

# TEACHING OF BRAHMAN THROUGH THE ATTRIBUTIONS OF AVIDYA AND MAYA

अध्यारोपापवादाभ्यां निष्प्रपञ्चं प्रपञ्च्यते ।  
शिष्याणां बोधसिद्धयर्थं तत्त्वज्ञैः कल्पितः क्रमः ॥  
अविद्योपाधिको जीवो मायोपाधिक ईश्वरः ।  
मायाविद्यागुणातीतं ब्रह्म वेदान्तडिण्डिमः ॥

**SRI DEVARAO KULKARNI**  
BANGALORE

**Teaching Of Brahman Through  
The Attributions Of  
Avidya And Maya**

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# A U M I N T R O D U C T I O N

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नमामि भगवत्पादं शङ्करं लोकशङ्करम् ।  
धर्मसंस्थपकं देवं भाष्यकारं शिवात्मकम् ॥  
पदवाक्यप्रमाणह्यं सम्प्रदायविदं गुरुम् ।  
सच्चिदानन्दयोगीन्द्रं वन्देऽहं देशिकोत्तमम् ।

It is very strange to say that the traditional teachings of Sri Goudapada, Sri Shankara and Sri Sureshvara i. e., the line of Advaita Vedanta, are distorted by the later commentators who have started to twist Sri Shankara's original teachings according to their own system of Advaita.

In the *Brahmasiddhi* written by Sri Mandana Misra, who was mostly a contemporary to Sri Shankara and Sureshvara, has mentioned that there are some advaitins who have held the view regarding avidya, that it is the material cause for Adhyasa. This material cause is beginningless avidya etc. [ "तथा चोक्तम् अविद्योपादानभेदादिभिः 'अनादिर-प्रयोजना चाविद्या' इति" ( Brahma Siddhi-10 ) ]. Man- dana himself differs in so many points with Sri Shankara's Bhashyas.

When Sri Sureshvara's *Varthika* and *Naishkarmaya Siddhi* have got popularised with Sri Shankara's Bhashyas, the above said two types of Advaita systems have lost their importance in the field of philosophy, because the traditional teaching of pristine pure Advaita system which has been taught since the time of Sri Goudapada to Sri Sureshvara, is based mainly on *Universal acceptance and Comprehensive vision of life* according to the utterances of Shrutis & supported by the intuitive reasonings.

After some years the above said Avidyopadana Vada and the teachings of Sri Mandana Misra have reappeared in the garb of commentaries on Shankara's Bhashyas and acquired importance place in Advaita Vedanta. The author of *Panchapadika* is an advocate of *avidya-upadana vada*. Commonly the propaganda is made that Sri Padmapada, the author of *Panchapadika* is the direct disciple of Sri Shankara, though there is no reliable evidence for this. The sub-commentary for *Panchapadika* which is called *Vivarana* written by Sri Prakashatman Yathi also has not said that this is the work of Sri Padmapada. This ancient commentary is available only for the Shankara's Sutra Bhashya, upto four Sutras only. *Panchapadika* and *Vivarana* systems are called as *Vivarana Prasthanas*. In this line there are so many books,

written by various followers of this tradition. Mostly in these days this Vivarana system has taken predominant place in the teaching of Advaita Vedanta.

The second commentary on Sutra Bhashya has been written by Vachaspathi Misra, which is known popularly as *Bhaamati*. The full commentary on the whole of Sutra Bhashya is available for us. This commentary has followed mostly the Mandana's system of Advaita.

The author of Panchapadika and Vachaspathi Misra have planned to show their own methods of Advaita in Shankara's original commentary. Taking this extra-ordinary task in hand they have twisted the meaning of the sentences of Sri Shankara's Bhashya in a manner so as to suit their own systems.

Through their scholarly writings they have captured the hearts of Pundits, who have entered into Advaita philosophy and have got some how oneness with the Bhashya of Sri Shankara. After these commentaries and sub-commentaries so many books have been written by various authors, giving the predominance to prove logically the Advaita Siddhanta to understand its theory or methodology. And by the by to get the experience of Advaita teaching, the process of Patanjali Yoga system has been prescribed in all the Advaitic works

from top to bottom. So Advaita Vedanta, as interpreted by Post-Shankara advaitins, is mostly a conglomeration of two systems i. e., the *logic* ( *Tarka-Shas:ra* ) for the Prakriya ( or methodology ) and *Patanjala Yoga* process for the practical experience.

Sri Sri Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji has freed the Advaita Vedanta from the clutches of the above said Tarka ( Syllogistic reasonings ) and Patanjala Yoga, and resuscitated the pristine pure Vedanta, which is taught by Sri Goudapada, Sri Shankara and Sri Sureshvara, after purging all later accretions and misinterpretations.

There are various differences between Bhashya and commentary. For the present I have tried to show in this book that the Superimposition and Rescission of *Avidya & Maya* through these two attributions how the non-dual nature of Brahman is taught in Sri Shankara's Prasthanatraya Bhashyas. In these days commonly these two words namely Avidya and Maya are not clearly understood by the people and some scholars also. Regarding these two concepts, Advaita followers have confused and confronted such as Maya is the cause and Avidya ( Adhyasa ) is the effect and vice-versa and that both are *Anirvachaniya*. Avidya or Maya means an incipient power of Brahman or Atman to delude Souls etc. I have

tried to show the exact definitions of these two words and also many other allied topics such as 'Vidya', 'Adhyaropa', 'Adhyasa', 'Adhyaropita', 'Maya Shakti', 'Eka Jiva Vada' and 'Nana Jiva Veda' etc., in two chapters, according to Shankara's Bhashyas. Adhyaropa-Apavada. Prakriya ( deliberate superimposition and subsequent rescission ), the unique method of teaching the Brahman has been assigned a prominent place and the line of reasoning based on the utterances of the Shrutis and intuitive experiences, has been employed in determining the nature of Reality in this booklet.

Though in Shankara's Vedanta 'Avidya' and 'Maya' are not identical, but the two terms can be used indiscriminately only in the figurative ( secondary ) sense. But it is not true that Maya is the material cause of Avidya or Adhyasa. This has been shown in the Appendix of this booklet.

At first I have no intention to publish a book regarding these matters. So I have furnished the subject matter as the answers to the queries/doubts etc., asked by my good philosophic friend *Sri Manas Kumar Sanyal, Calcutta*. I owe my deep debt to my friend who has edited and arranged the answers in a beautiful way in a book-form and also enthusiastically and philanthropically donated to publish this book. Sri Sanyal is an ardent aspirant of Advaita Vedanta and is the

real devotee of Sri Sadguru Maharaj. May Almighty Lord bless him in all the aspects. I hope this attempt will be of some assistance to the critical reader in appreciating Shankara's teachings as revealed by *Sri Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji of Karnataka*

It is my duty to convey my thanks to the *Bani Printers* and also devotees who have helped in publishing this book in various ways. I wish Almighty will bless them also.

Dedicated To ;

*H. H. Sri Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji  
of Revered Memory*

26th June, 1989

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**ERRATA**

Page	Line	For	Read
4	13	worng	wrong
21	2 ( from bottom )	Self Knowledge	Self-Knowledge
24	10 ( ,, )	nature ?	nature'.
34	5	wrong	wrong knowledge
44	3 ( from bottom )	described	described
57	7	present day	present-day
58	19	all these	all these,
60	4 ( from bottom )	पर्ववृत्तिः	पूर्ववृत्तिः
72	16	nuder	under

# Teaching Of Brahman Through The Attributions Of Avidya And Maya

## CHAPTER-I

### VIDYA-AVIDYA ADHYAROPA AND BRAHMA-BODHA

*( Teaching of Brahman through the superimpositions of knowledge and ignorance. )*

#### I THE METHODOLOGY OF VEDANTA ;

The methodology of Vedanta is superimposition and recession ( अध्यारोप-अपवाद ) alone which is used throughout Vedanta in teaching the nature of Reality. In this method there are so many subordinate methods which have been dealt with in Upanishads and also in Shankara's Bhashyas. The above said method ( viz, teaching of the true nature of the Self through the superimpositions of knowledge and ignorance or Vidya & Avidya ) is

one of the sub-varieties of the 'Adhyaropa-Apavada' method.

Due to ignorance regarding the reality, one by nature, attributes certain features, e. g. the distinctions like 'I am a seeker of Truth, Brahman as an object to be known and the teacher and the scriptures are the means to know it' ; 'the existence of three states like waking, dream & deep sleep as being independent states' etc. on the Reality, which in truth, are non-existence. To remove this innate misconception, the scriptural texts deliberately attribute certain other superior features which are in due course rescinded, ultimately leading to the realisation of the true nature of the Self after abolishing all superimpositions.

The superimposition is of two different varieties ; one due to innate avidya of the common man and the other a deliberate device employed by the Shastra.

(i) The attribution or superimposition is seen in the common experience of life and is evident for all in daily life ( 'अहमिदम्', 'ममेदम्', इति नैसर्गिकोऽयं अध्यासः मिथ्याप्रत्ययरूपः सर्वलोकप्रत्यक्षः ). This attribution will be deliberately extended by Shastra to teach the nature of Brahman ( अध्यारोपापवादाभ्यां निष्पञ्चं प्रपञ्च्यते ). To elaborate the superimposition, is called as **Kalpita Samvriti or Adhyaropa** by

**Shastra** ( see G. Karika—4/73 ) i. e. the deliberate superimposition employed by the Shastra for the purpose of teaching.

(ii) In our ordinary life what we have supposed regarding our life is called as **Adhyasa**, which means misconception regarding the truth. This is called as **Paratantra Samvriti** ( see G. Karika—4/73 ). This ordinary human procedure due to avidya is also called **Loka-samvriti** ( see G. Karika Bh-4/57 ). It will be seen that the empirical procedure and the Vedic one are both in the sphere of avidya only. In the beginning the adhyasa is explained and then the adhyaropa will be explained i. e. superimposed factors are described in a comprehensive manner before they are negated. After teaching the truth, the aspirant himself realises that there is no adhyasa or adhyaropa in the Self. When this realisation takes place then automatically the negation of the thing attributed will occur. This is called here as 'apavada' or recession.

## II IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ADHYAROPA AND ADHYASA ?

Adhyasa means misunderstanding, that is the defect of the antahkarana or mind. Due to adhyasa, when one mistakes one thing for another,

really which does not exist, that false appearance is called as Adhyaropa or Adhyaropita. For example when one does not know the real nature of the rope, he misunderstands the rope as a snake. Here his 'misunderstanding' i. e. wrong superimposition is called adhyasa. This is the subjective defect which pertains to the antahkarana or mind. Due to this misunderstanding he feels such as there is a snake ( this happens due to a wrong identification between the rope and the snake ) and he sees the rope as a snake—this is called Adhyaropa or Adhyaropita. Here 'feeling' as a snake is adhyaropa and 'seeing' the snake outside ( i. e. a wrong perception of one as the other ) is adhyaropita. This is the case of common man's view. In the illustrated, the non-dual Brahman is misunderstood naturally by the mind such as the world or universe etc. This misunderstanding which pertains to the mind is called adhyasa. And due to this adhyasa, he assumes the Brahman as the world, then this is called adhyaropa. So the world is called as Adhyaropita ( or Adhyastha or Vikalpita ). This is from the standpoint of common man's point of view. So it is called Paratantra Samvriti or Loukika-Samvriti.

