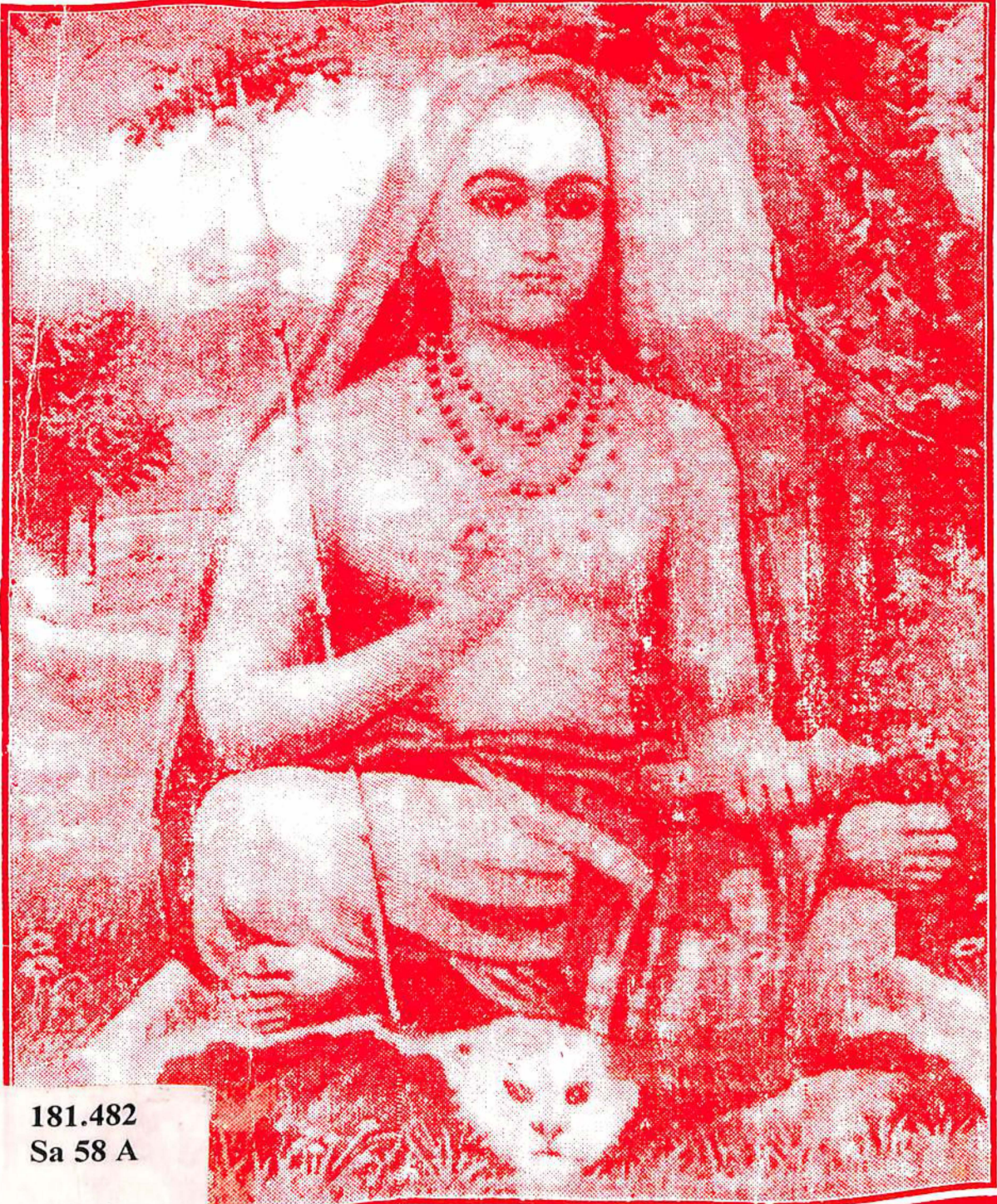


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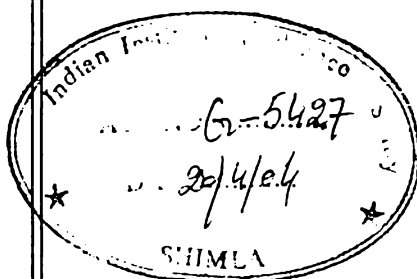
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Vidyavachaspati Panoli has, with courage and commensurate scholarship came forward, to render in excellent English Sankara Bhashya on the Upanishads and Gita . Not many have the vision, nor the passion, nor indeed the erudition needed for the great undertaking. The author places India in debt, the West under obligation, the world's spiritual literature under gratitude. The works are the product of a life-time

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आ नो भद्राः ऋतवो यन्तु विश्वतो-
ऽदब्धासो अपरीतास उद्भिदः ।
देवा नो यथा सदमिद् वृधे

असन्नप्रायुवो रक्षितारो दिवेदिवे ॥ ॥

May thoughts of goodwill come to us from all directions, without any obstruction or restraint, leading us to higher ideals, so that we may be recipients of divine protection without any hindrance from day to day for our well-deserved growth.

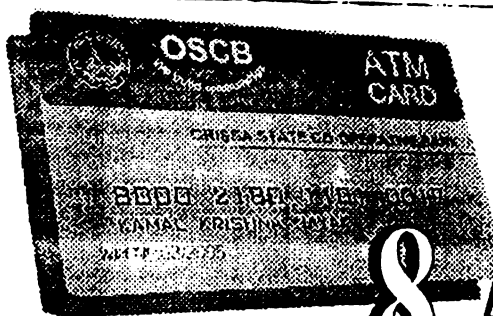
स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः

स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।

स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः

स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥ ॥

May Indra, with the opulent power of divine hearing, be propitious to us. May the Omniscient Pūṣan be propitious to us. May Garuḍa, with His irresistible weapons, be propitious to us. May Brhaspati be auspicious to us.



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MESSAGE

April 07, 2003

I am happy to learn that Adi Shankara Jayanti Mahotsav is being celebrated from May 4-6, 2003.

Shankara Jayanthi Mahotsav is being celebrated since 1992 in a benefiting manner, by the Adi Sankara Vedanta Pratishthanam. Adi Sankara, scholar, philosopher, sage and saint, belongs to the global galaxy of masterminds.

Adi Sankara Vedanta Pratishthanam, Orissa, is functioning with the objective of spreading and propagating the Advaitic message of Adi Sankaracharya, resuscitating the ancient Vedantic Heritage of Bharat Varsha and promoting inter-religious harmony which is very much needed at present throughout the world.

My best wishes for the grand success of the celebration.


(K.R. MALKANI)



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Date :

Sri K Ramamurthy
President
Adi Shankara Vedanta Pratishthanam
Qrs.No. IVA-29/4, Unit II
Bhubaneswar 751009
Orissa

Dear Sir,

Received your letter of 1st April announcing the celebration of Adi Shankara Jayanti Mahotsav from 4th to 6th May and placed at the Lotus Feet of His Holiness with your pranams.

His Holiness is happy about the souvenir to be brought out by you on this auspicious occasion.

Prayers are offered for the successful completion of the functions and the gracious blessings of His Holiness are conveyed to you all to continue your noble service and help the individual to take the path indicated by the spiritual values of life.

Sri Sharada Chandramouliswara prasadam and Asirmanthrakshatas blessed by His Holiness are also enclosed.

Yours sincerely

(V.R. GOWRISHANKAR)

Phone Off. 08265-50123 Resi. 08265-50192 Fax : 08265-50792 Bangalore Res. 080-8601698



H.H.Swami Mukhyananda

Belur Math, Howrah (W.B.)

24th Feb. 2003

Dear Sri Niranjan Rath,

I have received your letter of 11.2.03 requesting a Message from me to the Shri Shankara Jayanti Annual Souvenir for 2003.

I have also received and gone through with keen interest, the Shri Shankara Jayanti Annual for 2002 on the topic of Adi Shankara and His Relevance, published by the Adi Shankara Vedanta Pratishthanam, Bhubaneswar, under your able guidance. The articles are very scholarly and informative.

Adi Shankara was a great spiritual genius as well as a perceptive philosopher, who combined in his life and works saintliness and devotion to truth with a rational and scientific approach, which enabled him to place philosophy and religion on a firm scientific and realizational basis.

He established the spiritual harmony and unity of religions on the basis of Advaita. He proclaimed the true nature of man as the immortal Atman, transcending body and mind, and established its identity with the Infinite Sat - Chit - Ananda, Brahman, the source and ground of the universe. He also showed the paths of realizing the same .

Shri Shankara deals with universal principles in his writings ; he had also sublime poetic talent and vision and has composed many beautiful and inspiring stotras, devotional as well as philosophical, besides his profound philosophical works and commentaries.

Shri Shankara worked for the integration of society and its spiritual regeneration. His life and works are relevant today in the modern context as they were in his own times over 1200 years ago-rather his universal, rational and scientific thought and Advaitic approach are more relevant today to compose the differences and to enable mankind to realize its divinity and the supreme divine Reality in different ways and understanding and without conflicts.

You are doing very good work to spread the great life and beneficial thought of Shri Shankara through these Annuals and other spiritual activities. With blessings and best wishes.

Yours own

Sd/-

(Swami Mukhyananda)



TAT TVAM ASI

Adi Shankara Vedanta Pratishthanam

Bhubaneswar

Sri K. Ramamurthy, IAS (Retd.)
President

MESSAGE

I have been associated with Adi Shankara Vedanta Pratishthanam for more than decade. Late D. M. Mishra, the founder President of this Institution requested me to take interest in the activities of the organization. I readily agreed.

Sri Niranjan Rath, Secretary has done yeoman service in spreading the message of Advaita Vedanta. Almost every month a scholar is invited to deliver lecture on Vedanta/any topic on the spiritual lore of this land. Every year on the auspicious occasion of Shankara Jayanti Day, eminent Professors from India and abroad are invited. They give lectures on all the three days. All these lectures have great value in understanding Adi Shankara's Philosophy. A Souvenir is also published every year by this Organisation. Many eminent scholars and spiritual persons write for the same. These articles are of extra ordinary value to the members and others who get free copies.

I have presided over most of the monthly and annual meetings. I have personally benefited from these.

I am sure that this organisation is slowly and steadily reviving in Orissa the interest in Advaita Philosophy.

I wish all success to this organization dedicated for this noble cause.

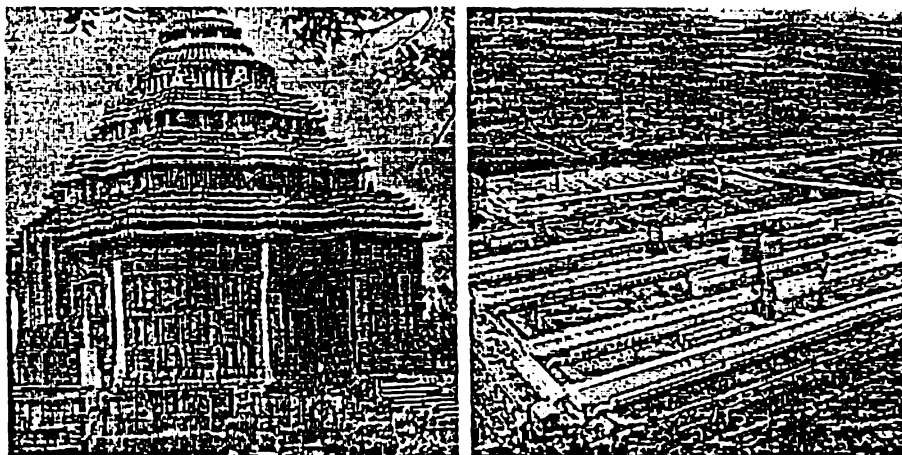
(K. RAMAMURTHY)
PRESIDENT

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Editorial

Heartiest greetings and soulful good wishes, to all Shankarites and lovers of the glorious spiritual heritage of this sacred land. Adi Shankara Vedanta Pratishthanam since 1992, has been unceasingly bringing out Shankara Jayanti Volumes containing scholarly articles by eminent personages.

This year's volume carries one article on the Vedic conception of God and seven articles featuring various aspects of Shankara's writings and philosophy.

The volume starts with a comprehensive and analytical article "Vedic Conception of God in All Its Aspects" by H.H.Srimat Swami Mukhyanandaji Maharaj, an exponent of Advaita Vedanta and the Acharya in Belur Math, Kolkata.

The second article is "Hastamalakacharya" by Dr. Satyadeva Mishra, Vice-Chancellor, Rajasthan Sanskrit University, Joypore. The learned author has ably unravelled hitherto unknown facts of Hastamalakacharya's life and philosophy.

Then follows articles by Dr. C.S. Ramakrishnan, Dr. Minati Kar, Sri P.V.N.Swamy,, Dr. S. Revathi, Dr. R.I.Ingalalli and Dr. B.S.B. Joshi

Thus the volume is so designed to provide our discernig readers, various facets of Shankara's writing and philosophy. It is hoped that the present volume would be well appreciated by the readers.

SANKARA JAYANTI
6th May 2003

Prof. BIJAYANANDA KAR
Editor

FROM THE DESK OF GENERAL SECRETARY

WISDOM OF THE RSHIS *

The Rshis or the Vedic sages were seers of Truth. They were living mostly in forests or on river banks. They preferred simple life with austere habits, that made their minds free from worldly cares and anxieties. Thus endowed with mind unruffled and susceptible to the higher values of life, they were constantly engaged in dialogues and debates on the mystery of universe and life. The awe-inspiring phenomena of nature - clouds gathering, thunder, lightening, sun rising and setting, moon waxing and waning-tormented their impeccable mind pouring out metaphysical questions; who is the author of this mysterious universe? Who am I? How am I related to the creator and creation? What is the meaning of life?

To unravel the mystery, the Rshis dedicated their lives to deep contemplation with unrelenting moral disciplines. This enabled them to rise above the drudgery of conventional formalities. They pierced through the mysteries of life and universe and realised the TRUTH. They discovered the inexorable Cosmic Moral Law "Rtam", that governs the working process in the Cosmos and realised the all pervading divinity in man, unity in existence and unity in God and Man (Brahman and Atman). Through self introspection and self analysis they achieved SELF KNOWLEDGE, the saving knowledge. Through intuitional vision they realised the unity behind and beyond all this apparent multiplicity.

The Supreme Wisdom of the Rshis has been preserved unalloyed in the Vedas and Upanishads. These corpus of scriptures are apauruseya, nitya and svatah pramāṇa.

* ऋषयः मन्त्र द्रष्टारः

The Vedic literature, which covers Mantras, Brāhmanas, Āranyakas and Upanishads, is regarded as the earliest composition of humanity . The Mantras are the oldest aspect of Vedic literature and have been classified into four major collections(Samhitā) - i) Rigveda Samhitā (ii) Yajur Veda Samhitā (iii) Sāmaveda Samhitā and (iv) Atharva Veda Samhitā. Most of the mantras are addressed to the gods or cosmic deities, that guard and function in different planes of existence. The Brahmanas prescribe elaborate rituals like Rājasuya, Asvamedha, Agnishtoma for attaining earthly sovereignty or heavenly joy. The language of Brāhmanas are also symbolical signifying cosmic phenomena. The speculative and inquisitive spirit of the Brahmanas led to the conception of Brahman as the ultimate Reality.

The Āranyakas and Upanishads transcend the Samhitās and Brāhmanas in their value. The Upanishadic seers were not only ascetics but also philosophers. They raised perennial questions as to the creation of the universe and one's relation to it inwardly and outwardly. The creation hymn of the Rigveda and Nāsadiya Sukta pioneered the quest for the Absolute and in the Brhadāranyaka Upanishad the Asvamedha sacrifice is contemplated as a process of the universe. Thus the Upanishadic seers turned their search inward. The philosophy of the Upanishads is based on logic and intuition. Dialogues, and discussions on the relation between the one and the many, the problem of cause and effect relation and its implication on the ontological status of both cause and effect, the primacy of BEING and the dependent status of beings and so on have structured a total and integral philosophy. Total because it comprehends everything sentient as well as insentient through the knowledge of the ONE and integral because everything of which BEING is the essence is dependent on and also sustained by it. The Upanishads repeat again and again the oneness of jiva and Brahman(jiva-brahma-aikya).

The principal Upanishads are Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mūndaka, Māndukya, Taitirīya, Aitareya, Chāndogya and Brhadāranyaka. These contain sacred wisdom :- the highest spiritual TRUTH (brahma vidyā) Āchārya Shankara wrote lucid and masterly commentaries on these Upanishads. The central teaching of the Upanishads, according to him, is summed up in three propositions 1) Brahman is the sole reality 2) the jiva in its essential nature is Brahman and 3) the world of plurality is

illusory. Through these commentaries he interpreted the wisdom of the Rshis. The Rshis summon everyone to break the veil of ignorance and strive delegently to realise the DIVINITY within him.

This is the eternal spiritual pilgrimage, from creatureliness to blessedness, from bondage to freedom.

*Srnvantu visve amrtasya putrah
aye dhamani divyani tasthuh,
Vedahametam purusam mahantam
aditya-varnam tamasaparastat
Tameva viditva atimrtyumeti
nanyah pantha vidyate ayanaya
X X X X
Uthisthata jagrata prapya varan
nibhodhata :
Ksurasya dhara nisita duratyaya
durgam pathastat kavayo vadanti
X X X X*

We express our deep sense of veneration and gratitude to Sri K.Ramamurthy IAS(Retd.) Patron - in Chief & President of ASVP and Sri K.C.Chand IRS(Retd.) Vice-President, whose blessing and goodwill have been encouraging and inspiring us to march ahead for achieving the avowed goal of the Pratishtanam.

Our reverential gratitude are due to Prof. D.A. Gangadhar Head of the Deptt of Philosophy & Religion, Benaras Hindu University Varanasi, who has lovingly taken much pain to be with us for three days. We have been amply rewarded by his erudition and oratory.

We offer our deep sense of veneration and gratefulness to Dr. Sathyamurthi supdt. A.S.I., Bhubaneswar who has kindly graced the inaugural day. Our reverential gratefulness goes to Dr. N.C.Panda, noted educationist and Litterateur and

Dr. A.C.Sarangi, Vice Chancellor Sree Jagannath Sanskrit University, Puri whose august presence in the succeeding two days has added grandeur to the function.

We are extremely grateful to Prof. Bijayananda Kar, Ex-Prof of philosophy, Utkal University and the working President of the Pratishtanam for his weighty and valuable Editorial and careful editing. Personally I owe to him much for his wise suggestions and ready wit at crucial moments.

Our heartfelt thankfulness are due to all our learned contributors, whose scholarly articles have enriched the value of this volume. I convey my sincerest gratefulness and indebtedness to Sri U.S.Murthy, a dedicated and committed soul ever ready to help for any noble cause. I further, on behalf of the Pratishtanam, extend my heartfelt thankfulness to all advertisers, sympathisers and donors, but for whose generous help and co - operation this function would have been hardly possible. Our sincerest thankfulness are due to H.H.Swami Dharma Prakashanandaji, the President & the Secretary, Sivananda Sanskritika Kendra, Bhubaneswar and the Members of the Divine Life Society for their hearty co -operation in providing us the hall and other necessary accessories freely. My personal thankfulness goes to all my colleagues and fellow brothers for their dedication, selfless service and timely assistance. Sri Srinivas Mohanty, Sri U.C. Das, Sri S.K. Chhotray and Sri H.Pati and Sri G.C.Panda deserve special thanks for their active involvement and readiness coupled with dynamism in making this function a grand success.

ŚAÑKARA JAYANTI
6th May 2003

NIRANJAN RATH
General Secretary

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- Even today, India is bound as one nation not by one political ideology, or one common economic policy or any other secular programme of material welfare, but by its cultural foundation which has sprung up from, is sustained by, its spiritual heritage. This great heritage was in turn consolidated in its best and purest form by Shankara.
- ❑ An exemplary Man of Letters, his style has the mathematical precision of a Scientist, vividness of expression of a poet-laureate and unity of vision of a spiritual master, coupled with simplicity and straight forwardness of presentation.
 - ❑ Above all, a down-to-earth man whose heart throbbed with compassion and sympathy for all men and beings irrespective of whether they were rich or poor, learned or illiterate, Brahmin or Chandala.

यत्प्रज्ञानमुत चेतो धृतिश्च

यज्ज्योतिरन्तरमृतं प्रजासु ।

यस्मान्न ऋते किञ्चन कर्म क्रियते

तन्मे मनः शिवसङ्कल्पमस्तु ॥ 3 ॥

The mind represents insight and awareness, patience, light and nectar (or immortal light) within the human beings; without mind no action can be performed. May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.

येनेदं भूतं भुवनं भविष्यत्

परिगृहीतममृतेन सर्वम् ।

येन यत्नस्तायते सप्तहोता

तन्मे मनः शिवसङ्कल्पमस्तु ॥ 4 ॥

That immortal mind permeates all the past, the present and the future; the mind itself extends into all actions of sacrifice endowed with seven sacrificers. May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.

यस्मिन्नृचः साम यजूषि यस्मिन्

प्रतिष्ठिता रथनाभाविवाराः ।

यस्मिंश्चित्तं सर्वमोतं प्रजानां

तन्मे मनः शिवसङ्कल्पमस्तु ॥ 5 ॥

The mind is the receptacle of the *Rg-veda*, *Sāma-veda* and *Yajur-veda*; they are located in it just as spokes are contained in the centre of the wheel of a chariot; all the stuff of consciousness of all the beings is inter-locked in it. May that mind of mine be filled with Good Will.

The Vedic Concept of God in All Its Aspects

Part - I

H.H.SRIMAT SWAMI MUKHYANANDAJI MAHARAJ

From the most ancient times man¹ all over the world has conceived of a powerful being or beings supernatural or quasisupernatural, controlling the affairs of the world. These conceptions have varied from time to time, and from clime to clime, but the basic idea of a powerful controller has remained whether conceived crudely or in a refined manner. It was man's inherent curiosity to understand himself and his environment, and his need for physical and psychological succour in a strangely hostile and benevolent environment that gave rise to a conception of God. These are the factors again which have stimulated his enquiry into the nature of God and His relationship to the universe and its beings. These conceptions of God have evolved over the ages simultaneously with the growth in the knowledge of man about himself and the surrounding nature, and influenced by social and political developments.

Primitive Conceptions

In the beginning, conceptions of God were of the character of just response to stimuli from external environment - in other

words, instinctive. Because they were instinctive, the primitives at times had profound intuitive glimpses to Truth, which they could not fully understand or rationally formulate. They could not separate them from other crude tribal conceptions at the intellectual level. But they gave very direct and forceful expressions to these glimpses.

