



SRI SHANKARA'S ADWAITHA SIDDHANTHA

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शङ्करं शङ्कराचार्यमज्ञानध्वान्त भास्करम् ।

सच्चिदानन्दयोगीन्द्रं नमामीप्सितसिद्धये ।

अध्यासरूपमज्ञानं येनेदं प्रकटीकृतम् ।

कृष्णस्वाम्यय्यराख्यं च ज्ञानिनं ज्ञानदं भजे ॥

श्री विठ्ठलशर्माहिम्

श्री श्री सच्चिदानन्देन्द्रसरस्वती महास्वामिनाम्

श्री चरणयोः समर्पयामि इदं पुस्तकम् ॥

FOREWORD

This is a short treatise on the main principles of Advaita Vedanta, written in a clear and unpedantic style and avoiding much of technicalities. For the general reader it conveys the essence of Advaita truth, and here, the author takes a stand that Sri Shankara, the systematiser of Advaita Vedanta, has been misunderstood and misinterpreted by his later commentators like Padmapada and Vachaspathi followed by their commentators. The author contends how on the most important or the crucial issue of Avidya there has been a gross misunderstanding. While avidya is purely an epistemological concept, it has been mixed up with Maya taken as an ontological entity. It is this error which has led to the notion of Mulavidya, forging into Shankara's thought a dualism, thus destroying his non-dualism. Those who are aware of this controversy find here a refreshing perspective presented.

Further the author has given a nice exposition of the concepts of Moksha in Advaita and the Sadhana marga prescribed therein. The treatment of the latter is very useful and practical for Advaita realisation.

Coming from the pen of Sri Vittala Sastry, an erudite scholar of great fame and name, the treatise

charya's works. As a scholar of Adwaita Philosophy Vidwan Shastri is a strict adherent to Shankara's exposition of Adwaita, and therefore to read Vidwan Shastri is to know Shankara in the original without the risk of being strayed into the jungle of the later commentaries.

Sri Vittala Sastri's other works

- (1) Moolavidya Bhashyavarthika Virudhaa (in Samskrita and in Kannada.)
- (2) Sri Shivananda's Upadeshas (in Kannada)
- (3) Parvanasraddha thithinirnaya (in Kannada)
- (4) Moolavidya Vimarshe (in Kannada)

P R E F A C E

The reason why Shri Shankaracharya who wrote the commentary on Vyasasutras first wrote "Adhyasa Bhasya" was to define Avidya (ignorance) and Vidya¹ (knowledge). He has described knowledge as one which ends in the realisation of the highest Reality and ignorance which is sublated by this knowledge as the mistaken knowledge of the Self for the non-self and non-self for the self (Adhyasa), which is in the experience of all.² Throughout his works Shankara has used the word Avidya in the same sense even though he has accepted not-knowing the Reality and doubting the Reality also as Avidya and in no other sense. He has used the word Avidya to mean Karma in the secondary sense. Vartikakara has stated that not-knowing the Reality is Avidya in the main as it is the cause of misunderstanding of the Reality. He too has accepted misunderstanding the Reality and doubting the Reality also as Avidya. This Adhyasa (misunderstanding) is the fundamental fact on which the complete system of Shankara is based.

“ १ तद्विवेकेन च वस्तुस्वरूपावधारणम् विद्यामाहुः ” ।

२ तमेतम् एवं लक्षणम् अध्यासम् पण्डिताः

अविद्येत मन्यन्ते ।

(Adhyasa Bhashya)

Panchapadikakara has used the word Avidya in the sense of an indescribable matter called Maya or moolavidya which is the seed-of-the world. He has said Adhyasa as Karyaavidya. As per Shankara maya is concocted by Avidya (i.e. Adhyasa or misunderstanding). As per Panchapadikakara and his followers Avidya or Adhyasa or misunderstanding is the product of maya. After Panchapadikakara all have followed him without keeping in mind the original views of Shankara.

Panchapadikakara's views have been spread as Sri Shankara's views. The real views of Shankara have not been understood even by great Sanskrit Scholars of these days.

The great men who have criticised 'Advaitha' have criticised only the Panchapadikakara's views and not the original views of Sri Shankara.

Therefore in order to show the difference between the original views of Shankara and those of the commentators this small book is written.

SRI SHANKARA'S ADWAITA SIDDHANTA

The fundamental Doctrine

The real Self in me, you and everyone is 'Brahman or Reality which is Pure Being, Pure Consciousness and Pure Bliss¹ This real Self is misunderstood as the individual or false self due to the identification of the body and senses which have no independent existence and which are no more real than the body and senses of dream state with Atman. This identification is really a mistaken knowledge and this mistaken knowledge is not the outcome of an indescribable matter. This identification of the Atman with the mind is in the experience of everyone. This false identification has no beginning or end², but this can be sublated by the right knowledge of the real Self.³ This Adhyasa or misunderstanding (mistaking one for the other) is natural and is experienced by everyone from four-headed Brahman down to the ant. Adhyasa does not require any means of knowlence or external proof, to prove its existence. It is directly

१ अयमात्मा ब्रह्म २ अयं अध्यासः अनादिः अनन्तः

३ अस्य प्रहाणं आत्मैकत्वविद्यया (Adhyasa Bhashya)

experienced by everyone. न हि दृष्टे अनुपपन्नम् नाम
(Brahma Sutra Bhashya 4.1.2 & Bri 1. 4. 10)
Individuality comes only as the outcome of
Adhyasa.

Mistaking one thing for the other is the result of not knowing the real nature of that thing. For example, if one knows the rope as it is, he cannot mistake it for a snake. In this sense, not knowing the real nature of something is the cause for knowing it otherwise. This Adhyasa, namely, misunderstanding the Self for the non-self and vice versa is called Avidya. Owing to this Avidya one mistakes oneself as an individual. As the individual is the outcome of Adhyasa he cannot think of the causes of Adhyasa. As this mistaken knowledge is in the experience of all, the knowledge of Pure Self which can stultify or nullify this ignorance must also end in experience. Mere book knowledge is not capable of nullifying it. All our concepts such as bondage, salvation, cause and effect etc. arise from this misunderstanding.

This misunderstanding is quite different from the expression of the "I" used in the world or vyavahara. A child in the womb also experiences this mistaken knowledge.

As soon as we consider ourselves as individuals or false selves on account of this Adhyasa or mistaken knowledge we begin to see the world outside, and immediately search for a material cause of this world and concoct a primordial matter as the material cause of this world. That matter (primordial matter) which is concocted by adhyasa is called MAYA. Akshara Avyakritha, Avyaktha, Prakrithi or Sakthi. Maya means that which does not exist at any time, or at any place, but appears as existent.¹ When the primordial matter itself is concocted by Adhyasa its product i. e. the world, is sure to be a concocted one too. The world exists as long as Adhyasa exists i. e. in waking and dream states. It does not exist when Adhyasa does not exist i. e. in deep sleep as well as in trance (Samadhi). Therefore, it is concluded that the world is concocted by Adhyasa,² the mistaken knowledge or by Maya which is again, concocted by Avidya.

No sooner we are identified with the body and the senses than we become false selves or

(1) मा. 1 मा. 2-31 या असद्वस्त्वात्मिका सद्वस्त्वात्मिकेव
अवभासमाना सा माया ।

(2) गी. भा. 13-26 भा. अध्यासात् सर्वे सञ्जायन्ते ।

ndividuals and the Pure Being becomes different from us. Then It is called God and is thought to be different from us. Just as space is misunderstood to be limited by a pot even though it is unlimited, we think that we are small and God is great. Space which cannot be divided into two as it is partless is taken to have been divided by ignorant persons, who do not know the nature of space. So is the case with Reality too.

Most of the thinkers of Religion and the Reality identify themselves with the mind, senses and body and begin to think as individuals. Then comes the differentiation between thinkers and God or Reality. They think that they are helpless and not capable of doing great things, but God or Reality is great and is capable of doing anything and everything and He is all-knowing He is the creator etc. They say that one must get salvation by meditating upon Him and surrendering oneself to Him.

It is to be understood that when thinkers identify themselves with the mind and body, and become false selves, their conclusion also must necessarily be wrong.

These persons who are identified with the mind, body etc. see the world through their

eyes and other senses and say that the world is real because they see it through their senses.

Shankaracharya and the great sages who had sublated their identification with the body and mind by the knowledge of Reality and stood as pure Being did not consider themselves as individuals but they saw themselves as the highest Reality, and the world as Brahman itself which is secondless¹. Suthra Bhashya 1.1.4 :- Aham Brahmasmi; (I am Brahman) and² Brihadaranyaka 1.4.10 Thadatmaanamevaveth Ahambrahmaasmeethi Thasmath thathsarvamabhavath (Atma understood himself as Brahman and so he became all) Then arises this objection. "How is it that Brahman which constitutes our very self is not universally apprehended whereas the world which is said to be non-existent is perceived by everyone"? The answer is as follows :

The Atman, in other words Pure consciousness. Pure Being and Pure Bliss is always the knower. It can never be reduced into the state of object, that is, a known thing. Therefore, it can-

(१) सू. भा. 1-1-4 अहं ब्रह्मास्मि

(२) बृ. भा. 1-4-10 तदात्मानमेवावेत्

अहं ब्रह्मास्मीति तस्मात् तत्सर्वमभवत् ॥

not be perceived by the mind or other senses for it presides over the mind and senses. It is to be intuited directly by being the real Self. It is not possible to deny its existence because he who denies is himself the Reality. This Self is to be directly intuited. Only the sublation of the identification of the body etc.; with the Atman by knowledge is necessary.

Even the false individual, namely, Jeevatma is known by himself, not by any means of knowledge. This is the experience of everybody. It is needless to say that the Pure being or the Reality is known by itself and it does not require any means of knowledge to establish its existence.

The Sastras establish the Atman by merely eliminating the distinctions concocted in it by Avidya (ignorance) and It cannot be established in any other manner.

How can the world which is irrefutably established by means of knowledge like Vedas, perception, inference be a mere appearance? While such is the case, how can it be said that the world is non-existent or is a mere appearance? The answer is that the world is merely the

(१) वृ. भा. :—3-3-1 ज्ञानाभावः मिथ्याज्ञानम् संशयज्ञानम्
अविद्या ।

concoction of Avidya (Adhyasa) and is perceived as such by the ignorant only. In fact, the world as well as its material cause has no reality or validity at all. It exists only as long as there is Avidya (Adhyasa). For example, Avidya exists in waking and dream states and only in these states the world and its seed exist. Adhyasa does not exist in deep sleep and in trance and the world with its cause does not then exist. Therefore, it is concluded that the world with its seed is concocted by Adhyasa or ignorance. In addition to this the eyes and mind are the products of the world. They must say that their material cause i.e. the world really exists.

Let us consider the nature of Avidya. In the very first Badarayana Sutra, "Athatho Brahmajigyaasa", the word Jigyaasa is explained as a desire to know the Reality (Brahman).

Knowledge is defined as that which culminates in intuition. Absence of correct knowledge, mistaken knowledge, i.e., to mistake the Atman for the body and vice versa and doubtful knowledge is Avidya. So, the main theme of Adhyasa Bhashya is to explain the true nature of Vidya and Avidya. It has been clearly defined

by Shankara that between the self and the non-self, to mistake the one for the other and one's qualities for the other's qualities is Avidya.¹ This Avidya is without a beginning and without an end. It is the natural experience of everyone. By its very nature, it is not the outcome of any other matter. In fact, it is the propelling force within everyone giving rise to the feeling of doership and enjoyership. This Adhyasa which is in the experience of all is expressed as "I" and "mine" in the world. This mistaken notion of Atman for the body and vice versa is common to all, right from Chathurmukha Brahma down to the smallest of creatures like the ant. On that basis of this fundamental mistaken tenet or Avidya all our thoughts and activities- secular or vedic based on perception, inference and the Veda(word) have their being and function. And again all our shastras injunctions, prohibitions and science dealing with liberation are based on this Avidya.

The body and senses including mind are the products of the food eaten by us. The essence of the food digested takes the form of mind senses etc.

(1) सू. अ. भा. अध्यासः अविद्य ।

अध्यासं पुरस्कृत्य सर्वे व्यवहाराः

The man identified with the body, mind and senses sees the world through the mind and senses and concludes that the world is real. He must say so, because the mind and senses are the products of the world, that is, of the food taken. They must say that their original matter is real and cannot deny the existence of their original matter.

