

*The Basic Tenets
of
Śāṅkara Vedānta*

*Written in Kannada by
Swāmi Satchidānandendra Saraswati*

*Translated By
D. B. Gangolli*

Adhyātmā Prakāsha Kāryālaya

Holenarsipur, Hassan - 573 211

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1996

TRANSLATED WORKS OF SWĀMI SATCHIDĀNANDENDRA SARASWATĪ

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 Trayī, 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.

Adhyātma Granthāvali

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Śāṅkara Vedānta

Written in Kannada by
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This important treatise by the pen of Shri Satchidānandendra Saraswatī Swāmīji, of revered memory, was based on 21 days' discourses delivered by the Swāmīji at Dāvaṇagere, Karnāṭaka State, prior to, and during the 'Shri 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' (Non-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 Bhāshyas 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 *Parōksha* (indirect, mediatory, external to us humans) but *Aparōksha* (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 Satchidānandendra Saraswatī Swāmiji, of revered memory, way back in 1966, deals with 'the basic tenets of Advaita Vedānta' as expounded by Ādi Śaṅkara in his extant Bhāshyas. 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 Swāmiji, 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

Date : July 25, 1996

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 *Paramāman* 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 : “वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थाः” (Muṇḍaka 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 *Āraṇyakas*, 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 *Tattvajñāna* (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 *Atīndriyavishayaka* (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 *Dṛishṭa Phala* (visible fruits accruing here in this life) or *Adṛishṭa 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 *Upāśanas* 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*, *Anumāna*, 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 *Rāmāyaṇa* 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 *Vijñāna* 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 : “नाविरतो दुश्चरितान्नाशान्तो नासमाहितः । नाशान्तमानसो वापि प्रज्ञानेनैवमाप्नुयात्” - (Kāṭha 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 Kṛishṇa 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 Vijñāna* 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 *Śrōtriya* (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 Kṛishṇa 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 Śāṅkarāchārya 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 Śāṅkarāchārya 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 Śāṅkara, 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 Śāṅkara 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 Śaṅkarā's grand-preceptor, who had written his now-famous *Māṇḍūkya 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 *Bhāṣhyas* (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 वृत्तिरारभ्यते' - 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 *Bhāṣhyas*, 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 Bhāshyas* 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, *Sāṅkhyans*, *Vaiśeṣikas*, *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 Bhāshya* there exists this transparent statement : “तदिदं गीताशास्त्रं समस्तवेदार्थसारसंग्रहभूतं दुर्विज्ञेयार्थम्, तदर्थविष्करणाय अनेकैः विवृत पदपदार्थवाक्यार्थन्यायमपि अत्यन्तविरुद्धानेकार्थत्वेन लौकिकैर्गृह्यमाणम् उपलभ्य अहं विवेकतोऽर्थनिर्धारणार्थं सङ्क्षेपतो विवरणं 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 Śāṅkara has written. From this too, it becomes very clear that he has written his commentary (*Bhāshya*) keeping in view the alien *Bhāshyas* alone.

(b) In this context we should remember the fact that Shri Śāṅkara has not examined or considered, anywhere

in his *Bhāṣhyas*, the recent tenets of schools belonging to or founded by Shri Rāmānujāchārya, Shri Madhwa, Shri Vallabha etc. The dualist philosophies, which Shri Śaṅkara has meticulously examined and refuted are, as already stated, *Sāṅkhya*, *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 ‘अद्वैतमतस्थापनाचार्य’ (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 ‘षण्मतस्थापनाचार्य’ (founder-preceptor of six different philosophies). But in Shri Śaṅkara’s original *Bhāṣhyas* neither any discussion on various philosophies like *Shaiva*, *Vaishṇava*, *Śākteya*, *Gāṇapatya*, 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 *Vishṇu Sarvōtamatwa* (Vishṇu, one of the three *Purāṇic* or mythological deities of Brahma, Vishṇu 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 Śāṅkara 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 *Vyākhyānakāras* (post-Śāṅkara 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 Śāṅkara’s Philosophy’ ; some present-day scholars are upholding and championing the opinions of those *Vyākhyānakāras* and are vociferously proclaiming in the manner - ‘These alone are Shri Śāṅkara’s teachings.’ It is to be seen that Shri Surēśwarāchārya, one of the direct disciples of Shri Śāṅkarāchārya, in his own works of *Naishkarmyasiddhi*, *Taittiriya Vārtika*, *Bṛihadāranyaka 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 Śāṅkarā’s school. Even so, merely because the *Vyākhyāna Prasthānas* (methodologies of post-Śāṅkara 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 *Jijñāsus* (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 *Bhāṣyas*, we will enumerate and exemplify :

(1) Some among the **Karma Mīmāṃsakas** 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 *Jñānakāṇḍa* 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 *Vīrakarmavādins* there were a second group of disputants who were also known as **Mīmāṃsakas** (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 *Kāmya Karma* (rituals performed with a desire to acquire a particular fruit) *Śubhaphala* (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 *Mōksha*, 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 (*Vedōkta*) 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 *Mōksha*' - were the *Samuchhaya-vādins*. 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 देवानप्येति” (meaning - Being a deity one attains the merger with the deities), if the *Upāsaka* attains *Sākshātkāra* (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

Mōkshaphala can be attained' - is irrational or illogical. Because of the reason that by means of *Upāṣana* the fruit that accrues is *Adṛishṭa* (invisible, posthumously attained), the *Śruti* sentence which says - 'अत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते' (meaning, here itself he becomes one with *Brahman*) - the *Dṛishṭaphala* (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 *Upāṣana* 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 *Nishprapañcha* (devoid of the world of duality), if the entire world of duality or diversity is 'dissolved' by means of *Upāṣana* one attains *Mōksha* (Beatitude, Liberation)" - disputants who propounded this kind of a theory were the 'Upasanāvādins'. They belonged to the fifth category. Shri Śāṅkara has refuted this doctrine in his *Sūtra Bhāṣhya* 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 *Vedāntins* 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 *Mōksha*. Why, in the very popular text called *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi* which is believed by one and all to be the genuine work of Shri Śaṅkarāchārya, there are three verses, viz. :

अकृत्वा दृश्यविलयमज्ञात्वा तत्त्वमात्मनः । बाह्यशब्दैः कुतो
मुक्तिरुक्तिमात्रफलैर्नृणाम् ॥६३॥

Meaning : Without attaining *Vilaya* (total dissolution) of the *Dṛśyaprapaṅcha* (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 शत्रुसंहारमगत्वाखिलभूश्रियम् । राजाहमिति शब्दान्नो राजा
भवितुमर्हति ॥६४॥

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 ?

आप्तोक्तिं खननं तथोपरिशिलाद्युत्कर्षणं स्वीकृतिं निक्षेपः समपेक्षते
न हि बहिःशब्दैस्तु निर्गच्छति । तद्वद्ब्रह्मविदोपदेशमननध्यानादिभिर्लभ्यते
मायाकार्यतिरोहितं स्वममलं तत्त्वं न दुर्युक्तिभिः ॥६५॥

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 *Śravaṇa* (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 *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi*, really speaking, is not the genuine work of Shri Śāṅkara ; but it is the work of one Śāṅkarānanda (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 Śāṅkara 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 *Vākyaśravaṇa* (listening to scriptural sentences) - directly the *Ātmajñāna* does not accrue ; even so, if that *Jñāna* itself is repeated (*Āvṛitti*) over and over again one attains its *Sākshātkāra* (materialisation or actualisation). This is opposed to Shri Śāṅkara’s teaching which is based on time-honoured traditional methodology which propounds : “For superior class of qualified seekers merely by virtue of *Śravaṇa* 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-Śāṅkara schools of *Vedāntins* viz. *Bhāmati*, *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 *Prasankhyānavāda*) is acceptable to Shri Śaṅkara !

(7) There were still some other ancient *Vedāntins* who used to propound that -“By mere *Vākyaśravaṇa* (listening to scriptural sentences) or by *Vākyaajanyajñāna* (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 *Vākyaajanyajñāna* and any *Yukti* (logical device) in consonance with it, he attains *Sākshātkāra* !” This doctrine also has been refuted by Shri Śaṅkara in his *Sūtra Bhāṣya*. It is his teaching that *Āvritti* (repetition) of *Vākyaśravaṇa* and its concomitant *Yukti* means really the *Abhyāsa* (practice) alone of giving up or sublating the *Anāmāśa* (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 - “*Vākyaajñāna* signifies or conveys *Samsṛishṭārtha* (a meaning brought about by the conjoined 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 *Samsṛishṭārtha* alone. By the *Abhyāsa* (repeated practice) of that *Vākyaajanyajñāna* (knowledge brought about or produced by the sentence), a new *Jñāna* or Knowledge with *Asamsṛishṭārtha* (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* (conjoined, 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 *Avasthātraya* (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 *Avasthāvāsanā* (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 *Mōkshasādhana* (spiritual practice for attainment of Liberation). There are some of these *Vāsanākshayavādins* who assert by the authority of a sentence appearing in *Yōgavāśishṭha* that - “वासनातानवं यम मुक्तिरित्यभिधीयते” - 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 Shri 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 *Vākyashravaṇa*, *Mōksha* cannot accrue as taught in the *Pātañjala* philosophy (i.e. *Yōga* philosophy) the seeker should practise 'Chittavṛitti Nirōdha' (suppression of mental concepts)." This doctrine of these disputants has been refuted in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Bhāṣhya*. Even today there do exist many followers of this doctrine who assert that - "Mere deliberation on *Vedāntavākya* 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 Shri 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 *Sākshātkāra* 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 *Gouṇa*' (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 Śāṅkara's teaching, viz. "*Jīvanmukti* or *Sadyōmukti* is itself the *Mukhyamukti* ; *Sasharīratwa* (embodiedness) is mere *Mithyābhīmāna* (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 Śāṅkara'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 *Vyākhyānaprasthānas* (methodologies employed in sub-commentaries on Shri Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣhyas* 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 *Bhāṣhyas*. Now herefore we will endeavour to delineate as to which traditional methodology Shri Śaṅkara has followed in and through his *Prasthānatraya Bhāṣhyas* 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