However God's existence was assumed, based on faith that was never questioned. A conscious enquiry into God as the cause of the universe sets in at a much later stage and that again in only some parts of the world and some civilizations. For the rest, conceptions of God rested on the stimuli-response basis, sometimes reinforced by sublime mystic insights and prophetic utterances. As such they could not have any universal rational appeal or philosophical and scientific value. They had only religious value to the followers of different cults and faiths, affording them psychological and emotional satisfaction. Even where a rational enquiry was instituted, in most cases such enquiries could not get free from the hold of religious theology. They often got involved in religious terminology

and symbolism, and gradually relapsed into dogmatic and credal sectarian views because passions and prejudices-racial, tribal or national prevented the growth of a universal vision.

Three Stages in the Conception of God

In the early stage we find that man and his world are the central theme of the picture, and the God who created them intervenes physically in the affairs of humans. He has all the qualities of goodness and failings of humans, only on a large scale, but is powerful. The anthropomorphic conceptions of humans, their desires and passions, cling to him. He has a definite form, has an abode, has human qualities and is moved by hatred and jealousy, has likes and dislikes, favours some and pours his wrath on others. He has his sons, daughters, angels, prophets, chosen people, and so on. And Satan opposes Him. He is like a powerful autocratic king who does not brook other gods or any opposition.

It is only at a later stage that man tries to shed his anthropomorphism and gradually rises to a purer conception of God as the source, sustenance and refuge of the whole universe and all its beings, human or non-human. God is divine. In Him all things,

animate and inanimate, live, move and have their being, and He loves all His creation equally. But, He is still a person based on faith, and generally male.

At the third stage, man shifts from human-centred conceptions of Personal God to Truth-centred philosophical enquiry. God sheds even His 'He' - ness and remains as the Truth and ground of the phenomenal universe, the infinite impersonal spiritual Reality in all Its glory, inspiring the functioning of the universe and its beings from within, and receiving their homage as the Source. It is the home to which all will return in the end for rest. The final rest is achieved when the individual being realizes its unity and identity with the universal Reality. This also means cessation of all outward movements. There is no duality in the Infinite, and hence no movement, no want, no fear or sorrow: 'What delusion, what sorrow can there be to him who realizes the oneness of all Existence?' ² It is 'Peace that passeth understanding'; *parā shānti* (supreme peace); *moksha* (freedom from all limitations); and *nirvāna* (cessation from all phenomena).

The Uniqueness of Vedic Conceptions :

We find all these three types of conception of God - especially the second and

third stages - reflected in the Vedic literature. Yāska an ancient Vedic etymologist, classifies them in his Nirukta: the anthropomorphic or natural (*ādhi-bhautika*), the divine or supernatural (*ādhi-daivika*) and the philosophical or transcendental (*ādhyātmika*), culminating in the highest conception of the absolute spiritual Infinite (*nirguna Brahman*) in Vedānta or the Upanishads, which form the last portion of Vedas.

In comparison with the conceptions of God in other parts of the world, the conceptions in the Vedic literature- the earliest extant living literature in the world- are unique in that a sort of enquiry or conscious quest is associated with them from the very beginning. They are not mere groping apprehensions or instinctive beliefs. The conceptions posited of a Personal God are often questioned and analysed deliberately. Progressively new solutions are offered to overcome logical difficulties and to satisfy psychological and emotional needs.

Another line of enquiry runs parallel to these conceptions to meet the philosophical requirements of Truth and the actual existence of a supreme divine Being. These two conceptions - religious and philosophical, the Personal God (*deva*) and the Im-

personal Reality (*sat*)- run parallel, meet, intermingle, and coalesce. As reflected in all Hindu thought, all through the Vedic literature the approach to problems is synthetic and comprehensive. The approach is inclusive and not exclusive, taking care not to leave any loose ends. The conception of God leads to the conception of the absolute Reality (*Brahman*). Again, God is derived from and treated as the phenomenal manifestation of the absolute Reality, giving God thus an existential status. They are two aspects of one and the same Reality, *Brahman* (the infinite spiritual Reality): 'Dual are manifestations of *Brahman*, the formed one and the formless one.'³ They are the *saguna* (phenomenal or with attributes) and the *nirguna* (noumenal or absolute) aspects of one *Brahman*, *Saguna Brahman* is Personal God, the Creator and Lord of the universe (*Īshvara*), possessed of all divine qualities; and *nirguna Brahman* is the pure spiritual Ground of the universe, which gives substance to the universe and makes its manifestation possible.

To be more accurate, *Brahman*, the single Reality appears to us in its phenomenal aspect as God, universe, and the living beings, while remaining all the time

as the impersonal Reality, their essence and substratum. Brahman is called Īshvara when thought of with māyā or prakṛiti, Its inherent, creative, divine Power.⁴ In other words, when the creative, divine Power māyā is kinetic as prakṛiti, Brahman is seen as Īshvara. It is this divine Power again which manifests as the universe on the substratum of Brahman.⁵ And according to the Vedic thought this phenomenal appearance of the universe is evolutionary in character,⁶ with God presiding (adhyaksha) over and evolving it⁷ through cosmic law and order in terms of Truth (*ṛta* and *satya*).⁸ *Satya* (derived from *sat*, Existence, Truth Reality) is never haphazard; It is always perfect and orderly, and the path to the Divine is paved with Truth⁹. Hence law, order and reason are inherent in the universe, and these are also the means through which we can discover the Truth or Reality.¹⁰

Nature and Definition of God :

In Vedanta, therefore, God should not be taken merely as an extra-cosmic Creator¹¹ of the universe, creating the universe out of nothing by an act of will, as in Semitic religions. Neither is God a mere *He*. He is both personal and impersonal. He is only a convenient description to show that God is

a conscious being (*chaitanya*) and not an inert existence (*jada*). As such God can be equally described as She or It, and can be thought of in all relationships such as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, master, lord, friend, and even as enemy (in the case of Ravana, for example), to establish emotional communion with the Divine to suit one's nature. From different standpoints God in Vedanta is extracosmic, intra-cosmic and supra-cosmic- as the pure non-dual absolute Reality, in relation to which no relativity or any touch of duality can be posited.¹² He is also transcendental and acosmic (*nishprapancha*).

God is also the infinite spiritual Reality (Brahman) from which the universe emerges, in which it rests, and into which it merges back, leaving no trace behind, like waves in the sea. The Taittiriya Upanishad defines Brahman precisely in this manner.¹³ The universe is not something apart from God, either in substance or in existence.¹⁴ God is to be meditated upon as the *tajjalan* in silence, says the *Chāndogya Upanishad*¹⁵. It is the same idea as in the *Taittiriya* but put in an aphoristic formula, using the first syllables of the words : *Tasmin jayate liyate aniti* (That in which the universe is born, in which it merges, in which it vibrates/

breathes/ lives). The Vedanta Sutras begin the enquiry into the nature of God or Brahman (athāto brahma - jijnāṣā) with this very definition ; 'Janmādi asya yatah, That from which the origin and so on of this manifested universe.'

Evolution of the Concept of God in the Vedas :

After this brief introduction we shall now try to trace the evolution of the conception of God in Vedanta from the early Vedic times. By this we do not mean any chronological development of the conception, but only logical and psychological, since the various conceptions overlap from the earliest period from time to time. Just as in modern times too various conceptions of God exist side by side, even at that time they existed side by side . In historic times too among Vedantic systems the subtle philosophy of Advaita (non-dualism) came first to prominence, next Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism) and then Dvaita (dualism), to spread it among the common people. It is also said that Krishna Dvaipayana, Vyasa collected and rearranged the Vedic hymns (saṁhitās) in ancient times and classified them into the present four Vedas to serve different

purposes. So we can only seek to trace a logical, and not a chronological, evolutionary process in the Vedic literature.

(a) *Vishvakarmān*: The first logical conception of God in the Vedic literature is that of Vishvakarmān ('the architect and builder of the universe') ; Who is our Father, our creator maker ; Who every place doth know and every creature. By Whom alone to gods their names were given; to Him all creatures go, to ask Him'.¹⁶ He builds the universe just as a carpenter builds house from wood (as in early times). But then, questions arose : Where was the material for the building? Where were the living beings? Does He evolve these things out of Himself? 'At the time of creation what was His basis? How and whence did He start creation, the great Vishvakarmān, the Seer of all ? How could He extend the sky above and the earth below? His eyes are everywhere, His face is everywhere, and He is of all hands and of all feet. He, that one God moves His hands and wings (imagination) and creates the sky and earth. What was that forest and what was that tree (material) out of which have been manufactured the earth and sky? O wise ones, enquire into these in your mind and realize on what basis He created the universe.'¹⁷

(b) *Hiranyagarbha* : The enquiry was made and we come across the next conception of God as the *Hiranyagarbha*, He who has the luminous germ of the universe (*hiranya* = (brilliant like) gold; *garbha* = (womb, foetus, germ), That is, Mahat or the cosmic Intelligence the germ of the universe, within Himself (as it were in His womb). This could be compared to the hen's having the egg within itself, created out of its own body. This cosmic germ or egg (*anda*) comes out of *Hiranyagarbha*, evolves and manifests as the universe with all its beings. *Hiranyagarbha* is also known as *Brahma* (the great Creator), and the universe is His cosmic egg, called *brahmanda*, *Prajapati*, the Lord of creatures, is also one of the epithets of *Hiranyagarbha*/ *Brahma*.

In the beginning *Hiranyagarbha* alone flourished and He was the Lord (*pati*) of all that was born. This earth He settled firm, and heaven established. He is the giver of life and strength, whom all gods and beings worship and obey; whose light and shade are life and death; who by His own glory is the one Lord of all that breathes and is their ruler What other God than He shall we adore with oblations?¹⁸

When it develops into a chicken the

egg resembles its parent. Similarly, *Hiranyagarbha* also must have a similarity to the universe. As such, He is called *Virat* in His cosmic form. He is *Brahma*, the vast. From different functional points of view *Hiranyagarbha* is called differently, such as *Virāt*, *Brahmā*, *Mahat*, *Mahān Ātman*, *Sūtrātman* and *Prāna*. Just as the hen is both outside the egg, and again is potentially in the egg, *Hiranyagarbha* also is both within and without the universe and encompasses it as well. He is extra cosmic, and also intra-cosmic. That is, He is within the cosmos as *Mahat* and the cosmos is within Him as *Mahat* in a subtle, germ form. The seed is in the tree, and the tree is in the seed in a subtle form.

(c) *Purusha* ; But like the hen and its egg, which develops into the chicken do the two, *Hiranyagarbha* and the universe, exist separately? Then, where do they exist? Or is *Hiranyagarbha* immanent only and is exhausted in the universe? And such other questions begin to impinge on the mind. The answer, already latent in the conception of *Hiranyagarbha*, is made explicit in the conception of the *Purusha* (the supreme Being). When the conception of the *Purusha* arose sometimes *Hiranyagarbha* was considered as proceed-

ing from the Purusha,¹⁹ and evolving the universe from within as its inner soul or sūtrātman²⁰.

The 'Purusha-Sūkta' declares :

All this universe and its beings are only a part a quarter of the Puruṣha; three quarters of the Puruṣha transcends all manifestation (*Pādoasya vishvā bhūtāni tripadasya amritam divi*). All this what ever exists is Purusha only, whatever was in the past and whatever will appear in the future (*Puruṣha evedam sarvam yat bhūtam yat cha bhavyam*). It is a reflection of His glory (*Etavān asya mahimā*); He far excels His glory (*Ato jyā-yāmscha pūrushah*). The Virāt is born from the Purusha-the manifested cosmic universe (*Tasmāt virāt ajāyata*).²¹

Like waves in the sea the universe arises from the Purusha. The waves are only a small part on the surface and the vast sea beneath is waveless, and is the support and substance of the waves. The wave form is only a condition or state of the sea, and not a separate thing in itself apart from the sea.

In these three conceptions of Vishvakarman, Hiranyagarbha and the Purusha, we have the conceptions of God as extra-cosmic, intra-cosmic and supra-cosmic, and as the source of the universe.

Vishvakarman is extra-cosmic, standing outside the universe and building it as it were; Hiranyagarbha is both extra-cosmic and intra-cosmic. The universe is part and parcel of Him, and though manifesting outside of Him, it comes out of His own being and is similar to Him in being and nature. It is not something separate from Him. Nor is He separate from it; He is the Virāt, He activates it from within as the cosmic Energy (*prāna*) or cosmic Ego (*mahān ātman*). Purusha is supra-cosmic and is the source of the universe. The universe is only a part of His glory and is not an entity different from Him; it is like the sun and its rays the sea and its waves. We may note that Vishvakarman is personal; Hiranyagarbha is cosmic and personal and Purusha is supra-cosmic and personal impersonal, which later on paves the way to the conception of the absolute impersonal Advaita.

(d) *Aditi and Vāk* : Along with these conceptions of God in masculine terminology, we also find in the Vedas God conceived in feminine terms. The conception of Aditi the Mother of gods, as the all-pervasive Infinite is significant. Says Max Muller in his English translation of the *Rig Veda*; 'Aditi an ancient god or goddess, is in reality the earliest name invented to

express the Infinite; not the infinite as the result of a long process of abstract reasoning, but the visible Infinite; visible by the naked eye, the endless expanse beyond the earth, beyond the clouds, beyond the sky'. The root meaning of Aditi is 'boundless', 'unbroken', 'indivisible' or 'infinite'. The *Rig Veda* describes Aditi in these terms; 'Aditi in these terms; 'Aditi is the celestial sphere; Aditi is the intermediary space; Aditi is the mother, the father, the son ; Aditi is all gods, the five classes of beings, the created, and is again the cause of creation.' (1.89.10)

Similarly Goddess Vāk (Word or Logos personified) is conceived as the all-pervading divine Power which empowers and animates all gods and beings. She is the saguna aspect of Brahman (Īshvara). In the *Rig Veda* Vāk declares:

I move about in the form of Rudras, Vasus, Adityas, and all gods I am the Queen of the whole universe, the bestower of all wealth. I am the knower of the Truth, the first among the worshipful. The gods have placed me in various regions, as diverse are my abodes, and I exist in various living beings. All things eat, breathe, see and hear only through me. ... I teach gods and men the highest Truth (compared *Kena*

Upanishad, 4.1). I make them great I have entered the heaven and earth and all beings and exist in numerous ways... Having created all the worlds and beings I move freely like the wind. I thus exist in my glory above the skies and on the earth. (10.125)

In the foregoing conceptions of God and also that of Nārāyaṇa (the supreme Being residing in all beings as the Self)²² which is similar to that of Puruṣa, there is an echo of God as infinite and impersonal and as the indwelling Self of all beings, a view that later developed in the Upanishads as the impersonal spiritual Infinite, Brahman.

Side by side with these evolutionary cosmic conceptions we find two other streams of thought all of which later culminated in a confluence, a grand synthesis. This synthesis is reflected even in the *Rig Veda* in the famous dictum: ' *Ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti*, Truth/ Existence is One ; the sages describe It in various ways.' (1.164.46)

Concept of God and Gods as Rulers of the Universe

While thus the middle stream of Vedic thought seeks a Personal- Impersonal God in relation to the universe on a logical basis , giving Him impersonal functional names, a

side stream running parallel to it seeks psychological satisfaction in conceiving various personal gods, phenomenal aspects of divine Power, who intervene in human affairs, look after their welfare, satisfy their emotions, and control the forces of nature. These are gods like Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, Vayu and Surya. Even in this conception their personality is vague. Often they are the embodiments of the forces of nature, or their controllers or presiding deities. Natural objects like fire, wind, sky and earth form their bodies and they, their inner soul. They are the guardians of the universe (Lokapālas), performing different functions. These gods may be likened to government functionaries in the governance of the universe. Though the repository of all power, the government remains personal -impersonal and operates through personal functionaries like the king and ministers to whom the powers are delegated. They act on behalf of the government in a personal manner, controlling different departments.

The supreme God stands for the king, who is the sovereign as well as the highest functionary. He is the supreme Ruler of the universe; and He delegates His power to other gods. In His personal aspect God rules from outside, as it were; but in His imper-

sonal aspect He controls things from within as the inner Ruler (Antaryāmin) pervading everything as the great cosmic Law (*ritam brihat*). According to the *Katha Upanishad* 'He is in man, in the gods, in the space, in the sky; He is in whatever is born in water, born on earth, born in space, and born in heavens . He is the great cosmic Law.'²³ His great cosmic Power (*prāṇa*) vibrating, the whole universe, along with everything in it, is projected forth (*yadidam kincha jagat sarvam prāṇa ejati nihsritam - 2.6.3*). He is the inner law of being of things, of all that exist, and none can transgress it. He is the great Fear (mahad bhayam) as the cosmic Law, which everything obeys implicitly. He is like a raised thunderbolt (*vajram udyatam*) for fear of whom all the forces of nature, all the other gods perform their respective functions. 'For fear of Him the fire burns, the sun shines, the rain pours, the wind blows, and death stalks everywhere.'^(2.6.3)

By the force of the immutable Law (*prashāsa*) of this abiding supreme Reality the sun, the moon and the earth (and all other things in the universe) are held in their proper places and perform their functions duly.²⁴ He is the unseen immortal Ruler abiding within all these beings as their Self and controls them (*yah sarvani bhutani*

*antaro yamayati esha te ātmā antaryāmi
amritah - 3.7.15).*

God and Gods as the Self

Thus by a gradual penetration of exterior gross manifestations, God is conceived as the very Self of all beings, which makes things what they are. The Brihadāranyaka Upanishad declares, 'He who worships God or gods as apart from the Self does not know the truth; he is like a beast to the gods to be enjoyed.' (1.4.10)

Interactions with other streams of thought lead to the gods being seen as aspects or manifestations of the same supreme Reality. They are raised to the status of the supreme God by turns and in hymns sung to them the other gods are described as subordinate to Him. Yāska explains the origin and nature of these gods :

*Mahābhāgyād-devatāyā eka ātmā
bahudhā stuyate; ekasya ātmano anye
devāḥ pratyangāni bhavanti; itaretara
janmano bhavanti; itaretara prakritayah;
karmajanmanah, ātmajanmanah Ātmā
sarvam devasya.* It is because of the great glory and infinite facets of the Divine that the one Self (Ātman) is extolled in many ways. The other gods (devas) come to be sub-members of the one Self. They are mutually born from one another;

they are of one another's nature; they originate according to their function (karma); they are born of the Self The whole essence of any god is the Self (Ātman) only.²⁵

In different contexts the same God appears differently or is viewed differently as Indra, Mitra, Agni, Vayu, or Varuna.²⁶ The one Essence (*asuratvam*) runs through all these gods (*mahad devānām asuratvam ekam*).²⁷

The Philosophical Quest for God as Reality or Truth

On the other side of the middle stream, runs parallel to it the rational philosophic enquiry about the nature of the impersonal Reality or Truth (sat), which is the source of all God, gods, the universe and its living beings.

In the very early stages of the Rig Veda (10.129) itself, the Rishi questions in the 'Nāsadiya Sūkta' about the nature of the Reality before creation:²⁸

Then there was neither Aught nor Nought,
no air or sky beyond.

What covered all ? Where rested all?

In watery gulf profound? (1)

Nor death was there, nor deathlessness,
nor change of night and day.

That One breathed calmly, self-sustained,
nought else beyond it lay . (2)

(* it was neither nothingness, nor insentient material entity.)

Who can predicate anything about
the pre-creation nature of
Reality ? It remains indescribable
in Its own nature:

Who knows, who ever told, from
whence this vast creation rose?

No gods had then been born-
who then can ever the truth disclose?(6)
Whence sprang this world and whether
framed by hand divine or no-
Its Lord in heaven alone can tell,
if even He can show." (7)

(*even the Lord is post-creation in conception.)

All our views are post-creation, even of God, for who saw the First One being born?²⁹ But still from the phenomenal point of view some relationship between Reality and manifestation has to be conceived without which the mind, being itself an emanation from Reality, feels lost and restless as Reality impinges on it all the time. Hence the poser:

The kindling ray that shot across
the dark and drear abyss-

Was it beneath? Or high aloft?

What bard can answer this ?

The answer follows ;

Gloom hid in gloom existed first-

One sea, eluding view:

That One, a Void in Chaos wrapt
by inward fervour grew. (3)

Within it first arose desire,
the primal germ of mind:

Which nothing with Existence
links as sages searching find. (4)

One kindling ray from that One (tadekam)
gives rise to mighty creative cosmic forces;³⁰

There fecunding powers were found,
and mighty forces strove-
A self-supporting mass beneath,
and energy above. (5)

Part - II

Various questions that assail the mind of the vedic investigator are deliberately discussed, analysed, and their solutions sought in the later Vedic literature - the Upanishads, which are called the Vedanta or the last portions of the corpus of Vedic literature. The thought - process of the Vedas as knowledge (from vid 'to know') also reaches its culmination (anta) in the Upanishads. From this point of view also the Upanishads are called the Vedanta.

Experiencer the Central Core

What is the relationship between the One and the many? Where do both these aspects, the noumenal and the phenom-

enal ,converge? What is their relationship with the investigator? Is not the experiencer the central core in all these problems? The ultimate Reality, God in His personal or impersonal aspects, all gods and nature itself - all these have a subject- object relationship with the experiencer. All conceptions of Reality are his. Without the experiencer, all talk about their existence becomes absurd; all problems become meaningless. For even to affirm,negate,doubt or characterize their existence, the experiencer is necessary. Then what is the nature of the experiencer? Is it that the secret of Reality, God and nature somehow lies hidden in the experiencer himself as his inmost and intimate essence? What is the nature of the experiencer, our inmost Self ?

