentary which depicts my opinion in brief.’ If we observe this recurring statement, we are compelled to infer or imagine that although prior to him many scholars had written elaborate and extensive commentaries, they had not followed the correct and sound methodology of teaching or conveying the truths; this fact looms large before us. It is found that Shri Śaṅkara, in his Bhāshyas, has not taken up in a predominant sense the condemnation of Buddhistic teachings; it is crystal clear that at various places he has refuted vehemently the
methodology adopted in the commentaries of the so-called pseudo-Vedāntins. In the Sūtra Bhāṣyās too he has taken up for refutation, predominantly, only those tenets or doctrinaire teachings wrongly propounded by Advaitins belonging to alien schools of philosophy; those Dvaitins (dualists) who were in his mind as the targets for refutation were, in the main, Sāṅkhyanas, Vaiṣeṣikas, Buddhists and Jains. After refuting the philosophies of these opponents in a brief manner, he has left it at that for the seekers to judge on merits. Especially in Gītā Bhāṣyā there exists this transparent statement: “तदिर्दं गीताशस्त्रं समस्तवेदार्थसारसंग्रहभूतं दुर्विव्याख्यायम्, तदर्थविष्करणाय अनेकः विवृत पदपदार्थवाक्यार्थ-यायमपि अत्यन्तविरूढ्यानेकार्थत्त्वेन लौकिकेन-गृह्यामाणम् उपलब्ध अहें विवेकतोर्ध्निर्धारणार्थ सङ्क्षेपतो विचारण करिष्यामि।” Meaning: “This Gītāśāstra is the quintessence of the gist of all the Vedas. It is very difficult to cognize its meaning. Although many people with a view to making it explicit have explained its words, meaning of words and meaning of sentences supplemented by logical devices - seeing the common run of people misconceiving many extremely contradictory meanings to be the true purport of the Gītā, I am writing a brief commentary in order to convey its genuine meaning through discrimination” - thus Shri Śaṅkara has written. From this too, it becomes very clear that he has written his commentary (Bhāṣya) keeping in view the alien Bhāṣyās alone.

(b) In this context we should remember the fact that Shri Śaṅkara has not examined or considered, anywhere
in his Bhāṣyās, the recent tenets of schools belonging to or founded by Shri Rāmānujačārya, Shri Madhwa, Shri Vallabha etc. The dualist philosophies which Shri Śaṅkara has meticulously examined and refuted are, as already stated, Śāṅkhyā, Vaiśeṣika, Buddhism etc. - which fact we cannot afford to forget.

(c) This being so, it has to be stressed here that the belief that Shri Śaṅkara is an ‘अद्वैतमत्त्वापनाचार्य’ (the founder preceptor of non-dualistic school of philosophy) is not correct. For, Shri Śaṅkara did not found or establish a new school of philosophy called Advaita. Even before him many teachers, in their respective works or commentaries, had clarified the truth that in the Upanishads, Advaita alone has been expounded. In truth, the task that was undertaken and performed successfully by Shri Śaṅkara was to analyse and refute the pseudo non-dualistic doctrines which were not having a traditional methodology of teaching, and at the same time to revive and resuscitate the pristine pure Advaitic methodology of pedagogics and re-establish such a pure Vedāntic philosophy in its own eternal glory and put it on its high pedestal.

(d) Some others have spread the canard that Shri Śaṅkara is a ‘षण्मत्त्वापनाचार्य’ (founder-preceptor of six different philosophies). But in Shri Śaṅkara’s original Bhāṣyās neither any discussion on various philosophies like Shaiva, Vaishnava, Śāktya, Gānapatya, etc., nor the spiritual practices or disciplines of their followers have been examined anywhere. It being so, since it is easy to decide as to what could have been the background for the misconception of those who believed that - ‘‘Shri Śaṅkara
was predominantly a follower of Shaiva school of philosophy and hence in order to refute his philosophy it was necessary to establish the concept of Vishnu Sarvâtamatwa (Vishnu, one of the three Purânic or mythological deities of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva or Maheshwara, being the supreme Lord), - we need not touch upon that controversy here at all.

(e) Now one more misconception among the scholars remains to be examined by us. Although Shri Śaṅkara has very clearly refuted, as already mentioned by us, many non-dualistic schools of philosophy which were contemporaneous with his own as also those which were rampant prior to his times, in recent times many Vyākhyaṇakāras (post-Śaṅkara sub-commentators) have embraced any one of those schools and written their commentaries to depict and declare in the manner -‘This alone is the genuine Śaṅkara’s Philosophy’; some present-day scholars are upholding and championing the opinions of those Vyākhyaṇakāras and are vociferously proclaiming in the manner - ‘These alone are Shri Śaṅkara’s teachings.’ It is to be seen that Shri Sūrēśwarāchārya, one of the direct disciples of Shri Śaṅkarāchārya, in his own works of Naishkarmyasiddhi, Taittirīya Vārtika, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Vārtika has refuted many ancient Advaitic schools. It being so, it becomes evidently clear that there is no guarantee that all the so-called Advaitins have invariably followed or adopted the Siddhānta (philosophical doctrines) belonging to the traditional line of teachings of Shri Śaṅkarā’s school. Even so, merely because the Vyākhyaṇa Prasthānas (methodologies of post-Śaṅkara period) which are very much in vogue and popular to boot,
as also some other independent concepts, have acknowledged *Advaita* (non-dualism) alone, it need not be gain­said that to conclude that all of them are in complete consonance with Shri Śaṅkara’s genuine teachings is a colossal blunder. Many of those methodologies or doctrines which Shri Śaṅkara had himself refuted in the past have, phoenix-like, assumed new forms and have been popularised. Many of those *Jijnāsus* (seekers of Self-Knowledge) who are not themselves mature and discrim­inative are likely to be deluded to believe that they alone are the genuine teachings of Shri Śaṅkara. Therefore, some of the philosophical doctrines which had been re­futed by Shri Śaṅkara in his extant original *Bhāshyas*, we will enumerate and exemplify:

(1) Some among the *Karma Mīmāṁsakas* who did not acknowledge any of the ancient *Vedāntic* methodologies or philosophies were saying: ‘The *Svarga* (Heaven) that is attained by means of *Karma* (*Vedic* rites and rituals) was blissful and hence apart from it there is no other *Mōksha* (freedom or liberated state). We should reckon all the knowledge that is found in the *Jñānakānda* to be *Arthavāda* (eulogistic statements mentioned in a secondary sense only); that means, they are mentioned to praise those *Karmas* stipulated in the *Vedas*.

(2) Apart from the above *Virakarmavādins* there were a second group of disputants who were also known as *Mīmāṁsakas* (people well-versed in logical and gram­matical or syntactical interpretations of the subtle teach­ings of the *Vedic* literature) who used to argue in the manner: ‘By means of Karma alone Mōksha too which the Vedāntins propound can invariably be at­
tained.' What they meant was: Because of the reason that by means of Kämya Karma (rituals performed with a desire to acquire a particular fruit) Subhaphala (auspicious, beneficial fruit) accrues and by means of Nishiddha Karma (prohibited actions) Aśubhaphala (undesirable or unwanted, calamitous result) accrues, the practitioner should give up both of them and constantly be performing Nitya Karmas (daily routine rituals like Sandhyāvandana etc.). By this the defect of Pratyavāya, a penalty for not performing or giving up any Vedic Karmas that may entail, will be avoided; and since there is no cause whatsoever for acquiring another body (i.e. to get rebirth) after the fall of the present body (i.e. after death) without any other effort, easily one can attain Moksha, which is of the nature of being established in Ātmaswarūpa (the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness of the Self).

(3) Those people who brought forward the doctrine that - 'Both Karma and Jñāna are taught in the Vedas alone (Vedākta) and hence to give both sections dealing with them equal status and value would be reasonable. Therefore, blending both Jñāna and Karma the seeker can practise both to attain Moksha' - were the Samuchhayavādins. In their theory, between the words Jñāna, meaning Upāsana (meditation) and Tattwajñāna (Knowledge of the Absolute Reality) the fact as to which of these two meanings one should choose was not clarified. It was also not very clear as to which of the two meanings, i.e. Upāsana or Tattwajñāna, was to be taken in the predominant sense or which was subsidiary to which. To a great extent, those who reckoned the word Jñāna to mean Upāsana were in the majority, it appears. Whatever may be the
fact in this regard, it has to be noted that Shri Śaṅkara has pointed out the defect of Mōksha being rendered Anitya (non-eternal) in all the various theories of the Karmavādins, because of the sound reasons that - (a) By the practice of a blending of the Jñāna and Karma the resultant fruit of Mōksha will be a Kārya (effect of an action); (b) for all things which are born (i.e. as effects of a cause) destruction is unavoidable. At present Advaita Vedāntins, who argue out that either exclusively by Karmas or by a blending of Jñāna and Karmas one gets Mōksha, do not exist. Because of the reason that among the new Vedāntic schools like Dvaita (dualism), Vishishtādvaita (special or supra - non-dualism) etc., this Jñāna-Karma-Samucchaya doctrine is to be found, we need not examine them separately.

(4) The fourth type of Vedāntins are those who propound that - ‘By means of Upāsana alone attainment of Mōksha is possible; apart from Upāsana there is no other Jñāna whatsoever.’ Some among them were saying that by means of Upāsana the removal of Avidyā too was possible. It is the staunch belief of Upāsakas that since the Śruti says: “देवो भूत्वा देवान्येति” (meaning - Being a deity one attains the merger with the deities), if the Upāsaka attains Sākshākāra (materialisation of the deity) by meditating in the manner - ‘The deity is verily myself’ - after the fall of the body he attains Devatāsāyujya (merger with the deity of his meditation). Although in this matter Shri Śaṅkara has no difference of opinion, it is his argument that the doctrine which propounds :- ‘By means of Upāsana which is a kind or form of mental action (Mānasa Karma) the final and eternal
Mokşaphala can be attained’ - is irrational or illogical. Because of the reason that by means of Upāsana the fruit that accrues is Adrśiṣṭa (invisible, posthumously attained), the Śruti sentence which says - ‘अन्त्र ब्रह्म समस्तुः’ (meaning, here itself he becomes one with Brahman) - the Drśiṣṭaphala (a fruit to be attained here and now), how at all such an immediate fruit can be attained by such means? For this objection there is no satisfactory solution in this philosophy. Moreover, the doctrine that - ‘By means of Upāsana alone the destruction of Avidyā occurs’ - is opposed to Yukti (logical devices) and Anubhava (universal Intuitive Experience) ; who can accept the theory that - ‘Avidyā, which prompts (deludes) one to misconceive a rope to be a snake, can be got rid of merely by an imagination or conceptual knowledge of the type - ‘This is a rope’?’

(5) “Because Brahman (the Absolute Reality) is Nishprapāñcha (devoid of the world of duality), if the entire world of duality or diversity is ‘dissolved’ by means of Upāsana one attains Moksha (Beatitude, Liberation)” - disputants who propounded this kind of a theory were the ‘Upasanāvādins’. They belonged to the fifth category. Shri Śaṅkara has refuted this doctrine in his Sūtra Bhāṣya by a logical device of the type - ‘If the Prapañcha (the world of duality) is Satya (real), no one can possibly dissolve it ; if it were a mere false appearance, this appearance conjured up or projected by Avidyā cannot possibly be removed by anything at any time other than Tattwajñāna (Intuitive Knowledge of the Absolute Reality).’” Unfortunately, even to this day this above doctrinaire theory is in vogue among some Advaitins
in a different, mutated form. Even today among several Vedántins the deep-seated belief that by a special kind of spiritual practice called ‘Laya Chintana (contemplation on the dissolution of the world of duality)’ the seeker invariably attains Móksha. Why, in the very popular text called Vivekachúḍāmáni which is believed by one and all to be the genuine work of Shri Śaṅkarāchārya, there are three verses, viz.:

अकृत्वा दृश्यविलयमः ज्ञात्वा तत्त्वमात्मनः: । बाह्यशब्दः कुतो मुक्तिरुक्मितमात्रफलेऽर्जुणाम् ।१६३।।

Meaning: Without attaining Vilaya (total dissolution) of the Driśyaprapaṇcha (visible world of diversity), without cognizing the Ātmatattwa (the Absolute Reality of the Self), by means of external words alone which have merely the pronunciation or recitation as their fruit, how at all can human beings attain Mukti (i.e. Liberation)?

अकृत्वा शुन्यासारमगत्वाखिलभूतिश्रीयमः: । राजाहमिति शाब्दात्रो राजा पवित्रमहति ।१६४।।

Meaning: Without killing the enemies, without acquiring the wealth (kingdom) of the whole universe, one does not become an emperor (merely) by uttering the words - ‘I am an emperor,’ is it not?

आप्तोक्ति खननं तथोपरिशिलाद्वल्कर्षणं स्वीकृति निक्षेपः समपेक्षाते न हि बहिःशाब्देस्तु निर्गच्छति । तद्वेद्धाविदोपदेशभावनादिभिर्भव्यं मायाकार्यतिरेलिं स्वममलं तत्त्वं न दुर्योगिमि: ।१६५।।

Meaning: Without needing pre-conditions like - advice given by well-wishers, digging up, removing the
covering slab etc. on top, picking up the treasure box - merely by resorting to illogical or irrational means the treasure cannot come out.

If we ratiocinate or ruminate over the meaning of these verses, the clear-cut opinion to the effect - “By mere Sravana (listening to the scriptural instructions), or mere Manana (reasoning on them) one does not attain the Absolute Reality; by devices like Laya Chintana etc. It accrues” - becomes evident. In fact, I have published a separate text dealing with this rarely-known secret that - “This text of Vivekachūḍāmani, really speaking, is not the genuine work of Shri Śaṅkara; but it is the work of one Śaṅkarānanda (belonging to the 15th or 16th century A.D.)” - after a great deal of research. Let it be; how at all can we accept that Shri Śaṅkara who has himself condemned a particular doctrinaire theory, can support and champion its cause so stoutly?

(6) Further, there were some ancient Vedāntins who used to argue that although merely by Viśvaśravana (listening to scriptural sentences) - directly the Ātmajñāna does not accrue; even so, if that Jñāna itself is repeated (Āvṛtti) over and over again one attains its Sākshātkāra (materialisation or actualisation). This is opposed to Shri Śaṅkara’s teaching which is based on time-honoured traditional methodology which propounds: “For superior class of qualified seekers merely by virtue of Śravana the Intuitive Experience of the Self (Ātmānubhava) accrues; once that Intuitive Experience accrues, there is nothing whatsoever remaining to be done by that Jñāni.” Even so, both the post-Śaṅkara schools of Vedāntins viz. Bhāmāti, Pañchapādikā, who are sub-commentators
on Shri Śaṅkara’s Bhāṣyas, have fully supported this theory. Even to this day there are many Vedāntins who staunchly believe that this pseudo-doctrine (called in Vedāntic parlance Prasankhyānaṇavāda) is acceptable to Shri Śaṅkara!

(7) There were still some other ancient Vedāntins who used to propound that - "By mere Vākyairavaṇa (listening to scriptural sentences) or by Vākyajanyajñāna (knowledge engendered by listening to the scriptural sentence), the Anubhava (Intuitive Experience) does not accrue; but if the seeker makes Abhyāsa (constant practice) of both Vākyajanyajñāna and any Yukti (logical device) in consonance with it, he attains Sākṣhāṭkāra!" This doctrine also has been refuted by Shri Śaṅkara in his Sūtra Bhāṣya. It is his teaching that Āvṛtti (repetition) of Vākyairavaṇa and its concomitant Yukti means really the Abhyāsa (practice) alone of giving up or sublating the Ānāmāṁśa (aspect of not-Self) which is Adhyārōpita (super-imposed upon or misconceived in) Ātman (our essence of Pure Being-Consciousness of Self).

(8) There was yet another school of Vedāntins who used to argue that - "Vākyajñāna signifies or conveys Samsrīshṭārtha (a meaning brought about by the conjointed meanings of various words and groups of words). To wit, to the meaning of each and every word a relationship with the meaning of another word arises. Therefore, the complete purport of the sentence signifies the Samsrīshṭārtha alone. By the Abhyāsa (repeated practice) of that Vākyajanyajñāna (knowledge brought about or produced by the sentence), a new Jñāna or Knowledge with Asamsrīshṭārtha (meaning not brought about con-
jointedly by its various parts or words) has necessarily to get born afresh!" Even today there exist disputants (followers of this school) who adhere to this dogmatic theory that - "The Vākya (scriptural sentence) instructs an Akhaṇḍārtha (conjointed, plenary meaning) which the seeker is expected to cognize by means of Anubhava (Intuitive Experience)."

(9) Vāsanānirōdha Vādins are one more school of Vedāntins. Their opinion is: "Ātman is the witness to Avasthāraya (the three states of Consciousness, viz. waking, dream and deep sleep), is it not? "Because of the reason that these states come and go one after another, they are Mithyā (false, unreal); one who is the witness to them is verily myself" - thus the Śāstra stipulates that the seeker has to achieve the Nirōdha (suppression or repression) of the Avasthāvāsana (latent or potential impressions of the Avasthās)." Although it is true that Avasthās are Mithyā (false, unreal), for the doctrinaire theory that - "The Śāstra stipulates by way of Vidhi (injunctions) that the seeker should practise Vāsanānirōdha (suppression of latent impressions) in order to remove or dislodge the Vāsanā to the effect that the Avasthās are really existing" - there is no support of the genuine followers of Shri Śāṅkara's traditional school of philosophy. Even today there exist these disputants who propound that - Vāsanākshaya (exhaustion or total removal of Vāsanās) is a Mokshaśādhana (spiritual practice for attainment of Liberation). There are some of these Vāsanākshayavādins who assert by the authority of a sentence appearing in Yogavāśishṭha that - "वासनातानवं राम मुक्तिरित्यमिष्ठियते" - as also who believe in the authority and
authenticity of texts like *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi* etc. which profess to propound the *Tattwa*. This doctrine is opposed to Śrī Śaṅkara’s teaching that - “By means of spiritual practices like *Śravaṇa* etc. *Tattwajñāna* of the essential nature of *Avagati* (meaning, *Anubhava* or Intuitive Experience) accrues, and consequent to that alone *Vāsanās* too may be got rid of.”

(10) There were also some *Vedāntins* who affirmed that - “Because of the reason that by mere *Vākyashrāvāṇa*, *Mōksha* cannot accrue as taught in the *Pāṇāśāyanal* philosophy (i.e. *Yoga* philosophy) the seeker should practise ‘Chittavṛitti Nirōdha’ (suppression of mental concepts).” This doctrine of these disputants has been refuted in the *Brihadāraṇyaka Bhāṣya*. Even today there do exist many followers of this doctrine who assert that - “Mere deliberation on *Vedāntavākyya* or mere *Manana* (its ratiocination) is not enough; it is quite necessary for the aspirant to attain *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* (a trance in which there are no mental thoughts whatsoever).” For this doctrine there is full support of *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi*.

In fact, the tenet preaching ‘*Tattwa Sākshātkāra*’ is itself opposed to the Vedānta Siddhānta propounded by the traditional school of Śrī Śaṅkara. For, the word *Sākshātkāra* (actualisation or materialisation) connotes an objective entity which is separated from us in respect of space, time and causation categories to be directly cognized by overcoming these intervening causes or impediments. But *Ātman* is the Witnessing Consciousness (*Sākshi*) even to these categories of space, time and causation; in truth, He is not at all separated or distinct from anything, and this is a logical device in consonance
with universal experience at the Intuitive level. Where is the need to stress the fact that the doctrinaire teaching that - 'Ātman who is verily the essential nature of Pure Being of all of us is separated from us' - can never be in consonance with logical arguments and Intuitive Experience?

(11) One more school of Vedāntins of the ancient times was propounding that - 'If one attains mere Sākshākāra it is not enough; because of the reason that Ātman just now (i.e. in this present birth or embodied state) is distinct by virtue of his association with this body, he attains Mukti called Videhamukti only after the fall of this adjunct of the body.' Even today there are many Vedāntins who affirm that - 'Jīvanmukti is Gouna' (attaining Liberation here and now while in this body is of a secondary kind), while Videhamukti alone is the Mukhyamukti (Liberation in the predominant sense). This is opposed to Shri Śaṅkara's teaching, viz. 'Jīvanmukti or Sadyōmukti is itself the Mukhyamukti; Sasharīratwa (embodiedness) is mere Mithyābhimāna (false pride due to delusion in owning or possessing the body, signifying one's innate identification with it); these truths can be realized in consonance with Śruti (scriptural statements), Yukti (logical devices utilized in the scriptures themselves) and Anubhava (universal Intuitive Experience).'

From all these various examples it becomes clearly evident that - 'To Shri Śaṅkara's traditional teaching of - 'Here and now in this life-span we can cognize, discern that the miseries or calamities of Samsāra are false, unreal appearances' - all the above-mentioned schools of philosophy are invariably opposed.'
The Vedānta that has been propounded by Shri Śaṅkarāchārya follows the truth that - 'What really exists is not destroyed or does not become extinct; what really does not exist, can never come into being or become existent.' He has established and expounded this truth by demonstrating its veracity on the strength of its being in full agreement with Śruti, Yukti and Anubhava, as already stated. Therefore, we should not get befuddled and bewitched by Vedāntic statements made by pseudo-Vedāntins or by recent post-Śaṅkara Vyākhyānapraśṭhānas (methodologies employed in sub-commentaries on Shri Śaṅkara's Bhāṣyas but totally opposed to them), which confuse us by presenting before us a mind-boggling, brain-racking maze of Śruti sentences and dialectical devices; first and foremost listen to the genuine Vedāntic teachings only which Shri Śaṅkara has determined and depicted in his Bhāṣyas. Now herefore we will endeavour to delineate as to which traditional methodology Shri Śaṅkara has followed in and through his Prasthānatraya Bhāṣyas and how he has enabled us to cognize his teachings to be fully in consonance with our own Intuitive Experience.

III. Śaṅkara’s Methodology vs. Other Alien Methodologies

Shri Śaṅkara was not a founder-preceptor of Advaita school of philosophy; even before him the methodology of his traditional school of philosophy co-existed with other ancient systems. Shri Gauḍapāda, on the pretext of explaining Māṇḍūkya Upanishad [the smallest with 12
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verses only, but the most difficult and the subtlest among the Upanishads, pregnant with all the secret teachings and esoteric imports], has brought out clearly the extra-ordinary tenets of this unique school with a rich heritage of time-tested and time-honoured methodology of expounding the subtle truths. Thereafter this school of philosophy acquired great value. The preceptor belonging to this tradition who made it famous all over the country and exposed the limitations and lapses in the alien philosophies of his period with a view to bringing down their popularity was Shri Śaṅkarāchārya. Let us now consider the topic of how Shri Śaṅkara made this Advaita philosophy shine resplendently like a well-polished gold ornament.

(1) The ancient schools of Vedānta were, in the main, following the method of Mīmāṃsakas (a school founded by Jaimini who were exponents in syntactic, grammatical sciences) in the matter of Vedapramāṇa (treating the Vedas as the authoritative texts) and were arguing that - "Vedānta (i.e. the Upanishadic lore) signifies a Tattwa (Reality) which is not within the ambit or purview of the empirical valid means like Pratyaksha (perception), Anumāna (inference) etc." But in their philosophical doctrines there was enough scope for atheists or non-believers in the Vedas to argue in the manner - "Because of the reason that this Tattwa is not at all cognizable by valid means like perception etc., there can be a reasonable doubt of the type - 'Does this Tattwa really exist or not?' - to be raised." But the one system of philosophy - which presented before its listeners or students the Absolute Reality (Paramārtha) in a manner
so that neither the *Vedas* were deprived of their authority and authenticity nor any reasonable doubt could possibly arise with regard to the *Tattwa* it propounds - was that tradition which belonged to the line of teachers like Shri Śaṅkara. The unique and profound teaching of this ancient system is: "Because *Brahman* is verily our *Ātman*, the *Śruti* teaches that - "अन्तः ब्रह्म समस्तते" (meaning, *Brahman* can be cognized here and now), our Self can be cognized here and now (in our present life-span); although this *Ātman* is not perceptible to our senses, mind etc., because of the reason that He is *Swayamsiddha* (self-established) and is of the very essence of *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience as the Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss) He is cognizable to the exclusive, extra-ordinary *Pramāṇa* of the *Vedas."

(2) Just like the *Mīmāṃsakas*, the followers of ancient systems of philosophy were defining the word *Āchārya* to mean 'one who explains and enables us to cognize the *Vedārtha* (meaning of the *Vedas*); the present-day *Vedāntins* too say the same thing. As the axiom says: "आचिनोत्यपि शास्त्राणि द्वाचारे स्थापयत्यपि। स्वयमाचारते यस्मादाचार्यः परिकीर्तिते" - meaning, "Commenting on the *Śāstras* and explaining their profound meaning, inculcating and establishing their teachings or tenets so that they become a way of life and he himself adopting them in his life - these are indeed the extra-ordinary qualities of an *Āchārya.*" But, apart from these the one more unique and special feature of this *Advaitic* system of philosophy is: "*Vedānta* does not teach only religious practices that one has to adopt in his daily routine. To propound the
Paramāmatattwa (the Absolute, Transcendental Reality which is the Supreme Self of every one) which is the Ultimate Reality (substratum) of the world of duality and to enable the true seeker to cognize It here and now, is its special feature.” As the Śruti sentence says: “न नरेणार्येण प्रोक्त एव
सुविद्येः बहुधा विन्यमानः : अनन्यप्रोक्ते गतिरस्त नास्ति अणीयान्
ह्वतवर्मणउप्रमाणात्” - (Kaṭha 1-2-8) - the purport being - “If
a teacher, who has a commonplace or general knowledge
of the Paramāmatattwa that is taught in Vedānta, pro-
pounds or instructs It, It cannot be cognized. This is a
Tattwa which provides a great deal of scope for doubts
of the type of - ‘Whether It is existing or not? Whether
It is an agent of action or not?’ But a true preceptor
who is capable of cognizing Intuitively in the manner -
‘I am verily that Tattwa or Brahman’ - when such a
Guru imparts this Intuitive Knowledge, there is no room
for anyone to complain that he did not cognize It; for,
just like the preceptor, for the Shishya (student, disciple)
too the Intuitive Experience to the effect - ‘This Paratattwa
(Absolute Reality of Brahman) is verily myself’ - accrues
spontaneously and directly. But if others propound It,
then It appears to be difficult to know or cognize, being
subtler than a microscopic atom.” For that reason alone,
Shri Kṛishṇa has instructed Arjuna in the manner: “उप-
देख्यति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिन्त्वत्वदर्शनः” - [the purport being, those
Jñānis or Realized souls who have not only acquired the
mere Śāstraic knowledge but also have directly (Intuitive-
ly) cognized the Reality of the Self to culminate in their
Intuitive Experience here and now will instruct about this
Jñāna (Self-Knowledge) properly; on their instructing, the delusion that you entertain just now, will not remain at all]. This is, in truth, the spiritual instruction of the Advaitic philosophy followed by Shri Śaṅkara.

(3) The adherents of other schools of philosophy were instructing about certain special Śādhanas (spiritual practices or disciplines) which were suitable and helpful to reach the goal that their respective systems propounded. Only if a practitioner practised those special Śādhanas alone, the fruit that they mentioned could be attained. Whereas in the system which Shri Śaṅkara has accepted and championed, that Jñāna (Intuitive Knowledge) which is exclusively Vedāntavākyajanya (produced or born from the sentence of Vedāntas or Upanishads) is exclusively the principal spiritual practice for Mukti; for, the Paramarthatattwa (Absolute Reality of the Self) eternally exists; It has to be per force cognized by means of Jñāna (Intuitive Knowledge) and not to be attained afresh by means of any particular Śādhana. This is an extraordinary and profound spiritual instruction.

(4) In the non-Śaṅkara systems of philosophy it is taught that Jīvatwa (soulhood) is a bondage that has ensued to all of us human beings. The doctrine of these various schools is: “Just as people who are afflicted by any disease have to be administered the proper medicine and thereby the disease has to be cured or got rid of, similarly in order to rid the Jīvas of the bondage of ‘Jīvatwa’ they should be persuaded or prevailed upon to practise Śādhanas stipulated in the Vedas.” But it is not taught in that manner in Shri Śaṅkara’s methodology, which propounds: “Jīvatwa is, in truth, Avidyākalpita
(conjured up or projected due to ignorance) ; just as to
drive away the snake imagined or misconceived in a rope
there is no need of a stick, similarly in order to rid
ourselves of this \textit{Avidyākalpita} \textit{Jīvatwa} there is no need
of any \textit{Sādhanā} whatsoever ; in fact, \textit{Sādhanā} is of no
avail here. If only the \textit{Jñāna} (Intuitive Knowledge) of the
essential nature of \textit{Anubhava} (Intuitive Experience) to the
effect - 'I am verily \textit{Brahman}' - as instructed in the
\textit{Vedāntic} texts accrues, the deep-seated delusion of the
type of - 'I am a \textit{Jīva}, a \textit{Samsāri} (transmigratory soul)'
is removed, destroyed. In the ultimate analysis, \textit{Sādhanā}
is not meant to remove \textit{Jīvatwa}, but for \textit{Jñāna} to ac-
crue.''

(5) What is meant by \textit{Avidyā}, \textit{Ajñāna} ? With re-
gard to this question there was no unanimity of opinion
among the other non-Śaṅkara schools ; even \textit{Ajñāna} too
had to be known only from the \textit{Śāstra}. If the \textit{Avidyā} that
has at present accrued to us has to be removed, it is quite
necessary to practise the \textit{Sādhanā} stipulated in the \textit{Śāstra}.
In the doctrines of some \textit{Vedāntins} there are two types
of \textit{Avidyā}s viz. (a) \textit{Naisargika} (natural) \textit{Ātmāvidya} (igno-
rance enveloping the Self) and (b) \textit{Anāmāvidya} (igno-
rance enveloping the not-Self), which is \textit{Āgantuka} (ad-
ventitious). ‘This latter \textit{Avidyā} which is adventitious and
pertains to \textit{Anāman} - for example, that \textit{Avidyā} which is
the cause for the wrong or false knowledge of a rope
being reckoned as a snake - is removed just as, by our
determining in the manner - 'This is a rope alone', the
delusion that it was a snake disappears. In the same way,
this adventitious \textit{Avidyā} (i.e. \textit{Āgantuka} \textit{Anāmāvidya}) im-
mediately disappears by means of \textit{Tattwajñāna}. But in the
case of Ātmāvidyā which is Anādi (beginningless, existing from time immemorial) it is not so. Even after it disappears by virtue of Tattwajñāna, due to Vāsana (latent impressions) it may once again recur; due to this recurrence, Jñāna too may have a set-back. Therefore, Jñānabhyaśa (repeated practice of Self-Knowledge) has to be undertaken.” Thus these proponents of the above-mentioned doctrine were affirming. Shri Sureshwarāchārya, one of the direct disciples of Shri Śaṅkarāchārya, following in the footsteps of his preceptor, has vehemently refuted the doctrine of these disputants raising questions like - “What is the meaning of saying that there are two Avidyās?” “How at all the Avidyā which is once destroyed by Vidyā can later on, once again, be resuscitated or can become alive?”

Whereas Shri Śaṅkara has described the fruit that accrues from Ātmavijñāna (Intuitive Knowledge of the Self) without any trace of doubt on the validity of the Śruti : “पुरुष एवेदं विश्रं कर्म ततो ब्रह्म परामृतम्, एतद्वेद निहितं गुहायम् सोपविद्यायन्यि विकिरतीह सोमय ॥” - (Muṇḍaka 2-1-10) - in the following manner - “Karma, Tapas (austerity) of the nature of Jñāna - all this is verily Parabrahman (Supreme Ultimate Reality) alone, Paramapurusha (Supreme Self) alone called Akshara (imperishable, immutable) which is extremely excellent, of the very essence of Amṛita (immortality) and Sarvakāraṇa (cause of all things). One who attains this in his Intuitive Experience in the manner - ‘That Parabrahman is verily myself. In every Jīva’s heart I am residing (existing) as his Ātman’, he will untie the Avidyāgranthi (knot of ignorance) here
itself while alive; he gets this Avidyā, along with all its various concomitant Vāsanās, completely destroyed.”

(6) Vākyārthanirnaya (Determination of the True Purport of Vedānta Vākya): Each school of ancient Vedāntins were determining the meaning of the Vedānta Vākyas (Upanishadic sentences) by deliberating upon or elaborately examining the Mīmāṁsā Niyamas (rules and regulations as per the science of Mīmāṁsā or rational interpretation or etymology) of the type of six kinds of Tātparyalingas (symbols of ultimate purport) like Upakrama (introductory part comprising the subject-matter to be propounded) and Upasamhāra (conclusive part proving or arriving at the desired conclusion) etc., as also the etymological rules like Śruti, Linga, Sthāna etc. and were formulating their own respective philosophical doctrines or tenets. Because of the reason that features like - choosing Vedānta Vākyas as per their whims and fancies, determining the meaning of the sentences by virtue of their intellectual skills - were common to all of them, there was no possibility of finding a genuine testing touchstone to determine as to which of these philosophical systems was the best among all of them and why. But Shri Śaṅkara drew the attention of his listeners or followers by asking them the pertinent question: “By following my time-honoured traditional methodology check up whether, according to the commentary I have made now, the subject-matter culminates in your Anubhava or not?”

It is quite possible for any particular philosophical theory to be interpreted somehow or the other by taking or quoting any particular Vedāntic sentence as the valid, authoritative source and on the strength of grammar,
lexicon etc. according to one's whims and fancies. But if the meaning or purport which they enunciate has to yield a fruit in course of time or in a different world or region, how at all could it be determined whether their commentary is correct or not? This problem is not to be found in Shri Śaṅkara's system or methodology. To the person (genuine seeker) who has attained the Intuitive Knowledge of the meaning of the *Upanishadic* sentence - 'All this is verily Brahman; I am Brahman' - here and now the Absolute Reality is realized in his own Intuitive Experience; this spiritual instruction is in consonance with universal experience too. How at all can anyone negate or refute it?

(7) *Paramatakhanḍana* (Refutation of the Opponents' Opinions): It was further a common feature among all schools of philosophy not only to determine the meaning of the *Vedānta Vākyas* to suit their own respective systems by following *Mīmāṁsā Nyāyas* (axiomatic principles as per the etymological science), but also to undertake the task of demonstrating in the manner - 'The other philosophies are opposed to Śrūtis and Smṛtis'; on the basis of certain *Yuktis* (logical devices) innovated or imagined by themselves, to refute the opponents' doctrines. It was not possible for people with common intelligence to determine as to which system or methodology among the disputants of this type is in consonance with Śruti and Yukti and which is opposed. But after Shri Śaṅkara demonstrated the truth that - "His own traditional methodology is unique inasmuch as it is supported by *Sārvatrika Anubhava* (universal experience) as also the Śrūtis and logic unopposed to them are in full agreement
with this *Anubhava*’ - the alien, rival systems lost their verve and vehemence.

In the olden times many *Bhāshyakāras* (commentators) had written their respective commentaries to suit their own systems. But none among them is extant today; whereas, the *Bhāshyas* which Shri Śaṅkara wrote are extant and intact even to this day and are respected and revered by one and all. Because of this reason that this Āchārya’s name is thus famous all over the world, it is the implicit belief of many authors that merely if it is stated that a particular work is Śaṅkarāchārya’s work it would invariably be given universal recognition and respect. Therefore, many an author has written a colophon to his own text of the type - *Śaṅkarabhagavatpāda Virachite.* Does it not amount to showing disrespect towards, and dishonouring, Shri Śaṅkara? The *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience) which this Āchārya has shown or depicted is acceptable to all people in all regions and at all times, and hence it is universally acceptable indeed. Just as Shri Kṛṣṇa has stated in the *Bhagavadgītā*:

“यज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेव यात्सि पाण्डव” - [meaning, if you cognize (this Reality), once again, as before your *Ajñāna* can never recur !], the *Jñāna* that Shri Śaṅkara has expounded destroys once and for all the *Ajñāna* (ignorance). It is, in fact, not possible for anyone anywhere at anytime to shake his head in negation of this teaching!