To remove this misunderstanding, Shastra will attribute primarily something else on Brahman. This type of attribution is called as Kalpita-Sam-

vriti, which means adhyaropa by Shastra ( previous adhyaropa was stated from the standpoint of common man ). For example, I am a man, I am born in this world and I have been brought up in such and such a way and one day I will die etc. are common ideas which are called Paratantra Samvriti or Loukika-Samvriti. To remove this at first the Shastra attributes the VAISHVANARA-HOOD in Atman ( Mandukya Upanisad-3 ). This attribution by Shastra is intended to remove the common idea that I am an individual soul. This is Shastric adhyaropa or Kalpita-Samvriti. When this is also removed by Shastra, saying that NA BAHISPRAJNAM ( न बहिःप्रज्ञम्-Man-7 ), then this adhyaropa is gone and the non-dual Atman remains. So adhyasa is the subjective defect and adhyaropita is objective false appearance. For this refer Gita-Bhashya-13/26, particularly the portion :

“अध्यारोपित सर्पं रजतादिसंयोगवत् सोऽयमभ्यासरूपः क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञ-संयोगो मिथ्याज्ञानलक्षणः ।”

( —Here the false appearance of the snake and silver are called 'adhyaropita' by Shankara and the misunderstanding is called as adhyasa.

So, in Shankara Vedanta 'avidya' is equal to adhyasa and 'maya' is adhyaropita. This is called in Sutra-Bhashya-2/1/14, as 'avidyakalpita' etc. When Moolavidyavaadins say that maya or prakriti, which is called as 'Moolavidya' is the materi-

al cause for adhyasa, then moolavidya would not be an attributed thing ( i. e. adhyaropita ). So it will not get removed by vidya. If it is 'kalpita' or avidya-adhyaropita, then it will be absurd to say, according to them, that it is the material cause of adhyasa. So 'adhyaropita' means the false appearance, 'adhyaropa' means feeling one thing as another ( e. g., conceiving the nacre as silver ) and 'adhyasa' means misunderstanding.

The difference between the 'adhyasa' and 'adhyaropa' is very subtle. The misunderstanding is there in the mind in the first place and then he feels the thing which it is not there. This 'feeling' is called as adhyaropa. This is clearly stated by Shankara in Sutra-Bhashya-4/1/5 thus :

“ततश्च यथा 'शुक्तिकां रजतम् इति प्रत्येति', इत्यत्र शुक्तिष्वचनः एष शुक्तिकारशब्दः, रजतशब्दस्तु रजत प्रतीतिलक्षणार्थः । प्रत्येति एष हि केवलं रजतम् इति, न तु अत्र रजतमस्ति ।”

In this sentence, Shankara shows that the word **Pratyeti** Atra the adhyaropa due to adhyasa ( e. g., the man has merely a cognition of silver ) and the word **Pratitilakshanaarthaha** shows adhyaropita, the false appearance ( i. e. the word 'rajata' denotes an appearance of silver by a figure of speech ).

In conclusion, bereft of adhyasa there will be no adhyaropa or adhyaropita. So, in adhyasa only other two words are included. Though this is the

thing, if we were to analyse these points, 'adhyasa' and 'adhyaropa' are the defects pertaining to the mind i. e., subjective and 'adhyaropita' is the objective false appearance.

Now we have to proceed to the attribution of 'Knowledge' and 'Ignorance'.

### III COMMON EXPERIENCE OF KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE IN OUR DAILY LIFE; THREE ASPECTS OF AVIDYA :

Ignorance is natural for human mind. For example, the just born child does not know anything regarding himself or others. As the child grows slowly, he gets the knowledge of mother, father etc., and regarding the surroundings. So, in our life, ignorance is natural regarding anything. When the knowledge occurs regarding a particular thing, ignorance of that thing will be removed completely.

Ignorance is of three kinds :

i) Non-perception or non-apprehension, also called AGRAHANA ( तर्वाग्रहण ),

ii) Misconception or misunderstanding, also called ADHYASA ( अध्यास ),

( Anyatha-grahana, Anyatha-jnana, Anyatha-pratyaya ; Viparita-grahana, Viparita-jnana,

Viparita-pratyaya ; Mithya-grahana, Mithya-jnana, Mithya-pratyaya —these are all synonymous terms which mean misunderstanding or adhyasa ).

iii) Doubting, also called SAMSHAYA ( संशय ).

All these three kinds are called Ignorance or Avidya meaning the word avidya includes all the the kinds. When the knowledge occurs in the mind, then all the three will vanish at once. Sri Shankara says this thing in his Bhashya clearly :

i) 'Indeed nescience is a Tamasic notion ; for basically it is what obscures. It gives rise to mis-apprehension, doubt or non-apprehension. It does not exist where there is the light of discrimination.' ( Geeta-Bh-13/2 )<sup>1</sup>

ii) 'Ignorance, whether it means the want of knowledge or a false notion, is always removable by knowledge....' ( Briha-Bh-3/3/1 )<sup>2</sup>

So, the ignorance is natural for human mind. It is removed by the knowledge. Here one thing we have to remember is that the knowledge will be got by the effort only. Efforts are of various kinds-

<sup>1</sup> "अविद्यायास्तामसत्वात् । तामसो हि प्रत्यय आवरणात्मकत्वात् अविद्या विपरीतप्राहकः संशयोपस्थापको वा अग्रहणात्मको वा । विवेकप्रकाशभावे तदभावात् ।" [ Geeta Bh.—13/2 ].

<sup>2</sup> "यदि ज्ञानाभावः, यदि संशयज्ञानं, यदि विपरीतज्ञानं वा उच्यते अज्ञानमिति सर्वं हि तत् ज्ञानेनैव निवर्त्यते ।" [ Briha Bh.—3/3/1 ].

just as taking teachings from others or observation of things or performing experiments etc. So, we have to try for knowledge of anything. Hence he who has got plenty of knowledge of so many things or so many sciences is called as Scholar or Pandit in this world. He who does not know anything is called an ignorant man. Misconceptions, unlike right knowledge, are quite natural to mankind. All these are the explanations of ignorance and knowledge which are inherent in our life.

#### IV IGNORANCE REGARDING ONE'S OWN TRUE NATURE :

According to Vedanta there is ignorance regarding one's own true nature of the Self common to human mind naturally. For example, according to Shrutis, one's own true nature is non-dual Brahman. If we ask the question to anybody as whether he knows his true nature as Brahman, his reply would be that he does not know. 'Then,

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N.B.—i) Read the word '*Rescission*' for '*recession*' in page 1 (8th line from the bottom) and in page 3 (6th line from the bottom).

ii) Read 16th line of page 8 as :  
Knowledge or '*Doubt*' or a false notion, is always removable'.

who are you ?' His reply would be 'I am so and so.' And then being asked the question—'How do you say that you are this body ? You have to leave this body one day. Then, who are you ?' He replies that there are so many doubts regarding these things. So I do not want to enter into these metaphysical arguments. By this common experience Vedanta says that there is ignorance regarding the true nature of one's own Self common for human mind. Accordingly, this ignorance regarding one's own Self is common for the ignorant and the scholar. Hence the dealings of the ignorant and the pandit are in the ignorance only, just like the darkness and light which appear in a cinema, are in the darkness which is there in the theatre. In this way, Vedanta shows the ignorance regarding the Self which is there in our life. It is this natural tendency of the human mind ( 'अहमिदम्', 'ममेदम्' इति नैसर्गिकोऽयं लोकव्यवहारः ) to mix up the real Atman and the unreal un-Atman owing to a misconception ( मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्त, सत्यानुते मिथुनीकृत्य ) as well as the mistaken transference of the mutual properties on each other, for want of discrimination ( अन्योन्यस्मिन् अन्योन्यात्मकताम् अन्योन्य-धर्माश्चाध्यस्य इतरेतराविवेकेन ) that has been called Avidya in Vedanta according to Shankara's interpretation. To remove this ignorance regarding one's own Self, the knowledge of Self must be

gained through the help of the teachings of the knower of the Self and the Vedanta Shastra. This is the attribution of the dealings of the Avidya and Vidya. 'तमेतमेवंलक्षणम् अध्यासं पण्डिता अधिद्येति मन्यन्ते, तद्विवेकेन च वस्तुस्वरूपावधारणं विद्यामाहः ।'

( Adhyasa Bhashya )

## V TWO CATEGORIES OF AVIDYA :

It is said earlier that the ignorance is of three kinds. All these three kinds will be included in two groups :

i) Causal ignorance or **Karanaavidya** ( कारणाविद्या ) and

ii) Effective ignorance or **Karyaavidya** ( कार्याविद्या ).

The non-perception is called causal ignorance and misconception and doubting are called as effective ignorance, meaning due to non-perception or want of discrimination ( **Aviveka** ) one misconceives the things or will have the doubts. So these are called as Causal and Effective ignorances.

We have to discuss here a subtle point that in all these three kinds of ignorances, which is predominant one ?

From the stand-point of scientific analysation of human mind, it seems that the non-perception

pertains to the instrument alone and not to the user of the instruments. Hence, here also the ignorance pertains to the instrument i. e. the mind or antahkarana. By this Shankara confirms that the knower who is the Kshetrajna ( क्षेत्रज्ञ ) whose nature is pure consciousness, for him there is no dealing such as ignorance and knowledge etc. He is Absolute Consciousness. From the standpoint of empirical life the ignorance pertains to the mind alone and that should be as it is. So he says in his Adhyasa-Bhashya that ;

“एवमयम् अनादिः अनन्तः नैसर्गिकः अध्यासः मिथ्याप्रत्ययरूपः  
कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वप्रवर्तकः सर्वलोकप्रत्यक्षः ।”

This argument is based on the common empirical experience of life and shows the fact that the knower has no ignorance.

In the Tai-Upanishad Bhashya—2/8/5, Shankara shows that from the standpoint of witnessing principle of life ( साक्षी अनुभव ) here and now one can intuit that one's own true nature is beyond the dealings of ignorance and knowledge and is of the nature of Pure and Absolute consciousness. For this we can study the question and answer given below ;

Are knowledge and ignorance the qualities of the Self ? Not so, for they are perceived. Discrimination ( i. e. knowledge ) and non-discrimination ( i. e. ignorance ) are directly perceived, like col-

ours etc, as attributes of the mind. Not that colour, perceived as an object, can be an attribute of the perceiver. And ignorance is objectified by by one's own intuition when one thinks as, 'I am ignorant', 'My knowledge is not distinct'. Similarly the difference of knowledge ( from the Self ) is perceived and the enlightened people communicate the knowledge of the Self to others ; and so too, others grasp it. Accordingly, knowledge and ignorance are to be ranked with name and form ; ( —तस्मात् नामरूपपक्षस्यैव विद्याविद्ये ) they are not attributes of the Self, in accordance with other Vedic text, '( that which is called space ) brings about the manifestation of name and form'.

So, it is clarified by Shankara that these three aspects of avidya are the modifications of the Antahkarana ( inner instrument or mind ).

## VII THERE ARE NO DEALINGS SUCH AS VIDYA AND AVIDYA IN BRAHMAN ;

Commonly one says that 'I do not know this thing'—for this the meaning is that there is no knowledge for my intellect or mind regarding the particular thing. Here the question is—'How do you know that I don't know ?' For this automatically one replies that 'This is my experience.' Here the ignorance which pertains to the mind

regarding that particular thing, is illumined by the nature of Consciousness. When he gets the knowledge of that thing, he says 'I know it'. Here, the knowledge which has occurred in the mind is also illumined by the witnessing principle of life, as for example, the darkness in the film and also the light both are illumined by the arc lamp. Hence ignorance pertains to the mind alone and not to the Self. This is attributed to teach the true nature of the Self.