The Relationship between the One and the Many

The search for the Unity of all existence or Reality (Brahman) and Its realization in the Self (Atman the locus of all experience) predominate the Upanishads. Without the unity with the Self, the experiencing subject,Brahman merely remains an object, an incomplete objective infinite; and without the unity with Brahman, the Self is reduced to a point of mere individual subjective consciousness. It is soon realized

that the subject and the object are the two poles of one and the same Reality. The external search for the absolute and infinite Brahman-which mind and speech fail to comprehend-culminates in Its discovery as the omnipresent Self of all existence, hidden in all things and beings inspiring their functioning and that of the universe. Instead of being merely a remote inference and an object of logical thought-process, Brahman is intimately experienced as one's innermost Self (antarātman).¹ Says the *Shvetashvatara Upanishad*, 'The one supreme divine Being, the attributeless Absolute is hidden in all beings (as their inmost Self). He is the all-pervasive indwelling Self within all (and energizes the whole universe and inspires and guides its functioning), the witness of all their activities , and the Reality beyond the three *gunas*.'²

The sage Shandilya expresses his realization of the Self thus: ' This is my Self within the heart, smaller than a grain of rice than a grain of barley, than a mustard seed, than a grain of millet, or than the kernel of grain of millet; the Self within my heart is greater than the earth, greater than the mid-region, greater than heaven,greater than all the worlds. This is Brahman.'³ The *Katha Upanishad* declares; "This Self hidden in

the heart of all beings is smaller than the smallest particle and greater than the greatest entity.⁴ We find the same idea echoed in the Shvetāshvatara Upanishad; 'Subtler than the subtlest, the Creator abides in the minutest germ, manifests this whole variegated universe and also enfolds it within Himself.'⁵

The Great Equation

The great equation 'Atman = Brahman' and vice versa is discovered and declared in the *mahā-vākyas* (great utterances) in the Upanishads. The *Māndukya Upanishad* declares: This Self is Brahman.⁶ The *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* points out that one can experience one's Self to be Brahman,⁷ like the sages Shandilya and Vamadeva. But this 'I' is not the ego in me as the corporeal individual, but the Essence that is in me, you, and all other beings and things as their substratum. 'Thou art That Reality', assures the *Chhāndogya upanishad*.⁸ The *Isha Upanishad* and the *Bhagavadgita* point out that it is not mere solipsism or subjective visualization of all beings and the universe in oneself.⁹ On the contrary, it is a direct realization of one's Self in all beings,¹⁰ thus reinforcing each other and removing any mutual shortcomings. It is a direct awareness (*aparoksha anubhūti*) of the unity of all exist-

ence. Brahman is pure universal Consciousness within all,¹¹ according to the *Aitareya Upanishad*. The source of all existence and experience, that Consciousness enables everyone to reveal (*bhā*) himself.

Brahman and the Universe

According to the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, Brahman is of the nature of absolute Existence-Consciousness-Infinity.¹² It is the basis of all relative existence, knowledge and boundless manifestation on the phenomenal plane. But from the absolute Infinite the relatively infinite universe has emerged without infringing the character of the infinite Brahman in the least as affirmed in the invocatory verse of the *Isha Upanishad*: *Pūṇam-adah, pūṇam-idaṁ, pūṇāt pūṇam udachyate; Pūṇasya pūṇam ādāya, pūṇam-eva avashishyate*. And as this universe has for its substratum Truth (*satya-sat* stands for Truth as well as existence, for Truth alone exists), it is phenomenally and rationally apprehended by the mind as an evolutionary process. The unmanifest, subtle *avyakta* projects grosser manifestations¹³ by stages guided by the cosmic Law and Order (*rita*). But it is not a straight-line evolution, but a cyclic process¹⁴ of evolution and involution, like the cycle of the seed and the tree. In the process, more and more

of the hidden Truth is manifested. There is no hiatus or disjunction anywhere in existence. It is the appearance of the continuous, unbroken (*akhanda*) Existence as different things at different levels from the subtlest to the grossest one leading to another (compare: H₂O and its various forms such as water, ice, vapour, frost, dew and fog). As the *Katha Upanishad* describes,

The elements are subtler (superior and more pervasive) than the senses (for the senses along with their objects are evolved from these subtle elements), the mind is subtler than the elements, the intellect (*buddhi*) is subtler than the mind the cosmic Ego (Mahān Ātman) is subtler than intelligence, and the Unmanifest (*avyakta*) (creative power of the supreme Being, Purusha), is subtler than the cosmic Ego, and Purusha is subtler and more pervasive than the Unmanifest, *avyakta*; there is nothing higher that transcends the Purusha, the Infinite. That is the culmination and that is the supreme Goal.¹⁵

On the macrocosmic scale the Ego is represented by Hiranyagarbha, and the Unmanifest by the inscrutable primal energy-matter, prakriti or māyā, the great creative Power of Purusha as Īshvara, which

is highly wonderful and indescribable (*mahā-adbhuta anirvachaniya - rūpa*). There is an interesting parallel in the Bhāgavata: 'Receiving energy from Thee (the infinite Brahman), the Purusha (Īshvara) of infallible power, along with māyā (*avyakta*) holds within Himself the Mahat (Hiranyagarbha or cosmic Ego), signifying, as it were, the embryonic state of the universe. Backed by the same māyā, this Mahat projected from within itself the golden sphere of the universe provided with outer coverings (that is, enclosed in different layers of cosmic existence of varying subtlety).¹⁶

The Ātman Is to Be Realized

Because everything of the manifested universe is Brahman,¹⁷ by knowing That - the Self or Brahman - everything of this (phenomenal universe) becomes known;¹⁸ Therefore the Ātman is to be sought after, is to be enquired into and realized;¹⁹ 'O, dear one, the Ātman is to be seen'²⁰ - 'the Ātman, which is the direct and immediate Brahman, the innermost core of one's being.'²¹ Then knowing this true infinite immortal nature, man rises above all sorrow, all delusion, all fear (*shoka*, *moha*, *bhaya*) and remains in his blissful nature²².

Interrelationship of Man, God and the Universe

Though from the noumenal (pāramā̃rthika) point of view everything is Brahman alone and there is nothing other than Brahman,²³ from the phenomenal point of view we need to examine the mutual interrelationship of living beings (jiva), the universe (jagat) and God as the Lord of the universe (Brahman as Īshvara). What must be the attitude of man towards these and how should he conduct himself? These question also occupy the mind of the Upanishadic Rishis. On the basis of their insights, great thinkers built up systems of philosophy, all of which come under the name Vedanta. As already explained, in these systems all the three aspects of God as extra-cosmic (Dvaita), intra-cosmic (Vishista-advaita), and supra-cosmic (Advaita) are propounded and paths of realization delineated.

These are not really mutually exclusive conceptions, but are only indicative of man's psychic journey from the external to the internal until its culmination in the realization of the Atman, the supreme Reality, as the inmost core of his personality. These are different stages of psychic evolution and not external independent realities. The in-

ternal psychic states are projected externally as seen in a mirror or as in dreams where the ego projects its own universe which, though internal, appears to be outside of one self, says Āchārya Shaṅkara in his Dakshinamurti Stotra.²⁴ Similarly, though we apprehend this projection of the universe empirically as an evolutionary process within an externalized space and time with a causal relationship we need to remember that space, time and causality themselves are the products of maya, the principle of relativity and divine Power that makes the Absolute appear as relative.²⁵

Man's personality is a viewing point, and his conception of the external world depends on how he views himself. When the locus of his personality is in the body (*deha*), he finds there is a corresponding concrete external universe of which his body is a part, and there is a Lord of the universe with a divine form and attributes, separate from the universe and its beings, which are dependent on His will. This is Dvaita, dualism.

When the locus of his personality is in the living soul within the body (*jivātman*), he sees the universe animated by a soul. That Soul is God, whose body is the universe and its living beings. The souls of all beings are parts of God, who is the universal Soul

(*paramātmān*), the Soul of souls. He controls the universe and the souls from within as the *antaryāmin* or *sutrātmān*, just as the individual soul controls the body from within. This is Vishishtā - advaita qualified non-dualism .

Finally, when the locus of man's personality is in the Self, the *Ātman*, transcending the body and soul, the universe and God are transcended in Brahman, which is the inmost Self or the *Atman* in all. The bodies, which are parts of God, are seen merely as the manifested glory of the one Self or Brahman the sole Reality, the sole infinite spiritual Existence. This is Advaita, non-dualism.

Hanuman, the great devotee of God in His incarnation as Shri Rama, says to Him: 'O Lord, when I look upon myself as the body, you are the Master and I am Your servant; When I think of myself as a soul, I am a part of you; when I realize that I am the Self, verily I am You, this is my conviction.'²⁶

These three main conceptions of Dvaita, Vishishtā-advaita and Advaita are interspersed with several shades and grades of views according to man's psychic or emotional necessities; but all those views

are comprehended by one of these three main concepts.

God in Popular Religion

Apart from these philosophic and quasi-philosophic conceptions, there are popular versions of these conceptions in the *Itihāsas* and *Pūrānas*, which Hinduism accepts as a secondary authority to meet the devotional needs and practical spiritual life of people at different stages of mental growth, understanding and capacities. These *Itihāsas* and *Pūrānas* render abstract philosophic conceptions of Truth into picturesque and poetic, living deities with divine and philosophic attributes for the sake of worship and meditation in people's daily life. They have given inexhaustible inspiration to art, architecture and sculpture; music and song; poetry and literature, innumerable hymns and joyful rituals and festivals, and have permeated people's lives through and through . In one word, they render philosophy into living religion.

According to the *Kulārnava Tantra*, 'Those people of weak intellect who are not able to realize the absolute, attributeless Brahman are helped to think of It through improvised forms with attributes.'²⁷ The *Mahānirvāna Tantra* has this to say with regard to Kālī; 'To facilitate concentration

of mind, to help in subtle meditation and to hasten the fulfilment of aspirations, the supremely glorious formless Kālī, the Mother of Time,²⁸ is invested with forms consistent with Her attributes and functions.,²⁹

The Evolution of the Concept of Deities:

Brahman in relation to the universe is Īshvara, the Lord, with the threefold functions of creation, sustenance and dissolution or reabsorption of the universe. In relation to these three functions, He is a Trinity (Trimūrti). These threefold aspects are personified into three separate deities: Brahmā (Projector), Vishnu (Protector) and Shiva (Dissolver). They carry out the functions of *srishti* (projection), *sthiti* (protection / maintenance) and *laya* (dissolution). At the next stage, they are conceived as male deities, and the powers (*shaktis*) through which they function are personified into their female counterparts or spouses. Gradually, from philosophic conceptions they descend to be popular deities or gods with their own families and retinue (subsidiary powers). Then again the curve takes an upward turn and by a process of synthesis, abstraction and refinement each god is raised to the philosophic conception of Īshvara or the supreme Lord performing all the three func-

tions of projection, protection, and dissolution of the universe. Then He is identified as the manifestation of the impersonal Brahman, the supreme Reality. The female counterparts are also similarly sublimated to the power of Brahman, like *māyā* and *prakṛiti*. Thus to the followers of Shiva, Vishnu, Ganapati, Surya, Kumara, and other deities, the respective deities cease to be mere subsidiary gods, but represent God (Īshvara) Himself performing all the threefold functions. Ultimately, in their true nature they are thought of as, and identified with, the supreme absolute Brahman Itself.

Similarly, those who conceive the supreme God as female (Devi), as Mother instead of as Father of the universe, identify the Devi with the conception of Īshvara and attribute to Her the threefold functions of the Divine³⁰ just as the followers of Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu and other gods do in the case of their deities. The Devi is then thought of as the *māyā* Power of Brahman (Mahā-māyā, Shakti), and is ultimately identified with the absolute Brahman (Brahman-mayī), based on the principle that Shakti and Shaktimat (possessor of Shakti) are non-different, being inseparable. In the Tantric literature, Shiva (not one of the Trin-

ity) stands for absolute Brahman and Devi is Ishvari, His Shakti responsible for creation, in place of Ishvara. Shiva is Mahā-kāla (the great potential Time or Eternity), and Shakti is Mahā-kālī (the great kinetic Time, who dances forth the universe on the bosom of Shiva, the still Eternity). Shiva and Shakti are non-different like light and its brilliance. Brahmā, Vishnu and Shiva-the Trinity- are looked upon as Her three forms. Devi is also conceived in many popular forms with different names and attributes such as Durga, Lalita, Meenākshi, Chandi, Kālī and Pārvati.

God and His Shakti are often thought of together with prominence to Shakti as in Umā - Maheshvara, Lakshmi - Nārāyana, Sita - Rāma, Rādhā - Krishna, Umā-pati, Sita - pati and Lakshmi - pati. Shiva and Shakti are also thought of in the combined half - Shiva (male) and half - Shakti (female) form as the famous Ardha-nārī-ishvara. The Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are also fused into a single popular form of Dattātreya with three heads and six hands. The deities are also thought of together in combined names such as Rāma- Krishna, Shiva-Rāma-Krishna, Shiva-Rāma, Rāma-Gopal and Rāma-Ishvara (Rāmeshvara). The process was current in Vedic times also.³¹

Meditation on Deities :

As already discussed, the Reality is beyond names, forms and genders, but can be conceived in any manner to facilitate meditation. The Shvetāshvatara Upanishad declares: 'This supreme One is neither woman nor man, nor is This neuter. It is connected with the particular body in which It dwells and is described as such.'³² So the Divine can be described in all ways for It manifests in myriads of ways: 'Thou art woman, Thou art man, 'Thou art boy and the girl too; Thou art the old man tottering with a stick, Thou art manifest everywhere in myriads of forms.'³³

All subtle things share this characteristic as we see in empirical experience too. The life principle itself is neither male nor female, but works through male and female physical bodies and in asexual plants and micro-organisms. Similarly, electrical energy is neither a fan nor a light bulb nor a motor, but works through different machinery and manifests its power differently. So the divine spirit animating all these forms may be conceived or addressed in any suitable way. That is how God is addressed as our Mother, Father, Friend, and so on. The Divine Mother also is similarly conceived as male or female and beyond both :

Think of the Divine Mother as of male or female form; or meditate on Her as the formless Reality with the attributes of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.³⁴

Since God is all-pervading, He can also be contemplated in non-human forms of animals, plants or images (pratimā) with or without form. Different images and figures made of gold are nothing but gold. Similarly, all forms of God are nothing but God. He may also be meditated upon in objects like the sun, the sky and time, which reflect some of His characteristics (pratika) such as all-pervasiveness, detachment, equality for all, removal of darkness (of ignorance) and the source of life and activity. He can also be meditated upon as word symbols (Logos) like Om, knowing full well that the supreme Reality is beyond words and thought (avāk-mānasa-gocharam). In fact, there is no symbol that can really represent It ³⁵.

What is important is divine communion and a rapport with the divine Reality, and not the form in which It is conceived, worshipped or meditated upon as a help.³⁶ Thus a man may have very high intellectual conceptions of God and yet be of demonic nature, and there may be another very

saintly by worship with inner fervour of God through a stone image. As Swami Vivekananda pointed out, 'Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man.'³⁷ Divine qualities are to manifest from within; they are not to be filled in from outside. The outside is only a help in this process. It is the lack of understanding of this psychological law that lies at the root of so much confusion and conflict in the field of worship of God through different methods. A person can be helpful to others, but should not violently force his ideas and methods on them. What is important in food is nutrition and not the names and forms of various dishes. The Reality is thought of differently because of different tastes, temperaments and stages of development of persons; but the object of love and worship is the same all-pervading divine Reality. as the Shiva-mahimna Stotra puts it, 'O Lord, due to variations in tastes, people think of You in different forms and names and follow different paths, whether straight or meandering; but, ultimately, Thou art the only goal of all people, just as the ocean is the one goal of all rivers.'³⁸ The Hindu hymnal literature is full of such universal sentiments. To quote another from Shri Hari-sharanāshtakam, 'Some describe Shiva as

the goal of meditation; some say it is Shakti (the Divine Mother); some say it is Ganesha; some say, verily, it is Surya. But, O Lord, everywhere in all these forms Thou alone art shining.³⁹

The Nature and Significance of Deities :

These different deities with their myriads of forms, statuses, families and retinue serve, so to say, as containers and purveyors of the Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman (infinite Existence Consciousness-Bliss); they serve as objects of worship and adoration to bring the Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman within the reach of all, according to their own inclinations, temperaments and capacities. They intimately live, move and have their being among people and give them the needed emotional and psychological satisfaction.

Though God can be conceived and worshipped in any form, certain forms have become convenient and useful and avoid confusion in social life. They have been visualized and adopted by saints and sages and have been handed down to us by tradition. They are often conceived symbolically with divine attributes and philosophical principles and are of great help in meditation. In some respects these conceptions may be compared to popular descriptions of

abstract science in concrete terms. Or they could be thought of as similar to working models to facilitate easy comprehension and appreciation of subtle phenomena, like models of atomic structure or of the DNA molecule. However, one should not imagine that the conceptions of God or gods are only imaginary and have no phenomenal existence. Though like currency bills they may be apparently imaginary and artificial, they have an empirical value. Again, though an aeroplane is an artificial thing, it serves the purpose of taking people to the destination. A simple ladder helps us ascend to a higher level. The Reality behind the conceptions of God is like the gold that supports the paper currency. The ultimate Reality is not insentient or material, but of the nature of universal Consciousness operating in all beings. It abides as the Self in all beings. It abides as the Self in all beings and insentient things. It responds to devotees by appearing in the very forms in which It is conceived and approached. It is this same Reality that is apprehended by our minds in several ways on the phenomenal plane through deities receiving our worship.

Again, to illustrate from modern science; Our views of matter have changed,

reducig it to subtle energy-particles. Still that does not preclude its manifestation as atoms, molecules, elements, compounds and various articles of daily use. Further, our ideas of many of the laws governing energy, material bodies, time and space have changed. But the old concept are also true to a certain extent and serve the purpose as far as they go. Each view has its own validity and unique purpose in its limited field of operation (*sva-kale satyavat bhati*). Similar is the case on the spiritual plane.

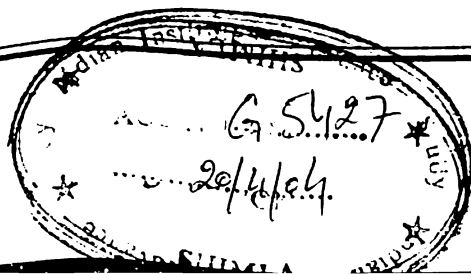
It may be mentioned in passing that the 'scientific' view of things, which itself has been changing from time to time, is also just one of the standpoints valid in its own particular field. Neither is it the only view of phenomena possible, nor is it coterminous with Reality. The *Bhagavata* says: 'That from which a thing originates, into which it dissolves, and in which it abides in the intermediate stage - that alone is Real. The modifications have a mere phenomenal existence. A state from which another state originates and into which it is dissolved, is also relatively called real.'⁴⁰ 'We accept as true the causal order and enumeration of the categories upheld by the different exponents, just as they put it; for they are all equally reasonable from differ-

ent points of view.'⁴¹

God Listens to His Creation

It should always be kept in view that the Reality is not only impersonal absolute Brahman, but, as far as Creation is concerned, It is also the personal *Īshvara* under whose guidance the whole universe consisting of the living and the non-living evolves.⁴² *Īshvara* listens to His creation, for He says; 'I am the Father of this world, the Mother, the Sustainer, and the Grandfather (impersonal Reality); the Purifier, the one thing to be known, the Om (the Word), and the Scriptures.' (He is also) 'the Goal, the Support, the Lord, the Witness, the Abode, the Refuge, the Friend, the Place of origin and merging, the Storehouse (of all power), and the Seed Immutable (of the universe).'⁴³

In the Gita the Lord further assures devotees that He accepts and grants their prayers in the very form in which they worship Him,⁴⁴ and also favours them in the way they approach Him.⁴⁵ He is the essence that runs through all forms in the universe, like the thread in a necklace of beads.⁴⁶ The *Bhāgavata* also emphasizes this truth.⁴⁷ The Gita is the great charter of spiritual liberty, freedom of worship and equality and fraternity before the Lord. He is close to His creation and resides in the



heart of all beings.⁴⁸ He is easily pleased and is easily approachable by all who want Him alone,⁴⁹ the greatest sinner not excluded.⁵⁰ The Lord is our very own, our very Self.⁵¹

In the Gita the Lord has declared that He appears to devotees in the form in which they worship Him, for He infills and permeates the forms conceived by their minds, though He Himself is without form, just as the formless water when poured into containers of different shapes assumes their forms. Not only that; He Himself assumes special forms of His own accord and lives among men from time to time when there is need,⁵² like water freezing into icebergs and assuming shapes and forms in the formless ocean. Thus though there are apparent forms, the content of all the containers is the same water, the same infinite Sat-Chit-Ānanda Brahman.

Brahman, the supreme Reality, is infinite and indivisible and is of the nature of absolute Sat-Chit-Ānanda. Time and space and all other phenomena are derived from It, through its creative divine Power, *prakriti* or *māyā*. 'The projection of the universe in its varied forms goes on for the experience of the soul through an unbroken succession of causes and effects until the term of

its continuance ceases, according to the will of the Lord.'⁵³ The whole of manifestation - God, gods, universe and all the living beings - is permeated through and through with Brahman, which abides as the Self (Ātman) of all. This realization and living in that light is the highest worship (*parā puja*).

Notes and References - Part - I

1. 'Man' denotes a human being.
2. *Tatra ko mohah, kah shokah, ekatvam anupashyatah.* - *Isha Upanishad*, 7
(Keep in view the general reader's convenience, the international system of spelling and diacritical marks for Sanskrit are not fully-used here. The usual spelling is adopted. However long vowels are indicated by a stroke above (ā, ī, ū) and hard consonants by a dot below (ṭ, ḍ, ṇ). And the visarga by 'h'.)
3. *Dve vāva brahmaṇo rūpe, mūrtam chaiva amurtam cha.* - *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, 2.3.1.
4. *Devātma-shaktih.* - *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad*, 1.3.
5. *Māyā tu prakṛitir vidyā mayinam tu maheshvaram; Tasya avayavabhutaiḥ tu vyaptam sarvam idam jagat.* (Know maya to be the *prakṛiti* and the Supreme Ishvara the Lord of *māyā*. He permeates the entire universe and its beings through His

- māyā, like parts of His body.) -
Shvetāshvatara Upanishad, 4.10. It is to be noted that though Īshvara is personal He is infinite and universal, and not a particular individual.
6. *Muṇḍaka Upanishad*, 1.1.8, 2.1.2-3; *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2.1.
 7. Compare *Bhagavadgita*, 9.10.
 8. *Rig Veda*, 10.190.1.
 9. *Satyena panthā vitato devayānah*. - *Muṇḍaka Upanishad*, 3.1.6.
 10. *Muṇḍaka Upanishad*, 3.1.5-6.
 11. In Vedic thought there is no conception of 'Creation' out of nothing. It is *srishti* (projection) of subtle components into gross manifestation, like the seed into a tree. In the very early Vedic stage, it was like construction out of pre-existing materials. Later on the subtle *Prakriti* / *māyā* Power became the material cause of the universe. Hence God is known as the *srishti-kartā*, Projector of the universe, and not 'creator'. The words 'Creator' and 'creation' are used in this sense in this article.
 12. *Prapanchopashamam shāntam shivam advaitam*. - *Māndukya Upanishad*, - 7.
 13. *Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jivanti, yat prayanti-abhisamvishanti*. - *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 3.1.1.
 14. *Brahmaiva idam vishvam idam varishtham*. - *Muṇḍaka Upanishad*, 2.2.11.
 15. *Tajjalan iti shānta upasita*. - *Chāndogya Upanishad*, 3.14.1.
 16. '*Vishvakarma Sukta*', *Rig Veda*, 10.82.3.
 17. *Rig Veda*, 10.81.2-4.
 18. '*Hiranyagarbha Sukta*', *Rig Veda*, 10.121.1-3.
 19. '*Hiranyagarbham janayāmāsa pūrvam*'. - *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* 3.4.
 20. Compare *Gita* 14.3; *Bhagavata*, 11.6.16.
 21. *Rig Veda*, 10.90.
 22. *Ātmā nārāyanah parah*. - *Mahānārāyana Upanishad*, 13.4.
 23. *Nrishad varasad ritasad vyomasad abjā gojā ritajā adriajā ritam brihat*. - *Kātha Upanishad*, 2.2.2.
 24. *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, 3.8.9.
 25. *Nirukta*, 7.4.
 26. *Rig Veda*, 1.164.46.
 27. *ibid.*, 3.55.1.
 28. 'Song of Creation' *Original Sanskrit Texts*, trans. J. Muir, 5.356.
 29. *Ko dadarsha prathamam jāyamanam*. - *Rig Veda*, 1.164.4.
 30. During worship in Devi temples the Devi as *māyā* Power is extolled as the Shakti or spouse (*Vallabhā*) of Īshvara, who by Her very glance projects forth millions of universe (*īkshana srishti brahmāṇḍa-koti* Īshvara-vallabhā). This concept of projection of millions of universes by the *māyā*

Power comes up now and then in Vedantic texts and the Purāṇas.