Anybody may raise a question here: “Maybe this *Jñāna* is acceptable universally as it is based on everyone’s experience; but, is there any benefit or utility for human beings in general in their workaday life?” But we ask a counter-question in this context: ‘What is meant by
workaday life of man?" The usual query of the type - 'My son has to pass his M.A. examination with distinction; from your Vedānta study is there any benefit accruing to him?' - is not worthy of being included among the relevant explanations of this word Jīvāna (life). For, passing any examination is not at all the goal of human life; by such graduation the life does not acquire any great value. Irrespective of his passing the M.A. examination or not, every human being wants and seeks peace of mind; in truth, that alone is the principal and prime goal of human existence. Therefore, we should all agree that if by means of Vedāntavijñāna (Intuitive Knowledge propounded by the Upanishadic lore) such a supreme mental peace can be attained, then it is definitely useful, beneficial in our life; then alone, it will be fit for the honourable, respectful name of Brahmavidyā (Intuitive Knowledge, greater than all other knowledges). Whether it is an internationally famous institution and a seat of all great sciences or knowledges, even if one obtains a priced position or title from that institution, but he does not get any mental peace and happiness from it - then can we reasonably and honestly say that there is any benefit or utility worth the name for his life in general? To believe that this mental peace and happiness is obtained from wealth or money, especially, is too ridiculous indeed. Man cannot possibly conquer or overcome his mortality by means of any practical means which does not give him mental peace and satisfaction. As per the Śruti sentence: "न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेनैके अमृतत्त्वमानसः" - [Even if we fulfil any great challenging task we cannot attain Amṛitatwa (immortality); even if
we get a prosperous progeny and attain an extra-ordinary fame for our entire family, by that we cannot attain immortality; even if we acquire an immense and immeasurable wealth, this Amritatwa cannot be gained from it. If man has to get freed, liberated from his present mortal nature of being and attain this Amritatwa, he has invariably to renounce the whole gamut of Anäman (not-Self) and has to attain the Vijñâna (Intuitive Knowledge) of his own essential nature of Pure Being which is the Absolute, Ultimate Reality; only when he gets established in It fully, he attains the real Amritatwa and not otherwise. Only then he acquires eternal Shânti (peace). Why, his very purpose of life becomes fulfilled. A great Brahmin (a Jñâni) by name ‘Yâjñavalkya’ has imparted this Vedântavijñâna even to a great emperor like Janaka and has assured him in the manner - “अपरं वै जनक प्रातोसि” - giving him the boon of fearlessness; this fearlessness (Abhaya), this Amritatwa, this Shâšwata Shânti (eternal peace) which is yielded by Vedântic Knowledge while one is alive, in the present embodied state itself - such a fruit who can deny as not needed in his own life?

Shri Śaṅkara has demonstrated the truth that - “This fruit (of Immortality) can be attained commonly by everyone while alive, in this present birth, merely by acquiring this Jñâna (Self-Knowledge or Brahmavidyā).” Although many others wrote their Bhâshyas like Shri Śaṅkara in Sanskrit alone on these very Upanishads, no one had in the past depicted and demonstrated like him that the Tattva (Absolute Reality of the Self) is in consonance or unison with everyone’s Anubhava (Intuitive Experience). Therefore, let us daily remember and
revere this great seer and saint worshipped and venerated everywhere and seek His grace and guidance so as to attain genuine Mumukshutwa (desire to attain Liberation) ; we can ardently believe that by His grace we will surely and certainly, in due course of time, at least, acquire this Vedāntavijñāna and its fruit of Amrītatwa, Abhaya and Shāśhwata Manaśśānti.

IV. EMPIRICAL SCIENCES

We have deliberated upon the mutual differences between the traditional methodology of Vedānta which was followed by Shri Śaṅkara and the remaining schools of Vedānta philosophy. Now we have to take up the consideration of Jñāna (Intuition, Self-Knowledge) and Ajñāna (ignorance of It) as expounded in Vedānta. But before we go into it, we will have to know, as a matter of necessity, the empirical Jñāna (intellectual knowledge of a particular subject-matter) and Ajñāna (its ignorance or lack of knowledge).

When a child is born, first of all its tongue starts functioning. Among some communities, the practice of smearing a cloth piece dipped in a particular kind of oil on its tongue is in vogue. Thereafter along with the tongue the eye as a sense organ starts functioning. The child is having an immense curiosity in seeing light ; in the beginning it keeps on seeing its mother’s face in the light. As it grows up, the remaining sense-organs too, one after another, start functioning. Even after we have all grown up, we perceive the external world through the sense-organs alone and acquire its knowledge. As such
knowledge gets amassed; whatever ignorance - to wit, the opposite of Jñāna (knowledge) we had with regard to the world and its objects - gets extinct by stages. Thus as and when knowledge increases, inversely the ignorance gets destroyed; even so, there is no final stage being reached when we can confidently say: “Here (now) all my Ajñāna has completely disappeared.”

As our knowledge goes on increasing we start getting a Samshaya (doubt) of the type - “This knowledge of mine - is it correct or not? Does this object exist as I have known it to be or not?” Because of reasons like objects being similar to one another, or they being too microscopic or subtle or being either too far away or too near - we may get Viparītajñāna (wrong or false knowledge) about the object we wish to know. In that event, in order to purify or clarify our Jñāna we may use Tarka (logic); for this exercise we need Manas (mind) also.

To assist the sense-organs which the common run of people utilize for the sake of acquiring knowledge, the scientists use instruments like binoculars, telescope or microscope etc. They keep on finding the essential nature of subtle matter, the state in which it exists at a particular point of time and its functions or behaviour. Because of the reason that as soon as we acquire the knowledge of externally-perceived things some among them appear to be dear and desirable while some others appear to be repulsive and undesirable, with regard to them we quite naturally get either desire or hatred, respectively. Then as and when our desire increases we engage ourselves in acquiring and amassing desirable things around us, while when our hatred increases we endeavour to keep away the
undesirable objects, and this becomes our natural habit. Children, once when they eat a bit of alum mistaking it to be sugar, even reject real sugar; but when they have been able to cognize the distinction between alum and sugar with regard to their essential natures and qualities, they get to know how to use both of them. In the same manner, elders too, as and when their Itchhā (desire) and Dwesha (hatred) increase, go on amassing the knowledge of the perceived objects and by virtue of that Vidyābhyāsa (education, pursuit of knowledge) get rid of their Ajñāna (ignorance) progressively. Even all the various branches of science which the modern scientists have accumulated in abundance over centuries - like physics, chemistry, biology, zoology, physiology, psychology etc., due to their intrinsic Itchhā-Dwesha - a story of engaging themselves in Pravṛitti (progress towards acquiring knowledge of the objects of study) or Nivṛitti (receding from or giving them up), of finding out devices of producing desirable objects and of avoiding or getting rid of unwanted things and utilizing those methods, are, in the same manner, verily a history indeed of their pursuit of knowledge.

In our own country Vaisheshikas have divided the perceived objects into seven categories of Dravya (substance), Guṇa (quality), Karma (action), Sāmānya (genus), Viśesha (species), Samavāya (inherence), Abhāva (non-existence) and have founded a whole Darshana (system of philosophy). Naiyyāyikas have founded another school of philosophy which is Jñānapradhāna (prominent as a branch of epistemology, knowledge) pertaining to the deliberation on categories like Pramāṇa (valid means of
knowledge), \textit{Prameya} (object of knowledge) etc. Whether in the case of the empirical scientists or indigenous \textit{Dārshanikas} (founders of schools of philosophy), although as and when their abundant objective knowledge about the external perceptible objects increased the three kinds of \textit{Ajñāna} (ignorance), like \textit{Jñānabhāva} (absence of knowledge), \textit{Samshaya} (doubt), \textit{Viparītajñāna} (wrong, erroneous knowledge or misconception), were being removed, it was not possible to determine that they reached the final rung of the ladder to affirm in the manner that - "\textit{Ajñāna} (ignorance) has been completely got rid of." If any one asks : "What is the final declaration of all empirical sciences ?" - the world-famous scientist, James Jeans, has given an apt answer of : "One should give up saying that such and such is the last and final decision" - in one of his books.

In any case \textit{Loupikajñāna} (empirical, mundane knowledge) means, instead of saying that it is 'getting rid of our ignorance', we may say that it is 'enhancing our \textit{Ajñāna} ; increasing our \textit{Itichhā-Dweshas}, finding out or deviding special methods of procuring or producing desirable things and getting rid of or destroying unwanted things or phenomena'. If we prepare a balance-sheet, so to speak, as to what are the advantages (benefits) and the disadvantages (calamities) that we have encountered due to the defects or deficiencies in the instruments of knowledge like the external sense-organs, internal mind and to assist and augment their perceptual power the various scientific instruments and gadgets that science has invented - then we are reminded of the following \textit{Upanishadic} sentences :
परांचि खानि व्यतृणतः स्वयंभूः तस्मात् पराभक्षण्यति नान्तरात्मन्।
परांचः कामानुयात्ति बालास्ते मृत्योर्यात्तिः विततस्य पाशांः।। (Katha
2-1-1, 2), meaning, (i) 'Because of the reason that our sense-organs are created to be extroverted, we are per­
ceiving outwardly alone ; we do not have any scope of attempting to cognize as to what is there internally within
us' ; (ii) 'People who are non-discriminative, ignorant like children, are hankering after externally desirable
things ; they are invariably falling a prey to the exten­sively spread-out dragnet of Death, comprising Avidyā
(ignorance), Kāma (desires), Karma (action)'.

It is true that to acquire any knowledge of objects
Pratyakshañi Pramāṇas (valid means of perception, infer­
ence etc.) are helpful to us ; but because those Pramāṇas
are having defects or deficiencies (as stated before) the
knowledge engendered by using them has necessarily to
be utilized only after properly examining it. It is also true
that in order to purify or clarify those Pramāṇas we seek
the help of Tarka (logic) ; but to find out whether that
logic or reasoning is proper or not is also quite necessary.
For, it is quite possible that the motives with which we
use the valid means like Anumāna (inference) etc. to
determine the essential nature of the objects may be
vicious or vile. The logicians have determined that
Hetvābhāsa (logical device or arguments which appear to
be the correct or proper motives or causes) are so many
in number. But while we are examining those Hetvābhāsas
the latent impressions of liking or hatred that lurk in our
mind (i.e. sub-conscious mind) are not totally removed
among any one of us. Therefore, it is not possible at all
for any one to assert or boast and declare that - ‘The knowledge that is determined by virtue of utilizing *Pramāṇas* (empirical valid means like perception etc.) as also *Tarka* (reasoning, logic) is definite, not giving any room for doubt or wrong or false knowledge.’ Hence, it amounts to saying that we cannot assert in the manner: ‘On the strength of such knowledges the pursuit of acquiring an object (*Pravṛtti*) and resigning or receding from an unwanted object (*Nivṛtti*), which we adopt in our daily transactions, will unfailingly succeed; there is no defect or deficiency whatsoever in these objective knowledges.’ Among those of us who have heard about a sentence in the epic *Mahābhārata*: “सर्पान् कुशाग्राणि तथोदपानं ज्ञात्वा मनुष्यां परिवर्जयन्ति। अज्ञातस्तत्र पतन्ति केवल ज्ञाने फलं पश्य यथा विशिष्टम्।” (meaning - “Cognizing that - ‘Here is a snake, here is a thorny bush, here there is a well’ - human beings avoid them and move away; but those who have not cognized them go and fall into them”) - a pertinent doubt of the type - “Though our present knowledge enhances our understanding or intelligence, proportionately our ignorance too is increasing, our likings and hatreds too are steadily on the rise, and hence as a result of our following repeatedly a wrong path and doing forbidden acts we are constrained to encounter all kinds of calamities and catastrophes, is it not? Thinking that we will be escaping from small snakes are we, in fact, being caught by big pythons? While moving to a side away from a bunch of thorns, are we stepping over a cluster of sharp-edged stones and injuring our soles? Fearing that we may fall into a pond when we are
running away from it, are we really jumping into a deep well?" - is likely to arise in our minds.

Our sense-organs and our mind which is supporting them to function are capable of cognizing only the external objects; despite the fact that however much our knowledge that they are providing us is increasing, we cannot possibly extricate ourselves from the vice-like grip of Ajñāna or ignorance. It does not appear to be possible for us to escape the expansive dragnet of the nature of Avidyā-Kāma-Karma cast by Death (Mṛityu). Hence, we have to consider now proper solutions or answers to questions like: "Apart from these two, viz. outer sense-organs and inner mind, are there any other Jñānasādhanas (instruments of knowledge) at all? Is the Upanishadic statement: 'वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितताया' (meaning: "We can possibly acquire an indubitable and inviolable knowledge by means of Vedāntavijñāna or Vedāntic Intuitive Knowledge of the Self") is, just like a fake promissory note which is a mere piece of paper, a vain assurance? Is there any real content or substantive truth in it?" Now let us try to find out satisfactory answers to the important question: This Amṛitatwa Sādhana (spiritual practice to attain Immortality or Liberation from the jaws of Death), which Vedāntins recommend, how at all can we discern it and on the strength of which irrevocable and irrefutable evidence? How at all can we determine the truth that the meaning of that Vedāntic statement is a Nirapavādajñāna (irrefutable Knowledge) devoid of even an iota or taint of defects or deficiencies like Samshaya (doubt), Viparīta-jñāna (false knowledge or misconception)?
V. Varieties of Experiences

We have so far understood the truths that - 'For acquisition of Jñāna the valid means are the sense-organs and the mind and through those Sādhanas (instruments) we can get to know, to some extent, the external world of diversity only. In order to know the external phenomena not only the instruments of our sense-organs but also, keeping all those phenomena perceived by our sense-organs directly as the basis, we can further imagine or infer, on the strength of that perception, some other objects which cannot be perceived by the sense-organs and mentally conceive them.' Thus for the acquisition of knowledge those people who have utilized predominantly the sense-organs alone are called Pramaṇavādins.

Among these Pramāṇas (means of knowledge), only the Pratyaksha Pramāṇa (perceptual knowledge as means) were accepted by certain people in our country and they were known as Chārvākas (materialists). All those phenomena which we reckon to have perceived through the senses are not real. For instance, the water seen to exist at a distance in a desert is not really existing; in this context the knowledge that we get is not the correct one, it is mere Bhrānti (delusion) - also called Mithyājñāna, Viparītajñāna. Even the sky appearing to be blue in colour, the sun appearing to be of the size of a thumb - these are also Bhrānti indeed. People mistaking a rope lying on the ground to be a snake in poor light, a seashell at a distance shining in sun-light to be silver - such Bhrānti (misconception or delusion) is familiar, well-known. For that reason alone, we have already stated that to determine whether the perceptual knowledge acquired
by us through our senses is *Bhrānti* or not, we need *Tarka* (reasoning, logic). After seeing or perceiving directly and determining as to what the object is by means of *Tarka*, we acquire *Yathārthahajñāna* (knowledge of the object as it really is); such *Pratyakshajñāna* is also called *Anubhava* (experience) and on the strength of what we have experienced in the past, that memory which we get now is called *Smṛiti* by *Pramāṇajñās* (people well-versed in the science of *Pramāṇas* or valid means of evidence). Although *Smṛiti* which accrues on the strength of *Yathārtha Anubhava* (experience as it is) which, in turn, is engendered by *Pratyaksha Pramāṇa* (valid means of perception), there is no rule of law as such to assert that *Smṛiti* (memory) should always be in consonance with (*Yathārtha*) *Anubhava* (experience); it may also be *Ayatārtha* (not in agreement with our perceptual knowledge). Keeping or using the *Anubhava* (experience) that accrues from *Pratyaksha* as the hallmark or principal criterion, that understanding or knowledge that we finally determine to be true is called *Anumiti* (inferential knowledge). Both *Pratyaksha* (perception) and *Anumāna* (inference) are accepted as *Pramāṇas* (valid means of knowledge) by some among the Buddhists. By cognizing the truth that - 'Like the buffalo there exists a wild buffalo' we decide, by using the *Upamāṇa Pramāṇa*, a buffalo seen in a forest to be a wild-buffalo. That *Nishchaya Jñāna* (definite knowledge) born out of that *Pramāṇa* is called *Upamiti*. Whereas, *Shabda* means the statement made by an *Āpta* (a trust-worthy, reliable person who can communicate honestly to others what he had seen). Though we are not able to see for ourselves and directly know
a particular object, on the strength of the statements of certain trust-worthy persons we believe that they would tell us correctly what they have perceived, and use that as a Pramāṇa. Another school of indigenous philosophers called Pūrva Miśmāṇṣakas (founded by Jaimini Rishi) add two more Pramāṇas called Arthāpatti and Anupalabdhī. Because of the reason that though a particular person does not take any food during the daytime he is quite strong and sturdy, we may imagine or infer that he must be eating during the night in secrecy. This kind of inferential knowledge is called Arthāpatti. To determine in the manner - “Since the existence of a particular thing could not be known or ascertained through any proper, reasonable valid means or evidence whatsoever, that thing does not exist at all” - is called Anupalabdhī.

Thus there are differences of opinion among the Darshanakāras with regard to the number of Pramāṇas. About Tarka too with which those Pramāṇas are tested to be proper or not, there is difference of opinion. There is also a controversy with regard to the question of - “Are the Pramāṇas independently valid or are they said to be valid if they are endowed with any particular Guna (quality) ?” In all such ways since there are differences of opinion with regard to Pramāṇas, it is not possible at all for anyone to provide a universally acceptable proof or evidence to affirm that the knowledge gained through Pramāṇas is Yathārthā (absolutely true). Because of the reason that for this Pramāṇajñāna (knowledge engendered by valid means or media) there is a necessity of the help or support of Smṛiti (memory), it is very difficult to decide, beyond all doubt, whether this Pramāṇajñāna is
Yathārtha or not. Besides, there are disputants who question in the manner - 'Why should we accept any Pramāṇa at all?' - amidst us. Nāgārjuna, a Shūnyavādin (nihilist), has demonstrated in one of his books that since each and every object in the world appears desiderating, or in relation to, another - which he has technically called - Pratīyāsamatpāna (dependent origination) - no object or entity has any Swabhāva (essential nature of Being of its own) whatsoever. We may adduce an example of his here as to how he has established his doctrine that Gamana (going) does not exist at all: “गतं न गम्यते तावदगातं नैव गम्यते । गतागततिविनिपुर्वं गम्यपातं न गम्यते॥” [meaning: The path one has traversed already cannot be possibly traversed; that path which has not been traversed cannot be possibly traversed; that which is not Gata (traversed) nor Agata (not traversed), a path which in future has to be traversed, one traverses now - if it is said so, we cannot at all accept it. So how at all the act of Gamana arise ?] Further, Nāgārjuna’s Yukti (logical device) to prove that Utpatti (coming into being, birth) is itself non-existent is as follows: “सतस्व तावुद्धहतिरसतस्व न युज्यते । न सतस्वसतस्वेति पूर्वभेदोपपादित्तम् ॥” [meaning: That which exists (Sat) cannot possibly be born; that which ever exists - how at all can it be said to be born? That which does not exist (Asat) - what is meant by the statement that it is born? Further, that which exists as also does not exist - such a statement is extremely ridiculous, is it not? Is there any sense in saying - ‘Existing as also non-existing at the same time? Thus, there is nothing like Utpatti (birth), Nāsha (destruction, death) whatsoever! Just as
there is no *Utpatti* (birth), *Sthiti* (sustenance) and *Nāsha* (death) - nothing whatsoever - for phenomena like *Māyā* (illusion), *Swapna* (dream), *Gandharvanagara* (celestial city) etc., in the same manner, there are no *Utpatti*, *Sthiti* and *Nāsha* whatsoever for anything - thus he opines! ]

How at all can such a *Shūnyavādin* accept any *Pramāṇa* whatsoever?

Therefore some people opine that: "Hence, that thing which is established by means of *Pramāṇas* cannot possibly be said to be *Satya* (real). In the same way, the thing which is *Artha-Kriyā-Kāri* (having substantive existence, has action, is the cause of action) is real; for instance, that thing which, if drunk, quenches thirst is the real water" - thus some people opine. If a thing is *Samvādipravṛttiyanaka* (after we endeavour, if a thing is acquired as we wished) that is the correct *Jñāna* (knowledge) - all such special features are, in the ultimate analysis, not sustainable or tenable. For, let us suppose: In a dream it appears as though at a distance there exists water; when we approach that place a pond is seen. In it if we bathe, our clothes get wet. Therefore, it becomes *Samvādipravṛttiyanaka*. But merely on that count do we ever reckon that the perceptual knowledge of the water that we gained there in the dream to be the real, proper knowledge or that there was really water therein? Never.

Let it be. It amounts to saying that the question that - "Whether the knowledge that we thus acquire through *Pramāṇas* or those objects, phenomena that we come to know through them - are they real or mere false appearances?" - cannot be determined merely on that basis, is it not? Apart from the *Anubhava* (experience) engen-
dered by means of Pramāṇas, Vedanas (feelings or emotions) like Sukha (happiness) Duhkha (grief, misery), Āśchcharya (wonder), Bhaya (fear) etc. are also called Anubhava.

Thus all experiences like - Pratyaksha Anubhava which we get through the senses, Sukha Duhkha Anubhava which are engendered in our mind and Anubhava that we get in the form of Vedanas - are being transacted as Anubhava alone by all of us. The name Vyavahāra (empirical transactions) is given to all three things like Vyapadesha (communicating through speech), Pratyaya (cognizing through Vṛittis or thoughts of our mind), Pravṛitti (engage oneself in action). This Vyavahāra is being carried out in the Jāgrat Avasthā - the waking state alone in which our senses are cognizing the external objects. Hence whether we call it Jāgrat Avasthā or Vyavahāra Avasthā, it is one and the same. In this Avasthā the person who cognizes through the senses is called Pramāṭru, one who performs any action is called Kartru and one who enjoys the fruit of any action is called Bhōktru. All these Vyavahāras like Pramāṭru, Pramāṇa, Prameya, Pramiti ; Kartru, Kāraka, Karma, Phala ; Bhōktru, Bhōga, Bhōgya, Tripti - are taking place in the Jāgrat Avasthā alone. Therefore, we can call this Avasthā by other names like Pramāṭrudpṛishi Avasthā, Kartṛutwa-Bhōkṛutwa Avasthā.

So far, it amounts to our having understood the fact that in our Vyavahāra Avasthā (i.e. waking state) in so many ways we have been using the meaning of the word Anubhava (experience). But with what do we cognize the entire waking state as a mass of one single object, so to
speak? For this act (really it is Intuition) we do not at all use any other instrument or valid means; we by ourselves directly become aware that - 'This is waking'. Because of the reason that our Swarūpa (essential nature or core of our Being) is Anubhavāmaka (of the very essence of Anubhava or Intuitive Experience, also called Chaitanya or Pure Consciousness) - just as all the objects which are in the vicinity or within the purview of the light of a lamp appear to us without desiderating any extra or special effort on our part - this whole gamut of Vyavahāra itself 'appears' to this Anubhava alone. In fact, in our workaday world there is not a single object or phenomenon whatsoever which does not come within the ambit of this Anubhava. Since It is our very Swarūpa, there does not arise any doubt (Samshaya) about It. Vedāntins call this alone by the name Anubhava. Those Anubhavas or experiences called by that name from our Vyavahāra Drishti (empirical viewpoint) are Gouna (of secondary importance or sense); this Vedāntic Anubhava (Intuitive Experience or Pure Consciousness) alone is the real Anubhava in the predominant sense.

In our transactions of Pramāṇa-Prameya the one who is called Pramāṇu (the cognizer, who uses those Pramāṇas when he wishes to know or cognize Prameya or objects) is - if we deeply observe - verily of Anubhava-swarūpa. No one gets a doubt or can ever doubt, in the manner - 'Am I myself (existing) or not?' In order to determine the Prameyas (objects) Pramāṇas (valid means) are necessary; but in order to determine the Pramāṇu (the cognizer) there is no need whatsoever of any Pramāṇa. Is it not true that assuming in the manner - 'I am or I
exist' - alone any person tries to cognize or know the Prameyas before him using his Pramāṇas? One more point: For the cognition of determining in the manner - 'This is such and such a thing' - there is a name of Pramiti. If we ruminate in our mind to find out as to what could be the cause for this Pramiti to be the final culmination of knowledge or cognition, then we will have to say that the real cause is - that Pramiti also is of the very nature of Anubhava. For that reason alone, whenever there arises a Samshaya (doubt) in our mind, no one ever thinks or understands it in the manner - 'This alone is Pramiti - the final culmination of true Knowledge.' In any case, it amounts to saying that in this way Anubhaya which is Paramārtha (the Absolute Reality) is Itself putting on various parts (acts) of Pramāṇu, Pramiti in the drama of Vyavahāra.

Although in this manner this Anubhava is verily the substratum or the projection screen for all Vyavahāra (empirical, waking transactions), people have totally forgotten It. Just as the fishes are always moving about, nay living in, water alone, they are not aware in the manner - 'Where we exist is the world of water' - though all of us are invariably following in the shadow of this Anubhava and carrying on all such various transactions like knowing, wishing, doing Karmas, enjoying their fruits - we are not cognizing this Anubhava Itself which is the substratum for everything.

The Āchārya (spiritual preceptor) who made it explicit that this prime secret is being used in the Vedāntic spiritual science for the first time is Shri Śaṅkarāchāryya. While undertaking the task of depicting the extreme dif-
ferences and distinctions between *Dharma* (pursuit of Dharma or religious tenets) and *Brahma* (pursuit of the Ultimate Reality or Spirit called *Brahman* in *Vedānta*), he has stated: "न धर्मजिज्ञासायामिव श्रुत्यादय एव प्रमाणं ब्रह्मजिज्ञासायाम्, किं तु श्रुत्यादय: अनुभवदयश्च यथा सम्भवमिह प्रमाणम्। अनुभववसानत्वातु भूतवस्तुविषयवत्तच्च ब्रह्मानस्य" - (Sūtra Bhāshya 1-1-2) - [meaning - "Just as in *Dharmajijnāsa* only *Śrutis* etc. are *Pramānas*, in *Brahmajijnāsa* too merely they (i.e. *Śrutis* etc.) are not *Pramāṇa*. On the other hand, here (i.e. in the context or case of *Brahmajijnāsa*) *Śrutyādi* (Śruti etc.) *Anubhavādi* (Intuitive Experience etc.) are *Pramāṇas* (i.e. valid means of cognition). For, *Brahmajijnāna* has to culminate in *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience); further, for *Brahmajijnāna* an ever-established, ever-existing Entity or Reality is the *Vishaya* (object of Knowledge, cognition) indeed’]. While by means of empirical *Pramāṇas* certain objects or phenomena which are *Prameya* alone (i.e. perceptible either to our senses or conceivable by our mind) may be cognized; but by means of this *Anubhava* which is the kingpin among all *Pramāṇas*, the whole, Consummate Reality behind the universe before us can itself be determined. In truth, Vedāntins following Shri Śaṅkara’s teachings have deliberated upon the *Paramārtha* (Absolute Reality), which is *Pramāṇa* (beyond the ambit or purview of all empirical valid means or media), on the strength and support of *Anubhava* and have thereupon determined that Reality.
VI. ANUBHAVA (INTUITIVE EXPERIENCE)

The Pramâñavâdins acknowledge the fact that by means of Pramânas that knowledge which becomes fully determined or established is itself Yathârtha (the correct knowledge of the entity as it is). But with regard to the authenticity or veracity of the Pramânas themselves, among them too there is a great deal of difference of opinion. For the sake of purifying, or rectifying, any deficiencies in the Pramânas they utilize Tarka (logic); it has already been pointed out that with regard to that kind of Tarka too there is difference of opinion.

The Pramânavâdins have not taken into consideration the support of a ‘Knowledge’ higher or subtler than the empirical Pramânas. In truth, Anubhava alone is the fountainhead or substrate for all Pramâna Vyavahâra (transactions involving valid means of knowledge); it is not possible for this Pramâna Vyavahâra even to breathe, so to speak, without the support and sustenance of Anubhava. It being so, for this the name of Anubhava is not truly suitable; if so desired, truthfully it may be called Pûrvabhava (an Entity preceding any transaction) alone. Shri Śaṅkara has proclaimed that: “Because of the reason that Jñâna (Intuitive Knowledge) of the Paramârtha Tattwa (Absolute Reality of Brahman of Vedânta) is the subject-matter of, or pertaining to, a Bhûtavastu (ever-existing Entity or Reality), Brahmajijnâsa (pursuit of the Absolute Reality of Brahman or Ātman, our innermost Self) is culminating in Anubhava (Intuitive Experience) alone; therefore, in this Jijnâsa (pursuit of Self-Knowledge) mere Śâstras (scriptures) alone are not the Pramânas; Anubhava etc. are also Pramâna (valid means).” To those who have
listened to and ruminated over his teachings - whosoever they may be - this teaching appears to be quite rational indeed.

Now let us deliberate upon this topic of Anubhava a little more in depth. The Indriyas (sense organs or senses) can cognize (perceive) only those objects which are external and in front of us. The Mind is capable of cognizing (as an object of knowledge) these Indriyas (senses), whereas Anubhava can subsume both the Grāhya (object cognized) and Grāhaka (the senses or the Mind with which we grasp or comprehend the objects) - just as two fruits are grasped or held in our fist - within Itself. The two knowledges of the type - ‘This topic I did not know; now I have known’ - when we determine both these as our objective knowledges - the Entity by the strength of which we determine them is Itself this Anubhava [i.e. It is not intellectual, but Intuitive, belonging to the Absolute or Pure Consciousness, ever-present, nay It is our very Being]. That Entity by virtue of which we objectify and cognize the two Avasthās (states of Consciousness) in the manner - ‘I woke up just now’, ‘So far I was dreaming or sleeping’ - that Entity Itself is this ‘Anubhava’, more pervasive than both these objectified or cognized states of awareness; It is Atman (our innermost essence of Pure Being-Consciousness called the Self). This Ātmānubhava (Intuitive Experience of the Self) alone has been signified by the Śruti sentence of Kaṭhōpanishad: “स्वप्नान्तः जागरितान्तः च उभौ येनानुपप्तति । महानं विभुमात्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥” - on the strength of Anubhavapramāṇa (Intuition Itself as the valid means of cognition).
Anubhava (Intuitive Experience)

In our workaday transactions in order to determine the Prāmāṇya (validity or veracity) of Pramāṇas (empirical means of cognition, knowledge) we utilize Tarka (logic), is it not? In the same way, for this kingpin among Pramāṇas, viz. Anubhava, a kind of Tarka is needed. But here while combining or cogitating various Anubhavas or universal experiences and determining the Tattwa (Ultimate, Absolute Reality), the intellectual faculties that we all utilize have been called here in this context - Tarka. This is a unique kind of Tarka or logic which is quite different or distinctive from the empirical kinds of logic like - Anumāna (inference), Arthāpatti (inferential conclusion) etc. which are Pramāṇalakṣaṇa Tarka (syllogistic logic), Anishṭaprasaṅjaka Tarka (logic or dialectics used to point out undesirable conclusions) which is utilized for finding out the veracity of the Pramāṇas, Kevala or Shushka Tarka (vain, academic dialectics) which is formulated or conceived of by merely imagining a coherent relationship among various forms of mental concepts (which need not necessarily be relevant or based on ground reality). For this unique Tarka all universal Anubhavas or experiences (Intuitive experiences) are themselves the support. This is such a profound and perfect Tarka in which, after all kinds of logical arguments like - "Because of the reason that our (universal) experiences of such and such type are there, we have necessarily to draw this conclusion; besides, the ground reality is also fully in consonance with it?" - are made, the final conviction culminates in everyone's Anubhava (Intuitive Experience) alone.
Here a question may arise: "Is it not your philosophical teaching that Anubhava Itself, being the support or substratum for everything, exists as a Pramāṇa (valid means of cognition)? But the Pramāṇu - one who combines and cogitates all his special or various experiences and then by means of Tarka takes a decision - is existing in the Vyavahāra Prapañcha (empirical, mundane world of duality); Tarka also belongs to this Vyavahāra Prapañcha alone. For both these phenomena Anubhava Itself is the support, is it not? Therefore, how at all can this Tarka which breathes, thrives on those Anubhavas alone deliberate upon those sustaining Anubhavas? How at all can this be possible?" The answer to this question is: "Anubhava (Intuitive Experience or Absolute, Pure Consciousness) Itself wears the attire or part of a Pramāṇu and utilizes a Tarka which is of the form of Buddhi Vṛitti (intellectual, rational concepts). Thereupon, although that Anubhava, which is of the form or nature of the final resultant fruit appears at the end of the definite concept of conviction, that Anubhava too is verily that Intuitive Experience which is the support and substrate for everything. Thus what is cognized (Intuited) by means of Anubhava is itself being determined by Anubhava in the attire of a Pramāṇu. It being so, one who is a Jñāsu (one who desires to attain Jñāna) is like a kind of a Dwibhashi (bilingual). All this is indeed a natural habit with all of us. It is a well-known fact of life of everyone of us that the waking Pramāṇu expresses his own Intuitive Experience of the deep sleep state in the manner: 'Last night I slept for only one hour; thereafter, I did not get any sleep at all.' Here, in truth, what is
cognized or Intuited by means of Anubhava is once again being explained in detail by Anubhava Itself in the garb of a Pramāṇa. Really speaking, Pramāṇa did not go to sleep, nor mere or Absolute Anubhava or Consciousness did not remember or get the memory of sleep. Even so, we are all believing that both these are special knowledges or cognitions that accrued to us only. What a great wonder this!

The Śruti is instructing in the manner: Tattwamasi (meaning, ‘That Thou Art’); its purport is that all of us are verily Paramāṇam (Supreme Self) of Anubhavaswarūpa (the essence of Intuitive Experience). Trying to objectify that Brahman (the Absolute, Ultimate Reality) of this Anubhavaswarūpa by means of or through their senses and Mind, the common run of people are complaining in the manner: ‘We are not having an experience of the type - ‘I am verily Brahman.’’ Here the secret is: ‘In states like Sushupti (deep sleep) etc., when the Pramāṇa has become one with or merged in his Anubhavaswarūpa, he gives up his false make-up or part to merge in his essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness. But once again when he emerges out to the Vyāvaharic region of the waking state and talks about those states - just as when a dog’s bent tail which was straightened is let off, it, once again, regains its natural bent shape - as before, he becomes a Pramāṇa only. Therefore, his Mind cannot discern or divine the truth that - ‘Being Anubhava Itself, I have cognized Anubhava only.’ But when a highly qualified disciple sits at the feet of his preceptor and deliberates Intuitively upon Ātmaswarūpa, although before the deliberation he remains identified with Pramāṇa,
since he keeps on deliberating in accordance with his *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience) alone, at the end of such Intuitive deliberation he becomes one with *Brahman* of the essential nature of *Anubhava* (Pure Being-Consciousness or the Self, *Ātman*). Thereafter, he can never become a *Pramāṇa*. This very teaching has been propounded by the *Śruti* sentence: "स यो ह वै तत्परमं ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मव भवति" - (meaning: 'He who cognizes, Intuits that *Para-brahman* he verily becomes *Brahman*').