Therefore, so long as one is identified with the body and senses one is not the right man to find out the reality or unreality of the world. Such a man must say that the world is real, because he is identified with mind and senses which are the products of the world. The man who has sublated this identification and stands as Pure Being, Pure Bliss and Pure consciousness is the proper man to judge the nature of the world, and he says that the world before us seen with the help of the mind, senses etc is merely concocted by Adhyasa; really it is nothing but Brahman. The ignorant man who has this mistaken knowledge believes in the existence of the world but the world apprehended by him does not exist. It is really Brahman itself. Adhyasa and the appearance of the world are interdependent. The existence of the one with the existence of the other and the disappearance of the one with the disappearance of the other affirms the relationship

of cause and effect between the two. By this law it is proved that the apprehension of the world is the effect of (Adhyasa) Avidya because the world exists only when Avidya exists., Besides, when this false understanding of the nature of mistaking the self for the non-self and vice versa is sublated by the true knowledge of the wise, which is in the nature of direct intuition, " I AM BRAHMAN " then the duality is not at all seen. Such wise persons no longer see the world but experience their Atman as Brahman having no second to it.

Therefore, it is established, that the apprehension of the world is the result of mistaking the self for the non-self and vice versa and that it is not a real one.

It is stated by Bhashyakara (Sri Shankara), that absence of knowledge and mistaken knowledge and doubtful knowledge are the three kinds of Avidya, and among them, mistaken knowledge alone, which is harmful is Avidya in the main, but Sri Sureswaracharya holds that mistaken knowledge can never arise without the absence of correct knowledge and according to him, absence of correct knowledge is Avidya in the main.

The afore, Sri Shankaracharya has declared that misunderstanding the Atman for the body and

vice-versa is Adhyasa. This is experienced by all. The knowledge of the Reality ending in realisation is Vidya. This Vidya can stultify Avidya, namely, mistaking the Atman for the Anatman and vice-versa¹. It² can never stultify matter whether it is describable or indescribable.

God, Maya and the World :

The popular notion that God created the universe and He sustains it and He destroys it has no relevance in the context of Advaita philosophy. The position taken by the Advaitin regarding this is as follows : There is one absolute Reality, which is Pure Being, Pure consciousness, and Pure Bliss. It is changeless, infinite and eternal. It is without motion, without attributes, without name without form and without parts. The words often used in the Upanishads to designate It are Brahman, or Atman. Brahman alone is the Reality and It is without a second. Brahman cannot be attributed with any qualities known to the human mind. Because qualities are objects and Brahman is the knower of the objects.

(1) ज्ञापकम् शास्त्रं न कारकम् (वृ. भा. 1-4-10)

(2) विज्ञानस्य च मिथ्याज्ञाननिवर्तकत्वव्यतिरेकेण

अकारकत्वं

It is always the subject and It never becomes the object. Brahman or the ultimate Reality cannot be referred to by any of the categories conceivable by us. It can never be known in the sense we know the yonder tree, because It can never become the object of knowledge. The method adopted by the Vedas to express this Highest Reality is negative. i.e., 'not this, not this.'¹ Thus the highest Reality is indicated in Adwaita philosophy, not by defining It but by eliminating what It is not. It is admitted on all hands that the Infinite cannot be conceived by the human mind, which is bound by the laws of time, space and causation. The Upanishads have categorically declared that the Absolute cannot be apprehended by the mind and senses.² The way out of this finite and conditioned Jivahood lies in discarding the finitude itself and realising for oneself one's own essential nature as Brahman or the highest Reality. The Upanishads have declared that the Jiva and Brahman are identical. The Jiva or the individual in its essential nature is Brahman only.³ The individual as individual cannot know the Reality because, he is bound by the very condition of his being, Therefore,

(1) नेति नेति (2) न बागच्छति नो मनः (3) तत्त्वमसि

knowing Reality is in fact, being Reality.¹ Brahman or Atman cannot be perceived by the mind and senses, for It presides over them. "That which the eyes cannot see, but that by which the eyes are seen, that which the speech cannot express, but that from which speech itself arises, that which the mind cannot comprehend, but that by which the mind is comprehended, that is the Atman".² This Atman has to be intuited as one's own Self by negating all the superimpositions and not by pursuing It as if it is a phenomenal object. The Shastras establish Atman by merely eliminating the distinctions concocted in It by Avidya (ignorance). It cannot be established in any other manner. It is by the identification of the body and senses with the Atman that the Reality is misunderstood as the individual. If this identification is sublated by knowledge the individual remains as Brahman Itself.

The question of creation and the existence of the world arises from the point of view of the

(1) तै॥ उ॥ सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म (1) एकमेवाद्वितीयं ब्रह्म

(2) Kenopanishad 1-5.

यन्मनसा न मनुते येनाहुर्मनोमतम् तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि
नेदं यदिदमुपासते ।

Jiva and not from the standpoint of Brahman. The infinite Brahman, the changeless Reality cannot become the finite world or the Jiva. There exists no part in Brahman; therefore, it is indivisible. It is not a thing, It is Pure Consciousness. There cannot be any will or desire in Brahman to create the world, for there can be no desire in the Infinite. What is there other than itself for the Infinite to desire for? The Adwaitin does not admit of any real creation. What is this creation then which you and I see? The Adwaitin replies that the creation which is seen through the adjuncts of the Jiva is Brahman Itself. No sooner we become the individual due to ignorance than we begin to see the world and presume its creator, God.¹ Let the Jiva shed its Jivahood or the individuality by attaining knowledge and the world will shed its creator, God. Let the Jiva shed its Jivahood or the individuality by attaining knowledge and the world will shed its 'worldness' too, and there will neither be the knowing subject nor the known

(1) सूत्रभाष्य 2-1-14 अविद्याकृतनामरूपोपाध्यनुरोधी ईश्वरः ।

अविद्याप्रत्युपस्थापितनामरूपकृतकार्यकरणसङ्घातानुरोधिनः

जीवाख्यानं प्रतीष्टे व्यवहाराविषये ।

object; but the one undivided homogeneous, infinite Existence alone will shine by Itself. The Jiva, Jagat (world) and Ishwara will then dissolve into Brahman, the one Reality without a second.

For most of the thinkers of religion and philosophy however, God acquires a different dimension and the world occupies a different status. For them the single Reality of the Adwaita gets broken into plurality. This incredibly vast universe cannot be the creation of the little self of man. There must be God then, the creator of the universe. He is conceived as a very superior entity endowed with attributes like omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience, which powers are, of course, denied to the Jiva. It is then presumed that God must have had some matter out of which He created the world. This matter too must be eternal like God since we cannot conceive of God creating even this matter out of nothing. Thus a material cause of the universe is postulated. The Jiva, which is subordinated to God is caught in the cycle of births and deaths and suffers in the world. The

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- 1) बृह॥ 2-4-14 येनेदं सर्वं विजानाति तं केन विजानीयात् ?
विज्ञातारमरे केन विजानीयात् ?

salvation for the Jiva lies in meditating upon God and obtaining His grace. How do we account for these various philosophies vis-a-vis the Advaita philosophy?. As philosophers, they have not distinguished their real Self from the upadhis or the conditions of the superimposition and apprehended the real nature of the Self. It is to be understood that when thinkers do not free themselves from the influence of mind and body and remain as conditioned selves, their conclusions in determining the ultimate facts of philosophy must also necessarily remain imperfect. Persons who are identified with their mind, body senses etc. see the world through their mind and other senses and say that the world is real because they see it. They do not consider that the mind and senses are the products of food and therefore they belong to the world. The senses cannot say that the world is a mere appearance as they themselves are the outcome of the world. The individual will be making a futile attempt to realise the highest Reality so long as he keeps clinging to his little individuality. Therefore, in Vedanta, true renunciation means the renunciation of "I" and "mine" or the Jiva-hood. Similarly, surrendering oneself to God means renouncing one's false individuality and

standing firmly rooted in one's own essential nature.¹

The great sages like Sri Shankaracharya, who had sublated their identification with the mind, body etc., and stood as Pure Being, did not consider themselves as individuals, but saw themselves as the highest Reality. Furthermore, they saw the world as Brahman itself, which is secondless and all pervading.

The nature of Maya is clearly defined by Shankara as that which does not exist but only appears to be existing. This is not a different meaning from the one held in common parlance. We use the word Maya to mean magic. If a box of matches is transformed into a flower by a magician we call it magic or Maya, because there is no real transformation. The flower is illusory and not real. The explanation of the world offered in Adwaita is similar to this. It is written in the commentary on the Brahma Sutras that the names and forms which constitute the seed of the world with all the empirical happenings in it, which are concocted by ignorance (Avidyakalpita), which

(1) बृ॥ भा. 4-4-23 एवंविद् आत्मन्यवात्मानं पश्य
सर्वं आत्मानं पश्यति ।

are identical, as it were, with the Omniscient God and which can neither be determined as such nor as not such are said to be Maya, Shakti or Prakriti. The appearance of the world of names and forms is the effect of Maya, which does not exist but only appears to be existing.¹²³ The Adwaitin recognises the phenomenon of the world as an appearance, but does not affirm it as real. It is not real because, its diversity consisting of names and forms disappears the moment one ceases to identify oneself with the body, mind etc. It is not absolutely unreal like the horns of a hare or the barren woman's son, because they are never seen, whereas the world is seen. Moreover, the substratum of the world i.e., Brahman is real. It is in order to explain this paradoxical nature of the world that Shankara puts forth the theory of Maya. The theory offers us an explanation

(1) Mandukya 2-31

या असद्वस्त्वात्मिका सद्वस्त्वात्मिकेव अवभासमाना सा माया ।

(2) Mandukya 4-58

साच माया न विद्यते ।

(3) Sutra Bhashya 2-1-14

अविद्याकल्पिते नामरूपे संसारप्रपञ्चबीजभूते माया

शक्तिः प्रकृतिरिति च श्रुतिस्मृत्योरभिज्ञेते ॥

of the world phenomenon. But it must never be forgotten that the theory of Maya is put forth from the Jiva's point of view and that the categories of Jiva, Maya and world have relevance only within the empirical domain or the Vyavaharika Drishti (Avidya Drishti).

Although, in the ultimate analysis, the individual, the world and God dissolve into a single Reality, viz., Brahman, when one realises oneself as Brahman, an explanation as to the questions why the world is created and how the world is created is sought by the individual as long as he sees it. When we, who are identified with the body and mind see the world, we suppose that there must be a cause for the world and believe that the world must be the effect of that cause. According to the law of causation, the effect is the cause itself in another form. The effect, i.e., the world, is known to be unreal on the attainment of knowledge. How can we presume a real cause for an unreal effect? Therefore once again, Maya concocted by Avidya is offered as the material cause of the world. This matter, i.e., Maya, which causes the appearance of the world of names and forms, is always held as conjured up by nescience. It is not real. It is said to be the

seed or the potential form of the world. It is important to caution here that the metaphor of the seed should not mislead us to take the seed as the material source out of which the world evolves into its variety and multiplicity. Maya is the matter concocted by Avidya and it has no real existence. Sri Shankara once again defines Maya as that which does not exist. Thus, both the world and its cause, Maya are held to be illusory.