When one discriminates himself as the witness of the mind, and takes his stand there, from that standpoint he is ever Absolute Consciousness. This firm conviction regarding one's own true nature which has generated in the mind is called as *Self-Knowledge*. This knowledge, as it is the mental condition, is also a false one. From the standpoint of ignorance regarding the real nature of the Self, the Self is called as ignorant person ( because of the modification of the mind of the nature of non-discriminating knowledge of Self and non-self ) and from the stand-point of knowledge, the Self is called as Jnani ( because of the modification of the mind, which is *unreal* likewise, of the nature of discriminating knowledge of Self and non-self ) this is clearly

stated by Shankara in his Geeta-Bhashya—2/21.<sup>1</sup> Just as in the dream both the conceptions distinguished as 'this is the right knowledge' and 'this is the false knowledge' are included in the dream alone and from the standpoint of waking they both become false knowledge alone, similarly when viewed from the standpoint of non-dual nature of Atman or the intuitive vision of non-dual Self, both right knowledge and false knowledge are avidya only. So in the real nature of the Self, there are no empirical dealings such as ignorance and knowledge etc. It is transcendental consciousness. Only from the standpoint of common experience of life this attribution is made and when one takes a stand in the true nature of the witness of the mind, then automatically this previous attribution falsifies. This is called subsequent negation or *Apavada*.

Therefore the viewpoints imagined by the commentators such as avidya is a potency of the Self, and that it encompasses the Self etc. are quite contradictory statements to Shankara's Bhashya. The dealings like thinking regarding the cause and

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<sup>1</sup> "यथा बुद्ध्याद्याहृतस्य शब्दाद्यर्थस्य अचिक्रिय एव सन् बुद्धिवृत्त्य-  
विवेकविज्ञानेन अविद्यया उपलब्धः आत्मा कल्प्यते, एवमेवात्मानात्म-  
विवेकज्ञानेन बुद्धिवृत्त्या विद्यया असत्यरूपयैव परमार्थतोऽचिक्रिय एवात्मा  
विद्वानुच्यते ।" [ Geeta Bh.—2/21 ]

effect relationship and location of avidya, subject matter for avidya, etc. are in the field of avidya because Shankara says in his Adhyasa Bhashya in consonance with the experience thus :

'All forms of worldly and Vedic behaviour that are connected with the valid means of knowledge and objects of knowledge start by taking for granted this mutual superimposition of the Self and non-self, known as nescience ; and so do all the scriptures dealing with injunction, prohibition or emancipation.'<sup>1</sup>

Not understanding, doubt or misconception may be possible in the case of knowledge of objective phenomena, but never with regard to Atman who is the real Self of the knower himself. Hence there is no necessity of removing the ignorance which has encompassed Brahman. According to Shankara, the dealings of ignorance and knowledge which are evident for all in daily life are attributed regarding the Self for the purpose of teaching the Truth and and ultimately he stated that when the unity of Atman is intuited, there is no place for any ignorance and knowledge in Brahman or Atman as it is the pure Consci

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<sup>1</sup> तमेतम् अविद्याः ख्यम् आत्मानात्मानोः इतरेतराध्यासं पुरस्कृत्य सर्वे प्रमाणप्रमेयव्यवहाराः लौकिकाः वैदिकाश्च प्रवृत्ताः, सर्वाणि च शास्त्राणि विधिप्रतिषेधमोक्षपरानि ।" ( Adhyasa Bhashya )

ousness and non-dual one and from that standpoint the attributions are rescinded.

So the dealings of the ignorance and the knowledge about the Self, is itself in the realm of avidya or ignorance, they are not related to Atman.

### **VIII** *What is the correct view to take about these concepts of Vidya and Avidya ?*

The following excerpt from Shankara's Sutra Bhashya ( 4/1/3 ) will clarify this ;

Opponent ; To whom does this Avidya, non-apprehension ( Agraphana ) pertain ?

Vedantin ; To you, who are asking this question.

Opponent : Is it not stated by the Shruti that I am Ishvara that is Absolute nature of consciousness ?

Vedantin ; If you have realised this thing, then you are already an enlightened person and there is no Avidya or non-apprehension to anybody.

Opponent : But, if Advaitins accept the Avidya as a second entity besides Atman, then there will be no *Advaita* ( because with Atman avidya also exists as a standing menace ).

Vedantin ; This objection which is raised on

Advaita philosophy is also refuted by this answer ( i. e. by showing the superimposition and rescission of the dealings of Vidya & Avidya ).<sup>1</sup>

The significance of the above Bhashya portion is given below ;

i) We have previously said that, from the empirical standpoint, a man naturally takes identification with his corporeal plane i. e. from body to ego ( body, vital force, organs of action, sense organs, mind and intellect, feelings of enjoyments, such as happiness and misery ). Here he assumes that I am the body and sense organs etc. are mine. At this stage, ignorance is natural to the man regarding the true nature of the Self. So, from the empirical experience, **Avidya** is there and it is natural.

ii) If we ask a man, 'Do you know your true nature according to Shruti, that you are non-dual Brahman ?' He replies frankly that I don't know. This shows that he has got non-apprehension regarding his true nature. If we ask

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<sup>1</sup> "कस्य पुनरयमप्रबोध इति चेत्, यस्त्वं पृच्छसि तस्य ते—इति वदामः। ननु अहम् ईश्वर एवोक्तः श्रुत्या। यद्येवं प्रतिबुद्धोऽसि नःसि कस्यचिदप्रबोधः। योऽपि दोषश्चोद्यते कैश्चिदविद्यया किल आत्मनः सद्वितीयत्वान् अद्वैतानुपपत्तिरिति, सोऽप्येतेन प्रत्युक्तः ॥"

then, 'Who are you ?' He replies simply, 'I am so and so'. This shows the misconception is there regarding his true nature. If we start to argue with him, how have you ascertained that you are this body or the body is yours ? etc, then he says in this regard. I have got so many doubts. This shows that he has got doubtful knowledge also regarding his true nature.

In this way the non-perception, misconception and doubting are there naturally for everyone regarding his true nature. For this purpose, Sri Shankara has said in his **Adhyasa Bhashya** that the Avidya is evident for all so long as the unity of non-dual Atman is not intuited. So from the stand-point of Lokanubhava (dealings of empirical view), Avidya is there. Keeping all these ideas in mind Sri Shankara has replied here at first Avidya pertains to you who asks these questions. Hence from the stand-point of the superimposition, Avidya is accepted on the firm ground of Lokanubhava i. e. empirical view point.

iii) Taking this stand-point of empirical view Vedanta accepts the Avidya regarding one's own true nature.

iv) Avidya will be removed inevitably by Vidya. As it is in the case of outer things so also it is in the case of one's own Self. So, Self knowledge is required to remove this Avidya. Presup-

misconception and doubting—this is clearly stated by Shankara in his Geeta-Bhashya 13/2. Here there is one word **Avaranaatmakatvaat** ( आवरणात्मकत्वात् ) in which this *avarana* is not the same as Mulaavidyaavadins say. It is not a shakti. Shankara clearly explains this avarana as *tamasa pratyaya* ( तामसो हि प्रत्यय ) pertaining to the intellect or antahkarana alone, not to Brahman or the Self. For this he has given the illustration of the cataract which hinders the eyesight.

(iv) In Briha-Bhashya—4/3/20, Shankara states his position regarding the nature of avidya ;

“अतः इदम् अविद्यायाः सतत्त्वमुक्तं भवति सर्वात्मानं सन्तम-  
सर्वात्मत्वेन प्राहयति आत्मनोऽन्यद्वस्त्वन्तरमविद्यमानं प्रत्युपस्थापयति,  
आत्मानमसर्वमापादयति, ततस्तद्विषयः कामो भवति ; यतो भिद्यते  
कामतः, क्रियामुपादत्ते, ततः फलम् । इदमविद्यायाः सतत्त्वं सह कार्येण  
प्रदर्शितम् ।” ( Briha-Bh.—4/3/20 )

In Sanskrit the word **Satatvam** ( सतत्त्वम् ) means ‘the true nature ?’ Here in this portion Shankara has not said such as avidya is a *shakti* and it has got two types of powers etc. He says clearly that avidya projects the not-self as if it is there in the Self even though it is not really there and then the dualistic world appears and due to dualism the desire starts etc. By this also it is clear that according to Shankara the world or its seed-form is conjured up by avidya.

After **Panchapadika Prasthanam** ( Pancha-

padika commentary), the Shankara's utterances have been twisted to suit their theory of **Mulavidya**. And it is propagated as the genuine teachings of Shankara.

Shankara never says that the avidya is a potency of Brahman and it is *anirvachaniya* ( अनिर्वचनीय ), because to imagine or differentiate the relationship between *Shakta* ( शक्त i. e. शक्तिमान् ) and *Shakti* ( शक्ति ) the avidya is required inevitably. So avidya is not a potency of Brahman. The difference between the potency and one who is in possession of it, is made through avidya. This is Shankara's teaching.

### **X Ajnana is not Bhaavarooopa, Sanatani and Anirvachaniya :**

Commentators hold the view that ajnana ( अज्ञान ) is **Bhaavarooopa** ( भावरूपम् ). According to Shankara, any positive thing, that is Bhaavarooopa, will not be removed by Jnana ( ज्ञान ). Jnana, the knowledge is able to remove only the misunderstanding. Jnana has no capacity to destroy any positive thing and create anything new. It removes only the misunderstanding regarding the fact. This is emphatically declared by Shankara ;

“न हि क्वचित् साक्षाद्वस्तुधर्मस्यापोढी दृष्टा, कर्त्रावा ब्रह्मविद्या ;  
अविद्यायास्तु सर्वत्रैव निवर्तिका दृश्यते न तु पारमार्थिकं धस्तु क्तु”

निवर्तयितुं वा अर्हति ब्रह्मविद्या ।”

[ Briha. Bh.—1/4/10 ]

And Shankara often says *Jnanam Tu Jnapakam Na Karakamiti* ( ‘ज्ञानं तु ज्ञापकं न कारकमिति’—Briha Bh.—1/4/10 ), which means that Shastra ( or Knowledge ) won’t create anything but only reminds the real fact. When one understands the real nature of the rope, the knowledge regarding the rope has not destroyed the snake and has not created the rope newly. So, holding the view that avidya is Bhaavarooपा and Sanatani is quite contradictory to the common experience.

For this purpose the commentator says that ‘we have accepted avidya as Bhaavarooपा not for the purpose of saying that avidya is a thing, but only to say that it is not *Abhaava* such as the horns of hare. So it is Sadasadanirvachaniya ( apparent things which are neither being nor not-being ). This contention is incongruous, because if it is not ‘Abhaava’ then it falls into the category of ‘Bhaavarooपा’ only.

The illustration which is given by the commentators of *Darkness* ( viz, it is not absence of light, it is positive something ) is quite incongruous. For this refer *Panchapadika Prasthanam* by Sri Satchidanandendra Saraswati ( page—6 ). The absence of light is called here as ‘darkness’. Since the darkness is not an existing thing or a

positive thing. That which is darkness for human beings will no longer be for a few animals. In that darkness also some animals are capable of seeing things as for example—cat, wolf, tiger etc. This shows that the eyesight of these animals are able to see things even in that least quantity of light whereas we require sufficient light. From this we can easily understand that darkness is simply an absence of light and not something positive. So also the ignorance itself is not at all an entity ( Bhaavaropa ). Therefore Shankara says in his Geeta Bhashya—13/2 thus, '*Viveka Prakashha Bhava Tadabhaavaat*' ( 'विवेकप्रकाशभावे तद्भावात्' )—meaning if the light of discrimination dawns, there will be no ignorance. From this we can easily judge that ignorance means want of discriminating knowledge. This is called here as ajnana. The want of discrimination is called as **Karanaavidya** ( i. e. causal ignorance ) and the misunderstanding and doubting which are the consequences of avidya as **Karyaavidya**. ( This has already been discussed in the previous article-V. )

## XI JNANAVRITTI AND JNEYA AVAGATI

The nature of the Self is itself the pure Consciousness. It never becomes an object for anything. He is self-established. Hence there is no

need for any Pramana or means of knowledge to know Him ; only it is necessary to cease or dispel one's identification with not-selves with the help of the teachings of the Shastra and the Acharya or Guru and not any necessity whatsoever of creating the direct knowledge of Him ( see Geeta Bh.—18/50 ). From this standpoint it is correct to say that the Self is not *Chaitannya-prakaashyam* ( चैतन्यप्रकाश्यम् ).