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 Śāṅkarāchārya. Let us now consider the topic of how Shri Śāṅkara 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 *Vedaprāmāṇya* (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 - “अत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते” (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 ह्याचारे स्थापयत्यपि । स्वयमाचरते यस्मादाचार्यः परिकीर्त्यते” - 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, Transcendent 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 नरेणावरेण प्रोक्त एष सुविज्ञेयो बहुधा चिन्त्यमानः । अनन्यप्रोक्ते गतिरत्र नास्ति अणीयान् ह्यतर्क्यमणुप्रमाणात्” - (Kāṭha 1-2-8) - the purport being - “If a teacher, who has a commonplace or general knowledge of the *Paramāmatattwa* that is taught in *Vedānta*, propounds 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-देक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः”’ - [the purport being, those *Jñānis* or Realized souls who have not only acquired the mere *Śāstraic knowledge* but also have directly (Intuitively) 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 *Sādhana*s (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 *Sādhana*s 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 *Vedāntavākya*janya (produced or born from the sentence of *Vedāntas* or *Upanishads*) is exclusively the principal spiritual practice for *Mukti* ; for, the *Paramārthatattva* (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 *Sādhana*. 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 *Sādhana*s stipulated in the *Vedas*.” But it is not taught in that manner in Shri Śaṅkara's methodology, which propounds : “*Jīvatwa* is, in truth, *Avidyākālpita*

(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 *Avidyākalpita Jīvatwa* there is no need of any *Sādhana* whatsoever ; in fact, *Sādhana* is of no avail here. If only the *Jñāna* (Intuitive Knowledge) of the essential nature of *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience) to the effect - 'I am verily *Brahman*' - as instructed in the *Vedāntic* texts accrues, the deep-seated delusion of the type of - 'I am a *Jīva*, a *Samsāri* (transmigratory soul)' - is removed, destroyed. In the ultimate analysis, *Sādhana* is not meant to remove *Jīvatwa*, but for *Jñāna* to accrue."

(5) What is meant by *Avidyā*, *Ajñāna* ? With regard to this question there was no unanimity of opinion among the other non-Śāṅkara schools ; even *Ajñāna* too had to be known only from the *Śāstra*. If the *Avidyā* that has at present accrued to us has to be removed, it is quite necessary to practise the *Sādhana* stipulated in the *Śāstra*. In the doctrines of some *Vedāntins* there are two types of *Avidyās* viz. (a) *Naisargika* (natural) *Ātmāvidyā* (ignorance enveloping the Self) and (b) *Anātmāvidyā* (ignorance enveloping the not-Self), which is *Āgantuka* (adventitious). "This latter *Avidyā* which is adventitious and pertains to *Anāman* - for example, that *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 *Avidyā* (i.e. *Āgantuka Anātmāvidyā*) immediately disappears by means of *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 *Tattvajñāna*, due to *Vāsanā* (latent impressions) it may once again recur ; due to this recurrence, *Jñāna* too may have a set-back. Therefore, *Jñānābhyāsa* (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 *Avidyā*s ?" "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 विश्वं कर्म तपो ब्रह्म परामृतम्, एतद्यो वेद निहितं गुहायां सोऽविद्याग्रन्थिं विकिरतीह सोम्य ॥" - (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) *Vākyaārthanirṇaya* (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 *Mīmāṃsā Niyamas* (rules and regulations as per the science of *Mīmāṃsā* or rational interpretation or etymology) of the type of six kinds of *Tāparyalingas* (symbols of ultimate purport) like *Upakrama* (introductory part comprising the subject-matter to be propounded) and *Upasaṃhāra* (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 Śāṅkara 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) *Paramatakhaṇḍana* (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 *Mīmāṃsā 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 *Śruti*s and *Smṛiti*s' ; 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 *Śruti*s 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 *Bhāṣhyakāras* (commentators) had written their respective commentaries to suit their own systems. But none among them is extant to-day ; whereas, the *Bhāṣhyas* which Shri Śāṅkara 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 *Śāṅkarāchārya'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 - *Śāṅkarabhagavatpāda Virachite*. Does it not amount to showing disrespect towards, and dishonouring, Shri Śāṅkara ? 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 Kṛishṇa has stated in the *Bhagavadgītā* : “यज्ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्डव” - [meaning, if you cognize (this Reality), once again, as before your *Ajñāna* can never recur !], the *Jñāna* that Shri Śāṅkara 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 *Jīvana* (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 अमृतत्वमानशुः" - [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 *Amṛitatwa* cannot be gained from it. If man has to get freed, liberated from his present *mortal nature of being* and attain this *Amṛitatwa*, he has invariably to *renounce* the whole gamut of *Anāman* (not-Self) and has to attain the *Vijñāna* (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 *Amṛitatwa* and not otherwise. Only then he acquires eternal *Shānti* (peace). Why, his very *purpose of life* becomes fulfilled]. A great *Brahmin* (a *Jñāni*) by name ‘Yājñavalkya’ has imparted this *Vedānta-vijñāna* even to a great emperor like Janaka and has assured him in the manner - “अभयं वै जनकं प्राप्तोसि” - giving him the boon of fearlessness ; this fearlessness (*Abhaya*), this *Amṛitatwa*, this *Shāshwata Shānti* (eternal peace) which is yielded by *Vedāntic 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 Śāṅkara 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 *Jñāna* (Self-Knowledge or *Brahmavidyā*).” Although many others wrote their *Bhāṣyas* like Shri Śāṅkara in Sanskrit alone on these very *Upanishads*, no one had in the past depicted and demonstrated like him that the *Tattwa* (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 *Amṛitatwa*, *Abhaya* and *Shāshwata 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), *Viśeṣa* (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), *Prameya* (object of knowledge) etc. Whether in the case of the empirical scientists or indigenous *Dārshanikas* (founders of schools of philosophy), although as and when their abundant objective knowledge about the external perceptible objects increased the three kinds of *Ajñāna* (ignorance), like *Jñānābhāva* (absence of knowledge), *Samshaya* (doubt), *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 - “*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 *Loukikajñāna* (empirical, mundane knowledge) means, instead of saying that it is ‘getting rid of our ignorance’, we may say that it is ‘enhancing our *Ajñāna* ; increasing our *Itchhā-Dweshas*, finding out or devising 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 *Upanishadic* sentences :

परांचि खानि व्यतृणत् स्वयंभूः तस्मात् पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन्।
 पराचः कामाननुयन्ति बालास्ते मृत्योर्यन्ति विततस्य पाशम् ॥ (Kāṭha
 2-1-1, 2), meaning, (i) 'Because of the reason that our sense-organs are created to be extroverted, we are perceiving 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 *Pratyakshādi Pramāṇas* (valid means of perception, inference 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 *Hetwābhāsa* (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 *Hetwābhāsas* 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 (*Pravṛitti*) and resigning or receding from an unwanted object (*Nivṛitti*), 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 मनुष्याः परिवर्जयन्ति । अज्ञानतस्तत्र पतन्ति केचिज्ज्ञाने 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 howevermuch 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 *Jñānasādhana*s (instruments of knowledge) at all ? Is the *Upanishadic* statement : ‘वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थाः’ (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 *Nirapavāḍajñāna* (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 *Sādhana*s (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 *Pramāṇavādins*.

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 sea-shell 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 *Yathārthajñāna* (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 *Pramāṇajñas* (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 *Upamāna 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 Mīmāṃsakas* (founded by Jaimini Rishi) add two more *Pramāṇas* called *Arthāpatti* and *Anupalabdhi*. 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 *Anupalabdhi*.

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 *Guṇa* (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 *Yathārtha* (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 - *Pratītyasamutpanna* (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 तावदगतं नैव गम्यते । गतागतविनिर्मुक्तं गम्यमानं 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 : “सतश्च तावदुत्पत्तिरसतश्च न युज्यते । न सतश्चासतश्चेति पूर्वमेवोपपादितम् ॥” [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 *Shūṇyavādin* 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 *Samvādipravṛttijanaka* (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 *Samvādipravṛttijanaka*. 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), *Āshcharya* (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 *Vṛttis* or thoughts of our mind), *Pravṛtti* (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 *Pramāṭṛu*, one who performs any action is called *Karṭṛu* and one who enjoys the fruit of any action is called *Bhōkṭṛu*. All these *Vyavahāras* like *Pramāṭṛu*, *Pramāṇa*, *Prameya*, *Pramiti* ; *Karṭṛu*, *Kāraṇa*, *Karma*, *Phala* ; *Bhōkṭṛu*, *Bhōga*, *Bhōgya*, *Tṛipti* - are taking place in the *Jāgrat Avasthā* alone. Therefore, we can call this *Avasthā* by other names like *Pramāṭṛudṛishti Avasthā*, *Karṭṛutwa-Bhōkṭṛutwa 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 *Anubhavātmaka* (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 Dṛishṭi* (empirical viewpoint) are *Gouṇa* (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 *Samśhaya* (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 *Anubhava* 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 Śaṅkarāchārya. While undertaking the task of depicting the extreme dif-