We are carrying on the external ‘*Vyavahāra*’ due to our *Bhrūnti* (delusion) of the type - ‘We are *Pramāṇa*.’ When the seeker of *Jñāna* (Self-Knowledge) gets *Vishaya Vairāgya* (a high sense of renunciation from attachment to external objects or possessions, belongings), approaches a *Sadguru* (spiritual preceptor) and seeks his instructions about the *Tattva* (Reality), the latter will explain the purport implicit in the *Śruti* sentence: "परालिचि खानि व्यत्तृणत् स्वयंभूतस्मात् पराइ पश्यति नांतरात्मन्। कश्चिद्विषुः प्रत्यागत्मान- मैक्ष्दावृत्तचक्षुमृत्तत्त्वमिच्चन्।" - (Kaṭha, 2-1-1), its purport being - ‘"My boy, you are not of the essential nature of a *Pramāṇa*; really speaking, you are verily *Paramāṇa* who is devoid of the distinctions of *Pramāṇa, Pramāṇa* etc.; you do not have death, you are verily of the essential nature of Immortality."' When the disciple, on hearing this kind of spiritual instruction tries to ruminate over its subtle meaning, slowly by stages his *Pramāṇa*- *twābhimāna* (deep-seated identification with the cognizership as ‘I’ notion) gets loosened, dislodged and he gets the habit of seeing from *Pratyagdṛṣṭi* (introspection or intro-
verted viewpoint of the Self). Finally, he gets established in the Intuitive Experience of the type - ‘I am never of the nature or form of a Pramāṇu; in truth, I am verily of the essence of Brahman which is Nityashuddha-buddhamukta (eternally Pure or Absolute, i.e. beyond all empirical accretions or adjuncts, Conscious and Liberated’.

If all of us Intuitively deliberate upon pregnant sentences of the Upanishadic lore like - ‘One should not deliberate upon the speech but he should deliberate upon the speaker’; ‘One who cognizes both the dream and the waking in their entirety he alone is the Ātman who is the greatest and all-pervading Reality’ - we get closer to our Paramānubhava (the Intuitive Experience of the Absolute, Ultimate Reality of our Self as the Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss). The logic of the type - “‘The waking ego or Pramāṇu is not in the dream; the dream ego or Pramāṇu is not in the waking; the Witnessing Consciousness in us (i.e. our really real Self which is verily our essence of Pure Being-Consciousness) which objectifies both these ‘Pramāṇus’ and their respective concomitant paraphernalia - how at all that supreme ‘I’ or Self be the Pramāṇu?” - is fully in consonance with universal experience. In the ordinary empirical Tarka of the type - ‘Since that thing is bigger, this thing is rendered to be smaller’ - our mind is confined to, or bound up by, a system of formal reasoning in which our thought-constructs (Vṛittis) are apparently related to one another sequentially. But this above Tarka pertaining to waking and dream experiences in their entirety is formulated on the strength of plenary, Intuitive Experiences, called, or popularly known
as Jñāgrat, Swapna, respectively. Just as a thorn embedded in our sole or palm is dislodged and removed by another thorn, by means of Anubhavānusāri Tarka (logic in consonance with universal, Intuitive reasoning) the falsity or unworthiness of (empirical) Tarka which is merely of the form of a sequence of mental concepts appearing to be rational can be detected, cognized. It is true that - 'Being or remaining as the waking Pramāṇu alone, all of us have perforce to deliberate upon our Ātmānubhava; there is no other go.' In truth, before we start the deliberation we have to perforce assume the distinctions of Pramāṇu, Pramāṇa, Prameya, Pramiti and carry out the deliberation. But when this reasoning or discrimination based on universal experience ends up - as Shri Śaṅkara has stated in his Gītā Bhāṣya: ‘प्रमात्वत्त्वेव हि निवर्त्यति अन्त्यं प्रमाणस्’ - we get the Intuitive cognition and conviction of the type - ‘We are truly treating the Paramārtha Anubhava (the Absolute, Ultimate Intuitive Experience) alone as the various distinct forms of Pramāṇu, Pramāṇa etc.’ The Śāstra does not create a non-existent object, nor does it remove an existent entity. ‘ज्ञापकं शास्त्रं न तु कारकम्’ (meaning, the Śāstra brings into our experience what really exists and reminds us; it does not create or bring about anything afresh) - thus Shri Śaṅkara has reiterated this truth.

There is difference of opinion among the various Pramāṇavādins, is it not? Various disputants have expressed differing opinions in the manner: ‘In this matter,’ - some people have said - ‘all the opinions or tenets of various schools should be accepted’; some others have
opined that - ‘All such opinions should be rejected, refuted.’ But Vedāntins say: “All these are considerations pertaining to external things; this deliberation pertaining to the subject-matter of Pramāṇas (valid means of knowledge, cognition) is not needed for the determination of Tattwa (the Absolute Reality). As the Gītā statement says: ‘अविनाशि तु तदृ विद्ध येन सर्वमिदं तत्तम्’ (meaning, ‘Know that Ātmavastu which is verily our Anubhavaswarūpa which is an all-pervading Reality to be indestructible.’) The Kaṭha Upanishad says: ‘सूयो यथा सर्वलोकस्य चक्षु: न लिप्यते चालुषैवैर्द्विद्यदोषः:। एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरत्मा न लिप्यते लोकुऽखेन बाह्य: इ।’ - [meaning, ‘Although the sun is illumining everything, he is not tainted by any defects or blemishes of the impure or defective things which he illumines; similarly, this Paramānubhava which is the Antarāman (the innermost Self) of every Pramāṇa - though It is illumining everything being its very Witnessing Consciousness (Sākshi) - It has no taint of anything whatsoever.’]

Whatever has been stated so far is verily our Swabhāva (essential nature). In truth, this need not be decided or determined by the Śāstra Pramāṇa (scriptures themselves as valid means of cognition). All this is invariably our Anubhava alone. If in case any one feels or says: ‘This truth we are not able to discern, grasp’ - then it has to be determined that - “That Entity in us with which we can understand or reckon that we could not ‘discern’ or ‘comprehend’ - that very Entity (in other words, Pure Consciousness) alone is what is being called Anubhava here.”
We all know for sure that the states like Jāgrat (waking), Swapna (dream), Sushupti (deep sleep) are all the Anubhavas of each and everyone of us. Even when we express that - 'We ourselves are experiencing these states' - we are articulating this statement on the strength and support of our Ātmaswarūpa which is verily the Witnessing Pure Consciousness (Sākshi Chaitanya or Sākshi Anubhava) of these three states indeed. For this Anubhava there is no distinct boundary or limit-line of the type - 'Up to here or there' - whatsoever. Anubhava is pervading everything in toto. Everything is, indeed, Anubhava alone. Apart from It there exists nothing else whatsoever. Thus Shri Śaṅkara, out of sheer compassion, taught all of us so as to be able to cognize or Intuit this truth. Let us acquire, earn this profound wealth of 'introspective discrimination' and by His benign grace let us attain the Intuitive Knowledge or Experience of Reality or Self, called Tattwānubhava, and attain solace!

VII. ANUBHAVA WHICH IS THE SUBSTRATE FOR ALL VYAVAHĀRA

We have understood the truth that on the strength and support of Anubhava we can transcend the Pramāṇa-Prameya Vyavahāra (empirical transactions involving valid means of knowledge and objects of knowledge). Now we have to pursue further this deliberation on Anubhava. In what manner does our Jñāna (knowledge) accrue in our workaday transactions? Merely on contact with their objects our senses acquire the cognition of those objects.
Remaining where we are, merely on opening our eyes, the perceptive knowledge of a distant hillock, river or tree etc. accrues to us, is it not? This Jñāna itself is the root cause for the functioning of Pravartaka Dōshas (defects which prompt or motivate us) like curiosity, desire, hatred etc. Merely by virtue of Jñāna man does not enter into or engage himself in Vyavahāra. Only after a thought of the type - 'This thing is good or bad' ; 'This thing I want or I do not want' - accordingly the Itchhā (desire), Dwesha (hatred) are engendered in us to prompt us either to try to obtain the objects concerned or to keep them away. These Itchhā and Dwesha are called Pravartaka Dōshas. Those people who are victims of these defects or weaknesses unconsciously, as it were, enter into Pravṛitti (attempt to procure an object) or Nivṛitti (attempt to recede from or keep away an object) ; thereafter when they find out the resultant fruit that has accrued to people in general, they decide or determine in themselves in the manner - 'What I did in this manner was proper' or 'I should not have done like this'. This is indeed a fruit of analysing merely our Vyavahāra.

In this empirical Vyavahāra how does that Jñāna which accrues to us first before anything else is known? Although an object is a mass or totality comprising many parts or aspects, first of all the entire object itself appears to us. For instance, the plenary knowledge of the type - 'This is a curry' - first accrues ; the fact that in it the various components like salt, tamarind, chillis are admixed is known later on by analysis or examination. Similarly, the knowledge of the type - 'This is a pot' - accrues first in its entirety ; but later on we have to
determine by deliberation or examination the various features like - 'It is made of brass' ; 'It is round' ; 'Its capacity is as much as to contain one litre of milk' etc.

All this is about Jñāna. Now let us turn our attention towards the Jñāru (knower). Though for all Vyavahāra this Jñāru alone is the main cause, the common run of people are not taking into consideration the essential nature of this Jñāru. As one saint by name Shri Chidānandāvadhūta has written: ‘Although you have known all the mythologies, you do not know your own mythology’ - even those scholars or scientists who have amassed an immense knowledge about the Jñeya (objects) have not made even a wee bit examination of or deliberation upon their own Jñānutwa - their 'I' concept which cognizes the object. Shri Śaṅkara in his Adhyāsa Bhāṣya has written: ‘देहेन्द्रियादिद्व अहं ममाभिमान रहितस्य प्रमात्वात्तानुपपत्तौ प्रमानप्रबृत्त्वनुपपत्ते:’ - [meaning, ‘Without assuming or reckoning that the body is ‘myself’ and the senses are ‘mine’ I cannot become a Pramāṇu (cognizer) or a Jñānu (knower)’]. But, although there is no reason or evidence for our assuming the body to be ‘myself’ or ‘I’ concept in us, the pride or innate identification or sense of ownership that we have in it, we do not have or exhibit in any other entity whatsoever ; in fact, to provide and pamper it with all creature comforts and conveniences has become the totality of our life itself. We have not learnt the lesson or earned the knowledge of the type - ‘This is a body ; this alone is myself’ - from anybody else ; neither, like the school-going children, we are learning it by rote in the manner - ‘I am the body, I am the body’.
This empirical transaction of using 'I' and 'mine' has become quite natural to all of us. Without any deliberation whatsoever pertaining to these assumptions, rather presumptions, we are by our very nature carrying on such transactions. In fact, there is no one who has not fallen into this deep pit. If the Vedāntins say - 'This is Avidyā, wrong or false knowledge; you are not the body, nor do the senses belong to you!' - no one pays any attention to it. The Sruti is proclaiming: 'अशरीरं वाच सन्तं न प्रियाप्रिये स्पृशतः' (meaning, 'To one who is not embodied, the objects which are dear or hateful do not affect or afflict'); but, in this matter - to wit, with regard to the question of: 'We really do not have a body' - the common run of people can never get any belief whatsoever!

Now, let us untie this knot of Jñānutvābhimāna (deep-seated, innate pride or identification with our knowership) a little in accordance with our Anubhava. However much strongly (deep-seated) we may now have an identification with our body and senses of the waking state in the manner - 'I' and 'mine', it is totally erased out in our dream; there in the dream, we possess a different body, different senses and through them a cognition of a different kind of objects ensues; this is the ground reality, our dream's Anubhava! As if this is not enough, in each one of our dreams we have one set of body and senses. It need not be gainsaid that then - to wit, when we are associated with or experiencing those dreams - we are dealing with those very bodies and senses as 'I' and 'mine'; who does not know this? Now,
especially in our deep sleep neither the body, senses etc. of the waking exist, nor do the dream bodies and senses etc. exist. Even so, no one ever thinks or believes that - 'We ourselves did not exist therein'. Is it not true? Though this is our experience, commonly all of us are presuming this waking body, senses themselves to be 'I' and 'mine'; what a wonder this! How strange it is that we are not in the least taking into account or considering anything about our Ātman too who is witnessing all the Avasthās and who is verily our real essence of Pure Being-Consciousness! What kind of Māyā (illusion, hypnotism) is this! For this kind of Bhrānti (delusion) alone the name of Avidya is given in Vedāntic parlance.

What we have considered so far is the Ajñāna (ignorance) with regard to the Jñānu (knower). None among us has known as to 'Who I am'; even so, just as an illiterate person undertakes to teach lessons to children, we all have begun to deliberate upon the Jñeyaswarūpa (the essential nature of the object of perception) in the manner - 'What is this object?' - and to determine its reality! Just as the Śruti proclaims:

'अविद्यायमनन्तरे वर्तमाना: स्वयं धीरा: पण्डित्त मन्यमाना: । दंडमयमाणा: परियत्ति मूढा: अन्नेनैव नीयमाना यथान्य: ।।' - (Kaṭha 5), (meaning 'Existing within the realm of Avidyā itself, boasting that they are themselves courageous, wise people, having lost their way and wandering about helter skelter - these people are appearing just like a horde of blind people who are meekly following a leader who is himself blind') - our present plight is just like that! It is true that we are having the cognition of some objects of perception
through our senses; but who can believe that whatever is appearing outside to a person suffering from the disease of cataract all that is real? How can we decide once for all that - 'For anyone, whatever his eyes signify about the external things, that information itself is the reality behind those objects' - ? It is not possible whatsoever to deny or refuse to accept the fact - "Assuming the objects that are perceptible to our senses alone to be real, we are all carrying on our workaday transactions." But, our senses merely report in the manner - 'The object before us is appearing like this' and not declaring in the manner: 'This is real; this is false.' On the basis of the report submitted by the senses, as it were, the Mind internally is deciding in the manner: 'This is real!' That Mind did not go out of the body, nor did the senses go inside. Even so, we - the Jñāṇus - are totally believing whatever this Mind is saying to be true and carrying on our empirical transactions. But neither do the senses nor the Mind know as to "Who 'I' am?", "How exactly is the real essential nature of the Jñāṇa?" Even so, we do not entertain even an iota of doubt with regard to the fact - 'We have the senses as also the Mind'. Therefore, there is invariably an ultimate essence of Consciousness, Awareness or Cognition which is Itself cognizing or Intuiting the truth about the inquiry - 'Which is that entity that is cognizing these phenomena like I, the Jñāṇa, the senses and the Mind - the Jñānakaraṇas (instruments, means of knowledge) - ?' That alone is called Anubhava. In fact, on the strength and support of this Anubhava alone both the external senses and the internal Mind are functioning or carrying on their respective functions. This
truth has been revealed in the form of a discussion between a preceptor and his disciple in Kenopanishad as follows: ‘केनेषिं पत्ति प्रेषिं मन: केन ‘प्राण: प्रथम: पैति 
युकं:। केनेषिं वाचमिं वदन्ति चक्षु: श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनकि’।। 
(Kena 1-1) (meaning - ‘By virtue of whose mere desire or wish, being induced, does the Mind pounce upon its object? By virtue of whose wish, being prompted, does the Mukhyapraṇa (the empirical consciousness or vital force) is functioning? Being in the control of whose wish, are these words being uttered by the people? Who is that deity who is utilizing the sense organ of sight as also the sense organ of hearing?’) Thus the disciple has questioned. To that the preceptor has given the following answer: ‘श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यद्वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य 
प्राण:। चक्षुष्ट्वचुर्तिमुच्च धीरा: प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकाद्वृत्ता भवन्ति’।। - 
(Kena 1-2) - (meaning - ‘The deity that you are asking about is the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, the Speech of the speech, the Vital Force of the vital force, the Eye of the eye; those Dhīrāḥ (wise, courageous people) who have given up the vain pride or identification of the type of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ in all these adjuncts and have transcended beyond this workaday world of empirical transactions become Immortal.’)

In the whole gamut of these empirical transactions, that phenomenon which is said to be Jñātrurūpa (form of knower or ‘I’ concept as the perceiver or cognizer) is verily Avidyākalpita ( conjured up due to ignorance). For, without having an identification of the type of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ with the adjuncts of the body, the senses etc. Ātman or our innermost Self cannot possibly become a
Anubhava Which is the Substrate for All Vyavahāra

Jñāṇu; now, where is the need to stress or point out the incapability of the senses etc. which are the adjuncts for this Jñāṇu to cognize or perceive the external objects? Here in this context all that is Paramārtha (absolutely real) is Anubhava (Intuitive Experience or Pure Consciousness) alone; in truth, that Anubhava alone is being called Paramātman (Supreme Self). Shri Śaṅkara has written in his Gītā Bhāshya that: “देहादीनां बुद्ध्यन्तानां प्रत्यगात्मानम् कल्पितानाम् अविद्या परम: उपद्रृत्तातिदिलक्षण: आत्मा - इति परमात्मा सः । अतः ‘परमात्मा’ इत्यनेन शब्देन चापि उद्दः कथितः श्रुतौ ।” - [meaning - “People are imagining due to Avidyā their adjuncts like the body, the senses, the vital force, the mind, the intellect themselves as ‘our inner Self or Ātman.’ In the Śruti this Ātman, who is of Anubhavarūpa (the essence of Intuitive Experience), is Himself called Paramātman (meaning one who is really real or Absolutely the Self), because of the reasons that: He is innermost to all these adjuncts, is innately near to all of us, is the cause for the functioning of all these adjuncts merely by virtue of His presence or vicinity, one who lends, as it were, His Chaitanyābhāsa (reflective light of His Pure Consciousness) to all of them and prompts them to get illumined, one who illumines all of them by means of His own independent Chaitanya's light and remains a Sākshi (Witnessing Consciousness) for all these.”]

Because of the reason that this entity called Anubhava is appearing as the Sākshi for each and every Pratyaya (mental concept) that is engendered in the mind, we have to perforce cognize It by means of this Anubhavarūpa
alone, with the support and strength of the *Anubhava* alone (i.e. Intuit It). The Mind that illumines every object has perforce to engender or create concepts which are of the shape or form of the respective object outside it; at that juncture due to the *Ābhāsa* (reflective light) of *Chaitanya* (Pure Consciousness) that arises in that *Vṛitti* (mental concept), the objective phenomenon appears. Whereas, in the case of this *Anubhava*, which is verily the essential nature of our *Ātman* - irrespective of the fact that *Vṛittis* may assume any number of new and various forms and appear - all of them It illumines without any trace of strain or exhaustion, but at the same time It remains self-resplendent as It is without any change or mutation. For this reason alone the *Śruti* (*Upanishad*) is stressing that - 'प्रतिबोधविदितम् मतम्' - (Kena 2-4) - the purport being - 'Thus for each and every *Bōdha* or *Pratyaya* (mental concept or thought-construct) that *Anubhavarūpa* alone, which illumines them as their *Śākshi*, is verily That; if one cognizes This by means of *Anubhava* alone it amounts to his correctly, properly Intuiting It; as otherwise in order to cognize It there is no other instrument or valid means or *Pramāṇa* (evidence, proof) whatsoever.' For the *Antaḥkaraṇa* (the internal instrument of knowledge or cognition i.e. the Mind) in order to get transformed or to assume the shape or form of the external object, there is distinctly some amount of strain or stress; for that reason alone, the Mind gets or feels exhausted [called in psychological parlance 'mental fatigue'] because it has to either perceive an object by effort or has to deliberate upon it using *Tarka* and then determining the object's real essential nature. But because
of the reason that *Anubhava*, remaining as It is without any dealings or effort, is ‘illumining everything, there is no strain or stress’ whatsoever for this *Anubhava*. For the *Vṛttis* of the Mind, in fact, *Anubhava* Itself is the *Pramāṇa* (valid evidence, nay the substrate). For their birth, sustenance and dissolution - for everything *Anubhava* alone is the substratum. But for *Anubhava* Itself there is no need of any other *Pramāṇa* (valid means of cognition); even Its birth or origination, functioning and dissolution or destruction can never even be imagined by the Mind. This *Ātmavijñāna* (Intuitive Knowledge of the Self) is taught only, exclusively by *Vedānta* (i.e. the *Upanishadic* lore); from this alone the *Jīvas* (all human beings) can attain *Amṛitatwa* (Immortality) here and now in this very life - thus all the *Upanishads* are proclaiming over and over again.

VIII. THE CHANGELESS *ANUBHAVA* EXISTING IN ALL THE *AVASTHĀS*

We have already mentioned that for the various senses to carry out their respective functions the help and support of *Anubhava* is necessary. We have also pointed out the truth that although both the external senses and the internal Mind are undergoing many mutations or changes while carrying out their respective functions, there is no change whatsoever in *Anubhava* which is the *Sākshi* [Witnessing Pure Consciousness - beyond time-space-causation categories, nay beyond the empirical realm]. We have also reminded about the truth that for this *Anu-
bhava to be attained there is no other means or instrument barring this Anubhava Itself. In this chapter too this deliberation about this indisputable universal truth of Anubhava alone will be continued more in depth.

Just as it has been stated in the following verse of Dakshinaṁūrthi Stōtra: ‘बाल्यादिष्वपि जाग्रदादिषु तथा सर्वास्वस्वास्वपि । व्यावृत्तास्वत्नुर्वार्तामानमहमित्यतः सक्रतं सदा ॥’ - the general purport of which is: For all Avasthas, Ātman who is of the very essence of Anubhava is the Sakshi. What is meant by the word Avastha? It is defined as: ‘विशेष: कलिकोठवस्था’ - (meaning - To any Vastu or entity any special feature brought about by time is itself ‘Avastha’). ‘That thing alone is this’ - in this manner there should be a Pratyabhijñā (recognition) and secondly, the thing should be always undergoing changes or mutations - thus anything that exists in time and is undergoing various sorts of transformations is said to be ‘Pariṇāmi Nitya’ in Vedāntic parlance. For example, a mango fruit - first it is unripe, then becomes big fruit and finally becomes a ripe sweet fruit. For the fruit, by transformation, various ‘Avastha’ (stages or states) are occurring. But Vedāntins call that thing or entity which does not undergo any change whatsoever and always exists as it is - ‘Kūṭastha Nitya’. Our body, senses etc. are always undergoing changes or transformations; but our Ātman, of the very essence of Anubhava who exists as our innermost Being, is Kūṭastha Nitya; because of the reason that He always exists as He is, the truth that He does not have any Avastha whatsoever becomes the Vedāntic Siddhānta (final, absolute spiritual teaching).
In the Gītā, Shri Krīṣṇa has taught Arjuna:
‘देहिनोजस्मिन् यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा। तथा देहान्तप्राप्तिर्गीरस्त्र न मुख्ति।’
(Gītā 2-13) - meaning - ‘Just as to an embodied being changes like childhood, youth and old age are occurring, in the same way another body may be acquired; but one who is a Viveki (wise discriminative person) does not get deluded in this matter.’ Here the fact that Shri Krīṣṇa has no intention of teaching Arjuna the universally known common truth of life that - ‘Jīvas undergo Dehāntaraprāpti (other births, rebirth), just as the embodied person undergoes childhood, youth and old age’ - is very clear and evident. For, none of us can possibly accept that Arjuna did not have the knowledge with regard to Janmāntara (other births), Pāpa (demerits, sin), Puṇya (merit), Svarga (heaven), Naraka (hell) etc.; in fact, he himself has stated - ‘We are beginning to commit a great sin!’; ‘By virtue of Varnasāṅkara (admixture of castes) one begets hell alone’. He wants to know from Shri Krīṣṇa as to - ‘Which is Dharma (moral, righteous duty)?, which is Adharma (unrighteous act)?’ He has clearly expressed his wish: ‘In the matter of Dharma, my mind has become deluded; hence I am asking you’ - is it not? For all these reasons - as Shri Śaṅkara has written in his Bhāṣya - this utterance of Lord Shri Krīṣṇa is not pertaining to topics like Janmāntara, Pāpa-Puṇya etc.; on the contrary, it is concerned with Ātmajñāna (Self-Knowledge). The introductory statement by Shri Krīṣṇa - ‘अशोच्यान्वशोचस्वस्तम्’ - (Gītā 2-11) - (meaning - ‘You are grieving about people for whom you should not feel sorry’) - is meant to remove Arjuna’s deep-seated
Shōka (grief), Mōha (attachment, delusion), which are the root causes for Samsāra (transmigratory life). What Shri Śaṅkara has written in his Bhāṣya in this context, viz. "महति शोकसागरे निमगनस्य अर्जुनस्य अन्यत्र आत्मज्ञानदुःस्वरूपमपस्यन् भगवान् वासुदेवः, तत: कृपया अर्जुनमू उद्विघीर्ष:, आत्मज्ञानाय अवतारयनः आह ॥" - [meaning - 'Lord Vāsudeva, who saw (realized) that - 'In order to save and provide solace to Arjuna who is immersed in the vast ocean of grief, barring Ātmajñāna there is no other solution or means' - out of compassion and with a view to saving Arjuna from his predicament - as an introductory discourse to Ātmajñāna - has begun in this manner'] - is fully suitable to this situation. Therefore, as he has written, although here in this birth Ātman is apparently undergoing states like childhood, youth etc., He exists immutably in His essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness; hence, even though apparently death comes and Dehāntara (obtaining another body) ensues, Ātman can never have any Avasthā whatsoever. The condition of having Sthūla (gross) and Sūkshma (subtle, astral) bodies obtaining in childhood is not to be found in the youth; that earlier condition having certain physical and mental features would have completely vanished in the youthful state. In the same way in old age any special features of the body or the Mind do not taint or touch Ātman at all. Ātman especially exists as Nirvikāra (immutable) and Kūṭāṣṭha Nitya (absolutely, eternally real) alone. For the question: "Does not one get the cognition of the type - 'In the past I was a child or a youth, but now I am old ?' - the answer is provided in the next verse: 'आगमापाविन:-' - (meaning, 'They are all states or
conditions coming and going' - to wit, they are not Ātman’s real essential nature). Therefore, although the Avasthās like childhood etc. are Vyāvṛttā (manifest), Ātman, of the very essence of Anubhava, exists as Anuvṛttā (unmanifest) alone; on the strength and support of the comprehensiveness of this Anubhava alone all these faculties like Smṛiti (memory) etc. are occurring - thus we have to reconcile. This fact is to be discerned here in this context. For this reason alone in the previous verse: "न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपत्: | न च चैव न भविष्याम: सावें वयमत: परम्" - the meaning that - ‘Ātman always exists; Ātman’s essential nature remains unchanged even a wee bit; that Kūṭastha Nitya Ātman is not different for different bodies like one Ātman for each body’ - is relevant and significant. Here Lord Shri Krishṇa has the ultimate intended purport of instructing Arjuna, who is totally deluded, the truth: ‘Ātman, who is Kūṭastha Nitya and Paramārtha Satyaswarūpa (of the essential nature of Absolute Reality), is alone the Satpadārtha (real Entity); all else is Asat (false, unreal, of a nature of appearing and vanishing).’ Ātman is the Sākshi (Witnessing Pure Consciousness) for everything; His ‘Anubhava Swarūpa’ does not change in the least; that Swarūpa of His is not affected by mutations of the type of Janana (birth), Maraṇa (death) etc. whatsoever.

In the same way, although ‘Avasthās like Jāgrat, Swapna and Sushupti’ are apparently coming and going, Ātman who is their Sākshi is, in essence, Kūṭastha Nitya; and for this reason alone, on the strength of His Anubhava-swarūpa the cognition of the type - ‘The Avasthās are
witnessed by us’ - accrues to all of us. When one of these Avasthās exists [i.e. is in our experience] there is no possibility for another to exist at all. Similarly, we have to understand the various other changing states like - ‘I am born’ ; ‘I have grown up’ ; ‘I have become emaciated’ etc. With regard to what we are believing in the manner that - ‘These Avasthās are occurring to the adjuncts like the body, the senses, the mind etc.’ - when one of their Avasthās exists (is being experienced), the other is not existing at all. In truth, their very essential nature is changing. Therefore, all of them are Asatya (unreal). As per the axiom - ‘आदावत्त्वेः यतःस्तिः वर्तमानेऽपि तत्तथा’ - meaning - ‘That thing, which did not exist in the beginning and at the end, also does not exist at present - that thing or phenomenon is not Satya (real)’. Just like the silver of the sea-shell or the snake of the rope etc. which are mere false appearances, these Avasthās too are mere false appearances. In the waking state there are categories like time and space ; but Ātman who is Nirvikāra does not exist on the support of these empirical categories like time and space ; in truth, He is the Sākshi for them too and invariably exists beyond these categories of time-space-causation.

In the dream, the time-space-causation categories of the waking state do not exist whatsoever ; but, on the contrary, therein a different set of these categories exists. Especially in the deep sleep state there is not even an iota of those categories like time-space etc. Ātman exists as He is. Even so, we are carrying on transactions in the manner : ‘At about 11 in the night I went to bed and
slept; in the morning at about 4 I woke up' - how strange! We are imagining - nay believing - the deep sleep which does not exist in time - to be existing at 11 p.m. belonging to the waking state time series, how strange! Although in deep sleep there is no time whatsoever, we are uttering that - 'I was sleeping for so long a period' - how strange! What a great wonder is this! In the waking state there exists a vast world which is confined to or restricted by the time-space-causation categories and having proper or suitable fruits of action; when we go to bed and sleep and experience (witness) a dream, therein another 'strange' world of a different kind comprising phenomena appearing to be related to a different type of time-space-causation categories is seen. Though it is so, we express in the manner: 'Such and such a dream occurred to me' - how strange! None of the adjuncts like the body, the senses, the mind etc. which exist in the waking is to be found in the dream. To Emperor Janaka, once upon a time, a dream occurred, it seems, that for twelve years there was famine and he himself wandered about as a beggar merely for a bowl of rice-soup! Even though this is true, assuming that we are traversing from waking to the dream and vice versa we are carrying on our conversation. We cannot find anyone who can provide convincing answers to the questions like: 'Which among these Avasthās is Satya (real) and which is false?' and 'Why?'

Thus, while all the Avasthās are appearing and vanishing, Ātman who appears to exist in all those Avasthās - to which particular series of time does He belong? In which space or region does He exist? If we dispassion-
ately, without any preference or prejudice, observe Intu­itively, then we will have to accept that - ‘For Anubhava which is of the essential nature of Ātma Chaitanya (Self-Consciousness) there is no object ; He is Nirvishesha (devoid of all special features or attributes), Nirguṇa (devoid of any qualities), Nishtkriya (devoid of any ac­tion)’. In fact, no Jñāna (knowledge) can possibly objec­tify or comprehend this Ātman. It is not possible to apply any numbers or to count and to say - ‘Ātman are many’. Because of the reason that He is Nitya Niravayava (eternally impartible), it is not possible at all to see any change or transformation in Ātman. It is not possible even to say that - ‘Ātmatattwa (the Absolute Reality of the Self) exists or does not exist’. Neither can we pos­sibly cognize Ātmaswarūpa (essential nature of the Self as Pure Being-Consciousness) nor forget It ; even so, our saying that - ‘I do not know or I am not able to cognize the Yāhāmya (the essential nature as He really is) of my Ātman’ - what a ridiculous statement it is !

It must have been by now discerned very clearly as to how vast a difference there is between the Avidyā (ignorance) pertaining to the external objects and the (Vedāntic) Avidyā pertaining to Ātman. Howevermuch the knowledge of the external objects may enhance, our Ajñāna (ignorance) does never get totally removed or banished - this truth has been acknowledged by all empirical or physical scientists, and it is rational too. Can there be possibly any ‘end’ to ‘time’ and ‘space’ concepts ? If not, how at all will it be possible for anyone to determine as to where and when all kinds of Ajñāna have been com­pletely removed ? But it is not so in the case of Ātman.
The phenomena like the body, the senses, the mind etc. are appearing every now and then; at that moment we too are having or entertaining an innate identification of the type of - 'I' and 'mine' - in those adjuncts of the body, the senses etc. But in the dream, the waking body, senses etc. do not exist at all; then there is no scope whatsoever for us to identify or feel in the manner - 'These phenomena of body, senses etc. are myself'. In truth, then we are having an intimate sense of identification with the dream body, senses etc. Thus although the association or relationship with the body, the senses etc. is coming and going (in these two states), the wrong knowledge or misconception of the type - 'They are really and always belonging to us' - does not leave us at all! How strange! Although Avidyā - meaning, the innate sense of relationship (identification) with the body etc. - is coming and going, if only we discern or Intuit the truth - 'I am always existing or resting in my Swarūpa' - then how at all can we say that we have any relationship with Avidyā? As the Śruti sentence teaches: "इन्द्रियाणं पृथगु भावमुदयास्तमयौ च यत्। पृथगुत्पद्यमानानं मत्वं धीरो न शोचति॥" - (Kaṭhōpanishad 2-3-6) - our senses are born from the primordial elements like Ākāsha (space), Vāyu (air) etc.; they are all objects of cognition for our Ātmānubhava. Between Ātma Chaitanya and those primordial elements objectified by It, there is a very great difference in their essential natures. The senses, existing in the waking, cognize the external objects; in the dream the senses which appear therein for the time being as also the external objects perceived by them therein are not
these (i.e. the waking senses and their objects); these waking senses and objects do not exist at all anywhere in the dream. In the deep sleep no body, senses whatsoever exist. Therefore, neither the relationship with the body, the senses, the mind etc. nor the Avidyā (misconception) that they belong to us is our Ātmāswabhāva (essential nature of the innermost Pure Self) at all. To the one who cognizes, realizes this profound truth, the Shōkādi Samsāra (transmigratory existence afflicted with misery etc.) does not exist at all. For, that Anubhava (Intuitive Experience of Pure, Absolute Consciousness) on the strength and support of which we carried out this deliberation on our three Avasthās - to that Anubhava there is no association or relationship whatsoever with any Anāman (not-Self); this truth has been determined by this Intuitive discrimination. Although each one of the Pramāṇas (valid means of cognition) which appear in the waking at this very moment are invariably deluding us, asserting in the manner - 'I alone am real, I alone am real' - none of these exists in all the states at all. Hence, it evolves definitely, with an irrefutable stamp of certainty, that - 'The special or extra-ordinary (adventitious) nature of Being which appears to have been brought about by the Avasthās does not really exist for us; neither any Avasthā nor any special attribute exists for us.' The final instruction of this Vedāntic spiritual science is: One should know or cognize in the above manner and should get established in that Anubhavaswarūpa which is Paramasatyā (the Absolute Reality) - that alone is the Paramapurushārtha (the supreme, prime purport of human existence).
IX. ĀTMAN WHO IS NIRVISHESHA

So far we have been deliberating upon Anubhava which is the prime support for both the senses and the Mind to carry out their respective functions. Ātman is verily of Anubhavaswarūpa. In Him there do not exist any special features or attributes whatsoever; He is Nirvikāra (immutable), Achintya (one who cannot be conceived of or meditated upon), one who cannot possibly be objectified or signified by any words or concepts - these decisions or conclusions we have arrived at.