If the Shrutis, Smritis and Puranas declare that Brahman is the cause of the world, man will begin to inquire into the nature of this cause, viz., Brahman and eventually come to realise himself as Brahman. For such an enlightened man the world does not exist as a phenomenal show, it reveals its essence as Brahman itself. The seeker and the sought thus merge into a single, absolute Reality, which has nothing second to it. Shankara says that the scriptures do not speak of creation in order to trace the process of creation but to turn our minds from the world towards Brahman which is its substratum.¹

(1) सू. भा. 1-4-14 दर्शयति सृष्ट्यादिप्रपञ्चस्य ब्रह्मप्रति-
प्रत्ययताम् ॥

Another explanation of the cause of the world is said in another way. According to Advaita, Brahman, is misunderstood as the world on account of Adhyasa or Avidya. Therefore, there is only one Reality and no other. But when the Advaitin is obliged to speak in terms of cause and effect, he would say that since Brahman is the only Reality without anything second to it, it must be admitted that Brahman alone is both the material and efficient cause of the world. But does Brahman transform itself into the world as milk is transformed into curds? No; because, Brahman is beyond change. It is described as immutable. There exists no cause and effect relation between Brahman and the world, although, Brahman is said to be the material and efficient cause of the world.¹ To make this paradox intelligible, the example of the serpent "born" of a rope in semi-darkness is given. The rope is mistaken to be a serpent, which is an instance of the misapprehension of the reality. The rope is not the evolutionary cause of the snake, the rope has not

(1) सू. भा. 4-3-14 उत्पत्त्यादिश्रुतीनां एकत्वप्रतिपादन

-परत्वात् ।

changed into the snake. But without the rope there would not have been any idea of snake. It is the substratum on which the imaginary snake is superimposed by the perceiver on account of illusion. Once the rope is seen as rope the snake disappears ; nay, it is realised that there is only the rope and the snake has never been. Similarly, on realising the Atman or Brahman as one's own Self the world concocted in Brahman by Avidya disappears and there remains Brahman alone shining by Itself as the Eternal Reality.¹

The Three States of Consciousness :

Everyone undergoes three states of consciousness daily, viz., waking, dreaming and sleeping. Since this is a common experience people have given little thought to study these three phases of our existence. Almost all thinkers in the world are concerned with the waking state alone and they believe that our knowledge of nature or of ourselves must necessarily be limited to what happens in the waking state. What happens to the

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- (1) सू. भा. 3-2-22 तत्र कलितरूपस्याख्यानेन ब्रह्मणस्त्वस्यावे
दनम् इति निश्चीयते । तदास्पदं हि इदं समस्तं कार्यं
नेतिनेतीति प्रतिपिद्धम् ॥

knower himself during sleeping and dreaming is a question that has seldom bothered these thinkers.

They think that these two phases of our existence are rather useless and their study may not yield any useful knowledge. Psychologists look upon dreams as mere mental forms whose correlates must be traced to our waking experiences. From the point of view of waking again, our deep sleep state, where the mind does not function, is a state of complete ignorance. Thus we are accustomed to judge dream and sleep from the point of view of waking only. Nevertheless, according to the Vedantic tradition, this is not the way to study the nature of our consciousness. The right way, according to Vedanta is not to study the three states from the standpoint of waking alone; rather, we are asked to consider each state independently as they are given to us in our experience.

Now, how do we experience each of these states? The first thing to note is that our so called dream experience is not at all a dream while we are actually experiencing it¹. No one experiences a dream knowing it to be such. Our

(1) . का 2-5 स्वप्न न गतिस्थाने लोकपाहर्षमतीषिणः ।

dream experiences are as real as the experiences we undergo during our waking hours. In other words, dreaming is experienced by us as waking only at the time of experience. It is only on waking that the dream is realised to be dream. This means that the mind which functions during waking is different from the one which functions during dreams. If one measures the duration of a dream by the standard time of the waking state it might be, say, one or two minutes; but these two minutes might sometimes be experienced as hundreds of years. One might even perform the marriage of one's grandson in one's dream, the dream-mind sometimes experiences impossible things—one might see one's own head cut off by the sword and put into one's hands. Such things could not happen if the waking mind existed in dreams. In dreams, the dreaming "I" acquires a new set of senses, a new body and mind.

In our deep sleep state, we remain as the highest Reality or Brahman. This is also a matter of experience of everybody. The mind is absent in deep sleep and with it vanishes our individuality too. There is neither mind, nor body, nor senses, nor the world in this state of dreamless sleep. The Jiva remains here

as Brahman. The Jiva or the soul is in fact, always identical with Brahman. But on account of Upadhis, such as the mind, body etc., he appears to be different from the Reality. As these Upadhis do not exist during deep sleep, it is said that the soul merges in Brahman during deep sleep. In reality, there is no time when Jiva is not one with Brahman. He is always one with Brahman.¹

It is often asked if the individual loses his individuality how does the same man come back to the waking state? The answer is that the Upadhis viz., ignorance, desire and action have not been sublated by real knowledge; therefore, the individual comes back with the same set of Upadhis. As the world is concocted by Adhyasa, when Adhyasa comes the world, body, senses etc. come. When adhyasa goes, the world, body, senses etc. also go away. When Adhyasa is sublated by knowledge, it does not come again. Till then it comes of its own accord and goes of its own accord. Adhyasa cannot be explained by reason. Because reason comes after Adhyasa. Time, space, causality come after

(1) छा. ॥ 6-8-1 सता सौम्य तदासम्पन्नो भवति ।

Adhyasa. Therefore, experience is the only proof for Adhyasa. Upadhis or Avidya are merely forms of the mind and therefore, where the mind is not, there the Upadhis also are not. The Upadhis exist in the mind only. There was no mind during deep sleep and hence, it must be concluded that there were no Upadhis. This is not merely a logical conclusion but a matter of universal experience. If it be asked where the mind existed then, it is said that it existed then in Avidya or ignorance. In other words, mind and Avidya cannot be separated from one another. The manifestation of the mind means the manifestation of Avidya. As has already been ascertained, mind can function only when the supreme Self or the Atman is identified with it, i.e., when it is under Adhyasa. In deep sleep this misidentification of the Self with the mind does not exist because, the latter (the mind) is absent there. The Atman alone is in sleep, which fact is borne out by our statement on waking, "I slept soundly, I did not know anything." The Jiva had indeed been one with its essential and blissful nature which is Pure Consciousness. If he were not Ananda itself he could not have come out with statements testifying to the

blissful experience he has had during deep sleep. How then did Brahman become the Jiva for the first time? Vedanta¹ answers it is in the experience of all. Any inference opposed to the experience is invalid. This identification of Athma with body mind etc. is in the experience of all. Similarly the absence of this identification of Athma with the body also is in the experience of all. In the same way this wrong identification of Athman with the body etc., is in the experience of all in the waking and dreaming states and the absence of this misidentification is in the experience of all in the deep sleep state. There is no reason for it. If it is sublated by the knowledge ending in realisation it never comes again. Since the very notion of time, space and causality rise only after Adhyasa manifests, it is futile to ask how or why Brahman has become the Jiva. The same explanation holds good with regard to the question how the same Jiva returns to waking from deep sleep where he was identified with Brahman.² Some people infer the existence of

(1) सू. भा. 4-1-2 न हि दृष्टे अनुपपन्नं नामा

बृह. भा. 1-4-10 न च दृष्टे अनुपपन्नं नाम

(2) सू. भा., अ. भा. अन्योन्यस्मिन् अन्योन्यात्मकतां
अन्योन्यधर्माश्च अध्यस्य इतरेतराविवेकेन ।

the Jiva even in deep sleep; but this contradicts the experience of everybody. Nobody experiences anything in deep sleep because nothing exists other than one's own Self according to the experience of all. This Self is Brahman¹.

But this Self, even though attained everyday by all in deep sleep is not realised to be such. When Brahman is realised in the waking state as one's own Self, the misidentification of the self with the non-self does not occur any more and the Jiva is liberated once for all.

All men see the world with their eyes as the product of something.

The Naiyyayikas and Vaisheshikas have declared Paramanus as the material cause of the world.

The Sankhyas and Yogins have declared Pradhana or Prakrithi which is the equilibrium of Sathva, Rajas and Thamo gunas as the material cause of the world. Here Guna means matter according to them.

Poorvameemamsakas have found the Prakrithi as the material cause of the world.

(1) Man 1-2 आत्मा च ब्रह्म । 'अयमात्मा ब्रह्म ।

Sri Ramanujacharya has declared Sookshma Achith as the material cause of the world.

Sri Madhvacharya has declared Prakrithi as the material cause of the world.

Modern Scientists say that a few types of elementary particles are the material cause of the world.

Modern Advaitins say that an indescribable matter called Moolavidya, Maya or Avidya etc., which is beginningless is the material cause of the world as well as of our misunderstanding, not understanding and doubtful understanding of the Reality.

Sri Shankaracharya says Brahman, which is changeless, partless, Pure Consciousness, Pure Being, and Pure Bliss is the material and instrumental cause of the world, on the authority of Upanishads such as (Yathovaa Imaani Bhoothani Jayanthe-Thadbrahma (Thaithireeya 3.1). "That from which these elements take their birth is Brahman"; and also on the authority of the Suthra 'Prakrithischa' (Sut. Bh. 1-4-23). The meaning of the Sutra is that Brahman is the material as well as the instrumental cause of the world.

Brahman is changeless, partless; it is not matter but Pure consciousness etc. How can such Brahman become the material cause of the world?

Let us first enquire into the nature of the world before we search for its material cause.

With what do the people see the world? The people see the world through their eyes. Which is the material cause of the eyes? Eyes are the product of the food eaten. Which is the material cause of the food? The elements are the material cause of the food. The five elements constitute the world. So the eyes are the product of the world. Can the eyes admit the nonexistence of the world? No, because no one can say "My mother is a barren woman". Similarly, the eyes which are the products of the world cannot say that the world does not exist. They are bound to say that the world does exist. If you really want to know the truth about the world do not identify the eyes and other senses with yourself. Consider them as parts of the world and not of yours. Then you stand as Pure Consciousness just as you are in deep sleep and see that you do not see the world at all. When you do not see the world the question of seeking its cause does not arise at all.

The above reasoning applies not only to the individual senses but to the perceiver himself who is lying behind the senses. The perceiver is not properly qualified to sit in judgement over the question of the existence or non-existence of the world since he is identified with the body and senses, which are objects to him. The subject and object cannot be one and the same. This identification is a mistaken knowledge, which means that the perceiver who wants to know the truth about the world has first misunderstood himself.[†] This disqualifies him as a judge over the world. The identification of the body and senses with the Atman and vice versa is effected in waking and dream states and it is in these states of our consciousness the world is seen. When this identification does not exist in deep sleep then the world is not seen. So it is concluded that the world is concocted in Brahman by our ignorance. Whenever a thing is concocted then its substratum is held to be the material and instrumental cause of that thing. For example, the

(1) अ. भाष्य. देहेन्द्रियादिषु अहंममाभिमान रहितस्य प्रमातृ-
त्वानुपपत्ते ।

सत्यानृते मिथुनीकृत्य ।

material and instrumental cause of the rope-snake is rope only. Similarly the material and instrumental cause of the world is Brahman as the world is concocted in IT.

What is the cause of the identification of the Atman with the body, mind and senses and vice-versa ? The cause is not knowing the substratum upon which the phenomenon of the body, mind and senses is superimposed. Thus, first there is not knowing the Reality as the cause, out of which misunderstanding of the Reality, i.e., the effect arises. This is known as 'Prathipatthikrama'. It must be clearly noted here that the process is not like the mud being the cause of the pot, but it is like the rope being the cause of the snake's appearance. Nowhere does misunderstanding require matter (indescribable) as its material cause.