ferences and distinctions between *Dharmajijñāsa* (pursuit of *Dharma* or religious tenets) and *Brahmajijñāsa* (pursuit of the Ultimate Reality or Spirit called *Brahman* in *Vedānta*) he has stated : “न धर्मजिज्ञासायामिव श्रुत्यादय एव प्रमाणं ब्रह्मजिज्ञासायाम्, किं तु श्रुत्यादयः अनुभवादयश्च यथा सम्भवमिह प्रमाणम् । अनुभवावसानत्वात् भूतवस्तुविषयत्वाच्च ब्रह्मज्ञानस्य” - (Sūtra Bhāshya 1-1-2) - [meaning - “Just as in *Dharmajijñāsa* only *Śrutis* etc. are *Pramāṇas*, in *Brahmajijñāsa* too merely they (i.e. *Śrutis* etc.) are not *Pramāṇa*. On the other hand, here (i.e. in the context or case of *Brahmajijñāsa*) *Śrutyādi*, (*Śruti* etc.) *Anubhavādi* (Intuitive Experience etc.) are *Pramāṇas* (i.e. valid means of cognition). For, *Brahmajijñāsa* has to culminate in *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience) ; further, for *Brahmajijñāsa* 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 Śāṅkara’s teachings have deliberated upon the *Paramārtha* (Absolute Reality), which is *Pramāṇātīta* (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 *Pramāṇavādins* acknowledge the fact that by means of *Pramāṇas* that knowledge which becomes fully determined or established is itself *Yathārtha* (the correct knowledge of the entity as it is). But with regard to the authenticity or veracity of the *Pramāṇas* themselves, among them too there is a great deal of difference of opinion. For the sake of purifying, or rectifying, any deficiencies in the *Pramāṇas* 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 *Pramāṇavādins* have not taken into consideration the support of a 'Knowledge' higher or subtler than the empirical *Pramāṇas*. In truth, *Anubhava* alone is the fountainhead or substrate for all *Pramāṇa Vyavahāra* (transactions involving valid means of knowledge) ; it is not possible for this *Pramāṇa Vyavahāra* 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 *Pūrvabhava* (an Entity preceding any transaction) alone. Shri Śaṅkara has proclaimed that : "Because of the reason that *Jñāna* (Intuitive Knowledge) of the *Paramārtha Tattva* (Absolute Reality of *Brahman* of *Vedānta*) is the subject-matter of, or pertaining to, a *Bhūtavastu* (ever-existing Entity or Reality), *Brahmajijñāsa* (pursuit of the Absolute Reality of *Brahman* or *Ātman*, our innermost Self) is culminating in *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience) alone ; therefore, in this *Jijñāsa* (pursuit of Self-Knowledge) mere *Śāstras* (scriptures) alone are not the *Pramāṇas* ; *Anubhava* etc. are also *Pramāṇa* (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 *Ātman* (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 *Kāthōpanishad* : "स्वप्नान्तं जागरितान्तं च उभौ येनानुपश्यति । महान्तं विभुमात्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥" - on the strength of *Anubhavapramāṇa* (Intuition Itself as the valid means of cognition).

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 *Pramāṇalakṣhaṇa Tarka* (syllogistic logic), *Aniṣṭaprasaṅjaka 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 *Jijñāsu* (one who desires to attain *Jñāna*) is like a kind of a *Dwibhāshi* (bilingualist). 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 *Pramāṇu*. Really speaking, *Pramāṇu* 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 *Paramātmān* (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 *Pramāṇu* 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 *Pramāṇu* 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 *Pramāṇutwa*,

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 *Pramāṇu*. This very teaching has been propounded by the *Śruti* sentence : “स यो ह वै तत्परमं ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मैव भवति” - (meaning : ‘He who cognizes, Intuits that *Para-brahman* he verily becomes *Brahman*’).

We are carrying on the external ‘*Vyavahāra*’ due to our *Bhrānti* (delusion) of the type - ‘We are *Pramāṇus*.’ 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 *Tattwa* (Reality), the latter will explain the purport implicit in the *Śruti* sentence : “पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत् स्वयंभूस्तस्मात् पराङ् पश्यति नांतरात्मन् । कश्चिद्धीरः प्रत्यगात्मान-मैक्षदावृत्तचक्षुरमृतत्वमिच्छन् ॥” - (*Kaṭha*, 2-1-1), its purport being - “My boy, you are not of the essential nature of a *Pramāṇu* ; really speaking, you are verily *Paramāṇman* who is devoid of the distinctions of *Pramāṇu*, *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 *Pramāṇu-twābhimāna* (deep-seated identification with the cognizership as ‘I’ notion) gets loosened, dislodged and he gets the habit of seeing from *Pratyagdarśiṇi* (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 *Jāgrat*, *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 Śāṅkara has stated in his *Gītā Bhāṣya* : 'प्रमातृत्वमेव हि निवर्तयति अन्त्यं प्रमाणम्' - 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 Śāṅkara 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 तद् विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम्’ (meaning, ‘Know that *Ātmavastu* which is verily our *Anubhavaswarūpa* which is an all-pervading Reality to be indestructible.’) The *Kaṭha Upanishad* says : ‘सूर्यो यथा सर्वलोकस्य चक्षुः न लिप्यते चाक्षुषैर्बाह्यदोषैः । एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा न लिप्यते लोकदुःखेन बाह्यः ॥’ - [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 Śāṅkara, 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 *Jñānu* (knower). Though for all *Vyavahāra* this *Jñānu* alone is the main cause, the common run of people are not taking into consideration the essential nature of this *Jñānu*. 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 Śāṅkara in his *Adhyāsa Bhāṣya* has written : 'देहेन्द्रियादिषु अहं ममाभिमान रहितस्य प्रमातृत्वानुपपत्तौ प्रमाणप्रवृत्त्यनुपपत्तेः' - [meaning, "Without assuming or reckoning that the body is 'myself' and the senses are 'mine' I cannot become a *Pramānu* (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 *Śruti* is proclaiming : 'अशरीरं वाव 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 *Jñānatwābhimāna* (deep-seated, innate pride or identification with our knowership) a little in accordance with our *Anubhava*. Howevermuch 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 *Avidyā* is given in *Vedāntic* parlance.

What we have considered so far is the *Ajñāna* (ignorance) with regard to the *Jñāṇu* (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 *Jñeyasvarūpa* (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 : 'अविद्यायामन्तरे वर्तमानाः स्वयं धीराः पण्डितं मन्यमानाः । दंष्ट्रम्यमाणाः परियन्ति मूढाः अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः ॥' - (Kāṭha 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 *Jñāṇīs* - 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 *Jñāṇi* ?” 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 *Jñāṇi*, 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 *Kenōpanishad* as follows : 'केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः । केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति' ॥

(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 *Mukhyaprāṇa* (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

प्राणः । चक्षुषश्चक्षुरतिमुच्य धीराः प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता 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 *Dhīrāṇa* (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

Jñānu ; now, where is the need to stress or point out the incapability of the senses etc. which are the adjuncts for this *Jñānu* 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 *Paramātmān* (Supreme Self). Shri Śaṅkara has written in his *Gītā Bhāṣya* that : “देहादीनां बुद्ध्यन्तानां प्रत्यगात्मत्वेन कल्पितानाम् अविद्यया परमः उपद्रष्टृत्वादिलक्षणः आत्मा - इति परमात्मा सः । अतः ‘परमात्मा’ इत्यनेन शब्देन चापि उक्तः 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 *Paramātmān* (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 *Sākshi*, 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 'illuminating 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 *Dakṣiṇāmūṛthy Stōtra* : ‘बाल्यादिष्वपि जाग्रदादिषु तथा सर्वास्ववस्थास्वपि । व्यावृत्तास्वनुवर्तमानमहमित्यन्तः स्फुरन्तं सदा ॥’ - the general purport of which is : For all *Avasthās*, *Ātman* who is of the very essence of *Anubhava* is the *Sākshi*. What is meant by the word *Avasthā* ? It is defined as : ‘विशेषः कालिकोऽवस्था’ - (meaning - To any *Vastu* or entity any special feature brought about by time is itself ‘*Avasthā*’). ‘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 ‘*Parināmi 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 ‘*Avasthās*’ (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 *Avasthās* whatsoever becomes the *Vedāntic Siddhānta* (final, absolute spiritual teaching).

In the *Gītā*, Shri Kṛishṇa has taught Arjuna :
 'देहिनोऽस्मिन् यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा । तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र
 न मुह्यति ॥' - (*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 Kṛishṇa 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), *Punya* (merit), *Svarga* (heaven), *Naraka* (hell) etc. ; in fact, he himself has stated - 'We are beginning to commit a great sin !' ; 'By virtue of *Varṇasaṅkara* (admixture of castes) one begets hell alone'. He wants to know from Shri Kṛishṇa 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 *Bhāṣhya* - this utterance of Lord Shri Kṛishṇa is not pertaining to topics like *Janmāntara*, *Pāpa-Punya* etc. ; on the contrary, it is concerned with *Ātmajñāna* (Self-Knowledge). The introductory statement by Shri Kṛishṇa - 'अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वम्' - (*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 Śāṅkara has written in his *Bhāṣhya* in this context, viz. “महति शोकसागरे निमग्नस्य अर्जुनस्य अन्यत्र आत्मज्ञानादुद्धरणमपश्यन् भगवान् वासुदेवः, ततः कृपया अर्जुनम् उद्दिधीर्षुः, आत्मज्ञानाय अवतारयन् 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 *Kūṭastha 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 : ‘आगमापायिनः’ - (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 *Vyāvṛitta* (manifest), *Ātman*, of the very essence of *Anubhava*, exists as *Anuvṛitta* (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 जनाधिपाः । न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः 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 Kṛishṇa 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), *Marana* (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 - 'आदावन्तेऽपि यन्नास्ति 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), *Nishkriya* (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 - '*Ātmans* 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 *Yāthāmya* (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 *Svarūpa*' - then how at all can we say that we have any relationship with *Avidyā* ? As the *Śruti* sentence teaches : “इन्द्रियाणां पृथग् भावमुदयास्तमयौ च यत् । पृथगुत्पद्यमानानां मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥” - (Kathōpanishad 2-3-6) - our senses are born from the primordial elements like *Ākāśa* (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 *Ātmaswabhāva* (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 *Paramasatya* (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 *Muṇḍakōpanishad*, the *Jñāna* which signifies or depicts this *Ātmaswarūpa* is called *Paravidyā*. A person by name *Shounaka* questions *Āṅgīrasa* in the manner : ‘Revered Sir, which is that Entity knowing which it amounts to knowing all this world of duality ?’ *Āṅgīrasa* 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 *Aksharaswarūpa* (an Entity of the essence of imperishable nature). That *Parabrahman* called ‘*Akshara*’ exists as : ‘यत्तदद्रेश्यमग्राह्यगोत्रमवर्णमचक्षुःश्रोत्रं तदपाणिपादम् । नित्यं विभुं सर्वगतं सुसूक्ष्मं तदव्ययं यद्भूतयोनिं परिपश्यन्ति धीराः ॥’ - (*Muṇḍaka* 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 '*Ātmatattwa*' (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 *Agōtra*, meaning, One without an origin ; that which is an origin - just as in the pot and the pitcher the clay is the pervasive substrate - exists as the pervasive substrate for its originations (manifestations). Because of the reason that this *Akshara 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 *Akshara* is the very origin of all *Rishis* and *Pitrus* (manes) ; for this *Aksharabrahman* which is the origin for everything, how at all can there be a *Gōtra*, origin ?