In the Mundakopanishad, the Jñāna which signifies or depicts this Ātmaswarūpa is called Paravidyā. A person by name Shounaka questions Āngirasa in the manner: ‘Revered Sir, which is that Entity knowing which it amounts to knowing all this world of duality?’ Āngirasa replies: ‘There are two Vidyās called Para and Apara - thus say Brahmajñānis (Realized Souls); Vidyā (knowledge) of the form of Rigveda, Yajurveda etc. is itself Aparavidyā (of an inferior grade of knowledge). Whereas Paravidyā means that Vidyā by means of which one cognizes (Intuitively) Brahman which is Akshara-swarūpa (an Entity of the essence of imperishable nature). That Parabrahman called ‘Akshara’ exists as: ‘यत्तददेश्यमयम्याध्यायोऽत्तांत्वम्रमवर्यत्वच्छु:श्रोत्रं तद्यथापिियदम्। नित्यं विविधं सर्वत्रः सुसूक्ष्मं तदन्त्यं यद्दूतत्योनि परिपरिपयति धीरा: ॥’ - (Musahaan 1-1-6). The explanation of this Śruti sentence is: It is Adrishya, meaning, that thing which cannot be cognized by the senses as their object; for, It is the Ātman for all these senses, or is their very essence of Being (Swarūpa). ‘In that case, it amounts to saying that such an object
does not exist at all, is it not?" - such an objection may be raised by anyone. This is not proper; that entity with (the support of) which we decide in the manner - 'It is not existing' - that Itself is 'Ātmattvā' (the Ultimate Reality of our innermost Self, Pure Consciousness). It is further Agrāhya, meaning, just as It cannot be cognized by Jñānendriyas (sense organs), similarly It cannot also be grasped by Karmendriyas (our organs of action) like speech, hands, feet etc. For, It is the very substrate for Grahaṇa (grasping or comprehending). It is verily the Ātman of one who tries to grasp It. Further, It is Āgūtra, meaning, One without an origin; that which is an origin - just as in the pot and the pitcher the elay is the pervasive substrate - exists as the pervasive substrate for its originations (manifestations). Because of the reason that this Akṣhara Brahman Itself is the origin for everything, there is nothing else other than Itself which originates this Ultimate, Absolute Entity or Reality. In our country (India) all the Hindus mention that they belong to such and such a Gōtra (original family tree), meaning, 'For our family such and such a person was the original patriarch. Thus they have been mentioning the name of a great renowned Rishi or sage. But this Akṣhara is the very origin of all Rishis and Pitṛus (manes); for this Akṣharabrahman which is the origin for everything, how at all can there be a Gōtra, origin?

It is Avarṇa; Varnas means qualities like grossness etc. or colours like white, black, blue etc. That thing which has or possesses Varnas can be described in the manner - 'It is such and such'; but Akṣhara (immutable or imperishable Reality) has no Varnas (special features
or attributes) whatsoever; then, how at all can It be
described or depicted, on which basis or support? The
real intended purport here is to denote that Akshara is
Avāchya (indescribable, indefinable by means of words or
speech). That ‘Akshara’ is Apānipāda (deviod of hands
and feet), Achakshuhshrōtu (deviod of eyes and ears).
The Karmendriyas (organs of action) are not objects for
Karmendriyas themselves; similarly the Jñānendriyas (sense
organs of perceptual knowledge) are not objects for
Jñānendriyas themselves. Therefore, there is scope for
imagining that - ‘Though they are not objects for descrip-
tion, they may be Indriyas (sense organs); Jīva (soul)
who is not an object for the senses, but one who is
endowed with the senses.’ But although It (i.e: Akshara
Brahman or Ātman) is Chetanaswarūpa (of the very
essence of Pure Consciousness), It is neither a sense
organ (Indriya) nor one endowed with the sense organs.

Thus because it is stated that It is neither Grāhya
nor Grāhaka, it amounts to saying that - ‘It (i.e: Akshara
Brahman) is Nitya (eternal).’ One may doubt in the
manner - ‘Such an object - how can we know as to
where It is? or how It is?’ But It is Vibhu, meaning,
It alone exists in all the forms of creatures beginning
from the subtle creator aspect called Brahma and ending
in the immovable objects in the world of duality. It is
Sarvagata, meaning, just like the empty space, It is
pervading everywhere. If it is questioned: ‘In that case,
why is it that It is not visible to us?’ - the answer is :
‘It is Susūkshma. Because of the reason that they possess
qualities like Shabdā (sound), Sparsha (touch), Rūpa (form),
Rasa (taste), Gandha (smell) etc. both the Pañchabhūtas
(five primordial elements) and the physical objects are visible; but because of the reason that none of them is to be found in Akshara, It is 'Susūkshma', meaning, It is extremely subtle. If it is argued in the manner - 'In that case, if It is so subtle, some time or the other It may get destroyed, is it not?' - the answer is: 'Not so; for, It is Avyaya, an Entity which is not of a nature which can ever be destroyed anytime. To wit, because of the reason that It has no essential nature like a physical body, It can never possibly meet with destruction through the destruction of Its parts or limbs; since there is no other object, phenomenon belonging to or associated with It - like a king who has lost all his kingdom and wealth and is bemoaning - there is no possibility of Its losing anything or getting destroyed; because of the reason that It has no Guṇas (qualities or attributes), It cannot also possibly be destroyed through the destruction or loss of Guṇas.

If anyone raises a question: 'In that case, who can ever, and how, cognize It and how?' - the answer is: 'Those who are Dhīras (courageous people), meaning, who are discriminative and wise, will cognize the truth that It alone is the prime cause for all physical objects. They will be seeing This everywhere.' Even those people, how at all can they cognize It? - We have already given an answer to this. 'It' is, in truth, verily Anubhava, of the essential nature of Pure Being of all of us. It is not possible to cognize 'It' by means of valid instruments of knowledge like the senses, the mind etc.; for, this Anubhava alone is capable of cognizing the fact whether all Prameya (objects of knowledge) are really existing or
not. For one who cognizes through the means or medium of any Pramanās should necessarily possess Pramāṇutwa (cognizership). But Pramāṇutwa exists only in the waking. In the dream the mere Ābhāsa (reflection) of Pramāṇu exists; in Sushupti (deep sleep), because no Pramāṇu whosoever exists, therein there do not exist any Pramāṇas whatsoever. Because of the reason that this Akṣara is verily our Ātman, who is of the very essence of our Anubhava, happens to be the Sākshi (Witnessing Consciousness) of the three Avasthās, It is capable of cognizing the Pramāṇas as well as their absence. In our workaday world although our Karmendriyas are capable of carrying out their respective functions, they do not possess Jñāna (Knowledge, Consciousness); although the Jñānendriyas have cognition (awareness), they do not have any movement. Even so, both these sets of organs combine and cooperate and somehow are carrying out their functions in the waking. Whereas our Ātman, who is verily our Anubhavaswarūpa, though devoid of Pāṇipāda (hands and feet), is able to grasp, seize through the Karmendriyas everything wherever it may be. Though devoid of eyes and ears, He can see and hear through them. He (Ātman) alone cognizes everything; however, there is no one who can ever cognize Him. The Śruti also is confirming this truth that such a wonderful power is verily this Ātman; we all can truly nod our head and give full support to that statement on the strength of our Anubhava and express in the manner: ‘That is true’. Our Anubhava is readily acknowledging the fact that the Śruti sentence: ‘मायां तु प्रकृति विद्यामार्यियंतु महेश्वरम्’ - [meaning, One should cognize
Prakṛiti (primordial nature) to be Māyā (illusion, magic); reckon Maheshwara (the supreme Lord) to be Māyin (the magician) - is stating a universal truth. Barring this Anubhava, how at all is it possible to determine the fact as to what is existing, where? Therefore, the conclusion that - 'This alone is Akṣara; This alone is all-pervasive' - is quite rational.

In our empirical transactions, Vidyā (knowledge, Jñāna) has to be invariably subservient or subordinate to Kriyā (action). Mere Jñāna is of no avail. In fact, people in general say that Vidyā that cannot be utilized for any action or activity (beneficial pursuit) is verily Avidyā (ignorance). But the question of Paravidyā is not like that. Once that accrues to us, then there is nothing remaining to be done or acquired. In this sense, the Vidyā that is taught or propounded with regard to Karma in the Karmakāṇḍa is also not Pūrṇa (complete, consummate).

Shri Śaṅkara has written in this regard: 'यथा विधिविषये कर्त्तव्यायेऽपि तत्त्वं न निर्विद्याभिविषये। वाक्यार्थानलाद्विद्यायः कर्मविद्यायः।' The purport of this Bhāshya teaching is: "With regard to Karmavidhi (injunctions about rituals) after gathering together Karakas (instruments) like Kartṛu (agent of action), Karanā (means of action) etc. - not only understanding the meaning of the sentences but also the Karma (action, ritual) like Agniḥōtra etc. remains to be performed, is it not? But it is not so in the case of this Paravidyā. At the very instant of cognizing the meaning of the scriptural sentence everything comes to its fruition. After understanding the meaning of the Vidhivākya
(sentence pertaining to the injunction) mentioned in the *Karmakānda*, the fruit that accrues by performing *Karmas* as per the injunctions is also *Anitya* (non-eternal). Whereas here because of the reason that the *Paramātmavastu* (the Entity of Supreme Self), which is never within the purview of categories like time and space, which is in Itself and by Itself eternal and non-dual as also devoid of action, is Itself known or cognized by means of the *Jñāna* (Intuitive Knowledge) engendered by the scriptural sentence to be our *Ātman* (Self), there remains nothing whatsoever to be done or performed after this *Jñāna* accrues.

In our workaday world if we examine any object or phenomenon, whatsoever it may be, it is associated with the essential nature called *Pure Absolute Being or Existence*. Although this is in everyone’s experience, we, who are totally engrossed and indulging in the objective phenomena alone, do not express it stridently. When we say - ‘house’, we mean only ‘an existing house’; when we say ‘door’, we mean only ‘an existing door’; similarly we should reckon in all such instances like hillock, mountain, river, ocean, creature, human being etc. In fact, there is not a single thing which is without the association with ‘*Being or Existence*’. Even in our empirical dealings *Chit* (Awareness, Consciousness), *Sat* (Existence), *Ānanda* (Happiness, Bliss); *Ajñāna* (ignorance), non-existence, *Duhkhha* (misery) - these are always together. *Jñāna* and *Sukha* also are invariably associated with Existence (*Sat*). But whatever may be there in the empirical sphere - all that is verily existing within the purview of or in consonance with *Ātmānubhava* (Intuitive
Experience of the Self). In Sushupti (deep sleep) in which the empirical objects do not appear as being distinct we all have the (Intuitive) experience of our ‘Satchidananda Swarūpa’ (i.e. our very core of Pure or Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss); none of us - whosoever he may be - ever gets a cognitive knowledge of the type that - ‘I did not exist’ nor gets a doubt of the type - ‘Did I exist or not?’ in Sushupti. In fact, with regard to our Swarūpa that exists in Sushupti there does not exist even an iota of relationship either with Dukkha (misery) or Ajñāna (ignorance). Although we do not cognize anything else therein, with regard to our essential nature that existed therein none of us entertain, any doubt about the fact that - ‘It was of Satchidananda Rūpa’. Therein for our Swarūpa there is no relationship whatsoever with time-space categories or with distinctiveness of objects. Hence, we have to acknowledge, in accordance with our experience, that - ‘Our Swarūpa then was Akṣaṇḍa Sat (Existence without any measure or break, division), Akṣaṇḍa Chit (indivisible Consciousness, Knowledge), Akṣaṇḍa Ānanda (indivisible, uninterrupted Happiness or Bliss) - It was of such a profound nature’.

Although in Sushupti there does not exist any trace or taint of the world of diversity in our Swarūpa, the moment we wake up all the phenomena like the body, the senses, the mind are acquired; along with them we get the cognitive knowledge of the whole world of duality. It being so, we are constrained to accept the truth that - “This our Akṣaṇḍa Satchidananda Swarūpa Itself is the Bhūta Yōni - the root cause or the womb for everything.” Ātman who is of Aksharaswarūpa is Himself the
cause for everything; everything is the effect of this \( \text{Atman} \) - thus it evolves from our Intuitive reasoning. Now, we can take up the deliberation on the question of - 'How at all is there any relationship of cause and effect between \( \text{Atman} \) and the world of duality?'

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**X. THE REALITY BEHIND THE CONCEPTS OF K\( \text{ĀRANA} \) (CAUSE) AND K\( \text{ĀRYA} \) (EFFECT)**

Deliberating upon the purport behind the special features or attributes which describe \( \text{Atmatattwa} \) (the Absolute Reality of the Self), we have reached a stage of cognizing or reckoning It to be \( \text{Bhūta Yōni} \) - the root cause for all empirical phenomena, is it not? Now, let us analyse a little more this purport behind this pregnant expression or epithet. How at all can we believe if it is stated that - 'From the Param\( \text{ātmavastu} \), devoid of any Gu\( \text{nas} \) (qualities) like Shabda-Sparsha etc., the world of duality with attributes like Shabda (sound), Sparsha (touch) etc. is born'? - There should necessarily exist some common features between the cause and the effect, is it not? Between \( \text{Ātmavastu} \) and this world which has concealed within its purview worlds like Bhūhu, Bhuvaha, Swahaha, etc. there do not seem to be any common features at all, how come?

It is not our job to find out the solution for this doubt. First, we must try to discern and deliberate upon the question: 'The world of duality being born from \( \text{Atmatattwa} \) - is this in our experience or not?' If this is in our experience, for the doubt that we raise on the
strength and support of Tarka (logic) what value or importance can we attach? In our Sushupti there is no world of diversity whatsoever; our Ātmaswarūpa alone exists. This is in the experience of everyone of us. As soon as we wake up the entire universe appears; this too is in the experience of everyone of us. For the world that is appearing before us, barring the Ātmavastu no other cause is seen anywhere by us; nay, it is not possible to see such a cause. How at all can any entity other than the two, viz. Ātman (Self) and the world which is Anāman (not-Self) - exist anywhere? Therefore, we are compelled to imagine, in accordance with our Anubhava, that - 'In Ātman Himself - since there exists a particular wonderful power or potency - He existing as He is - but at the same time He appears as the world of diversity, multiplicity!'

Thus to conclude that - 'Existing as the Advitiya Tattwa (non-dual Reality) alone, He (i.e. Ātman) appears both as the Jagat (world of diversity) of the nature of sentient and insentient (animate beings and inanimate things) and as Īśwara (the Lord Creator) of both animate and inanimate phenomena' - is a Yukti (logical device) which is in consonance with universal experience. Both the Śruti: 'अजायमाने बहुधा विजायते' - meaning - 'Being devoid of birth, He is coming into being in various forms' - and the Gītā sentence of - 'अजोपि सत्यव्ययत्त्वा भूतानामोधोग्यत च सन्। प्रकृति स्वामिष्टाय संभवायमायय च।।' - meaning - 'Although I am devoid of birth as also I am the Lord Creator (Īśwara) for everything, by taking into My Control My Prakṛti by means of My Māyā (power of illusion) I get born' - are proclaiming this truth alone. For
that reason alone, Āśtra indicates that which really exists but does not create that which does not exist. According to the axiom - ‘ज्ञापक शास्त्रं न कारकम्’ - meaning, ‘The scriptures merely remind us (what really exists) and not that it creates anything afresh’ - Shri Śaṅkara has incessantly stressed this fact so as to be inculcated in our minds. Just as the followers of other religions quarrel among themselves saying that - ‘In our Bible it has not been stated like this’; ‘In our Qurān it has not been taught like this’ - etc. etc. Vedāntins are not assuming Āśtraic sentence as the authoritative sentence just because it is a scriptural, canonical commandment; this Upanishadic sentence is merely stating a universal truth in accordance with everyone’s Anubhava (Intuitive Experience) alone. If anyone - whosoever he/she may be - says: ‘Three plus four is seven’ - it is valid, true, is it not? Similarly, the judgement or proclamation of the spiritual science of Vedānta is: ‘Because of the reason that this Tattwa is in the experience of everyone here and now, this Vedānta Āśtra should be followed.’ Just because some one has praised the Śruti it does not acquire any special or greater validity, nor because some one has condemned it, it does not lose even a wee bit of its validity and veracity.

A youth by name ‘Shwetaketu’, having undergone a 12-year-long education in a hermit’s Āshram, returned home with a high sense of egoism and swagger. Then his father, by name ‘Uddālaka’, who noticed this, asked him: ‘Oh son, you are so egoistic and proud! Have you learnt about that Entity or Reality which is to be taught, hearing about which all that which is not heard about (hitherto)
becomes heard, all that which is not deliberated upon hitherto becomes deliberated upon, all that which is not cognized hitherto becomes cognized? The young intelligent man (taken by surprise by this question) asked: ‘What do you mean by that, Oh father? How is that kind of instruction or education?’ The father then answered: ‘यथा सोम्य एकेन मृतिप्रेतेन सर्वं मृणमयं विज्ञातं स्वातं वाचारमयं विकारो नामभियं मृतिकेष्येव सत्यम्।’ - meaning - ‘Just as, if a lump of clay is realized or cognized to be really clay alone, then all the products like a pot, a pitcher, a lid etc. that are made out of clay can be determined to be clay alone, the other phenomena or concepts like the pot, the pitcher, the lid etc. are mere transactions caused by speech alone, but clay itself is the reality or entity; similarly here too it should be understood. Brahman Itself which is of the essence of Sat (Pure Existence) is the really real Entity; Pṛthivi (earth), Ap (water), Tejas (fire) - these primordial elements being Its (i.e. Brahman’s) effects is merely a statement (i.e. speech).’ Those people who are indiscriminative are always reckoning or perceiving only the forms of effects like the pot, the pitcher, the lid etc. But to those discriminative Jñānis (Realized souls) - just as all effects such as the pot, the pitcher etc. are truly clay and clay alone - the prime cause of Brahman alone becomes discerned and determined to be the Absolute Reality. For them - as the axiomatic truth goes - ‘ज्योतिषि विष्णुपुरुषानि विष्णुर्बन्धनि विष्णुगिरियश्च विष्णु:’ (meaning, ‘Brilliant bodies like the sun, the moon and the stars are the all-pervading Lord Vishnu; the various worlds are Vishnu and the forests and the mountains etc. are Vishnu’) - all
The Reality Behind the Concepts of Cause and Effect

the celestial luminary bodies, worlds and the physical phenomena are all Paramātman (Supreme Self, Brahman) alone.

In the mythological text of 'Bhāgavata' there is an episode of kidnapping of cattle and its tenders. In that anecdote the four-headed Brahma (i.e. the Creator-aspect of the Hindu Trinity - Brahma-Viṣṇu-Maheshwara), by way of a test, kidnaps the cattle and their tenders, shepherds who were dear to Shri Kṛṣṇa (said to be an incarnation of Viṣṇu) to His world called Brahmaloka; realizing this mischief, Shri Kṛṣṇa, remaining as He is, also becomes or assumes the forms of all those cattle and the shepherds; thus He performs a miracle, it is said. It is verily in the experience of everyone of us that Jīva (the soul) - though he alone is seeing or experiencing the dream, during that dream state - just as it is in the waking state - the Jīva feels as if he is carrying on his transactions, as also along with him many other human beings or Jīvas are also existing therein. Although in the dream the dreamer alone really exists [i.e. since it appears to be his individual experience], there is a queer world therein and in it many movable and immovable creatures, as also in consonance with categories like space-time-causation, Jīvas are performing their actions and experiencing their fruits. But merely on that count [i.e. his having seen a dream] in his essential nature of the waking, there is no change or difference whatsoever, is it not? Do we (any one of us) believe that just as from the clay the pot, the pitcher, etc. are produced, our Swarūpa (essential nature of Being) is transformed or changed and the dream world is created? Not at all. If
we go deeper and deliberate, even when we think that the clay has been transformed into the pot or the pitcher, is it not clay and clay alone, and has it become, transformed into something other than clay? Not at all. Even if the clay appears to have assumed many forms - all those forms or shapes are, in reality, clay alone and nothing else. Therefore, Uddālaka, tells his son: 'मृत्तिकेकेत्येव सत्त्यम्' (the clay alone is the reality or entity). In the same way, in the illustrated example too, Brahman, of the essence of Pure Existence (Sat), alone is the Reality; all that is supposed to be born is really Sadbrahman alone. In truth, what is conceived as a Kārya (effect) is always the cause itself - thus the teacher has taught this subtle truth about Brahman or Ātman. The real Kārya-Kāraṇa-Vāda (theory or methodology of cause and effect) that is acceptable to the Vedāntic spiritual science is: ‘अवैतानिक सौम्य शुद्धगेनापो-मूलमन्विच्छ अवैतानिक सौम्य शुद्धगेन तेजोमूलमन्विच्छ तेजस सौम्य शुद्धगेन सम्मूलमन्विच्छ सम्मूला सोप्येमा: सर्वाः प्रजाः सदायतना: सत्यतिष्ठा:’ - (Chhāndōgya 2-8-4) (meaning, "From the effect called Prithivi (earth) cognize or realize the cause called Ap (water); from the effect of Ap cognize the cause of Tejas (fire) alone; from the effect of Tejas cognize the cause of Sadbrahman alone. All those creatures which are born are, in truth, born or created from the cause of 'Sat'; even now they exist in Sadbrahman (i.e. when they are perceived) and finally they merge or culminate in Sadbrahman alone - thus one should realize. What we commonly call Kārya (effect) is imagined (or misconceived) in the cause. In reality, the cause itself appears
as various effects.’” For the Taittirīya Śruti - ‘सत्यं चानृतं च सत्यमभवत्। यदिदं किंच। तत्तत्त्वभिन्नाच्छक्ते।’ - (Tai. 2-6) the intended, implicit purport is: ‘Brahman which is the Absolute Reality Itself became Satya (reality) and Asatya (unreal, false appearance); whatever you are perceiving as ‘this’ all that is Tat (Brahman) alone; That alone is called Satyam.’” To wit, Brahman which is devoid of any special attributes or adjuncts is exclusively Satyam (the Absolute Reality); here in this context, we should reckon in the manner - the five primordial elements like Ākāsha, Vāyu etc. and all the physical phenomena that are caused by them, that which is said to be real or false, that which is said to be existing or not existing - thus whatever is perceived all that is - just as in the clay the effects of the pot, the pitcher etc., in the rope the effects of the snake, the streak of water etc. are imagined or misconceived - merely ‘false appearances’ superimposed upon or misconceived in that Parabrahman or Sadbrahman alone. Just as Shri Kṛishṇa has taught Arjuna - ‘सम्प्रवायात्मायाय’ - (meaning, I am born as everything by virtue of my illusory power) - everything is merely an appearance of Paramāman who is the Paramārtha Satya (Absolute Reality beyond time-space-causation categories). This is called in Vedāntic parlance Satkārya Vāda, Māyākārya Vāda.

The Śruti sentence: ‘एतावानस्य महिमा’ (meaning, All this much is His Glory) ; ‘अतो ज्यायांश्च पूरुषः’ (meaning ‘That Being is of an essential nature which is greater than this’) - conveys the teaching that - ‘Brahman which
is Paramārtha (the Ultimate Reality) is Itself the prime cause; even if all this extensive, wonderful and manifold world of diversity is said to be born from It, everything is Its glorious expansive configuration alone.' Although for the word ‘Karana’ (cause) there is a connotation of - ‘That which makes’ and for the word - ‘Kārya’ (effect) there is a connotation of - ‘That which is to be made’, the world which is an effect (Kārya) is not made or produced afresh by anyone or anything; Paramāman who has ‘produced’ the Jagat or world has not performed any act or action and thereby has Himself undergone any change or mutation. As the Gītā says: ‘तस्य कर्तारमिष्य मां विद्यकर्तारस्य यम्’ - (Gītā 4-13), although from the Vyavahāra drishti (empirical viewpoint) we have to say that - ‘He is a Kartṛu by virtue of His transaction of creation which is merely of the form an appearance’ - He (i.e. Ātman) is not doing or performing any act or action at all. Nor from any action, any mutation whatsoever is occurring in Him.

There is one more important thing that we have to remember in this context. In the spiritual instruction imparted by Uddālaka to his son Shwetaketu it has not been taught that - ‘Brahman which is a particular Entity or Reality which is existing externally to us is the cause for the world of diversity.’ In fact, he has instructed in the manner - ‘In Sushupti or deep sleep, everyone of us gives up or renounces all his adjuncts like the body, the senses, the mind etc. and merges in or becomes one with his real essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss. That Swarūpā alone is Sadbrahman; that Brahman
Itself is yourself - in very clear terms. In the Bhagavadgītā too Shri Kṛishṇa has proclaimed: ‘क्षेत्रज्ञ मां विद्य सर्वक्षेत्रेऽपि भास्त’ - (Gītā 13-2) meaning - ‘In all Kshetras or abodes (i.e. bodies) the Kshetrajña - the Jīva who appears to be existing within the body - is in reality Paramāman Himself.’ Hence it amounts to saying, this world, appearing in the forms of Jīvas, is also in truth Paramāman Himself. We should determine or decide that even for the common people to believe in the manner - ‘I am able to know everything ; I can do anything’ - the root cause is that they are essentially of the nature of Paramāmatattwa (the Absolute Reality of the Supreme Self). From this we can also imagine as to what profound and paramount purpose will be served, or benefit will accrue, from the Vijñāna (Intuitive Knowledge) of this Paramāmatattwa which is the root cause for the entire world or universe of diversity.

XI. Jñātṛutattwa (THE REALITY BEHIND THE KNOWER)

From the standpoint of Vedānta we have expounded the methodology of cause and effect. The criterion or symptom of a cause as defined by the logicians in the manner: ‘कार्यनियतपूर्वकृति कारणम्’ (meaning, ‘By a rule of law, that which should exist prior to an effect is a cause’) - is not pure or perfect; for, time too is itself an effect of Brahman indeed. In fact, for all the primordial ele-
ments like time, space, air etc. the *Paramāmatattwa* alone is the ultimate support or substratum; when it is said that - ‘The whole world of time, space etc. is Its (Brahman’s) effect’ - means: ‘It is - just like a snake is seen erroneously as a false appearance - a mere false appearance’; for all this, *Paramāman* alone is the real substratum; the cause itself appears as the effect. In the cause itself the effect is being misconceived (imagined to exist). The Proclamation of Vedāntic spiritual science is: All that is well-known in our workaday world as the material cause (Upādāna Kāraṇa) is said to be a cause only in this sense alone.’ Let us conclude here the deliberation on the cause-effect methodology.

Now let us deliberate upon the topic of *Drashtṛutwa* (seer-hood). In the Śruti the most popular Jīva (soul) has been described as: ‘एष हि द्रष्टा स्प्रष्टा श्रोता प्राता रसयिता मन्ता बोधा कर्ता विज्ञानात्मा पुरुषः’ (Prashna 4-9). These nomenclatures of the Jīva, like *Drasṭru* (seer), *Sprasṭru* (toucher), *Shrōḷru* (listener or hearer), *Ghrāru* (smeller), *Rasayitā* (taster), *Mantru* (one who reflects), *Bōddhā* (one who cognizes or the cognizer), *Kartṛu* (agent of action) - are given to the *Vijñānāma* (the conscious self, i.e. the ‘I’ concept) according to the particular work or action that he performs. The Śruti brings to our mind these names of the self, because of his actions or functions alone, in the manner: ‘अकृत्त्वो हि सः प्राणेऽव प्राणो नाम भवति वदन् वाकः पस्यंश्चाच्छुः: शृण्वन् श्रोत्रेऽत्मनवै नस्तात्यस्यैतानि कर्मनामामेव’ - (Bṛi. 1-4-15). It is well known to all of us that in our work-aday transactions a particular person begets various names
like father, son, husband, son-in-law etc. according to the relationship of his particular behaviour or functions, but at the same time none of these names can possibly describe his complete essence of Being; in the same way, because of the reason that these names like Drashti, Shrōtu etc. are addressed to him by virtue of his particular acts, they too cannot possibly describe properly the person's complete nature of Being; while he sees only, he is said to be a 'seer'; besides, while seeing he is addressed as only a 'seer'. Therefore, this Karmanāma (vocational or predicative noun) is Akritsna (incomplete) and cannot be said to indicate his complete nature. Hence, the Śruti points out: ‘आत्मेत्येतो-पासीतात्र छोटे सवर्ग एकीभवति’ - [Therefore, one should know or cognize him to be Ātman (Self) only; for, in this form He has pervaded everything; in Him everything is merged]. ‘तदेतत् पद्नीयमस्य सर्वस्य यदयमात्मा छोनेन छोटस्वर्ग वेद’ - (This alone has to be cognized; for, by virtue of knowing This, all this becomes known). By saying Drashti it does not amount to having included Shrōtu, but when we say - Ātman - it amounts to combining everything like Drashti, Shrōtu, Mantru, Vijñānu etc. Just as the pronoun 'He' is used to signify particular functions like seer, hearer, thinker and cognizer, in the same way in Sanskrit the Trīch Pratyaya is used in the manner - 'Drashti', 'Shrōtu', 'Mantru'. Although Ātman, who witnesses all these forms of Drashti, Shrōtu etc. as the Sākshi (Witnessing Consciousness) and is pervading all those forms, He does not perform any of those acts whatsoever. If we say, 'a seer', it does not mean 'one who always sees', if we say 'a hearer' it does
not mean - 'one who always hears'. But Ātman (Self) who is the Sākshi is always seeing or witnessing all these functions without there being any temporal interruption by means of His sight which is of Chaitanya Swarūpa (essential nature of Pure Consciousness) which is verily His Core of Being. In Sanskrit grammar the word 'Sākshi' is defined as 'साक्षी द्वैतिक संज्ञायाम्' (It is a significant name which has the connotation of 'one who sees directly'). The word 'Drashtṛu' means 'one who sees through the doorway of the eyes' ; the word ' Shrōtrū' means 'one who hears through the doorway of the ears' ; but the word 'Sākshi' means 'one who, without any medium or doorway of any sense-organ, directly illumines by means of the light of Chaitanya (Pure Consciousness) which is His very core of Pure Being and sees.' The Śruti has described Him as : 'साक्षी चेता केवलो निर्गुणस्च' (Shwetā-shwatara).

A finite Drashtṛu by means of a finite Drīshṭi (sight) illumines (becomes aware of) a finite Drīshya (object of sight) according to his capacity or capability, whereas this Paramārtha Drashtṛu (Absolute Real Seer) of the nature of Sākshi is Himself the Karana (sense-organ of sight), is Himself also the Drīshya (the object of sight) ; by virtue of or in His essential nature of Being, He is Avikriya (immutable, infinite). He is Kevala meaning Advitiya (non-dual, one without anything second to Him). He is Nirguna [i.e. Nirdharmaka or devoid of any Dharmas (qualities) or Nirvishesha or devoid of special features or qualities] ; for His Drīshṭi (sight) which is, in truth, His very essential nature of Pure
Being, there is no loss or lapse at all; it is not even possible to imagine His non-existence whatsoever - thus the Sruti signifies to everyone this Ātmatattwa which is verily the most implicit secret (essence of Being) of the entire created world of diversity - just as a parent teaches or communicates a truth, as it is, to his child with all love and compassion. Shri Śaṅkara, on the strength of a sentence in an epic, has defined (described) the Yaugikārtha (the composite meaning that evolves after splitting a compound word) as: ‘यज्ञापनोति यदाद्ते यज्ञात्ति विषयानिह। यज्ञास्य सन्तो भावस्तमादात्मेति कीत्यति।’ - (Because of the reasons that He has pervaded everything, that He is taking in or subsuming everything, that He is enjoying by utilizing everything, that is existing uninterruptedly and ubiquitously everywhere - He is called ‘Ātman’). Because the word ‘Ātman’ is etymologically having a root ‘Att’, all these four meanings are adduced to that word Ātman. This is, in fact, the very Tattwa (Absolute Reality) behind Jīvātman (soul or self) who is appearing as the Jñānu (knower) in our workaday transactions.

We find it in our workaday dealings that our Ātman (self) enjoys the objects and obtains satisfaction, as also each one of us gets his satisfaction from different kinds of enjoyments of the external objects. But in the Tripti (satisfaction) that one gets or acquires, especially, there is no difference whatsoever seen. That satiation or satisfaction that accrues to a rich millionaire by consuming highly savoury, ambrosial food verily accrues also to a poor man who consumes stale food. This very Ātman being in the form of Jāharāgni (the fire power behind
the digestive system) in all the bodies of the various creatures and digesting all kinds of food eaten by them causes the satiation in them. Therefore the Āstika (one who believes in the sacredness of the Śāstra) Brahmins believe in the veracity of the Gītā sentence: ‘अहं वैश्वानरे भूतम प्राणिं देहमाश्रयितः। प्राणायमसमायुक्तः पत्चाम्यं चतुर्विधम्॥’
- (Gītā 15-14) and meditate on its meaning. They feel that for one who believes in the truth that - ‘Vaishvānarāgni Itself is the Bhoktru (enjoyer), and the food is Sōmāmaka (ambrosial)’ - and eats the food, there is no defect or deficiency of the food tainting or affecting him. Especially from the Absolute viewpoint of the Reality, Ātman who is the Sarvasākshi (Witnessing Consciousness overseeing or observing everything) - since He objectifies everything by means of His essential nature of Chaitanya - is said to be Mahabhoktru (the Supreme Enjoyer) who is Nityatṛupta (eternally, perennially satiated), or, in the alternative, He is Nityatṛupta even without the need of any Karana or sense-organ or valid means, as also even without the least dependence upon any object of enjoyment. For example, observe the deep sleep experience; therein without the existence of any enjoyment of any object whatsoever, effortlessly Ātman is blissful or happy as well as satiated - this is in everyone’s experience indeed.

Because of the reason that the finite Drashtru’s mind invariably flows towards the external objects alone, it keeps on getting distracted and disturbed by their sight. As long as the mind continues to be a mind, it becomes distracted or gets disturbed and keeps on hovering from
one object to another. But when the mind starts flowing inwards towards Ātman alone, then by virtue of its contact with Ātman the mind is rendered to be a ‘no-mind’.

At that juncture wherefrom and how can it acquire distraction or fickleness? If observed in depth, Samādhi (trance) has not to be acquired by the mind; Ātman Himself is verily Samādhi; not knowing the truth that - ‘The state in which the mind becomes that Ātman alone of the very essence of Nityasamādhi (eternal trance)’ - is itself the Paramārtha Samādhi (the really real, Absolute or Transcendental trance), some people are bragging to say that - ‘In Samādhi the body is elevated to a height of so many feet; such and such Siddhis (magical or mystic powers) are obtained’ - and thus are deluded. The Chitta (mind) merging in this Ātman becomes verily Chit (Pure Consciousness) - just as it is rendered to be one with It in deep sleep; that alone is the really real Samādhi. For those who have cognized or Intuited Ātman's Chitswaraṭpā properly Sahaja Samādhi (natural state of trance) accrues. To Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa even a clay idol appeared to be made of gold; for those who are established in Ātmaswarūpa an awareness (Intuitive Experience) devoid of the pairs of opposites of cognition and non-cognition (or perception and non-perception) has become everything indeed.

What Shri Kṛishṇa has stated in the Bhagavadgītā: 'या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी। यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुने: ॥' - is literally true. For the common run of people, the phenomenon of Paramārtha Tattwa (Absolute Reality) is merely a thing existing in the dark. It
is not cognizable to them in any manner whatsoever; they are snoring, as it were, in such a deep sleep of indiscrimination! But that very Paramārtha (Absolute Reality) is being cognized (Intuitively seen) by a Jñāni (Realized Soul), who has conquered the senses and has directed all his attention incessantly towards his Self (Ātman) alone - just like the rest of the people are seeing very clearly all the external objects in the waking - as the non-dual Ātman alone who is of the very essence of the Absolute Reality. When the rest of the people are thinking that - 'We are awake' - they are, in truth, having the experience of a prolonged dream of the type of seeing the distinction of Grāhya (that which is comprehended) and Grāhaka (that which comprehends). To them it may be appearing as: 'This phenomenon called Paramārtha or the Absolute Reality must be a particular eatable or a silk cloth; by virtue of this alone, these people who are said to be Jñānis must be so very happy.' Especially in the case of some people, there lurks a fear in their minds that - 'We do not at all want any association with this Paramārtha Jñāna; for, with any kind of association with these Jñānis we may get a high sense of detachment or renunciation!' But those great holy sages, who have cognized that Paramārtha, do not see or have even an iota of any latent impression of the distinctions of the type of these categories like Grāhya, Grāhaka, Grahaṇa; Jñānu, Jñāna, Jñeya. In them there is a steadfast determination (conviction) that Jñānaswarūpa is pure Jñapti (Absolute, Pure Consciousness or Awareness) which has dissolved all the various distinctions.
XII. AMRITATWA (IMMORTALITY)

It has been taught in the Upanishads that the Reality behind the Jnāṭu is Nityavartamānarūpa (of the essential nature of perennially present tense, i.e. eternally existing) and Amṛita (Immortal); it is also stated in the Śāstras that the Devatas (deities) are immortal, is it not? But their Amṛitatwa is not the real Amṛitatwa in the predominant sense; that Amṛitatwa is meant to signify one existence lasting for a long period of time. Nachiketa (a boy of 12 years of age) even after asking details about the Amaratwa (immortality in the secondary sense) that is attained by means of Nāchiketāgni has inquired about the Jñāna (Intuitive Knowledge) of Amṛitatwa (Immortality in the predominant sense) from the God of Death (Yama) in the manner: 'अन्यत्र धर्मद्वन्द्वाधर्मात् अन्यत्रास्मात् 
कुताकृतात्। अन्यत्र भूताच्छ भव्याच्छ यत्तत्त्वविषयिः तत् वद।' -
(Katha 1-2-14) - meaning - 'Please tell me that Tattwa (Absolute Reality) alone which is beyond Dharma and Adharma, beyond Kārya-Kāraṇa (effect-cause), beyond the past, the present and the future periods of time!' When the great sage Yājñavalkya distributed (gifted away) all his wealth between his two wives and was planning to wander about as a Paramahamsa (monk in pursuit of spiritual emancipation), his senior wife, Maitreyi, inquired in the manner: 'If this entire universe full of various kinds of assets is acquired by me, can I, by that wealth, become Amṛita (Immortal, Liberated from Bondage)? Then, Yājñavalkya clarified in the manner: 'यथैवोपकरणवतां 
जीवितं तथैव ते जीवितं स्वादमृतत्तत्स्य तु नाशास्तु विचेतेन' - meaning
- 'One's life endowed with all kinds of comforts and aids will be accordingly comfortable, but one can never entertain a desire of attaining Amritatwa by means of wealth.'