But Shankara says in Geeta Bhasya-2/21, that the mind is the instrument to realise the Self which is purified by the Sadhanas of Shama ( शम ) Dama ( दम ) etc. and endowed with the teachings of the Shastra and the Acharya. Here the objection raised is that there is no possibility of the self-knowledge because the Self is not an objectifiable one by any means i. e. instruments such as sense organs and the mind etc. For this objection, Shankara has given the above answer. i. e. 'शास्त्राचार्योपदेश-जनितशमदमादिसंस्कृतं मन आत्मदर्शने करणम्।' This thing is explained by vedantins as 'Self is the Vishaya ( विषय ) of Shuddha-Chittavritti.'

But we have to remember here that by purified mind also it is impossible to objectify the nature of the Self. For Brahman is, according to the Upanishads, beyond the objective range of both words and mind. One should not forget or ignore the Shruti ; 'That which cannot be express-

ed by the word' ; 'That which cannot be thought of by the mind' ( Kena-1/5,6 ), and also one should not disregard the dictum of the Sutra Bhashya. 'Shruti etc. and immediate intuition and the like too are the immediate means according to the context' ( 'अनुभवादयश्च प्रमाणम्' )—Su. Bh.—1/1/2. So it can know him only by intuition when it is merged in him.

When mind turns towards the Self the mind loses its mindness ( *manastva* ) and appears as the Self i. e. the mind will have become one with Atman when one has realized the true nature of his Self This type of appearance is called as *Jnanavritti* ( शास्त्राचार्योपदेशजनितमालम्प्रत्ययिकं ज्ञानम् )—Geeta Bh.—13/34. This is misinterpreted by some people as the Atman has been objectified by this Vritti. There is one anectode connected with the infancy of Sri Rama. He wanted to play with the full-moon. The minister played a trick. He gave a mirror in the hand of Rama and the child was satisfied with the image, because he thought that he has the moon in his hand. Here also the same is the case with the Self-knowledge. Thus it is not contradictory to say that the Self is un-objectifiable one and it can be realised through the *Shuddha Chitta*.

When one understands the nacre ( शुक्ति ) as silver he determines that 'this is Silver'. This

is Vrittijnana of Silver. After cognising the true nature of the nacre he realises that the previous knowledge which he had got as silver, is a wrong notion. This type of cognition of the real nature of nacre is also a vritti. Thus from the standpoint of vritti both are concerned to the antahkarana alone. These are called as ajnana ( misunderstanding ) and Jnana ( knowledge ) respectively. But here there is one subtlest point — we have to cognise that after knowing the real nature of the nacre one says, previously I had misunderstood this nacre as silver; here the notion regarding the silver is wrong and unreal. But the judgement that this type of notion had taken place previously in my mind is born now. This judgement emerges out when one takes his stand in his true nature of the Self and unknowingly he has objectified the modifications of his own mind as misunderstanding and understanding etc. This type of determination regarding the misunderstanding or true understanding of the mind is called here as *Avagati* ( or *Anubhava* ). By this, the conclusion that can be arrived is that the notion of nacre is false, but the type of notion which had arisen in my mind previously was real. This judgement is real because this has arisen on the firm ground of *Saakshi anubhava*. Shankara said,

“यद्यपि स्वप्नदर्शनावस्थस्य सर्पदर्शनोदकस्नानादिकार्यमनृतम्, तथापि तदवगतिः सत्यमेव फलम् । प्रतिबुद्धस्याप्यबाध्यमानत्वात् । न हि स्वप्नादुत्थितः स्वप्नदृष्टं सर्पदर्शनोदकस्नानादिकार्यं मिथ्येति मन्यमानः, तदवगतिमपि मिथ्येति मन्यते कश्चित् ।”

( Sutra-Bhashya—2/1/14 )

When one dreams he feels so many things in his dream such as bathing, being bitten by a serpent etc. After waking he says that all of them are false and unreal. But he does not say that the intuitional experience of the dream which had occurred in him is false. This means that one says that the dream is false, but the intuitional experience of the dream such as a dream had taken place is not false. Because it concerns to the *Saakshyanubhava* ( साक्ष्यनुभव ). This type of Saakshyanubhava or intuition is called as avagati.

This is a very subtle point and one will be able to understand this with discriminative mind—discrimination between the *vritti* which has arisen in the mind and the true nature of the Self which illumines all the *vrittis*. When it illumines, at that time the intuitional experience in antahkarana such as, 'I dreamt', 'I misunderstood' etc.—this type of knowledge is directly reflected in our mind without the intervening means of any instruments of knowledge. Thus that which has been illumined is false and the nature of the Self

as pure Consciousness which illumines the vrittis is true.

## XII PRAMANABHUTA JNANA AND PHALABHUTA JNANA ;

According to commentaries like Panchapadika, Vivarana etc. ; the commentators have distinguished Jnana as :

*Vritti-vyaapti* ( वृत्तिव्याप्ति ) and *Phala-vyaapti* ( फलव्याप्ति ). The first is called Pramana Bhuta Jnana and the other one is Phala Bhuta Jnana. According to this theory, the Moolavidya encompasses Brahman. And the same avidya or a part of Moolavidya encompasses the outer things also. Hence we have no knowledge of those things. To get the knowledge of outer things two functions are necessary—

1) The *Vritti* should pervade thing. By this the curtain of avidya will be removed.

2) After that *Chidabhasa* comes there and gets the right knowledge of the thing.

Here the former function is called Pramana Bhuta Jnana while the latter, the Phala Bhuta Jnana. These are divided as *Vritti-vyaapti* and *Phala-vyaapti* respectively. ( 'घटविषयकाज्ञानं च निषल्यं घटप्राकट्यं च कार्यमत्युभयत्रापि प्रमाणव्यापारः, इति मतम्'—माण्डूक्यरहस्यविवृतिः—page 86 ). So these two types of

functions are necessary to understand the outer things according to commentators.

But according to Shankara, there are no two separate functions in this process. Firstly, there is no *Avarana* ( आवरण ) of avidya on the outer things. Avidya means 'Non-perception, Misconception and Doubting' alone ( Ref. Geeta Bhashya—13/2 ). This is a Tamasic avarana which pertains to antah-karana. When one tries to get the knowledge of a particular thing with the help of teachings, observations etc, then the vritti pervades the thing with Chidabhasa. Without being pervaded by the nature of consciousness of the Self, it is impossible to imagine the very existence of the vritti. Whenever there is any knowledge of any object, the knowledge of the object pervaded by the pure consciousness of Atman alone is obtained. So when the Vritti with consciousness ( i. e. with Chidabhasa ) pervades the thing, then automatically the Phala Bhuta Jnana or Phalabhuta Anubhava generates in the mind. Hence, once the pramana removes the non-perception and misconception of a thing the Phala Bhuta Jnana will result and that alone is the function of a pramana. For example, the pot which is in a dark room is not seen by the naked eyes. When light comes, it removes darkness alone and the knowledge regarding the pot takes place automatically which is

the knowledge of the Self takes place then the vrittis pervade the nature of the Self. By this the curtain of Moolavidya which resides on Brahman, is removed. But there is no necessity of Phala-vyaa-  
pti, because Brahman is Self-effulgent. For example, to see the pot which is in the dark-room—the light and eyesight both are required. But when we want to see the light then the eyesight is enough—no necessity of another light. The same is the case with Brahmajnana. In this point some commentators differ and say—where ever there is Vritti-vyaa-  
pti, there must be Phala-vyaa-  
pti. In the case of Brahma-Jnana or Self-knowledge, even though the Self is Self-effulgent one, the Chida-  
bhasa also shines there. But in the presence of brilliant light of the Self, this Chidabhasa is insignificant, just like a candle-flame in a daylight. These are the opinions of commentators.

But in Shankara Bhashya, these types of arguments are not found. The real nature of the Self pervades the Vrittis ( pratyaya ), not the vrittis pervade the Self as contended by the commentators. But one thing to be noted here is that when the **antahkarana-vritti** completely turns towards the true nature of the Self through the discrimination, then it loses its vrittitva ( वृत्तित्व ). At that time aspirant himself remains as the witnessing principle of life ( साक्षिचैतन्य ) which is the

true nature of the Self and the antahkarana that which follows this nature starts to appear just like the true nature of the Self. For this purpose Sri Goudapada said in Mandukya Karika—3/33 that this Jnana-vritti or pratyaya is not as separate entirely apart from Brahman ( ज्ञानम् ह्येयाभिन्नम् ). Here the antahkarana is completely pervaded by the Self, so it appears just like Self. This is called *Atmapratyaya* in Mandukya Mantra—7. This is Shankara's contention. According to this Great Master, when the Pramana removes the misconception regarding a thing, then *Phalabhuta Anubhava* or *Phalabhutajnana* emerges out automatically—which agrees with the *Universal Intuitional Experience*.

### XIII REGARDING EKA-JIVA VADA AND NANA-JIVA VADA ;

#### *Controversy about the number of Jivas :*

The discussion about the relative merits of *Ekajiva-Vada* ( एकजीववाद—the theory of a single Jiva ) and *Nanajiva-Vada* ( नानाजीववाद—the theory of many Jivas ) is futile, since from the empirical standpoint ( vyavaharic dristi ), we do believe and behave as if there are actually a number of Jivas. For this refer to Brahma-Sutra Bhashya—3/2/9—

the last paragraph :

“सदेव तूपाधिसंपर्कात्, जीव इत्युपचर्यते इत्यसकृत् प्रपञ्चितम् ।  
एवं सति यावदेकोपाधिगता बन्धानुवृत्तिः, तावदेकजीवव्यवहारः ।  
उपाध्यन्तरगतायां तु बन्धानुवृत्तौ जीवान्तरव्यवहारः ।”

‘We have explained at length again and again, that it is Pure Being ( Brahman ) alone that is spoken of as a Jiva owing to connection with a conditioning associate. This being so, we talk of one particular Jiva, so long as bondage continues as attaching itself to one *Upadhi* ( conditioning associate ). But in the case of bondage continuing to attach itself to another *Upadhi*, the talk of another Jiva becomes necessary’.

Here Shankara accepts both the views that if we hold the *Samashti* ( सम्मष्टि ) or collective antahkarana as the upadhi for Atman, then it is *Eka-Jiva-Vada* ; instead of this, if we hold the individual antahkaranas - as they are many—then *Nanajiva-Vyavahara* will take place. Sri Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji has translated the Brahma Sutra Bhashya in Kannada and he has given the foot-note that in Nyayanirnaya-Commentary of the Bhashya, it is said that Shankara has refuted the Nana-jiva vada, but it is baseless, and it is not supported by the Bhashyakara. The Bhashyakara has accepted both the views from two different standpoints. When the Samashti upadhi, meaning Samashti antahkarana upadhi is

taken, the Self is called as Mahan Atman or Hiranyagarbha or Prathamaja ( see Katha—1/3/13 and Brahma Sutra Bhashya—1/4/1, last para ).