It is *Avarṇa* ; *Varṇas* means qualities like grossness etc. or colours like white, black, blue etc. That thing which has or possesses *Varṇas* can be described in the manner - 'It is such and such' ; but *Akshara* (immutable or imperishable Reality) has no *Varṇas* (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 *Apāṇipāda* (devoid of hands and feet), *Achakshuhshrōṭṛu* (devoid 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 description, 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 *Pramāṇas* 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 *Akshara* 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 co-operate 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 प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं तु 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 *Akshara* ; 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 Śāṅkara has written in this regard : 'यथा विधिविषये कर्त्राद्यनेक कारकोपसंहारद्वारेण वाक्यार्थज्ञानकालादन्यत्र अनुष्ठेयोऽर्थोऽस्ति अग्निहोत्रादि लक्षणः, न तथेह परविद्याविषये ; वाक्यार्थज्ञानसमकाल एव तु पर्यवसितो भवति ॥' The purport of this *Bhāṣhya* teaching is : "With regard to *Karmavidhi* (injunctions about rituals) after gathering together *Kāraṅgas* (instruments) like *Kartṛu* (agent of action), *Karaṇa* (means of action) etc. - not only understanding the meaning of the sentences but also the *Karma* (action, ritual) like *Agnihōtra* 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 *Karmakāṇḍa*, 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, *Duḥkha* (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 'Satchidānanda 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 *Duḥkha* (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 *Satchidānanda 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 *Akhaṇḍa Sat* (Existence without any measure or break, division), *Akhaṇḍa Chit* (indivisible Consciousness, Knowledge), *Akhaṇḍa 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 *Akhaṇḍa Satchidānanda 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 *Ātman* - 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 *Ātman* and the world of duality ?'

X. THE REALITY BEHIND THE CONCEPTS OF KĀRAṆA (CAUSE) AND KĀRYA (EFFECT)

Deliberating upon the purport behind the special features or attributes which describe *Ātmatattwa* (the Absolute Reality of the Self), we have reached a stage of cognizing or reckoning It to be **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 *Paramātmavastu*, devoid of any *Guṇas* (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 *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 *Ātmatattwa* - 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 *Anātman* (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* : 'अजायमानो बहुधा विजायते' - meaning - 'Being devoid of birth, He is coming into being in various forms' - and the *Gītā* sentence of - 'अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् । प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥' - meaning - 'Although I am devoid of birth as also I am the Lord Creator (*Īśwara*) for everything, by taking into My Control My *Prakṛiti* by means of My *Māyā* (power of illusion) I get born' - are proclaiming this truth alone. For

that reason alone, *Śāstra* indicates that which really exists but does not create that which does not exist. According to the axiom - 'ज्ञापकं 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 *Śāstraic* 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 Śāstra* 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 मृत्पिण्डेन सर्वं मृण्मयं विज्ञातं स्यात् वाचारम्भणं विकारो नामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येव 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 ; *Prithivi* (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 - 'ज्योतीषि विष्णुर्भुवनानि विष्णुर्वनानि विष्णुर्गिरयश्च विष्णुः' (meaning, 'Brilliant bodies like the sun, the moon and the stars are the all-pervading Lord *Vishṇu* ; the various worlds are *Vishṇu* and the forests and the mountains etc. are *Vishṇu*') - all

the celestial luminary bodies, worlds and the physical phenomena are all *Paramāṭman* (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-Vishṇu-Maheshwara*), by way of a test, kidnaps the cattle and their tenders, shepherds who were dear to *Shri Kṛishṇa* (said to be an incarnation of *Vishṇu*) to His world called *Brahmalōka* ; realizing this mischief, *Shri Kṛishṇa*, 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 : ‘मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम्’ (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 : ‘अत्रेन सोम्य शुङ्गेनापो-मूलमन्विच्छ अद्भिः सोम्य शुङ्गेन तेजोमूलमन्विच्छ तेजसा सोम्य शुङ्गेन सन्मूलमन्विच्छ सन्मूलाः सोम्येमाः सर्वाः प्रजाः सदायतनाः सत्प्रतिष्ठाः’ - (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 Taittiriya Śruti - ‘सत्यं चानृतं च सत्यमभवत् । यदिदं किंच । तत्सत्यमित्याचक्षते ॥’ - (Tai. 2-6) the intended, implicit purport is : ‘*Brahman* which is the Absolute Reality Itself became *Satya* (reality) and *Asatya* (unreal, false appearance) ; whatever thing 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 *Ākāśha*, *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 - ‘सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया’ - (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 '*Karaṇa*' (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 कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम्' - (*Gītā* 4-13), although from the *Vyavahāra dṛishṭi* (empirical viewpoint) we have to say that - 'He is a *Kartu* 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 *Swarūpa* alone is *Sadbrahman* ; that *Brahman*

Itself is yourself' - in very clear terms. In the *Bhagavadgītā* too Shri Kṛishṇa has proclaimed : 'क्षेत्रज्ञं मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत' - (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 *Paramātmān* Himself.' Hence it amounts to saying, this world, appearing in the forms of *Jīvas*, is also in truth *Paramātmān* 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 *Paramātmāmatattwa* (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 *Paramātmāmatattwa* which is the root cause for the entire world or universe of diversity.

XI. JÑĀTRUTATTWA (THE REALITY BEHIND THE KNOWNER)

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 : 'कार्यनियतपूर्ववृत्ति 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 *Drashṭṛtva* (seer-hood). In the *Śruti* the most popular *Jīva* (soul) has been described as : 'एष हि द्रष्टा स्प्रष्टा श्रोता घ्राता रसयिता मन्ता बोद्धा कर्ता विज्ञानात्मा पुरुषः' (Prashna 4-9). These nomenclatures of the *Jīva*, like *Drashṭṛ* (seer), *Sprashṭṛ* (toucher), *Shrōṭṛ* (listener or hearer), *Ghrāṭṛ* (smeller), *Rasayitā* (taster), *Manṭṛ* (one who reflects), *Bōddhā* (one who cognizes or the cognizer), *Kartṛ* (agent of action) - are given to the *Vijñānātmā* (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 : 'अकृत्स्नो हि सः प्राणत्रेव प्राणो नाम भवति वदन् वाक् पश्यंश्चक्षुः शृण्वन् श्रोत्रं मन्वानो मनस्तान्यस्यैतानि कर्मनामान्येव' - (Bṛi. 1-4-15). It is well known to all of us that in our workaday 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 *Drashṭṛu*, *Shrōṭṛu* 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 *Akṛitsna* (incomplete) and cannot be said to indicate his complete nature. Hence, the *Śruti* points out : 'आत्मेत्येवो-पासीतात्र ह्येते सर्व एकीभवन्ति' - [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 पदनीयमस्य सर्वस्य यदयमात्मा ह्यनेन ह्येतत्सर्वं वेद' - (This alone has to be cognized ; for, by virtue of knowing This, all this becomes known). By saying *Drashṭṛu* it does not amount to having included *Shrōṭṛu*, but when we say - *Ātman* - it amounts to combining everything like *Drashṭṛu*, *Shrōṭṛu*, *Manṭṛu*, *Vijñāṭṛu* 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 *Trich Pratyaya* is used in the manner - '*Drashṭṛu*', '*Shrōṭṛu*', '*Manṭṛu*'. Although *Ātman*, who witnesses all these forms of *Drashṭṛu*, *Shrōṭṛu* 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 'साक्षाद् द्रष्टरि संज्ञायाम्' (It is a significant name which has the connotation of 'one who sees directly'.) The word '*Drashṭṛu*' means 'one who sees through the doorway of the eyes' ; the word '*Shrōṭṛu*' 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 निर्गुणश्च' (Shwetāshwatara).