Part - II

1. *Yat śakṣhāt aparokṣhāt brahma, ya ātmā sarvāntarah.*-Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad, 3.4.1.
2. *Eko devah sarvabhūteshu gūdhah sarvavyāpi sarvabhūta-antarātmā; Karmādhyaṁśah sarvabhūtādhivāsah śākṣhi chetā kevalo nirgunashcha.* - Shvetāśhvata Upanishad 6.11.
3. *Chhāndogya Upanishad, 3.14.3.*
4. *Anor-anīyān, mahato mahīyān ātmā asya ījantornihito guhāyām.* - Katha Upanishad, 1.2.20.
5. *Sukṣhmāṁśu sukṣhmaṁ kalīlasya madhye vishvasya srashtāram aneka rūpam; Vishvasya ekam pariveshtitāram...* - Shvetāśhvata Upanishad, 4.14.
6. *Ayam ātmā brahma.*-Māṇḍūkya Upanishad, 2.
7. *Aham brahmāsmi* (I am Brahman).-Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad, 1.4.10.
8. *Tat-tvamasī.*-Chhāndogya Upanishad, 6.8.7.
9. *Sarvāni bhūtāni ātmani eva anupashyati.* - Īsha Upanishad, 6.
10. *Sarva bhūtastham-ātmānam sarva bhūtāni cha ātmani* - Bhagavadgita, 6.29.
11. *Prajñānam brahma.* - Aitareya Upanishad, 3.1.3.
12. *Śatyam-jñānam-anantam brahma.* - Taittirīya Upanishad, 2.1.
13. *ibid.*
14. *See Gita, 8.16-9; Bhagavata, 11.24.21-7.*
15. *Purushāt na param kinchit, sā kāshthā sā parā gatih.* - Katha Upanishad, 1.3.10-1. 'Purusha' is used in several senses such as a man, a person, a male and the soul which dwells in the body (*pura*). In the Upanishads and the Purāṇas it is often used for Brahman / Ātman and Īshvara, which is different from the concept of supra-cosmic and personal-impersonal Purusha in the 'Purusha Sukta' of the Vedas, though later on it paved the way to the Upanishadic conception.
16. *Bhagavata, 11.6.16.*
17. *Sarvam khalu idam brahma.*-Chhāndogya Upanishad, 3.14.1.
18. *(Tasmin) vijñāte sarvam-idam vijñātam bhavati.* - Muṇḍaka Upanishad, 1.1.3; *Vijñānena idam sarvam veditam.* - Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad, 2.4.5.
19. *Sah anveshtavyah, sah vijijnāsitavyah.* - Chhāndogya Upanishad, 8.7.1.
20. *Ātmā vā are drashtavyah.* - Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad, 2.4.5.
21. *Yat śakṣhāt aparokṣhāt brahma ya ātmā sarvāntarah* - *ibid.* 3.4.1.
22. *Īsha Upanishad, 7; Taittirīya Upanishad, 2.7.*
23. *Brahmaiva idam vishvam idam varishtham.* - Muṇḍaka Upanishad, 2.2.11;

- Aitadātmyam idam sarvam.-Chhāndogya Upanishad, 6.8.7; Ekam-eva advitiyam.-Chhāndogya Upanishad, 6.2.1.*
24. *Vishvam darpana-drishyamāna-nagari tulyam nijāntargatam, pashyan ātmani māyayā bahiriva udbhūtam yathā nidrayā. - Dakshināmurti Stotra, 1.*
25. *Māyā-kalpitaḥ desha-kāla-kalanā vaichitrya chitrikritam. - ibid,2.*
26. *Deha-buddhyā tu dāso'ham
jiva buddhyā tvadamshakah;
Ātma-buddhyā tvameva aham
iti me nishchitā matih.*
27. *Nirvishesham param brahma
Sakshatkartum-anishvarah;
Ye mandāh te anukalpyante
savishesha-nirupanaih.*
28. *Kāla = time ; Kāli is Time personified, for in Time everything comes into existence, flourishes, and decays.*
29. *Manaso dhāranānāthāya
shighram sva-abhishṭa-siddhaye.
Sūkshmadhyāna prabodhāya ...
arūpāyah kālikāyah
Kālamatur mahādyuteh, guna-kriyā-
anusārena kriyate rūpa-kalpanā.*
30. *Srishti-sthiti vināśhānām shaktibhūte sanātani. - Chandī or Devi-māhātmya.*
31. *Compare: Gods like Maitra-Varuna and Vishvedevas (all-gods).*
32. *Naiva stri na pumān eshah
na chaiva ayam napumsakah;
Yat yat shariram-ādatte
tena tena sa yujyate.
- Shvetāshvatara Upanishad, 5.10.*
33. *Tvam stri tvam pumān asi
tvam kumāra uta vā kumārī;
Tvam jirṇo dandena vanchasi
tvam jāto bhavasi vishvatomukhah. - ibid.4.3.*
34. *Pumrūpam vā smaret devim
strirūpam vā pi chintayet;
Athavā nishkalam dhyāyet
sat-chit-ānanda lakshanam.*
35. *Na tasya pratimā asti yasya nāma mahad-
yashah. - Shvetāshvatara Upanishad, 4.19.*
36. *It is generally thought that we please God by out prayers, and we praise Him in high terms about His wonderful nature and qualities. But it is not God who is benefited; nor does He stand in need of our praise. It is we who are benefited and uplifted psychologically. We are shaped by our conceptions and attitudes with which we are imbued when we worship God. 'Yat dhyāyati tat bhavati. What one meditates upon, that one becomes.' Yādrishi bhāvanā yasya siddhih bhavati tādriishi. As are one's sentiments and feelings, so will be one's attainment.' Tht is the psychological law. The external object of*

- worship is only a help for concentration; it is out feelings and approach that are important. God is all-pervading and infinite and is present everywhere in all beings and entities. He responds to our love and sentiments. So whether the object of worship is a highly refined conception of God or a stone image, it is our inner sentiments and feelings that determine the psychological results that accrue, such as a calm and joyful state of mind, noble character, and divine vision, and even in external results such as help in times of need, since God is omnipresent and knows our mind and attitude. It is not the intellectual conceptions but the emotions of the heart and character that count.
37. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols. (Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama, 1-8, 1989; 9, 1997), 4.358.
38. *Ruchinām vaichitryāt*
riju-kutīlā nānā pathajushām;
Nrinām eko gamyah tvamasi
payasām arnava iva.
 - *Shiva - mahimna Stotra*, 7.
39. *Dhyeyam vadanti shivam eva hi kechit*
- anye shaktim ganesham apare tu divākaram vai;*
Rūpaistu tairapi vibhasi yatah tvamekah ..
 - *Shri Hari-sharanāshatakam*, 1.
40. *Bhagavata*, 11.24.17-8.
41. *ibid.*, 11.22.9.
42. *Gita*, 9.10; see *Bhagavata*, 11.22.17-8.
43. *Gita*, 9.17-8.
44. *Yo yo yām yām tanum bhaktah*
shraddhaya architum ichchati;
Tasya tasya achalām shraddhām
tam eva vidadhāmi aham.
 - *ibid.*, 7.21; see also 9.23.
45. *Ye yathā mām prapadyante*
tāmstathaiva bhajāmi aham - .4.11.
46. *Mayi sarvam idam protam*
sūtre manigānā iva. - *ibid.*, 7.7.
47. See *Bhagavata*, 3.9.11; 3.24.31.
48. *Īshvarah sarva- bhūtānām*
hriddeshe arjuna tishthati. - *Gita*, 18.61.
49. *Tasya aham sulabhah partha*
nityayuktasya yoginah. - *ibid.*, 8.14.
50. See *ibid.*, 9.22.26.30-2; 10.10-1; 18.66.
51. *Aham ātmā gudākesha*
sarva- bhūtāshaya- stihatah - *ibid.*, 10.20.
52. *ibid.*, 4.6-8; 9.11.
53. *Bhagavata*, 11.24.20.





Śrī Hastāmalakacārya

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Śrī Hastāmalakā was one among those four devoted disciples of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, who have been considered as the Master Architects of Advaita Philosophy, and revered as the great soul for past eleven centuries. It is recorded in the *Samnyāsotpatti*, that Prthvidharācārya was his another name and he was the first Ācārya of the fourth Matha i.e. Sringeri in the south.¹ *Hastāmalaka-stotra* is the only work ascribed to him. This is small metrical work consisting of only 12 verses. The verses are so pregnant with metaphysical meaning and spiritual experience that, according to one tradition, Śrī Śaṅkara himself wrote a commentary of them.² Besides Śaṅkara's commentary, there are also two other commentaries on this stotra, one by Ānandaprakasabhattāraka,³ and the other by Svayamprakāsa Muni.⁴ Ānandaprakāsa has also referred to some other unidentified commentator on the *Hastāmalakastotra* in his *Hastāmalaka-tika*.⁵ Even a cursory glance at the *Hastāmalakastotra* and the commentaries thereon would show that it represents not only the quintessence of

Hastāmalaka's immediate experience, but also set forth some of the fundamentals of Advaitic thought. The verses constituting the *Hastāmalakastotra* are also famous as *Hastāmalaka*, because they express as clearly the *Paramātma-tattva* (Absolute Principle) as if an *āmalaka* (myrobalan) on the palm of the hand.⁶ Before we analyse these verses in the order given in the *Hastāmalakatika* of Ānandaprakāsa Bhattāraka, it is necessary to give in brief the few events associated with the life of Hastāmalakā as referred to in the Śaṅkaravijayas of Vyāsācala⁷ and Ānandagiri,⁸ Śaṅkaradigvijaya of Madhavacārya⁹ and the introduction of Ānandaprakāsa's gloss on the *Hastāmalakastotra*.¹⁰

Once the eminent sage, Śrī Śaṅkara, accompanied by his disciples reached Sri Bali, a village near Gokarna and inhabited by three thousand Brahmanas. An affluent Brahmana, namely Prabhakara, together with his sick son, who was thirteen years old, approached Śaṅkara in the hope of getting him cured. The father bowed down at

the feet of Śrī Śaṅkara and made his son to do the same. The latter like 'the fire hidden in the ashes' did not get up and remained prostrated before the lotus-feet of Śaṅkara. When the sage lifted up the boy, the father asked, " O Lord ! Let me know what is the cause of his inactivity (*Jadavattā*). Thirteen years had so far passed without his *avabodha* (knowledge). He did not learn the Vedas . Somehow the investiture with the sacred thread had been performed. The playmates would abuse him but he would not come forward for playing. Even the physical harm inflicted on him would not evoke any kind of anger.¹¹ Sometimes he would take his meals, while at other times he would not do so. He acted always according to his own will, and did not abide by others' instructions. And thus he was growing up with his own *karman*."

Having thus listened to the words of that Brahmana, the supreme teacher, Śaṅkara, asked the boy " Who are you ? Why do you behave as the possessed one?" In reply to these questions, that great soul (*mahātmā*), dwelling in the body of that boy spoke twelve verses, which as we have stated above, are known as the *Hastāmalaka* or *Hastāmalaka-stotra*. These verses deal with the nature of the Ātman

and maintain the identity of the individual self with the supreme Soul. 'I am that Self, which is eternally conscious (*Sanityopalabdha svarūpohamātmā*), is the refrain of the first eleven verses. The author pours forth his immediate experience of the Self in these verses, and explains in terms of similes and metaphors how the world of duality derives its existence and vitality from the non-dual Self.

It is said in the first verse itself that the Ātman, which is devoid of all conditions (*nirastākḥilopādhi*) like ether, is the source of the activities of the mind and sense-organs, just as the sun is the real cause of the activities of all human beings.¹² By the analogy of the sun, the author seeks to explain that as the sun is the casual factor of the activities of human beings merely through the presence of its proximity, the non-dual Self is also so in the case of the activities of the mind and sense-organs, simply because of its existent proximity.¹³

The second verse¹⁴ points out that the mind, sense-organs and worldly objects are inert and hence they owe their respective functions to and depend on that one and immoveable Self, which is of the nature of the eternal consciousness. The Self is essentially different from the mind and

sense-organs, and source of the latter's existence and manifestation. It is therefore said in the next verse¹⁵ that Self is the mind of the mind and the eye of the eye. The existence of the mind, sense-organs and worldly objects cannot be different from the Self, in as much as they are superimposed on the latter. It is an established fact that the superimposed objects have no separate existence and manifestation apart from the substratum. The self is transcendent and therefore it cannot be known through the empirical mind or any other means of empirical knowledge.¹⁶

The jiva or individual soul is the appearance of the Self in the mind, and it is not different from the Self, as the appearance of the face seen in the mirror is not different from the face on the neck. The Self permeating in the different minds is the one and the same and there is thus an underlying identity among all individuals.¹⁷ The appearing distinction of the prototype (bimba) and the reflection (pratibimba) between the jiva and the Atman remains only till the existence of the mind. The soul attains its non-dual and ever conscious nature immediately after the fire of knowledge burns the mind, just as the real oneness of the face is restored on the removal of mirror.¹⁸

It has been said above that there is only one Self among all bodies. But it may be objected that when there is an empirically known difference among the individuals in the form of 'I' and 'You', how can be oneness of the Self ? In reply to this objection, our author says that the Self which is self-established consciousness (svātaḥ-siddha-cetāḥ) and luminous (prakāsa-Svarūpa) is, in fact one, but appears to be many due to different minds, just like one and the same sun seems to have splintered up into multiple forms because of the different platters full of water.¹⁹

When it is observed that the one very Self is among all bodies, why the Scriptures declare the Self to be the enjoyer of the fruits of this and other worlds ? This is illustrated again on the analogy of the sun. As the sun seems to be following both the moving and unmoving conditions of water, so also appears the non-dual Self to be the follower of the modifications of various minds.²⁰ It is the mind that undergoes changes, but because of the false identification of the Self with the mind, the modifications of the latter are wrongly ascribed to the former.²¹

Just as a single sun, which is the light of all eyes, illumines all objects without any sequence, so does the non-dual *Ātman*

simultaneously illuminate the multitude of minds, and enables them to cognise the world of duality.²² The self is not only the mind of the mind etc. but also the main stream of all lights. The sun illumines the sense-organs and makes them fit to perceive the objects, but this sun, too, cannot do so unless it is illumined by the *Ātman*.²³ In other words, the sun also owes its capacity of rendering worldly things manifest to the Self, which according to the Scriptures, is the light of all lights.²⁴ The Gita also proclaims that the Self alone is the light of the sun, moon and fire.²⁵

The nature of the relation between the Self and the objects is explained in the tenth verse. Though the Self with its existence and consciousness is present among all objects, the objects are not related to it, just as the ether pervades worldly things without any relation.²⁶ That the Self is ever pure and unrelated to the mass of universal objects is also declared by the Scriptures.²⁷

Why does the Self feel pleasure and pain, undergo bondage and transmigrate from the one to another body, if it is unconditioned and unrelated? In answer to this question, Hastāmalaka introduces the *ajnāna* (nescience) and says, as the ignorant one thinks of the sun without light when

it is covered with the cluster of clouds, so also appears the Self in bondage to those, whose vision is over powered by ignorance.²⁸ In other words, the *Ātman* is always free from bondage, but because of the *avidyā* or ignorance, which has veiled its true nature, and projected out and superimposed on it the characteristics of the mind i.e. *karṭṛtva* (doership), *bhokṭṛtva* (enjoyership) and *pramāṭṛtva* (knowership), it seems to be in bondage.²⁹

The concluding verse reasserts the non-dual character of the *Ātman* and makes it clear that the plurality and inconstancy can be only figuratively applicable to the *Ātman*, because these, in fact are the attributes of the limiting adjuncts and media of appearance.³⁰

It is quite evident from these verses that their author was not an ordinary human being, but a sage who had realised the true nature of the Self because of the *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* practised in the previous births. He was a *jīvanmukta* like *Vāmadeva*, and inhabiting the body of the boy in order to exhaust the stored impressions of the past actions (*prārabdhakarmas*).³¹ He had crossed the ocean of births and deaths, and was here to help others attain their immortal status. The worldly objects

were unable to please or displease him, because he was aware of their illusory character.

Ānandaprakāsa Bhattāraka has raised some important questions in his commentary on the above verses. A brief reference to a few of them would show how these verses solve some of the complicated problems pertaining to the Advaita doctrines.

In the second verse it has been maintained that the mind and sense-organ depend for their activities on the Self. But the question is ; whether the self has any association with them or not? If the first alternative is accepted, there would be a contingency of sansaragatva (relatedness) and sāvayavatva (particleness) in the Ātman. And in admitting the second alternative of non-association, the Self cannot be held as the inspirer of objects. Thus the statement of the above verse is disputed in both of its alternatives. Ānandaprakāsa commenting on the third verse refutes these objections. He says: As the self, in fact, is unrelated to the said objects the defects, mentioned in the samyogapaksa (the alternative of association) dash to the ground. Turning to the second alternative, he points out that the question of association arises only between the two different things.

The minds and other objects are superimposed on the self, just as the snake on the rope, and as the snake has no status apart from the rope, the mind etc. also have no different existence apart from the self. The relation between the self and the objects is thus of identity and how can one assume any kind of relation within a thing itself? The worldly things depend for their existence and functions on the appearance of the Self. In other words, the Self relates itself and imparts existence and energy to the manifold objects of this universe through its appearance pervading always the latter and hence the defects of non-association do also not arise.³²

The Self, objects some opponent, can be either different or non-different from the mind and sense-organs. If it is held different from them, it would become delimited (*paricchinna*), and if it is accepted identical with them, there would be no difference between the Self and the mind etc. Thus the absoluteness (*paramātmatva*) of the Ātman is impossible in both cases. This objection, says Ānandaprakāsa, can also be answered with the first two lines of the third verse which are as follows: *manascaksuraderviyuktah svayam yo manascaksuradermanah caksuradih*. Here,

Ānandaprakāśa interprets the word viyukta as vyatirikta (different) and maintains that as the Self is different from the mind etc, the defect pointed out in the case of identity would not arise. The defect of delimitation would also not occur, because the Self is the mind and so on. It means that though the Self is different from them, they are not different from the Self, because they are the display of the ignorance of the Self (ātmajnānaparikalpita) and so essentially the Self itself, as the nacre-silver is the silver in essence.³³ The great sage, Vyāsa also says that there is nothing different from the Self, but the latter is different from all.³⁴

Commenting on the second verse, Ānandaprakāśa Bhattāraka has criticised, the views of the Cārvākas, Bauddhas, Mimāṃsakas and Vaisesikas about the nature of the bodha (knowledge).³⁵ The Sāṃkhya view of the plurality of the Self has been refuted in the commentary on the 6th verse.³⁶ That the consciousness is the very nature of the Self is discussed in detail in the gloss on the second verse.³⁷ All these require a detailed and independent study which naturally falls beyond the scope of this paper.

While concluding, we may lay stress on this point, that whatever may be the fate of the historical data, describing the life and

activities of Hastāmalaka, his work, the Hastāmalaka-stotra, itself gives an ample proof that he was a jivanmukta and had come over this earth to lead us to the shore of Immortality, and abode of Eternal Bliss.

Notes :

1. *Sannyāsoṭpatti*, pp.2 and 4 (The manuscript in my possession is one among 500 Sanskrit manuscripts preserved in my family)
2. Cf. pp. 163 ff. Vol. XVI of the Works of Śrī Śāṅkarācārya, Sri Vani Vilas Edition.
3. *Hastāmalaka-tika*. Government oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, Manuscript No. R. 5187)
4. *Hastāmalaka-sloka-vyākhyā* (Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, Ms. No. R 3324(f))
5. Cf. pp. 4 and 10 of the *Hastāmalakatikā*.
6. *Prakāśayante paramātmātattvam karasthadhatrīḥalavad yadekam.slokastu hastāmalakah prasiddhastatkarturākhyāpi tathaiva vṛtha* (*Vyāsācala: Śāṅkaravijaya*: 12.24. (Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras Edition, p.195).
7. Ibid. pp.191 ff).
8. *Śāṅkaravijaya* of Ānandagiri, pp. 250 and 267.
9. *Śāṅkaradigvijaya* of Mādha-vācārya, 12, 47-53.
10. Cf. *Hastāmalaka-tikā*, p. 2.

Lakṣmīnṛsiṃha has also mentioned Hastāmalaka in his *Viśvadesika-kāvya* : cf. S. Narayansvami Sastri's introductory page iv on Nṛsiṃhasrama's *Vedānta-tattva-viveka*, Mysore Edn., 1955 A.D.

11. *Kṛidāparah krosati bālavargah tathāpi na kṛiditumesa dhāvati. bālam hathān mugdhamimam nirikṣya, santadayanto' pi na rosameti* (Vyāsācala : Śāṅkaravijaya, 12.19).

12. *nimittam manascaksuradipravṛttau niraśtākhiḷopādhirakasa kalpah. ravirlokaṣeṣānimittam yathā yaḥ sa nityopalabdhisvarupoh amātmā.* (Hastāmalaka, v.1.)

13. *yathā khalu savitā svasannidhisattāmatrena sakala-pranipravṛttihetuh tadādayamapi svasnnidhi sattāmatrena sakalamanscaksurādipravṛttihetuh* (Hastāmalaka - tikā on v.1.p.5.)

14. (Hastāmalaka, v.2.)

15. *manascaksuraderviyuktah svayam yo manascaksura-dermanascaksuradih.* (ibid, v.3.)

16. *manascaksurāderagmyasvarupaḥ....* (ibid) cf. *yato vāco nivar-tante aprāpya manasā saḥ* (Tai. u.2.u. 1.)