Shankara has also said that Maya, which is concocted by Adhyasa is the material cause of the world¹. Now, this Maya is not real, itself being concocted by Adhyasa or misunderstanding. If

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- (1) सू. भा. 2-1-14 अविद्याकल्पिते नामरूपे प्रपञ्चबीजभूते
माया शक्तिः प्रकृतिरिति श्रुतिस्मृत्योरभिलप्येते ।
सू. भा. 2-1-27 अविद्याकल्पितेन नामरूपलक्षणेन
प्रतिपद्यते ॥

Maya itself is unreal the world which is its product must also be unreal. The process of concoction, however, cannot take place without a substratum. This substratum, it must be admitted, is Brahman. So it makes no difference whether Brahman is said to be the material cause of the world or Maya is said to be so. Because Maya is that which does not exist, but only appears to exist. When the cause does not exist its effect also does not exist. Both the cause and effect, viz., Maya and the world are merely concocted in Brahman by Avidya. Therefore, for one who persistently seeks the cause of the world it is said that Brahman is the instrumental as well as the material cause of the world. in the sense explained above.¹

Both for Gowdapada and Shankara the world of our waking state is equal to the world of our dream state.² The world is, according to them, comparable to the mirage or the city of clouds or

(1) लोकप्रसिद्धं त्विदं रूपद्वयं ब्रह्मणिकल्पितं परमृशति
प्रतिषेध्यत्वाय ॥

(2) गौ. का. 1-15 अन्यथागृह्यतः स्वप्नः

भा. स्वप्नजागरितयोः अन्यथा रज्ज्वां सर्पमिव गृह्यतः

(b) सू. अ. भा. सत्यानृते मिथुनीकृत्य ।

the objects seen in the dream.¹ All these phenomena are only seen but not real. Therefore, the conclusion is that the world has no existence or SATTA. The commentators' classification of the Reality into the Paramarthika, Vyavaharika and Pratibhasika Sattas (the Absolute, the empirical and the apparent) is not found either in Shankara or Gowdapada. For Shankara SATTA or REALITY is one only and it has no gradations.²

(!) (a) गी. भा. 13-26 क्षेत्रं च माया निर्मितहस्ति हर्म्या
दिवत् स्वप्नदृष्टवस्तुवत् गन्धर्वनगरादिवत् असदेव
सदिव अवभासते ॥

(b) सू. भा. 2-1-14 प्रपञ्चजातस्य ब्रह्मव्यतिरेकेण अभावः ।

(c) सू. भा. 3-2-22 कल्पितरूपप्रत्याख्यानेन ब्रह्मणस्वरूपा
वेदनम् ।

(2) सू. भा. 2-1-16 एकं च पुनस्स्वम् ।

ब्रह्मणि कल्पितं रूपद्वयं परामृशति ।

MULAVIDYA VADA

(The Doctrine of the Original Matter
or Mayavada)

For the first time in the history of India it was given to the great genius of Shankara to make a searching and comprehensive analysis of the commonly accepted texts of philosophy viz. the ten Upanishads the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita and refute the various divergent and distorted systems of philosophy and establish that the general purpose of these scriptures is to propound the doctrine of Advaita. It is strange that this very doctrine of Advaita, which had once overridden all other doctrines is faced with an aberration called Mulavidya Vada within its own fold today.

To get out of the rut created by the subsequent commentaries on Shankara's original commentary, one had better go to Shankara himself in order to understand him rather than depend upon his commentators. This is a sound advice because, those who begin their studies of Advaita philosophy with these commentaries on commentaries, despite the fact that they study Shankara's own commentaries along with them—have come to accept and propagate a new-fangled idea known as Mulavidya Vada or the

theory of the material cause of the universe. The attribution of this theory to Shankara by way of misinterpreting him is a serious matter worthy of the attention of all the lovers of philosophy in general and the lovers of Advaita in particular, in as much as this theory, if admitted as part of the Advaitic doctrine, reduces it into a form of Dvaita philosophy. Because, the theory postulates a beginningless, indescribable and second material entity besides Brahman, which is said to be sublated by the knowledge of Brahman. If the theory is vitiated by the doctrinal error of putting a second reality beside the secondless Brahman of the Advaita, it is marred by the illogicality of its claim that matter can be sublated by knowledge. It may be noted here that it is on the score of this theory of Original matter or Maya that the Advaitic doctrine has had to suffer several onslaughts in the hands of its critics. Perhaps, it may not be an exaggeration to say that, this kind of interpretation has occasioned the birth of the schools of Visistadvaita (the Qualified Non-Dualism) and Dvaita (Dualism). One might now see that though the interpretations which favour the existence of the Original Matter (Mulavidya) do so on what seems to be only a marginal departure from

Shankara's own views, the departure actually has a much wider implication in that, it has given rise to different systems of philosophy involving major controversies. Hence the supreme importance of understanding Shankara's philosophy as it is.

The chain of commentaries that followed Sri Shankara's in the relay fashion are known as Panchapadika, Vivarana and Tathwapradiṭṭa in one series and Bhamathi, Kalpatharu and Parimala in another series, each one being the commentary on the former in its series. One should little wonder then, if there is wide divergence from Shankara on the part of these commentators in answering certain moot questions. Hence the importance of ascertaining Shankara's real views on such questions. It is also to be noted in this context that there were commentators and interpreters who grafted some of their own views on Shankara's, so that those views of theirs might survive and become acceptable since they derive thereby, a greater authority. Further, the theory of Moolavidya, in presuming the existence of some subtle matter as the seed out of which the whole world evolves seems to impart some credibility to the world and man's empirical life in it, which is so dear to the

embodied souls that they can hardly bring themselves to deny its reality even on the grounds of the soundest philosophy. But any attempt to project Shankara, the uncompromising philosopher of Advaita as one who would admit of any reality other than the one absolute Brahman is to take a very unphilosophical stand in the name of philosophy and do injustice to him.

The controversy of **Mulavidya** hinges round the interpretation of the word—'Maya'. In Shankara's commentaries, **Maya** is clearly defined as that which does not exist but only appears to be existing.

This concept of **Maya** is instituted in order to offer an explanation to those who demand how the undifferentiated, absolute Reality became the qualitative and diversified universe. But for this demand by those who admit of creation because they see it on account of their **Avidya**, the Advaitin having declared, " All this is verily **Brahman** " (**Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma**) would have kept quiet about the existence and the cause of creation. But now that he has to oblige the inquirer with an answer that he can understand, he says like others, without letting his confirmed doctrine of non-dualism suffer from any detracton, that if

the world exists,¹ Brahman is both the material and efficient cause of it. The empirical mind of the inquirer which is obsessed with the reality of the material world is still seen to search for a material cause for the material universe, and the Adwaitin once again graciously condescends to answer the query by saying "Well, the material cause of the world you are looking for is Maya ; nevertheless, that Maya is concocted by Avidya" The Adwaitin has come round the full circle and has stood once again from where he had started i.e., in the absolutism enshrined in the Upanishadic statements like 'Ekamevadwiteeyam, Sadeva Saumyedamagraaseeth, Ayam atmabrahma Sarvanubhuh etc., (Chandogya 6.2.1 and Brihadaranyaka 2-5-19). Having said that Maya is the material cause of the world, notwithstanding that this Maya is matter conjured up by Avidya (ignorance), the Adwaitin has to subordinate it (Upadhi) to God, or Ishwara, who is a necessary corollary to the insentient entity [of Maya. Because the insentient Maya by itself cannot create anything. Otherwise, for the Adwaitin there is the one eternal Reality shining by itself in its own nature. The Jiva and Ishwara, the creation and its cause are themselves the effects of Avidya

(1) यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते तद्गम ॥

or Adhyasa on the part of the Ji:a. Just as space which is indivisible appears to be divided into separate spaces within pots and jars, the one indivisible Reality appears to be diversified into God, the world, the souls etc. Even God's creatorship, His rulership etc., are contingent upon the limiting adjuncts concocted in the Atman owing to Avidya.

In the wake of the ego 'I' which is the result of our identification with the body and mind, we begin to perceive the world; the perception of the world calls for a God as its creator, and the creatorship of God becomes meaningless unless he is given something out of which the world could be created. **And that something out of which the world is created is the Paramanu or the primary atom for the Naiyayikas and Vaisesikas; it is the Pradhana - a compound of the triple qualities of Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas held in the state of equilibrium for the Samkhyas and the Yoga-philosophers, and it is Prakriti for the Purva-Mimasakas. Here guna means matter. For Sri Ramanujacharya, the propounder of the doctrine of the qualified Non-Dualism (Vishishtadwaita), the subtle matter (Sukshma Achit), one, of the two constituents, viz, the Chit and Achit of the body of God, is the**

cause of the world. The dualists who are the followers of Sri Madhwacharya again, hold Prakriti as the material cause of the world. Falling in line with the dualists mentioned above, some commentators as well as some modern adwaitins say that there exists a primordial matter concocted by Avidya as in Shankara-known as Mulavidya or Maya, which is the material cause of the universe. It is to be understood that they say the Mulavidya or Maya is the material cause of Avidya. It is imposible to accept Maya as the material cause of Avidya and at the same time to maintain that it is the product of Avidya. They say that this primordial matter rests on Brahman, that it is the seed of the world which is diversified into names and forms, that it is ineffable, insentient and beginningless and yet capable of being sublated by knowledge, (Jnana-Badhyatwa). Sri Ramanuja is in fact more logical than these commentators in not characterising his subtle matter (Sukshma Achit), the material cause of the universe, as capable of being sublated by knowledge; for no one has seen knowledge negating an object which really exists, whether it is describable or indescribable, dependent or independent. However, if the object is an illusory one caused

by misapprehension as the snake in the rope it may be sublated by right knowledge and can put an end to it. Knowledge only reveals something that already exists. Sri Vivaranacharya has admitted that Mulavidya is concocted by ignorance (Avidya) and therefore it can be sublated by knowledge. This is a contradiction because, he has also said that Mulavidya is the material cause of concoction.¹

The origin of this theory of Mulavidya (the theory of the material cause of the world as well as of Adhyasa) is traced to the panchapadikakara who wrote his Panchapadika as a commentary on Shankara's commentary. According to Panchapadikakara Maya and Avidya are one and the same. The two terms are synonymous. Maya is the material cause of the world as well as of three types of Avidya, viz, the absence of knowledge, the mistaken knowledge and the doubtful knowledge. This Maya or Avidya is beginningless. It is called by the name of Mulavidya (Original Ignorance) as it is held to be the material cause of both the world and Adhyasa. Adhyasa also is called as Avidya by them, in the sense that it is Karyaavidya. Karyaavidya means

(1) P.P. अध्यासस्यापि उपादानकरणीभूता

Avidya, the effect for which Mulavidya is the material cause. It is an indescribable matter as it cannot be described either as existent (Sat) or as non-existent (Asat) etc. It exists in Brahman making It its object. It is subordinated to Brahman and it is an indescribable matter. Therefore it can be negated by the knowledge of Brahman. It exists extensively in all the three states of consciousness. It envelops Brahman and it projects doership and enjoyership in the Reality. It takes shelter in Brahman even though it is a matter outside it. It possesses the three qualities of Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. It goes by the name of Maya, Avidya, Mulavidya, Prakriti, Avyakta, Avyakṛta, Shakti, Tamas, Akshara etc.¹

(1) Panchapadika (20) येयं श्रुतिस्मृतिइतिहासपुराणेषु
नामरूपं अव्यक्तं अविद्या प्रकृतिः अव्याकृतिः माया इत्यादि बहुधा गीयते
चैन्यस्य स्वतएवावस्थितलक्षणवत्स्वरूपतावभासं । प्रतिबन्ध
जीवत्वापादिका सुषुप्ते प्रकाशाच्छादनविक्षेप संस्कारमात्रस्थितिः ।
अनादिरविद्या न केवलं अग्रहणान्यथाग्रहणसंशयग्रहणानां
उपादानकारणीभूता किन्तु सर्वस्यप्रपञ्चस्य उपादानकारणीभूता
ईधरार्थीना अनिर्वचनीया माया ।

It is important to note here that wherever there is a reference to Maya the so called material cause of the world, Shankara invariably mentions it as concocted by nescience (Avidyakalpita). For Shankara, it must be remembered, Avidya is Adhyasa (mistaking the Self for the non-self and the non-self for the Self) in the main. Thus according to him Adhyasa is the cause of Maya and not Maya the cause of Adhyasa. Even to see Mulavidya, which is said to be the cause of Adhyasa according to the Mulavidyavadins, one should first become individualized due to Adhyasa. Moreover, Adhyasa, does not require any material cause for its occurrence since it is only a form of ignorance, which is in the experience of all. It is said by Sri Sureswara that not knowing the Reality is the cause of Adhyasa.

Further, if Mulavidya is the cause of the world, the existence of Mulavidya is implied in the existence of the world. Similar is its position with reference to our bodies also. As long as the body lasts Mulavidya should also operate in it. Even on attaining Self-realisation the Jnani cannot attain salvation because, Mulavidya exists in the form of body. Thus according to the Mulavidyavadins, the state of liberation is attainable

only after death. This position of the Mulavidyavadins is unacceptable to Shankara who maintains that the state of liberation is attained the moment Adhyasa disappears and knowledge dawns. If Mulavidya is accepted, the Reality or Brahman becomes "vasthuparichinna" that is, limited by another thing.