A finite *Drashṭṛu* by means of a finite *Dṛishṭi* (sight) illumines (becomes aware of) a finite *Dṛishya* (object of sight) according to his capacity or capability, whereas this *Paramārtha Drashṭṛu* (Absolute Real Seer) of the nature of *Sākshi* is Himself the *Karaṇa* (sense-organ of sight), is Himself also the *Dṛishya* (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 *Nirguṇa* [i.e. *Nirdharmaka* or devoid of any *Dharmas* (qualities) or *Nirvishesha* or devoid of special features or qualities] ; for His *Dṛishṭi* (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 *Śruti* 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 : 'यच्चाप्नोति यदादत्ते यच्चात्ति विषयानिह । यच्चास्य सन्ततो भावस्तस्मादात्मेति कीर्त्यते ॥' - (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 *Jñātr* (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 *Tṛipti* (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 *Jātharāgni* (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 वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः । प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥’ - (*Gītā* 15-14) and meditate on its meaning. They feel that for one who believes in the truth that - ‘*Vaishvānarāgni* Itself is the *Bhōkṛu* (enjoyer), and the food is *Sōmāma* (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 *Mahābhōkṛu* (the Supreme Enjoyer) who is *Nityatṛupta* (eternally, perennially satiated), or, in the alternative, He is *Nityatṛupta* even without the need of any *Karaṇa* 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 *Drashṭṛu*’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 Chitswarūpa* properly *Sahaja Samādhi* (natural state of trance) accrues. To Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa 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 मुनेः ॥' - 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*, *Grahana* ; *Jñāṇu*, *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. AMṚITATWA (IMMORTALITY)

It has been taught in the *Upanishads* that the Reality behind the *Jñānu* 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 धर्मादन्यत्राधर्मात् अन्यत्रास्मात् कृताकृतात् । अन्यत्र भूताच्च भव्याच्च यत्तत्पश्यसि तत् वद ॥’ - (Kāṭha 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 *Paramahansa* (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 स्यादमृतत्वस्य तु नाशास्तु वित्तेन’ - 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 *Amṛitatwa* by means of wealth.'

Then Maitreyi requested : 'येनाहं नामृता स्यां किमहं तेन कुर्यां 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 वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः । चक्षुषश्चक्षुरतिमुच्य धीराः 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 *Vishṇu*, 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 **Kaṭhōpanishad** instructs : 'कश्चिद्धीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्षदावृत्तचक्षुरमृतत्त्वमिच्छन्' - (Kātha 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 *Amṛitatwa* (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 *Sātwika* (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 विज्ञानादन्तरो यं विज्ञानं न वेद यस्य विज्ञानं शरीरं यो विज्ञानमन्तरो यमयत्येष त आत्माऽन्तर्याम्यमृतः’ - (Bṛi. 3-7-22) - meaning - ‘That which is innermost in us is *Vijñāna* or *Buddhi* (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 (*Amṛitaswarūpaḥ*). 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 *Sarvasāṅkshi* alone. Yama, the God of Death, has instructed Nachiketa, his 12-year-old disciple, thus : 'यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि श्रिताः । अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ॥ यदा सर्वे प्रभिद्यन्ते हृदयस्येह ग्रन्थयः । अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्येतावद्ध्यनुशासनम् ॥' - (Kāṭha 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. *Mōksha* 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 chilli, 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 *Kāṁavāṣana* (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 Śāṅkara in his work called 'Mōhamudgara' has written ; 'का ते कान्ता कस्ते पुत्रः संसारोऽयमतीव विचित्रः । कस्य त्वं कः कुत आयातस्तत्त्वं चिन्तय यदिदं भ्रातः ॥' - 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 'Gorakhnātha' 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 *Śruti* states : 'न वा अरे 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 *Advitīya* (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 *Amṛitaswarūpa* (of the essential nature of immortality)' - flashes in our Mind like lightning.

XIII. AVASTHĀTRAYA (THE TRIAD OF STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS)

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 *Svarūpa* (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 *Nityatṛupta* (ever-satiated) ; even those who worship him will become rich. The *Śruti* expresses this in the manner : ‘आत्मज्ञं ह्यर्चयेद् भूतिकामः’ - (Muṇḍaka 3-1-10), meaning - “Those who worship a ‘Knower of the Self’ do not have rebirth.” It further says : ‘उपासते पुरुषं ये ह्यकामाः ते शुक्रमेतदतिवर्तन्ति धीराः’ (Muṇḍaka 3-2-1). We are just now having a belief that we are modest only ; but howevermuch 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 कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति । हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मैव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥’ - (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

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*

(the essential nature of Intuitive Experience for eternity). 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 *Svarūpa* in the manner : 'नान्तः प्रज्ञं न बहिः प्रज्ञं नोभयतः प्रज्ञं न प्रज्ञानघनं न प्रज्ञं नाप्रज्ञम्' - (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), *Sāmānya* (a genus), *Visheshā* (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*, *Guṇa* etc. ; how at all can anyone call the entire waking state of Consciousness as *Dravya*, *Guṇa* or any other *Padārtha* (entity, substance) whatsoever ? '*Padārtha*' 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 *Padārtha* (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 *Padārthas* (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' (*Ākāśha*) 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 *Ākāśha* (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 : 'अवधिर्ब्रह्मणो वयः' (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 नाभावो विद्यते सतः' in the *Gāṇ*,

is it not ? Therefore, we should determine that *Ātmānubhava* (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 *Ātman* alone these *Vikalpas* (misconceptions) are appearing and disappearing - such a *Bhrānti* (delusion) is taking place in us. In truth, the very essence of these *Avasthās* is itself this our *Ātman* (Self) of *Anubhavarūpa* (of the very nature of Intuitive Experience). As Shri Gaudapāda has stated : ‘अनादिमायया सुप्तो यदा जीवः प्रबुध्यते । अजमनिद्रमस्वप्नमद्वैतं बुध्यते तदा ॥’ - (Gaudapāda 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 *Jāgrat*, *Svapna* and *Sushupti* is constant. The waking and the dream together are a *Svapna* (dream), deep sleep is *Sushupti* - here ‘*Svapna*’ means anything falsely appearing as though it is existing ; ‘*Sushupti*’ means *Ajñāna* (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 *Avasthās* are mere misconceptions (false appearances) or in their very core of Being they are one’s own *Svarūpa* of *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 *Ātman* who is *Nirvikalpa* (devoid of or beyond any misconception)’.”

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 *Anātman* (not-Self), not a false appearance.' But even these *Vikalpas* (misconceptions) which are mutually opposite like *Ātman* and *Anātman*, *Satyam* and *Asatyam* (false) - where do they exist apart from this *Kūṭasthānubhava* ?

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 desirating an opposite of *Anātman* (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 *Jāi* (species), not *Guṇa* (quality) ; that It has no relation whatsoever with anything else' - there is another *Śruti* sentence : 'अथात 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 *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* 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 *Brahmaswarūpa*. 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 *Brahmātmavastu* (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 *Anubhāvyā* (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 *Avasthātraya 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 *Sūtra Bhāshya* in this manner : When a disciple by name '*Bāshkali*' 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 होवाचाधीहि भो इति स तूष्णीं बभूव तदिह द्वितीये वा तृतीये वा वचन उवाच ब्रूमः 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 *Ātmaswarūpa* 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 Chintāmaṇi*' (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 *Svarūpa* 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 Śāṅkara 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 *Sūtra Bhāṣhya* 1-1-2 : 'न धर्मजिज्ञासायामिव श्रुत्यादय एव प्रमाणं ब्रह्मजिज्ञासायाम्, किं तु श्रुत्यादयोऽनुभवादयश्च 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 *Brahmajijñāsā* (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 : 'ज्ञानेन हि प्रमाणेन अवगन्तुमिष्टं ब्रह्म । ब्रह्मावगतिर्हि पुरुषार्थः, निःशेषसंसारबीजाविद्याद्यनर्थनिबर्हणात् ॥' - (Sūtra Bhāshya 1-1-1). The purport is - "*Brahmāvagati* meaning *Brahmātmānubhava* (Intuition of *Brahman* or *Ātman*) alone is the real *Purushārtha* (goal of human life) ; for, all the *Samsārabījās* (root causes for transmigratory existence of repeated births and deaths) like *Avidyā* (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 *Brahmānubhava*. Neither by means of *Karma* nor by means of *Upāsana* (mental contemplation or meditations) *Avidyā Samsāra Bījās* 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 *Brahmātmānubhava* alone."

In the *Vedas*, *Sādhana*s (spiritual practices) which yield visible fruits (*Dṛishṭaphala*) are stipulated in the

manner : 'न चेयमवगतिर्नोत्पद्यते इति शक्यं वक्तुम् अवगतिसाधनानां श्रवणादीनां वेदानुवचनादीनां च विधानात् ॥' - (Sūtra Bhāshya 2-1-14), meaning - 'It is not possible to assert that this *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience) does not accrue ; for, *Śravaṇa* (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), *Nididhyāṣana* (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) *Sādhana*s are mentioned in the *Upanishads*. For *Vastujñāna* (knowledge of substance) such practices like *Śravaṇa* etc. are needed, is it not ? Those very practices are stipulated here. The *Śruti* is stating in clear terms that by means of such *Sādhana*s 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 *Sādhana*s the suitable, qualifying pre-conditions like *Pratyagdrishṭi* (introvertedness, introspection), *Antahkaraṇasaṃskāras* (subtle refinement of the Mind), the other earlier preparatory *Sādhana*s like *Adhyayana* (study of the scriptures), *Yajña* (sacrificial fire), *Dāna* (charity, philanthropy), *Tapas* (austerity, penance) are stipulated therein. It being so, there is no reason whatsoever to say that *Anubhava* does not accrue.