Then Maitreyi requested: 'येनाहं नामृता स्या किमहं तेन कुयां यदेव भगवान् वेद तदेव मे ब्रूहि' meaning - 'That by which I cannot become Immortal, by acquiring such a thing what can I achieve? Please teach me that Tattwa alone which you know.' In those times, women, boys, Brahmins and even Shūdras (menials) - all humans were hankering after, with great anxiety, this Ātmajñāna. Whereas, the present-day people are complaining in the manner - 'We do not have anything to eat and to wear; then what use can we get from such a Vidyā?' To such people there is no question of their ever getting Ātmavidyā; in fact, their plight is pitiable in that they are not able to think of a device of acquiring enough food and clothes and are blinking with despair!

Let it be. In another Upanishad, there is a discussion between a preceptor and his disciple. To a question by the disciple that - 'Prompted by whom do the mind and the senses are performing their respective functions?' the preceptor gives the answer: 'श्रोतस्य श्रोतं मनसो मनो यद्वाचो ह चाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राण:। चक्षुषःचक्षुरतिमुच्य धीरा: प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति॥' - (Kena 1-2), meaning, 'There exists an Ātman who is the very essence of all the senses, the very essence of the entire psyche; those discriminative people who have cognized Him transcend this world of senses and become Immortal. In fact, destruction or death lurks in the senses alone; the senses are the seat
or abode (substratum) for Kāma (desires); the popular saying of sages that—‘Where there is Kāma (desire) there is no Rāma (the incarnation of Vishnu, the Ultimate Reality); where there is Rāma, there is no Kāma’—is being discarded by the common people. Their common query is: ‘Why has God given us, or endowed us with, the senses? If there is no enjoyment of the external objects, the senses being there becomes a total waste, is it not?’ But what is the ground reality here? By virtue of these senses alone—to wit, by the hankering after, or attraction towards, enjoyment alone—we have become Martyas (mortals). As the Kathopanishad instructs: ‘कश्चिद्वीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैवदावृत्तचक्षुरपूतत्त्विच्छन्न’—(Katha 2-1) meaning, ‘Controlling the habitual behaviour of the senses, when the discriminative person cognizes (finds out) the Paramārthavastu (Absolute Reality) Itself which is the Ātman (Self) of even those senses, then and there he attains Amṛatatwa (Immortality).’ The non-discriminative (extroverted people with a deep-seated materialistic outlook on life) do not know this secret. The majority of people do not at all have the habit of giving up activities or pursuits prompted by qualities or mental propensities of Tamas (inertia, indolence) and Rajas (dynamism) and adopting a way of life replete with Sāwika (benign and sober) habits pertaining to food, living conditions as also behaviour and deliberation. Vichāra (discrimination) for them means consideration or deliberation on external objects alone! How at all can such people get the time or leisure for Ātmavichāra (Self-Knowledge, discrimination about the Self)? To them the question: ‘Who am I?’—appears to be or sounds like a childish question!
For that reason alone, the Śruti is alerting Tattwajijñāsus (seekers of the Absolute Reality) in the manner:

"Thou art here and now immortal; even the deities are afraid and jealous thinking that - ‘Even the Martyas (mortal human beings) may surpass us by cognizing such an Amṛitaswarūpa!’” This Amṛitaswarūpa is not something that has to come to us adventitiously and afresh. The purport of the Śruti sentence: ‘यो विज्ञाने तिष्ठन् विज्ञानादन्तरे यं विज्ञानं न वेद यस्य विज्ञानं शरीरं यो विज्ञानमन्तरे यमयत्येष त आत्मान्त्यम्यम्मुन्’ - (Bṛi. 3-7-22) - meaning - ‘That which is innermost in us is Vijñāna or Buddhī (intellect), one who is innermost even beyond this intellect and who prompts this intellect too to function as per certain laws or regulations - such a controller of the intellect cannot possibly be cognized by the intellect. He alone is ‘Antaryāmi’ who is Ātman, who is Amṛita (Immortal).’ Ātman of all of us is verily our essential nature of Pure Being who is innermost beyond all other phenomena; being very much in His control alone, all of us are carrying on all the functions of our mind and senses. He alone is our Ātman. In Sanskrit anything that is extremely near is indicated by the word - ‘Eshaha’ (this person). There is no one who is nearer to us than this Paramātman who is Amṛita (Immortal). He alone is witnessing everything and is moving everything; He alone is our Ātman (Self), of the essential nature of Immortality (Amṛitaswarūpah). Even if the body dies, He does not die; it is not even possible to think or conceive of this Ātman to be either non-existent or destructible. For, even the concept of any particular thing or phenomenon of the
type - 'It exists' or 'It does not exist' as also 'It is destroyed' - is invariably and unavoidably to be known to us with the support of this Sarvasākshi alone. Yama, the God of Death, has instructed Nachiketa, his 12-year-old disciple, thus: 'यदा सवे प्रभुच्यन्ते कामा येस्य हृदि श्रिता: \[।
अथ मत्योंमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समस्यते \[।
यदा सवे प्रभुच्यन्ते हृदयस्येह \[।
ग्रन्थयः। अथ मत्योंमृतो भवत्येतावद्‌ध्यनुशासनम्।\]
' (Katha 2-3-14, 15) - meaning - ‘When all the desires lurking in the heart of a Jīva leave him, then the mortal being becomes Immortal; here itself this Jīva attains Brahman. When all the knots of the heart get untied, then the mortal being becomes Immortal; this much is the spiritual instruction propounded by all Vedāntas or Upanishads. Our having built up or cultivated a strong relationship (attachment) with desires has itself become an impediment to our attaining Purushārtha (the ultimate goal of human life viz. Moksha or Liberation). There is no counting with regard to our desires. They are lurking, hidden in our hearts (Mind) in the form of latent impressions of the false notion of ‘I’ (born out of ignorance). The Avidyāvāsanās (latent impressions born out of ignorance) of the type of - ‘I am this body; this is my wealth’; ‘I am happy or miserable’ - etc. have got themselves ensconced, embedded in our heart; just as a condiment of mango is full of or subsumed by salt and chili, in the same manner the heart is fully occupied by the latent impressions of desires born out of ignorance. Even at the time of death these impressions do not leave us. In the past, in a small town called Hiriyūr, a 60-year-old man was having the last pangs of death, so to speak,
and at that moment his two younger brothers asked him - 'Oh brother, if you have any wish, desire to be fulfilled tell us, we will definitely fulfil it.' Pat came the answer: 'I wish to get married once more!' (Later on, he survived that moment and with the unflinching efforts of his brothers he got married and was served well by a devoted wife for a few more years! That is a different topic). Such is the potency of Kānavāsana (latent, potential impression of a desire)!

Hamstringing our minds thus with many Avidyā-samskāras (latent impressions of ignorance), we have to traverse somewhere and by giving them up or leaving them behind, we are not able to put forward even a single step, so to speak. Shri Śaṅkara in his work called 'Mōhamudgara' has written; 'का ते कान्ता कस्ते पुज्र: संसारोपययमतीव विचित्र:। कस्य त्वं कुः कुत्र आयातस्तत्तथं चिन्तय यदिदं प्रातः।' - meaning - 'Who is your wife? Who is your son? This Samsāra (transmitratory existence or life) is extremely wonderful. To whom do you belong? Who? Wherefrom have you come? Oh brother, think over this truth.' In the same way, if we deeply observe and think in the manner: 'In our life what is the relationship between us and the external objects?' - then we can reckon that - 'Before I was born, these objects were not related to me; especially after my death they cannot possibly be related to me; therefore, there is no relationship whatsoever between me and these phenomena.' If this truth is determined and we are convinced about its veracity, this discrimination will lead us to the conclusion that - 'Even these adjuncts like the body, the senses etc. are not, in reality, related to us.' Then the desires leave us in peace.
There is a drama called ‘Bhartruhari Nirveda’ in Sanskrit. In that, a king by name ‘Bhartruhari’ found that his queen died hearing the false news spread about his death and unable to bear the pangs of separation because of his innate attachment to her, embraced the body saying: ‘I will die keeping her body on my chest; at least in the next birth let her association be achieved!’ When he was lamenting like this, a sage by name ‘Goraknātha’ gave him spiritual instruction and as a result the king got over the delusion and acquired total detachment and a high sense of ascetic renunciation. This is beautifully described there in that drama. That thing which is very dear to anyone—when it is separated from him or is destroyed, then the person feels as though he himself has been destroyed; but when this false identification disappears, immediately the latent impressions of desires lurking in his heart are loosened and destroyed. As the Šruti states:

‘न वा ओरे सर्वस्य कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवत्यात्मनस्तु कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति’ - (Bṛi. 4-5-6) - meaning - ‘We do not love anything for its own sake; by virtue of the innate love that we have for our Self and for our own satiation or satisfaction we love the other thing.’ Thus more than anything else Ātman alone is dear to us. But for Ātman, in reality, there is no taint of any attachment or relationship with anything whatsoever. ‘He is Advitiya (non-dual)’ - If this truth is cognized, immediately all the inner desires in our Mind get sublated; even the cognition of the truth that - ‘We are really Amritaswarūpa (of the essential nature of immortality)’ - flashes in our Mind like lightning.
Although all of us are verily Nitya (eternal), Shuddha (Pure), Buddha (Conscious), Mukta (Liberated), because of the reason that we do not have the Jñāna (Intuitive Knowledge) of that Swarūpa (essential nature of Being), as a result of that Avidyā (ignorance) we have reckoned ourselves Ashuddha (impure), Ajñānis (people devoid of Jñāna), Baddhas (bound by this Samsāra). Let alone the truth that an Ātmajñāni is Nityatrupta (ever-satiated); even those who worship him will become rich. The Śruti expresses this in the manner: ‘आत्मज्ञ द्वन्द्वेन्द्र भूतिकामः’ - (Muṇḍaka 3-1-10), meaning - “Those who worship a ‘Knower of the Self’ do not have rebirth.” It further says: ‘उपासते पुरुषं ये ज्ञातां: से शुक्रस्वेतिवर्तन्ति धीरा:’ (Muṇḍaka 3-2-1). We are just now having a belief that we are modest only; but however much our desires are fulfilled, the time when we say - ‘It is enough; nothing more’ - does not come at all. As Yayāti has expressed: ‘न जातु कामः कामानामुपपोगेन शाम्यति । हविषा कृष्णवत्तेव भूय्य एवाभिवर्धि ।।’ - (Our desires never end or get exhausted by means of enjoyment; just as a fire fed by ghee - they get enhanced more and more). To those who are having a mental attitude of the type - ‘I want more, I want more’ - just like a beautiful beggar woman, even after becoming the queen of a King, was secretly begging and eating - this mental weakness can never be avoided.

Really speaking, in our Swabhāva (essential nature of Absolute or Pure Being) there are no distinctions
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whatsoever of abundance or paucity. When we are in deep sleep, although no divisions or distinctions of the body exist therein, in our waking spontaneously the feeling that - 'We were lying down in about six feet of space' - accrues to all of us. Although the Śruti is proclaiming vehemently that - 'The entire universe that we perceive in our waking is directly related to us; our Ātman is verily Vaishwānara, meaning - 'the Self of all creatures and entities' - we all have assumed the waking state to be a Vyavahārāvasthā (i.e. a state wherein we all carry out our workaday or empirical dealings) by remaining within that 'world', by cognizing and communicating, and by engaging ourselves in various transactions. The state of Svapna (dream) appears to be a reflection or replica of the waking - at that moment it seems to be verily waking itself; even so, it is extremely different, distinct from waking indeed; either in the waking or the dream, no one can possibly smuggle out even a small object that exists in one of them to the other state. It is also not possible for any one to determine or detect the dream, during its experience, to be a 'dream'. Let it be; even now (i.e. in waking) how at all can we decide in the manner: 'This is waking' - with certainty or conviction? [To wit, there is no specific hallmark or evidence to detect the reality of a state taken as a whole, plenary experience]. Such is the illusory depiction of these waking and dream states in us!

Even when we say to ourselves - 'We are awake' - that state (of waking) is - just like a wave arising in an ocean - merely an extra-ordinary concept which appears to arise in the ocean of our Nityānubhavaswarūpa
In the same way, the phenomenon of dream too is a mere misconception. That alone we are reckoning at that moment to be 'waking'. That state which is the present one that is 'waking'; that state which first appears to be 'waking' and then gets falsified or sublated is a 'dream'. Between these two states to pinpoint and assert in the manner - 'This alone is waking' - we do not at all have any particular hallmark whatsoever.

Why say more? Barring the valid proof of the fact that the phenomena of waking, dream and deep sleep are accruing to all of us and are all disappearing - there is no other evidence whatsoever before us. In fact, the whole gamut of misconceptions comprising these three states (universal experiences) is the Anāma Jagat (the world of not-Self). Really speaking, in order to instruct that - 'Ātman does not at all have any state' - the Śruti has described our Swarūpa in the manner: 'नात्मा प्रज्ञा न बहिः प्रज्ञा नोभयत: प्रज्ञा न प्रज्ञानां पर न प्रज्ञान प्रज्ञाम्' - (Māṇḍūkya 7). To wit; we do not have any kind of cognition or non-cognition at any time whatsoever; we are ever of the very essence of Absolute, Transcendent Being-Consciousness.

Avasthātraya - meaning, the group (triad) of three states - is itself an expression which is meaningless. For, it is not possible at all to say that they are any one of Dravya (substance), Guṇa (quality, special attribute), Kriyā (action), Śāmānya (a genus), Vishesha (a particular species), or Abhāva (non-existence). For, the logicians are dealing with the objects or phenomena that appear to us
in a state called 'waking' alone as Dravya, Guna etc.; how at all can anyone call the entire waking state of Consciousness as Dravya, Guna or any other Padarthas (entity, substance) whatsoever? 'Padarthasa' means 'that thing or entity which is signified by or meant by the word'; either the Pada (word) or its Artha (object or substance signified) are phenomena that appear to us in our waking state only. Therefore, the expression 'waking' is neither a Pada nor Artha. These Avasthās (states of Consciousness) are not events that occur one after another in time; for, the concept of time is the name of a Padarthas (a phenomenon) that appears within the waking or the dream. Within these two states the feeling that the events are taking place one after another does arise in our Mind on the support of the concept of time, is it not? Now, these phenomena of Avasthās are also not Padarthas (entities) that appear in space, one by the side of another. To wit, the concept of 'space' (region) is caused in us in relation to the 'empty space' (Ākāsha) that appears to us either in the waking or in the dream. The support for the spatial concept is the feeling of the type of 'there', 'here', is it not? But if we raise the questions like: 'Where, in which region are these states of waking, dream or deep sleep? In support of these states which Desha (region) is there; for that spatial concept which is that Ākāsha (empty space) that is the substratum, support?' None of these exists indeed. Therefore, Avasthās are neither existing in any particular region, nor are they occurring (as events) in any particular time. Without understanding the ground reality of these concepts of 'time' and 'space', we are merely
talking about the 'three' Avasthās occurring as events. Without the support of either region (space) or time how at all can there arise any concept of 'number'? Therefore, it is not possible for us to count the Avasthās; we may, for namesake, express that the words like 'waking', 'dream', 'deep sleep' are three in number. For, these 'expressions' we can make in one time series, one after another.

It is not possible to say that these Avasthās have arisen (been caused) from one another; for, just as a pot is made out or produced from clay or the sound, produced from firing a gun, arises - none of these Avasthās appear at all in one and the same (common) time and space series. For that reason alone, it is not possible at all to determine in any one manner as to how they are born, or how they are gone (disappear or get destroyed) or they are mutually related to one another, or they are different, each from the other, or non-different from one another. It is also not possible at all to determine their Swarūpa (essential nature of Being), Sthiti (sustenance), Vyāpāra (functioning), Phala (benefit, fruit) etc. - none of them whatsoever. There is a saying in vogue in Sanskrit to indicate that certain riddles can never be resolved as: 'अवधिर्न्विर्हणो वचः' (Take if you wish that much time as the life-span of the four-headed Brahma or the Lord Creator in order to resolve this riddle). Really speaking, those people who undertake the task of determining as to what these Avasthās are, and organizing them (in a rational manner) are confronted by, or become victims of, this predicament or confusion! Don't ask - 'What is this magic that you have per-
formed? We are not trying to mesmerize anyone and delude them. ‘Avasthās’ are mere Vikalpas (mis-conceptions); such a truth is possible to be Intuited or cognized on the support or strength of our Anubhava (Intuition) alone. We have assumed the waking, which is the Vyavahāra Avasthā, itself to be the most important or superior state other than all other states, and from its viewpoint or standpoint alone we are looking at or examining the other two states of dream and deep sleep; and hence, since we undertake to apply those very Shabdapratyaya (verbal expressions) which are suitable to the waking phenomena, all such difficulties are confronted by us. In consonance with Anubhava if we cognize anything that is seen as it appears alone and then test it on the anvil or touchstone of Tarka (logic), so to speak, then the reality behind these Avasthās will become revealed. That is all.

Thus if these Jāgrat (waking), Svapna (dream) and Sushupti (deep sleep) are mere misconceptions, and in reality they do not exist at all, if this alone is the truth, which is that Vastu (Reality, Entity) which really exists? - thus a question may be raised here. To that Anubhava alone all these phenomena are appearing; even when these states appear and disappear that Anubhavarūpa (Intuition as our essence of Being) which does not undergo even a wee bit change or mutation and exists as It is - that Anubhava alone is to be reckoned as ‘really’ (Absolutely) existing. That which really exists never goes out of existence; that which does not exist, never comes into existence. Thus Shri Krishna has expressed the truth - ‘नासतो विद्यते भावो नामावो विद्यते सतः’ in the Gītā,
is it not? Therefore, we should determine that \( \text{Atmānubhava} \) (Intuition of the Self) alone really exists; just as mis-conceptions of the type of a snake, a streak of water, a crevice in the ground etc. do appear in a rope - in this our \( \text{Ātman} \) alone these \( \text{Vikalpas} \) (misconceptions) are appearing and disappearing - such a \( \text{Bhrānti} \) (delusion) is taking place in us. In truth, the very essence of these \( \text{Avasthas} \) is itself this our \( \text{Ātman} \) (Self) of \( \text{Anubhavarūpa} \) (of the very nature of Intuitive Experience). As Shri Gauḍapāda has stated: ‘अनादिमायया सुप्तो यदा जीवः प्रबुध्यते। अजयनिद्रंभवनममदृतं बुध्यते तदा।’ - (Gauḍapāda Kārikā 1-16), meaning - “All the people are having an illusory dream which does not have a beginning. They entertain a deep-seated belief that the appearance of a dream comprising \( \text{Jāgrat} \), \( \text{Swapna} \) and \( \text{Sushupti} \) is constant. The waking and the dream together are a \( \text{Swapna} \) (dream), deep sleep is \( \text{Sushupti} \) - here ‘\( \text{Swapna} \)’ means anything falsely appearing as though it is existing; ‘\( \text{Sushupti} \)’ means \( \text{Ajnāna} \) (ignorance) as nothing is appearing - these phenomena are pestering all human beings. But when by virtue of the instruction by the Śāstra as also a qualified spiritual teacher the truth that - ‘These \( \text{Avasthās} \) are mere misconceptions (false appearances) or in their very core of Being they are one’s own \( \text{Swarūpa} \) of \( \text{Kūṭasthānubhava} \) (Absolute, Transcendent Intuition) alone’ - is cognized with conviction, then this dream disappears (gets sublated, falsified) and the seeker gets the ‘waking of Intuition’ of the type - ‘I am verily the non-dual Self or \( \text{Ātman} \) who is \( \text{Nirvikalpa} \) (devoid of or beyond any misconception).’”
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Now a doubt of the type that - 'If it is so, we may call this Anubhava ‘Ātman’ at least, is it not?' If we say - ‘Ātman is myself; Satyaswarūpa (essential nature of Reality) is myself' - it amounts to saying - 'I am not Anāman (not-Self), not a false appearance.' But even these Vikalpas (misconceptions) which are mutually opposite like Ātman and Anāman, Satyam and Asatyam (false) - where do they exist apart from this Kūṭasthā-nubhava?

This Absolute Reality of the essential nature of Anubhava is also being called Sākshi - ‘One who witnesses directly (without any medium)' - in Vedāntic parlance. But even this is merely a ‘concept' assumed on the basis of Adhyārōpa (super-imposition) in relation to or desiderating an opposite of Anāman (not-Self) which is Sākshya (the witnessed object) and, in truth, Ātman cannot possibly be called ‘Sākshi'. Because of the opinion that this is a Tattwa (Reality) which subsumes Sākshi and Sākshya, as also because of the opinion that for this Reality there are no distinctions or divisions caused by the categories of time and space, this Reality is being called Brahman in the scriptures. Even that is also assumed on the basis of Adhyārōpa alone. For, the word ‘Brahman' connotes 'that which is not small', 'that which is not finite' ; when there is no other phenomenon or entity which is small or limited, how at all can we call this ‘Brahman'? Therefore, even the name of ‘Brahman' is not a satisfactory word to indicate or signify the ground reality or truth about the Tattwa (Absolute Reality).

Now we will consider one more method of indicating the Reality and conclude this topic. In Brahman, there
is no special feature whatsoever, is it not? In order to signify that - 'It is not Dravya (substance), not Jāti (species), not Guṇa (quality); that it has no relation whatsoever with anything else' - there is another Śruti sentence: 'अध्यात्म आदेशो नेति नेति' - [Now, the real essential nature of Being of Brahman (the Absolute Reality) will be instructed]; 'नेति नेति' (Not this, not that) - this alone is that indication (instruction). Thus this is the meaning of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka sentence 2-3-6. Ātman has been repeatedly described in the Upanishads as - 'स एष नेतिनेत्यात्मा' - 'He is Ātman described as - Not this, not that.' This description is, from one viewpoint, proper indeed. For, since whatever we imagine about or conceive of, it amounts to saying something that is not existing in Ātman, to signify in the manner - 'Not this, not that' so as to deny that - 'Any concept is not Brahman at all' - is truly an excellent and efficacious device for describing Brahmaswarupa. But here also there lurks a subtle point for consideration, reflection. When we say - 'Not this' - the word 'this' is reckoned to mean 'something that is existing in front of us' and that 'something' we are denying, is it not? But apart from this Brahmatamavastu (the Absolute Reality called Brahman-Ātman) which is Nirvishesha (devoid of any special attribute) what entity or phenomenon is existing? Nothing at all. Hence, when we look at it in this sense, even this final signification has to be admitted to be inadequate indeed. Though with a view to indicating this Tattwaswarūpa somehow or the other we have called it Kūṭasthānubhava (Absolutely immutable Intuition, Pure Consciousness), in our worka-
day world without an object like *Anubhāva* (experienced thing) there cannot possibly be an entity called ‘*Anubhava*’ (experience) and hence that Absolute Reality of *Brahman* or *Ātman* cannot suitably, adequately be called ‘*Anubhava*’.

Therefore, better than indulging in *Tarka* (logical exercises) of the nature or form of *Avasthāraya Vichāra* (deliberation on the three states) if we establish our Mind quietly and constantly in *Anusandhāna* (Intuition) of that *Swarūpa* (essence of Pure Being-Consciousness), then that Mind alone is rendered to be of the essence of *Ātmānubhava*. This secret Shri Śaṅkara has indicated in his Śūtra Bhashya in this manner: When a disciple by name ‘Bāskali’ requested his preceptor, Bādhwa, to instruct him about this *Tattwa*, the Śruti itself states that the teacher instructed him by *Avachana* (without any statement, i.e. in silence, tranquillity) alone: ‘स होवाचाषीहि भो इति स तृणी बभूव तदि द्वितिये वा तृतीये वा वचन उवच ब्रूम: खलु त्वं तु न विजानासि । उपशान्तोऽयमात्मा ॥’ - [Even after requesting two or three times, Bādhwa remained quiet, silent. Finally, he uttered - “I am telling you, Oh dear, but you are not comprehending It ; this *Ātman* is *Upashānta* (verily silent, embodiment of tranquillity)”]. In whatever manner we explain or describe *Ātmāswarūpa* there always remains some defect or deficiency or the other; because of the reason that *Ātman* is *Nishkala* (devoid of any attributes), *Nishkriya* (devoid of any action), *Shānta* (tranquil) - to get rooted or established in *Ātman* Intuitively is itself the only doorway or method of ‘Knowing’ and ‘teaching’ *Ātman* to others. Thus it becomes established here.
The deliberation on ‘Avasthāraya’ has been given briefly here. Its detailed explanation or description may be known from another book - ‘Paramārtha Chintāmani’ (in Kannada) or ‘The Magic Jewel of Intuition’ - its English translation. After reflecting and ratiocinating on the discussions mentioned therein the readers may question themselves - ‘Whether the Swarūpa described here is really Paramārtha (Absolutely true) or not? Whether that Ātman or Brahman exists in this manner or not?’ Because of the reason that that Tattwa is ‘Known’ only by Intuition, there does not remain anything to be asked or to be explained.

XIV. CONCLUSION

Now we will try to draw certain conclusions with regard to the topics we have deliberated upon so far. Shri Śaṅkara has proclaimed that for the whole gamut of Vedāntic lore Anubhava (Intuition) alone is the predominant or prime factor, nay the foundation. We cannot afford to forget the most pregnant statement that he has mentioned in his Śūtra Bhāṣya 1-1-2 : ‘न धर्मज्ञासायाभिमिक श्रुत्यादय एव प्रमाणं ब्रह्मज्ञासायामृ, कि तु श्रुत्यादयोजनेनवादयस्च यथासम्भवम् इह प्रमाणम् ।।’ - [In the matter of study and pursuit of Dharma or religious tenets, while deliberating upon the sentences found in the Karmakāṇḍa, just as those mere sentences are Pramāṇas or valid authoritative sources, in this Brahmajījñāsā (study and pursuit of Brah-
man or the Absolute Reality), the Śruti or scriptures and its concomitant accessories alone are not Pramāṇa; on the other hand, Śrutis etc. as also Anubhava (Intuition) etc. as per the contexts are Pramāṇas]. Wherever we say that - 'This is Shri Śaṅkara's opinion' - it should invariably be reckoned that that very opinion is the teaching propounded with one voice, and unequivocally, by all the three traditional Āchāryas, viz. Shri Gauḍapādāchārya, Shri Śaṅkarāchārya, and Shri Sureshwarāchārya.

Another important sentence pertaining to Anubhava is: 'ज्ञाने निः प्रमाणेन अवगतुमिष्टं ब्रह्म। ब्रह्मावगतिः परम्परा ॥' - (Sūtra Bhāshya 1-1-1). The purport is - "‘Brahmāvagati’ meaning Brahmatmānubhava (Intuition of Brahman or Ātman) alone is the real Purushārtha (goal of human life); for, all the Samsārabījas (root causes for transmigratory existence of repeated births and deaths) like Avidya (ignorance) etc. - to wit, Avidyā, Kāra (desire), Karma (action, work) which are the cause for repeated births and deaths called ‘Samsāra’ - are destroyed exclusively by Brahmatmānubhava. Neither by means of Karma nor by means of Upāsana (mental contemplation or meditations) Avidyā Samsāra Bijas get totally destroyed without remnants; the real Purushārtha in which Avidyā is completely destroyed and any desire for anything apart from Ātman is not at all sought after, and no action or undertaking is resorted to for the fulfilment of any desire whatsoever - is attained (nay accrues spontaneously) by Brahmatmānubhava alone."

In the Vedas, Sādhanas (spiritual practices) which yield visible fruits (Drīṣṭāphala) are stipulated in the
manner: ‘न चेयमवगतिनेत्यवदते इति शक्यं वकुम् अवगतिसाधनां
श्रवणादीनां वेदानुवचनादीनां च विद्यानात्।’ (Sūtra Bhāshya 2-
1-14), meaning - 'It is not possible to assert that this
Anubhava (Intuitive Experience) does not accrue; for,
Sravana (listening to the topic of Ātman and determining
the meaning of the Vedāntic sentences), Manana (what is
heard is in consonance with reason - thus to discern and
decide), Nididhyāsana (contemplating upon Ātmavastu or
the Reality of our Self alone with utmost concentration
or one-pointedness and to determine Its Absolute Reality)
- such visible, fruit-yielding (practical) Sādhanas are men-
tioned in the Upanishads. For Vastujñāna (knowledge of
substance) such practices like Sravana etc. are needed, is
it not? Those very practices are stipulated here. The
Śruti is stating in clear terms that by means of such
Sādhanas here itself - i.e. in this very life, Brahmaprāpti
(attainment of the Absolute Reality) is achieved. It is also
stipulated in that context that in order to be able to
practise those superior and sublime Sādhanas the suitable,
qualifying pre-conditions like Pratyagdrśhi (introvertedness,
introspection), Antahkaranaśamskāras (subtle refinement
of the Mind), the other earlier preparatory Sādhanas like
Adhyayana (study of the scriptures), Yajñā (sacrificial
fire), Dāna (charity, philanthropy), Tapas (austerity, pen-
ance) are stipulated therein. It being so, there is no reason
whatsoever to say that Anubhava does not accrue.

‘न चेयमवगतिः, अनर्थिका भ्रान्तिर्वा इति शक्यं वकुम्।
अविद्यानिज्ञित्विफलदर्शनात्। बाधकज्ञानात्वभावाच्य।’ (Sūtra Bhāshya
2-1-14), meaning - ‘It is not possible to doubt in the
manner - Even if this Anubhava accrues, what use is there from It? Or, this too may be a sort of delusion (Bhrānti), why not?” When this Jñāna called Brahmānubhava is attained, there is a fruit of the nature of Avidyā disappearing or being removed. Avidyā (ignorance) means a Bhrānti (delusion) of the type - ‘We have an eternal association with adjuncts like the body, the senses and the mind’; when this Bhrānti disappears, the fruit of the type - ‘Paramāman who is Advitiya (non-dual) and Nityamukta (eternally Free, Liberated) Himself I am’ - culminates in our Anubhava (Intuitive Experience). It is said that a swindler promised a person that - ‘After crossing the river I will teach you the Tattva (Absolute Reality)’; but after actually they both crossed the river, the swindler asked the other - ‘Look at the anointed symbol on my forehead’! This (Vedāntic) ‘Anubhava’ is not such a worthless experience at all! Who will ever opine that if all the catastrophes and calamities of transmigratory existence are got rid of, such a thing is worthless? It is not possible also to say: ‘Even such an Anubhava may be Bhrānti, why not?’ For, this Ayagati (Anubhava or Intuitive Experience) of the essence of Advitiya Brahmanājñāna (Self-Knowledge which is non-dual) accrues only after showing or depicting that the limitations of time-space-causation categories are a delusion. Then there is no scope whatsoever for a doubt of the type - ‘Herefore there may accrue another Jñāna (Intuitive Knowledge) which may sublate this present one.’ Just as immediately on consuming food the resultant of satiation accrues, in the same manner when the Anubhava (Intuition) called Ātmajñāna (Self-Knowledge) accrues, the fruit of the
type of Avidyānivṛitti (sublation of ignorance) is engendered spontaneously, so to speak. For that reason alone, in the Bhagavadgītā this is called Rājavidyā (kingpin among all knowledges or sciences) and has been praised, eulogised in the manner: ‘प्रत्यक्षावगम् धर्म्य सुसुख करुपत्व-मयः’। Now let us examine the purport behind these various special attributes: (i) ‘Pratyakshāvagamam’ - means that - ‘The Vijnāna (Intuitive Knowledge of the Self) is directly, i.e. without the aid of any medium whatsoever, Intuited without fail; therefore, there will never be any possibility of any doubt whatsoever arising in our mind pertaining to that Self’; (ii) ‘Dharmyam’ means ‘that which is not opposed to righteousness; for, it is Anubhava (Intuitive Experience) which manifests Itself as a fruit or culmination of all Dharmas (religious pursuits, spiritual disciplines)’ (iii) ‘Susukham Kartum’ (easy to perform) means - ‘This is Intuitive Experience which, after finding out Its own true essential nature of Pure Being, gets established in Itself - just as without any physical strain or stress whatsoever the analysis of the real quality or worth of a gem as also its examination can be carried out; (iv) ‘Ayyayam’ (that which doesn’t get emaciated or worn out) means: ‘Because of the reason that It is the Advitīya (non-dual), Paramārthaḥsatyam (Absolute Reality) - by Its very nature or in Its essence of Being - like saffron or jasmine etc. - It is not a thing which wears out little by little before getting destroyed’; neither is It a thing which is susceptible to be destroyed by any other thing. ‘तस्मात् सर्वदुःखविनिमुक्तकैचैतन्यत्तमकोहं| इत्येष आत्मानुभवः। न चैवम् आत्मानम् अनुभवतः किंचिदन्यत् कृत्यम्|
(Sūtra Bhāshya 4-1-2), meaning: ‘Because of the reasons that It is verily our essence of Being which is thus Kūtastha (Absolutely real and immutable); That It is directly Aparāksha (innate or immediate, not indirect via a medium) alone; It is having a fruit which accrues here and now culminating in our Intuitive Experience; because of the reason that It helps us to cognize Ātman who is of the very essence of non-duality, there is no scope whatsoever for any kind of a doubt; because of the reason that there are no distinctions of time-space-causation categories, It is having Anantaphala (endless fruits) - towards such Vedāntavijñāna (Vedāntic Intuition) who can ever afford to be indifferent if he is a discriminative human being?'