There are some sentences in the Shankara Bhashya which admit the existence of the seed of the universe in deep sleep and many sentences which say that the individual merges as it were, in Brahman during this state. The seed or the potential form of ignorance here means nothing but the absence of knowledge, a condition obtaining in the Jiva before he becomes one with Brahman in deep sleep. This seed exists in Adhyasa. This does not come in the way of the individual's merger in Brahman as it is only a negative state. There is no positive matter here like Mulavidya to prevent the oneness of the Jiva with Brahman. It is said that the Jiva merges as it were, because there is no action of merging actually taking place in the deep sleep state, as, in reality the Jiva in its essential form is always identical with Brahman. Owing to the upadhis like the mind and body he appeared as Jiva ; when the upadhis

do not exist in deep sleep it is said he appears as if he merges in Brahman.

According to Mulavidyavadins, Mulavidya is the seed which exists during deep sleep and there is no possibility of the Jiva becoming one with Brahman. They interpret the phrase 'as it were' in a different way to mean that there is no merging of the Jiva with Brahman during deep sleep. This is opposed to Sruthi and Bhashya.

The authority for the existence of Mulavidya is ascribed to the following quotation from the Adhyasa Bhasya of Shankara: 'Mithyajnana Nimittah', which means 'Mithyajnana' i.e. the mistaken knowledge of the non-self for the self and the self for the non-self, is nimittah, i.e. the efficient cause (of our individualization). This absence of knowledge also is a concoction; so it comes with Adhyasa and it goes with Adhyasa. Thus Adhyasa is clearly said to be the efficient cause of our existence here as Jivas, although, all this diversity including the Jivas constitutes one undifferentiated absolute Existence.

Mulavidyavadins interpret 'mithya' as indescribable, 'Ajnana' as an indescribable matter, and 'nimitta' as the material cause. But nowhere has

Shankara split the word 'mithyajnana' as 'mithya-ajnana'. The word 'nimitttha' never gives the meaning of material cause. While Mulavidya is hanging on this solitary statement which, of course, is misinterpreted, Shankara has clearly stated that there are only three kinds of Avidya, viz, the absence of knowledge, the mistaken knowledge and the doubtful knowledge and they are the sole cause of the appearance of the phenomenal existence. If we admit the existence of Mulavidya which is beginningless, we contradict the Upanishadic statements like, "There was Brahman alone before creation, There was Atman alone before creation". This amounts to the admission of Dwaita (duality) although an illogical attempt is made in claiming that this Mulavidya is sublated by knowledge at the end. In the Brahma Sutra Bhashya Shankara has first described this potential power (beejasakthi) as subordinate to Brahman (B.S. 1.4.3) and then clarifies it by saying 'Avidyathmika'. As this 'beejasakthi' is concocted by Avidya it can be sublated by knowledge.¹ The

(1) सू. भा. 2-1-14 आविद्याकल्पिते नामरूपे

माया शक्तिरिति अभिधीयेते ।

(2) सू. भा. 1-4-3 आविद्यात्मिका हि बीजशक्तिः ।

great scholar Vivaranacharya knew that a thing, unless concocted by Avidya could not be sublated by knowledge. So he said that Mulavidya is concocted by nesience, but he forgot that a thing which is the material cause of concoction cannot itself be concocted. Because it must exist before concoction to become its material cause.

In conclusion, we say that if one does not read the views of the post-Shankara scholars into Shankara's writings, one would call Shankara as a Brahnavadin and not as a Mayavadin. For Shankara, whatever existed or exists or will ever exist is only Brahman and not Maya or Mula-vidya. The status of Maya is clearly held in Shankara's philosophy to be one of appearances as names and forms concocted by Avidya. There is no mention of Avidya or Maya in the sense of Mulavidya either in the Bhasya (Shankara's commentary) or in the Vartikas (Sureshwara's commentaries), and it is a theory injected into Shankara's commentaries by the later commentators.

STEPS TO THE REALISATION OF THE HIGHEST REALITY ACCORDING TO SHREE SHANKARACHARYA

The first step is to refrain from forbidden actions motivated by our desire for worldly pleasures (kama). In his pursuit of worldly pleasures, man often indulges in forbidden actions which are unrighteous and socially harmful. These actions are detrimental to the development of the individual as well as the society. The individual who busies himself with the gratification of his worldly desires finds it very hard to rise above the trifles of his humdrum life and dwell on the lofty ideas of knowledge and enlightenment. Indulgence in the worldly pleasures prevents him from thinking about the Reality. Therefore, the least he can do in the direction of knowledge is to give up all forbidden actions. Actions like telling lies, stealing, harming or killing others and all acts of similar nature which damage his own personality as well as the society should be entirely given up. Even though one does not help others, but just does not harm others, it is thought that it is great help at this stage.

The second step is that we must act in accordance with the injunctions of the holy scriptures

(Vedas). The authority of the Shastras is to be honoured and not the arbitrary rulings of the men with vested interests, although, these may claim to be authorities on Shastras. The holy works give us the details of the actions to be done by us and also the details of the fruits to be derived therefrom, not only in this world but also in the next. Thus we are advised to act always with faith in the scriptures and with devotion to God. By performing these actions sanctioned by the scriptures we attain such results as happiness here and also enjoyments in heaven. But since the results of all actions are only transitory, one gets soon disgusted with the path of action for obtaining fruits and starts questioning the utility of all actions, whether good or bad.

The third step is to relinquish the fruits of our actions or surrender them to God while acting in accordance with the injunctions of the scriptures. So long as we desire for the fruits of our actions we are bound to be either elated or depressed at the success or failure of our actions. Failure in our endeavours leaves us ill-tempered and an ill-tempered man cannot act with discrimination. Having lost the discrimination between the right and wrong, and caught in the grips of

anger and delusion one might go to the extent of even killing one's own parents or teachers. Therefore we should renounce the desire for the fruits of our actions which invariably leads to the perfect mental poise or the state of equilibrium of mind. It should be noted that renunciation of actions is not good in the premature state, performing them in accordance with the scriptures dedicating them to God is better than giving them up.

The fourth step is to surrender the actions themselves at the altar of Reality or God and remain unattached not only to the fruits of one's actions but also to the actions themselves. The surrender of actions means the surrender of the doership or agency of one's actions. The ego in man arrogates unto itself the actions performed and gives expressions to such feelings as, "I have done this action. Nobody could have done it. It is some thing great indeed It is my achievement etc. Thus the worldly man feeds his ego constantly and gets entangled in actions and the chain of misery it brings in its train. The seeker after truth, on the other hand, constantly discriminating knows for certain that all actions and their results are in reality dispensed by God alone and not by

him and therefore, surrenders them to God to whom they properly belong. Or he might adopt the attitude of perfect non-attachment by realising that he is only an instrument in the hands of God. This kind of Sadhana described in this step constitutes KarmaYoga and the Vedantic Sadhana properly begins from this step.

Giving the details of this Karmayoga, Bhagavan Sri Krishna Says in the Geetha¹— (Yatkaroshi madarpanam) — “Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice and whatever you do by way of penance. offer it to Me, dedicate it to Me,”

Needless to say that absolute sincerity must be the hallmark of the aspirant who treads the spiritual path. Here is a story to illustrate this point.

There was a landholder in a city. One day he saw a stray cow eating the crop in his field. He picked up a stone and hit at it hard. The cow fell down and died. Immediately he said very ceremoniously, “Let it be dedicated to God”. After some years the time of his death

(1) यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यन,

यत्तपस्यासि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ।

came. Then the servants of Lord Yama, the God of death and the servants of Vishnu arrived there to take him. There was a dispute between them. The servants of Yama said that they would take him to hell as he had killed a cow. The servants of Vishnu said that his soul belonged to them because he had dedicated that action to Lord Vishnu. Finally they came to agreement to find out whether he had dedicated all his actions to God in this way or merely the act of killing the cow. Only then they would solve the dispute. Both the parties now appeared before the dying man in the disguise of the police and asked him questions such as these :

Whose house is this? Who built it? Whose land is this? who cultivated this?" The old man replied, "I built the house. I bought the land and I cultivated it." All of them expressed a desire to see his beautiful field and they were taken there. The Landlord was now asked who killed the cow. Then the landlord replied, "Ofcourse, the cow died when I hit it; but I have dedicated that action to Lord Vishnu and therefore I am not responsible for the cow's death". On hearing this the servants of God left the place, leaving the landlord into the hands of

Yama's servants. He was taken to Lord Yama's court and was given double punishment.

This kind of dedication is undesirable. If he had dedicated all his actions including the one of killing the cow he would have been protected. Such a man also would not kill a cow for straying into his fields. Therefore whatever one does must be sincerely dedicated to God. If we dedicate all our actions as well as their fruits to God then our hearts will be purified and we become free from selfishness and worldly desires. When this stage is attained we never do forbidden actions, simply because, by our very nature we are averse to such things.

The fifth step is to meditate upon God or the Reality. The moment we start dedicating our actions to God a definite relationship is established between ourselves and God. God is pure Bliss and finding one's relationship with God means being happy. This experience of happiness which is untainted by sensual desires is a sufficient motivation for the pure-hearted aspirant to meditate upon the reality. At the beginning stages, while meditating, the aspirant feels that he is separate from the God he is

meditating upon, but as he advances on the path, he begins to feel his oneness with God. He feels that he is God Himself by his Bhavana. At this stage the aspirant might also attain some of the powers of God. After casting off his physical body (death) he will become one with God whom he has been meditating upon.

The sixth step is Bhakthi or devotion to God. When meditation progresses the aspirant experiences the blissful nature of God and begins to love him. When love in God increases it is natural for him to find his love for worldly pleasures decreasing. Love is a natural quality in man, but we find it always misplaced. Generally, most of the people love their wives, their children their wealth or home and their own welfare in this world or in the worlds after death. Even those who engage themselves in religious performances very often do so with a view to attaining higher worlds or better happiness. There is hardly anyone who loves God for His own sake. The love which looks for no reward but attaches itself to God for His own sake is the highest kind of Bhakthi (Nishkama Bhakthi)

(1) देवो भूत्वा देवान् अप्येति ।

which is indeed the worthy ideal of every devotee of God in every religion.

The seventh step is to surrender ourselves completely to God, which is called Prapatthi by some people. When the love of God matures, the devotee loses his individuality and becomes an instrument in the hands of God. He takes the stand that God alone is working through him and he is neither the doer nor the enjoyer of fruits of any actions. When he thus surrenders himself to God and lets himself to be His instruments, he can no longer commit any forbidden actions. This is because the passions like greed and anger which prompt him to perform forbidden actions are now totally sublimated and his personality is on its way to growing into the divine image of God Himself. If he does anything now he does only good actions useful to the world

The eighth step is the inquiry into the real nature of the Reality and Its realisation. As the aspirant continues his inquiry he finds the hollowness of the world and its cause (Maya), and gradually loses his individual self and merges in the Highest Reality. He realises that the Reality is the soul of everything in creation. His own self is no exception to this and he comes to

realise that he too in essence is nothing but the Reality itself. Not only his soul but also all the souls including the inanimate objects reveal themselves to him their metaphysical essence, which is the highest Reality itself. Now he sees nothing but the reality. Before and behind, to the right and left, above and below, inside, and outside, the Sadhaka sees himself as the Reality, as Pure bliss, Pure Consciousness and Pure Being, without a second.

It is the basic tenet of Advaita Philosophy that we are always the Reality and that there has never been a time when we were not IT. Man as man is only an apparent fact whereas man as Brahman is an absolute fact. Owing to the mistaken knowledge (Avidya), we conceived ourselves as what we are not. On the attainment of the right knowledge we only become aware of the incontrovertible fact that we have always been the reality and we have never been the finite individual selves.

To put it succinctly, the path of knowledge enunciated by Sri Shankaracharya consists of (1) Viveka or discrimination between the real and, the unreal, between the right and the

wrong, (2) **Vairagya** or dispassion towards all worldly pleasures (3) **Shat Sampath** or the six-fold virtues like **Shama** or the control of the mind, **Dama** or the control of the sense organs, **Titiksha** or forbearance of heat and cold, pleasure and pain censure and praise, **Uparathi** or withdrawing the mind from actions, **Shraddha** or faith in the scriptures and in the words of the Guru, and **Samadhana**, the equilibrium of mind. The last of the fore-fold virtues (**Sadhana Chathushtaya**) to be practiced by the **Sadhaka** before he takes up the search for the Reality is **Mumukshutwa**, i. e. a keen longing for liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. When one equips oneself with these four means, then one is advised to listen to a **Guru** (**Sravana**) who is not only well versed in the **Vedas** but also has the intuitive knowledge of **Brahman**. Having listened to the the **Guru** and understood the teachings of **Vedantha**, the disciple is now asked to cogitate or constantly reflect on the truths so heard, applying his own powers of logic and reasoning, (**Manana**). This kind of intelligent inquiry into the nature of the Reality and the nature of the world leads him on to **Nidhidhyasana** or fixing the mind on the Reality itself. If one is capable of realising oneself

as Brahman by hearing only, then there is no necessity of Manana or Nidhidyasana. If one does not realize even after hearing he should make manana. Even if he does not realise after manana, he should make Nidhidyasana. For realisation these three-Shravana, Manana nidhidyasana are the means.