'न चेयमवगतिः, अनर्थिका भ्रान्तिर्वा इति शक्यं वक्तुम् । अविद्यानिवृत्तिफलदर्शनात् । बाधकज्ञानान्तरभावाच्च ।' - (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 - ‘*Paramātmān* who is *Advitīya* (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 *Tattwa* (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 *Avagati* (*Anubhava* or Intuitive Experience) of the essence of *Advitīya Brahmajñāna* (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 *Avidyānivṛtti* (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 : ‘प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम्’ । Now let us examine the purport behind these various special attributes : (i) ‘*Pratyakshāvagamam*’ - means that - ‘The *Vijñāna* (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) ‘*Avyayam*’ (that which doesn’t get emaciated or worn out) means : ‘Because of the reason that It is the *Advitīya* (non-dual), *Paramārthasatyam* (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 सर्वदुःखविनिर्मुक्तैकचैतन्यात्मकोऽहम् इत्येष आत्मानुभवः । न चैवम् आत्मानम् अनुभवतः किञ्चिदन्यत् कृत्यम्

अवशिष्यते ॥' - (Sūtra Bhāshya 4-1-2), meaning : 'Because of the reasons that It is verily our essence of Being which is thus *Kūṭastha* (Absolutely real and immutable) ; That It is directly *Aparōksha* (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 *Mōksha* (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 Chaitanyaswarūpa* (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 Śāṅkara 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 Śāṅkara. By such reflection all the important tenets of *Vedānta* will be easily discerned, nay to the *Mumukshus* (true seekers of *Mōksha*) it amounts to having achieved, attained the very essence of Shri Śāṅkara's *Vedānta* indeed.

XV. ASPARSHA YŌGA

The *Vedantic* philosophy belonging to the tradition of Shri Śaṅkara is called **Asparsha Yōga**. Shri Gaudapāda, the grand-preceptor of Shri Śaṅkara, while explaining the teachings of **Māṇḍūkyaōpanishad**, in his famous *Kārikas* at the beginning of the fourth chapter called *Alātashānti Prakaraṇa*, has written this invocatory verse : ‘अस्पर्शयोगो वै नाम सर्वसत्त्वसुखो हितः । अविवादोऽविरुद्धश्च देशितस्तं नमाम्यहम् ॥’ The reason for the *Advaita Darshana* (non-dual school of philosophy) according to the traditions of Shri Gaudapāda (and Shri Śaṅkara) getting the nomenclature of ‘*Asparsha Yōga*’ is : There is no difference whatsoever between this *Darshana* (philosophy) and the essential nature of *Brahman*. Since there does not exist anything whatsoever that is second to, or other than, *Brahman*, 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, *Brahman* is *Nitya* (eternally) *Shuddhānubhavarūpa* (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 *Brahman in esse* ; different or distinct from that *Brahman*, this *Anubhava* does not at all exist.

This *Darshana* (philosophy), or *Brahman*, 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 द्वैतमिव भवति तदितर इतरं जिघ्रति तदितर इतरं पश्यति' (Bṛi. 3-4-14) ; 'द्वितीयाद्वै भयं भवति' - (Bṛi. 1-4-2), when we observe from the *Vyavahāra Dṛishṭi* (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 *Virōdha* (opposition) and *Vivāda* (dispute) is invariably unavoidable. But in the *Advaita Darshana* there is never any *Vivāda* (dispute or controversy), because there is no *Virōdha* (opposition) whatsoever. All this is the purport behind *Shri Gaudapāda'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 *Prameyarāshi* (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 *Anātman* (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 Sāṅkhyans, 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 (*Jñeyasatyatwavādins*). 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 phenomenon 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 *Tārkikas* (logicians) who affirm . ‘लक्षणप्रमाणाभ्यां वस्तुसिद्धिः’ [meaning : “Without showing, demonstrating *Lakṣhaṇa* (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 *Parama Tattwa* (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 *Pramāṇu* (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 *Avirōdha* ? 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 *Shūṇyavādins* (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 *Yōga 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 '*Yōgāchāras*' 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 *Yōgipratyaksha* (individualistic experience on the basis of *Yōgic* practices) there will invariably arise differences of opinion. In the *Śrutis* (*Upanishads*) and *Bhagavadgītā* too *Sādhana*s (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 *Śāṅkarāchārya*), these *Dhyāna* (contemplation) and *Samādhi* (trance) are taken as support for *Tattwavichāra* (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 *Tattwanirdhāraṇa* (determination or establishment of the Absolute Reality) is not made or based.

The *Darshanakāras* (philosophers) who are *Vākya-sharaṇa* (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 axiomaic 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 *Adhyātma 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 Mīmāṃsakas* (believers in the *Karmakāṇḍa* of the Vedas). In *Vedānta Darshana* also (i.e. *Uttara Mīmāṃsā*) the *Vedaprāmāṇya* (authority of the *Vedic* lore) is assumed ; but for the purposes of determining the *Tattwa*, 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 ‘ज्ञापकं तु शास्त्रं न कारकम्’ (*Śāstra* states about an entity as it is, and not creates what is not existent, nor does it remove or sublate what really exists) - Shri Śāṅkara keeps on reminding *Jijñāṣus* (seekers of the Ultimate Reality) about it every now and then. In the ‘*Vedānta Mīmāṃsā Śāstra*’ which undertakes the task of teaching or expounding *Brahman* (the Absolute Real-

ity) for the sake of Its *Jijñāsus*, Shri Śaṅkara adopts the axiom that - 'श्रुत्यादयोऽनुभवादयश्च यथासंभवमिह प्रमाणम्, अनुभवावसानत्वात्, भूतवस्तुविषयत्वाच्च ब्रह्मज्ञानस्य' [Both *Śrutyādi* 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 *Mṛityu* (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 *Mṛityu* can be transcended, surmounted here and now itself. 'एतावद्ध्यनुशासनम्' (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 *Āshramas* (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 *Śrūtyanugrahā 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 Sureswarāchārya, the direct disciple of Shri Śāṅkarāchārya, in his *Naishkarmyasiddhi* has written : 'सोऽयं न्यायोऽपि वेदान्तार्थाः शास्त्राचार्य प्रसादलभ्योऽपि अनपेक्षितशास्त्राचार्यप्रसादः, अनन्यापेक्षसिद्धस्वभावत्वाद्' । 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 Śāṅkara.

XVI. THE QUINTESSENCE OF THE TEACHINGS OF ŚĀSTRA & 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 *Kāthōpanishad* there is a sentence : ‘उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान् 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 Gaudapādāchārya in his famous *Kārikā* : ‘अनादिमायया सुप्तो यदा जीवः प्रबुध्यते । अजमनिद्रमस्वप्नमद्वैतं बुध्यते तदा ॥’ Here it has been stated that the *Jīva* (transmigratory soul) is experiencing the dream due to *Anādimāyā* (beninlingless illusion), is it not ? Here, the two kinds of dreams, viz.

Agrahaṇa (not knowing the *Tattwa* 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 *Svarūpa* (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), *Kāraṇa* (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 *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Vārtikā* Shri Sureśwarāchārya has stated : 'नास्य स्वापः प्रबोधो वा कुतः स्वप्नस्य सम्भवः । प्रत्यक्स्वरूप एवास्य जाग्रत्स्वप्न-सुषुप्तयः ॥ सुप्तः प्रबुद्ध इत्येवं स्वप्नं पश्यति चेति यः । विकल्प एष

भूतानामविद्या-रात्रिशायिनाम् ॥' - (Bṛi. Vārtikā 2-1-264, 265).

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 howevermuch 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 अनुपपन्नं 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 *Avasthātraya Prapañcha* (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 *Avasthās* 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 *Vedāntins* 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 *Śruti* sentence - 'एकमेवाद्वितीयं 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 *Śruti'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* : ‘प्रपञ्चो यदि विद्येत निवर्तेत न संशयः । मायामात्रमिदं द्वैतमद्वैतं परमार्थतः ॥’ - (Gauḍapāda Kārikā 1-17). To wit : Even after determining by means of deliberation

in consonance with *Sārvatrika 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 *Prātibhāsika 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 *Prātibhāsika Padārtha* (illusory object) is actually born during the time of delu-

sion. This *Sannyāsin* has established an institution (monastery) on behalf of the Rāmakṛishṇa 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 Vedānta*, are nodding their head in approbation or ridiculing in the manner - 'After all, this is what *Vedānta* 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 *Anirvachanīya Sarpa* (indefinable, indescribable snake) which is of *Sadasadvilakṣhaṇa* (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 *Māyāmātra* (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 *Śruti* 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 । उपदेशादयं वादो ज्ञाते द्वैतं न विद्यते ॥' - (Gauḍapāda Kārikā 1-18). To wit : 'All phenomena or concepts like *Prapañcha* (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 VIJÑĀNA

If we discern the purport behind the statement of Realized Souls that - 'ज्ञाते द्वैतं 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 Āṅgīrasa in the manner - 'कस्मिन् भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवति' - (Mundakōpanishad) - 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 Transcendental 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 Vṛitti* (a concept of the form of the Self) produced ? This question has to be deliberated upon now.

From the viewpoint of the (*Pūrva*) *Mīmāṃsakas* 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 Vṛitti has perforce to accrue, is it not ? Perhaps, for the *Mīmāṃsakas* to opine that - “*Ātman* is *Ahampratyayagamyā* (object for the ‘I’ notion)” - this alone may be the reason. But, in truth, *Ātman* is not *Ahampratyayagamyā* ; in fact, that *Ātman* (self, ‘I’ notion), who is *Kartṇurūpa* (of the form of an agent of action) in the empirical sphere, is merely a *Sōpādhikarūpa* (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 Kṛishṇa has very clearly denoted : ‘य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् । उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥’ - (Gītā 2-19). To wit, its implicit purport is : ‘This *Ātman* (Self) is not the *Kartṇu* (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 *Jñāṭṛu* (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 *Jñāṭṛu* (knower). To wit : To be a *Jñāṭṛu* 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 *Mīmāṃsakas* has been accepted in *Vedānta* also, but only from the *Adhyārōpa Dṛishṭi* (viewpoint of deliberate super-imposition). Because of the reason that a *Jñāṇu*, without imagining or assuming any object external to him, cannot himself possibly become a *Jñāṇu* at all, in his empirical dealings this *Jñāṇu* 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 *Jñāṇuswarūpa* (essential nature of being a cognizer or knower) at all. But there is no rule of law at all to the effect that - '*Paramārthātmān* (the Absolute Self as the Transcendental Reality) should invariably and ever be of *Jñāṇuswarūpa* (of the innate nature of a Knower, cognizer)' ; for example, in deep sleep too *Ātman* exists, but therein He is not a *Jñāṇuswarūpa*.