17. *mukhābhāsako darpane drsyamano mukhatvātpṛthaktvena naivasti vastu. cidābhāsako dhisu jivo'pitadvat* (Hastāmalaka, v.4.)

18. *yathā darpanābhāva ābhāsahānau mukham vidyate kalpanāhina mekam. tathā dhiviyoge nirābhāsako yaḥ.* (ibid v. 5.)

19. *ya eko vibhāti svatassiddhacetaḥ*

prakāśasvarūpo' pi-nanaiva dhisu. Sarāvodakastho yathā bhānurekah saḥ..... (ibid v. 6.) cf. *'eko devah sarvabhūtesu gudhah'* (Śvetāsvatara Up. 6. 11) *'kṣetrajnam cāpi mam viddhi sarvakṣetresu bhārata !* (Gita B.2.) and *avibhaktam ca bhūtesu vibhaktamiva sthitam.*' (ibid 13.15.)

20. *yathā sūrya eko'pyanekascalāsu sthīrāsvapyananvagvi-bhavyasvarūpaḥ. Calāsu prabhinnāsu dhisveka evam* (Hastāmalaka, v.7.)

21. *'dhyāyativa lelāyativa'* (Br. Up. U. 3.7.).

22. *yathānekacakṣuprakāśo ravim kramena prakāśi karoti prakāśyam. aneka dhiyo yastathaikaprabodhaḥ* (Hastāmalaka v.8.)

23. *vivasvatprabhātam yathā rūpamaksam pragṛhñāti nābhātmeka vivasvān. yathābhātamābhasayatyakṣamekam* (ibid.V.9.).

24. *'tameva bhāntamanubhāti sarvam'* (Katha. Up. 5.15) (*tasya bhāsā sarvamidam vibhāti* (ibid) . *'tadeva jyotisām jyotiḥ'* (Muṇḍaka Up.2.2.10.) and *'yena suryastapati tejaseddhaḥ'*

25. *yadādityagatam tejo jagadbhāsayete 'khilam. yaccāndramasi yaccāgnau tattejo viddhi māmakam* (Gita 15.12) and *'jyotisamapi tajjyotiḥ tamasaḥ paramucyate'.*

26. *samastesu vastus - vanusyutamekam samastāni vastuni yanna sprṣanti. viyadvat sudā suddhamacchasvarūpaḥ'* (Hastāmalaka V.10).

27. *'asaṅgo na hi sa jyet'* (Br. Up. 3.9.2) and *asṅgo hyayam purusaḥ'* (ibid 4.3.15.)

28. *ghanacchannadrstirghanacchanna-markam yathā nisprabham manyate*

cātimudhah. tathā baddhavadbhāti yo mudhadṛsteh (Hastāmalaka, V.11.).

29. moghās'ā moghakarmano moghajnānāvicetasah. rākṣasimasurim caiva prakṛtim mohinim sritah (Gita, 9. 12.)

30. upādhanu yathā bhedaśāsanmaninam tathā bhedatanmaninam tathā bhedaśā buddhibhedeṣu te'pi. yathā candrikānām jale cacncalatvam tathā' piha viṣṇo (Hastāmalaka, V.12.)

31. Cf. Ānandaparakāśa Bhaṭṭāraka : Hastāmalakatika, p.3.

32. manascakṣurātmānyadhyastattvena tadvyatirekena sattāpratiyorabhavadadhyastatādātmyasambandhasya bhāvāccidābhāsa-vyāptimantareṇa 'manascakṣurādipravṛtṭyanu-papattestatpravartakatvamupapadyate. (ibid on V.3, p.8.)

33. ibid, p.9.

34. 'Vyatiriktam na yāsyasti vyatirktokhilasya yaḥ' (quoted by Ānandaparakāśa in his commentary on V. 3).

35. Cf. pp. 5 ff.

36. Cf. pp. 12-13.

37. Cf. pp. 6-7.



ABANDONMENT



The essence of all spirituality is contained in this phrase: 'complete and utter abandonment to the will of God'.

We must offer ourselves to God like a clean, smooth canvas and not worry ourselves about what God may choose to paint on it, but at each moment, feel only the stroke of His brush . . . It is the same with a piece of stone. Each blow from the sculptor's chisel makes it feel — if it could — as if it were being destroyed. As blow after blow descends, the stone knows nothing of how the sculptor is shaping it. All it feels is a chisel chopping away at it, cutting it and mutilating it. For example, let's take a piece of stone destined to be carved into a crucifix or a statue. We might ask it: 'What do you think is happening to you?' And it might answer: 'Don't ask me. All I know is that I must stay immobile in the hands of the sculptor . . . I have no idea what he is doing, nor do I know what he will make of me. But what I do know is that his work is the best possible. It is perfect. I welcome each blow of his chisel as the best thing that could happen to me, although, if I'm to be truthful, I feel that every one of these blows is ruining me, destroying me, and disfiguring me.'

Jean Pierre de Caussade

Śrī Śaṅkara - An Overview

C.S. Ramakrishnan

Chennai.

Gangā jala lava kanikā pitā,¹ even a tiny drop of Ganges water consumed, purifies us thoroughly. Likewise even a few random reflections on Śrī Śaṅkara are enough to waft our minds to ethereal heights.

Śrī Śaṅkara, is indeed a name to conjure with. He is not so much a person as a phenomenon. To think of him is a challenge and an inspiration. How difficult it is to describe him ! 'Yato vācho nivartante', whence words beat a hasty retreat. The Upanishad like the Maya he so stoutly champions . He is *anirvachaniya*, beyond definitions.

He is a brilliant oxymoron. Great-contraries meet and mingle in him smoothly. Take his age for instance. Youngest among thinkers he is oldest in wisdom. He lived only for thirtytwo years, and that too on the instalment plan, so to say. He was to have died when eight, but the encounter with the crocodile and the consequent adoption of Sannyāsa, gave him an extension of eight years. Next, Vyasa, impressed by the magnificence of his commentary on the Brahmasutras, granted him a further lease of sixteen years. But in this all too brief span

of life Śaṅkara has produced and bequeathed us an immensity of ideas that defies the passage of unrelenting time. Like diamond his thoughts are forever.

We are strongly reminded of Sri Dakshināmūrti; the Guru of Gurus, of whom Śrī Śaṅkara is considered to be a replica. Dakshinamurti is very young and the disciples at his feet are quite old. Sitting under the ageless banyan tree he teaches the loftiest truths in silence. With unparted lips he transmits the unspoken word. And the grave doubts of the disciples are completely dispelled. As Śaṅkara is the mirror-image of Dakshināmūrti the duplication undergoes also a lateral inversion. Dakshināmūrti permanently abides in the North on the Himalayas, looking towards the South, but Śaṅkara hails from the southernmost part of India, Kerala, and darts towards the North. Dakshināmūrti is static, whereas Śaṅkara is dynamic, he is ever on the move, traversing the whole of Bharatavarsha, south to north and east to west, again and again. And in contrast to Dakshināmūrti how eloquent he is . The Vedanta Kesari's roar

is a clarion call to every one, even to generations unborn, to awake, arise and strive for the highest.

That Śaṅkara took his birth in Kerala is significant. In the scheme of the Divine nothing happens by chance. Kerala is the land the redoubtable Parasurama reclaimed from the western sea. So it is the youngest part of India. No wonder Kerala has produced a number of geniuses who are in the forefront of modernity. And Śaṅkara leads them all. The profound truths he has presented to the world are so modern that today great scientists find their insights tallying beautifully with Śaṅkara's postulations. A Schrodinger, for instance, can speak of the 'Ultimate Reality as Consciousness' which is a singular without a plural.' We can imagine Śaṅkara nodding approval pointing to the Upanishadic assertion 'ekam eva advitiyam', the one without a second. In Śaṅkara the old emerges as the most modern.

Indeed the stupendous task accomplished by his razor-sharp intellect and boundless vision is a marvel even to the most acute of mind and spirit. And with other illustrious personalities of the world he shares the mystery that veils his personal life. To be self-effacing is part of greatness.

In none of his prolific writings does he speak to himself. Only towards the end of the Sūtra Bhāṣya he makes an oblique reference. 'How can one deny the heart-felt experience of another as possessing Brahman-knowledge while still in a body !'

No doubt we have a number of Śaṅkara Vijayams describing Śaṅkara's life and teachings; but they were all written long after his time and naturally they contain conflicting details. But all of them agree that from very birth Śaṅkara was conscious of his lofty mission in life. While boys of his age lost themselves in games he knew he was born to lead mankind to the blessedness of unexcelled peace. Dauntlessly and steadfastly he dedicated himself to the quest of the Absolute and joyously shared his grand discoveries with all his fellow beings.

To appreciate the magnitude and revolutionary character of his achievement we must remember the context in which he took his birth. The practice of Vedic religion had got degraded to an exercise in barren and outmoded ritualism. The orthodox Vedists had little to offer to counter the clever arguments of the heterodox atheists. Nor were other faiths satisfying. Buddhism, for instance, had started with the marvellous enlightenment of a Siddhartha, but with the

passage of time it too had degenerated into vitandā vāda a spiritual ju-justu, a negative approach to all standpoints and indulgence in sophisticated licentiousness. In sum false doctrines misguided the common people. It was Śaṅkara's remarkable feat to climb the Everest of Upanishadic wisdom and thence bring down for the benefit of humanity the sacred waters of eternal life. Sanatana Dharma, the perennial philosophy of bliss, he re-established on firm foundations.

It is to be noted that his way of thinking and exposition has set a model for all subsequent philosophers. The uncompromising Absolute he taught no doubt challenges our intellectual acumen. And expounding transcendent Brahman usually lends itself to obscurantism. But Śaṅkara's writing is always prasanna gambhira, lucid and deep. Without in any way diluting the grandeur of the truth he invites us to follow him in a language that is pointed and precise, pleasant and powerful.

His approach is three-pronged- Śrutya, Yuktya, Svānubhūtya. To establish any verity he presses into service the triad - the sublime Upanishads, brilliant reasoning and undeniable personal experience. Like a true scientist he does not accept anything contrary to reason. If a scripture

says fire is cold, reject it outright, he declares. But he points out that reason has its limitations. It cannot operate when dealing with the transcendental. There the Śruti, the insight of the Rishis, the Mantradrastās reigns supreme. It has to be accepted without reservation for the seers had no axe of their own to grind. Yet the crowning authority for any principle is the aspirant's own inner experience. Reality is realization.

In the field of reasoning Śaṅkara's *Purva paksha* is famous. When dealing with any proposition he first marshals arguments that the opponent can present. In fact these arguments are often superior to what the other one can think of. So much so we tend to feel that these arguments are valid. Then comes a bolt from the blue. Śaṅkara makes a few master strokes and demolishes this spate of arguments. He presents us the Siddhānta, the irrefutable truth.

Śaṅkara is known as the Bhāshyakāra, because of his immortal commentaries on the three canons of Vedānta, the *Prasthānatraya* - the Upanishads, the Brahmasūtras and the Bhagavad Gita. These are the works that call for a close and intensive thinking for which the common but sincere reader may not be equipped. So the ever-compassionate

Śaṅkara has produced the *prakarana Granthas*, independent, systematic manuals like *Viveka Chudāmani*, *Upadesa Sahasri* and *Ātmabodha*. In these the sublime obiter dicta of the Upanishads are re-presented in a charming lyrical form.

Sam karoti iti Śaṅkaraḥ - Śaṅkara is he who carries the nectar to the thirsty seekers. Even after writing *Prakarana Granthas* Śaṅkara must have felt that he had not done enough to bring the common folk into the Divine net. Hence his devotional missiles. Poems like the lilting *Bhajagovindam* delight equally the toddler in his grandma's lap and the nonegenarian grandpa in the easy chair. These verses dance their way into the chanter's and listener's hearts and instil into them a longing for the holy and the Supreme.

It is often protested that there is a grave contradiction in dyed-in-the-wool Jñāni like Śaṅkara preaching and practising Bhakti. This delusion occurs due to an under-valuation of Sankara's intelligence and sensibility. Śaṅkara was a Dhira in its double implication- wise and brave. His wisdom was universal in its reach and he had the courage to apply it to all situations. Jñāna, the Vichāra Mārga he extolled as the royal road to Liberation. But he was also aware that this might not be the path for all.

Bhinna ruchir hi lokah men differ in tastes, aptitudes, equipments. Hence the path of devotion too forms a national highway. Love comes natural to every one of us, and the intensification of this love to the extreme is the *parābhakti*, which is *parama prema rupā*. So he declares *Moksha kārana sāmāgryām bhaktireva gariyasi*, among the techniques for emancipation devotion alone holds the supreme place. Both the paths of Jñāna and Bhakti culminate in the same ineffable Infinite. It is only little minds that see a difference between Pure Jñāna and Pure Bhakti.

Śaṅkara never touched anything that he did not adorn. So the Bhakti literature he has produced is not only profound but also mellifluous. *Sivānanda Lahari* and *Saundarya Lahari* are monumental tributes to the agony and ecstasy of the votary seeking the Ultimate in its personal and impersonal aspects.

Far from rejecting the need for ritualistic worship, he purged religious practice of their excrescences and raised them to the pedestal of adorable sanctity. He came to fulfil and not to destroy. Not a fanatic wedded to a single faith he became the *shanmata sthāpaka*, he established the six modes of deity worship. If today we are able to derive solace and a sense of gratitude

by observing Vināyaka Chaturthi and Śivarātri, Janmāshtami and Rāma Navami, Saraswati Pujā and Durgā Pujā, we are indebted to the vision of Śaṅkara who could lead us to Nirguna Brahman through the stairs of Sagunopāsanā. For, to Śaṅkara all religious practices and all forms of devotion stem from the same underlying Advaitic truth. With moral purity and impartial reasoning he never compromised, but he left it to the devotee to choose the deity most appealing to him. We find Sankara visiting every famous temple from Badri in the north to Rameswaram in the south, from Jvalamukhi in the west to Kamarupa in the east. If in some shrines the deity happened to be a bit cruel, he did not hesitate to use his yogic powers to transform the Presence into one of benign grace.

Again there is a misunderstanding that Śaṅkara frowned on Karma Mārga. The fact is that both jnana and Bhakti generate the conviction that it is the Lord who is the Kartā and Bhoktā and we are but tools in His hands. When a poet writes a poem it is ridiculous for the pen to claim that it is writing the poem. The pen is only an instrument in the poet's hands. We too are but instruments in the hands of the Divine. Hence are we told to work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof'. This realization gives the selfless worker tremendous dynamism. In his brief life how much work Śaṅkara performed, Traversing the whole

of India on foot, and engaging in thrilling debates hundreds of illustrious scholars belonging to different faiths. His confrontation with Mandana Misra is a masterpiece revealing his sense of humour and invincible debating skill.

Sankara was essentially an integrator. He took the best and the positive in every field of human endeavour and by a marvellous alchemy moulded it all into a captivating symphony. Very often he is accused of being *prachana baudha* - a cryptic Buddhist. The fact is that he did not have any qualms in absorbing into his system of philosophy what is true and graceful in Sakyamuni's exposition. Even the purer features of Tantra he accepted and presented us the magnificent *Śrī Vidyā*.

The more we look at Śaṅkara's life and work the greater grows our wonder how a youth could blaze such a trail that is so superbly universal in form and content. Other philosophers may quarrel with it, but Śaṅkara's Advaita has quarrel with none. No wonder all philosophers after Śaṅkara have to be either pro-Śaṅkara or anti-Śaṅkara. In no way can they ignore Śaṅkara or dismiss him lightly. In the fullest sense of the term he is Jagadguru, the world Teacher. He is nonpareil. *Vasantavad lokahitam charan*, like the spring he is ever on the move for the welfare of the world.





An Analytical Study of Śaṅkara's Mohamudgara

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Śaṅkara propagated the jñāna line of sādhanā which is fundamentally different from all other sādhanās. This may be called ātmopāśanā. Self is the highest reality. The Vedantic experience is 'I am Brahman'. The self or Ātman is not to be taken as subject, but it is something which transcends both subject and object, and is beyond all relational experience. Non-relational apprehension is a thing of direct experience. Śaṅkara has emphatically stated that jñāna or knowledge is the only way to salvation. Aparokṣānubhūti is our goal. The direct apprehension is not the awareness of any object by the subject, the awareness is the very essence of the thing to the cognised. Upanisads say 'brahma veda brah maiva bhavati,' to know it is to be it.

Śaṅkara has laid down means and methods of self realization. There are four pre-requisites to Brahman knowledge. These are absolutely necessary to know the Truth. These pre-requisites are :-

1. Discrimination between eternal and non-eternal (nityānitya vastuvivekaḥ) Brah-

man is real and all other things are unreal and illusory. Discrimination is the first and foremost of all disciplines.

2. Relinquishment of fruits of enjoyment in this life or next life (ihāmūtraphala bhogavirāgaḥ). All empirical objects are finite in nature. Therefore they cannot generate permanent happiness. Renunciation comes after discrimination. Hence it is absolutely necessary for an aspirant.

3. Six gems such as control of mind (sama), control of the senses (dama), cessation of sense engagement (Uparati) endurance (titikṣā), contemplation (samādhi) and faith (Śraddhā) are the means to salvation. Control of the mind and senses are absolutely imperative for Brahman knowledge. Control of the mind entwined with faith in the statements of the vedānta as taught by the teacher gives rise to realisation of the supreme Truth.

4. The desire to be liberated (mumukṣutva) helps one to get rid of the bondage and suffering. The purpose of vedānta is ending the ignorance relating to the object of knowl-

edge and attaining the joy of one's own true nature.

Non-attachment and relinquishment should be practised by an aspirant. These two give an inward pull from the external sensuous objects and thus helping the mind to stay in a state of calmness. The mind once controlled and disciplined becomes a fit receptacle to know the truth.

There are many stotras where Śaṅkara has projected the status of the world and meaninglessness of this worldly life. Once in the morning Śaṅkara was going to take a dip in the river, he heard some students repeating the rules of grammar. He thought the precious morning time was to chant the name of God, and these students were wasting their time repeating the rules of grammar. So in carpatapanjarika Śaṅkara rebukes them saying ' Oh! fools utter the name of Govinda, when death comes the rules of grammar will not be your saviour'.

In Mohamudagara Śaṅkara has propounded his basic philosophy of non-attachment, how one should lead his life in this mortal world and worthlessness of the enjoyments of this world.

Hankering after material objects enhance the desire for the enjoyments of and

happiness in the empirical world. Gita says ' when one ponders over the material objects of sense interest there is born in man an attachment for them, from attachment rises passion (kāma), in the face of passion arises rage (Krodha) . From rage is produced distortion of values (sammoḥ) from distortion of values emerge memory lapse (smṛti bhraṁsaḥ) from memory lapse comes loss of reason (buddhiṁāsaḥ) and from loss of reason he perishes'.

मूढ जहीहि धनागम तृष्णां
कुरु सद्बुद्धिं मनसि वितृष्णाम् ।
यत्लभसे निजकर्मोपात्तं
वित्तं तेन विनोदय चित्तम् ॥ १ ॥

Renounce, Oh! fool your ceaseless thirst and desire for hoarding wealth. Inculcate non-attachment. You should remain calm with what may come through deeds performed in previous lives .Devote your mind to righteousness".

In this world wealth is the cause of all misery and it brings no permanent happiness. Acquisition of wealth gives rise to false ego. In Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad Yajñavalkya desirous of renouncing the world wanted to bestow his earthly possession to his two wives Maitreyi and Katyayani. Maitreyi

asked ' will this wealth give me immortality." Yajnavalkya said, " amṛtatvasyatu nāsāsti vittena,"there is no hope of immortality through wealth." Yogavasistha Ramayana says "acquisition of wealth is sufferig, protection of it suffering and its loss is also suffering . Hence wealth and riches cannot bring eternal happiness."

अर्थ-मनर्थ भावय नित्यं
नास्ति ततः सुखलेशः सत्यम् ।
पुत्रादपि धनभाजां भीतिः
सर्वत्रैषा विहिता रीतिः ॥ ६ ॥

'You should remember wealth and riches are the root of all misery. It only bring grief. Even a rich man fears his son . Everywhere this is the position'.

Always through ignorance one ponders over the reality of the world. Through avidyā one gets attached to the false relation of this world. In reality there is nothing except Brahman. This world is false like a mirage .

का ते कान्ता कस्ते पुत्रः
संसारोऽयमतीव विचित्रः ।
कस्य त्वं वा कुत आयात-
स्तत्त्वं चिन्तय तदिह भ्रातः ॥ ८ ॥

'Who is your wife?, who is your son ? This

world is really a strange place. Who are you ?, From where have you come? . Ponder on these things carefully.

In this world everything is in an eternal flux. Whatever is impermanent cannot be the real truth . Vairāgya or desirelessness is helpful towards spiritual realization. The body passes through different phases like childhood , youth and old age . What once passes away never returns To realize this truth realization of Brahman is necessary.

मा कुरु धन-जन-यौवन-गर्वं
हरति निमेषात् कालः सर्वम् ।
मायामयमिद-मखिलं हित्वा
ब्रह्मपदं त्वं प्रविश विदित्वा ॥ ११ ॥

Do not boast of your youth, friend and wealth. Time steals everything swiftly in a wink of an eye. Abjure that this world is an illusion and rest yourself in Brahman, the ultimate TRUTH.

Hindu sādhanā points out that to realize the ultimate truth, there is absolute necessity to discipline the mind. In the Gita Arjuna says, "mind is very fickle and it is difficult to control like the wind". The six enemies are desire (kāma), anger (krodha) greed(lobha), infatuation(moha) and jealousy (mātsarya). All our joys and sorrows, anger,illusion are

created by the mind itself. These six enemies cause endless misery in this world. To get rid of these enemies repeated practice of taming the mind is necessary. Upanisads say, Into blinding darkness they enter who follow the path of ignorance."

कामं क्रोधं लोभं मोहं
त्यक्त्वात्मानं भावय कोऽहम् ।
आत्मज्ञान-विहीना मूढा-
स्ते पच्यन्ते नरकनिगूढाः ॥ १४ ॥

"Give up desire, wrath and lust ; give up delusion and greed. Think who you are. Those who do not have self knowledge are fools . They go to hell and suffer incessantly".

The proximate instrument to Brahman knowledge is renunciation. Vicāra or constant meditation is necessary. The darkness of ignorance can be removed by the light of caitanya, the self effulgent one. Ignorance makes the absolute appear as relative and one as many. The Māyā with its gunas is hard to overcome. One who takes refuge in Brahman can overcome Māyā. Therefore vairāgya is absolutely necessary. Vairāgya and moksa are interwoven together. Vairāgya is total dispassion by seeing fault in the object of desire seen or unseen.