Here in Sutra-Bhashya, the two words are used as *Bhokta* ( भोक्ता ) and *Hiranyagarbhva* ( Agrayaam i. e Agraja meaning the first born one ). The word 'Bhokta' denotes an individual soul. Here it is taken from the standpoint of various antahkaranas as upadhis. This is Nanajiva vada. And in the word Agrayaam or 'Hiranyagarbha', the standpoint is taken from the Samashti antahkarana which is one. This is Ekajiva vada. The same single antahkarana appears as many due to the upadhis of the body. So, the Ekajiva vada or Nanajiva-vada are from the standpoint of upadhis which in itself is false appearance conjured up by Avidya. Hence Shankara accepts both the views from the different standpoints. It is clearly mentioned in the above mentioned Brahma-Sutra Bhashya—3/2/9, that is the implication of the plurality of Jives in this Sutra is justified by Shankara as due to conditioning associates. This is so because the Jivahood itself is a false appearance conjured up by Avidya. This is clearly stated by Shankara in his Sutra Bhashya—1/3/19 ;

“नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वभावे कूटस्थनित्ये एकस्मिन् असङ्गे परमात्मनि तद्विपरीतं जैवं रूपं व्योम्नीष तल्ललादि परिकल्पितम् ।”

—'In the supreme Atman, ever pure, ever conscious and ever free in nature, absolutely changeless, one and untainted by anything else. has been conjured up, the Jiva-form quite opposed to this in nature, just as a surface and dirt are fancied to pertain to the sky'.

The statement—'various types of Jivas exist in this world' is made from the empirical or the waking point of view alone. If it is observed from the comprehensive view point of the three states, one & only one Atman alone exists. Nothing whatsoever exists second to or apart from Him i. e. Atman or the Self is the only Reality and it has no gradations—'एकं च पुनः सत्यम्'—Sutra Bh.—2/1/16. So, it is foolish to quarrel on the issue of which is correct and which is wrong in the above said Ekajiva-vada & Nanajiva-vada.

We can understand this from the illustration of the dream. The dream state occurs (takes place) in one's own Being which is the substratum of the whole dream state and absolute non-dual one. During the dream state naturally one feels that 'I am an individual soul residing in this world and there are so many other souls and creatures like me in this world' etc. From the standpoint of this notion during the dream-time, the Nanajiva-vada is accepted. When we see from the standpoint of the substratum i. e., the

real nature of the Self, as there is no other source for the dream state apart from this Self, so only the Self appeared as if it has taken the form of many souls. And the same Self has appeared in the form of Samashti antahkarana ( collective mind ) and from that standpoint the Self is described as Hiranyagarbha through this collective Upadhi. The same principle is applied to the waking state in Mandukya while describing the word *Vaishvanara* ( वैश्वानर ).

“विश्वश्चासौ नरश्चेति विश्वानरः, विश्वानर एव वैश्वानरः ; सर्वपिण्डात्मानन्यत्वात् ।”

( Man. Bhashya—3 )

Here it is taken the Ekajiva-vada from Samashti Upadhi. It helps to realise the truth ( i. e. the realisation of the non-dual Atman ) which is said in Geeta—6/29 and Ishavasya Upanisad—6 & 7, as ‘One sees all the creatures in himself and sees himself in all the creatures, for he sees the same Reality ( Atman ) everywhere.’

In Briha-upanisad Bhashya also, Shankara has said these two view points :

“उपाधिबशात् संसारित्वम्, न परमार्थतः ; स्वतोऽसंसार्येव । एवमेकत्वं नानात्वञ्च हिरण्यगर्भस्य । तथा सर्वजीवानाम्, ‘तत्त्वमसि’ इति श्रुतेः ।”

That the transmigratory character of Hiran-yagarbha is not real, but due to limiting adjunctes, is known from Shruti texts ( Ka.—1/2/21 ).

Essentially he is but the Supreme Self. So Hiran-yagarbha is one as well as many. The same is the case with all beings, as the Shruti says, 'That thou art' ( Ch.—6/8/7 ). When divested of all limiting adjuncts, everyone is spoken of by the Shrutis & Smritis as the Supreme Self.

So both the view points are accepted by Shankara from the point of Adhyaropa for the purpose of teaching. Yet post-Shankara advaitins, who have interpreted Advaita wrongly, have entertained different views as to whether Eka-jivavada or Nana-jivavada is the more correct one ! The commentary of Nyayanirnaya ( mentioned previously ) consists in Vivarana Prasthanam. This Prasthanam holds the view of Eka-jivavada and wants to condemn Nana-jivavada often and often.

#### XIV REGARDING DRISHTISRISHTI-VADA AND SRISHTIDRISHTI-VADA :

In Prasthanatraya Bhashyas of Shankara there is no mention of these two types of visions ( i. e., दृष्टिसृष्टिवाद & सृष्टिदृष्टिवाद ). In Yoga Vasishtha, it is said that where there is Drishti there is Srishti. But though this Yoga Vasishtha Ramayana or Jnana Vasishtha deals with Advaita, it is not a standard book such as the Prasthanatraya

Bhashyas of Shankara. Sri Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji has said that Yogavasishtha Ramayana, Bhagavata, Sutasamhita ( Yajnavai-bhava Khanda ), *Adhyatma Ramayana*—all these four books are posterior to Shankara Bhashya. If they had been available at the time of Bhashya-kara, inevitably he would have mentioned them in his Bhashyas. The above phrases have started from Yogavasishtha only.

The Drishti-srishti-vada means when one sees outside then only one will find the world or Srishti. So the mind is the creator. This is the argument. This argument resembles the Vijnana-vada of Buddhism. The Srishti-drishtivada means there is Srishti or the world outside really and we only perceive it through the mind. This argument resembles the Baahyastiva-vada or Realistic view of Buddhism. Between these two the former argument is more logical than the latter. For this purpose Sri Gowdapada has accepted the former theory as better than the latter. And Shankara also has agreed with this point in Mandukya-karika Bhashya—4/28 in the first sentence as the policy of Vedanta is to accept every reasoning unopposed to Vedas.

“प्रज्ञप्ते सनिमित्तम्” इत्यादि एतदन्तं विज्ञानवादिनो बौद्धस्य वचनं बाह्यार्थवादिपक्ष प्रतिषेधपरम् आचार्येण अनुमोदितम्। यस्मात् असत्येष घटादौ घटाद्याभासता चित्तस्य विज्ञानवादिना अभ्युपगता,

तदनुमोदितम् अस्माभिरपि भूतदर्शनात् । तस्मात् तस्यापि चित्तस्य  
जायमानावभासता असत्येष जन्मनि युक्ता भवितुमिति ।”

And Shankara has given the reason to accept tentatively the view point of Vijnanavadins by Gowdapada. For this see Karika Bhashya—4/99, last paragraph—

“यद्यपि बाह्यार्थनिराकरणं ज्ञानमाप्रकल्पना चाद्वयवस्तुसामीप्यम्  
उक्तम् । इदन्तु परमार्थतत्त्वम् अद्वैतं वेदान्तेष्वेव विश्वेयमित्यर्थः ।”

Strictly speaking in the above two stand-  
points—Drishti-srishti-vada and Srishti-drishti-  
vada, it is wrong to assert that anyone is superior  
to the other. This judgement is given in Mandu-  
kya-karika Bhashya—4/67. The gist of this judge-  
ment is ‘If we accept the outer things inevitably  
we have to accept the consciousness which objec-  
tifies the external world. In the same manner,  
if we accept the consciousness i. e., Vijnana or  
Buddhivritti, then inevitably we have to accept  
the outer things. There is no independent exis-  
tence of either this or that’. In our experience  
also both the microcosm ( the individual I-sense )  
and the macrocosm ( the cosmic I-sense ) appear  
simultaneously and disappear simultaneously.  
When the ‘I’-sense is described from the stand-  
point of the Microcosm, then it is called as a *Jeeva*  
and when this ‘I’-sense is described from the stand-  
point of Macrocosm, then it is called as *Hiranya-  
garbhaha or Mahan Atma*. This is evident in

our waking and dream states. So there is no use in having any quarrel between these two views.

In Prasthanatraya Bhashyas, it is said that the Srishti or the creation of the universe is not an instance which takes place in a time series, because the time is also an effect. But for the purpose of teaching the non-dual nature of Brahman the Shruti attributes the theory of creation from Brahman. It has no intention of asserting that the creation is real. Shankara says :

i) “तत्र एतत् सिद्धं भवति—ब्रह्मप्रकरणे सर्वधर्मविशेषरहित-  
ब्रह्मदर्शनात् एष फलसिद्धौ सत्यां यत् तत्र अफलं श्रूयते ब्रह्मणः जगदा-  
कारपरिणामित्वादि तत् ब्रह्मदर्शानोपायत्वेनैव विनियुज्यते,....न हि परि-  
णामवस्त्वचिह्नानात् परिणामवस्त्वम् आत्मनः फलं स्यात् इति वक्तुं युक्तं,  
कूटस्थनित्यत्वात् मोक्षस्य ।” [ Sutra Bhashya—2/1/14 ]

The conclusion is ; ‘Since in a context speak-  
ing of Brahman, it stands proved that the result  
( i. e., liberation ) accrues only from the  
realization of Brahman, devoid of all distinctions  
created by attributes, therefore when in that  
context some other fact is heard of that has no  
result, as for instance, the modification of Brahman  
into the world, that fact has to be interpreted as  
a means leading to that realization. It is not  
reasonable to say that from a knowledge of Brah-  
man as capable of transformation, one will get  
that capacity of transforming one’s own Self ;  
for liberation is changelessly eternal.’

ii) “न हि अयं सृष्ट्यादि प्रपञ्चः प्रतिपिपादयिषितः, न हि तत् प्रतिबद्धः कश्चित् पुरुषार्थं दृश्यते, श्रूयते वा । न च कल्पयितुं शक्यते, उपक्रमोपसंहाराभ्यां तत्र तत्र ब्रह्मविषयैः वाक्यैः साकम् एक-वाक्यतायाः गम्यमानत्वात् । दर्शयति च सृष्ट्यादिप्रपञ्चस्य ब्रह्म प्रतिपत्त्यर्थताम्.... ।”

( S. Bh.—1/4/14 )

‘Not that all these forms of manifestation, that creation is, are sought to be propounded by the Upanisads ; for no human goal is seen or heard of in the Upanisads as remaining linked up with them ; nor can this be imagined to be so, for in those respective places, they are seen to combine with the texts about Brahman to convey a single unified fact—this is what the Upanisad also shows.’

iii) मृदादिदृष्टान्तैश्च कार्यस्य कारणेन अभेदं बधितुं सृष्ट्यादि-प्रपञ्चः श्राव्यते इति गम्यते । तथा च सम्प्रदायविदः वदन्ति—

“मृल्लोहविस्फुलिङ्गाद्यैः सृष्टिर्या चोदिताऽन्यथा ।  
उपायः सोऽवताराय नास्ति भेदः कथञ्चन ।”

( गौः काः—1/15 )

( S. Bh.—1/4/14 )

‘We can understand that when the Upanisad speaks of the forms of manifestation etc., in exten-  
so, the intention is to declare the non-difference of the effects from the cause with the help of such illustrations as clay. And this is what people well-versed in the Vedantic tradition say : ‘The crea-  
tion that is taught divergently with the help of clay, iron, sparks, etc, is only a means for inculca-

ting the knowledge of Brahman ; but there is no diversity whatsoever.'

Hence the judgement is that Brahman itself appears in the form of Srishti due to Avidya. To teach Brahman, the *Srishti-prakriya* or the theory of creation is accepted as a tool in Shrutis. So one should not hold the view that there is really a Srishti. From the standpoint of Avidya it is Srishti but from the standpoint of Vidya, it is Mithya or an illusion or it can be said that it is real in the form of Brahman alone. We may call this as Avidya-drishti and Vidya-drishti respectively. Through Avidya-drishti there is Srishti, but from the standpoint of Vidya-drishti, there is no creation or Srishti, it is Brahman alone. Whether it is said that the Srishti is illusory or that it is real in the form of Brahman alone—both mean the same. Due to non-comprehension of this truth now-a-days the Vedantins have coined new words, thus confounding and confusing themselves and others.