Now, let us see what happens if we concentrate all our Mind on *Ātman* or the Self with a view to cognizing that *Shuddhātmān* (Pure, Absolute Self) who is *Anubhavarūpa* (of the essential nature of Intuition, Pure Consciousness). If we attempt to cognize the *Jñāṇu*, the imagined (or misconceived) *Jñāṇu* himself becomes the object. But here in this context there is not even a little scope or room for the *Jñāṇu-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 Bhāshya* : ‘एवं योगाभ्यासबलात् योगिन आत्मन्येव प्रशाम्यति मनः’ - (*Gītā Bhāshya* 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 Gaudapādāchārya in his *Kārikā* : ‘आत्मसत्यानुबोधेन न

संकल्पयते यदा । अमनस्तां तदा याति ग्राह्याभावे तदग्रहम् ॥' - (Gauḍapāda Kārikā 3-32). 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 *Paramārthasatya* (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 objectfying 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 *Antahkaraṇa Vṛitti* (mental concept) tries to cognize (Intuit) that *Paramātmāsvarūpa*, 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 *Dhyānayōga* 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 *Sāṅkhya Vichārakrama* (method or system of Intuitive deliberation) all the *Anātman* (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 *Vṛittirūpa* (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 *Avasthātraya* or some other particular methodology.

Those who have acquired the *Pratyagdṛishṭi* (introvertedness, introspection) may attain *Ātmaswarūpa* so as to culminate in their *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience) by any one of the three paths (*Sādhana*s which are *Vastutantra*), viz. (i) *Sāṅkhya Dṛishṭi Vichāra* (deliberation on Intuitive, Absolute Reality viewpoint), (ii) examination of *Avasthātraya* 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 एषोऽणिमैतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं तत्सत्यं स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो' - (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 सोम्येकेन मृत्पिण्डेन सर्वं मृन्मयं विज्ञातं स्याद्वाचारम्भणं विकारो नामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येव 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 सोम्येदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम्’ - [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 Gauḍapāda has given the illustration of the empty space (*Ākāśha*) for elucidating

this truth : ‘रूपकार्यसमाख्याश्च भिद्यन्ते तत्र तत्र वै । आकाशस्य न भेदोऽस्ति तद्द्वज्जीवेषु निर्णयः ॥’ (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 *Ākāśha* (empty space) ; because of the reason that all of them are invariably the effects of *Ākāśha*, they are not phenomena different or distinct from *Ākāśha* ; 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 *Ākāśha*, the *Ākāśha* also is the effect of *Ātman* alone. This *Ākāśha* 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 *Bhāṣhya* on *Chhāndōgya Upanishad* that : ‘सदिति अस्तितामात्रं वस्तु सूक्ष्मं निर्विशेषं सर्वगतम् एकं निरञ्जनं निरवयवं विज्ञानं यदवगम्यते सर्व-वेदान्तेभ्यः ॥’ - meaning - “*Sat* is a *Vastu* (entity) which

exists in the form of Pure or mere Existence ; being very *Sūkshma* (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 *Anubhavātmaka* (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 (Shwetaketu) that in this *Avasthā*, *Ātman* alone exists has turned his son's attention (mind) towards the Sanskrit word '*Svapiti*' (is sleeping). He has explained it thus : 'यत्रैतत् पुरुषः स्वपिति नाम सता सोम्य तदा संपन्नो भवति स्वमपीतो भवति तस्मादेनं स्वपितीत्याचक्षते स्वं ह्यपीतो 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 *Visheshavijñāna* (special perceptual knowledge) of the type of cognizing the external objects by means of our instruments of knowledge (*Jñāna Karaṇas*). Hence, we exist not only in

our Pure or Absolute *Svarūpa* (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), *Sanmātra* (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 (*Svapiti*), 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 Paramārthaswarūpa* 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

मधुकृतो निस्तिष्ठन्ति नानात्ययानां वृक्षाणां रसान् समवहारमेकतां गमयन्ति । ते यथा तत्र न विवेकं लभन्तेऽमुष्याहं वृक्षस्य रसोऽस्मि अमुष्याहं वृक्षस्य रसोऽस्मि इत्येवमेव खलु सोम्येमाः सर्वाः प्रजाः सति संपद्य न विदुः सति संपद्यामहे इति ॥' - (Chh. 6-9-1, 2) - meaning, "The honey bees bring the juice from flowers of various plants and prepare honey. But in the whole-some 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 : "इमाः सोम्य नद्यः पुरस्तात् प्राच्यः स्यन्दन्ते पश्चात् प्रतीच्यस्ताः समुद्रात् समुद्रमेवापियन्ति स समुद्र एव भवति ता यथा तत्र न विदुरियमहमस्मीय-महमस्मीति ॥ एवमेव खलु सोम्येमाः सर्वाः प्रजाः सत अगम्य न विदुः सत आगच्छामः इति त इह व्याघ्रो वा सिंहो वा वृको वा वराहो वा कीटो वा पतङ्गो वा दंशो वा मशको वा यद्यद्भवन्ति तदा भवन्ति ॥" - (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 *Sanmātra* (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 *Vāśana* (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 *Vāśana* (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) *Sadātmavastu* ?’ - 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 *Jñānachakśus* (eye of Knowledge, Intuition) looks within himself and by virtue of his own *Anubhava* (Intuitive Experience)

cognizes *Ātman*. 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 Uddālaka, 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 *Paramātman* alone ; to me that *Paramātman* Himself is the real *Ātman* ; that very *Paramātman* is *Paramārthasatyaswarūpa* (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 *Kartṛu-Bhōktṛu* (agent of action-cum-enjoyer) of ours is itself real, we become verily the thieves who have stolen our real *Ātmatattwarūpa* ; and for t to 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 *Sanmātra 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. BRAHMĀTMA VIDYĀ

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 *Ātmaswarūpa*. 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) the sentence - *Aham Brahmāsmi* (I am verily ~~Brahman~~) 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 Brahmāsmi*' - 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 *Brahmāmaswarūpa*, 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 *Brahmātmans* 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 '*Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* : "ब्रह्म वा इदमग्र आसीत्तदात्मानमेवावेदहं

ब्रह्मास्मीति तस्मात्तत्सर्वमभवत् तद्यो यो देवानां प्रत्यबुध्यत स एव तद-
भवत् तथर्षीणां तथा मनुष्याणां तद्धैतत् पश्यन् ऋषिर्वामदेवः प्रतिपदेऽहं
मनुरभवं सूर्यश्च इति । तदिदमप्येतर्हि य एवं वेदाहं ब्रह्मास्मीति स इदं
सर्वं भवति तस्य ह न देवाश्च ना भूत्या ईशते । आत्मा ह्येषां स
भवति । अथ योऽन्यां देवतामुपास्तेऽन्योसावन्योऽहमस्मीति न स वेद
यथा पशुरेवं स देवानाम् ॥” - (Bṛi. 1-4-10).

Here how did the *Sarvātmabhāva* (cognizing every-
thing 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 aris-
es : '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 be-
cause 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 *Upāsya 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 *Svarūpa* (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 आत्माऽन्तर्हृदये एतद् ब्रह्म एतमितः प्रेत्याभिसंभवितास्मि', meaning - 'That *Brahman* which is *Sarvātman* 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 स्यादद्वा न विचिकित्सास्ति 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 *Brahmasākshātkāra* (materialization of the Absolute Reality), in due course of time *Brahmaprāpti* will be attained - thus the sage *Shāṇḍilya* 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 *Brahmavidyā* 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 *Bhrānti* (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 *Brahmātma 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*', '*Kṛitsna*' - 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 *Śruti* 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 *Jñānu* (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), *Ṛishis* (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 *Ṛishis* too it is the same. That *Ṛishi* to whom a *Jñāna* of *Anubhavarūpa* (of the essential nature of Intuitive Experience) of the type - 'I am verily *Brahman*' - accrued, to that *Ṛishi* alone *Sarvātmabhāva* (cognition of being one with everything) has accrued ; the remaining deities and *Ṛishis* - even if they are great souls - all of them are, from the viewpoint of the *Brahmajñāni*, 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 Dṛishṭi*, *Ajñānis* indeed. In ancient times a *Ṛishi* by name *Vāmadeva* attained, acquired this *Brahmāmaavidyā* ; 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 *Sarvātmabhāva* 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 *Ṛigveda*, viz. 'अहं मनुरभवं सूर्यश्च'.