सुरमन्दिर-तरुमूल-निवासः
शय्या-भूतल-मजिनं वासः ।
सर्व-परिग्रह-भोगत्यागः
कस्य सखं न करोति विरागः ॥ ६ ॥

Make temple or tree your home. Clothed in deerskin use the bare earth as your bed. Avoid all gifts and sensuous enjoyments. He is blessed, who can be content with dispassion.

Vedanta says as each individual is Brahman or Ātman there should not be any distinction of caste and sex. In the empirical level we are faced with strife and mental agony. Our visions are clouded and the tranquility of mind cannot be established. Rigorous mental discipline is necessary, so that the aspirant can realize equality with all beings. Śaṅkara has pointed out there is no plurality of selves. There is only one self without a second.

शत्रौ मित्रे पुत्रे बन्धौ
मा कुरु यत्नं विग्रहसन्धौ ।
भव समचित्तः सर्वत्र त्वं
वाञ्छस्यचित्त-द्यदि विष्णुत्वम् ॥ १३ ॥

"Do not be attached to friend and foe, son and kinsman. Do not put your effort in peace and war. If you aspire to the realm of Visnu, look upon everything as equal".

The world with names and forms cannot be denied in the empirical level-Relative world is only illusion. It is called dr̥stanastaṣvarūpa. In the Gita it is said just as one thread passes through many gems and it holds the gems together, Brahman is one and is present in every being. It is also the locus and sustainer. Different religious sects quarrel with each other being intolerant. The self or the Atman is in inseparable connection with all.

त्वयि मयि सर्वत्रैको विष्णु-
 व्यर्थं कुप्यसे मय्यसहिष्णुः ।
 सर्वस्मिन्नपि पश्यात्मानं
 सर्वत्रोत्सृज भेदज्ञानम् ॥ १२ ॥

Visnu or Atman dwells in you, me and in everything. In vain you are intolerant showing wrath and impatience. See the Atman in yourself and in every being and give up the knowledge of separateness.

Vedanta has advocated astāṅgayoga for the concentration of mind, though it has refuted the duality expressed in yoga system of Philosophy. The astāṅga yoga are : - restraint(yama), disciplines of the development of the personality (niyama), posture(āsana), breath control (prāṇāyāma), withdrawal (pratyāhāra), fixation(dhāraṇa), meditation(dhyāna) and concentration (samādhi).

In vedāntasāra these have been explicated very vividly. Restraints are non violence (ahimsā), speaking the truth (satya), non-stealing (āsteya), celibacy (brahmacarya) and non-possession (aparigraha). The observances are cleanliness(sauca), contentment (santosa), austerity(tapas), study of the scriptures (svādhyāya) and worship of the Lord (pranidhāna). Postures are practical arrangements of hands and feet viz padmāsana svastikāsana etc.

Prāṇāyāma is restraining the breath by exhaling(recaka) inhaling(puraka) and retaining (kumbhaka). Pratyahara means withdrawal of senses from their objects. Dhāraṇa is holding the mind on the non-dual principle. Dhyāna is meditation or mental flow toward the non-dual principle. Samādhi means concentration of mind. Above eight subsidiary parts are to be practised by an aspirant for one-pointedness of mind.

प्राणायामं प्रत्याहारं
 नित्यानित्य-विवेक-विचारम् ।
 जाप्य-समेत-समाधि-विधानं
 कुर्वन्महद्विधानम् ॥ १७ ॥

"Withdraw the mind, and senses from their objects. Restrain the breath. Discern the real from the unreal. Constantly repeat

the name of God. Take the restless mind to the state of samādhi. Steadfastly apply your mind to this universal rule".

In this world nothing is constant except Brahman. Everything is changing every moment like the flickering lamp. Yāska in his Niruka has mentioned six stages of transformation of every object. It is born (jāyate), it is (asti), it grows (bardhati), it matures (parinamati), it decays (apakṣiyati) and it perishes (vinasyati). Vedānta emphatically declares that in this universe nothing is static. The empirical consciousness yielding to the reality of the body and other constituents have got a firm hold on us. Therefore it is hard to conceive the idea that nothing is permanent. From our daily experience it can be observed that day by day man comes nearer to death. Everything is transient as the ripples in the stream.

नलिनी-दल-गत-जल-मतितरलं
तद्वज्जीवित-मतिशयचपलम् ।
विद्वि न्याय्यभिमानग्रस्तं
लोकं शोकहतं च समस्तम् ॥ ३ ॥ (10)

Just as water drops on the lotus lead slips away similarly the life of man is uncertain All human beings are subjected to ego, disease and grief.

Śaṅkara says in one of his stotras in childhood suffering never comes to an end. The child has no control over his body. Day and night passes away crying. In youth venomous snakes of senses kill the discriminative power. When old senses lose their power of judgement. Afflictions experienced in every day life brings the realization of finitude and worthlessness of desires. This reflective thinking agitates the mind.

का ते कान्ता-धनगतचिन्ता
वातुल किं-तव नास्ति नियन्ता ।
त्रिजगति सञ्जन-संगतिरेका
भवति भवार्णवतरणे नौका ॥ १ ॥

"Why do all these things bring distress to your mind ? Is there no guide to hold you firmly by hand and instruct you on birth and death" ?

Hindu tradition emphasizes spiritual knowledge to be effective must be transmitted by a Guru. Upaniṣad says, 'ācāryavān 'purusaveda'. Man is enlightened by a preceptor. Śaṅkara has stressed the need of spiritual Guru who can guide the mortal being in the right path. The preceptor who has direct apprehension of Brahman (aparokṣajñānavān) is fit person to dispel the darkness of ignorance of his disciple. It is through the compassion and the guidance

of the Guru, the disciple is able to know the highest TRUTH. Therefore the Absolute Truth can hardly be had without the assistance of a spiritual teacher.

गुरुचरणाम्बुज-निर्भरभक्तः

संसारा-दचिराद्भव मुक्तः ।

सेन्द्रिय-मानस-नियमादेवं

द्रक्ष्यसि निज-हृदयस्थं देवम् ॥ १८ ॥

"Depend on the lotus feet of your Guru and in no time free yourself from the bondage of the world. Control your senses and mind, and see the Lord within your heart."

द्वादशपञ्जरिकामय एष शिष्याणां कथितो ह्युपदेशः ।
येषां चित्ते नैव विवेकस्ते पच्यन्ते नरकमनेकम् ॥

Sāṅkara says in these twelve slokas I have given advice to the disciple to follow the right path . Those who do not have discriminative knowledge they suffer the evils of samsāra.

In conclusion it may be said that mohamudgara is an excellent piece of stotra which has almost become proverbial. It is an eye-opener to all ignorant persons. From its name it can be inferred that it acts like a hammer in the minds of all men and women. It basically teaches non-attachment and renunciation Guru's lotus feet delivers one from the perils of his unreal world.



मूढः कश्चन वैयाकरणो

डुकृञ्करणाध्ययन-धुरीणः ।

श्रीमच्छंकर-भगवच्छिष्यै-

बोधित आसीच्छोधित-करणः ॥

Thus was a silly grammarian
Lost in conning rules
Cleansed of his narrow vision
And shown the Light by Sankara's
apostles.

Viveka Chudāmani - The Crest Jewel of Wisdom

(By Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya)

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Viveka chudāmani, the crest jewel of wisdom is a Prakarana grantha, a work lucidly explaining the vedantic concepts enshrined in the Upanishads, Bhagavad Geetha etc. It is a valuable compendium since a basic sine-qua-non for a proper study of Vedanta is a correct grasp of fundamental terms definitions embodied in Vedantic literature. According to Swamy Chinmayananda " to one making a deep study of Viveka chudamani, no other help is needed"

There are 581 verses and a bird's eye view of the work is highlighted. The great Acharya has presented the subject in the form of a lively conversation between an erudite scholar and an enthusiastic student. The slokas reveal how Śaṅkara the poet and Śaṅkara the philosopher harmoniously blend in as much as mellifluous poetry explains abstruse truths with apt analogies.

न योगेन न सांख्येन कर्मणा नो न विद्यया ।
ब्रह्मात्मैकत्वबोधेन मोक्षः सिध्यति नान्यथा ॥

Liberation is not possible merely through either karma , or Jnana or rituals or through learning. Only through the realisation of identity between the individual self and the Universal self is liberation possible. There are no other means,

वीणाया रूपसौन्दर्यं तन्त्रीवादनसौष्ठवम् ।
प्रजारञ्जनमात्रं तन्न साम्राज्याय कल्पते ॥

The melodious music of the Veena combined with the performer's skill may enthrall an audience. But it cannot contribute to the knowledge of the Self. So also sastras can only be of help up to a point beyond which it is one's own effort which counts.

अविज्ञाते परे तत्त्वे शास्त्राधीतिस्तु निष्फला ।
विज्ञातेऽपि परे तत्त्वे शास्त्राधीतिस्तु निष्फला ॥

Without intelligently grasping the truth of the Supreme the study of the sastras

becomes an exercise in futility. Having realised the truth too further study is no less so.

तद्वद्ब्रह्मविदोपदेशमननध्यानादिभिर्लभ्यते

मायाकार्यतिरोहितं स्वममलं तत्त्वं न

दुर्युक्तिभिः

A treasure hidden in the bowels of the earth can be retrieved by serious efforts involving digging, removing supernatant stones etc. It cannot be recovered by calling it by name. Similarly the Self screened by Māyā can be attained only by first getting instructions from a Guru, to be followed by indefatigable practice of reflection, meditation etc by oneself. It cannot be perceived by concatenated arguments or hair splitting logic.

The Āchārya with consummate poetic skill dramatically presents a lamentable picture of man's doom when he, instead of controlling his sense organs is enslaved by them. The deer has an innate love for melodious sound. A hunter capitalises on that catching it at an unguarded moment when being fascinated by sound of music produced by the hunter it is oblivious to the world. An elephant has a weakness for the

sense of touch. It indiscriminately rubs against other elephants, trees etc unmindful of the pit dug and camouflaged to catch it. Moth is attracted by flame and meets with doom. The gluttonous fish bites the bait and meets with death. The bee with a wonderful sense of smell collects honey with painstaking efforts. The honeycomb along with the bees becomes a prey to man's vandalism. In each of these instances the animal comes to grief through excessive affinity to one sense organ. When man is simultaneously influenced by all the five sense organs can he ever hope for liberation ?

अन्तःकरणमेतेषु चक्षुरादिषु वर्ष्मणि ।
अहमित्यभिमानेन तिष्ठत्याभासतेजसा ॥

अहंकारः स विज्ञेयः कर्ता
भोक्ताभिमान्ययम्
सत्त्वादिगुणयोगेन चावस्थात्रयमश्नुते ॥

विषयाणामानुकूल्ये सुखी दुःखी विपर्यये
सुखं दुःखं च तद्धर्मः सदानन्दस्य नात्मनः

One's own ego in association with the body, takes the role of performer, enjoyer sufferer etc. Also jointly with the three gunas satva, rajas and tamas assumes the three states of consciousness, the waking, dreamlike and the deep sleep condition. The vicissitudes of life are the characteristics of the ego, not Atman which is ever in a state of bliss.

Nescience, avidyā or māyā is unmanifest and symbolises the Lord's power to delude. At the micro level it associates with jiva and at the macro level with Īswara. We cannot see electricity except through it's manifestation as heat, light etc. So also maya can only be inferred through it's consequential effects in the form of vāsanās, impressions.

सन्नाप्यसन्नाप्युभयात्मिका नो
भिन्नाप्यभिन्नाप्युभयात्मिका नो ।
साङ्गाप्यनङ्गा ह्युभयात्मिका नो
महद्भुताऽनिर्वचनीयरूपा ॥

Māyā is neither existent nor noneexistent . It is neither similar nor dissimilar. It is neither a part nor a whole. It is a great wonder and is indescribable. Knowledge of Brahman drives away the delusion

that is māyā. The very term maya means that which is not - 'Yaa maa saa māyā'

Everything other than Brahman is nonself. To illustrate further nonself is constituted of body, mind, ego, satva rajas and tamas with all their different permutations and combinations in the form of multitudinous manifestations of thoughts and actions, the gross elements, in fact the whole universe inclusive of maya. To realise Brahman all that is unreal (in a relative sense) as detailed above have to be perforce negated/ transcended. In short Anatman is solely due to maya because of the nonapprehension of reality.

The Ātman is man's basic substratum behind his ego and a witness to all his actions in all the three states of waking, dream and in the deep sleep condition. Ātman as pure consciousness is aware not only of the presence of thoughts in the mind but also the absence (of thoughts). Human intelligence can see, conceive, thoughts flowing in the mind but Atman can "see" the absence of thoughts too. Atman sees all but is seen by none. Atman provides the where-withal for man to act in accordance with his vāsanās and gunas . Ātman pervades the universe but is pervaded by nothing. The relation between Ātman and Brahman is

beautifully brought out thus.

न जायते न म्रियते न वर्धते
न क्षीयते न विकरोति नित्यः।
विलीयमानेऽपि वपुष्यमुष्मि-

न लीयते कुम्भ इवाम्बरं स्वयम्॥
Space pervades everything. Space in a pot

merges with the universal space when the pot is broken. The act of merging has nothing to do with pot. So also Ātman housed in the tabernacle of the human body can attain Brahman when the body falls. As an entity Ātman is widely different from the body.

Ignorance and the lack of discrimination between Ātman and Anātman are the root cause for bondage. Man's helplessness in this context is entanglement with the octopus grip of vāsanās as brought out in.

बीजं संसृतिभूमिजस्य तु तमो देहात्मधीरङ्कुरो
रागः पल्लवमम्बु कर्म तु वपुः
स्कन्धोऽसवः शाखिकाः
अग्राणीन्द्रियसंहतिश्च विषयाः
पुष्पाणि दुःखं फलं
नानाकर्मसमुद्भवं बहुविधं भोक्तात्र
जीवः खगः

For the tree of Samsara the fundamental cause (seed) is ignorance, Contact with the body is the sprout. Desire consti-

tutes the first offshoot of leaves. Performance of work helps to water the tree. The tree trunk is the body. Pranas are the branches. Sense organs are the twigs, sense objects the flowers. The ups and downs of life are the fruits. The individual jiva as a bird is perched helplessly on this tree.

The only solution for the problem of ignorance is the acquisition of knowledge which in turn arises from proper discrimination by a purified mind. Ātman is seemingly covered by five sheaths - Annamaya kosa (food sheath), Prānamaya kosa (vital air, sheath), Manomaya kosa (mental sheath), Vijñānamaya kosa (intellectual sheath) and Ānandamaya kosa (bliss sheath). It is like water in a pond obscured in toto, by moss. When the moss is cleared water appears. The moss though on water is independent of it. So also the sheaths covering the Ātman have nothing to do with the Ātman which is altogether separate. When man negates the kosas he gets liberated.

The negation of the sheaths thus paves the way for the affirmation of the Ātman. Being distinct from the sheaths, it has to be realised by the subtlest of intellects. The Ātman is a witness of itself

swasākshi. The Ātman is a silent witness of bodily activities too. In other words That which manifests in the three states of consciousness. That which is seen inwardly as a long vista of impressions imprinted on the ego, That which is a witness of the ego, and That which is ultimately seen (felt) as pure existence, knowledge and supreme bliss - That is Ātman . Illuminating every thing It ever is never not. Devoid of division It is a homogeneous all pervading entity present every where and at all times. To put it succinctly Brahman and the divine spark in us The Atman are one, not two.

A description of Brahman follows .

अतः परं ब्रह्म सद्वितीयं
विशुद्धविज्ञानघनं निरञ्जनम् ।
प्रशान्तमाद्यन्तविहीनमक्रियं
निरन्तरानन्दरसस्वरूपम् ॥

निरस्तमायाकृतसर्वभेदं
नित्यं सुखं निष्कलमप्रमेयम् ।
अरूपमव्यक्तमनाख्यमव्ययं
ज्योतिः स्वयं किञ्चिदिदं चकास्ति॥

It should be understood that Brahman is qualityless but the following features help

us to understand Brahman (1) transcendental, (2) Sat - reality (the only one) (3) Adviteeyam- one without a second, (4) Visuddham- purity personified, (5) Vijnāna ghanam- a gargantuan mass of knowledge (6) Niranjanam-absolutely without taints (7) Prasāntham-peace nonpareil,(8) Adi anta vihinam-without beginning or end, (9) Akriyam- associated with no activity, (10) Nirandharānandarasaswaroopam- the quintessence of supreme ineffable bliss, (11) Nirasthamāyākriithasarvabhedam-transcending all māyā - created delusions, (12) Nityam-eternal. (13) Sukham-intrinsic happiness, (14) Nishkalam-without any parts, (15) Aprameyam-immeasurable, (16) Aroopam-formless, (17) Avyaktam-unmanifest (18) Anakyam-nameless, (19) Avyayam-changeless and (20) Jyoti swayam-self effulgent. The epithets mentioned above are only indicative but by no means exhaustive because Brahman cannot be described adequately by words or conceived in thoughts.

The significance of the mahavakya "Tat Tvam Asi- That Thou Art " is to be understood by going into the lakshyārtha-implied meaning-rather than vāk्यārtha-literal meaning. Jiva plus upādhies or vāsanās ie māyā or ignorance in a micro scale consti-

tutes man. Īswara plus māyā in a macro dimension is Brahman. When māyā the common factor is nullified the self in man and the universal Self - Brahman are one and the same.

One should meditate on the following aspects of Brahman. Brahman has no caste, creed or family lineage. It is beyond space, time and causation...It can be perceived by the eye of wisdom only. Being a homogeneous mass of consciousness, it is beyond all sorrows occasioned by hunger, thirst, revulsion for the unpalatable, fascination for the agreeable, old age and death. It is the basic substratum of the universe and an immeasurably immense entity by itself. It is changeless and so free from decay. It is free from distinctions, calm like a waveless sea, ever free and indivisible. Brahman signifies "many in one and one in many". It is beyond the normal logic of cause-effect relationship. It is infinite, free from māyā and is everlasting supermundane bliss. Brahman in fact is everything and beyond it there is nothing. The realisation of Brahman comes as a sudden flash. Once man realises Brahman there is no samsāra for him.

Three types of shackles prevent man from realisation. They are loka vāsanā, sāstra

vāsanā and deha vāsanā. Going after the world will involve one less in Ātman and more in samsāra. Study of sāstras merely mechanically without possessing a pure mind, will only make the seeker miss the forest because of the trees. Getting obsessive with the care and comfort of the body is to be scrupulously avoided.

The Āchārya advocates sravana, manana and nidhidhyāsana to overcome the aforesaid obstacles. Vide sloka 281

श्रुत्या युक्त्या स्वानुभूत्या ज्ञात्वा सार्वत्रियमात्मनः
क्वचिदाभासतः प्राप्तस्वाध्यासापनयं कुरु ॥

Realise the Ātman by study of scriptures-sravana. Reason it out in your own mind and intellect-manana. Attain knowledge by dint of your own personal experience in abiding by what you hear. Learn and contemplate- (nidhidhyāsana)

Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty in a political context. It is no less so in a spiritual situation too. Even for a moment man should never fumble, falter or fall in his quest. Once fallen, the damage can be precipitous like a ball slipping and falling down the staircase continuously.

To recognise the entire universe as the self is the "open sesame" for liberation. Viveka and vairāgya are the two wings to enable the seeker to soar high into the realms of Nirguna Brahman through Nirvikalpa samādhi where-in there is a total cessation of thoughts in the mind which is not a consequential void, but ineffable bliss. In Nirvikalpa samādhi, the knots of ignorance in the heart are broken asunder for good. The knots pertain to spiritual ignorance, desires and activities. Successful meditation entails serenity, control of sense organs and total avoidance of mental pre-occupations whatsoever. The samadhi has it's grand final in "the complete realisation of the self by the self in the self". The significance of samādhi can be understood from the fact that reflection is hundred times superior to listening, meditation hundred thousand times superior to reflection and samādhi infinitely more so than meditation-vide

निर्विकल्पकसमाधिना स्फुटं
ब्रह्मतत्त्वमवगम्यते ध्रुवम् ।
नान्यथा चलतया मनोगतेः
प्रत्ययान्तरविमिश्रितं भवेत् ॥

Constant and continuous attention to keep the self in the focus of one's mind should be the clarion call for realisation. Until the very last stage one cannot afford to forget Brahman even for a moment. The self Brahman - is Indra, Siva, Vishnu and in fact everything in the universe. When the light of knowledge about Brahman shines, the darkness of ignorance is exterminated.

A man of realisation does not care for the body which is in a way the warp and woof of his prārabdha.

The traits of a jivanmukta are detailed and are somewhat analogous to the sthitaprajñā that the Lord speaks about in chapter-II of the Bhagavad Geeta. Śaṅkarāchārya adds a jivanmukta forgets totally the phenomenal world. Though physically living, all his experiences are centered on the concept of oneness with Brahman. His relationship with the body is like that of a shadow. If the shadow is persecuted nothing happens to the body. He does not regret the past, shuns the present and does not long for the future. Even the worst type of rake will have only respect for his mother. So also a jivanmukta will not be affected by even an iota of vāsanās.

For a jivanmukta the sañchita karma-unaccumulated fruits of past actions-get

dissolved like a in a dream, the activities in which come to nought after waking up. As regards āgāmi karma, - results waiting to fructify in future- they get automatically dissolved because karma affects the ego only and a jivanmukta is sans ego. With regard to prārabdha karma, if an arrow is discharged at a cow, mistaking it for a tiger, the arrow does not stop it's course. So also the prārabdha karma invariably works it's way but the jivanmukta is unaffected . Thus he is free fom the totality of karma-bondage.

The student finally overcome by the ecstasy of spiritual fervour exclaims " The splendour of Brahman replete with the nectarine essence of the blessed Self caused by mind merging into it's infinitesimal part like a hailstone in the ocean, leaves me absolutely contented and happy. Where has the plurality of the world vanished ? How did such

an inexplicable experience come to pass?"

Overwhelmed by uncontrollable emotions of transcendental joy the student in grateful words of thanks prostrates before the Guru saying

शशि -

चलत्युपाधौ प्रतिबिम्बलौल्य -

मौपाधिकं मूढधियो नयन्ति ।

स्वबिम्बभूतं रविवद्विनिष्क्रियं

कर्तास्मि भोक्तास्मि हतोऽस्मि हेति ॥

"I neither perform nor make others do so. I neither experience nor cause others to undergo experience. I neither see nor cause others to see . I am the luminous Self".

The Guru too advises as a parting shot " At all times, in all places, under all circumstances spend your time always contemplating on and revelling in the Self ".