Here some people may get a doubt: ‘If we are thus Advitiya Brahmāma Tattwa alone which is verily of the essence of Nityashuddhamukta (i.e. eternally Pure or Absolute and Free or Liberated), then why is it that this our Avidyā does not get sublated from all of us? Why is it that we do not attain Moksha (Liberation)?’ To this doubt the solution is ‘अधिकारिणि प्रमितिजनको वेदः’ - (To those who are especially qualified and fit for this Liberation, by the valid authoritative means of the Vedas this Yathārthajñāna (Intuitive Knowledge of the Reality in esse) will accrue and not to any Tom, Dick and Harry (who are not qualified). Those who have acquired through incessant practice of Jñānasādhanas (spiritual disciplines attuned to Intuitive Knowledge of the Absolute Reality) like Amānitwa (non-egoism), Adambhitwa (absence of vanity) etc. - which are enumerated in Bhagavadgītā 13-
7 to 11 - to such qualified people invariably this Jñāna accrues. Although the Vedic (Upanishadic) sentence of - 'That Brahman alone thou art' - is instructing about Paramārtha (the Absolute Reality) which eternally exists, we have not acquired or earned the proper qualification of discerning its true meaning by testing it against our Anubhava (Intuitive Experience). Ātmānubhava (i.e. the Intuitive Experience of the Self, the Absolute Reality) is not a commodity that is available in any grocer's shop; because of the reason that It is of the very essence of Intuition, we have to perforce give up everything else and have to earn It deservedly through Anubhava alone. In truth, that Nitya Chaitanyaaswarūpa (very essence of eternal, Absolute, Pure Consciousness) devoid of any grief or misery arising out of association or relationship with adjuncts like the body, the vital force (Prāṇa), the senses, the mind etc. is Itself Ātmānubhava; Shri Śaṅkara has proclaimed in his extant Bhāshyas quite clearly and in unequivocal terms that for one who is experiencing this Self or Ātman thus, there is nothing else whatsoever that remains to be done or achieved.

The tenets that have been taught or deliberated upon so far will serve as very valuable introduction to the topics to be taken up in due course. Hence the true seeker should discern and ratiocinate on the genuine purport behind the sentences pertaining to Ātmānubhava, quoted from Sūtra Bhāshya of Shri Śaṅkara. By such reflection all the important tenets of Vedānta will be easily discerned, nay to the Mumukshus (true seekers of Moksha) it amounts to having achieved, attained the very essence of Shri Śaṅkara’s Vedānta indeed.
XV. ASPARSHA YOGA

The Vedantic philosophy belonging to the tradition of Shri Śaṅkara is called Asparsha Yoga. Shri Gauḍapāda, the grand-preceptor of Shri Śaṅkara, while explaining the teachings of Māndūkyopanishad, in his famous Kārikas at the beginning of the fourth chapter called Alātashānti Prakaraṇa, has written this invocatory verse: ‘अस्पर्शयोगो वै नाम सर्वसत्त्वसुखो हितः। अविवादोतविरूपधर्म देशितस्तं नमा-म्यहम्॥’ The reason for the Advaita Darshana (non-dual school of philosophy) according to the traditions of Shri Gauḍapāda (and Shri Śaṅkara) getting the nomenclature of ‘Asparsha Yoga’ is: There is no difference whatsoever between this Darshana (philosophy) and the essential nature of Brahma. Since there does not exist anything whatsoever that is second to, or other than, Brahma, there is no Sparsha (relationship, contact) with anything else; hence it is Asparsha (unrelated Entity). Between this Anubhava (Intuitive Experience) of the nature of Advaita Darshana and Parabrahman (the Absolute Reality) there does not exist any distinction whatsoever. For, Brahma is Nitya (eternally) Shuddhānubhavārūpa (of the essential nature of Pure or Absolute Intuitive Experience); the Anubhava that accrues as the fruition or culmination of Vedāntavichāra (discrimination as per the Upanishadic teachings) is verily of the essence of Brahmān in esse; different or distinct from that Brahma, this Anubhava does not at all exist.

This Darshana (philosophy), or Brahma, is Sarvasattwasukha, meaning, blissful to every creature, a means for supreme Bliss indeed. For example, Tapas (penance)
is a spiritual practice or means which has to be performed by enduring great hardship. But this *Darshana* is not like that; for, this being the *Brahma Darshana* (Intuition of the Absolute Reality) which is *Paramānandaswarūpa* (of the essential nature of supreme Bliss) which, in truth, is the *Ātman* (Self) of everyone, is different from *Tapas*. This is *Sukha* (blissful) as also *Hita* (benign, beneficial). Enjoyment of external objects etc., though apparently pleasant, is not *Hita*; for, in the ultimate analysis or at the end of it all, it is the cause for catastrophe or calamity alone. But this *Darshana* — because of the reason that both at the beginning and at the end exists in *Brahmaswarūpa* which always exists in *Ānandaswabhāva* (essential nature of Pure or Absolute Bliss) alone — is both *Sukha* (blissful) and *Hita* (beneficial). Because of the reason that *Brahman* is verily *Ātman* of everyone — whether he is an *Āstika* (believer in the scriptures, theist) or *Nāstika* (non-believer, atheist) — this *Darshana* is blissful to everyone, beneficial to everyone too. This *Darshana* is *Avivāda* (non-controversial, not disputable). Because of the reason that this is a *Darshana* of the very essence of non-duality, in this there is no scope whatsoever for argument and counter-argument or assuming roles or factions for and against the teachings of this philosophy. For this reason too this *Darshana* is *Sarvasattwasukha* (Blissful to the very Being or existence of everyone) as also ‘*Hita*’ indeed. When there exists a second entity, as the *Śruti* states: ‘यत्र हि द्वैतमिच्छति तदद्वितयं ज्ञाति तदद्वितयं इत्यर्थे पश्यति’ (Bṛi. 3-4-14); ‘द्वितीयोद्वैतो यत्य पश्यति’ — (Bṛi. 1-4-2), when we observe from the *Vyavahāra Drishti* (empirical viewpoint), it appears as though there is *Dvaita* (duality)
in reality; there exists invariably empirical transactions like one seeing another, one hearing another etc. as also fear being caused by the second entity; in the workaday transactions (Vyavahāra) there are invariably differences of opinion among one another, and hence in the Siddhāntas (philosophies) of Dvaitins (dualists) the fear of Virodha (opposition) and Vivāda (dispute) is invariably unavoidable. But in the Advaita Darshana there is never any Vivāda (dispute or controversy), because there is no Virodha (opposition) whatsoever. All this is the purport behind Shri Gauḍapāda's Kārika.

Between Bhoutika Vijñāna (physical or empirical sciences) and Advaita Darshana (the oriental philosophy of non-dualism) there exists a very great difference. In the empirical sciences, in general, the external objects or phenomena in the world are perceived through valid means like the senses, are then examined or analysed, and by comparing with the previous knowledge about the phenomena the scientists arrive at a particular determination or theory; if this theory becomes opposed to or contradictory to the next examination and analysis etc., they give up that theory as not correct. But Advaita Darshana is not like that at all. In fact, in this science par excellence the methodology of the empirical sciences cannot possibly be utilized, nay it is not of any use or benefit whatsoever. For, in the physical sciences only the Prameyārāshi (the entire mass or matter of the objective world) alone is being taken up for deliberation. But here in Advaita Vedānta a deliberation pertaining to the totality of existence or Life comprising Ātman (Self) and Ānātman (not-Self) is being deliberated upon;
Vedāntins are never satisfied by examination or deliberation of a partial outlook on one aspect of life.

Similarly between *Tarkapradhāna Darshanas* (speculative philosophies) and *Advaita Vedānta* there is a great deal of distinction with regard to their methods of exposition and the truths enunciated by them. The laws or rules of logic, which are formulated or rationalised in consonance with certain mental concepts based on intellectual faculties of reasoning, discrimination, are themselves the principal or authoritative means for determining the 'Absolute Reality' *in esse* for those philosophies or branches of knowledge. Having stipulated certain logical rules or regulations as laws with regard to *Tattwa* (Reality), they are always arguing among themselves mutually. Some people opine that the *Jñeyavastus* (known objects) are absolutely real; some others aver that apart from *Jñāna* (knowledge or intellectual concepts or ideas) there is nothing whatsoever like *Jñeya* (known object); in truth, that known object is a mere shape or form of mental concept or intelligence - thus for a long time there has been going on a long-drawn dispute, controversy among these disputants or proponents of Realism, Idealism and several other 'isms' of the same ilk. In our country too Śāṅkhyans, Vaisheshikas etc. were saying that 'The *Jñeyavastu* really exists; that alone is the object for *Jñāna* (knowledge)'. Among the Buddhists, *Vijñānavādins* (Idealists) were propounding that 'Apart from *Vijñāna* (intellectual concept, idea) there is nothing like *Jñeya* (known object) at all; mental concept itself cognizes one part of itself. Among the Western thinkers too, there were many Idealists as also Realists (*Jñeya-satyatwādins*). For all of them logical dissertation alone
is the main instrument or means of presentation or prop­agation. Here we can give an example to depict as to how these Western thinkers or so-called philosophers determine the Truth or Reality by utilizing logical argu­ments; German thinker Hegel has explained in the fol­lowing manner his doctrine that - "By means of logic the mental concept of 'becoming' can be established by the intellectual mode called Pure Being". If all the special features like branches, sub-branches, stem, roots etc. of a tree are withdrawn or sublated by our intellect and then if we deliberate upon (the remainder), then at the end the 'Pure Being or Existence' alone remains; at that moment there is no distinction between this Pure Being and nothingness or essencelessness. Therefore, Pure Being or Existence means Shūnya (non-existence) alone. If we conjoin this Pure Being with its opposite phenom­eon of non-existence, then it amounts to saying that Pure Being itself becomes non-existence, and hence by the combination or conjoining of these opposites an entity or phenomenon called 'Becoming' is engendered - he opines! Whether this deliberation or theory is proper or not is not the topic here for discussion or deliberation. This type of dry logic is called in Vedāntic parlance Kevala Tarka, Shushka Tarka. Tarka (logic) cannot possibly be a Pramāṇa (valid proof or evidence) for anything. Vedānta is not a philosophy (spiritual sci­ence) which is formulated or established on the basis or strength of Kevala Tarka (dry, vain logic or dia­lectics); therefore, in Vedānta there is no scope whatsoever for either Vivāda (argumentation or dis­putation) or Virōdha (opposition or refutation).
Now, some philosophers who are Pramāṇavādins (exponents of valid means or proofs, evidences) are there. They have not accepted or totally relied upon Kevala Tarka alone. For them the valid means for propounding their theories or doctrines are Pratyaksha (perceptual knowledge), Anumāna (inference) etc. alone. They keep on asking questions like - "For saying - 'That thing exists' - what is the evidence ?" "For saying - 'This thing does not exist' - what evidence is there ?" If a thing is established by valid means or evidence, they aver 'It exists' ; if it is not proved or established by valid means, they conclude - 'It does not exist.' But what Pramāṇa (proof) is there for the existence of Pramāṇas (valid means of knowledge) ? How at all can we determine or establish the question - ‘Whether the Pramāṇa (in question) is really a proper or correct Pramāṇa or not ?’ - by what valid means (Pramāṇa) ? For this question there is no satisfactory answer in their philosophy. Besides, in their philosophy there exists a controversy, dispute with regard to the number of Pramāṇas, and in order to determine it they have perforce to use Tarka (logic) alone. In our country too there are some Tārnikas (logicians) who affirm. "लक्षणप्रमाणाष्ट्र्यं वस्तुसिद्धः:" [meaning : ‘Without showing, demonstrating Lakṣaṇa (extraordinary, special quality or attribute) and Pramāṇa (valid evidence) we do not accept that a Vastu (entity or object) exists.’] Why, there are Darshanakāras (founders of philosophical schools) who include both Pramāṇa (valid means of cognition) and Pramāṇu (cognizer) in the Prameya Rāshi (mass of objective phenomena) ! If we observe according to the tenets of Vedāntic philosophy, although
the empirical transaction of Pramāṇa-Prameya Vibhāga (distinctions or divisions of valid means or proof and the perceived object) is a pre-requisite for Vyavahāra (workaday dealings), for determining the Paramāṇa (Absolute Reality) to ask about Pramāṇa is not at all proper, valid; for, the very Pramāṇa-Prameya-Vyavahāra (the whole gamut of empirical dealings of valid means of cognition and the cognized object) rests on the base, foundation stone of Avidyā alone. Without an innate identification with the body, the senses, the mind - as 'I' and 'mine' - no one can ever become or be a Pramāṇa (cognizer); but there is no universally accepted support or substrate whatsoever to affirm or assert that these phenomena like body, senses and mind are really, absolutely, 'I' or 'mine'! Therefore, it is the opinion of Vedāntins that - 'For the determination of Paramārtha (the Absolute Reality) it is not proper to utilize or take recourse to Pramāṇa Vyavahāra which is projected, caused by Avidyā (ignorance).'

Because of the reason that among the various philosophies which are logic-predominant there exists thus differences of opinion, how at all can we determine or discern the Tattwa Siddhānta (spiritual teaching of Absolute Reality)? Such a question arises, is it not? For this question the various philosophers or thinkers do not have the same kind of answers. It is the opinion of some people that - 'Whatever is of essence in all these philosophies, it has to be accepted and what is not has to be discarded. But then, those logicians who take into their reckoning only that which is essential, become a separate group by themselves, is it not? Even then, in their
philosophy how at all can there be tenets or theories which are *Avivāda* and *Avirūdha*? There are some others who are of the opinion that whatever matter that is commonly acceptable in all disputes or controversies should be reckoned. Even then, it is quite clear that there is no hope whatsoever to say that all the disputants will accord their approval to such a system or method. Now, especially *Shūnyavādins* (nihilists who champion the cause of essencelessness) among the *Buddhists* have been asserting that their doctrine is to refute all disputes or the various theories by means of logic - to wit, to refute all viewpoints and condemn them - is itself their doctrine. Their argument sounds like or is analogous to the assertion - 'If we kill all the enemies, there will not remain any enemies opposing us'!

Those who affirm that - *'Anubhava (experience) alone is the Pramāṇa'* - are disputants belonging to yet another group; followers of Patañjali's *Yoga Darshana* belong to this group. There are many among Christians, Mohammedans and Sufis who are of this group. Among the Buddhists too those who were *'Yogāchāras'* were of this group alone. Even today there are several people spread out here and there who claim that in *Samādhi* they acquire such and such experiences or *Anubhavas*. For the fact that such individualistic experiences accrue to such individuals, they are themselves *Pramāṇa* (evidence). It is the opinion of *Vedāntins* that on the strength and support of such individualistic experiences a philosophy which is universally acceptable or acknowledgeable and which is, at the same time, *Avivāda* and *Aviruddha* cannot possibly be formulated or deduced. It is but nat-
ural that even among those who argue by relying on their respective *Yogipratyaksha* (individualistic experience on the basis of *Yogic* practices) there will invariably arise differences of opinion. In the *Srutis* (*Upanishads*) and *Bhagavadgītā* too *Sādhanas* (spiritual practices) like *Adhyātmayōga* and *Dhyānayōga* for attaining *Paramārtha Darshana* (Self-Realization) have been mentioned. Although in Śāṅkara Vedānta (Vedantic teachings as propounded by Shri Śāṅkarāchāryya), these *Dhyāna* (contemplation) and *Samādhi* (trance) are taken as support for *Tattwavicchāra* (deliberation on the Absolute Reality of the Self), one of its most important tenets or features is that exclusively on the support of this kind of experience alone the *Tattwanirddhāraṇa* (determination or establishment of the Absolute Reality) is not made or based.

The *Darshanakāras* (philosophers) who are *Vākyasharāṇa* (totally dependent or reliant upon *Vedic* sentences or etymology) are of two kinds. Among them some believe in *Āptavākya* (statements by well-wishers) and carry out their deliberations. One who is *Anubhavi* (experienced, seasoned), who can depict the truth (or Absolute Reality) as It really exists and who is bereft of human defects and weaknesses like deception, cheating etc. - such a great, righteous person is fit to be called *Āpta* (one who is a well-wisher interested in our progress and prosperity). It is very difficult to decide about the genuineness and righteous qualities of *Āptas* ; there is a pious axiomatic saying that : ‘A *Rishi* or sage who is believed or supposed to be a *Pramāṇa* (the ultimate authority) is very difficult to be judged or decided’.
People belonging to various religious faiths believe that their respective founder of the faith or holy personalities are Āptas and reckon them to be the Pramāṇa (valid authority) for their Adhyāma Sādhana (spiritual practices). ‘Apourusheya Vākya (scriptural sentence which is not of human origin, rather of divine dispensation) is itself the Pramāṇa’ - people who affirm in this manner are of the second kind. Since Vedavākya (Vedic or scriptural sentence) is Apourusheya, in it there does not exist any defect or deficiency whatsoever of human origin; those, who believe that for fruits like Svarga (Heaven) which are unseen or invisible as also for the existence of deities etc., this Veda alone is the Pramāṇa, belong to this group of Pūrva Mīmāṁsakas (believers in the Karmakāṇḍa of the Vedas). In Vedānta Darshana also (i.e. Uttara Mīmāṁsā) the Vedaprāmāṇya (authority of the Vedic lore) is assumed; but for the purposes of determining the Tattva, while utilizing the sentences belonging to the Jñānakāṇḍa (end portions of the Vedas), because of the reason that for Vedānta the visible, perceptible fruit of Anubhava (Intuitive Experience) alone is the culmination, fruition - merely on the one premise of the Vedāntic sentence being ‘Apourusheya Vākya’ alone it is not reckoned as Pramāṇa. The Nyāya (axiomatic truth) that ‘ज्ञायते तु शास्त्रं न कारकम्’ (Sāstra states about an entity as it is, and not creates what is not existent, nor does it remove or sublate what really exists) - Shri Śaṅkara keeps on reminding Jijnāsus (seekers of the Ultimate Reality) about it every now and then. In the ‘Vedānta Mīmāṁsā Śāstra’ which undertakes the task of teaching or expounding Brahman (the Absolute Real-
Asparsha Yōga

ity) for the sake of Its Jijñāsas, Shri Śaṅkara adopts the axiom that - ‘श्रुत्यादयोनुभवादयस्च यथासंभवमिह प्रमाणम्, अनुभवावसानत्वात्, भूतवस्तुविषयत्वाच्च ब्रह्मानस्य’ [Both Śrutvādi or scriptures etc. and Anubhava etc. are Pramāṇas here; for, Brahma Jñāna has necessarily to culminate in Anubhava or Intuitive Experience and has perforce to signify Siddha Vastu or an existing entity fully established; just as the Karma Vākya gives rise merely to the knowledge of the Karma (ritual), it does not stop its function there]. Because of the reason that Vastuvākya (a sentence indicating an entity as it is) is a Pramāṇa, we should interpret it as it appears to be proper or correct to our Anubhava (experience) and it cannot possibly be imagined in a manner contrary to our Anubhava at all. Here in this context ‘Anubhava’ which is Sārvatrika (universal) alone is the Pramāṇarāja (kingpin among all valid or authoritative means); this truth has been propounded and proclaimed exclusively by Shri Śaṅkara alone. For that reason alone this philosophy is Avivāda and Aviruddha - this assertion by Shri Gauḍapāda is acceptable and suitable to this Darshana.

Avidyā-Kāma-Karma are the three phenomena, of the form or nature of Mrityu (Death), are verily the Samsāra Bandha (the Bondage of transmigratory existence); by means of Vedānta Jñāna (the Intuitive Knowledge of the Self as propounded by the Vedāntic spiritual science) this Mrityu can be transcended, surmounted here and now itself. ‘एतावद्ध्युनुशासनम्’ (This much alone is the established teaching of Vedānta). The Vedāntic ‘Anubhava’ accrues only to people of such and such Varnas (castes)
or such and such Āśhramas (stages of life) - such a special qualification does not exist; it can accrue to all Martyas (mortal human beings). Vedāntins take into the reckoning only Śrutyanugraha Tarka (meaning, only that logic which is in consonance with Anubhava); they do not call - just like the predominantly logic-oriented empirical sciences - that logic which is acceptable and attractive to the human intellect alone 'Tarka' (logic). Tarka has necessarily to be supported by or built up on Anubhava; coloured or smeared by that Anubhava, that Siddhānta (conclusive philosophy) finally arrived at should perforce culminate in Anubhava alone. Shri Sureśvarāchārya, the direct disciple of Shri Śaṅkarāchārya, in his Naishkarmyasiddhi has written: 'सोयं न्यायोपि वेदांतार्थं: शास्त्राचार्य प्रसादलभ्योपि अन-पेक्षितशास्त्राचार्यप्रसाद:, अनन्यापेश्यसिद्धस्वभावत्वाद्.' meaning, this purport - or Reality - of Vedānta is that which is in consonance with Yukti i.e. Tarka, logic; though It is that which accrues from the benign grace of the Śāstra and the Āchārya (preceptor), It is not dependent upon the benign grace of the Śāstra and the Āchārya; for, It is devoid of any dependence whatsoever upon anything else and is of Swatahsiddha (self-established) Swabhāva (essential nature, of Absolute Being). This alone, is the unique and exclusive spiritual instruction of Vedānta as expounded by Shri Śaṅkara.
XVI. THE QUINTESSENCE OF THE TEACHINGS OF ŚASTRA & ĀCHĀRYA

Because the Paramārtha Tattwa (Absolute Reality) is extremely subtle, in order to teach or instruct about that Entity those who are adepts in this Knowledge have assumed certain gross attributes, meant for spiritual practices, as though they are absolutely real, and then have taught this Reality. Just as when a house is being constructed, first the scaffolding is erected but after the intended purpose of the construction of the actual house is achieved, the outer (extraneous) scaffolding is removed - similarly, once the determination of the Ultimate or Transcendental Reality is achieved, those extraneous but deliberate super-impositions are sublated and then they establish the Pure, Absolute Reality in the minds of the pupils. This truth can be signified by means of an apt illustration. In the Kathāpanishad there is a sentence: ‘उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राय्थ चरान् निबोधत’ (meaning, ‘Get up, wake up, approach great preceptors and know the Absolute Reality’). In this sentence it amounts to saying that the Upanishad has asked or alerted everyone of us to reckon this our waking to be a dream and that we should wake up from it and find or search out the Absolute or really real ‘waking’ state. This very opinion has been expressed by Shri Gauḍapādāchārya in his famous Kaikī: ‘अनानिन्दमय्या सुप्तो यदा जीवः प्रबुध्यते। अजमनिद्रमस्वप्नमद्वैतं बुध्यते तदा।’ Here it has been stated that the Jīva (transmigratory soul) is experiencing the dream due to Anādimāyā (beninningless illusion), is it not? Here, the two kinds of dreams, viz.
Agrahaṇa (not knowing the Tattva or Absolute Reality of the Self), Anyathāgrahaṇa (to misconceive the Tattwa in a totally different and wrong manner) are included. In both the states which we are dealing with in our workaday life as waking and dream, there exists Anyathāgrahaṇa which induces us to know (misconceive) that, apart from our Swarūpa (essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness), there exist other extraneous special phenomena. In fact, to be perceiving a world of diversity of the form or nature of Kriyā (action), Kāraka (means of action), Phala (fruit of action) is itself Anyathāgrahaṇa or Svapna; Agrahaṇa meaning ‘not knowing or cognizing anything whatsoever’ is itself Nidrā. Our innate but natural belief that we are constantly experiencing both these is itself called in this Kārikā: ‘अनादिमायया सुप्तः’.

As soon as we wake up we all come to realize that - ‘All that we were witnessing in our dream was Kalpita (misconceived, imaginary); the dream phenomenon did not exist whatsoever.’ Even so, we are all, without exception, being deluded, befuddled over and over again! If the dream comes once again, we will reckon it then as ‘waking’ alone. The Vedāntins keep on instructing us that just like this Svapna of the Vyavahāra or empirical, workaday world of transactions, all the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep are together, in their entirety, a beginningless dream. In the Bṛhadāranyaka Vārtikā Shri Sureswarāchārya has stated: ‘नास्य स्वपः प्रबोधो वा कुतः स्वप्नस्य सम्भवः। प्रत्यक्षत्वस्य एवास्य जाग्रत्वप्रभुत्वं-सुपुष्पयः॥ सुप्तः प्रबुद्ध इत्येवं स्वपं पश्यति चेति यः। विकल्पश्च
To wit: Just as where there exists really a rope alone people imagine (misconceive) it to be a snake, a stream of water, a stick etc., in our Ātma Swarūpa Itself, which is one without anything second to It, the three Avasthās or states of waking, dream and deep sleep are being imagined by the common people. When seen from this viewpoint, there does not exist any distinction whatsoever between the dream and the waking; just as in the dream we are observing, witnessing Satya-Mithyā-Vibhāga (distinctions of real and false phenomena), Sthira-Chara-Vibhāga (distinctions of immovable and movable things), divisions of Ādhyātmika (internal to the body) and Ādhibhoutika (external to the body), similarly in the waking too all the people are witnessing these distinctions. Just as those who exist in the waking are believing in the manner - 'The states like waking, dream and deep sleep are occurring to us endlessly, constantly' - in the dream state too those people therein believe in the same manner. It being so, barring the experience that - 'The world comprising the entire states of waking, dream and deep sleep is appearing' - there is no other support or evidence of any logical means whatsoever available to us to prove or establish the fact that - 'These three states really exist.' In the dream howevemuch strongly we had believed that - 'We are really awake; like the dream, this waking is not false or unreal; due to the deficiency or defect of sleep the dream appears, or is engendered, but the waking is not like that at all' - as soon as we wake up from that dream, we keep wondering in the manner - 'Oh dear! How at all could this happen? !' Here we should remind
ourselves about the *Nyāya* (axiom) that - ‘न हि दृष्टे अनुपपत्तं नाम’ (That which is perceived in one’s experience, to say that it is all *Ayukta* or not rational or proper is not at all correct). It is quite certain that the universal experience of the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep is appearing to occur to us; it is also quite certain that - ‘When we are in the dream all of us staunchly believe that these experiences are thus occurring.’ Although the Śruti is repeatedly proclaiming vociferously, stridently: ‘उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत’ (stand up, get up, wake up), we are not capable at all to give up our deep-seated belief that the *Avasthāraya Prapāñcha* (the entire gamut of the world of diversity of waking, dream and deep sleep) is real!

People suffering from the illness of day-dreaming perceive all kinds of visions; then, in that state, they have totally, strongly believed that they are awake and all those perceptions are really, certainly existing. Even the words that we utter in their presence are being heard by them; but they are totally in the grip of the staunch belief that their experience is the real thing as it appears. In the same manner, we - all of us - have innately believed that the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep are constantly occurring to us one after the other. Although those *Vedāntins* who have realized the Absolute Reality are shouting at the height of their voice, so to speak, that - ‘All this is verily a dream; get up, wake up!’ - we feel that - ‘Can anyone (in his senses) say that these three *Avasthā* which are so clearly occurring to (experienced by) every one of us are false, untrue? Are they themselves day-dreaming or are they mad?!
Perhaps, they may be suffering from a psychological or mental aberration! - and we are all ensconced in our belief! Here who are really day-dreaming or mad? Those few Vedántins or we, the rest of the people? This is the basic question here.

The philosophers or thinkers who have deliberated upon the *Tattwa* (Absolute Reality or Truth) have carried out their deliberations with regard to the *Paramārtha* (The Ultimate Truth) and then have presented before us their respective spiritual theories or doctrines. We are always saying - "Thus 'Hegel' - a Western thinker, has said; thus 'Kant' - another thinker has opined; thus 'Russel' has averred; 'Shri Śaṅkarāchārya', an Indian philosopher, has expressed thus", is it not? All this, is it a dream! Here (in this our waking world) we are seeing, hearing, discriminating, deciding about the Ultimate Reality; is all this merely a misconception, a wild imagination! We are also listening to the words of the *Sruti* sentence - ‘एकमेवाहितियों ब्रह्म’. But is this world of duality that is being perceived by all of us false? The haunting doubt - "Should we say the verdict of the reality of the world of duality given by or acceptable to many people is correct, or the opinion of some one or two people? or the *Sruti*s teaching that - ‘Advaita alone is the *Paramārtha*’ - is true?’ - is pestering some among us. But is it proper to decide the *Tattwa* by a majority verdict? Just because hundreds of people who are suffering from 'fever call a meeting and decide that - 'To consume curd is not all wrong; in fact, it causes coolness to the body and this is in our experience; similarly, we can eat plantain too which is good for health' - and, on
that score, can one single doctor, who is not having fever, (who is in the minority) acquiesce in their majority verdict and accept their faulty verdict? It is better for us to go deep into this question and ratiocinate or reflect.

If we think even a wee bit in the manner - "The Śruti, which proclaims: 'उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत'; 'Discern that all this is a mere long dream' - and this teaching which is bereft of any taint of defect that can ever be even imagined; as well as the preceptor, who out of compassion towards humanity and its well-being in general, instructs the Tattwa, which is established on universal experience - are a hoax, mad and they are instructing thus out of a selfish motive" - then that can never be beneficial to us at all. Without finding out the truth in accordance with our experience that - 'The distinction between a dream and waking is like this' - to conclude in the manner that - 'What the Śruti and the Āchārya have been teaching cannot possibly be correct' - is not at all proper for those who are professing to find out the Tattwa.

Now anybody may raise another question of the type - 'Okay, in that case, since this world of diversity is invariably in the experience of each and every one of us, there is no scope whatsoever for anyone to believe that Advaita itself is the Paramārtha (the Absolute Reality or Truth) at least as long as this duality lasts, is it not?' For this, Shri Gauḍapādāchārya has answered in the following Kārikā: 'प्रपन्नो यदि विद्वेद निवर्तेत न संशय:।
मायामात्रमिद्धैतमद्हैत परमार्थतः॥' - (Gauḍapāda Kārikā 1-17).
To wit: Even after detemining by means of deliberation
in consonance with Śārvatrikā Anubhava (universal Intuitive Experience) that - "'Just like the states of waking, dream and deep sleep, the world of diversity in its entirety is a mere Anādi Māyā Svapna (beginningless illusory dream)’" - to raise a doubt of this kind is not proper. It is true that we saw a dream. Merely on that count, does anybody who is awake (in his senses) believe that the dream world did exist really at that moment and now (in the waking) it disappeared or is destroyed? Merely on the basis of our reckoning for a moment a rope to be a snake due to Bhrānti (delusion), does anybody accept that that ‘snake’ really, actually was born in the rope or in our mind, but after the delusion disappeared (or was removed) that snake too disappeared or ran away? No one believes at any time that - ‘At that particular instant a snake really, actually existed, but when a lamp was brought it did not appear because it must have hidden itself in some hole or crevice’ - is it not? Even the common run of people take it to be that that particular thing (seen as a snake) was merely a false appearance (or misconception); really all the time a rope alone existed. Is it not so? However, some present-day post-Śaṅkara commentators who profess that they are followers of Shri Śaṅkara’s school of philosophy - i.e. Advaita Vedānta - have been arguing that - at the moment of the delusion of the snake a Prābhāsīka Sarpa (illusory phenomenon of a snake) is (actually) born. Especially in recent times a Sannyāsin has written a book - ‘Methods of Knowledge’ and has strengthened and supported the theory that the Prābhāsīka Padārtha (illusory object) is actually born during the time of delu-
sion. This Sannyāsin has established an institution (monastery) on behalf of the Ramakrishna Mission in America; his this new treatise is printed in England. We cannot say whether the thinkers or philosophers of England and America, reading or hearing this new (novel) theory of Vedanta, are nodding their head in approbation or ridiculing in the manner - 'After all, this is what Vedanta is or what it propounds!' Let it be. 'If the snake which appeared were real, then it should not have been sublated, falsified; if it were Asat (unreal or false), then it should not have appeared at all; therefore, it is an Anirvachaniya Sarpa (indefinable, indescribable snake) which is of Sadasadvilakshaṇa (the queer nature of being both real and unreal) - thus the argument of the new Vedāntins runs! Is this acceptable to all of us? This question has to be reflected upon in our minds and we ourselves have to decide its veracity.

Let it be. The logical device or argument of the type - "The world of duality is Māyāmāra (mere illusion); it does not come into being nor does it go out of existence. Hence, as long as it 'exists' there cannot possibly be Advaita (non-duality)" - is opposed to Anubhava (universal experience). However, it is not the teaching of true Vedāntins that - 'The world of diversity or duality truly, really exists, but by means of Advaita Jñāna (Knowledge of non-dualism) it disappears or is destroyed.' But, in accordance with our empirical, workaday knowledge the world at large that we all perceive is itself real, and Brahman which is apart or different from it we do not know or cognize. When, after the Śrutī and the spiritual teacher or preceptor instruct us in a
manner that the *Tattwa* (Absolute Reality) is Intuited by us, if we observe from their viewpoint, we are convinced that - ‘The world of duality did not exist whatsoever at any time indeed.’ Not only that; even the divisions or distinctions of *Guru* (teacher), *Shishya* (disciple), *Shāstra* (scripture) - do not at all exist in reality. Shri Gauḍapāda has propounded: ‘विकल्पो विनिवर्तेत कल्पितो यदि केनचित्।
उपदेशादायं वादो ज्ञाते हृदं न विद्यते॥’ (Gauḍapāda Kārikā 1-18). To wit: ‘All phenomena or concepts like *Prapancha* (world of duality), *Guru, Shishya* etc. are mere misconceptions’ - thus when it is said, it should not be misunderstood to mean that - ‘Some one, in particular, has this misconception.’ In truth, these misconceptions which are universally popular or familiar are being utilized, harnessed so to say - for the purposes of spiritual instruction in *Vedānta* and thereby the Absolute Reality is taught or signified. From the standpoint of those who have discerned (Intuited) the Reality (Truth) as It really is so as to culminate here and now in their *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience) - ‘No duality whatsoever existed at all at any time; *Advaita* (non-dual Reality) alone is verily *Paramārtha* (the Absolute, Transcendent Reality).’

**XVII. BRAHMĀTMA VİJŅĀNA**

If we discern the purport behind the statement of Realized Souls that - ‘ज्ञाते हृदं न विद्यते’ - (If we Intuit the Absolute Reality, the duality itself does not exist whatsoever), it is tantamount to saying that - ‘All that exists
is one and one non-dual Entity alone.’ Hence, it evolves from this truth that if one cognizes or Intuits That Reality, it amounts to knowing or cognizing everything indeed. This truth Shounaka inquired about from the preceptor Āngirasa in the manner - ‘कस्मिन्नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वसिदं विज्ञातं भवति’ - (Mūṇḍakopanishad) - meaning: ‘Revered Sir, which is That (Truth, Reality) knowing or cognizing which all this amounts to being known?’

Here what is meant by ‘knowing, cognizing’ ? Just as in our workaday world people cognize each one of the external objects separately, does it mean that this Paratattwa (Absolute Trancendental Reality) has to be cognized (objectively) ? When we use any one of the senses and perceive any object, there occurs a particular change or mutation (reaction) in our mind. When we cognize objects through that mind - even while reckoning each and every object - the whole of our Mind (psyche) is utilized indeed. At that same time or moment it is not possible for the Mind to cognize any other object at all. If we have to cognize any other object, we have to perforce leave the present object in hand, so to speak, and then only the Mind has to envelop or pervade the new object. But while we cognize (Intuit) Ātman - just as the Mind acquires or assumes the shape or form of the external object - is the Ātmākāra Vṛtti (a concept of the form of the Self) produced ? This question has to be deliberated upon now.