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- (1) बृह. 2-4-5 आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः
श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः ।

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MOKSHA OR SALVATION

Atman or Brahman is always free from anything such as the body, senses, mind and the world.¹ But no sooner It is identified with the body, mind and senses than it becomes the Jiva or false individual. This identification is quite natural and is accepted to be a fact of experience by all. The Shruti tells the individual, "You are Brahman".² But as long as the individual is identified with the body,

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- (1) बृ. 4-3-15 असत्त्वोऽयं पुरुषः ।
(2) छा. 6-8-7 तत्त्वमसि ।

mind &c, it is impossible for him to understand the meaning of this great truth. The individual normally holds that he is born on such and such a date in such and such a place and that he is going to die some day. He also feels that he is either caught in the calamities of Samsara or he is enjoying all the pleasures thereof. ¹But the Shruthi says "You are Brahman". ¹ So one has to enquire into the real nature of oneself.

Method of enquiry :

We know well enough that the body, senses and mind are the products of the food we eat. In what relation then does the food we eat stand to us ? The food which we eat in the form of rice, pulses &c is the object to the knowing subject, viz. the Jivatma. This is readily realised to be so when the food is stored in bags or other containers before us. But the same food when it takes the form of the body, senses etc. is identified with the Self, our essential being. Is this right ? What is the nature of this connection which we presume to exist between the body and the Atman ? It can neither be one of combination

(1) छा. तत्त्वमसि 6-8-7, 6-9-4, 6-10-3, 6-11-3, 6-12-3
6-13-3, 6-14-3, 6-15-3, 6-16-3

(Samyoga) nor of inherence (Samavaya) when the two are in a state of inseparable union. For the Atman is pure Being and pure consciousness) partless and it is not a thing. Therefore Samyoga Sambandha between the body and the Atman is impossible. Similarly Samavaya Sambandha is also not possible between the two since the Atman is changeless by its very nature. This Atman is thus always 'Asanga (unconnected), Niravayava (partless), Nirvikari (changeless) and Nirguna (devoid of attributes). What then is the nature of the connection between the Self and the non-self?¹ It is defined as Mithyajnana or mistaking one thing for the other, i.e., the Self for the non-self and the non-self for the Self. This is called adhyasa.² This mistaken knowledge is the very basis underlying our individuality and our empirical existence. This is a matter of everybody's experience.

No sooner one identifies oneself with the body, senses etc. than one mistakes oneself to be the Jiva. Now the same Atman, which is all-pervading and secondless appears to be different

(1) 23-9-26 असङ्गो न हि सज्जते ।

(2) गी । भा । 13-26 क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगः अध्यासः ।

from the individual just as the small space of a hall appears to be different from the big space outside. Space is partless. It cannot be divided as hall-space and outside big space. However, all people say that one is a small space and the other is the big one. Nevertheless, it is an error. So is the case in our apprehending the one indivisible, all-pervading Pure Consciousness as divided into a number of souls and God. But each and everyone, except the Jnanins or the illumined ones, misunderstands himself as a different entity from God. He identifies himself with the body and feels that he is subjected to birth and death. God, of course, he admits, is not subjected to birth and death. But since the individual regards himself as different from God comes to believe that his existence has no dimension other than the one that undergoes the stages of birth, childhood boyhood, youth, oldage etc. But God is free from all these changes and stages. By acting according to His orders, by serving Him whole heartedly, by meditating upon him continuously and by surrendering oneself to Him unconditionally and thus obtaining His grace one can get salvation. This view is held by all people on the earth, whether they are Christians, Mohammedans, Hindus, Parsees or others belonging to various

religions. Different religions describe the form of God in different ways attributing to Him different qualities. Offering prayers to God sincerely and surrendering to Him completely one must obtain God's grace in order to attain salvation. This view is common to all religions.

The Shruti says "Tatvamasi". —"Thou art That" Those whom we have described above accept the possibility of salvation only after death. This notion is quite against the declaration of the Shruthi. What is salvation or Moksha according to the Shruthi or Gowdapada, Shankara and Sureshwaracharya? It is already pointed out that the identification of the body, mind etc., with the Atman and vice versa is an error. To know the Atman as the body and the body as the Atman is a mistaken knowledge. We have conceived difference between ourselves and God owing to this mistaken knowledge only. No one dares to say that one is body and senses. No one can explain the real connection between the Atman and the Anatman. Wise men consider this connection as nothing but mistaken knowledge. Now Shankara says that if this mistaken knowledge is realised as such by the right kind of enquiry it is stultified by the true knowledge which ends in Self-realisation. Then

the Atman, which is thought to be the Jiva reveals Himself as Pure Being, Pure Consciousness and Pure Bliss. The stultification of the mistaken knowledge of taking the Self for the non-self and the non-self for the self and the birth of the new knowledge of one's being the all-pervading Atman are two events that happen simultaneously.¹ The meaning of the Upanishadic declaration "You are Brahman"² is thus justified.

To make this idea clear a story given in Chandogyopanished is as follows:—

There was a king. He had a young child. The enemies destroyed him and took his kingdom. A nurse who was looking after that child took it to her hut saying that the child is hers.

She protected the child with great care till it grew into a young man. Now and then she used to tell him the history of the Royal family and used to take him to the Palace to show him the greatness of the palace.

When he came of age to understand matters of the world she told him thus:— "My dear boy, the kingdom is yours and you are not

(1) बृ. 1-4-40 विद्याकालान्तरितत्वात् ब्रह्मप्राप्तिफलम् ।

(2) छा । 6 तत्त्वमसि ।

my son. The enemies killed your parents and took the kingdom for themselves. You are the real prince and you must make bold to destroy the enemies and take back your kingdom." Even though he was a prince from his childhood he was not aware of that and thus not knowing his position he was under the impression that he was the nurse's child. No sooner he was made to understand that he was not the nurse's child but was the son of the king than he understood himself as prince.¹

Similarly every one is always Brahman himself but no sooner one identifies himself with the body, senses &c. than he understands as Jeeva. When he realises himself as Brahman by the advice of Sruthi and Guru he is Brahman and Brahman alone.² Here knowing is becoming. There is no time or space and cause between these two-knowing and being. One who realises oneself as Brahman becomes Brahman immediately.

(1) बृ. 1-4-10 विद्याकालानन्तरितत्त्वान् ब्रह्मप्राप्तिरुल्लस्य ।

आत्मविषयं विज्ञानं यत्कालं तत्काल एव तद्विषयाज्ञानतिरो-
भावः ।

(2) बृ. 2-1-20 सर्वोपनिषत्सु हि विज्ञानात्मनः परमात्मन्य-
एकत्वप्रत्ययो विधीयते इत्यविप्रतिपत्तिः सर्वेषां उपनिषद्वादिनाम् ।



Sree

Sankara Bhagavathpoojyapadebhyo Namaha

The following quotations show that the individual has merged in Brahman or has become one with Brahman in deep sleep without knowing that he has become one such. This is an experience of all. To infer the existence of individual person and maya against the experience is invalid.

(ii) Sutra Bhashya pp. 351 ; 3.2.7

Swamapeethobhavathi.

—Swa means Atma ; Apeethobhavathi means he attains his own real self.

(i) Sutra Bhashya pp. 109 ; 1.3.15 and

pp. 351 ; 3.2.7

ii. a. (ii) Satha soumya thada sampanno
bhavathi.

—At the time of deep sleep the individual is merged in Brahman.

ii. b. Sutra Bhashya pp. 1.3.15

Lokepi kila gadham sushuptham
aachakshathe brahmeebhutho brahmatham
gathaha ithi.

—People in general say that the man in deep sleep has become Brahman.

3. Su. Bh. pp. 114 ; 1.3.19

Samprasadasabdoditham jeevam “Swena roopena abhinishpadyathe ” ithi brahmaswaroopapannam darsayathi.

—The individual who is in deep sleep is called by the name of Samprasada. He enters his own real nature which means he has become Brahman himself.

4. Su. Bh. 143 ; 1.3.42 ; Bri pp. 608 ; 4.3.21

Sushupthow thavadayam purushaha prajnenaa athmana samparishvakthaha na baahyam kinchana veda nantharam

—The individual has embraced the highest Reality that is Prajna, in deep sleep. Therefore he does not know anything outside or inside.

5. Su. Bh. pp. 168 ; 1.4.18

Sushupthikale cha parena Brahmana jeevaha ekatham gachchathi.

—The individual becomes one with Para-Brahman in deep sleep.

- Su. Bh. pp. 189 ; 2.1.6

Samprasadecha prapancha parithayagena sadathmanaa sathsampatheh nishprapancha sadathmathwam.

—The individual gives up the world and becomes SAT that is Brahma himself without a second in deep sleep.

7. Su. Bh. pp. 191 ; 2.1.9

**Sushupthisamadhyadavapi sathyaam
swabhavikyam avibhagaprapthau.**

—The individual jeeva gets non-duality which is his own nature in deep sleep and in trance.

8. Su. Bh. pp. 281 ; 2.3.18 ; Bri. 617 ; 4.3.23

**Yadwaithannapasyathi pasyanvai
thannapasyathi.**

—The individual who is in deep sleep has become Pure Consciousness without the second. He does not see anything because the second thing to see does not exist although he is capable of seeing.

9. Su. Bh. pp. 293 ; 2.3.40

**Atma swam athmaanam param brahma
pravisyā vimuktha karyakaranasanghathaha
akarthāa sukhee bhavathi
samprasadaavasthayam.**

—The individual in deep sleep enters his own real Athma, that is, Para-Brahma, becomes free from body and senses and thus becomes happy.

10. Su. Bh. pp. 349 ; 3.2.7

(a) **Naadeedwarenaiva brahmanyeva
avathishtathe.**

—The individual stands only as Brahman or becomes Brahman through the nadees.

(b) **Sathisampadya navidhubu
sathisampadyamahe ithi.**

—The individuals become Brahman but they are not aware that they are Brahman or Sat.

11. Su. Bh. pp. 350 ; 3.2.7

Brahmaivathu ekam sushupthisthanam.

—Sushupthi means Brahman and Brahman alone.

12. Su. Bh. pp. 351 ; 3.2.7

Swaroopapaannaha supthobhavathi.

—The individual jiva gets his own nature that is Brahman in deep sleep.

13. Su. Bh. pp. 351 ; 3.2.7

**Sushupthavasthaayam kadachith
sathisampadyathe kadachit na
sampadhyathe ithyayuktham swaroopasya
anapayithvath.**

—It is irrational to say that the individual becomes one with SAT at one time and does

not become so at another time. Because his nature is Brahman and Nature cannot either be given up or taken up.

14. Su. Bh. pp. 351 ; 3.2.7

Sathisampanasthavath thadekathinvath na vijanathi.

—The individual is one with SAT and SAT only. Therefore he does not know anything.

15. Su. Bh. pp. 351 ; 3.2.7

Swapnajaagarithayosthu upadhisamparkavasath pararoopapathimiva apekshya thadupasamath sushupthe swaroopaapathithihi vakshyathe.

—The individual's deep sleep means Brahma which cannot be given up. Brahma is said to be individual due to upadhi. Upadhi exists in waking and dream states. In deep sleep there is no upadhi and therefore it is said that the individual is one with Brahman even though he is always Brahman the individual appears as if he is different from Brahma in waking and dream states due to upadhis.

16. Su. Bh. pp. 351 ; 3.2.7

Athmaiva supthisthanam.

—The individual's deep sleep means
ATHMAN OR BRAHMAN.

17. Prasna. pp. 44 ; 4.9

Saha pare athmani samprathishtathe.

—At the time of deep sleep the individual
becomes Brahman or merges in Brahma.