## CHAPTER-II

### MAYA-MAYAVITVA ADHYAROPA AND BRAHMA-BODHA

( *Teaching of Brahman through the attributions  
of Maya & Mayavitva* )

In Shankara's Vedanta the concepts like Avidya and Maya are confused in our present days. Now we have seen in the first chapter, the word 'Avidya' is used in what sense by Shankara in his Bhashyas and how he has shown the methodology of superimposition and rescission and ultimately the nature of Brahman is taught through this attribution. Now we shall first try to understand what Shankara has said about *Maya* in his commentaries.

#### I FOUR ASPECTS OF MAYA :

##### ( a ) **Maya is Avidya-kalpita**

In Shankara's Vedanta, according to Bhashya, the word *Maya* means *false appearance*—which

appears as if it is really there due to ignorance of the truth. For example, when one does not know the real nature of the rope, due to this ignorance he misconceives this rope as a snake, water-flow or garland etc. Due to this misconception, he feels that there is really a snake. For him the snake appears as if it is there really. This false appearance of snake is called as **MAYA**. Hence, according to Shankara's Bhashyas, avidya is subjective defect (defect of the mind) and Maya is an objective false appearance due to ignorance. Meaning thereby, ignorance gives the existence for the false appearance. For this purpose, wherever Shankara has described Maya, he uses these following terms to Maya —

*Avidyakalpita* (अविद्याकल्पिता) — conjured up or  
imagined by avidya.

*Avidyapratyupasthaapita* (अविद्याप्रत्युपस्थापिता) —  
brought forth or  
projected by avidya.

*Avidyaakrita* (अविद्याकृता) — cooked up by  
avidya.

*Avidyaakaarya* (अविद्याकार्या) — made up of  
avidya.

*Avidyaatmaka* (अविद्यात्मका) — of the nature of  
avidya (i. e. avidya  
is the essence or  
self of Maya).

**Avidyaalakshana** ( अविद्यालक्षणा )—indicated by  
avidya ( or app-  
earance of  
Maya indicates  
the existence  
of avidya ).

All of which mean the objective appearance due to avidya. Maya, then, according to Shankara, is the objective false appearance due to ignorance or Adhyasa. All these descriptions are given in Brahma-Sutra Bhashya—2/1/14 ; the only word Avidyalakshna is used in the Geeta Bhashya. Hence the first significance of Maya is 'Avidykalpita' or its equivalent words as mentioned above by Shankara.

**( b ) Maya is Vyakta-avyaktaatmaka :**

The second aspect of Maya is Vyakta-avyaktaatmaka ( व्यक्त-अव्यक्तात्मका ) or Vyakrita-avyakrita-atma ( व्याकृताव्याकृतात्मकेन — S. Bh.—2/1/27 ). For example, when one sees a snake on the road, at first he fears regarding the snake. Due to darkness sometimes he may not see the snake but fear is not removed. He thinks that the snake which he had seen before is still there in some place, but for the time being it has disappeared. And he sees the same snake as it was before. Here the

snake has got two forms—(i) as manifested ( i. e. differentiated ) and another. (ii) as unmanifested ( i. e. undifferentiated ). The manifested form is called *Vyakta* ( व्यक्त ), *Vyaakrita* ( व्याकृत ), *Kshara* ( क्षर ), *Sat* ( सत् ), *Vidita* ( विदित ), *Moorta* ( मूर्त ) and the unmanifested form is called *Avyakta* ( अव्यक्त -Gi-8/18 ), *Avyaakrita* ( अव्याकृत—S. Bh.—2/1/27 ), *Akshara* ( अक्षर—Gi.—15/16 ), *Asat* ( असत्—Gi.—13/12 ), *Avidita* ( अविदित—Kena—1/4 ), *Amoorta* ( अमूर्त—Bri.—2/3/1 ).

Due to ignorance in the mind regarding the non-dual Brahman, Brahman Himself appears in the form of universe i. e., Brahman is mistaken for the world through ignorance. This false appearance of Brahman due to ignorance is called as Maya. This universe appears in the waking state & disappears in deep sleep ( Swoon, Samadhi etc. ) and the same world and the same ego appear again as they were before. This method of manifested and unmanifested forms of the universe is to be applied to the state of death and rebirth and Mahapralaya, that is dissolution of universe according to Shastras and recreation. All these are based on the firm ground of common experience of life that the man who goes to the sleep, the same individual comes again with his attributes so that Vedanta has accepted the seed form of the universe which is in potential form in deep

sleep, death and dissolution of the universe etc. This seed-form is inferred ( admitted ) in Vedanta to teach the true nature of the Self. Hence the manifested-form of the universe and the unmanifested-form are there in Brahman due to ignorance. From this standpoint the false appearance of the universe & its seed-form are called as *effect* and Brahman, which is substratum of this false appearance is called as *cause*. So, in Vedanta, cause means the *substratum* and the effect means *false appearance* which is superimposed on Brahman, due to ignorance.

( See Sri Shankara's Bhashya—2/1/14 & 2/1/9 )

For the purpose of teaching when Vedanta accepts the seed-form and the manifested-form of the universe, it describes the cause and effect respectively. But from the standpoint of Brahman, both are effects. So the second description of the Maya is *Vyakta-avyaktaamaka*.

### ( c ) **Maya is Anirvachaniya :**

The third significance is *Anirvachaniya* ( अनिर्वचनीय ), meaning indefinable. This word has created so many confusions in present days. It is very necessary to understand the exact mean- of this word, according to Shankara. Commonly this word denotes the incapability of the explana-

tion either as being ( सत् ) or as not-being ( असत् ). But it is not used in this sense in Bhashyas. According to Shankara the definition is ; *Tatva-Anyatvaabhyam Anirvachaniya* ( तत्त्वान्यत्वाभ्याम् अनिर्वचनीय—S. Bh.—2/1/14, 2/1/27 etc. ). This is the correct definition or description of the false appearance. Here *Tatva* ( तत्त्व ) means the reality or the substratum & *Anyatva* ( अन्यत्त्व ) means having independent existence of its own. In our daily experience whenever the false appearance appears just like rope-snake, nacre-silver etc., these false appearances are not really the substratum or the reality and at the same time they have no independent existence of their own apart from the substratum. Hence these false appearances are called as **Anirvachaniya**. This expression 'anirvachaniya' has been explained by Shankara by citing the illustration of the foam, the waves, the bubbles which are not quite the same as water, but yet not different from water. ( 'न सलिलं न च सलिलः अत्यन्तं भिन्नं फेनम्, सलिलं व्यतिरेकेन अदर्शनात्, सलिलं तु स्वच्छम् अन्यत् फेनात् मलरूपात्' )—Upadeshasahasri—शिव्यानुशासनप्रकरणम् and also in Brihadaranyaka Bhashya ;

'नामरूपयोरेव हि परमात्मोपाधिभूतयोः व्याक्रियमाणयोः सलिलं फेनवत् तत्त्वान्यत्वेनानिर्वक्तव्ययोः सर्वावस्थयोः संसारत्वमिति ॥'

( Briha-Bh.—2/4/10 )

According to this the universe which appears in Brahman is false and the seed-form of this appearance which is inferred from the standpoint of the manifested world is also a false one. This false appearance of Maya or Prakriti etc., is not there really in Brahman and it has no independent existence apart from Brahman. So it is not **Tatva** and not **Anyatva** and hence it is **Anirvachaniya** ( see S. Bh.—2/1/14 ). That is, Maya cannot be defined to be identical with Ishwara or Brahman or quite distinct from Brahman. This is the third description of the word Maya.

( d ) **Maya is Ishvara Shakti :**

The fourth description of Maya is **Ishvara-Shakti**, the potency of the Lord ( Gi. Bh.—13/5, 13/19 ). Some thinkers misled by the word **Shakti** occurring in the Bhashyas as well as in Shruti think that Maya is a power of God or Lord to delude souls. They say God has created Maya which envelopes all Jivas. By means of surrendering to God He Himself will remove the Maya, because He is all-merciful etc. Strictly speaking there is no Lordhood in non-dual Brahman because it requires the distinction between the ordainer and the ordained, ruler and the ruled. But when Vedanta accepts the Univer-

se and its seed-form which is conjured up by avidya, then Brahman is considered as the substratum of this false appearance and there is no other source apart from Brahman to this universe. From this standpoint Vedanta attributes the **Ishvarahood** or **Lordship** on Brahman. The nature of Brahman as it is ever unchangeable, immutable but the same Brahman appears in the form of universe without forfeiting his true nature, so it is described as 'Mayavi' ( S. Bh.—2/1/37 ). These are the attributions of 'Maya' and 'Mayavitva'. Shankara uses the word **Shakti** as synonymous with Prakriti—the causal potentiality of the world on the authority of the Shruti 'मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यात् मायिनन्तु महेश्वरम्'—( Sve—4/10 ). meaning Prakriti is to be known to be the Maya and the Supreme Lord to be the Mayin.

So from the standpoint of adhyaropa when Maya is seen ( meaning the world and its seed-form are seen ) by avidya in non-dual Self, from that standpoint this non-dual Self is described as 'Ishvara', 'Mayavi' ( like magician ) etc. The very Godhood is attributed on the non-dual Self through this Maya which is concocted by avidya, when it is thought of as the cause and ruler of the world containing individual souls for the purpose of teaching. Here really the avidya does not produce the Maya, but it creates the mis-

understanding regarding non-dual Brahman as the universe and its seed form. So God has not created Maya intentionally. Maya is conjured up by avidya. Through vidya, when avidya is removed, then the Maya will be falsified meaning he realises that this is only a false appearance. For this purpose Shankara has given the definition of maya thus ; **Saa Cha Maya Na Vidyate, Maya Iti Avidyamanasya Akhya** ( माया नाम वस्तु तर्हि ? न, सा च माया न विद्यते. माया इति अविद्यमानस्य आख्या )—Mandukyakarika Bhashya—4/58 - ‘...and that Maya does not exist, the idea being that the term ‘Maya’ relates to something non existing’.

Brahman is described as *Sarvajna* ( सर्वज्ञ )—Omniscient, *Sarvashakta* ( सर्वशक्त )—Omnipotent, *Sarvavyapaka* ( सर्वव्यापक )—Omnipresent and *Sarvesvara* ( सर्वेश्वर )—Lord of all etc. These descriptions are given from the standpoint of above-said conception of Maya. Here the word ‘*Sarva*’ is the Maya which is conjured up by avidya ( i. e. अविद्याकल्पिता ) But ‘*Jna*’ is the Self. ‘*Shakta*’ is the Self. ‘*Vyaapaka*’ is the Self. ‘*Ishvara*’ ( Lord ) is the Self. Taking the attribution of ‘*Sarva*’ the Shastra keeps the name to the Self as ‘*Sarvajna*’ etc., So in Shankara’s Bhashya ‘*Atman*’, ‘*Ishvara*’, ‘*Barhman*’ are synonymous terms. According to Vyaakhyanakaras ‘*Atman*’ or ‘*Brahman*’ is superior to the word ‘*Ishvara*’. They say *Ishvara* is

'*Maya-Upahita*'—circumscribed by maya ; *Maya-Vishishta*—having special features due to maya ; '*Maya-Pratibimba*'—Brahman reflected in maya etc. But Godhood or Ishvara, the Almighty, according to Shankara, is not Maya-upahita or Maya-vishishta or Maya-pratibimba, as is taught by various present day Vedantins. On the other hand, Brahman or the Witnessing Principle, in relation to the appearance of the universe and its seed form ( Primordial matter, called maya or prakriti which is conjured up by ignorance or avidya ), is treated as Ishvara for the purpose of teaching alone. Shankara holds the view that Brahman is Eternal, Pure, Nature of Consciousness, Ever free by nature, and All-knowing and All-powerful ( S. Bh.—1/1/1 ). 'That Omniscient source must be Brahman'.... ( S. Bh.—1/1/2 ) etc. Here the adjectives are given to Brahman synonymously such as Nityashuddha, Sarvajnam Sarvashaktisamanvitam. Hence to point out the true nature of Brahman these words are used through the attribution of 'Sarva'. From this standpoint these are Swaroopalakshanas ( स्वरूपलक्षण ) and not Tatasthalakshanas ( तदस्थलक्षण ). Here, it should not be forgotten that the Upadhi ( उपाधि ) of 'Sarva' is conjured up by avidya. So the real nature of Brahman is Absolute and non-dual. These words are used for the purpose of teaching

only. Strictly speaking as the consciousness is the nature of Brahman, so also the Shakti etc., are the nature of Brahman. Jnana, Shakti, Ishvara are the nature of non-dual Brahman. But to distinguish the difference between Shakti and Shaktiman or Shakta, the upadhis or adjuncts, which are conjured up by avidya, are required. Through these adjuncts He is called as Sarvajna, Sarvashakti etc. So Sarvajnatva, Ishvaratva etc., attributed from the standpoint of adjuncts or upadhis, but the nature of Brahman itself is nature of Consciousness, nature of potence etc., and as such they can never be alienated from Brahman. This is the secret. If this secret is not understood, then we will feel the contradictions to the statement of Bhashya. This difference in description should be noticed between Shankara's Bhashya and commentator's other books.