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 *Sarvātmatawa* (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 *Pratyagdṛishṭi* (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 *Sarvāmabhāva*. In the work by name *Naishkarmyasiddhi* Shri Sureshwarāchārya has written : 'देशकालाद्यसंबन्धाद्देशादेर्मोहकार्यतः । नानुत्पन्नमदग्धं वा ज्ञानमज्ञानमस्त्यतः ॥' - 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 *Brahmāman* 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 *Sarvāmabhāva*. *Brahman* did not cognize *Brah-*

man, making Itself an ‘object of cognition’ ; thereafter It did not become *Sarva* (everything). The distinctions of the type - ‘*Jñāṇu*, *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 *Brahmāmaidyā* 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 Brahmāsmi*' (I am verily *Brahman*).'" To such people here and now itself the Intuitive Experience of the *Nityasiddha* (eternally established or existing) *Sarvātmabhāva* (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 '*Ātmaswarūpa*' 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 : “विज्ञानात्मा सह देवैश्च सर्वैः प्राणा भूतानि संप्रतिष्ठन्ति यत्र । तदक्षरं वेदयते यस्तु सोम्य स सर्वज्ञः सर्वमेवाविवेश ॥” - (Prashna 4-11). To wit : In *Sushupti* our *Vijñānāman* ('I' notion, concept) does not exist ; neither do the senses or their *Adhishṭhāṇu Devatas* (deities who are supporting, sustaining them) exist therein ; nor do the primordial elements like *Pṛithvi* (earth) *Ap* (water) etc. exist. Then all these have become one into an *Akhaṇḍa* (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 physically 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 Experience) 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* (Omniscient) ; he alone has become everything, he has become *Jñānamātraswarūpa* (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 '*Kriyā*' (action) ; for, at that moment he does not have *Karṇutwa* (agentship of action). In fact, it is a *Sthiti* (condition) devoid of any *Karṇutwa* 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 *Vijñānātmā* ('I' concept) himself is the witness or proof, is it not ? Even that *Vijñānātmā* has totally got dissolved in *Paramātmā* herein. This '*Ātmaswabhāva*' is - as it is stated :- 'न वर्धते कर्मणा नो कनीयान्' - '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 *Kāthōpanishad* like :

‘इन्द्रियाणां पृथग्भावं उदयास्तमयौ च यत् । पृथगुत्पद्यमानानां मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥’ - (Kāṭha 6-6). To wit : 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 *Sushuptātmān*. For the sake of *Vijñānātmān* (‘I’ concept, ego) the senses are born and are functioning ; but in a state wherein the *Vijñānātmān* 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 *Vijñānātmān* (‘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*.’

(3) In the *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad* there is a description of the *Sushupti* state : ‘सुषुप्तस्थान एकीभूतः प्रज्ञानघन एवानन्दमयो ह्यानन्दभुक् चेतोमुखः प्राज्ञस्तृतीयः 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 *Ātma-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 *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* there is a sentence pertaining to *Sushupti* state : 'स होवाचाजातशत्रुर्यत्रैष एतत्सुप्तोऽभूत् य एष विज्ञानमयः पुरुषस्तदेषां प्राणानां विज्ञानेन विज्ञानमादाय य एषोऽन्तर्हृदय आकाशः तस्मिन् शेते तानि यदा गृह्णाति 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 'Dripta-bālāki-gārgya' - while engaged in determining the *Tattwa* (Absolute Reality) this sentence occurs. The Brahmin 'Gārgya' was very much devoted to and established in *Upāsya-brahman* (the Reality as the object of meditation), having believed deeply that the *Purushas* (Beings) who exist in *Ādityamaṇḍala* (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 *Sushuptāvastha* (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 *Hṛdayākāśha* (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 '*Ākāśha*' - 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 *Vijñānamayātmā* 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 *Ākāśha* (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), *Kāraṇa* (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*'. Ajātashatṛu had asked Gārgya : "Then in *Sushuptāvasthā* where was this 'Person' ? Now wherefrom did 'He' come ?" Because of the reason that Gārgya did not know the answers to these questions, Ajātashatṛu 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 *Vijñānāman*.'

(5) In the *Brahma Sūtras* too while discussing about *Sushupti* Shri Bādarāyaṇa has stated : 'तदभावो नाडीषु तच्छुतेरात्मनि च' - (Bra. Sūtra 3-2-7). To wit : One who has come to the dream from waking, when he comes to *Sushuptāvasthā* in which even that dream too vanishes - he merges in *Paramāman* alone through the *Nāḍīs* (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 Bhāshya* too Shri Śāṅkara has written : 'न च देहाद्यात्मप्रत्ययभ्रान्तिसन्तानविच्छेदेषु सुषुप्तिसमाध्यादिषु कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वाद्यनर्थ उपलभ्यते । तस्मात्, भ्रान्तिप्रत्ययनिमित्त एवायं संसारभ्रमो न तु परमार्थः इति सम्यग्दर्शनादत्यन्तमेवोपरमः इति सिद्धम्' - (Gītā Bhāshya 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 Bhāṣya* sentence.

Thus in *Śruti* (*Upanishads*), *Sūtra* (*Brahma Sūtras*) and *Gītā Bhāṣya* - 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 *Jijñāṣus* (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 ADHYĀTMVIDYĀ

To those who are *Mumukshus* (people seeking Beatitude or Liberation here and now) alone the *Jñāna*

(Intuitive Knowledge) of *Paramāṭman* (the Supreme Self of the very essence of Pure Absolute Existence-Consciousness-Bliss) which is expounded in the *Śruti* (*Upanishadic* 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 *Sādhana*s (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 मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन । यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यः तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम् ॥’ - (Muṇḍaka 3-2-3). To wit : This *Ātmalābha* (attainment of Self-Knowledge) alone is greater *Lābha* (profit, benefit) than all other *Lābhas* (mundane benefits). Even ‘so, in order to acquire or attain It, there may be many *Sādhana*s 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 *Paramāṭman* 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 *Ātmalābha* is to acquire, at the outset, the innate and intensive aspiration of the type - '*Paramātmān* alone we want or seek.' Then *Paramātmān* Himself will provide or procure all the *Sādhanas* needed for *Ātmalābha*. Swami Vivekānanda 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 : 'मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुं लङ्घयते गिरिम् । यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे 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 Swāmiji 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 *Paramāṭma 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 दुश्चरितान्नाशान्तो नासमाहितः । नाशान्तमानसो वापि प्रज्ञानेनैवमाप्नुयात् ॥' (Kāṭha 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 - *Ātmaśānta* (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 *Antaḥkaraṇa 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 दुर्दर्शं गूढमनुप्रविष्टं गुहाहितं गह्वरेष्ठं पुराणम् ।
अध्यात्मयोगाधिगमेन देवं मत्वा धीरो हर्षशोकौ जहाति ॥' - (Kātha 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 *Darshana* (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 *Adhyātmavichāra* (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 *Pratyagdarśiṇī* (inner vision, introspection, introvertedness). Only such a person who has thus cognized *Ātman* by himself within himself by means of *Adhyātmayōga* goes beyond, nay conquers *Harsha-Shōka* (the pairs of opposites like happiness and misery).

(d) 'सत्येन लभ्यस्तपसा ह्येष आत्मा सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् । अन्तःशरीरे ज्योतिर्मयो हि शुभ्रो यं पश्यन्ति यतयः क्षीण-दोषाः ॥' - (Muṇḍaka 3-1-5). To wit : In this *Upanishadic* sentence the *Sahakārisādhana*s (accessorial spiritual practices or disciplines) needed for *Ātma-lābha* 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 (*Sādhana*s) 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. *Shri Kṛishṇa* has stressed that - 'एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा' - '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 ; *Kṛucchra*, *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 exclusively deliberated upon here. *Samyajjñāna* means to attempt to cognize *Ātman* as He really is. Merely the *Śāstra* has not been called here ‘*Samyajjñāna*.’ *Brahmacharya* means ‘to wander about’ always in *Brahman* alone. To one who is dedicated to the *Vedas*, to *Satya* alone, this *Adhyātmajñāna* accrues. Remembrance of external objects, dealings with objects, hankering after enjoyment of external objects alone, being engrossed in objects - all these are impediments to *Brahmacharya* (celibacy, 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 expounds that - ‘One who has really attained *Ātmānubhava* begets *Ātmaśravaṇa* by means of *Ātmaśravaṇa*, *Ātmaśravaṇa* and *Ātmachintana* and has become *Ātmarata*, *Ātmakṛīḍa*, *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 (*Tattwānveshaṇapara*). *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 परिग्रहम् । विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥’ (*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 *Sātvika* 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 परादाद्योऽन्यत्रात्मनः सर्वं वेद इदं ब्रह्मेदं क्षत्रमिमे लोका इमे देवा इमानि भूतानीदं सर्वं यदयमात्मा ॥' - (Bṛi. 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 Paramātmā *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 हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति । भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥ - (Gītā 18-61). तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत । तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥’ - (Gītā 18-62).

To wit : *Īśwara* 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 *Sātwika 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 *Shāshwatasthāna* (eternal abode) which has no repeated returns to the world of duality (i.e. no return to *Samsāra* once again) will be attained undoubtedly.

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 *Paramātmān* feeling that - 'To become one with that *Paramātmān* 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 *Shōka* (misery) and *Mōha* (attachment). This alone is the spiritual instruction that was imparted by Bhagavān Shri Kṛishṇa to Arjuna : 'सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज । अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥' - (Gītā 18-63).

By discerning the real purport behind this instruction and surrendering ourselves unto *Paramāṭman*, may all of us become fit and successful in attaining our life's goal - let us pray before *Śhrīmannārāyaṇa* (*Shri Mahāvishṇu*) to grant us His benign grace !!

OM TAT SAT

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 Sāṃpradāyic 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 '*summum 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 Paramahansa Sri Sri Satchidānandendra Saraswati Swāmiji, the founder of Adhyātma Prakāsha Kāryālaya and author of over 200 reputed works on Advaita in Kannada, Sanskrit and English, blessed the earth with his presence for ninety-six 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 Satchidānandendra Saraswati Swāmiji in Kannada exclusively meant for the new initiates into the highly-developed, esoteric spiritual science of Advaita Vedānta. If the true seeker carefully scrutinizes the 21 topics delineated by the revered Swāmiji in his own inimitable lucid style, he will be able to equip and enlighten himself with the fundamental tenets of Vedānta 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 Mōksha (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.