अज्ञानमूलोऽयमनात्मबन्धो

नैसर्गिकोऽनादिरनन्त ईरितः

जन्माप्ययव्याधिजरादिदुःख-

प्रवाहपातं जनयत्यमुष्य ॥

Ignorance is the root of this bondage — natural, but beginningless and endless. Birth, death, sickness, disease, old age, pain — ignorance creates these for the enjoyer (the ego).

The Concept of Jivanmukti in Advaita

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अज्ञानान्तर्गहनपतितान् आत्मविद्योपदेशैः
त्रातुं लोकान् भवदवशिकातापपापच्यम्नान् ।
मुक्त्वा मौनं वटविटपिनोः मूलतो निस्सरन्ती
शम्भोर्मूर्तिं चरति भुवने शङ्कराचार्यरूपा ॥

i) Of the different schools of Vedanta, the concept of Jivanmukti is unique to the Philosophy of Advaita. The other schools do not admit it, and even question it, on the basis of the argument that this is a contradiction in terms. It is according to them, unreasonable to postulate that while the Jiva is embodied or imprisoned as it were, it is also in a released state (moksa) at the same time . Release or mokṣa can occur only with the destruction of the body, which is called " videhamukti " . But Advaita asserts that this state of being realised for the Jiva while yet embodied is possible and more than that, to keep the tradition of passing the knowledge gained through self-realisation, this state of jivanmukti should logically also be admitted.

ii) This concept holds that while the Jiva strives to attain the direct knowledge of Brahman - the ultimate transcendental

reality beyond the spacio-temporal confines, it is not necessary that with the attainment of this jñāna, the fall of body of the realised soul should also be co-terminus.

iii) No doubt, the Jiva strives to attain this knowledge which is in itself release or moksa - so says the śruti texts - ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मैव भवति, ब्रह्मभावंश्च मोक्षः, अत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते etc., but having attained it, to exhaust the prārabdha karma (which is a portion of the sañcita karma) that has started or to complete the experience of the prārabdha karma that has commenced yielding result in the form of the present body, the jiva has to continue to reside in the body. The time-interval between rise of direct knowledge of Brahman (मोक्ष) and the fall of the physical body of the jñāni is the state of jivanmukti, however small or infinitesimal it may be.

iv) The usual example cited is the potter's wheel which continues to spin, even after the effect (pot) of the action, namely, the spinning of the wheel has been achieved. More than anything the state of

liberation while, embodied is admitted because it is experienced says Sarva jñātman in his Samksepa Śāriraka. As the shadow of duality is experienced it is also accepted. And the trace of avidyā (avidyāleśa) is upheld to account for the shadow of duality. And these views are based on one's experience,

जीवन्मुक्तिस्तावदास्ति प्रतीतेः

द्वैतछाया तत्र चास्ति प्रतीतेः ।

द्वैत छायाः क्षणायास्ति लोशः

तास्मिन्नेव स्वानुभूतिः प्रमाणम् ॥

Samksepa Sariraka. 4.43.

This view is based upon Śaṅkara's bhāṣya wherein he states that one's experience of the realisation of Brahman and also the embodied state at the same time cannot be questioned by the other.

अपि च नैवात्र विविदितव्यं ब्रह्मविदा काश्चित्कालं शरीरं ध्रियते न वा ध्रियते इति । कथं हि एकस्य स्वहृदयप्रत्ययं ब्रह्मवेदनं देहधारणं च अपरेण प्रतिक्षेपुं शक्येत ।

The text of the Muṇḍaka - क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तास्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे (2.28) and the Gita text ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते अर्जुन (4.41) speaks of destruction of all karmas in the case of a realised soul. But it must be added here that the knowledge of Brahman cannot remove the Prārabdha karma. This is because a soul has attained the knowledge of Brahman by being present in a particu-

lar body. This body has come into existence through prārabdha karma. Thus the rise of this knowledge regarding Brahman will not, destroy prārabdha karma. But the accumulated merits and demerits (sañcita) will be annihilated. No future merit or demerit would accrue, as the realised soul would not perform any karma with a sense of agency and whatever he does will not bind him.

To the one who is in the realm of avidyā, the jīvanmukta may appear to perform some activities. But from the standpoint of the jīvanmukta it is only the mind that performs the activity This is the essence of Bhagavad-Gita texts -

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।

अहंकारविमुढात्मा कर्ताऽहमिति मन्यते ॥ 3.27

तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागशः ।

गुणगुणेषु वर्तन्ते इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥

Bhagavad Gita 3.18.

It comes to this that in order that the prārabdhakarma may be experienced there is the need of the physical body. On these grounds the state of jīvanmukti stands to reason.

Our land is known as भारतवर्ष The word भारत etymologically means " men of spiritual enlightenment", that is, those who revel in the ultimate reality, which is self-luminous pure consciousness. भारूपे ब्रह्मणि

रताः - भारताः And this term is metaphorically applied to our land, which abounds in such persons of spiritual enlightenment. India, therefore, means not a landmass geographically not a race denotatively but a culture, a language and a literature that are distinctive. It is an idea that world matters not, but the spirit within, does. There have been jivanmuktas and will be in our land for redeeming others by their personal example and precepts. In the Bhagavad - Gita, Lord Kṛṣṇa says that those who are conversant with the Upaniṣadic teachings (ज्ञानिनः) and have intuitive knowledge of Brahman (तत्त्वदर्शिनः) impart this knowledge to the worthy aspirants, when the aspirants draw near to them, with reverence.

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन शेषया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः

Bhagavadgita 4.34

A realised soul, if he is not embodied cannot impart knowledge. If one is embodied but has not realised the self does not have the competence to impart the knowledge. Hence, in order to preserve and transmit the knowledge of Brahman, a realised soul in an embodied state, is absolutely essential. And a realised soul is one who lives in the body in spite of his having acquired the direct knowledge of Brahman.

The realised soul although is present in the body does not have the false notion of 'I' or 'mine' . Hence he is अशरीर . The Brhadāranyaka text -

तद्यथा अहिनिर्त्वयनी वल्मीके मृता प्रत्यस्ता शयीत,
एवमेव इदं शरीरं शेते । अथ अयमशरीरः अमृतः प्राणः
ब्रह्मैव तेज एव ।, 4.4.7.

states that just as the slough shed by a serpent lies on the ant- hill with the serpent having no attachment towards it, in the same way, the body of the realised soul remains without having any attachment towards it. Thus, the realised soul is aśariri as he has no attachment to the body in which he continues to live. The Chāndogyaopanisadic text -

न ह वै सशरीरस्य सतः प्रियाप्रिययोरपहतिरस्ति ।

अशरीरं वा व सन्तं न प्रियाप्रिये स्मृतः 8.12.1

states that sasārīratva means that the soul has the false notion of one's identity with the physical body . It is considered to be aśarira in the sense that it does not have the false notion caused by mithyājñāna or indeterminable avidyā. It is with this in view that Śrī Śāṅkara states -

तस्मात् मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तत्वात् सशरीरत्वस्य
सिद्धं जीवतोऽपि विदुषः अशरीरत्वम् ।

Brahmasūtrabhāṣya on 1.1.4

No one becomes a jivanmukta overnight. There are various stages one has to cross before reaching this stage. There are many obstacles in the way too. The Gita says :

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यताति सिद्धये ।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥7.3

i) In the Yogavāsistha, sage Vasistha in his dissertation to Sri Rama, speaks of three stages that precede the rise of Jivanmukti which is said to be the fourth stage.

Stage 1 : The first stage is characterised by the attainment of intense desire to get liberated. This is possible by the performance of one's allotted duties obligatory as well as optional by offering their fruits to God. Śrī Śaṅkara in his अपरोक्षानुभूति says

स्ववर्णाश्रमधर्मेण तपसा हरितोषणात् ।

साधनं प्रभवेत्पुंसां वैराग्यादिचतुष्टयम् ॥

Thus action relating to one's stage and class of life performed as an offering to God, cleanses one's heart; gives rise to the discernment between the eternal and the non-eternal (नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेक) followed by absolute detachment towards objects of enjoyment here and in the hereafter (इहामुत्रार्थफलभोगविराग) control of mind, external senses, asceticism fortitude, concentration and faith (शमादिषट्कसंपत्) . These

culminate in the desire to get liberated (मुमुक्षुत्व) from the transmigratory existence.

ii) The second stage involves vedantic study and reflection (श्रवण and मनन) which are the dual constituents of jñānayoga which is mixed with Bhakti). Vedantic study under a preceptor removes the false notion (pramāṇasāmbhāvanā) that the Upaniṣadic texts do not teach non-dual Reality. Manana or reflection consists in arguing within oneself on the basis of reasoning with a view to ascertain that the Upaniṣadic teaching is valid and it is not stultified by the view-points of the other schools of thought. This enables the aspirant to get over the false notion (prameyāsambhāvanā) that the Upaniṣadic teachings may not after all be true.

iii) The aspirant now gets into the third stage of intellectual conviction that the Upanisads teach non-dual reality, as identical with his true nature and that, that teaching is not contradicted by any other proof, or school of thought. Yet one is not able to realise within oneself the truth of the Upanisads as one's mind is still afflicted by old habits of thought or vāsanās in the form of 'I' and 'mine' . To overcome this, one pursues nididhyāsana which is a conscious mental effort to check the sense-organs and

mind from comprehending the external objects; with a view to maintain the continuity of the knowledge of Brahman, arisen from sravana and manana.

These three stages are known as jāgradavasthā. It is because the world of duality, as in the waking state is presented as real in these stages. In the Yoga Vāsistha, Sri Vasistha says Sri Rama -

भूमिका त्रितयं त्वेतत् राम जाग्रदिति स्मृतम् ।

जाग्रतीवात्र विस्पष्टं भेदबुद्ध्यनुवर्तनात् ॥ 6-126-52

iv) The fourth stage is marked by the rise of the direct knowledge of Brahman. It is known as svapnāvasthā since here the world of duality is manifested like a dream state. In the Yoga Vāsistha it is said : चतुर्थी स्वप्न इत्युक्ता स्वप्नाभं यत्र वै जगत । 6-120-7. One who has attained this stage is known as a jivanmukta and the stage is known as jivanmukti.

जीवन्मुक्तिरितीमां वदन्त्यवस्थां स्थितात्मसंबोधा ।
बाधितभेदप्रतिभां अबाधितात्मप्रबोधसामर्थ्यात् ॥

But after any one of the three stages prior to the rise of the direct knowledge of Brahman, if the body of the aspirant falls, he is a योगभ्रष्ट. What happens to such a one, who is neither here nor there, asks Arjuna in the Gita and Rama in the Yogavāsistha.

अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतः योगाच्चलितमानसः ।

अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ॥

Sri Rama asks

एकामथ द्वितीयां वा तृतीयां वा इतरां च वा ।

आरूढस्य मृतस्याथ कीदृसी भगवन्गतिः ॥

Sage Vasistha replies :

The sins of the previous transmigratory existence of that yogin whose life passes away from his body during any one of the stages of yoga are removed in proportion to the degree of development he has acquired in that stage .

योगभूमिकया उत्क्रान्त जीवितस्य शरीरेणः ।

भूमिकांशानुसारेण क्षीयते पूर्वदुष्कृतम् ॥

Then he lives in the world of celestial beings and incarnates on this earth again. He is born in the house of some pious, rich, noble-hearted person of blemishless character: in a family of wise yogins. Having then rapidly passed through the stages of yoga he has already gone over, he reaches the next higher stage.

भोगक्षयात् परिक्षीणे जायन्ते योगिनो भुवि ।

शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे गुप्ते गुणवतां सताम् ॥

तत्र प्राग्भवनाभ्यस्तं योगभूमिक्रमं बुधाः ।

हृष्टा परिपतन्त्युच्चैः उत्तर भूमिकात्रयम् ॥

In the Gita Lord Kṛṣṇa replies Arjuna identically.

प्राप्य पुण्यवृत्तां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।

शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।

एतदृद्धिं दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीहशाम् ॥

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम् ।
यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन ॥ 6-41 to 43

South India has been very fortunate
in having realised souls like Śaṅkara,
Sadāśiva Brahmendra, Bhagavān Ramana,

Seshadri Svāmi, Sage of Kanchi and others. It is with these great personages in view
the Bhagavad Gita declares:

अनेक जन्मसंसिद्धः ततो याति परां गतिम् ।
बहूनां जन्मनां अन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते ॥
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥ 6.49



Unpolluted Mind

Build up a character, make firm resolutions; make strong determinations and take solemn vows so that when you come out of the lake or river of the mind, you may not find the waters poisoned; so that the waters will not poison those who drink from them. Come out of the lake having purified it altogether. Let people differ from you, let them subject you to all sorts of difficulties, let them revile you, but despite their favours and frowns, their threats and promises, from the lake of your mind there should flow nothing but divine, infinitely pure, fresh water. Nectar should flow out of you so that it may become as impossible for you to think evil as for the pure fresh spring to poison those who drink from it. Purify the heart, sing the syllable Om, pick out all points of weakness and eradicate them. Come out victorious having formed a beautiful character. When the dragon of passion is destroyed, you will find the objects of desire worshipping you just as the wives of the dragon under the river paid homage unto Kṛṣṇa after he had killed the snake.

—Swami Rama Tirtha

ROLE OF REASON IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF ŚRĪ ŚAṆKARĀCĀRYA

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1. Śrī Śaṅkara's monistic philosophy is basically epistemological in its nature, because it is structured in the method or path of knowledge (jnāna-marga). Knowledge has two forms namely lower-knowledge pertaining to practical reality and higher knowledge concerning spiritual knowledge. In the course of rational inquiry(jijnāsā). Śrī Śaṅkara makes use of empirical models and metaphors to maintain the intellectual rigour.

2. The types of reasoning generally used by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya are: Anumāna pramāna (syllogistic inference), and Upamāna(comparison). A brief analysis of each type of reasoning is given below .

i) INFERENCE (anumāna) : The term anumāna literally means 'knowing after'. Anumāna is the method by which mediate knowledge (anumiti) is derived from the knowledge of an unchanging relation between the perceived things (Vyāpti-jnāna).

Śrī Śaṅkara makes use of a five-membered syllogism to establish the phe-

nominal character of the world . The syllogism formulated in Māndūkya-bhāṣya (4.4) is as follows :

a) Pratijnā (proposition) : The objects of the waking state are phenomenal.

Hetu(Reason): Because they are perceptible. Udāharana (Illustration): Whatever is perceptible is phenomenal. Such as dream objects.

Upanaya(Application): So is an object of the waking state.

Nigamana (Conclusion):
Therefore the objects of the waking state are phenomenal.

The structure of this inference is similar to the pattern of five-membered syllogisms formulated by Gautama and other Naiyāyikas.

From the point of view of modern logic,the argument(a1) is valid because it

satisfies the criterion of validity that no false conclusion follows from the true premises.' The arguments (a1) could be expressed in the form of Western syllogistic inference as follows;

Major Premise : All the objects of the waking state are perceptible.

Minor Premise : All perceptible objects are phenomenal.

Conclusion : Therefore all the objects of the waking state are phenomenal.

Forms of the arguments :

- | | | |
|------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | (x) (Ox > Px) | |
| ∴ 2. | (x) (Px > Hx) | |
| 3. | (x) (Ox > Hx) | |
| 4. | Oa > Pa by UI-1 | Formal
proof of
validity. |
| ∴ 5. | Pa > Ha by UI -2 | |
| ∴ 6. | Oa > Ha by 4.5 H.C | |
| 7. | (x) (Ox > Hx) 6 U.G. | |

(Where Ox=x is an object of cognition in waking state. Px=x is perceptible ; Hx=x is phenomenal).

The significant difference between India and Western syllogisms is the presence of an example in Indian syllogism.

Śaṅkara has used anvaya-vyatireka tarka in the Upadesa Sahasri. During an

inquiry into 'Who am I ?', the mahāvākya 'That Thou Art' is arrived at as the conclusion. This is based on the process of rejecting the mind, senses, and the body as not being the Self. Using this negative mode of reasoning, Sureśvara in his Naiskarmya Siddhi developed anvaya-vyatireka-tarka in which conclusion is drawn from affirmative and negative statements. Following examples represent anvaya-vyatireka tarka :

- a2) 1. Whatever is not self-luminous is material: for example, physical body.
 2. The ātman is self-luminous.
 3. Therefore, the ātman is not material.
- a3) 1. Whatever is an object of cognition cannot be the ātman.
 2. The body, sense-organs, mind, intellect are objects of cognition.
 3. Therefore, they cannot be the ātman.

ii) COMPARISON (upamāna) : Upamāna is a process of reasoning from similar cases to establish probable conclusions. The structure of analogical reasoning by comparison is characterized by certain points of resemblance between two objects without considering their essential differences. Some of the interesting illus-

trations from Śaṅkara's Ātma-bodha are considered below :

a4) As fire is the direct cause of cooking, so knowledge is the direct cause of liberation, and no other discipline is the direct cause of liberation.

In this argument knowledge is compared with fire. The comparison is drawn on the basis of causal mechanism involved in fire and cooking and knowledge and liberation. Thus the conclusion that knowledge is the direct cause of liberation is justified. To take another example :

a5) As the moon appears to be moving when the clouds move in the sky, so also the ātman appears to be active, when in reality the senses are active.

In this analogy, the ātman is compared with moon. Though the atman and the moon belong to different orders of reality, apparent activity or motion is common to both. When the clouds move in quick succession, it appears as if the moon is moving. Similarly, the movements of the sense - organs give the impression that the ātman is moving.

It is important to understand the subtle difference between (a4) and (a5). The former is a positive analogy to establish the truth of an affirmative conclusion that

'Knowledge is the direct cause of liberation.'

But (a5) is a negative analogy to show the falsity of hypothesis that the ātman is active. In reality, the ātman is the sākṣicaitanya or the witness-consciousness.

An important function of reason is to serve as a criterion for the validity of scriptures. A correct interpretation of the basic text requires fullest use of reason. Gaudapāda in his Kārika (3.23) explicitly states that scripture (Śruti) must be treated valid if it is compatible with reason (yukti-yukta), and not otherwise. If the primary sense of a text is unintelligible then the text is to be understood through the secondary implication or a figurative meaning (Karika: 3.14). Reason as a criterion takes for granted consistency in the system of knowledge (Śruti). In a consistent system every proposition exhibits the logical relationship of coherence in such a way that it is impossible to accommodate in it two mutually conflicting statement and its negation can be accommodated only in an inconsistent system. And such a system cannot be the source of knowledge. Therefore, upapatti or intelligibility in the light of reasoning functions as an important criterion of purportful scripture.

Śrī Śaṅkara admits the role of reason

to investigate truth. He himself adopts the principle of non-contradiction in criticizing rival systems. He holds that Śruti (scriptural testimony) is superior and does not depend on reason. At the same time, he does not allow Śruti to contradict reason and perception. In the domain of empirical reality, empirical means of knowledge are autonomous and valid. Even if a hundred texts say that fire is cold, we cannot accept it. Śaṅkara says: "Knowledge arises from its valid means and it conforms to its object just as it is . It can neither be produced by a hundred injunctions nor debarred by a hundred prohibitions."

Reason and Śruti are independent, yet interaction between them is possible. The function of reason is controlled by Śruti, and reason, therefore, has a subordinate role. Prof. Hiriyanna has made an interesting observation: 'As regards the claim of rationalists that such truths can be reached through reason, it is pointed out that there is a case of reasoning when once the revealed truth is there. They do not know because they reason; rather, they reason because they know'. So reason by itself is incapable of revealing scriptural truths. At best, it may help to reach plausible conclusions.

Śrī Śaṅkara recognizes the importance of reason in testing scriptural statements and

tries to confirm scriptural statements by logical arguments. He uses reason as a critical weapon against untested assumptions.

He recommends reasoning (tarka) as an auxiliary to intuition (anubhava). He upholds the view of Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad that hearing (śravaṇa) should be followed by reflection (manana) and self-enquiry (nididhyāsana). Logical reflection is important. It should however, conform to the conceptual framework of the Upaniṣads.

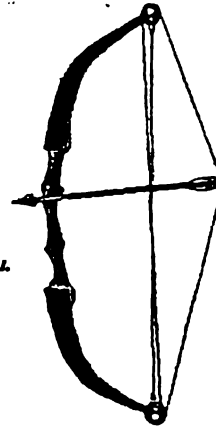
Notes and References

1. Śaṅkara admits that lower knowledge is a step to higher wisdom, See.
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*Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you.
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you
cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living
arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the Infinite, and He
bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also
the bow that is stable.*



Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*

ADVAITIC THOUGHTS WITH MODERN EXAMPLES

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कविराजहंसं भुविशर्वमूर्तिं

बहुरागलोके सुविरागमूर्तिम्

जनतामसार्कं जितचन्द्रकीर्तिं

गुरुशंकरार्यं चिरमानतोऽस्मि

"The unimaginable, marvellous and unsurpassed way in which Śrī Śaṅkara caused a dynamic revival of the Vedic religion, within the short span of a life of 32 years establishes beyond all doubts the fact of his being a divine incarnation." As such, there are no two opinions on the fact that Śrī Śaṅkarācārya was completely outside the run of average humanity. His interpretation to the Upanishadic statements and thoughts have brought him an everlasting place in the history of Vedānta. The Advaita-Vedānta, a gracious name given to the interpretations of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya has made a land mark in the field of metaphysics and has enjoyed the universal fame.

The Upanishadic principles are cored in the Brahmasūtras of Bādarāyana, and the commentary (Bhāṣya) of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya

technically known as "Śārīraka Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya" on these Sūtras is a brilliant exposition to get the core of the subject in a flowery language. The cardinal features of Advaita Vedānta have become all the more effective in his impressive literary style full of vigour and grace (भाष्यं प्रसन्नं गम्भीरम्). Beautiful examples marked with poetic excellences presented by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya exercised remarkable influence on the minds of readers of all times. The Vedānta Philosophy interpreted by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya is flexible like anything. It can be expanded by way of illustrations and expositions to thousands of verses & passages (उपदेश साहस्री) or can be reduced to hundred verses (शतश्लोकी) . It can be minimized even to ten verses, (दशश्लोकी) or even to five verses (पञ्चश्लोकी) or brought in essence hardly to one verse (एकश्लोकी) or at last it can be briefed even in half a verse :

श्लोकार्धेन प्रवक्ष्यामि यदुक्तं ग्रन्थकोटिभिः
ब्रह्मसत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः

The Supreme Brahman is eternal and immutable ; as such it is the only real entity. Consequently the world is illusory (from the point of supreme reality), and the individual soul is Brahman and non else. These are the pivotal points that have shaped the future of Advaita vedanta.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya has treated the illustrations as the best vehicle to carry the message of Upanishads even to the doors of common people. He has insisted the importance of examples with all the emphasis at his command.¹ That is why a very good number of illustrations, or say thousands of examples has made his exposition easily accessible to the aspirants marching on the path way to God.