To summarise all these the non-dual Brahman is called Ishvara from the standpoint of Maya which is conjured up by avidya and Vedanta has attributed the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe etc., on Brahman.

But when avidya is removed through the knowledge of non-dual Brahman then all the above attributes are automatically falsified. This is clearly stated by Shankara thus ;

'Moreover, when the idea of non-difference

is generated by such declaration of identity as 'That thou art', the transmigratoriness of the individual is removed as also the creatorship of Brahman ; for all dualistic dealings, brought about by ignorance get sublated by right knowledge.'

( S. Bh.—2/1/22 )<sup>1</sup>

So Maya is **Avidyakalpita, Vyakta-Avyaktaatmaka, Anirvachaniya and Ishvara-shakti**. Through the attribution of the Maya, non-dual Brahman is called Ishvara, when it is thought of as the cause and ruler of the phenomenal world including individual souls.

## II AN OBJECTION RAISED BY MOOLA-VIDYA-VADINS :

Avidya is described as non-perception, misconception and doubting. And it is said that this is the defect of Antahkarana. It is not concerned to the Self. It is said that by this avidya, Maya is conjured up. And you have told that maya and prakriti are the same. The antahkarana in which avidya is there, is the very product of prakriti according to Shastra.

<sup>1</sup> अपि च यदा 'तत्त्वमसि' इति एषं जातीयकेन अभेदनिर्देशेन अभेदः प्रतिबोधितः भवति, अपगतं भवति तदा जीवस्य संसारित्वं ब्रह्मणश्च स्रष्टृत्वं, समस्तस्य मिथ्याज्ञानविज्ञूम्भितस्य भेदव्यवहारस्य सम्यग्-ज्ञानेन बाधितत्वात् ।

The Prakriti that is avyakta is modified as Mahat, Ahankara, Panchatanmatra and then through panchikarana this antahkarana or the mind is created ( Ka. Up.—1/3/10, 11 ). It being so how the prakriti will be 'Avidyakalpita'? Hence we have to hold the view that the material cause of the antahkarana or the mind which is called as prakriti and which is the potence of the Lord is the causal-ignorance or 'Moolavidya' and all the three like non-perception etc., are effective ignorance.

#### **Answer to the above objection :**

(i) From the standpoint of empirical view, our intellect always wants the rigorous rules and regulations of causation. So we seek the cause for our mind and the world etc.

(ii) The causation i. e., the relationship between the cause and the effect inevitably requires the time series or time factor. Because the cause must be in a previous time and effect comes afterwards. So Nyayashastra says, that **Kaarya Niyata Purva Vrittihi Kaaranam** ( कार्यनियतपूर्ववृत्तिः कारणम् ). So whenever we seek the cause for something inevitably we have the appriori notion of time, space and causation. Hence our intellect

always follows these rigorous rules of time, space and causation.

(iii) But from the standpoint of Vedantic view, when the whole phenomenon of the universe including the notions of time, space, causation also is taken as a whole, then the complete viewpoint will change. For example, before the occurrence of the dream state, there is non-dual Self alone which remains in the deep sleep. In that pure Being the whole dream state appears. The phenomenon of the dream consists of the three types of the worlds or planes :

(a) Divine plane i. e., sun, moon, stars and the planets of millions and the heavenly worlds upto Brahmaloка etc.

(b) Material plane—which is conglomeration of five elements such as space or ether, air, fire, water and the earth. In this plane all the bodies of all creatures and all the machineries of various kinds like computers etc., which are invented by the material scientists are included.

(c) The Corporeal plane i. e., body, vital force, organs of actions, sense organs, mind, intellect or ego and feelings of all kinds just like common man's experiences and mystic experiences of Yogis etc., are included.

These three types of planes are called in Vedanta respectively as **Adhidaivika** (आधिदैविक)

**Prapancha, Adhibhoutika ( आधिभौतिक ) Prapancha & Adhyatmika ( आध्यात्मिक ) Prapancha.** All this whole phenomenon of the universe including the concept of infinite time, space and causation is restricted to the dream state or to the waking state which occurs in the pure being which is everyone's true nature of the Self. This is the Vedantic view. It is called as **Poorna-Anubhava Dristi**. From this standpoint, as I am the pure being. in me the whole waking or the whole dream state appears and disappears. When one realises the truth, he has taken the stand in nature of the Witnessing principle of life. From this standpoint, the whole dream state exists in me as I am the substratum of that state and Pure Being.

(iv) But in the dream state everyone feels that 'I am in this world, I have been born here some time ago and I will die one day. I am an individual etc.' From the feeling of this individuality, he sees the universe there and starts to investigate the cause of that world. At last he comes to the conclusion that the *prakriti* or primordial matter of the universe, is the cause. And he feels that this *prakriti* is the cause of his own mind. etc. Here he feels the time series and the causation etc., as the real things. But

when the dream disappears, all the phenomenon will be falsified including the idea of infinite time, space, causation etc. Here, in this illustration the world which is seen in the dream state, exists in its essence, the pure Being. And the mind which appeared in the dream did not cognise the truth. Hence it holds the view that the world is real and starts the investigation and arises to the certain conclusions just as prakriti is the cause of his own mind etc.

(v) Strictly speaking, the outer world, the inner mind and all the notions such as time, space, causation etc., appear simultaneously in the dream state. So also the same is the case with the waking state. This is to be realised taking a stand in the Witnessing principle which is the substratum of the waking and dream states. From the standpoint of this realisation, there is no cause or effect. All the notions of cause and effect etc., are in avidya i. e. in the Me-notion. This Me-notion is called avidya (Me-notion='I am so and so' and 'this is mine') and that which appears to this Me-notion is called as Maya. For this reason we have said that 'avidya' is the subjective defect (i. e. primarily denotes a species of knowledge) and 'maya' is the objective one (i. e. an illusory object).

(vi) Very important thing we have to remember is that the idea like the prakriti is the cause and the world is effect etc., are not imaginations of Brahman. but these are the imaginations of the individual soul which is the 'Me-notion'. Therefore the complaint regarding avidya or maya are from the standpoint of 'Me-notion' and not from the standpoint of the Witnessing principle of life. For this purpose Vedanta has attributed these two concepts of 'avidya' and 'maya' to teach the non-dual Brahman ( अभ्यारोपावादाभ्यां निष्प्रपञ्चं प्रपञ्च्यते ) and never as a really real something to be defended. When Brahman is realised, both will be falsified. This is called Rescission ( अपवाद ).

Swamiji says, 'That we pass through the three states of consciousness, that we appear to age, die and are born again, and that there is creation, sustentation and dissolution of the world, is an inborn delusion of human mind, which can be overcome only by the dawn of Vedantic enlightenment'. *This is pristine pure Shankara's Vedanta.* From the standpoint of intellect, it is very difficult to solve the problem, but from the standpoint of the transcendental Reality or the Pure Being, which is called as the intuitional experience of Brahman, all the contradictions i. e. problems or questions are resolved.

### III SOME DEFECTS OF MOOLAAVIDYA-VADA :

The Moolaavidya as well as Toolaavidya are not mentioned in the right tradition of Shankara i. e., Gowdapada-Karikas, Shankara's Bhashyas and Sureshvara's Brihadvartika, Taittiriya vartika and Naishkarmya-siddhihi. These are correct traditional texts which we have to rely upon according to Sri Satchidanandendra Saraswati Swamiji. The origin of this theory of Moolaavidya is traced to Panchapadikakara who wrote his Panchapadika-Prasthanam as a commentary on Shankara's commentary on Brahma Sutras. After Panchapadika-Prasthanam, the Shankara's utterances have been twisted to suit their theory of *Moolaavidya*. And it is propagated as that as the genuine teachings of Shankara. It is called by the name of Moolaavidya as it is held to be the material cause of both the world and Adhyasa. *Moolaavidyavadins* say :

Moolaavidya hides or covers up Brahman and because of this alone ignorances of the forms of *not knowing* ( अग्रहण ) and *wrong knowledge or misconception* ( अन्यथाग्रहण ) as well as 'the world' are produced or projected. Moolaavidya exists in all the three states of consciousness ; the names and forms remain hidden or latent in deep-sleep

( *sushupti* ) as well as in dissolution of creation or the world ( *pralaya* ) either as the seed-form ( *beeja roopa* ) or as the energy-form ( *shakti roopa* ). This seed of names and forms is called as Moolaavidya. And it ( *moolaavidya* ) can be removed by *Knowledge of Atman*.

In the previous article, it has been shown how Moolaavidya-vada has entered into the Bhashya and what are the defects of this contention. For the present some main defects will be shown here regarding the acceptance of Moolaavidya.

### *Main defects of Moolaavidya-Vada*

(a) According to Gowdapada and Shankara, non-perception is the causal ignorance and misunderstanding and doubting are the effective ignorance ( refer Gowdapadakarika with Shankara's commentary, Agamaprakarana—11 to 15 ). The sub-commentators say that Moolaavidya is the material cause for the universe and Ahankara and also for the three types of avidya i. e., Agrahana, Samshya and Viparitajnana ( or misconception ). Again they say that this moolaavidya is a Kalpita one. Here if it is Kalpita, it would not be a material cause for Adhyasa ( i. e. misconception ). If it is the material cause for Adhyasa,

it is not Kalpita by adhyasa. It pertains to Brahman alone. And as it is a thing ( भावरूप ) so it is impossible to remove it by knowledge.

(b) If Jiva is endowed with Toolaavidya and toolaavidya is a part of moolaavidya, then the real cause i. e., moolaavidya will not be removed by the knowledge which is obtained by Jiva. Because according to Moolaavidyavadins, moolaavidya covers Brahman. Then Brahman should have removed moolaavidya which pertains to him through his getting knowledge and Jiva can never destroy Brahman's moolaavidya.

(c) In our Antahkarana there is ignorance regarding the outer objects. When we know the object, at that time the knowledge arises in our mind. Being so, to imagine that avidya ( moolaavidya or toolaavidya ) encompasses the outer things is absurd. No one says that when I know the thing the encompassed avidya on that thing is removed. Everyone says that I have got a knowledge regarding the thing & my ignorance is gone. So, regarding *Brahmajnana* there is no cover of ignorance on Brahman.