From the viewpoint of the (Pūrva) Mīmāṁsakas without the form of the object being produced the knowledge or perception of the external object does not accrue. If this is true, then in order to cognize Ātman the
Ātmākāra Vṛtti has perforce to accrue, is it not? Perhaps, for the Mīmāṃsakas to opine that - "Ātman is Ahampratyayagamya (object for the 'I' notion)" - this alone may be the reason. But, in truth, Ātman is not Ahampratyayagamya; in fact, that Ātman (self, 'I' notion), who is Kartṛurūpa (of the form of an agent of action) in the empirical sphere, is merely a Sūpdhikarūpa (a form or phenomenon associated with an adjunct) of the really real, Absolute, Transcendental Self; for that reason alone, while teaching the Paramārthaswarūpa of Ātman, Shri Krisṇa has very clearly denoted: 'य एवं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम्। उभौ तौ न विज्ञानीतो नायं हृदि न हन्यते॥' (Gītā 2-19). To wit, its implicit purport is: 'This Ātman (Self) is not the Kartṛu (agent of action) for any Kriyā (action), nor is He any Karma (action, ritual); for, He is not the one who is the object for the Ahampratyaya ('I' concept or notion) at all.' For that reason alone when it is said - 'To cognize Ātman who is Paramārthaswarūpa - or who is Aparicchinna (immutable, indivisible)' - it evolves that - 'Not to make the Self an Ātmākāra Pratyaya (a concept having the form of the Self)' - just like when we cognize or perceive an object. Ātman who is a Jñānu (knower) is, in truth, not an object for any Pratyaya (concept) whatsoever; the truth that - 'The statement about Ātman being an object for Ahampratyaya ('I' concept) is itself not the final verdict' - is Intuited invariably, because of the reason that it is not possible whatsoever to comprehend by the Mind the Swarūpa (essential nature of Being) of the Jñānu (knower). To wit: To be a Jñānu and at the same
moment to be Jñeya (known object) is self-contradictory; even so, in our workaday dealings, because of the reason that people, in general, themselves imagine or assume their own selves to be an object to themselves on the strength or with the help of their Ahampratyaya (‘I’ notion), and then express it in the manner - ‘Don’t I know that my innate nature is like this?’ - this viewpoint or opinion of the Mīmāmsakas has been accepted in Vedānta also, but only from the Adhyārūpa Drishṭi (viewpoint of deliberate super-imposition). Because of the reason that a Jñāru, without imagining or assuming any object external to him, cannot himself possibly become a Jñāru at all, in his empirical dealings this Jñāru imagines himself as though he is an object for himself. That is all! But, even then, it is never possible for him to discard or give up his Jñāruswarūpa (essential nature of being a cognizer or knower) at all. But there is no rule of law at all to the effect that - ‘Paramārthāman (the Absolute Self as the Transcendental Reality) should invariably and ever be of Jñāruswarūpa (of the innate nature of a Knower, cognizer)’; for example, in deep sleep too Ātman exists, but therein He is not a Jñāruswarūpa.

Now, let us see what happens if we concentrate all our Mind on Ātman or the Self with a view to cognizing that Shuddhāman (Pure, Absolute Self) who is Anubhavārūpa (of the essential nature of Intuition, Pure Consciousness). If we attempt to cognize the Jñāru, the imagined (or misconceived) Jñāru himself becomes the object. But here in this context there is not even a little scope or room for the Jñāru-Jñāna Swabhāva (natural habit of
being or behaving as the knower and having any knowledge) to exist even as an imagined phenomenon. If we concentrate our Mind or make it one-pointed in order to cognize (Intuit) as to how our Ātmaswarūpa exists in Sushupti (deep sleep), then it (i.e. the Mind) has to *per force* become just like that Ātman alone; to wit, it has invariably to give up, discard its very Mind-ness. If the Mind endeavours to cognize any object whatsoever, it has invariably to assume the *Vṛitti* (concept) which is the same as that of the object, is it not? In the present case, because of the reason that Ātman does not have any form or shape whatsoever, to say that the Mind becomes just like Ātman means it has invariably to become *Nirākāra* (formless) alone. With regard to the Mind which contemplates upon the Self alone, Shri Śaṅkarāchārya has written in his Gītā Bhāṣya: 'एवं योगाभ्यासबलातू योगिन आत्मस्वरूप प्रकाश्यति मनः' - (Gītā Bhāṣya 6-26), meaning - 'The Mind of a person, who contemplates thus, gets stilled (attains tranquillity) in Ātman alone. Because of the reason that Ātmaswarūpa is the *Sākshi* (Witnessing Consciousness) which *observes* (objectifies) even the Mind, one who has discerned this secret and is observing, witnessing from his *Swarūpa* - to him even this *Dhyāna* (contemplation) is not needed. In truth, the *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience) that - 'Following (in the shadow of) Ātman alone the Mind appears, manifests; the Mind is completely pervaded by Ātman alone' - accrues, and It manifests verily in our Intuitive Experience to help realize that - 'Everything is Ātman alone.' This alone is implied by Shri Gauḍapādāchārya in his *Kārikā*: 'आत्मसत्त्यानुभोधेन न
Since at the instant of our Intuiting, by means of the instruction of the scriptures and the preceptor, the truth that - ‘Ātman alone is the Paramārtha-satya (Absolute Reality) and apart from Him there does not exist anything else whatsoever’ - there is no object whatsoever for Him, there is no question of cognizing anything whatsoever by objectifying it, and hence the Mind becomes no-Mind - thus he has explained.

Here the secret is: We are always [eternally, i.e. whether there are concepts or no concepts of time-space-causation] verily Ātman who is Anubhavaswarūpa (of the very essence of Intuition). When this Absolute Truth is Intuited by us, then it is said that - ‘He has attained, acquired Ātmānubhava (Intuitive Experience of the Self as Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss).’ In Sushupti (deep sleep) Ātman alone exists (exclusively, non-dually); then Ātman does not cognize anything whatsoever, He exists or remains as the Kevala (Pure, Absolute) Chaitanya (Anubhava or Intuitive Experience or Pure Consciousness) Swarūpa (essence of Being). That very Chaitanyaswarūpa exists in all states like Jāgrat (waking), Svapna (dream). When the Antahkarana Vṛitti (mental concept) tries to cognize (Intuit) that Paramāmaswarūpa, that Vṛitti itself becomes one with Brahman alone. There is no sense or meaning whatsoever in the statement of some Vedāntins that: ‘The Mind assumes a Vṛitti of the shape or form of Ātman’. For, Ātman does not have any form or shape whatsoever. As a matter of concession, for name-sake, we may say that when by means of Dhyānayoga the Mind merges in Ātman - this itself may be called - Ātmākāra
Vṛitti (the mental concept of the shape or form of the Self). We should discern that - 'The Buddhi (intellect) becoming clear, pure and subtle just like Ātman' - is itself expressed as 'assuming or acquiring Ātmākāra.' Although by virtue of Sānikhya Vichārakrama (method or system of Intuitive deliberation) all the Anāman (not-Self) which is super-imposed (Adhyārōpita) upon the Self is sublated, falsified, and (further) by means of Dhyāna Yōga (Intuitive Contemplation on the Self as It really is) if all the functions of the senses, the Mind etc. have ceased and the Mind becomes quiescent in Ātman alone, the Ātmānubhava (Intuitive Experience of Pure Consciousness as the Self) becomes Abhivyakta (instantaneously, spontaneously manifested). ‘एकस्मिन् विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवति’ - meaning, 'If we get the Intuition of the Self - to wit, the Mind becoming no-Mind rests as Ātman alone - the conviction of the type - Ātman alone exists everywhere ; apart from Him there is nothing else existing whatsoever' ensues. It is not possible at all to reckon or understand that - 'In this Jñāna we remain as Jñānus in a Vṛitti-rūpa (form of concept) and cognize the Jñeya (known object) - such a form of Jñāna exists separately.' For those who have established themselves in Ātmaswarūpa Itself, there is nothing else needed at all for Ātmajñāna. It is quite possible for the superior class of evolved, qualified seekers to Intuit directly that - 'Ātmānubhava which is Sarvasākshi (Witnessing Consciousness of everything) is Itself really pervading everything ; that Itself is the Paramārtha (Absolute Transcendental Reality).’ But those who have not been able to
attain this kind of Intuition - have to strive to attain this very Anubhava, say either by means of Intuitive deliberation upon Avasthāraya or some other particular methodology.

Those who have acquired the Pratyagdrishṭi (introvertedness, introspection) may attain Ātmāswarūpa so as to culminate in their Anubhava (Intuitive Experience) by any one of the three paths (Sādhanas which are Vastutantra), viz. (i) Sārikhya Drishṭi Vichāra (deliberation on Intuitive, Absolute Reality viewpoint), (ii) examination of Avasthāraya and (iii) Dhyāna Yōga (Intuitive Contemplation). This very Anubhava is Itself called 'Brahmātma Vijñāna.'

XVIII. SATSAMPAT (ACQUISITION OF THE WEALTH OF REALITY) FROM SADVIJÑĀNA (INTUITION OF REALITY)

The profound and pregnant sentence of Tattwamasi (That Thou Art) is found in the Chhāndōgya Upanishad. Nowadays many Vedāntins opine that this is one Mahāvākya (profound sentence) and this sentence is to be utilized by Sannyāsins (monks, ascetics) for their Japa (rote, repeated recitation). Especially some people go to the extent of saying that while reflecting on the meaning of this sentence alone the experience of Samādhi (trance) has perforce to accrue; and even after attaining Samādhi in that manner, those great holy men who come down to the mundane, workaday world are singularly excellent examples of Jīvanmuktas!
Really speaking, this sentence is the one which has repeatedly (to be exact, nine times) been taught or propounded by one sage by name ‘Uddālaka’ to his bright son, Shwetaketu, during the course of the former’s spiritual instruction. The complete sentence runs like: ‘स य एषोणिमैतदात्ममिदं सर्वं तत्सत्यं स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्येतकेतो’ - (Chh. 6-7-8) the literary meaning being - ‘This most subtle Reality or Entity that exists - Its essential nature Itself is verily all this world of duality ; That alone is real, That alone is Ātman (Self) ; Oh Shwetaketu, That thou art.’

Shwetaketu, a brilliant student, finished his 12-year course of education in a hermit’s monastery or house (residential school), learnt all the Vedas and returned home full of pride, vanity, thinking that there was none else more knowledgeable or wiser. Observing his vain pride, Uddālaka, the father, inquired of him: “Oh son, Shwetaketu! You are so proud of your education and are so audacious; have you inquired of your teacher about Ādesha (spiritual instruction) - by that mere instruction the Tattwa (Absolute Reality) becomes Intuited, cognized - knowing which all that which is not heard becomes heard, all that which is not reflected upon becomes reflected upon, all that which is not cognized becomes cognized - such a spiritual instruction have you imbibed from your preceptor?” The son on hearing about this wonderful Vastujñāna (profound knowledge of the Absolute Reality) was amazed and asked his father - “Such a spiritual instruction - how is it imparted?” The father then elucidated the method of teaching the Absolute Reality
by means of an illustration: ‘यथा सोम्येदमेव मृत्युपदेन सर्व मृत्युं विज्ञातं स्वाद्धास्तम्यं विकारो नामवेयं मृत्युस्त्येव सत्यम्।’ - (Chh. 6-1-4) meaning - ‘Just as by knowing the one lump of clay all the effects of clay are rendered to be known, just as the phenomenon of an effect is merely a name brought about by speech, but the clay alone is the reality - in that same manner (here too you have to reckon)’. Similarly he has exemplified two other illustrations of pieces of gold and a nail-cutter of iron. If properly observed, here in the illustration itself that Tattwa which Uddālaka wished to instruct about is implicit; there is no need whatsoever of giving or adducing any Yukti (reasoning or logical device). To wit: Clay, gold etc. - which are the Upādāna Kāraṇa (material causes) are themselves appearing in the forms of a pot, a pitcher etc. as effects; but apart from the clay the effects like the pot, the pitcher etc. do not exist at all. From this kind of an example that Tattwa or Reality which is cognized by everyone is verily the Vedānta Tattwa, and this profound teaching is implicit in the Upanishadic statement: ‘सदेव सोम्येदम्य आसीदेक्षेपवादितीयम्’ - [That Sat or Pure Existence, Being - the one without anything second to It - alone existed in the beginning; even now That alone exists. Just as from the one entity of clay alone all the effects like the pot, the pitcher etc. are appearing to be caused or brought about, in the same way from the Paramārtha or Absolute Reality alone which is Sanmāra (Pure Being or Existence) all this world of diversity is appearing to be caused]. Shri Gaudapāda has given the illustration of the empty space (Ākāsha) for elucidating
this truth: 'रूपकार्यसमाख्यात्व भिद्वज्जे तत्र तत्र वै। आकाशस्य न पेदोक्षित्ति तद्वृज्ञीवेषु निर्णय: ॥' (Gauḍapāda Kārikā 3-6). To wit: Although Rūpa (form), Kārya (function), Nāma (name) - these differ for each and every object, in all of them the common denominator of existence is Ākāsha (empty space); because of the reason that all of them are invariably the effects of Ākāsha, they are not phenomena different or distinct from Ākāsha; in the same way, although the Jīvas are appearing to be different due to the different adjuncts of the body, the senses etc., since these adjuncts of the body, the senses etc. are different by virtue of their name, form and functions, the Jīvas are appearing to be different; in truth, for all these Jīvas there is one Ātman alone. Just as all the objects are the effects of Ākāsha, the Ākāsha also is the effect of Ātman alone. This Ākāsha is not different from Sadrūpa Ātman (Self of the form or nature of Pure Being or Existence). In all phenomena or objects of sight the Sadbuddhi (sense of Being or Existence) runs in and through or is invariably associated with; therefore, Sanmātra (Pure Existence, Being) alone is appearing in the forms of all objects of sight or perception. Apart from Sanmātra Ātman no other effect whatsoever exists in reality. Everything is verily Sanmātra. This is in our Intuitive Experience indeed.

What is meant by Sat (Pure Being, Existence)? Shri Śaṅkarāchārya has also explained in his Bhāshya on Chhāndogya Upanishad that: 'सति अस्तित्वात्र वस्तु सूत्रम् निरविशेषं सर्वगतम् एकं निरज्ञज्ञ निरज्ञज्ञ विज्ञानं यदवगम्यते सर्वज्ञात्मेप्य: ॥' - meaning - "'Sat is a Vastu (entity) which
exists in the form of Pure or mere Existence; being very Sūkṣhma (subtle) devoid of any special features or attributes like Jāti (genus), Dravya (substance), Guṇa (quality) etc., Sarvagata (all-pervading), non-dual (i.e. one and one alone without anything second to or other than Itself), Asaṅga (unattached or unassociated with anything else), It is that which is Known from all Vedāntas (Upanishads) and Anubhavāmaka (of the very essence of Intuitive Experience).” There is no need for asking: ‘Where do we get the Intuitive Experience of such a Vastu (entity)?’ It is, in fact, seen as the very Swarūpa (essence of Being) in our Sushupti (deep sleep). The father-preceptor, Uddālaka, in order to remind his son (Shvetaketu) that in this Avastha, Ātman alone exists has turned his son’s attention (mind) towards the Sanskrit word ‘Svapiti’ (is sleeping). He has explained it thus: ‘यत्रैततपुरुषः स्वपिति नाम सता सोम्य तदा संपन्नो भवति स्वमपितो भवति तस्मादेन स्वपितत्त्वयाचक्ष्ठे स्वं द्यम्पितो भवति’ [People say that - ‘Man is asleep (Svapiti), is it not? Then, he is actually one with this very Sadvastu’. That Sadvastu being his very Swarūpa (essence of Being) they say Svapiti. Svam (his own essential nature) he has merged in, is it not?] This is the real purport, import behind this statement of Uddālaka.

Even now we are all existing in our Swarūpa alone. But we are now associated with adjuncts like the body, the senses, the mind etc.; we also have the Visheshavijnāna (special perceptual knowledge) of the type of cognizing the external objects by means of our instruments of knowledge (Jñāna Karanās). Hence, we exist not only in
our Pure or Absolute Swarūpa (essence of Being) but also another Āgantuka Rūpa (adventitious form); because of the reason of this adventitious form being there alone, we are being called Jīvas. But in Sushupti - in our deep sleep state - we do not have the experience of the external objects like sound, touch etc.; we are not associated with either the body, the senses or the mind; then in that state we are not endowed with the special knowledge of the nature of - ‘This is such and such a thing’ - by our acts of seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting. We do exist therein in the essential nature of Pure or Absolute Chaitanya or Consciousness alone which is Nirvishesha (devoid of any special attributes), Sanmāra (Pure Existence, Being). By virtue of that Anubhava (Intuitive Experience) of that Chaitanya (Pure Consciousness) alone we are capable of remembering in the manner - ‘So far we were sleeping’ - as soon as we wake up.

But because of the reason that in the waking we are seeing, hearing, smelling, touching or tasting those objects, we are entertaining a deep-seated belief that those external objects are really existing. But the Ātman who exists in our deep sleep and is of Anubhavarūpa (of the essence of Intuitive Experience), we do not, in the same manner, see, hear, smell, touch or taste; for that reason alone, we are all transacting in the manner - “In deep sleep there does not exist anything whatsoever ; therein we are not seeing either ‘I’ or ‘phenomena other than ourselves’.” But what is the ground reality? Is it that we ourselves do not exist therein? No one ever accepts that sort of a proposition to be true. For the belief (opinion) to the effect - ‘If anything is an object for our
sensations (sense-perception) of seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting, then only that object is real' - to be rooted in our Mind, the real cause is our Mind being invariably and inextricably engrossed in the external perceptible things or phenomena alone. In our empirical dealings the innate attachment or identification of the type - 'We are really of the essential nature of the conglomeration of the body, the senses and the Mind' - shadows (nay haunts) us without let; therefore, even if it is said that - 'We ourselves did not exist in Sushupti' - we are ready to accept that to be true! If we observe deeply, if it were true that in deep sleep state our very essence of Being Itself did not exist, who - he or she, may be anybody - would have desired or sought for sleep? The ground reality is: Therein the Jīva [the transmigratory soul, who is none else than this 'I' concept with his indispensable paraphernalia of the body, the senses, the mind etc.] is asleep (Svāpiti), meaning Svam Apiti (has merged in his essential nature of Absolute or Pure Being, Existence). 'सता सोम्य तदा संपन्नो भवति' - (Then he has merged in his Sadrūpa Paramārthaśwarūpa or the really real essential nature of Absolute, Transcendental Being or Existence and has become one with It). When, in the true absolute sense, we have merged and become one with Sadbrahma - which is non-dual, one without anything else second to It - What a foolishness it is to think or reckon that we do not exist!

In that case, then at that moment why is it that we do not at all cognize the truth that we have merged in Sadbrahma Itself? To this pertinent question of his son, Uddālaka has given the following answer: 'यथा सोम्य मधु
meaning, "The honey bees bring the juice from flowers of various plants and prepare honey. But in the wholesome honey nowhere do we come to know the juices being distinct therein in the manner - 'This is the juice of this (such and such) flower', 'This is the juice of this (such and such) flower' - ; everything has become pure honey alone. Is it not so? In the same way, although in our workaday transactions the distinct knowledges of the type - 'I am such and such a person' and 'These are such and such people' - do accrue to us distinctly and variously, in Sushupti, especially because of the reasons that neither these distinct creatures exist nor our adjuncts (like the body, the senses, the mind etc.) exist; no instruments of cognition also exist; no object or phenomenon whatsoever other than one's own Self exists therein; everything has merged and become one with Ātmaswarūpa alone, the distinctive knowledges of the type - 'I', 'these people', 'others' etc. do not occur or accrue. We all have become one with our Sadrūpa which is verily our Swarūpa (essential nature of Absolute, Pure Being, Existence). Because of the reason alone that thus being one with our Swarūpa is - like the taste of the honey - the very Intuitive Experience of Supreme Bliss (Ānanda), we all hanker so much after sleep; we equip ourselves with all kinds of comfortable things like a soft bed, pillow, warm rug etc. so as to get sound sleep."
All right, let it be that in Sushupti we were one with that Sadrūpa; then because of the reason that we did not have either the senses or the Mind we were not able to cognize that we were in that Sadrūpa; but now (i.e. in the waking) we do have the body, the senses and the Mind - the whole gamut of instruments of cognition! At least when we are awake why cannot we know in the manner - ‘In deep sleep we were in this particular manner one with Sadrūpa, but now we have come to this state from there’? Just as a person who has reached or arrived at the village cognizes in the manner: ‘I have come to the village from my house’ - if we ask the question - “‘Why cannot we know that - 'I have come (here to the waking) from Sadbrahman’ - ?’” - then the answer is: “इमा: सोम्य नदः: पुरस्तात् प्राच्यः स्यादन्ते पश्चात् प्रतीच्छ्यताः: समुद्रात् समुद्रभवतिः स समुद्र एव भवति ता यथा तत्र न विद्विषियमहस्मीय-महस्मीति ।। एवेऽवेव खलु सोम्येमा: सर्वाः: प्रजा: सत अगम्य न विदुः सत आगच्छाम: इति त इह व्याप्रो वा सिस्या वा वृक्षो वा वराहो वा कीटो वा पतझ्गो वा दंशो वा मशको वा यद्यभवतिः तदा भवति ।।” - (Chh. 6-10-1, 2) meaning: “That water which rose from the sea as rain-bearing cloud falls as rain and flows down in the forms of rivers like the Ganges etc. and (finally) fall into the sea alone. In this manner although over and over again these rivers like the Ganges, the Yamuna etc. are born from the sea and are merging into the sea alone, we are not cognisant whatsoever of the fact that those various rivers have come out of the sea and merge into the sea alone, is it not? In the same manner, we all of us are born out of this sea called ‘Sadbrahman’ and
having been different Jīvas we transact variously and over and over again we merge into that very sea of Sadbrahman alone. Even so, we are not able to cognize the truth that - ‘We are always belonging to (are one with) that sea of Sadbrahman, and not distinct from It.’ Although all the Jīvas are thus verily Sanmāra (Pure Existence, Being) Nirvishesha (devoid of special attributes) Brahman, not knowing or cognizing this truth, they are not at all cognisant of the truth that - ‘They are coming out of that Sadbrahman over and over again.’ Whatever creatures they were considering, reckoning themselves to be due to the Vāsana (latent impression) of Ajñāna (ignorance), becoming those very different creatures they are waking up over and over again. In Sushupti all the creatures - not only the human being but also the tiger, the lion, the jackal, the boar, the butterfly, the insect, the giant fly, the mosquito - all these have attained Sampatti (merger, onement) in Sadbrahman alone and exist in the Swarūpa alone of that Brahman. Once again while waking up the tiger wakes up as a tiger alone; the lion as the lion alone; the bear as the bear alone - similarly the human being wakes up as a human being alone.” Thus is the profundity and power of Ajñāna! Although we are one with Brahman, exist in Brahman and carry out all our empirical transactions in Brahman alone, the Vāsana (potential impression) of Ajñāna that we are such and such Jīvas (individual souls) has stuck on, adhered to all of us!

There is no reason whatsoever to doubt in the manner - “From this extremely subtle Ātmavastu (Reality of the Self) how at all can such a variegated and won-
derful and extensively spread-out world come out?” The seed of a pine tree is so microscopic, small, is it not? Even so, from such a microscopic seed is not such an amazingly big tree with many branches and sub-branches born? It is seen in the world that from a small thing a huge thing is born; what is actually seen, can it be neglected or discarded saying that it does not agree with logic? In Sushupti merging or becoming one with Sadbrahman and then over and over again waking up in our respective forms as individual Jīvas - all this is in everyone’s Anubhava; and hence one should not discard such a universal experience and forward an illogical or unreasonable argument; there is wisdom in adopting, or rather adapting, our logical argument itself so as to be in consonance with Anubhava (universal experience). Only from such an approach we attain Shreyas (Beatitude, spiritual solace).

Let it be. Yet another doubt of the type - ‘How at all can we cognize such a non-perceptible (beyond the ken of our senses and mind) Sadāmavastu?’ - may torment us. For this, Uddālaka has given a suitable illustration; if we put some salt granules in water, they get dissolved and merged in (become one with) water. Then if we put our hand and search for the salt granules, they may not be grasped by the hand any more. Even so, can we not find out the truth that they are all there in the water by tasting the water by our sense-organ of tongue? At that moment we come to realize that - ‘In and through the water the salt has pervaded (spread out)’, is it not? In the same manner, Ātmavastu may not be perceptible to our sense-organs; even so, if we observe through the
'eyes of Anubhava' it becomes quite clearly discernible that - 'This Ātma Tattwa alone is pervading everywhere and this Tattwa alone is the Ātman (innermost essence of Being) for everything.'

Now another doubt may arise: 'If Anubhava alone is thus the basic device to cognize a Vastu (substance, Entity) which is not perceptible to any sense-organ, then where is the question of knowing or cognizing this Tattwa from others? Can we not know or cognize it by ourselves?' In answer to this question, Uddālaka has narrated an episode: In the olden days a resident of Gāndhāra State was robbed of his wealth by thieves who took him blind-folded to a far-off wild forest and left him there. He was unable to know where exactly he was, suffering from acute thirst and hunger and being terribly afraid of wild animals like tiger, bear and thieves; thus being tormented in that forest, he kept shouting for help in the manner - 'Please someone help me, release me! Thieves have tied me up and left me here blind-folded!' At that moment, one particular passer-by, out of compassion, untied him, removed the cloth around his eyes, gave him full details of the landmarks of his path to his State and sent him. Then that man, by the dint of his intelligence, remembering the path, was said to have returned to his native State and home. In the same way, this Jīva has been caught hold of by the thieves called Indriyas (senses) and is wandering about in the wild forest of Samsāra. When an extremely compassionate 'preceptor' unties his knot of Avidyā, this disciple by means of his Jñānachaksūs (eye of Knowledge, Intuition) looks within himself and by virtue of his own Anubhava (Intuitive Experience)
cognizes Atman. It is quite but natural here in this context that for all of us who are habitually looking outwardly through our senses, there is a dire need of a spiritual preceptor who is himself an Anubhavi (one who has realized the Ultimate Reality in his own Intuitive Experience) who can instruct in the manner: 'Look within yourselves, cognize the Tattwa.' In the absence of the proper spiritual instruction by a knowledgeable, well-qualified preceptor we too, like that rich resident of Gāndhāra State, will keep on getting blind-folded and merely (helplessly) be suffering untold miseries in this wild forest of Samsāra, is it not?

To those people who have attained this Sadbrahmāma Jñāna there is no Duhkha (misery) of this Samsāra (transmigratory existence of repeated births and deaths); but for the rest of the people this is unavoidable. In order to inculcate this truth also Uddalaka, Shwetaketu's father-preceptor, has given an apt illustration. That very illustration has been suitably adapted here in a very familiar manner. If, suppose, a thief is caught by the police and during the inquiry if it is proved that he uttered a lie and really he has committed a theft, then he has to undergo the respective punishment and to suffer a great deal. But if it is proved that he had not committed any theft at all, then the police release him, is it not? In the same manner, one who has cognized the truth in the manner - 'This whole universe has been caused by Paramāman alone; to me that Paramāman Himself is the real Atman; that very Paramāman is Paramārtthasatyasvarūpa (the very essence of the Absolute Reality), all else is - when compared to Him - invariably false or unreal' -
attains *Shreyas* (Beatitude, solace); to him the *Duhkha* that is caused by this false or untrue *Samsāra* cannot taint or touch whatsoever. But if we do not endeavour to cognize the truth but believe staunchly that this form or nature of *Kartṛtu-Bhokṛtu* (agent of action-cum-enjoyer) of ours is itself real, we become verily the thieves who have stolen our real *Ātmatattwarūpa*; and for these we would have to perforce suffer the misery of *Samsāra* over and over again. Though some people do not know the *Tattwa*, they are bragging and professing in the manner—‘I am verily *Brahman*; I have already cognized the Absolute Reality; where is the question of my knowing anything from others?’. Even such people—just like the thief who has uttered a falsehood—will have to undergo a rigorous punishment fit for their crime. On the other hand, those people—just like the honest Shwetaketu—acquire the spiritual instruction from a preceptor and attain the *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience) of the type—‘All is verily *Sanmāra Brahman*; That alone is really the *Ātman* of everyone; That alone I am’—such people not only attain *Satsampat* Itself in deep sleep but also attain It eternally, perpetually and become *Nityamuktas* (eternally Liberated, Realized Souls), to enjoy that Blissful state.

**XIX. Brahmatma Vidya**

So far all along we have completely relied upon *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience) alone and have been cognizing the various methodologies meant for determin-
ing the Ātmāsmawarūpa. In the previous chapter we have deliberated upon the method of Intuiting the purport behind, or implicit in, the most famous Upanishadic statement of Tattwamasi (That thou art). Some present-day Vedāntins are propounding that ‘Tattwamasi’ is an Upadesha Vākya (a profound sentence meant for spiritual instruction and initiation) of the sentence - Aham Brahmasmi (I am verily atman) is said to be Anubhava Vākya (a sentence pertaining to one’s Intuitive Experience) - thus they are categorising these sentences. It is true that the preceptor teaches in the manner - ‘You are verily Brahman’ - while the disciple Intuits in the manner - ‘I am verily Brahman’. But for both these sentences Anubhava alone is the support or substrate; in fact, in Anubhava alone their ‘Knowledge’ has invariably to culminate. Especially from this viewpoint there is no difference whatsoever between these two sentences.

Here certain points pertaining to the Upanishadic sentence of - ‘Aham Brahmasmi’ - will be presented. This deliberation too has perforce to take complete recourse to, or given all the predominance to, Anubhava alone. Because of the reason alone that we have not cognized Brahmaswarūpa, we are of a form or nature which is finite and limited, as also Anādi Bhrānti (beginningless delusion) has taken root in us; merely by Intuiting that we are truly Brahman this delusion disappears and we become Sarvāman (all-pervasive Self). The essential natures of these Vidyā (Self-Knowledge) and Avidyā (Its absence, ignorance) and their respective functions, effects are described in one section of ‘Bṛihadārāṇyaka Upanishad’：“ brahma vā īdāmy āsītākṣatātmāneva vādeḥ
Here how did the Sarvātmabhāva (cognizing everything as one’s own Ātman or Self) accrue to Brahman? If it is said that without cognizing anything whatsoever Brahman became everything, then why can’t that same thing accrue or occur to us? Or, in the alternative, if it is said that because of the reason alone that Brahman cognized another Tattwa (Reality), It attained Sarvabhāva (becoming one with everything) - then the question arises: ‘That another thing or Reality - how did that attain Sarvātmabhāva? ’Then, how did that second Tattwa too having cognized yet another thing attained Sarvātmabhāva; again how did that third Tattwa, having cognized another thing, attained Sarvātmabhāva and so on. Thus for a series of questions or objections there is no end, or no finality is reached. ‘How can we resolve this difficulty or predicament?’ - To this question a proper answer has been provided here in the above sentence.

This difficulty, or rather confusion, has arisen because of the reason that the literary meaning of the sentence - ‘Having cognized another, Brahman became everything’ - has been taken. It has been stated in the Vedas that if an Upāsaka (one who contemplates) actually contemplates on his deity of adoration or meditation with
the intense feeling - ‘That deity is myself alone’ - he verily attains the innate nature of that deity. In the same manner, because of the reason that for this Śruti sentence a wrong interpretation has been made as - “We should meditate or contemplate on Sarvarūpa Brahman as - ‘I am verily That Brahman’ - and we should attain Sākshākāra (materialization)” - the problem has arisen. Actually the ground reality is not so. All that exists is merely Brahman alone; That alone is verily the Ātman (Self) of all of us. That Entity called ‘Brahman’ is not something separate or different from us; like the Upāśya Devata (deity meditated upon), It does not exist finitely or in a limited form in some corner of space; neither is there any need of meditating upon It and only then we have to perforce obtain or attain Its Swarūpa (essential nature of Being). For the sake of those middle-class seekers who are not able to raise their Mind to the lofty, profound level, so to say, capable of Intuiting this Paramārtha (Absolute Reality) it has been stipulated in the Śruti, it is true, by way of a Vidhi (injunction), that they should meditate (Upāsana) on It in the manner - ‘I am verily that Brahman.’

‘एष म आत्मानान्तहृदये एतद्र ब्रह्म एतत्मितः प्रेत्याभिसंभवितास्मि’

meaning - ‘That Brahman which is Sarvāman is verily my Ātman (Self); after I leave this mortal coil (body) and migrate from here I will go and reach this Ātman’ - thus the Upāsaka (meditator) has to meditate; and further it is stated: ‘यस्य स्वादद्ध न बिचिचिक्षुसास्तिः इति ह स्माह शाण्डिल्यः’ - (Chh. 3-14-4) - meaning - ‘To one who does not get any doubt of the kind - ‘Whether I will attain Brahmaprāpti (attainment of the
Knowledge of the Ultimate Reality) or not? - to such a person as a fruit of his Brahmasākshākāra (materialization of the Absolute Reality), in due course of time Brahmaprāpti will be attained - thus the sage Śaṅdilya has stated.” But that itself is not the final Jñāna (Intuitive Knowledge) pertaining to the Entity of Brahman which is the Absolute, Transcendental Reality; that too is Avidyā alone. The Brahmaidyā that we have taken up for deliberation now is not such Upāsana (mental meditation) ; there is no need whatsoever of believing with all Shraddhā (faith) that in due course of time this will yield its fruit. If the seeker cognizes, Intuits Brahman he verily, instantly becomes Brahman; for, having always been Brahman, due to Avidyā (ignorance) - due to beginningless Bhṛānti (delusion) of the nature of misconception alone - the Jīva has believed that - ‘I am finite and distinct’ - and is suffering in this (ocean of) Samsāra. Such a profound Jñāna of a lofty level is this Brahmatma Vidyā!

Now let us find out the answer for the first question that we have raised. The Śruti answers: “This was, in the beginning too, Brahman alone; It cognized Itself in the manner - ‘I am verily Brahman’; by virtue of that (cognition) alone It became everything.” For the Sanskrit words like ‘Brahman’, ‘Sarva’, ‘Pūrṇa’, ‘Kṛṣṇa’ - the meaning is ‘everything’. These words actually do not signify either any number or any quantity, measure; they are words which point out the totality of an Absolute Reality Itself, in truth. All that ‘is or exists’ is one and one alone (non-dual Reality). That (Entity) verily we are; apart from our own Swarūpa (essential nature of
Being) there does not exist anything else whatsoever. It being so, although we are all really of the very essence of Brahman (Brahmaswarūpa), without knowing or cognizing It, we have misconceived in the manner that - 'I am finite and limited to be of the proportions of the body, the senses etc.' This very truth the Śrutī is proclaiming in the manner - 'All this was in the beginning Brahman alone.' The expression 'in the beginning' really means - 'before attaining Jñāna'. Due to Ajñāna alone we are not having the Jñāna of the type - 'I am verily Brahman' ; this is not the empirical or mundane 'Jñāna' of divided or distinct appearances like Jñāru (knower), Jñāna (means of knowledge) and Jñeya (object of knowledge) ; It is verily that Jñāna (Intuitive Knowledge of the Self) of the essential nature of Anubhava (Intuitive Experience) which enables us, nay, Itself directly Intuits, cognizes in the manner - 'I am verily everything.'

For the proper or real Jñāna in esse with regard to (the Absolute Reality of) Brahman not having accrued to us, Avidyā (or Ajñāna) alone is the (screening, covering) impediment. A sea-shell is always (existing as) a sea-shell only ; in it there is not even an iota of silver. Even so, due to Bhrānti (delusion) it appears to us to be silver ; in fact, that Avidyābhrānti (delusion due to or of the nature of ignorance) is itself the impediment to know or cognize it to be a sea-shell ; whether they are Devatas (deities or divine beings), Rishis (sages) or human beings - all are really Brahman alone. Among them that deity to whom the Jñāna (Intuitive Knowledge or Experience) of the type - 'I am verily Brahman' - accrued, only to that particular deity the Ajñāna of the type - 'I am a
deity who is distinct or finite' - has disappeared. To the Rishis too it is the same. That Rishi to whom a Jñāna of Anubhavarūpa (of the essential nature of Intuitive Experience) of the type - 'I am verily Brahman' - accrued, to that Rishi alone Sarvāmabhāva (cognition of being one with everything) has accrued; the remaining deities and Rishis - even if they are great souls - all of them are, from the viewpoint of the Brahmadāna, verily Ajñānis. Among men too it is the same case. Those men (or women) who have attained the Anubhava of the type - 'I am myself verily Brahman' - are, in truth, one with Brahman of the very essence of everything; all the others are, from Vyavahāra Drishti, Ajñānis indeed. In ancient times a Rishi by name Vāmadeva attained, acquired this Brahmatmavidyā; by virtue of that, the individualistic, distinct or finite sense of the type - 'I am Vāmadeva' - disappeared. Then he, on the strength and support of Jñāna, instantaneously attained the Sarvāmabhbāva of the type - 'I am myself Manu; I am myself the Sun.' On the strength of this Jñāna alone he found out the Mantras (aphoristic verses) of the Rigveda, viz. 'अहं मनुस्यं सूर्यर्षच ......'.