18. Bri. pp. 605 ; 4.3.21

Yathra avidya kamakarmaani nasanthi.

—At the time of deep sleep ignorance,
desire and action never exist.

19. Bri. pp. 606 ; 4.3.21

Abhayamroopam avidyaarjitham.

—The nature of Athma in deep sleep is
free from ignorance which is the cause of fear.

20. Bri. pp. 608 4.3.21

**Vasthwantharasya prathyupasthapika-
avidyaya praviviktha.**

—In deep sleep the individual is freed
from ignorance which is the cause of duality.
So Athma is one with Reality.

21. Bri. pp. 609 ;

Avidyayaha abhavath athmakamam.

—As there is no ignorance which is the cause of duality in deep sleep he is desirous of himself.

22. Bri. pp. 610 ; 4.3.22

**Avidyaakamakarmavinirmukthameva
thadroopam yathsushupthe athmano
drisyathe prathyakshathaha.**

—In deep sleep the Athman is freed from ignorance, desire and action and this is experienced by each and every one.

23. Bri. pp. 617 ; 4.3.23

**Yadvai sushupthe thannapasyathi
pasyanneva napasyathi
nathuthadwitheeyamasthi.**

—The Athman is pure consciousness. He is capable of seeing anything. He does not see anything in deep sleep because nothing other than Athman exists to see.

24. Bri. pp. 626 ; 4.3.32

**Vasthwantharaprathyupasthapikaa avidya
sushupthe saantha.**

—The ignorance which is the projector of duality does not exist in deep sleep.

25. Bri. pp. 626 ; 4.3.32

**Avidyaayaahi dwitheeyaha pravibhajyathe
saacha sushupthe saanthaa.**

—A second thing is seen as different from Athman due to ignorance. The ignorance does not exist in deep sleep. Therefore the second thing does not exist.

26. Bri. pp. 633 ; 4.3.34

**Avidyakamakarmadisarvasamsara-
dharmaatheetham roopamasya
saakshatsushupte grihyathe.**

—The nature of Athman is free from ignorance, desire and action. This is in the experience of all in deep sleep.

27. Bri. pp. 634 ; 6.4.34

**Samprasadaasthanam mokshadristantha
-bhootham.**

—The deep sleep is an example for salvation.

28. Bri. pp. 660 ; 4.4.6

**Yohi sushupthavasthamiva nirvishesham
adwaitham athmanam pasyathi saha
brahma bhavathi.**

—He who sees him as permanent pure consciousness as in deep sleep becomes Brahman.

29. Ch. pp. 367 ; 6.9.3

**Yasmaccha yevam athmanaha sadroopatham
ajyaathmaiva sathsampadyanthe
sathpravishhtaapi tatthbhavenaiva
punaravirbhavanthi.**

—The individuals become one with SAT-Brahman without knowing that they are Brahman. So even though they become Brahman they return as before due to lack of knowledge in waking state.

30. Ch. pp. 356 ; 6.8.1

**Sushupthe eva swam devathaaroopam
jeevathwavinirmuktham darsaishyami.**

—The Upanishad says that in deep sleep alone the individual loses his individuality and merges in Brahman.

31. Ch. pp. 356 ; 6.8.1

**Nahyanyathra sushupthath swam apeethim
jeevasya ichchanthi Brahmaavidaha.**

—The wise who have realised Brahman as themselves do not accept the merging in

Brahman of the individuals in any place other than in deep sleep.

32. Su. Bh. pp. 351 : 3.2.7

**Swasabdena athma abhilapyathe swaroopam
aapannaha suptho bhavathi ithyarthaha
apicha nakadachith jeevasya brahmanaa
sampathihi nasthi. Swaroopasya
anapayithwath swapnajagarithayosthu
upadisamparkavasath pararoopapathimiva
apekysha thadupasamaath sushupthe
swaroopapathihi vakshyathe. Athascha
supthaavasthayaam kadachit satha
sampadyathe kadachith na sampadyathe
ithi ayukthan.**

—The individual is always Brahman by nature. Once own nature cannot go out or come in. The individual appears as different from Brahman in waking and dream states due to upadhis. In deep sleep there is no upadhi and therefore, he is said to be one with Brahman. Really he is always Brahman but he has mistaken himself as if he is an individual due to Adhyasa. Therefore it is wrong to say that the individual merges in Brahman at one time and does not merge at another time. He is always Brahman.

THE FOLLOWING QUOTATIONS SHOW AS IF THE SEED EXISTS IN DEEP SLEEP

1. Su. Bh. pp. 32-33 ; 1.1 9.

**Saha upadhidwayoparama sushupthavastha-
yaam upadhikrithaviseshaabhavath
swathmani praleena iva ithi.**

—Both upadhis do not exist in deep sleep so it is said as if he is merged in Athman or Brahman. Some may say the words '*as if*' show that the individual does not merge in Brahman. But this meaning is wrong, because the individual is always Brahman in reality, but due to upadhis he appears as if he is different. Where there is no upadhi it is said that he appears to be one with Brahman even though he is always with Brahman. Oneness with Sat is said here.

2. Su. Bh. pp. 130 ; 1.3.30

**Praleeyamanamapi idam jagath
sakthyavaseshameva praleeyathe**

—This world which merges in Brahman in deep sleep merges leaving sakthi behind. Sakthi or seed means not knowing the Reality. Knowing or not knowing belongs to the individual. The individual did not know that

he was Brahman before merging in Brahman. Not knowing will not go until it is sublated by knowledge. It exists in mind and mind exists in Adhyaasa. Knowing or not knowing are the forms of the mind. When adhyasa goes of its own accord then the body, mind and Agrahana concocted by adhyasa go. when adhyaasa comes of its own accord everything comes. There is no reason for the adhyaasa's going or coming. The question of reason comes only after adhyaasa when adhyasa is stultified by Real knowledge it never comes again oneness is said here.

3. Man. Karika Bhashya pp. 48 & 50 ;

1.13 & 16

**Tathwaaprathibodho nidra saivacha
viseshaprathibodhaprasavasya beejam.**

—Not knowing the Reality is the seed for knowing otherwise.

pp. 50 ; 1.16

**Tathwa aprathibodharoopena
beejaathmanaa.**

—Not knowing the Reality is the seed. Not knowing the Reality is not opposed to oneness. It comes with Adhyasa and goes with Adhyasa.

4. Su. Bh. pp. 191 ; 2.1.9

**Sushupthi samadhyadaavapi sathyaam
swabhavikyaam avibhagapraphou
mithyaagyaanasya anapodithathwath
poorvavath punaha prabodhe vibhago
bhavathi.**

—Even though there is a natural non-duality in deep sleep, the misunderstanding of Brahman as jiva is not nullified by correct knowledge. Therefore duality comes again as before. Here also the statement, misunderstanding Athman for body is not sublated by Real knowledge. This also exists in mind which is concocted by adhyaasa. Oneness with Brahman is accepted here.

5. Su. Bh. pp. 288 & 289 ; 2.3.31

**Ayamapi atmanobuddhyupadhisambandhaha
shakthyaathmanaa vidyamanaeva
sushupthapralayayoho punaha prabodha
prasavayoravirbhavathi.**

**Apicha mithyaagnanapurassaraha ayam
athmano budhyupadhisambandhaha.**

—The seed or shakthi which is concocted by ignorance is in deep sleep. Therefore it makes one to awake to the same individuality. Here also the seed concocted by ignorance

does not really exist. Therefore it is not opposed to oneness.

6. Su. Bh. pp. 353 ; 3.2.9

**Ihathu vidyathe vivekakaranam karmacha
avidyacha ithi.**

—In deep sleep there is action and ignorance means wherever and whenever not knowing the Reality exists there is the possibility of misunderstanding the Reality and action. In this sense it is possible for action to exist. I have already said that oneness of jeeva with Reality exists always and I did not know it before I go to sleep. This not knowing comes with adhyasa and goes with adhyasa. Adhyasa's going and coming is experienced by all and there is no reason for it no reason can be adduced for it. Oneness with Brahman is said here.

7. Su. Bh. pp. 403 ; 4.2 8

**Sushupthapralayavath beejabhavavasee-
shaiva eshaa sathsampathihi.**

—There is oneness with Brahman in deep sleep and in Pralaya leaving the seed behind. Here also seed means not knowing the Reality on the part of the jiva. As it is not stultified by knowledge it is said it exists. Oneness with Brahma is said here.

8. Chan. pp. 367 ; 6.9.3

**Athmanaha sadroopatham ajyathyaiva sath
sampadyanthe.**

—Without being aware of their identity with Brahman in deep sleep the Jivas enter into Brahman. Here also without knowing the Reality they become one with Brahma. So they come again as before. Not knowing the Brahman is not against oneness with Brahman. Not knowing belongs to Jeeva. Before going to deep sleep the individual did not understand the oneness with Brahman, oneness with Brahman is said here.

9. Man. Karika pp. 30 ; 1.2.

**Nirbeejathayaiva chethsathi leenanaam
sampannaanam sushupthapralayayohpuna-
ruthaanaanupapathi syath.**

—If there was no seed when the individuals become one with SAT-Brahma in deep sleep and in Pralaya, they could not have come to the waking state and creation again, when they come so, one should admit that there was seed in deep sleep and in Pralaya. That seed is only not knowing the Reality. Not knowing the Reality and the existence of the Reality are not opposed to the doctrine of Non-duality,

because not knowing is not a thing but is of the mind which comes and goes with Adhyasa. Oneness with Brahma is stated here.

10. Man. pp. 142 ; 3-34

**Sushupthe anyaha pracharaha avidyaa
-sahithasya manasaha.**

—There is a vast difference between the deep sleep and salvation even though Brahman only which is secondless exists in both the states. There is ignorance in deep sleep in the form of not knowing the Reality. There is no ignorance in salvation even though one has become one with Brahman in both states. Here also ignorance means misunderstanding Atma for body and vice versa. Before going to deep sleep one must realise himself that he is Brahman. Everyone without knowing that he is one with Brahman becomes one with Brahman in deep sleep. This seed is a mental form. When the mind comes then the seed comes. When there is no mind the seed is also does not exist. When Adhyasa comes the seed also comes.

11. Esavasya pp. 4 ; 1-8

**Suddham nirmalam avidyamalarahitham
ithi kaaranashareeraprathishedhaha.**

—The pure being is free from Avidya, that is, the causal body. This shows the existence of the causal body in deep sleep. The causal body means not knowing the Reality. This belongs to the individual person, not to Brahman. This is a mental form. This comes when Adhyasa comes and goes with Adhyasa.

12. Mand. Karika pp. 30 : 1-2

Beejathmakathvabhyupagamathsataha.

—Here Sat is accepted as the seed. Nothing other than Sat is accepted as the seed; because by ignorance the world is concocted in Sat. Therefore Sat is the seed.

In many places it is said that not knowing the Reality is the seed and here it is said SAT is the seed. This shows the variation but really there is no variation; because the word is concocted by ignorance caused by not knowing the Reality. Therefore both are one and the same.

N.B.:—Waking, dreaming and deep sleep should be taken according to their experience in their places and one should not imagine or infer the two other states from the standpoint of the waking state.

Quotations from Bhashya and Varthika to show that Adhyasa is Avidya in the main, according to Shankara.

Not knowing the Reality is Avidya in the main according to varthikakara. Doubtful knowledge of the Reality, not knowing the Reality and mis-understanding the Reality are Avidya according to both and Moolavidya is not at all an Avidya according to Goudapada, Sankara and Sureswaracharya.

1. Adhyasa Bhasya

**“Thamethamevamlakshanam adhyasam
Pandithaha Avidyethi manyanthe”.**

—The pundits understand that this misunderstanding of Athman for body and vice versa is Avidya.

2. Adhyasa Bhashya

**“Asya adhyasasya anarthahethoh
prahanaya Athmaikathva Vidya prathi-
pathtaye sarve Vedanthaarabhyanthe.”**

—All Vedanthas start to teach the sublation of Adhyasa or Avidya which is the cause of miseries and to establish the knowledge of oneness of Athman who is secondless.

3. Suthra Bhashya 1.3.2 pp 95

**“Dehadishu anathmasu athmabudhihi
Avidya ”**

—To know the objects such as body, senses etc. as Athman is Avidya.