In the passage of time, after more than thousand years, in these modern days we have many aspects of examples like electricity, bulbs, machines, movies, cinema screen television etc. that exercise remarkable effect to understand the cardinal points of Advaita Vedanta in their right perspectives. For example - A battle with hard weapons, burning scene of a village, endless ocean, cruel tempest and other things are reeled on the cinema screen. But in no way the white screen is affected by them. This can easily bring in focus the Nature of

Brahman as noted in the Geeta -

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापः न शोचयति मारुतः

In fine, these new examples in a way exhilarate the exposition of the Advaitic principles by reducing the cold logic of philosophy into a gracious style of poetry thus bringing the chief tenets into spot-light. An attempt is made here to high-light the relevancy of the modern examples by showing how they evince in hitting the nail on the head.

The Upanishads announce with one voice that the Brahman is the supreme authority and the only substratum to the whole of the universe.² Generally the example to illustrate this is the ether. The ether is all pervasive and like wise the Brahman is said to be all pervasive and thus, it can be the substratum to the whole of the universe.³ But, how far this ether can be justified as the substratum to this world; because, the ether cannot stand as the base for a building , earth trees and so on. For this we can take the example of a big machine and the electricity. In fact, a heavy machine cannot be said as standing on the electricity; but it functions only by the

help of electricity. Its activities are reduced to a full stop if electricity ceases to be. Thus, in its true sense, the electricity is the substratum for the machine. Similarly, the whole world is like a big machine, and it runs only if the supreme Brahman takes charge of this. In other words, the role of Brahman in this world is like electricity in a machine.

The same example can be afforded even towards the understanding of the relation of the Soul and Body. The body is like a machine; it functions only if the soul exists in it, like the electricity in the machine. It is reduced to naught if the soul ceases to be⁴. The electricity, coming from the generator, passes through the wire and then enters the machine. The Supreme Brahman too with the help of māyā passing through various stages enters the body in its own procedure⁵ and stands there as the substratum to the same. Thus, the example of electricity is more effective in showing the sentient nature of Brahman.

The Brahman, bereft of qualities as presented by the Upanishads⁶ is said to be immutable. In no way it changes by any kind of instrument or object of the world. In other words it is not affected by any worldly object. But the whole world is superimposed on this Brahman, yet it is not at all affected

by the qualities of these objects.⁷ This immutable nature of Brahman can be illustrated with the screen of the cinema. A wonderful world itself is reeled on the white screen in the talkies. For that enchanting universe in the form of movies the screen itself is the substratum. That screen is not at all uglified by the unfair qualities of the movies. The endless ocean is appearing in the screen but the screen is not at all saturated by that ocean. Village conflagration is pictured wherein every thing is burning; the battle with varied hard weapons is seen in the movies; the tempest and its cruel effects are beheld on the screen, but soon after the movies are over the white screen is found absolutely safe or unaffected by any of these things. Neither it was burnt by fire; nor torn away by sword, flutter by the violent storm. That is the nature of the immutability of Brahman which is sung with loud voice by Bhagavan in the Geeta.⁸

The Brahman is styled as the witness-self (sākṣi). In the body the witness-self the Kutastha chaitanya, the prototype, of which the individual self is reflection is just shining and doing nothing else. Neither it is guiding the intellect in its functionings, nor issuing order to any sense organ and never doing anything by itself. It is totally outside the run

of functionings. This kind of indifference, but shining can be illustrated with the big mercury bulb posted at the squares of cities. This bulb hanging high in the air sheds equal amount of light on all the vehicles that pass by . It may be a minister's car, or a truck, a bus, a scooter or a bycycle of a layman the rays of the light are equal on all the vehicles irrespective of their qualifications. Over and above, remarkably surprising thing is that it shines even if no vehicle is passing through it, say at mid-night. This example can be called to our mind when we read the excellent example of Nāṭakadēpa given by Shri Vidyāranya in his Pañcadasi.⁹

The Upanishads declare with one voice that the Brahman alone is the real entity¹⁰. In other words, that, which is not etrnal and immutable, or changeable cannot be real. Now, the world is neither eternal nor immutable. It is observed to perish every moment. As such it cannot be real¹¹ as Brahman is. On the other hand the world cannot be void (शून्य) like a son of barren (वन्ध्यापुत्र) who is totally out side the run of experience; for it is presented to our perception. Thus, the world is neither real nor naught (Sūnya) hence, it is indescribable (anirvachaneeya). This aspect itself is tech-

nically known as Mithyā.¹² However, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya insists one point with all the emphasis at his command that this world is false only from the point of the Supreme Brahman; in other words it is from the point of a realized soul and not when dealing with the world.¹³ As far as the dream is being enjoyed it is noted as real itself, but the very next moment when a person is awoken, the dream world is suddenly reduced to naught. Same is the case with the world which is sublated when the Brahman, the substratum is realized. This aspect of principle can be explained with the example of the cinema. In the movies an altogether enchanting world itself is being, put forth on the Screen, the substratum. Innumerable sweets and ~~at~~ables are beheld on the screen, but one can neither touch them nor eat them. If the sweets were real one could have easily tasted them, but one cannot eat them. If they were absolutely naught (असत्) like a flower of the sky (शून्य) they could not have appeared on the screen. In fact, they are being beheld, but could not be taken like real things, and immediately when the movies are over every thing else is sublated and the only existing entity will be the white screen. They are appearing but sublated. Therefore they are false (मिथ्या) or indescribable .

A heart touching scene is being displayed on the screen. Some ladies are moved to tears as if they are sharing in the sufferings of the hero, but when the movies come to fullstop they derive consolation from the fact that every thing was just an appearance on the screen which is the substratum. In other words after realizing the substratum, the screen, everybody feels highly consoled that it was after all just cinema and not real. Like wise after realizing the Brahman, the substratum of the whole world, the world is sublated and proved to be false.

The next pivotal issue of the Advaitic system is the Self. The individual self is the Supreme Brahman itself in its core.¹⁴ It is just, due to the adjunct (Upādhi) in the form of Avidyā, the Brahman itself is called the self or Jiva. The Brahman with māyā is first manifested in the form of Īshvara. The Brahman when comes in contact with body is styled as Jiva.¹⁵

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya illustrates this with the example of the Sun and a glow worm.¹⁶ The same thesis can be explained with the example of modern bulb. The mercury bulb with high voltage sheds light with all the force at its command. On the contrary the bud like bulb with zero voltage are just twin-

klings or shedding minimum amount of light. But, the source of light in both the cases is electricity. This electricity itself is like the absolute Brahman bereft of qualities. With the adjunct of the biggest bulb, that sheds maximum amount of light, the electricity is called big mercury light; and the same with small bulbs is called zero bulbs. Similarly, the Brahman with Māyā is called Īshvara; and with the adjuncts of Avidyā it is called the Jiva. If the bulbs are removed the electricity remains as it is unaffected.¹⁷

Another example can also be adduced to note the relation of Īshvara and Jiva. Two police men are standing behind the police inspector to wait upon him. On the other hand two policemen are also standing behind a thief to keep an eye on him. The difference between these two is that the policemen behind the inspector are under his control. In other words they obey the orders of the inspector. But, here the thief has to obey the orders of the policemen who were watching him behind. Similarly the Maya is totally under the control of Īshvara and the Jiva is put under the thumb of the Avidyā.¹⁸

Now some miscellaneous points of Advaita thoughts can be elucidated with good few modern examples. It is generally

objected that in the system of Advaita no due consideration is afforded to the Karma theory. To this one modern example can be adduced. For a situation in a college an advertisement is given wherein the basic qualification is stated as the master's degrees like M.A. M.Sc. etc. One cannot allege against that advertisement that due importance is not at all given to the Bachelor's degrees like B.A. B.Sc. etc. For it starts with master's degree only. Similarly, the system of Advaitic thinkings starts only after renouncing the Karmas. In other words the inevitable actions (Nitya Karmas) are meant for only the purification of mind (Cittasuddhi)¹⁹ and an aspirant has to march on the pathway to realization only after purification. Purification is a must to start with Brahma- jijnāṣā. This purification is left to the tender mercies of Nityakarmas. Thus, we cannot shoot any allegation against the Advaita Vedanta as no due importance is given to the Karma theory. The Bachelor's degree is a qualification for getting through the examination for M.A. and the M.A. is for the Lecturer post. This is how we can find the relevancy of this example.

One may wonder as to how these fruits of Actions (Karmas) are accounted in the fortune of a man. These fruits are

remitted to our accounts just as the salary of an employee is remitted to his account in the bank. On the basis of these fruits of actions seven births of a Jiva are arranged in the form of his Prārabdha. He has to undergo seven births if once his series of lives is started. This is like the video cassette shoot by the Almighty. Every incident has to take place as arranged in accordance with the fruits of karmas like the videocassette displayed on the screen. God has the remote controller, and when he presses the button the life of Jiva starts functioning on the screen of the world.

To get rid of this series of sufferings in this world one has to think of the pathway to God. For this he has to forbear the hardships of pathway and should realize that the sensual pleasures are mixed with the bits of grief.²⁰ (दुःखसम्भिन्नं सुखम्). It is just like the advertisements displayed in the middle of the vital situations of the movies. We have to see those advertisements, though unwillingly to rejoice the forthcoming joyous moments of the movies. Similarly we have to endure the hardships of the passage of the Heaven.

Thus, these examples are highly effective in bringing the cardinal principles into focus. The Modern examples are highly

appealing to the hearts of readers. However, the Advaita vedanta is also a science of knowledge, and as such these illustrations exercise much in understanding the principles in the environment of science. The Upanishads try very hard to explain the exact nature and various facets of Brahman with so many similies. But the Upanishads are not satisfied to their mark, that is why they set back from the job of describing the principles of Brahman (यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह). But if we see the same principles in the perspectives of these modern illustrations we feel more satisfied than we do with the similies of the Upanishads. The more we think in these directions of modern illustrations the less we get the tenets of Advaita complicated. In other words we have before us the modern world of science to exercise still more in the finding of such examples thus to simplify or to amplify the tough issues of philosophy in general and of the Advaita Vedanta in particular.

In these new illustrations in a way exhilarate the expositions of the Advaitic principles by reducing the cold logic of philosophy into a gracious style of poetry thus bringing the chief tenets into spotlight.

- 1.a. वेदान्त वाक्यमीमांसा तदविरोधि तर्कोपकरणं पस्त्यते । - अध्यास भाष्यम्

- b. तदर्थग्रहणदाढ्याय, अनुमानमपि ... न निवार्यते । ब्र.सू.शा. भा. १-२ (उदाहरणस्य अनुमानान्तर्गतत्वं नान्तरीयकम् ।)
2. तस्मिन् सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् । - महानारायणोपनिषत् ।
3. अस्मिन् खल्वाक्षरे गार्गि आकाशः ओतश्च प्रोतश्च- वृ. उप. 3-8-11.
4. जीवो हि नाम चेतनः शरीराध्यक्षः प्राणानां धारयिता प्रसिद्धेर्निर्वचनात्- सू. भा. 1-1-6
5. अनेन जीवेनात्मनानुप्राविश्य नामरूपे व्याकरवाणि । उप.
6. साक्षीचेता केवलो निर्गुणश्च । श्वेता. उप. - 6-11
- C.P. निष्क्रियं निष्कलं शान्तं निरवद्यं निरञ्जनम् उप.
7. यत्र यदध्यासः तस्य दोषेण गुणेन वा अणुमात्रेणापि स न सम्बध्यते - (अध्यासभाष्य) वि. वि. - एवं च सति सर्वक्षेत्रेष्वपि सतो भगवतः क्षेत्रज्ञस्य ईश्वरस्य सांसारित्वं गन्धमात्रमपि नाशङ्क्यम् । न हि क्वचिदपि लोके आविद्याध्यस्तेन धर्मेण कस्यचिदुपकारः अपकारो वा दृष्टः - गीता. भा. 13-2 .
- वि. वि. - छायामात्रेण जीवरूपेणानुप्राविष्टत्वाद् देवता न दैहिकैः स्वतः सुखदुःखादिभिः सम्बध्यते - छ. भा. 6-3-2.
- अस्तिचायमपरो दृष्टान्तो यथा । स्वयं प्रसारितया मायया मायावी त्रिष्वपिकालेषु न संस्पृश्यते अवस्तुत्वात्, एवं परमात्मापि संसारमायया न संस्पृश्यत इति । ब्र.सू.शा. भा. 2-1-9.
8. नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
- न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शेषयति मारुतः ॥
- अच्छेद्योऽयमदाहोऽयं अक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एवं च ।
- नित्यः सर्वगतस्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥ श्री. भी. ॥ 2-23
9. नृत्यशभास्थितो दीपः प्रभुं सभ्यांश्च नर्तकीम् ।
- भासयेदविशेषेण तदभावेऽपि दीप्यते ॥ - पञ्चदशी नाटकदीपः
10. सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म । तै. उप. १-१ तत सत्यं स आत्मा ।
- छा. सत्यस्य सत्यम् ।
11. यद्रूपेण यन्निश्चितं तद्रूपं व्यभिचरन् अनृतमित्युच्यते । अतो विक्रोऽनृतम् ।
- तै. भा. - 2-1.
12. सच्चेत्रवाध्येत, असच्चेत्र प्रतीयेत, बाध्यते, प्रतीयते अतः
- सदसद्भयामनिर्वचनीयत्वम् ॥ - ब्र.सू.शा. भा. 2-14
13. सर्वव्यवहाराणां प्राग ब्रह्मात्म विज्ञानात् सत्यत्वोपपत्तेः स्वप्रव्यवहारस्यैव प्राक् प्रबोधात् ।
- ब्र.सू.शा. भा. 2-1-1

14. न हि विज्ञानात्मा परमात्मनो वस्त्वन्तरम् । बृ.उप. भाष्यम् - 2-3-6
15. पर एवात्मा देहेन्द्रिय - मनो-बुद्ध्युपाधिभिः परिच्छिद्यमानो बालैः शरीर इत्युपचर्यते । - ब्र.सू.शा.भा. 1-2-6
16. ईश्वरस्य तावन्नित्यं सर्वविषयं ज्ञानं सवितुप्रकाशवत् तद्विपरीतं संसारिणां खद्योतस्येव । - केन भाष्यम्. - 3
17. न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचित् नायं भूत्वा भाविता वा कदाचित् । अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ - कठोपनिषत् - 1-2-18
18. मायाविम्बं वशीकृत्य तां स्यात् सर्वज्ञ ईश्वरः । अविद्यावशागस्त्वन्य, तद्वैचित्र्यादनेकथा ॥ - पञ्चदशी - 1-16
- C.p.आश्रयं अव्यामोहयन्ती कर्तुरिच्छामनुसरन्ती माया, तद्विपरीतात्वविधा । - विवरणप्रमेयसंग्रहः - ।
19. कर्मणां चित्तशुद्धिद्वारा परंपरया मोक्षसाधनत्वं न तु साक्षात् । - Vidyāranya Vivarana Prameyasamgraha - ।
20. यत्र दुःखेन संभिन्नं न च ग्रस्तमनन्तरम् । अभिलाषोपनीतं च तदाहुस्वपदास्पदम् ॥ - मीमांसा भावप्रकाशः

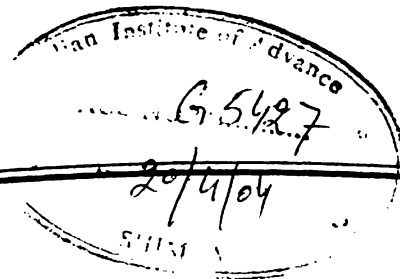


किंस्विदेकपदं धर्म्यं	किंस्विदेकपदं यशः ।
किंस्विदेकपदं स्वर्ग्यं	किंस्विदेकपदं सुखम् ॥
दाक्ष्यमेकपदं धर्म्यं	दानमेकपदं यशः ।
सत्यमेकपदं स्वर्ग्यं	शीलमेकपदं सुखम् ॥

The Yakṣa asked,—'What is the highest refuge of virtue? What of fame? What of heaven? And what, of happiness?'

Yudhiṣṭhira answered,—'Liberality is the highest refuge of virtue: gift of fame: truth of heaven: and good behaviour of happiness.'

(Mahā. Vana. 313. 69-70)



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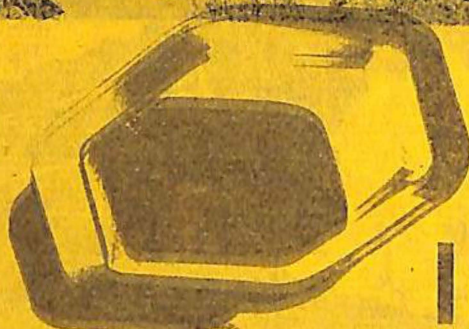
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ଶ୍ରୀ ଅଶେଷ କୁମାର ଘୋଷ
ସଭାପତି

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ କୃଷି ବିପଣନ ପରିଷଦ

ଶହୀଦ ନଗର, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ।

୧. ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ କୃଷି ବିପଣନ ପରିଷଦର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ କୃଷି ବିପଣନ ପରିଷଦର ମୂଳ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ହେଉଛି କୃଷିଜୀବୀଙ୍କୁ ପାଇଁ ବଜାର ଲିଭିବାକୁ ସୁବିଧା ଦେବା ଏବଂ କୃଷକମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ସୁବିଧା ସୁବିଧା, ଯେଉଁଥିରେ ସେମାନେ ଅଧିକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବା ସହ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ବଜାର ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଅସାଧୁ ବ୍ୟବସାୟମାନଙ୍କ କବଳରୁ ରକ୍ଷା ପାଇ ପାରିବେ ।
୨. ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ କୃଷି ବିପଣନ ପରିଷଦର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ହେଉଛି ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ୬୦ଟି ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ବଜାର କମିଟି ଗଠନ କରାଯାଇଅଛି । ସମସ୍ତ ରାଜ୍ୟର ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ମୋଟ ୪୮ଟି ମୁଖ୍ୟ ବଜାର ପ୍ରାନ୍ତର ଓ ୩୭୭ଟି ଉପବଜାର ପ୍ରାନ୍ତର ରହିଛି ।
୩. ସମସ୍ତ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ବଜାର କମିଟିର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ମାନ୍ଦେରିକ ଯାଚି ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ପାଳାୟ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର, ବିଶ୍ୱାସୀ, ଶୋଭାପତି, ଶୋଭାପତି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାପକ ଓ କୃଷି ସୁବିଧା କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ବ୍ୟବସାୟ ରହିଛି ।
୪. କୃଷକମାନଙ୍କ ସୁବିଧା ପାଇଁ ଏବଂ କୃଷକମାନଙ୍କୁ ସର୍ବୋତ୍ତମ ସୁବିଧା ଯେଉଁଥିରେ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯାଏ, ଗର ବ୍ୟବସାୟ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଏବଂ ପ୍ରତି ମାନ୍ଦେରିକ ଯାଚିରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରକାର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାପକ ଓ ମାତ୍ର ପରିଚାଳନା ଯନ୍ତ୍ରପାତି ଯଥା : ସ୍ୱେ-ସ୍ଥିତି (ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଯନ୍ତ୍ର) ଆର୍ଡ୍ରା ମାପକ ଯନ୍ତ୍ର, ଧାନ ସମ୍ପାଦକ, ଯାତ ଫାଟ ଏବଂ ଛୋଟ ବଜାର ଓ ପକ୍ଷ ପ୍ରଦାନ ବ୍ୟବସାୟ ରହିଛି ।
୫. ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ମାନ୍ୟତା ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କର ୧୨ ସୁତ୍ରୀ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ ମଧ୍ୟରେ କୃଷକ ବଜାର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ହେଉଛି ଅନ୍ୟତମ । ଏହା ଏବେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା କରାଯାଇଛି । ଏହାଦ୍ୱାରା କୃଷକମାନେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ ବଜାର ସୁବିଧା ପାଇ ଉପକୃତ ହେବେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଉତ୍ପାଦିତ ବ୍ୟବସାୟ ସେମାନେ ସିଧାସଳଖ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିକ୍ରିକର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ ହେଉଥିବେ ।

ଭାରତ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଚକ୍ରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କର ପକ୍ଷରୁ କଟକ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧୀୟ ଦୈନିକ ବିଦ୍ୟା ମିଶନର ସମ୍ପାଦକଙ୍କ ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧାପୂର୍ବକ ଠାରେ ଏବଂ କଳାକାର ବିଦ୍ୟାପତି ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧାପୂର୍ବକ ଠାରେ କଟକ ମାନ୍ଦେରିକ ଯାଚି ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା କରାଯାଇଛି । ଏହି ଯାଚି ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ପାଇଁ ଓ ବିକ୍ରି ସୁବିଧା ସହିତ ଆଧୁନିକ ଗୋଦାନ, ନିବାସ ପକ୍ଷ, ବିଆଁ ଘର ଯନ୍ତ୍ର, ଚକାର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାପକ କରିବା ସହ ଆଦିର ସୁବିଧା ରହିଛି ।

“ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ କୃଷି ବିପଣନ ପରିଷଦ କେବଳ କୃଷକମାନଙ୍କ ସେବା ପାଇଁ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟକ । ସେମାନେ ଏହାର ସୁବିଧା ନେବା ପାଇଁ ଆଗେଇ ଆସିବା ଉଚିତ ।”

ଅମର ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

ଆଇ.ଏ.ଏସ୍.ଏ.ଏସ୍

ସରକାରୀ ସଚିବ

ଆମର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ

* ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ବଜାର କମିଟି ଓ ପରିଷଦର କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟରୀକରଣ

* ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ସ୍ତରରେ କୃଷି ବଜାର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା

ଅରବିନ୍ଦ ଜାଲୀ

ଅଧ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ତଥା ମାନ୍ୟବର ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ

ସମବାୟ, ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବହନ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ।

* କୃଷମୂଳ ସ୍ତରରେ କୃଷକ ସଚେତନତା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ।

* ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଅଧିକ କ୍ଷୋଭେଇ ସୁବିଧା ସୁବିଧା ।

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Dist : Mayurbhanj (Orissa)

Pin : 757001

Major Highlights :-

- * Business hours extended up to 4.30 PM in all Branches and Extension Counter.
- * Sunday Banking facilities available at Betnoti, Udala, Karanjia and Rairangpur Branch.
- * Computerized Customer Service will be available very shortly at Head Office & Baripada Branch.
- * Identified eligible Farmer Members are provided with different Credit Facilities with 1% less interest.

Sri. B.K. Dash
Secretary

Sri S.K. Bala
President


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