Here in this context it should be discerned that pairs of events like - Ajñāna disappearing (or getting sublated) and Jñāna accruing (or being attained); Abrahmatwa (not being Brahman) being got rid of and Brahmatwa getting established; Asarvatwa (not being everything) being sublated and Sarvāmatwa (being the innate Self of everything) being acquired - do not occur. In truth, everyone here and now are verily of the essence of Brahman, they are verily everything that is or exists;
in order that this *Jñāna* should accrue to us there is no rule of law that we should be invariably great and very powerful *Rishis* (sages) like Vāmadeva. If the proper *Pratyagdrishṭi* (introverted vision, introspection) exists (or is acquired), even now anybody - whosoever he or she may be - can earn this *Jñāna* of the type - 'I am verily *Brahman*; he can also acquire *Sarvātmabhāva*. In the work by name *Naishkarmyasiddhi* Shri Sureshwarāchārya has written: ‘देशाकालाद्वारासम्बन्धादिदेशादेशमहाकार्यतः। नातुन्त्तरमङ्गलं वा ज्ञानम्ज्ञानान्मस्त्यतः।’ - meaning - ‘For *Brahman* there is no relationship whatsoever with time and space; for, time-space etc. are the effects, products of *Avidyā*. Really speaking, time-space-causation - all these categories or concepts - are verily *Brahman* of the very essence of *Anubhava*. Therefore, to say or assert in the manner - ‘*Ajñāna* disappears (is sublated) now, in such and such a place and due to such and such a cause; similarly *Jñāna* accrues or is acquired in such and such a moment of time, in such and such a place and due to such and such a cause’ - is also *Ajñāna* alone. There does not exist any *Ajñāna* which does not disappear or is sublated; nor there exists a *Jñāna* which does not accrue or is not attained. In truth, all these (concepts of) *Jñāna* and *Ajñāna* are verily *Brahmatman* alone of the very essence of *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience).

Therefore, the statement: *‘Brahman Itself cognized Itself’* - should not be misconstrued that ‘In ancient times, *Brahman* got rid of *Ajñāna* and acquired *Jñāna* and thereafter, in due course of time, It (i.e. *Brahman*) acquired *Sarvātmabhāva*. *Brahman* did not cognize *Brah-
man, making Itself an ‘object of cognition’; thereafter It did not become Sarva (everything). The distinctions of the type - ‘Jñātu, Jñāna, Jñeya’ as also the distinct events like - ‘disappearing’ and ‘accruing, acquisition’ - do not exist whatsoever in Brahman; because of the reason that we are verily Brahman (i.e. eternally, here and now), there is no Avidyā even now (i.e. as we are deliberating upon It) in our Swarūpa; nor is there any necessity of Vidyā accruing afresh. If this profound truth is Intuited, cognized to culminate in our Anubhava (Intuitive Experience), the fact that - “Vyaktitwa (individuality of the nature of ‘I’ concept, notion) never existed in us” - becomes resplendent, effulgent in us.

The statement: “Among the deities, sages or human beings some who cognized in the manner - ‘I am verily Brahman’ -” also should be discerned in the same manner. Manifoldness of the type - ‘many deities’, ‘many sages’, ‘many human beings’ - does not exist whatsoever in Brahman. In fact, just like the Rishis who have the vision of the Mantras, the deities who are having the powers of becoming invisible etc., the human beings who are great, famous endowed with riches like money and gold etc. - even the common ignorant or illiterate people, weak and emaciated people with limited strength, people who are physically handicapped or blind and deaf from birth - all of them here and now, eternally, are verily Brahman alone which is non-perceptible, non-dual and beyond the ken of distinctions brought about by time-space-causation categories. If it is taught in the manner: ‘Brahman cognized Itself alone by Itself; similarly, all of you cognize (Intuit) your innate essence of Being of Ātman
(Self) alone, by virtue of that you will become (one with) Brahman' - it really means that we should never imagine (misconceive) any concepts of inner aspect (interior) and external aspect (exterior) in Brahman (the Absolute Reality). The distinctions of not-selves like the body, the senses etc. were never existing in the past for any one of us; in the future also there is no need whatsoever of discarding or dislodging this concept of distinction and then become Brahman at all. Now itself (as it is at present) everything is verily Brahman alone. It is also not the case that to those who cognize this truth, by means of a 'medicine' called Brahmātmavidyā the disease of Abrahmatwa (not being the Ultimate, Absolute Reality of Brahman) does not vanish in reality, actuality. On the other hand, if it is instructed in the manner - Tattwamasi (That Brahman Itself thou art) - the true seekers say: "Yes, very true; 'Aham Brahmiismi' (I am verily Brahman)." To such people here and now itself the Intuitive Experience of the Nityasiddha (eternally established or existing) Sarvātmabhiīva (oneness with everything) has accrued readily, Intuitively.

XX. SUSHUPTĀTMA TATTWA

In order that Brahmānubhava that is expounded in Vedānta accrues to us, we should constantly (repeatedly) contemplate upon Ātmaswabhāva (essential nature of Pure Being-Existence of the Self or Pure Consciousness) which is in every one's experience in Sushupti (deep sleep). For the superior class of seekers, merely by virtue of this
contemplation alone Anubhava (Intuitive Experience) may
dawn. Hence, we will take up now for our deliberation
in the main, the ‘Ātmastwārūpa’ of that Avasthā.

(1) There is a brief but pregnant sentence in
Prashnōpanishad which is the reply given by the Rishi
(sage who was the preceptor) by name ‘Pippalāda’ to a
query by a pupil, Gārgya: “विज्ञानात्मन सह देवेश्च सवें: प्राणा
भूतानि संप्रतिष्ठिन्ति यथा। तद्वर्त वेदेते यस्तु सोम्य स सर्वज्ञः सर्व-
मेवाविवेश।” - (Prashna 4-11). To wit: In Sushupti our
Vijñānāman (‘I’ notion, concept) does not exist; neither
do the senses or their Adhishṭhāru Devatas (deities who
are supporting, sustaining them) exist therein; nor do the
primordial elements like Prithvi (earth) Ap (water) etc.
exist. Then all these have become one into an Akhanḍa
(mass), Advitiya (non-dual), Nirvishesha (devoid of any
special attributes), Paramārtha Tattwa (Absolute Reality)
by the name of Akshara - which Entity alone remains.
In That Tattwa alone all this world of duality, diversity
has merged. Without there being a body which is phy-
sically made out of the five primordial elements, the
senses, as also, externally, the objective phenomena not
being there - we can never have the special (distinctive)
knowledge of the type - ‘I am cognizing this object’. Because of the reason that the Anubhava (Intuitive Ex-
perience) of Sushupti (deep sleep) is accruing to all of
us, it evolves from this that - “Our essential nature of
Pure Being then was verily ‘Akshara Brahman’, devoid
of any special feature or attribute whatsoever” - this is
the real truth (beyond any doubt). If anyone through
effort dissolves or merges his senses, mind etc. and gets
established in his Ātman - that Avasthā (state) is called Samādhi; but when all these (adjuncts) get dissolved or merged quite naturally due to causes like exhaustion etc., and one remains in the nature of 'Akshara' - we conventionally call it Sushupti (deep sleep). If we observe deeply, both these are not at all separate Avasthās (each one being distinct); at that moment, we are all existing in our really real Swarūpa (essential nature of Pure, Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss). That is all.

One who attains this 'Aksharaswarūpa' so as to culminate in his Intuitive Experience is Sarvajña (Omni-scient); he alone has become everything, he has become Jñānamāraswarūpa (of the very essence of Pure Consciousness). He has entered into 'Sarva' (meaning, Aksharabrahman Itself which has become or pervaded everything) and has merged or become one with It. When we say - 'He has become Sushupta - or he is sleeping' - it is not meant to be a 'Kriya' (action); for, at that moment he does not have Kartrutwa (agentship of action). In fact, it is a Sthiti (condition) devoid of any Kartrutwa and any transaction or function. If this is ruminated over in our mind, we actually attain 'Samādhi' itself. In Samādhi we do not possess any body, senses etc. whatsoever; to affirm that they exist, our Vijñānāman ('I' concept) himself is the witness or proof, is it not? Even that Vijñānāman has totally got dissolved in Paramāman herein. This 'Ațmaswabhāva' is - as it is stated :- 'न वर्घते कर्मणा नो कल्पितान्' - 'It is neither an entity which gets exhilarated or excited, nor gets dejected or depressed as a result or fruit of any action.'

(2) There is a sentence in Kaṭhōpanishad like:
The senses are born from their respective primordial elements and are grasping, comprehending their respective objects in the waking and the dream. In deep sleep they once again get dissolved or merged along with the primordial elements in Sushuptāman. For the sake of Vijñānāman (‘I’ concept, ego) the senses are born and are functioning; but in a state wherein the Vijñānāman himself does not exist, there is no scope whatsoever for those senses to exist. This truth should be ruminated over and over again. By this, the Intuitive Experience that—“This Vijñānatmatwa (‘I’ concept or egoism) is not in the least related to or associated with our real Swarūpa”—will accrue. This alone is what is called ‘Ātmānubhava.’

In the Māṇḍūkyopanishad there is a description of the Sushupti state: ‘सुषूप्तस्थान एकभूतः प्रज्ञानं एवान्द्रमयो ह्यान्द्रमुक्ते चेतोमुखः प्रामृत्तित्यः पादः।’ (Māṇḍūkya 5). To wit: In the state called ‘Sushupti’ all the distinctions of Vishaya (object) and Vishayi (subject) have disappeared and everything has become one unitary Entity just like a lump or mass of Absolute Existence. Therein there does not at all exist any distinct special knowledges or cognitions for each and every object; they too have been rendered into Mere or Pure Jñāna (Knowledge, Intuition) and have merged into, or have become one with, Ātmaswarūpa Itself. Therein—just as now in the waking—due to the categories or concepts of the subject and the object what happiness or pleasure we experience— that kind of happiness does not exist; one and one
Ānanda (Bliss) alone exists. Then our Existence, Consciousness or Awareness, Happiness or Pleasure - all these have become verily our innate Swarūpa. Therein our Ātman (Self) is Himself the Existence, Consciousness, Bliss. Quite different from the existence-consciousness-happiness of the workaday world, the Nirvikalpa (that which is beyond all concepts) Sat-Chit-Ānanda Swarūpa Itself is verily ours. Though words are Loukika (empirical, belonging to the world of duality), that Ātman-swarūpa that has to be cognized by means of or through the medium of those words is quite different, distinct from the objects or phenomena of the workaday world.

(4) In the Brīhadāraṇyaka Upanishad there is a sentence pertaining to Sushupti state: ‘स होवाचाजातशत् भूतु य एष विज्ञानययः पुरुषस्तदैव प्राणान्य विज्ञानेन विज्ञानानाशय य एशोउन्तः दृष्टं आकाशः तस्मिन् शेते तानि यदा गृह्यति अथ हैतत् पुरुषः स्वपिति नाम ||’ - (Bṛi. 2-1-17). To wit: In the form of a discussion between two persons, viz. a King by name ‘Ajātashatru’ and a Brahmin by name ‘Driptabālāki-gārgya’ - while engaged in determining the Tattwa (Absolute Reality) this sentence occurs. The Brahmin ‘Gārgya’ was very much devoted to and established in Upāya-brahman (the Reality as the object of meditation), having believed deeply that the Purushas (Beings) who exist in Ādityamandala (solar region) etc. are themselves Brahman (the Absolute Reality). Now, this above sentence is quoted by Ajātashatru in order to indicate, teach Shuddha Brahman (Absolute, Pure Reality) which is different or beyond that Aparabrahmaswarūpa (inferior form of Brahman tentatively assumed for the purposes of meditation).
Before we go to the Sushuptavastha (deep sleep state) this Vijñānamayapurusha (Pure Being of the very essence of Pure Consciousness appearing as ‘I’ concept, ego) withdraws His power of becoming aware of special features which rests in the senses like the speech etc. (i.e. Karmendriyas, as also Jñānendriyas like eyes, ears); in Sushupti He exists invariably in the form of Parabrahman Itself in the Hṛidayākāsha (empty space of the heart). Thus when He withdraws all the Indriya-Jñānas and becomes one with or merges in Brahman which is indicated by the word ‘Ākāsha’ - then He begets the nomenclature of Swapiti (He is asleep). The implicit subtle meaning of this word ‘Swapiti’ has already been described, explained once. The Vijnānāmāyanāman then has merged in His Parabrahmaswarūpa (the essential nature of Absolute Reality) Itself which is His Paramārthaswarūpa (essence of Pure Being-Consciousness-the Absolute, Transcendental Reality), which is all-pervading and untouched or untainted like Ākāsha (empty space); then He does not have any Samsāra (transmigratory existence) of the form or nature of Indriyavyāpāra (functions of the senses). The implicit, intended purport behind this statement is: Thus being devoid of Samsāraswabhāva of the nature of Kriyā (action), Kāraka (means of action), Phala (resultant fruit of action), because He rests in His glorious essence of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss alone, He has gained the name of ‘Swapiti’. Ajātashatru had asked Gārgya: “Then in Sushuptavasthā where was this ‘Person’? Now wherefrom did ‘He’ come?” Because of the reason that Gārgya did not know the answers to these questions, Ajātashatru signifies about the Anubhava (Intuitive Expe-
rience) of this *Sushupti* and has stated in the manner: ‘Then He remained in *Paramāman* (the Supreme Self) which is verily His *Svabhāva* (essential nature of Being). Now from that very *Paramāman* alone He has come and is appearing as *Vijnānāman*.’

(5) In the Brahma Sūtras too while discussing about *Sushupti* Shri Bādarāyaṇa has stated: ‘तदभावो नाहीत तत्त्वसृष्टिमि च’ - (Bra. Sūtra 3-2-7). To wit: One who has come to the dream from waking, when he comes to *Sushuptavasthā* in which even that dream too vanishes - he merges in *Paramāman* alone through the *Nāṭīs* (subtle nerves). Therein he has described *Sushupti* as *Tadabhāva* (absence or non-existence of *Svapna* or dream) and not that therein *Jīva* has a relationship with any particular phenomenon or object in the manner of, or as an, injunction; *this fact must be properly, pointedly noted*. By this it evolves that Shri Bādarāyaṇāchārya’s genuine opinion was: ‘Devoid of any taint whatsoever of any adjunct, to be one with *Paramāman* who is one’s own *Swarūpa* or essential nature of Pure Being is itself *Sushupti*.’

(6) In the Gītā Bhāṣhya too Shri Śaṅkara has written: ‘न च देहादिभावप्रत्येकश्चानिष्टानामविच्छेदेशु सुप्रतिसमाध्यादिष्ठु कार्त्तिकभोकृत्वाद्यान्तः उपलम्यते। तस्मात्, श्रवणिप्रत्येकनिमित्त एवायं संसारस्मिन् न तु परमार्थः इति सम्यगदर्शनाद्यत्तत्त्तत्मेवोपरमः इति सिद्धम्’ - (Gītā Bhāṣhya 18-66). To wit: In states like *Sushupti* (deep sleep), *Samādhi* (trance) etc. the delusory paraphernalia or retinue of the ‘I’ concept of the type of the body, the senses etc. have been rendered non-existent. There-
fore, it amounts to saying that - “Due to the delusion to the effect that - ‘The body, the senses etc. themselves am I’ - we have got this Samsāritwa Bhrānti (delusion of transmigratory existence), but it is not existing in reality.” This is the real purport behind this Gītā Bhāṣhya sentence.

Thus in Śruti (Upanishads), Sūtra (Brahma Sūtras) and Gītā Bhāṣhya - in all these texts it has been consistently and clearly stated that - ‘In the state called ‘Sushupti’ we exist in our Paramārtha Swarūpa of Brahman alone ; because of the reason alone that we have not cognized this truth, we are afflicted by this delusion of Samsāra.’ Even so, some people are callously stating that even there (i.e. in Sushupti) we have a particular Samsāra Dōsha (defect of transmigratory existence) called ‘Mūlāvidyā’ entailing us ; this theory is baseless and illogical without any support of evidence of any kind. Let their doctrinaire teaching be anything, but if we examine our deep sleep experience in consonance with Shri Śaṅkara’s spiritual instruction, to those qualified people who are Jījnāsus (true seekers of Liberation, Self-Realization) there will never occur any doubt whatsoever pertaining to the truth that - ‘The Vedāntic spiritual teaching - ‘We are all verily of Brahmaswarūpa’ - is totally in consonance with universal Intuitive Experience.’

XXI. SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR ADHYĀTMAVIDYA

To those who are Mumukshus (people seeking Beatitude or Liberation here and now) alone the Jñāna
(Intuitive Knowledge) of Paramāman (the Supreme Self of the very essence of Pure Absolute Existence-Consciousness-Bliss) which is expounded in the Śruti (Upānishadic lore, scriptural texts) accrues. If the proper or suitable implements or instruments of action are not acquired, (even in our workaday world) no person can aspire to beget or obtain what is possible to acquire, is it not? Hence, we will now consider, deliberate upon the topic of - 'Which are those Sādhanas (spiritual practices or disciplines) which a Paramārtha Jijñāsu (seeker of the Absolute Reality of the Self) has perforce to be endowed with?'

(a) 'नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेघया न बहुना श्रुतेन। यमेवैश वृणुते तेन लभ्यते तस्येष्ठ आत्मा विवृणुते ततू न चाम्।' - (Mundaka 3-2-3). To wit: This Ātmalābha (attainment of Self-Knowledge) alone is greater Lābha (profit, benefit) than all other Lābhās (mundane benefits). Even so, in order to acquire or attain It, there may be many Sādhanas to be practised or gone through - this sort of an idea or concept need not be entertained. There isn’t such a great need of reading or studying scriptural texts for the sake of ‘Ātmalābha’; even the faculty or extra-ordinary capacity of remembering everything that one has read or studied is not a spiritual practice for this; neither listening to discourses or lectures by many people (scholars) is also not so very important. For, this Paramāman is not one who can be attained by means of reading or studying many texts, remembering their contents and then through Vichāra (deliberation), doing something in order to attain Him. Because, He, being verily our Swarūpa, is Nitya-
labdhaswarūpa (of an essential nature of Being who is ever available and acquired), but yet now (in our present condition) He remains without being acquired by us. The main or principal Sādhana to be performed for Ātmābha is to acquire, at the outset, the innate and intensive aspiration of the type - 'Paramāman alone we want or seek.' Then Paramāman Himself will provide or procure all the Sāhanas needed for Ātmābha. Swami Vivekananda was reluctant to address the huge congregation at the 'Conference of All Religions of the World' in America. But when the president of the Conference compelled him saying - 'You have to speak now' - he remembered, recited quietly the verse: 'मूर्क करोति वाचालं प्रद्युं लड़घयते गिरिम्। यत्कृपा तमहं वदे परमानन्दमाधवम्।।' - [If the benign grace of Him accrues, even a dumb man becomes an orator, even a lame person surmounts a mountain - such a Mādhava (Shri Kṛishṇa) who is of the very essence of that Paramānanda or Absolute Bliss, I invoke, adore] and after discerning its real meaning or purport he began his speech, it seems. By the grace of God, the opening words of his address, viz. ‘Sisters and Brothers of America’ - came out of his mouth. For all those foreigners, such a kind of speech (oration) which enchanted and enticed away the minds of all of them was itself quite new. Admiring that style of speech saying that - 'Did you listen? Oh dear, What a profound sentiment it is!' - the people gave him a standing ovation for nearly ten minutes! The Swāmīji could not make out what was the purport of such an ovation at all; but after some time it flashed to his mind that his loving and heartfelt words touched the strings of everyone's heart and induced their
minds to listen to his teachings with rapt attention, and all this was due to the benign grace of the Lord alone. Thus if all of us humbly and whole-heartedly seek for *Paramāma Prāpti* (attainment of the Supreme Self) alone, by virtue of His compassion, we all will acquire all the qualities or capacities to be able to perform the right *Sādhana*.

(b) ‘नाविरतो दुर्सचरितात्राशान्तो नासमाहितः। नाशान्तमानसो वापि प्रज्ञानेनैणमानुयात्त।’ (Katha 2-24).

To wit : To one who has not given up bad, sinful habits or behaviour, to one who cannot control the vagaries of the senses, to one who does not hanker after bliss or happiness of the nature of mental peace or satiation - *Ātmalōbha* (the great benefit accruing from Self-Knowledge) which has perforce to accrue from *Jñāna* (Self-Knowledge) does not accrue. For *Ātmaprāpti* (attainment of Self-Realization) what is needed is not a *Tarka Buddhi* (logic-oriented intelligence) but *Antahkaranā Samskāra* (refinement, purification of the psyche, Mind). First and foremost, the *Koushalya* (art, skill) of controlling both the *Karmendriyas* (instruments of action) and *Jñānendriyas* (instruments of knowledge, senses) so that they do not get distracted and drawn incessantly towards the external objects in the world is essential. For, that *Ātman* (Self) exists within us (internally). To those people whose minds are wandering and wavering about due to fickleness, *Ātmaprāpti* is never possible. For, only when the mind attains, acquires one-pointedness or concentration and thereby quietude, satiation - to such (a serene and sublime) mind alone the cognition (Intuitive
Experience) of this Paramāman who is verily our Ātman becomes effulgent, emerges out from within, so to speak. We should not forget the truth that we have to cognize (Intuit) our Ātman within ourselves alone.

(c) 'तं दुर्देशं गूढमनुप्रविष्टं गुहाहितं गह्वरेष्ठं पुराणम्।
अध्यात्मयोगाविगमेन देवं मत्ता धीरो हर्षशोको जहाति॥' - (Kaṭha 2-12). To wit: Paramāman is extremely subtle; it is never possible to perceive Him through the senses. In fact, the perceptual knowledges of the external phenomena are themselves a cover or impediment for Him; without the hankering after external objects getting depreciated (steadily), introspection or inner vision (Darshana) of Ātman is never possible. He is hidden in the cave of our Buddhi (intellect); it is possible to search Him out therein only, but to those who are extroverted He is never visible or cognizable. Although He is verily our own innate Self, just now He has been entrapped within the fortress of many calamities and vicissitudes of life, so to speak. For that reason alone, we are not able to have His Darshāna (clear vision).

How at all can we cognize, know such a (subtle) Ātman by means of Jñāna (Intuitive Knowledge)? The answer is: By means of Adhyātmayōga. In fact, the attempt to give up our Tādāmyabuddhi (deep, staunch sense of identification) with Anāman (not-selves) is itself called 'Adhyātmayōga'. We may be having the money to buy all the texts devoted to Adhyāmavichāra (deliberation on spiritual matters or topics). But merely on buying them Ātmajñāna does not accrue. We should make a sincere and assiduous attempt needed to give up our vain
pride in, or sense of identification with, not-selves like the body, the senses etc.; we must also make all efforts to acquire, earn Pratyagdrishhti (inner vision, introspection, introvertedness). Only such a person who has thus cognized Atman by himself within himself by means of Adhyāmāyōga goes beyond, nay conquers Harsha-Shōka (the pairs of opposites like happiness and misery).

(d) 'सत्येन लभ्यत्सप्तसा ह्येष आत्मा सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्यम् नित्यम्। अन्तःशरीरे ज्योतिर्मयं हि शुभ्रो यं पश्यन्ति यत्य: क्षीण-दोषा: ॥' - (Muṇḍaka 3-1-5). To wit: In this Upanishadic sentence the Sahakārisādhanas (accessorial spiritual practices or disciplines) needed for Ātmalābha are mentioned. Satya (always speaking truth), Tapas (observing austerity) - both these are extremely necessary for Ātmaprāpti. These Śruti statements are not mere empty or shallow words; only if these spiritual disciplines (Śādhana) are practised, one becomes qualified for Vedāntajñāna (the Intuitive Knowledge of the Self that is expounded in all Vedāntic or Upanishadic texts); otherwise not. In the Bhagavadgītā, after mentioning spiritual practices like Amānitwa (humility, absence of pride), Adambhitwa (absence of ostentatiousness) etc. Śrī Kṛishṇa has stressed that - ‘एततःज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तम्ज्ञानं यदतोल्लथा’ - ‘Only this is said to be Jñāna, all that is opposed to this is said to be Ajñāna’ - and this fact must be remembered here in this context. The word Satya means ‘whatever one has seen and heard one should tell, communicate that as it is’. We might have heard the Smṛiti statement: ‘One should utter the truth, one should utter that which is Priya (pleasant), one
should not utter a *Satya* which is *Apriya* (unpleasant) ;
even though it is *Priya* (pleasant to hear) one should not utter *Anṛita* (falsehood, lie).
’ Even by way of fun or humour without uttering falsehood, to tell the truth amounts
to showing one’s adoration for the Ātmaprāpti which is
verily *Satyaswarūpa* (of the very essence of Truth).
*Tapas* means the one-pointedness or concentration of the senses
and the Mind ; *Krucchra, Chāndrāyana* etc. - such austerities which are of the nature of torturing the body are
not *Sahakāri Sādhanas* (accessorial practices) for *Jñāna* ;
they are *Sādhanas* stipulated for *Vānaprasthas* etc. In the
present context the *Sādhanas* - meant for one who is a
Mumukshu and which enable him to become Antarmukhi
(introverted) and to cognize the *Tattwa* - are being ex-
clusively deliberated upon here. *Samyajjñāna* means to
attempt to cognize Ātman as He really is. Merely the
Śāstra has not been called here ‘*Samyajjñāna.*’ *Brahma-
charya* means ‘to wander about’ always in *Brahman*
alone. To one who is dedicated to the *Vedas*, to *Satya*
alone, this *Adhyāmajnāna* accrues. Remembrance of ex-
ternal objects, dealings with objects, hankering after en-
joyment of external objects alone, being engrossed in
objects - all these are impediments to *Brahmacharya*
(celibecy, dedicated to wandering about in *Brahman*).
Therefore, for the Intuitive Experience (*Anubhava*) of
Ātmatattwa (Absolute Reality of this Self) *Brahmacharya*
is extremely necessary indeed. For, the Śruti itself ex-
pounds that - ‘One who has really attained Ātmanubhava
begets Ātmadarshana by means of Ātmāsravaṇa, Ātma-
manana and Ātmachintana and has become Ātmarata,
Ātmakriḍa, Ātmamithuna.’ We should interpret the word
'Brahmacharya' to mean that one who wishes to attain or acquire the suitable qualification for Ātmavijñāna (Self-Realization), who should be bereft of Rāga (attachment) and Dvesha (hatred) while utilizing or making use of external objects and minimize such transactions to the limit which is unavoidable, who should become introverted and completely be dedicated to the spiritual search of the Absolute Reality (Tattwānveshanapara). Yatis means those who are endeavouring incessantly to cognize Ātma Tattwa alone - they are eternally, constantly Satyarata (established in the Truth), are attempting to make their senses and mind one-pointed, are giving up totally false or wrong behaviour and speech which are the cause for Ajñāna, renouncing or abstaining from Vishayāsakti (indulgence in external objects for his pleasures); if such Yatis are practising all these disciplines alone, they will cognize Chinmaya (of the very essence of Pure Consciousness) Ātman who exists ever in the cave of the heart. This is the intended teaching of the Śruti.

This same teaching or tenet has been described in a verse in the Bhagavadgītā:

(e) 'अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परियम्भम् । विमुच्य निर्ममध्यो ब्रह्मयम अल्पस्ते II' (Gītā 18-53).

To wit: One who aspires to cognize Ātman and get established in Ātman alone should have a tight control over his senses in the matter of food and his general living conditions; he should accept only things which are of the Sāvika kind or quality, seek solitude by living in seclusion, and should be dedicated to performing Dhyāna-
yōga daily and constantly. Giving up or rooting out Ahaṅkāra (egotism), Bala (power, strength), Darpa (arrogance), Kāma (desire), Krōdha (anger) etc. he should become Antarmukhi (introverted, introspective) and should get established in Ātmachintana (contemplation on the Self). Just as one who undertakes a pilgrimage to Benares, bathes in the holy river Ganges, performs Shrāddha (death anniversary rites), visiting temples for the Darshan (view) of the deities etc. - gives up his vices and sinful or corrupt practices and only if he does this and fulfils all such pre-requisites, his pilgrimage will be regarded as fruitful ; in the same way, one who aspires to become a Mumukshu (seeker of Liberation) and attempts to attain Ātmadarshana (Self-Realization) should necessarily seek solace in Ātman alone and should spend his time in invocation of Ātman, contemplation on the Self alone. To such a person alone Brahmaprāpti accrues indeed, and to none else ; this fact need not be gainsaid. He will surely attain the Brahmabhāva (Self-Knowledge, Intuition of Absolute Reality) of the type - 'I am eternally Brahman alone.’

(f) 'सर्वं तं परादायोन्यत्रात्मनः सर्वं वेद इदं ब्रह्मेऽदं क्षत्रिममे
लोका इमे देवा इमानि भूतानीदं सर्वं यদ्यमात्मा ॥' - (Bri. 2-4-6).

To wit : Till such time one begets the subtle sense or perspective of realizing all the disciplines like Brāhmaṇya etc. needed for performing the Vaidika Karmas (rites or rituals), all phenomena like the deities, worlds, all the creatures, why say more ? - whatever things are perceived - all those are verily that Ātman only, one should necessarily and incessantly do Tattwavichāra (deliberation
on the Absolute Reality of the Self). Nothing else other than Ātman - whatever it may be - exists apart from Ātman. In truth, we are all transacting Ātman (Self) alone as 'I', 'others', 'Vedas', 'Deities', 'Worlds' etc. Barring this Tattwa, to conceive (rather be under the delusion) that - 'This is a Jāi (genus)', 'This is Karma (ritual, action)', 'This is Mantra (hymn)', 'These are deities', 'These are objects' etc. and to believe that all of them are independent entities and to carry on all empirical transactions is itself the root cause for being far away from Ātmatattwa. "Whatever things are being perceived or seen, whatever things are being heard, whatever concepts, deliberations are getting ensconced in our Mind - all those things are, in reality, that Paramātma Tattwa alone - such a truth to be cognized here and now, to attempt to acquire such a Manōbhāva (mental make-up) is itself the main spiritual practice for Adhyātmavidyā."

(g) By quoting two verses from Bhagavadgītā this topic will be concluded now:

"ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हस्तेषुजुन तिष्ठति । भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रस्याद्यानि मायया ॥ - (Gitā 18-61). तमेव शरण गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत । तत्रसादात्पर्यं शान्ति स्थानं ग्राप्यसिः शाश्वतम् ॥' - (Gitā 18-62).

To wit: Íśwara Himself exists as Ātman in the heart of every creature. Even so, the unrefined or uncultured people (highly extroverted, materialistic people) being captivated by Māyā (illusion), being highly engrossed in external objects - just like the dolls kept on a turning machine go round and round when the machine is turned
- are wandering about in this Samsāra. Only such people, with Śāwika Guṇas and whose merits have ripened up, surrender unto that Bhagavān (the Lord). Only to such people who totally in all respects surrender themselves unto Him feeling that - ‘He alone is the final resort, abode for us’ - His benign grace flows. By dint of His compassion His Shāśhwatasthāna (eternal abode) which has no repeated returns to the world of duality (i.e. no return to Samsāra once again) will be attained undoubt-edly.

In this workaday world of ours the common run of people are showing off ostentatiously their high sense of dedication towards their duties or responsibilities saying - ‘We have to do this’ ; ‘We have to do that’ and thereby becoming Karmaparavasha (fully controlled by or dependent upon duties or responsibilities) and keep on uttering that - ‘This work is done or achieved’ ; ‘That thing is yet to be done’ ; ‘I have finished the task of acquiring this’ ; ‘But I have yet to acquire that’ - just like the ox that is tied down to an oil-milling stone - and they repeatedly think about fresh duties or jobs, straining themselves in the process. But those who surrender unto Paramātman feeling that - ‘To become one with that Paramātman is the only important or prime duty in this life ; all the other duties are not needed’ - to such people this compassionate Bhagavān helps loosen or untie their bondages of Dharma and Adharma and rids them of their Shoka (misery) and Mōha (attachment). This alone is the spiritual instruction that was imparted by Bhagavān Shri Krīshṇa to Arjuna : ‘सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रजः अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षविष्णु मा शुचःः’।। - (Gitā 18-63).
By discerning the real purport behind this instruction and surrendering ourselves unto Paramāman, may all of us become fit and successful in attaining our life's goal - let us pray before Śrīmānārāyaṇa (Śrī Mahāvīṣhṇu) to grant us His benign grace !!

ॐ तत सत
3. THE ESSENTIAL ĀDI ŚAṆKARA

It is a well-known fact in spiritual circles that one cannot by himself comprehend the genuine Vedāntic teachings by a study of ‘Prasthāna Traya Bhāshyas’ of Ādi Śaṅkara without the help and guidance of a preceptor well-versed in the traditional methodology of utilizing the ‘Adhyārōpa Apavāda Nyāya’ which is implicit in and through those Bhāshyas. Even the avowed followers of Ādi Śaṅkara, scholars, academicians and anchorites have miserably failed to bring about a convincing reconciliation among all the teachings or doctrines of the triad of the original Bhāshyas as well as between the spiritual teachings pertaining to ‘Dharma Jijñāsa’ and ‘Brahma Jijñāsa’. Consequently, their interpretations and commentaries - verbal or written - bristle with contradictions and inconsistencies. Besides, the traditional or Sāmpradāyic methodology handed down from the teacher to the taught and subtle pedagogics utilized by that world teacher (Ādi Śaṅkara) have been virtually denied to the true seekers of the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Ātman.

If the Vedāntic ‘Absolute Reality’ of Ātman is beyond all empirical transactions and phenomena and, at the same time, if the ‘Science of Vedānta’ brings home this Ultimate Reality as one’s own essential Being of Ātman using an immaculate and infallible methodology of teaching, then it becomes evident to any ardent seeker of this all-comprehensive and all-pervasive Reality that this ‘Ātma Vidya’ is, in truth, the ‘sumnum bonum’ of all human endeavour and prosperity. It deserves to be given the pride of place in all educational institutions and academies.

This book comes in handy as an excellent reference book and a constant guide for the genuine student of Vedānta as also to a seeker and will invariably create a spiritual hunger to know more details and secrets in the vast Upanishadic lore.

Price : Rs. 75.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

His Holiness Paramahamsa Sri Sri Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji, the founder of Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya and author of over 200 reputed works on Advaita in Kannada, Sanskrit and English, blessed the earth with his presence for ninetysix useful and rich years (1880-1975).

His works are characterized by vast and deep scholarship, clear and precise perception and an attractive and lively style. His authentic interpretation of Śaṅkara has been greatly recognized by both the East and the West. He was not just a rare and accomplished individual but a mighty and magnificent institution.

ABOUT THE BOOK

This is one of the important works written by Shri Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji in Kannada exclusively meant for the new initiates into the highly-developed, esoteric spiritual science of Advaita Vedanta. If the true seeker carefully scrutinizes the 21 topics delineated by the revered Swamiji in his own inimitable lucid style, he will be able to equip and enlighten himself with the fundamental tenets of Vedanta which will kindle in his pure heart an abiding interest to cognize the eternal values of Life and its real goal. The highly beneficial approach of Intuitive reasoning and deliberation that is expected of him in order to ‘climb up’ the steep ladder of Moksha (Liberation) here in this very life will be available at his ‘beck and call’, so to speak. These tenets are bound to bring about a vast change in the seeker’s perspective and to remove many a deep-seated misconception, not barring the ‘I’ concept which, in the form of egoism or selfishness, is the root cause for all mundane miseries.