(d) Many defects are raised by *Dvaita-Vedantins* on the Moolavidya which is *Bhaavaropa-avidya* according to Moolaavidyavadins. If we were to accept this Bhaavaropaavidya, then the defects raised by *Dvaita-Vedantins* are

impossible to be refuted. But these defects will not effect the *Adhyasavada* of Shankara, because of the following reasons ;

(i) Adhyasa i. e. identification with body etc., is evident for all in empirical life. It is clearly stated by Shankara in his Adhyasa Bhashya *Sarvaloka Pratyakshaha* ( सर्वलोकप्रत्यक्षः ) while Moolaavidya is an imagined thing by the sub-commentators.

(ii) Moolaavidyavadins hold the view that the Moolaavidya is the material cause for Avidya. According to Shankara, the causation, as it a dealing, so thinking about *cause and effect relationship* itself takes place in Adhyasa.

(iii) One may say in Adhyasavada also there may be shown so many defects. For this, the answer is the act of thinking such as defects, virtues etc., itself is endowed with avidya, because without taking wrong identification with the mind, one cannot think or move ( अविद्यावस्त्वेनैव जीवस्य सर्वः संव्यवहारः सन्ततो वर्तते -- Br. Su. Bh. — 1/4/3 ). So from the empirical standpoint Adhyasa is there as evident for all. And when one cognises the true nature of his own Self which is untainted by this Avidya then the whole empirical view is falsified. So the removal of Adhyasa also is evident for those endowed with discriminative knowledge. Here we do not find any dogmatic assertions, while in

Moolaavidya, we see many such dogmatic assertions.

(e) The sub-commentators hold the view that Moolaavidya is Bhaavarooपा and it is destroyed by the Knowledge of Atman. According to Shankara, any positive thing, that is Bhaavarooपा, will not be removed by knowledge. Jnana i. e., the knowledge is able to remove only the misunderstanding which is not at all an entity ( i. e., Bhaavarooपा ). Jnana has no capacity to destroy any positive thing and create anything new. It removes only the misunderstanding regarding the fact ( see Briha-Bhashya—1/4/10 and this point is clearly stated in the 1st chapter, para No. 9 ).

(f) Moolaavidyavadins accept the three types of Padartha ( पदार्थ ); the Self as Svayansiddha ( स्वयंसिद्ध ), Moolaavidya as Saakshisiddha ( साक्षीसिद्ध ) and the outer things as Pramanasiddha ( प्रमाणसिद्ध ). So outer things have got Ajnatasatta ( अज्ञातरूपा ) and Moolaavidya is not Ajnatasatta etc. These types of interpretation have no place in Shankara's Bhashyas anywhere and these commentators have interpreted according to their own understanding. The doctrine of three grades of existence viz., the Paramarthikasatta ( परमार्थिकरूपा ), Vyavaharikasatta ( व्यावहारिकरूपा ) and the Pratibhasikasatta ( प्रातिभासिकरूपा ) i. e., the Absolute, the empirical and the apparent realities is not found either

in Shankara's Bhashyas or in Gowdapada's Karika. For Shankara *Satta* or Reality is one only and there are no grades of existence ;

“यथा च कारणं ब्रह्म त्रिषु कालेषु सत्त्वं न व्यभिचरति, एवं कार्य-  
मपि जगत् त्रिषु कालेषु सत्त्वं न व्यभिचरति। एकं च पुनः सत्त्वम्,  
अतोऽव्यनन्यत्वं कारणं कार्यस्य।” ( S. Bh.—2/1/16 )

Just as Brahman the cause never deviates from existence in all the three periods of time, so also the effect, the world, never deviate from existence in all the periods of creation, sustenance and dissolution. And *existence again is only one*. So for this reason also, the effect is none other than the cause.

## APPENDIX

### SOME VIEW POINTS REGARDING AVIDYA AND MAYA

*Can we use the terms 'Maya' and 'Avidya' indiscriminately even while strictly adhering to Shankara's Adhyasa-vada ?*

From the standpoint of transcendental reality there is no dealing such as Vidya and Avidya, because It is of the nature of non-dual Absolute Conciousness. But from empirical standpoint there are dealings of Vidya and Avidya not only regarding the outer things, but also about the true nature of the Self. It is evident for all. So in Vedanta, this dealing of Vidya and Avidya is called as Maya, which means, that which is not there really but appears as if it is there really, is Maya. In this sense if we call Avidya as Maya figuratively, then it is not wrong. Shankara hints about this in his Tai. Bh.—2/8/5 thus ; 'Accordingly knowledge and ignorance are to be ranked with name and form ; they are not

attributes of the Self,<sup>1</sup> meaning in so far as Vidya and Avidya are regarded as a function of the mind and are included in the world of names and forms. it may also be called 'Maya' meaning thereby an illusory appearance.

In the same way. the Prakriti or Avyakta may be called as Avidya in a secondary sense. There are two reasons for this ;

The first is, if there is avidya, then only Maya will appear as if it is there. So maya is the projection of avidya. In this sense ; we may include maya in avidya i. e., one is perfectly justified in calling it avidya in a secondary sense, just as one may say 'this is all his foolery'.

The second reason is that commonly no one knows that he is in grip of the ignorance or under the influence of ignorance. So this ignorance is not manifested for the common man though it is behind his all dealings. From this standpoint, the ignorance is called as 'Avyakta'. Shankara hints this in his Su. Bh.—1/4/3, *Yada Tu Jiva Mahan* <sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'तस्मान्नामरूपपक्षस्यैव विद्याविद्ये । नामरूपे च न आत्मधर्मो.... ते च पुनर्नामरूपे सवितर्यहोरात्रे इव कल्पिते ; न परमार्थतो विद्यमाने ।' ( Tai. Bh. 2,8,5 ).

<sup>2</sup> 'अव्यक्ता हि सा माया तदिदं महतः परम् अव्यक्तम्' इत्युक्तम्, अव्यक्तप्रभवत्वात् महतः, यदा हैरण्यगर्भी बुद्धिः महान् । यदा तु

Therefore from these higher standpoints we may call avidya as maya and maya as avidya in a secondary sense. Because both are attributed or superimposed on Brahman for the purpose of teaching. See the Sanskrit introduction of *Vedanta Vidvat Gosthi & Essays on Vedanta* ( page 44 ) by Sri Swamiji in this regard. To avoid confusion we usually restrict the use of these words Avidya and Maya to denote ignorance ( subjective notion ) and ( objective ) name and form respectively, according to Shankara Bhashya.

But it is wrong to argue that the Prakriti is the material cause of Avidya and it will get vanished through knowledge etc. So from the standpoint of the methodology of Vedanta, i. e., from the superimposition point of view, it is first जीवः महान् तदापि अव्यक्ताधीनत्वात् जीवभावस्य महतः परम् अव्यक्तम् इत्युक्तम् । अविद्या हि अव्यक्तम्, अविद्यावत्त्वेन एव जीवस्य सर्वः संबन्धहारः सन्ततः वर्तते ।' ( S. Bh.—1/4/3 )

— 'If however, the individual Jiva be the meaning of *Mahat*, still the statement 'Avyakta is higher than Mahat', is admissible, since the state of becoming an individual creature depends on the influence of Avyakta ( 'Maya' ) acting as a limiting adjunct For ignorance is Avyakta, and it is because of the possession of ignorance by the individual soul that all kinds of empirical behaviour continue for ever.'

accepted that Brahman is the location of avidya and Brahman is the subject matter of avidya. See Briha-Upa. Bh. - 1/4/10, *Brahmani Saadhakatva Kalpana ...Apehala Iti.*<sup>3</sup> Shankara hints here from the standpoint of superimposition that Brahman is the location and Brahman is the subject matter of Avidya. All these are accepted for the purpose of teaching the truth alone. From standpoint of Absolute standpoint of Reality neither Avidya nor Maya called into being by it, ever existed as entities side by side with Brahman, nor is there any need for Vidya to actually destroy either of the two, as Sureshvara says,

‘तत्त्वमस्यादिवाक्योत्थ सम्यग्धीजन्ममात्रतः ।

अविद्यासहकार्येण नासीदस्ती भविष्यति ॥’

( सं, वा—183 )

This is the rescission of the ideas of the attributions of Avidya and Maya.

## **AUM TAT SAT**

<sup>3</sup> ब्रह्मणि साधकत्वकल्पना अस्मदादिष्विव अपेशाला - ‘तदात्मानमेवावेत्, तस्मात् तत् सर्वमभवत्’ इति चेत्, न ; शास्त्रोपालम्भात् ; ...न चैतावत्येवाक्षमा युक्ताः भवतः, सर्वं हि नानात्वं ब्रह्मणि कल्पितमेव ‘एकधैवानुद्रष्टव्यम्’ ‘नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन’ ‘यत्र हि द्वैतमिव भवति’ ‘एकमेवाद्वितीयम्’ इत्यादि वाक्यशरतेभ्यः, सर्वो हि लोक व्यवहारो ब्रह्मण्येव कल्पितो न परमार्थः सन् ; इत्यल्पमिदमुच्यते इयमेव कल्पना अपेशलेति ।’  
( Briha-Bh.—1/4/10 )

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'Objection : To think that Brahman, like us, is a seeker of liberation, is not proper, and that is what we see in the passage 'It knew only .Itself.... therefore It became all'.

Reply : Not so, for by saying this you will be flouting the scriptures. It is not our idea, but that of the scriptures. Nor should you lose your patience over this much only, for all plurality is but imagined in Brahman, as we know from hundreds of texts like the following : 'It should be realised in one form only' ( Bri.-4/4/20 ); 'There is no difference whatsoever in Brahman' ( Bri.- 4/4/19, Ka.- 2/1/11 ); 'When there is duality, as it were' ( Bri.- 2/4/14 & 4/5/15 ) and 'One only without a second' ( Ch.-6/2/1 ). Since the whole phenomenal world is imagined in Brahman alone and is not real, you say very little when you condemn this particular idea as improper.

## **Vedanta-Jijnasa** ( वेदान्त-जिज्ञासा )

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( Published & Edited by—*Manas Kumar Sanyal, Calcutta* )

विदुषामभिप्रायाः

'I have read the book *Vedanta-jijnasa* with with fervour throughout and I am surprised to see that only through the postal teachings the publisher and editor of this book has grasped the subject so correctly. The questions and doubts raised by Sri Sanyal to know the differences between Shankara and commentators and to clear some inconsistencies of Bhashya and Sri Sri Swamiji's books which he has put in that book, are most appropriate one and these types of questions can be put only by an ardent seeker like him. And the answers which have been given by *Sri Sri Jnananandendra Saraswati Swamiji* are also very clear and helps one to take a stand in his own intuitional experiences of his true nature. By this once again I got confirmed by comparing the Swamiji's answers that I am also in the right path because *Sri S. Vittla Shastriji* is a pioneer and the first disciple of Swamiji of Holenarsipur and so he is a most senior one. Hence I have tallied my knowledge with his teachings and am very much satisfied. Besides these things, one thing has been confirmed that by postal teachings also one can impart Vedantic Knowledge to a seeker if only we have an ardent student like Sri Sanyal etc.'

—**Sri Devarao Kulkarni, Bangalore**

The following philosophical books written by

*Brahmajna Kavi*

**SRI DEVARAO KULKARNI**

**BANGALORE**

will be soon published ;

1. AVASTHAATRAYA-VIVEKA

[ under print ]

2. GUIDE-LINES TO SHANKARA VEDANTA

3. MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT

'YOGA' & 'SANNYASA'

4. DIRECT MEANS OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

[ it is now being serially published in the religious  
monthly journal 'SADHAN-PATH' from  
March-April, 1989 ]

5. BRAHMA-JIJNASA