4. Bri. 3.5.1 pp 453

“ Mohasthuvipareethapraathyaprabhavaha
aviveko bramaha Sa cha avidya sarvasya
anarthasya prasavabeejam shokamohow
manodhikaranow.”

—Moha is the cause of misunderstanding the Reality. This is Avidya the cause of all miseries.

5. Bri. 1.4.7 pp 145

“ Vipareethajnanavyavadhanaapoharatha-
thavath jnanasya ”

—The knowledge sublates wrong notion of the Reality, which is the hindrance to knowledge.

6. Bri. 3.3 in the preface pp 425

“ Yadi jnanabhavahā yadi samsayajnanam
yadi vipareethajnanamva uchyathe
ajnanamithi sarvam hi thath jnanenaiva
nivarthyathe.

—Absence of knowledge or doubtful knowledge or mistaken knowledge is ignorance. All these are sublated by knowledge alone.

Here too, ignorance which can be sublated by knowledge is no other than absence of knowledge, doubtful knowledge and mistaken knowledge. This is made clear by the word 'All' (sarvam). This very Trinity is ignorance which is sublated by knowledge and no other Avidya exists.

7. Bhagavadgita Bhashya 13.2. pp 282

**“ Avidya Vipareethagrahakaha
samshayopahapakaha agrahanathmako
va vivekaprakasabhava thadabhavath ”**

—Avidya is of the nature of mistaken knowledge, doubtful knowledge or lack of knowledge. In the presence of the light of discrimination (viveka) it (avidya) disappears.

8. Bhagavadgita Bhashya 18.50 pp 416

“ Anathmadhyaropananivrithireva karyaa ”

—Our duty is only to get rid of the mistaken knowledge, namely taking Anatman for Atman and vice versa.

9. Bhagavadgita Bhashya 18.66. pp 438

**“ Athmani Avagatha Dehadisanghathe
ahamprathyayaha badhyathe ”**

—Identifying the self with the body and senses is Avidya. The sacred text says

hat by the knowledge of Brahman culminating in the intuition of the Self, the mistaken knowledge of Atman for Anatman is sublated.

Here also it is stated that the Avidya or the mistaken knowledge is sublated by true knowledge.

10. Bhagavadgita Bhashya 18.66 pp 428

" Athmani Kriyakarka phalabhedabud-dhiravidya "

—Mistaking Atman as doer and enjoyer is Avidya.

11. Prasna 6.8 pp 75

—Since Avidya is mistaken knowledge ... by means of the boat of true knowledge you have made us overcome it—that is, you took us to the other bank ... you have made us sublate ignorance. Here also it is stated that ignorance or mistaken knowledge is sublated by true knowledge. Therefore mistaken knowledge is Avidya.

12. Kena Bhashya 1.2 pp 8

Ye snotradhyathmabhavam parithyajanthi-the Dheeraha amrutha bhavanthi.

—Having given up the mistaken knowledge of identifying themselves with their senses (like ears, eyes, etc), they become

immortals. Here too it is said that only on the sublation of mistaken knowledge there would be realisation of Brahman. Here also mistaken knowledge is Avidya.

13. Bri 1.4.10 pp 155

“ Drishyathehi ekathvajignadeva anavagama nivritihi ”.

—Not knowing the Reality is sublated by knowledge and knowledge alone. Here not knowing is described as Avidya which is stultified by knowledge.

14. Varthikakara : Varthika 789

“ Ajnanamithyasamseethi vyathirekena naparam Prathyrthimeya vishaye manasye-nasthikinchna ”.

—There is nothing other than lack of knowledge, mistaken knowledge and doubtful knowledge which are the hindrances to the understanding of Brahman.

Here also it is stated that want of knowledge, mistaken knowledge and doubtful knowledge are Avidya. Apart from these, no other Avidya that can be sublated by true knowledge exists. Want of knowledge, mistaken and doubtful knowledge, are forms of

the intellect and they can only be sublated by true knowledge, which is also a true form of the intellect, for both have a common base and are opposed to each other. As the world is concocted by mistaken knowledge, the mistaken knowledge as well as its creation (the world) can be sublated by true knowledge. By this, Atma's non-duality, and its being without a second, and its immutability are undisputably established and this has been experienced by the wise.

Quotations to show that Maya is an indescribable matter concocted by Avidya-namely Adhyasa-according to Shree Sankaracharya and Varthikakara.

1. Mandukya Bhashya 2.31 ; pp. 90

" Swapnaschamaayaacha swapnamaye
Asadvastwathmike sadvasthvathmike iva
lakshyathe avivekibhibi ".

—Dream and Maya do not exist but they are understood by ignorant persons as existent.

2. Mandukya Bhashya, 4.58 ; pp. 196

" Sa cha maya navidyathe
Mayethyavidyamanaanasya akhya ".

—Maya does not exist. Maya is the name of a thing which does not exist.

3. Sutra Bhashya, 2.1.14 ; pp. 201

**“Sarvagnasya Iswarasya Athmabhute iva
Avidya kalpithe Namarupe
tattvanyatvabhyam anirvachaniya
samsaraprapanchabijabhute (sarvagnasya
Ishwarasya) maya shakthihi-
prakrithirithisruthi-smrithyorabhilapyete”.**

—It is found both in Sruthis and Smrithis that Maya which is the seed of the names and forms, namely, the world, is a concoction by Avidya. It can never be defined as either Reality or otherwise, i.e., either as Brahman or other than Brahman and so is indescribable. It appears as though the very self of the Omniscient Brahman. Maya is also referred to as Shakti, prakrithi, Akshara, Avyaktha, Avyakritha etc ; but it is not at all called as Avidya.

Here it is clear that Maya or Shakthi or Prakrithi is concocted by Avidya or Adhyasa.

4. Sutra Bhashya 2.1.27 pp 213

**“Avidya-kalpithenacha namarupalakshnena
rupabhedena vyakrithavyakritatmakena
tattvanyatvabhyam anirvachaneeyena
brahmaparinamadi sarvavyvaaharas-
padatvam pratipadyathe”.**

—Being a concoction of Avidya, having perishable (destructive) states, the manifested and unmanifested, possessing name and form, being inexpressible since it is impossible to define it as Reality or otherwise i.e. Brahma or otherwise. Maya which is concocted by Avidya becomes liable to all the processes of evolution of Brahman. Here it is clearly stated that the unmanifested seed of names and forms also is concocted by Avidya.

5. Sutra Bashya 3.2.22 : pp. 365.

“Thathra kalpitarupapratyakhyanena
brahmanaswarupavedanamiti nirniyathe.
Roopashabdah murthamurthaparah
ityathraivoktam”.

—It is concluded that when we reject that form which is a concoction of Avidya, then comes the realisation of Brahman. Here ‘rupa’ is said to refer to both the manifested and unmanifested forms of the world.

Here also it is clearly stated that both the forms, the manifested and unmanifested, are concocted by Adhyasa. The concoctor is Avidya. Both these forms are concocted.

In the passages cited above, it is clear, that Maya is concocted by Avidya or Adhyasa.

In other passages where other terms like (Avidyatmika maya', 'Avidyalakshana Maya', 'Avidyapratyupasthapitha Maya', 'Avidyakarya Maya' etc., are used, it should be taken to mean that Maya is concocted by Avidya only. Maya being one, it cannot be said that it is concocted in one place and that it is of the nature of Avidya in another place.

6. Sutra Bhashya 1.4.3 pp. 149.

**“Avidyathmika hi beejashaktihi
avyaktasabdanirdesya parameshwarasraya
mahamaya mahasupthihi”.**

—Beejasakthi is Maya. If Avidya and Maya are one and the same, then it means that Avidyatmika Maya is Avidyathmika Avidya or Mayatmika Maya. This would be ridiculous. So 'Avidyatmika' means Avidya Kalpitha i.e. it is concocted by Avidya. The above five passages clearly define Maya as concocted by Avidya. Therefore Avidyathmika means avidya kalpitha.

7. Sutra Bhashya 2.1.14 pp. 201

**‘Evam avidyakritha namarupopadhyanu-
rodhi. Ishwara-bhavathi’.**

—The medium (upadhi) of Ishwara is Maya and so Avidyakritha is equivalent to Avidyakalpitha. Here also it is said as concocted by Avidya.

8. Sutra Bhashya 2.1.14. pp. 201.

‘Avidyathmakopadhi parichchedapakshameva Ishwarasya Ishwaratvam’.

—Here too Avidyatmaka is avidyakalpitha, concocted by Avidya.

9. Sutra Bhashya 2.1.14 pp. 201.

“Avidya prathyupastapita namarupakrita karyakarana-sanghatanurodhinah jivakhyam”

—As before ‘Avidyapratyupasthapita’ means Avidyakalpita: names and forms are concocted by avidya.

10.. Sutra Bhashya 2.1.14 pp. 200.

“Avidyatmikanamarupabeejavyakarana-pekshatvat, sarvagnasya”.

—Here also ‘Avidyathmika’ means Avidyakalapitha. The names and forms are concocted by Avidya.

11. Sutra Bhashya 3.2.11 pp. 356.

‘Upadhinam avidya pratyupsthapitattvath’.

—All upadhis are concocted by Avidya.

Avidya pratyupasthapittvam means Avidya kalpitattvam concocted by avidya:

12. Bhagavadgita Bhashya 9.10. pp. 206.

‘Maya thrigunathmika Avidyalakshana prakrithihi’

—Avidyalakshana means Avidyakalpita concocted by avidya.

Avidyalakshana prakrithihi means Avidya-kalpita prakrithihi. Prakrithi is concocted by avidya.

14. Bhagavadgita Bhashya 9.8 pp. 204.

“Prakritim Swaam”.

—While explaining ‘Prakrithim’ Bhashyaka uses the words ‘Avidyalakshnam prakritim’. Where was the need for this additional word if Prakrithi is not concocted by Avidya. It is used for the purpose of making the point clear that Prakriti as Avidyakalpitha.

15. Bri. 1.5.2 pp. 206.

“Sarvohyayam vyaktavyaktalakshnamaha samsarah avidya Vishayah”.

—Here also ‘Avidyavishayaha—means Avidya kalpitha—concocted by ignorance.

16. Bhagavadgita Bhashya 8.20 pp. 196.

“ Avidyalakshanadavyaktat’ ”

—Avyakta is concocted by Avidya.

17. Bhagavadgita Bhashya 5.14 pp. 135.

“ Swabhavah...avidyalakshana prakritihi
maya ”.

—Maya or Prakriti is concocted by Avidya or ignorance. Wherever ‘ Maya ’ occurs it is stated as Avidyakalpita or Avidyathmika etc. That means concocted by Avidya.

Therefore the world consisting of the animate and the inanimate and manifested or unmanifested ever exists in its real nature as Brahman but never exists in its own (perceived) form or as world. Brahman is the only ‘ Sat ’ or entity. This is established by Sri Shankaracharya.

—Knowledge does not sublimate a thing which is not concocted by wrong knowledge. Therefore if one does not accept Maya or Prakriti as concocted, Maya cannot be sublated by knowledge, The great scholar Vivaranakara accepted Maya or Moolavidya as concocted by

wrong knowledge ; but he has admitted Moolavidya as the material cause of concoction or Avidya. If Moolavidya is accepted as the material cause of concoction it can never be concocted and it can never be sublated by knowledge. Acceptance of such a position reduces Adwaita to a form of dualism.

OPINION

I am glad to be recording this appreciation of the latest brochure of Sri Vedamurthy, Vittala Sastri, who after its publication has entered into the ascetic order under the venerable name of Swamy Jnananandendra Saraswathi, on the theme of Advaita Vedanta as propounded by Sri Shankaracharya, to which system of philosophy and spiritual culture the author's entire life has been a fruitful and ardent dedication. The book is brief but like the Brahma-sutra it is quintessential. The basic argument is presented in a precise outline starting with a fundamental phenomenon of Adhyasa and all the tenets are drawn out in rigorous deduction. It is at once interpretative, empiricist and ratiocinative, rising to the supreme height of the monistic vision of the Absolute. The elaborations of the later Advaitic writers complicating the pure insight of the Master with the mechanics of Maya are mercilessly set aside. It is an exemplary condensation, simple in form and at the same time bringing into clear relief the sublimity of import. As a work of Vedantic devotion it evokes our grateful commendation.

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9th July 1980

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